

## International Symposium #131 Report

### **"World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power"**

March 7-13, 2003, *Hotel Villa Luppis, Pordenone, Italy*

Organizers: Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (University of Brasilia)

Arturo Escobar (University of North Carolina)

### **Summary and Overview**

"World Anthropologies" aimed at pluralizing the prevailing visions of anthropology in a juncture where the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon discourses on difference persists. It stemmed from the realization that, in an age of heightened globalization, anthropologists have failed to discuss consistently the current nature of their practice and its mutations on a global scale. This is perhaps a result of the growing international hegemony of U.S. anthropology, and its tendency to confound its own internal crisis with a global one. The Symposium was an opportunity to trigger a conversation among anthropologists from various regions of the world in order to assess the diversity of relations between regional or national anthropologies and a contested, power-laden, disciplinary discourse. "World Anthropologies" aimed at contributing to the articulation of a diversified anthropology that is more aware of the social, epistemological, and political conditions of its own production.

The goals of the conference were twofold: a) to examine critically the international dissemination of anthropology - as a changing set of Western discourses and practices - within and across national power fields, and the processes through which this dissemination takes place; and b) to contribute to the development of a plural landscape of anthropologies that is both less shaped by metropolitan hegemonies and more open to the heteroglossic potential of unfolding globalization processes. As we saw it, the Symposium was to be part of a critical anthropology of anthropology, one that decentered, re-historicized, and pluralized what has been taken as "anthropology" so far. Our aim was to question not only the contents but also the terms and the conditions of anthropological conversations.

"World Anthropologies" brought together scholars working in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, England, India, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, and the United States. The majority of the participants were either born or did their doctoral studies in countries other than those where they are currently working, a fact that added a decisive cosmopolitan atmosphere to the meeting. Participants' nationalities did not entirely coincide with the list of countries above. There was a German anthropologist who worked in Holland but wrote about neither of these countries, for instance, an Argentinean writing about France from Norway, a Finn writing about anthropology in the U.K, and so forth. Most of our participants had, in short, some degree of displacement.

The conference deliberations started on the morning of the 8th of March with an Introductory session that was followed, in subsequent afternoons and mornings, by four sessions, named “Anthropology and Transnationalism”, “Power and Hegemony in Anthropology”, “Truth and Politics”, and “Anthropology Today”. This routine was altered on the afternoon of March 10 when the first part of the afternoon was spent in group discussions. On that afternoon participants were divided into three groups of six. Group one, coordinated by Shinji Yamashita, focused on the theme of “Colonialism, Nationalism, Imperialism: Contexts and Predicaments for World Anthropologies?.” Group two, coordinated by Eduardo Archetti, considered the following question: “Eurocentrism and World Anthropologies. Epistemological Tensions or Hegemony?”. Group three, coordinated by Nikolai Vakhtin, developed a discussion on “Power and Practices within Institutional, National and International Scenarios and the Future of World Anthropologies”. Coordinators of the three groups presented their reports in the last part of the afternoon. Finally, in the last section of March 10, Michal Osterweil, the conference’s student rapporteur, presented her synthesis of the symposium until that moment. The conference reconvened on March 12, when Verena Stolcke made her general comments, followed by a concluding and general discussion on “New Exchanges and Possibilities in World Anthropologies.” The closing of the gathering was chaired by Richard Fox and was focused on plans for paper revision and the publication of a volume.

## **The Meeting in Detail**

### March 8th

In the first morning of the conference, Richard Fox welcomed all participants and the organizers, Ribeiro and Escobar, presented the symposium goals. For Ribeiro the conference’s main subject was how anthropology related to globalization and power. He understands the present as another moment of reinvention of anthropology that is not so much linked to a crisis in the subject position of anthropologists’ “object” par excellence, i.e., native populations but to changes in the relationships among anthropologists located in different loci of the world system. He believes that bringing a plurality of anthropologies to the forefront and giving them greater international visibility are powerful means towards a more heteroglossic and democratic community of world anthropologists and more complex forms of creating and circulating knowledge on a global level. New conditions of conversability are fundamental to this endeavor. He asked: In an era of heightened globalization, and after the intense epistemological and methodological critique of the 90’s, how can we establish new conditions of academic exchange and regimes of visibility? Regarding the roles anthropologists play within systems of power, he suggested that this complex issue cannot be reduced to a disjunction between anthropologies of empire-building and anthropologies of nation-building. Ribeiro believes that what underlies this question is the kinds of positions, perspectives and practices anthropologists have regarding powerful and powerless groups and projects. A way of looking at this issue, he suggested, is to consider that anthropology is good to empower certain groups, powerful or powerless ones, to make

“legitimate” statements about their claims to power. He concluded by saying that in a globalized world the issue is not to struggle for other hegemonies but for other ways of constructing hegemony.

Escobar proposed, as a working hypothesis, that what is at stake with a “World Anthropologies” project is the rejection of the assumption of a single space within which anthropology is necessarily practiced. For him, diversifying anthropology requires the shattering of this single space and the creation of a multiplicity from which diverse anthropologies may emerge. As a multiplicity, this means that there isn’t any “true” anthropology –that is, no normativity that can be applied worldwide. A “world anthropologies” framework would suggest that it would no longer be possible to talk about, say, “Russian anthropology” or “Mexican anthropology” but “world anthropologies” in Russia, or in Mexico, etc. This multiplicity –World Anthropologies— would be generated by a network of sites in an uneven, contested terrain. The resulting plural space would amount to a “post-anthropological era” (that is, post-anthropological in the singular).

After Ribeiro’s and Escobar’s presentation all participants introduced themselves. The presentations were couched in terms of the following suggested question: “What kinds of experiences –personal and professional—influenced your conception of anthropology as a contested transnational discourse and practice”? A great majority mentioned that their interest in anthropology and on the Symposium was highly related to life histories that included living in different countries and studying abroad. Encounters with difference, the richness of the critical gaze, anthropology’s subversive potential and its potential as “refuge,” questions of identity and of being in or out of step with the world, and the rationalization of inequalities through difference were some of the elements cited by participants in their inclination towards the field.

The afternoon discussion was organized under the rubric of “Anthropology and Transnationalism” and chaired by Verena Stolcke. The first afternoon session revolved around the following questions: *“In what ways does the heightening of transnationalism transform the conditions under which anthropology is practiced? What particular mutations can be identified at present as a result of emerging transnational factors, such as forms of networking, traveling, information exchange (including internet), funding patterns, and institutional settings”?* Johannes Fabian and Esteban Krotz gave their remarks on these topics. Fabian proposed that we discuss the field of anthropology not as a territory but as a sequence of events. The idea is that, through the temporalization of discourse, one might be able to subvert hegemonic thinking since this relies heavily on the establishment of boundaries. For him, we should consider anthropology always in the plural; concomitantly, the project of creating a transnational anthropological community would depend on our ability to keep “world anthropologies” as a floating concept. Krotz addressed Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira’s notion that a main problem with “peripheral anthropologies” is the lack of horizontal dialogue among them. But, he added, they also are anthropologies without histories. He emphasized the importance of considering processes of diffusion in the formation of national anthropologies along with claims that arise within specific nation-states. In the

discussion that followed, Archetti recalled that much of the national anthropologies is based on the control of territories. Velho mentioned that it would be interesting to consider the role that national metropolises, such as Mexico City, play in the diffusion of anthropology since there are no homogeneous national communities of anthropologists. Visvanathan stressed the need to take into account the existence of multiple temporalities, a question that made Stolcke think of which time is different in relation to which time. For Toussaint there was a need to think more about “floating concepts” since they run the risk of having their meanings defined by people who have access to greater amount of power and visibility.

The second session of the afternoon was dedicated to discussing the following issues: *How do different histories of immersion into transnational/global processes influence national and regional outcomes? Can anthropology be recognized as one discipline as a result of the multiple mutations effected by transnationalism? Which concepts would be most suitable to account for present conditions?* The formal presentations were in charge of Josephine Smart and Marisol de la Cadena. Smart started by identifying common features among the anthropologies that are done in Canada and China. A genuine desire to have cross-cultural knowledge may inform a shared perspective across anthropologies but the importance of place has to be highlighted because of different geopolitical legacies. The Chinese example is especially interesting in showing the power of the state in shaping anthropology. De la Cadena stressed the relationship between anthropology and politics from the standpoint of Peruvian anthropology as part of a regional, Latin American network. She explored the existence of a tension between epistemological intolerance and epistemological tolerance. The latter should not be confounded with liberal diversity, rather it is a way of knowledge that allows for conflict, works through power and does not start from knowledge as a given but as a process. In the discussion that followed, Fabian commented that we need to identify more clearly what we call knowledge production in order not to reify native knowledge. Smart pondered that to consider indigenous knowledge superior would be to repeat the kind of mistake we need to avoid.

Susana Narotzky was the discussant of both sessions. She focused on alternative space-time frames in knowledge production and raised the following questions: what are the conditions for the emergence of space-time frames of knowledge production? How do they affect the unequal possibility of knowledge production? For Narotzky, the issue is the relationship between knowledge production and the particular political agendas of those in power. She also thinks that there is no alternative to spatialized discourse, therefore there is a need to know better what despatialized knowledge and multiple times mean. What is at stake is the construction of different spaces of knowledge where subaltern knowledges find grounds to grow. A general discussion followed Narotzky's intervention. Toussaint stressed that the audience of anthropological knowledge is an equally important issue. Krotz believed that we should pay more attention to why and how a subject becomes internationally known. Ribeiro considered the impossibility of finding pure, completely non-Eurocentric thought in Latin America and De la Cadena further explored her notion of epistemological tolerance asserting that it is intimately related to the capacity of negotiating different positions that

may converge into an epistemological hybridity. Archetti intervened by saying that Norwegian anthropology gained worldwide visibility when an outstanding scholar such as Barth gained international prominence. For him there may be several outstanding intellectuals in other places who may acquire worldwide visibility. Fox recalled that American anthropology does not control its own destiny and that we should consider that hegemonic anthropologies also face constraints created by the state. Krotz final comments were about the impossibility of context-free anthropologies.

### March 9th

The morning session was organized under the heading of “Power and Hegemony in Anthropology.” The discussion was chaired by Arturo Escobar. The session revolved around the following questions: *What are the main contradictions and tensions between hegemonic anthropologies and different national, or minority anthropological knowledge? How are the various positions that anthropologists may occupy structured by hegemonic discourses and particular institutional practices? How could non-hegemonic anthropologists promote new conditions of conversation for more plural world anthropologies?* Arlene Dávila, Eduardo Archetti and Otávio Velho were scheduled to discuss these issues in the context of their papers. Eeva Berglund presented Arlene Dávila’s paper since Davila was unable to come to Villa Luppis. Davila’s work analyzes the problematic relationship of anthropology and minority anthropologists against the seeming irrelevance of race and ethnicity as public discourses within neoliberal cultural, urban and academic policies. She suggests that the discipline’s ‘problematic history’ with practitioners who are minority, ethnic, and previously colonized subjects is far from over in the increasingly corporate and niche-oriented U.S. academy. Comments were made after Berglund’s presentation. Archetti noted that anthropologists were also marked by the predicaments of ethnicity and that behind feminist and Chicano studies, for instance, there were social movements while this was not true in the Latino case. De la Cadena argued that Davila was an ethnic intellectual in the United States and Fox suggested that different processes of whitening and blackening meant different entries of distinct minorities within the North-American slot system. Smart stated the need to go beyond the slots playing multiple identities.

Archetti then presented his views by positing that the way we read and the way we define and write histories is how we construct hegemonies within the discipline. He also pointed out that to join the mainstream in international anthropology an author needs to write in English, and that while there is much room left for non-hegemonic anthropologists to be recognized on the basis of the ethnographies they write, there is less room for those outside hegemonic centers who write theory. As an example, he cited the important work of Brazilian anthropologists on Dumont’s theory, a work that is unknown internationally. Archetti stressed that differentiated visibility of some subjects and regions in the center is another factor in the reproduction of hegemony. In the discussion that followed, Fox asked whether silencing subjects are not the way hegemony is constructed. Fabian traced a difference between ethnographic objects, those that are taken out of contexts and placed within a repertoire of naturalistic visions, and ethnic objects, related to history and permeated by romantic visions. For him,

anthropology became world anthropology when national anthropologists decided they were natural scientists. Archetti considered the tendency to see the history of anthropology as a history of ideas and not as a history of fieldwork projects and institutions as very problematic. He also asserted that the history of the discipline is often marked by a sequence of role models and heroes. For Archetti, North-American anthropology is hegemonic because of its flexibility to integrate foreign anthropologists. Velho presented his ideas starting by considering that universalist and particularist discourses occur simultaneously and at the same time complement each other. Furthermore, he sees anthropology as a combination of science and political processes of nation building, a combination that is not concealed, for instance, in the anthropology practiced in Brazil. Velho argued that empire-building anthropologies forgot their role in nation-building while this would be impossible within non-hegemonic anthropologies. He also thought that we should be careful not to speak in the name of any social actor, creating new forms of hegemonies, or reifying power. Velho pointed out that the relationships between global and local phenomena are much more complex today and were superseded in many cases, such as in the relationships between world religions and local religions. He believes that the same might well be occurring with anthropology.

In the discussion of Velho's argument, Fox suggested that it would be interesting to compare Brazilian and Japanese anthropologies since they are anthropologies that do research outside of their countries. Yamashita recalled that Japan was an empire-building anthropology but after World War II it entered a period basically dedicated to research within Japan. In the 1960's, however, Japanese anthropologists started doing research abroad again. Vakhtin also addressed the empire/nation-building issue, asking where would Russia, a nation-state with an imperial history, be located since she has always been a nation-building anthropology. Ribeiro then stated that the question of how to construct world anthropologies remained open. Krotz referred to unequal power relations among nation-states and Berglund called the attention to the need of understanding the politics of scientific authority.

Josephine Smart was the designated discussant of the morning presentations. In her view, the papers showed the great variation within anthropology and that the idea of center is more complicated than what is usually believed. For Smart, knowledge production is important but she found it crucial to discuss more about knowledge reproduction since issues of silencing and granting visibility were so salient in the discussions. She believes that publishing and teaching in anthropology should be much more diverse than what is the case today. A general discussion began after Smart's intervention. For Fabian, the discussion was about how empires and nation-states produce anthropologies. Velho considered that we need to explore languages other than that of power since power can be an Eurocentric category. Fabian argued that the impossibility of talking outside of structures makes it mandatory to talk about power in terms of structures. Stolcke recalled the importance of relating power to inequalities. Archetti noted that it is possible to speak about power because autonomy is always present. For him, to exercise power is to create new conditions, objects and speeches.

He raised the question of which are the anthropologies that are integrated to the center and how are they integrated?

In the afternoon, the session was entitled “Truth and Politics” and was chaired by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro. The issues were summarized by the following questions: *What are the social and epistemological bases on which anthropologists can make claims to truth that have political consequences? After the various critiques of ethnographic authority, how is the production of ethnographic knowledge to take place within a world anthropologies project? In what ways do different institutional settings enable or constrain the development of anthropology as a whole?* Susana Narotzky, Paul Nkwi and Eeva Berglund were scheduled to present their views on these issues in the context of their papers. Narotzky started by arguing the need to understand how we value other forms of knowledge (literary, theological, popular, etc.). In her opinion this consideration leads to a discussion on communicability and incommensurability, two issues that often remain under-discussed. She posed the following questions: “How can we create spaces where knowledges from different ‘structures of feeling’ can co-exist and communicate with each other? In this context, what is the meaning of ‘epistemological tolerance’ and what does it have to do with political projects and interests?” She also pointed out the possibility of recuperating ethnographic realism and the importance of trying to find new alternatives to create a new hegemony. Nikolai Vakhtin asked how borders can produce radically different knowledges; Esteban Krotz suggested that the actual practice points at a multi-centered anthropology in a polycentric world. Escobar pondered how we can re-invent realist epistemologies – including ethnographic realism—after constructivism and deconstruction. What would a “neo-realist” ethnography look like?

Richard Fox presented Paul Nkwi’s paper since Nkwi was unable to come to Villa Luppis. The paper aimed at showing how the discipline has been transformed by African scholars engaging with emerging issues and critical problems facing the continent as an appropriate platform. He related the different moments of African anthropology to different waves of international policies of development. Berglund felt that Nkwi’s paper reflected a nostalgia for a strong state. Fabian pointed out that the main question would be: why do African anthropologists believe in the reality of anthropology? He also recalled that African diasporic intellectuals in the United States became powerful scholars. This presentation was followed by Berglund’s, who called the attention to the role of anthropological ancestors in legitimating different national and international scholarly traditions. She argued that the present is a moment of fundamental transformations of the university system; employment and funds for research are scarce, and such trends affect the social sciences as a whole. Despite these problems, it is important to acknowledge the vision and courage of colleagues in the UK in re-inventing their practice. An encouraging example is the proposal for “auditing cultures” initiated by M. Strathern and co-workers.

Otávio Velho was the discussant of this session. In his opinion, Nkwi’s glamourization of the African situation is a strategy of little efficacy, especially if his goal is to reinvent anthropology with an African accent. Velho believes that we should not try to convert

necessity into virtue. Regarding Narotzky's discussion on the relationship between knowledge production and political struggle and engagement, Velho recalled the autonomy of texts, a fact that prevented their reduction to their contexts of production. In the general discussion that followed, Narotzky said she did not believe that anthropology could be a pure discourse; in fact, she thought it would be more and more impure, something that was shown in Nkwi's and Berglund's papers. Visvanathan recalled that radical critique is not to be taken for granted since most of it is not really so radical. Smart pointed out that we needed to think about a transformation of the curricula of anthropological courses if we want to have new forms of teaching and doing anthropology. De la Cadena argued that the de-academization of anthropology can produce positive results, to which Vakhtin agreed. He recalled that linguists do participate in "parapolitical activities" when they engage in language politics, defining new writing systems, or publishing books on certain native languages, for instance. Archetti found it an exaggeration to state that market forces dictate the conditions of research as well as to think that there is a pure anthropology. He proposed the possibility of intertwined logics of the market and disciplinary logics. Krotz recalled that anthropology is also about publishing. Stolcke considered that the integration of European universities within the European Union may open up new scenarios to which we need to pay attention.

### March 10th

March 10th was programmed to be a mixed day. In the morning, under the chairship of Richard Fox, participants gathered to discuss "Anthropology Today" in two sessions. The first session was guided by the following set of questions: *How have the relations between anthropology, nation-state power, and empire shaped anthropological practices? In a time of neo-liberal globalization and renewed imperialism, what will happen at/to the intersections of national and transnational anthropological discourses and practices?* Nikolai Vakhtin and Shinji Yamashita were the main presenters at this session. Vakhtin focused on the changes that Siberian ethnology went throughout the years, especially on the transition from a discipline normalized by the state, during the Soviet regime, to a period when new contacts were established with Western anthropology. He believes that scientific research cannot be divided into European, indigenous, Russian, etc. For him what matters is whether it is good or bad research, what is accepted or not, what becomes legitimate. Yamashita pointed out that there is no teaching of the history of Japanese anthropology in Japan. He argued that the importance of the East/West tension in anthropological narratives depends on the audience. When North-Americans write to North-Americans this may be an important issue but not within the Japanese academic milieu. He also emphasized the growing numbers of foreign students of anthropology in Japan, especially Koreans, who end up teaching Japanese studies in their home country. Yamashita recognized that Japanese anthropology was created through a connection with the West but stated that the real issue was how Western is anthropology in Japan. After their presentations, Ribeiro commented that the Russian and Japanese examples showed the importance of considering how nation-states open or close borders to research and the problems they



create regarding access to field sites. Smart recalled that to this day anthropologists cannot do field research anywhere in China.

The second morning session, featuring Sandy Toussaint and Shiv Visvanathan, was dedicated to discuss the following questions: *What have been the relations between the location(s) of anthropological subjects - understood in national and international power contexts - and the rise and development of particular anthropological practices? Can a more plural vision of the history/ies of anthropology be fostered by examining the intersection of national and supra-national networks in which particular 'traditions' have been enmeshed?* Toussaint started by stating that world anthropologies is also about understanding other anthropologies and that Australian anthropology was placed in an interesting crossroads, neither at the center nor at the periphery. Australian anthropology is going through a moment of growth highly fostered by the engagement of anthropologists in the anthropology of land claims and indigenous rights and also by a growing market for consultancies. These raises new puzzles and challenges for anthropology: while critical engagement is often practiced, it is not clear whether indigenous peoples benefit from this new situation. Toussaint thought it is not clear what Westernization or Western anthropology are. Comments on Toussaint's intervention started with Ribeiro who emphasized the need to consider how market pressures shape anthropology and not only state forces. Narotzky reminded us of another crucial contrast, that between ethics and politics while Archetti pointed out that we needed to consider the intra-regional scale as well, that relationships between Australian and Japanese anthropologies or between Mexican and Brazilian anthropologists may be more important than others. Krotz called the attention to the importance of different starting points for the history of world anthropologies. Visvanathan's presentation started by highlighting the exceptional pluralism of the nationalist movement, which embraced not only other colonialisms (including the West's) but also a multiple dissident imagination, in what amounted to a theory of hospitality. In this context, the West was not the other but one of the selves in Indian multiple identities. It is important, though, to know which West is being considered if one wishes to digest it. He pointed out that when India became an independent state, the parochial character of sociology became clear since it was marked by a parochial notion of time, a notion of progressive and lineal time. If sociology is linked to nation-building, in India citizenship has to be constructed on a notion of multiple times not on a notion of industrial time.

This session's discussion was started off by Johannes Fabian. He argued that anthropology in Japan and India was a provider of evolutionary time, a time on which modernization feeds. He considered that the transnational utopia seems to be receding in both cases. Fabian also thought that we should envisage the language issue not as a theoretical one but as a practical one. English is the language of world anthropologies. Regarding Toussaint's paper he pointed out that it seems like a replay of the American story. The fact that natives are still there, brings a kind of intimate atmosphere to anthropological practice. After Fabian's comments, a general discussion developed. Vakhtin made the point that if you believe that there is a transnational anthropology, you are implying that there are national anthropologies and this is not the case. Yamashita argued that anthropology played a double role in Japan: to show that the country is

modern and to look for its origins. Since Japan was never colonized, he'd rather consider that from the point of view of Japanese anthropologists there are many Wests, a situation that triggered different traditions of answering to the different existing Wests. He summed up by saying that Japanese anthropology is a plural Westernized anthropology. Smart argued that national and transnational anthropologies exist. One proof of the increasing transnationalization of anthropology was the growing numbers of foreign students who now choose to study at universities anywhere in the world. Ribeiro considered that the issue whether there are national or transnational anthropologies depend on the theory of identity that one spouses. De la Cadena drew a distinction between anthropologies that provide evolutionary time and those that impose it. Visvanathan stated that his theory of freedom rests on a pluralization of pathologies and considered that fundamentalism is a construction of the encounter with modernity. Opening or closing is increasingly a very problematic issue in global times. For him, the role of world anthropologies is to imagine new concepts about the future. Escobar asked about the implications for World Anthropologies of Visvanathan's emphasis on the existence of a multiplicity of times, livelihood, and epistemologies. Is this multiplicity a starting point for a World Anthropologies project? Visvanathan stated that "world anthropologies are a riddle for which we have not found enough questions."

In the afternoon, participants broke into three groups of six. The subjects discussed by each group were: 1. *Colonialism, Nationalism, Imperialism: Contexts and predicaments for World Anthropologies?*, coordinated by Shinji Yamashita; *Eurocentrism and World Anthropologies: Epistemological Tensions or Hegemony?*, coordinated by Eduardo Archetti; and *Power and Practices within Institutional, National and International Scenarios and the Future of World Anthropologies*, coordinated by Nikolai Vakhtin. Coordinators read group reports upon reconvening. Yamashita's report started by recognizing that the "isms" in expressions such as colonialism, nationalism and imperialism always indicated that a system was expanding. Nationalism, for instance, may be considered as an internal imperialism. The group raised the question of what world anthropologies are supposed to accomplish. Much of the discussion revolved around time. If it is possible to speak about multiple times, how do we speak about them? When time is compared to space, its different nature, its fluid and evasive character, for instance, stand out. The relationships between time and space play a central role in the construction of hegemonies. What kinds of notions of time should be promoted to go beyond the current hegemonic forms of time and space control? Archetti's report stressed the need to include eurocentrism and other forms of centrisms within the same universe since eurocentrism has always existed in the midst of a multiculturism. The circulation of ideas and peoples is not new, something that is reflected in the fact that anthropology has always been diasporic. It is important to note the existence of uneven processes of integration in the formation of world anthropologies. Furthermore, an interesting exercise to get a sense of the heterogeneity of world anthropologies would be the drawing of the ethnographic map of the world according to different departments. This group also identified a commodification of theory production that gets reflected in the patterns of recruitment of professionals in the center. Vakhtin's group raised the question of whether national anthropologies were necessarily nationalist. He also identified a confusion between state and nation,

asserting the need to clarify which are the boundaries between national anthropologies and states. On the other hand, the group pointed out that there are no clear borders between national and international anthropologies. However, it is clear that national anthropologies are aware both of their own traditions and the center's, while in the latter there is acquaintance only with its own history. Anthropologists were also viewed as knowledge brokers that speak the same language with local accents. This group also pointed out the need to write histories of world anthropologies, to write histories of the dissemination of anthropology on a global scale as well as the need to increase the translations of different works that are still limited to a singular national audience. After the reports, a general discussion developed chaired by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro. Escobar emphasized the need to develop inter-epistemic dialogues, to think, for instance, about how natives theorize. Smart problematized the notion of center and asked: do the Chinese recognize as the center what we are calling the center?

The last part of the day was dedicated to the report of Michal Osterweil. She identified the existence of underlying and recurring tensions in the debates, for instance: between what anthropology has been and what we want it to be; anthropology in the singular versus anthropologies in plural; anthropology as ethical and political practice and as academic discipline; anthropology as a positive endeavor and as a deeply problematic one. She remarked about the need to broach normative and ethical issues, despite the symposium's injunction not to deal with the "normative question" (how anthropology/ies ought to be), since this has been precisely part of the problem. For her, it is impossible to avoid the ethical and normative issues if we want to arrive at a positive theory of anthropological practice, especially one that does want to make political interventions. This necessarily depends on an understanding of the conjunctural nature of knowledge and the power that anthropology has to unsettle things and make visible competing and multiple stories. When related to a theory of interrelatedness and embeddedness, anthropology can yield new ways of broaching some of the difficult terrains of ethics and intervention

### March 12

This was the Symposium's final day. Arturo Escobar explained how the day was organized.

The work started with Verena Stolcke's general comments on the conference. She pointed out two recurrent preoccupations: how can we adapt anthropology to a rapidly changing world; and how can anthropology contribute to such a rapidly changing world. She argued that we need to transcend dichotomies, such as East/West, North/South, Empire/Nation, since they are not capable of dealing with transnational orders. In the end, what was at stake during the symposium was what anthropology is for and what is it about. She noted that the notion of a shared matrix did not find an echo in the discussions. Stolcke believes anthropology continues to have a twofold driving force at present: a notion of a shared humanity and a consciousness of the existence of historically marked differences. Inspired in Hannah Arendt she made a plea for

pluralizing the universal. Stolcke recalled the importance of drawing maps of anthropological and ethnographic areas to identify specificities of world anthropological practices and the connections among them. She also considered that there is no part of the world where we cannot talk of a center. But the centers have changed. Which are the peripheries? Who are local anthropologists in Latin America? Rio-based ethnologists working in Amazonia? What about situations that do not fit, such as Australia? Is it a periphery? And India, a colony which discovered its otherness only with independence? For her, what has become transnationalized is the way we think about humanity and about politically, historically and socially marked differences. She also thought that we needed to clarify concepts such as hegemony, legitimacy, power, knowledge, epistemological tolerance and visibility.

After Stolcke's comments a general discussion developed. Ribeiro recalled that maps of connections are also cognitive maps and that maps are also instruments of power. Stolcke added that she was thinking of open-ended maps in movement because she wanted to relate them to history. Velho problematized the notion of periphery and argued for the existence of middle positions. He also stated that the current issue is not only that we share humanity but that we inhabit the same world. For Narotzky we are trying to do what Eric Wolf did in "Europe and the People without History," to trace connections, differences and unicity at the same time. She added that she could not see how is it possible to go beyond a unitary history and that even the metaphor of a map with flows and movements would still imply the existence of a unitary space, that of the map itself. Escobar pointed out that we needed to make a difference between a certain view of a totality, global capitalism, for instance, in contrast to a unitary vision of history. Yamashita related the need for anthropology to modernity itself. For him, anthropologists, like any other professionals, wish to go to the center to get in touch with the excellence of their professions. Archetti raised the question of how can national maps be globalized and remembered that Borges' map is impossible to draw. He argued that the issue is to capture different creativities and, at the same time, be aware that some of these creativities are visible while others are not, that some of them enter the core while others do not. Smart recalled pragmatic ways of homogenizing visibility such as the social science citation index that reinforce the power of a given set of journals.

The last part of the morning, chaired by Verena Stolcke, was dedicated to discussing *New Exchanges and Possibilities in World Anthropologies*. Toussaint started by suggesting different editorial policies and initiatives such as Australian anthropologists co-authoring editions with Brazilians, the edition of particular volumes on South American anthropology, getting funds to translate works, etc. Visvanathan stated that we were engaged in the creation of new myths. He asked: who are the examples of world anthropologies? What do world anthropologies mean in concrete terms? Do we have a community of world anthropologies? He suggested that we forget hegemony and looked for a playful theory. Visvanathan also pointed out the need to develop languages that influence institutions like the World Bank, for instance, and that discursive matrices associated to human rights are not enough to accomplish change. How can other notions of justice enter the United Nations? He thought it crucial to look for other kinds

of symbolic markers and asked: what would be a keyword dictionary of world anthropologies? He also argued that the question is how to evade any map. After Toussaint and Visvanathan interventions a general discussion developed. Escobar stated the importance of pluralizing map making. Fabian recalled that lexicon is an enterprise that lives on the elimination of practices and that he would be more favorable to subverting the practice. Visvanathan raised the question of what prevents world anthropologies to be a human relations school. For him contamination will always be there. Velho suggested a concerted effort towards the creation of a research agenda. Vakhtin mentioned that the desire to control, construct and foresee everything related to one's activity is highly marked by a Western perspective. He invited us not to think of ourselves as engineers but as gardeners. To plant and wait for it. He stated the impossibility of foreseeing what world anthropologies will be. Krotz summarized his viewpoints by asking what would be an anthropology different from what it is today? He called the attention to the fact that participants of the symposium represented to some extent some of the most powerful nations of the world. Narotzky synthesized her views by stating that the issue is to understand the relationships between different political agendas in different places and groups and how they relate to epistemology and practices. Archetti argued that the point is not multiplicity per se but that the potentiality of the creativity of the discipline must increase.

The discussion on "New Exchanges and Possibilities in World Anthropologies" continued in the afternoon, this time chaired by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro. This session was also dedicated to closing the conference. Esteban Krotz, Eeva Berglund and Marisol de la Cadena were scheduled to make the first interventions. Krotz thought that it is clear that something new, "world anthropologies" is emerging and that we need to ask what we want to do with it. He also recalled that the world is not divided only in terms of differences but also in terms of inequalities. For him, we need to favor exchange with researchers in different parts of the world and bring a more diversified picture of different ethnographic realities to the classroom. Students need to have a different vision of anthropology. He thought we had to identify which are the critical topics for world anthropologies and ask practical questions such as what would be the materials for world anthropology's courses. Berglund pointed out that a tremendous effort had been accomplished in the past days and that as a result we now hear many things that are or could be related to World Anthropologies, from commercialization and de-academicization to the imagination of social movements. She considered that world anthropologies created a space for a particular kind of modesty yet at the same time gave us confidence on what we do. De la Cadena stressed that we accomplished a lot of dialogue and communication in spite of the great complexity of debates; in our debates, we did not reduce everything to commensurability. She pointed at the recurrence of subjects such as the difference between politics and the political, between multiple times and single time. She considered that we moved from epistemological tolerance to epistemological engagement. She also emphasized the question of how to teach new forms of ethnography. In the final discussions of the session, Archetti remarked how the notion of world anthropologies raises the issue of different kinds of teaching. Vakhtin suggested that a basic list of translations of different national traditions would be an interesting project to develop. Different ideas followed in terms of

practical steps that could foster world anthropologies, from teaching syllabi and transformed training models to new types of collaboration, translation projects, and so forth.

In the final session, participants explored collectively the revisions they expected to make on their papers, based on the four days of intensive debates.

## **Participants**

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (organizer), U of Brasilia  
Arturo Escobar (organizer), U of North Carolina  
Eduardo Archetti, U of Oslo  
Eeva Berglund, independent practitioner  
Arlene Dávila, New York University  
Marisol de la Cadena, U of California, Davis  
Johannes Fabian, U of Amsterdam  
Esteban Krotz, U of Yucatan  
Susana Narotzky, U of Barcelona  
Paul Nchoji Nkwi, African Population Advisory Council  
Michal Osterweil, U of North Carolina  
Po-Ling Josephine Smart, U of Calgary  
Verena Stolcke, Autonomous U of Barcelona  
Sandy Toussaint, U of Western Australia  
Nikolai B. Vakhtin, European U at St. Petersburg  
Otávio Guilherme Cardoso Alves Velho, Federal U of Rio de Janeiro  
Shiv Visvanathan, Center for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi  
Shinji Yamashita, U of Tokyo

Richard Fox (Wenner-Gren Foundation)  
Laurie Obbink (Wenner-Gren Foundation)