Culture, power, place : explorations in critical anthropology/ Edited by Akhil Gupta & James Ferguson; London: Duke University Press, 1997. (1-32 p.)

Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era

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AFTER "PEOPLES AND CULTURES"

It has become usual to assert that the theoretical thread linking twentieth-century American cultural anthropology through its various moods and manifestations has been the concept of culture. In a sense, this is true. Certainly, the Boasian success in establishing the autonomy of the cultural from biological-cum-racial determination set the stage for the most important theoretical developments to follow. But perhaps just as central as the concept of "culture" has been what we might call the concept of "cultures": the idea that a world of human differences is to be conceptualized as a diversity of separate societies, each with its own culture. It was this key conceptual move that made it possible, in the early years of the century, to begin speaking not only of culture but also of "a culture" — a separate, individuated cultural entity, typically associated with "a people," "a tribe," "a nation," and so forth (Stocking 1982:202–3).[1] It was this entity ("a culture") that provided the theoretical basis for cross-cultural comparison, as well as the normal frame for ethnographic description (hence accounts of "Hopi culture," fieldwork "among the Ndembu," and so on). This often implicit conceptualization of the world as a mosaic of separate cultures is what made it possible to bound the ethnographic object and to seek generalization from a multiplicity of separate cases.[2]

The later development of the idea of "a culture" as forming a system of meaning only reinforced this vision of the world.[3] A culture, whether pictured as a semiotic system to be deciphered (Marshall Sahlins) or as a text to be read (Clifford Geertz), required description

and analysis as an integrated totality. As a universe of shared meaning, each culture was radically set apart from other cultures, which had, of course, "their own" meanings, their own holistic logic.

Today, it would be widely agreed that it has become increasingly difficult to conduct anthropological research in these terms. In ethnographic practice, as in theoretical debate, the dominant "peoples and cultures" ideal carries ever less conviction. Ethnographically, much of the best work today no longer fits within the model of a study of "a culture," while the most challenging contemporary fieldwork cannot be contained within the stereotypical "among the so-and-so" mold. What would once have appeared as a logical impossibility — ethnography without the ethnos — has come to appear, to many, perfectly sensible, even necessary (Appadurai 1991). Theoretically, too, a move away from the "peoples and cultures" vision of the world, always a live concern for a small section of anthropologists, appears to have become a leading position within the discipline.

Two otherwise quite different lines of anthropological critique have converged on this point. First, scholars employing political economic approaches have for some time insisted on foregrounding regional and global forms of connectedness, while denying the ideas of separateness and isolation implicit in anthropological ideas of "cultures" (Gunder Frank 1967; Mintz 1985; Wallerstein 1974; Wolf 1982). In Eric Wolf's memorable image, the division of "a totality of interconnected processes" into a set of discrete, homogeneous "billiard balls" (whether cultures, societies, or nations) threatens "to turn names into things" (1982:3, 6). In place of such a world of separate, integrated cultural systems, then, political economy turned the anthropological gaze in the direction of social and economic processes that connected even the most isolated of local settings with a wider world.[4]

More recently, a far-reaching critique of representation has undermined in a rather different way the traditional anthropological confidence in the solidity of its analytic objects, its "cultures" (Marcus and Fischer 1986; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988). Studies of ethnographic writing have revealed the apparent boundedness and coherence of "a culture" as something made rather than found; the "wholeness" of the holistically understood object appears more as a narrative device than as an objectively present empirical truth (Fabian 1990; Marcus 1989a; Thornton 1988). The "polyphony" of ethnographic fieldwork — the many different "voices" present in the actual discussions and dialogues through which ethnographic understand-

ings are constructed — is contrasted with the monophonic authorial voice of the conventional ethnographic monograph. Such critiques have implied that anthropology's "cultures" must be seen as less unitary and more fragmented, their boundedness more of a literary fiction — albeit a "serious fiction" (Clifford 1988:10) — than as some sort of natural fact. If anthropologists working in this vein continue to speak of "culture," in spite of such concerns, it is with a clear awareness of just how problematic a concept this has become. "Culture," as James Clifford laments, remains "a deeply compromised idea I cannot yet do without" (1988:10).[5]

At the level of anthropological theory, then, the turn away from ideas of whole, separate "cultures" would appear to be fairly well established. Yet what such a shift might mean for ethnographic practice, we suggest, is still very much in the process of being worked out.[6] As a way of clarifying the issues at stake and indicating some useful ways in which an ethnography beyond "cultures" might proceed, we will begin by discussing two broad sets of issues that seem especially important to us. The first of these centers on questions of place and the way that culture is spatialized, whereas the second deals with issues raised by relationships between culture and power. These two overarching themes provide the basic organizational structure for the volume, with the first half concentrating on issues of culture and place and the second half highlighting questions of culture and power.

The authors of essays in part 1 aim to raise questions about anthropology's implicit mapping of the world as a series of discrete, territorialized cultures. The idea that "a culture" is naturally the property of a spatially localized people and that the way to study such a culture is to go "there" ("among the so-and-so") has long been part of the unremarked common sense of anthropological practice. Yet, once questioned, this anthropological convention dissolves into a series of challenging and important issues about the contested relations between difference, identity, and place.

At a time when cultural difference is increasingly becoming deterritorialized because of the mass migrations and transnational culture flows of a late capitalist, postcolonial world (as Arjun Appadurai, Ulf Hannerz, and others have pointed out), there is obviously a special interest in understanding the way that questions of identity and cultural difference are spatialized in new ways. The circumstances of an accelerating "global cultural ecumene" (Hannerz 1989; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1988a:3; Appadurai 1990; Foster 1991), of a "world

in creolization" (Hannerz 1987), make the project of exploring the intertwined processes of place making and people making in the complex cultural politics of the nation-state an especially vital part of the contemporary anthropological agenda. Certainly, such real-world developments do much to account for the increased academic visibility of these theoretical issues.

But the larger point is not simply the claim that cultures are no longer (were they ever?) fixed in place. Rather, the point, well acknowledged but worth restating, is that all associations of place, people, and culture are social and historical creations to be explained, not given natural facts. This is as true for the classical style of "peoples and cultures" ethnography as it is for the perhaps more culturally chaotic present. And the implication, animating an enormous amount of more recent work in anthropology and elsewhere,[7] is that whatever associations of place and culture may exist must be taken as problems for anthropological research rather than the given ground that one takes as a point of departure; cultural territorializations (like ethnic and national ones) must be understood as complex and contingent results of ongoing historical and political processes. It is these processes, rather than pregiven cultural-territorial entities, that require anthropological study.

A second sort of critique that has helped to move discussions of difference beyond the idea of "cultures" is highlighted in part 2. This line of criticism raises questions over the classical idea of culture as "order," emphasizing instead questions of partiality, perspective, and — above all — power. The idea of culture as order — standing, like a Hobbesian Leviathan, against the ever present threat of chaos and anomie — is, of course, a very well established one in Western thought. Whether styled as the functionalist glue making social cohesion possible (the Durkheimian reading); the abstract code enabling societal communication (the structuralist one); or the domain of shared, intersubjective meanings that alone make sense of symbolic social action (the Weberian/Geertzian interpretation), concepts of culture have consistently emphasized the shared, the agreed on, and the orderly.

Marxist and feminist revisions in the 1960s and 1970s only partly displaced these earlier visions.[8] By centering questions of domination, both approaches made it possible to ask searching questions about how the cultural "rules of the game" got made, by whom, and for whom. But the idea of culture (and of ideology) as order remained mostly intact, even as that order was politicized.[9]

More recent developments, sometimes (if misleadingly) lumped together under the label "poststructuralism," have implied a more complicated conception. From Foucault (1978, 1980) ethnographers have borrowed the idea that power relations permeate all levels of society, with a field of resistances that is coextensive with them. From such writers as Bourdieu (1977) and de Certeau (1984), they have taken a stress on the active practices of social agents, who never simply enact culture but reinterpret and reappropriate it in their own ways. And from Gramsci (1971) and his more recent interpreters (Raymond Williams [1977] and Stuart Hall [1986] chief among them), they have taken a focus on the partiality, the eternally incomplete nature of hegemony, with its implication of the cultural as a contested, contingent political field, the battlefield in an ongoing "war of position."

For those who seek to make sense of contemporary processes of cultural globalization and transnational culture flows, these theoretical developments raise a rich set of ethnographic possibilities. Rather than opposing autonomous local cultures to a homogenizing movement of cultural globalization, the authors in this volume seek to trace the ways in which dominant cultural forms may be picked up and used — and significantly transformed — in the midst of the field of power relations that links localities to a wider world. The emphasis is on the complex and sometimes ironic political processes through which cultural forms are imposed, invented, reworked, and transformed. The sense of culture as a space of order and agreed-on meanings, meanwhile, undergoes a transformation of its own in the process. Rather than simply a domain of sharing and commonality, culture figures here more as a site of difference and contestation, simultaneously ground and stake of a rich field of cultural-political practices.

Such approaches in anthropology link up at this point, of course, with a large body of more recent work in cultural studies.[10] This area has been one of the most exciting within more current interdisciplinary activity, and the essays in part 2 reveal how much is to be gained from such cross-fertilizations at the interstices of disciplines. It is clear, at the same time, though, that even as they refer to issues raised in cultural studies, the pieces in this volume continue to stress the value of an ethnographic approach. The attention to "reading" cultural products and public representations here does not displace but complements the characteristically anthropological emphasis on daily routines and lived experience.

These two lines of critical thinking about culture that we have sketched here — the line through space and the line through power — are intimately intertwined. In the essays to follow, it is possible to identify three major themes that crosscut the two-part organization of the volume and bring together a set of crucial issues about the interrelations of culture, power, and place: place making, identity, and resistance.

PLACE MAKING

The challenge to spatially territorialized notions of culture leads the contributors of this volume to emphasize processes and practices of place making. Anthropologists have long studied spatial units larger than the "local," and a well-established anthropological tradition exists that has emphasized interrelations and linkages between local settings and larger regional or global structures and processes. Such studies have led to rich and informative accounts that have deepened the collective disciplinary understanding of particular regions or "peoples," enlivening the methods and techniques of fieldwork as traditionally conceived. Too often, however, anthropological approaches to the relation between "the local" and something that lies beyond it (regional, national, international, global) have taken the local as given, without asking how perceptions of locality and community are discursively and historically constructed. In place of the question, How is the local linked to the global or the regional? then, we prefer to start with another question that enables a quite different perspective on the topic: How are understandings of locality, community, and region formed and lived? To answer this question, we must turn away from the commonsense idea that such things as locality and community are simply given or natural and turn toward a focus on social and political processes of place making, conceived less as a matter of "ideas" than of embodied practices that shape identities and enable resistances (see also Bird et al. 1993; Friedland and Boden 1994; Harvey 1993; Massey 1994; Morley and Robins 1995; Probyn 1990; Pratt 1984; and Pred and Watts 1992).

The contributions to this volume suggest just how complicated commonsensical notions of "locality" or "community" actually turn out to be. Liisa Malkki's essay elegantly demonstrates that concepts of locality or community can appear natural and unproblematic because of what she calls "a metaphysics of sedentarism," in which the rooted-ness of peoples and cultures in "their own" territories is taken as the normal state in the taken-for-granted "national order of things." This pervasive, implicit vision of a natural world of "peoples" unproblematically rooted in their proper soils, Malkki argues, has powerfully shaped the ways in which such things as displacement and mobility have been conceptualized by anthropologists and others.

Rather than begin with the premise that locality and community are obvious, that their recognition and affective power flow automatically out of direct sensory experience and face-to-face encounters, our contributors argue that the apparently immediate experience of community is in fact inevitably constituted by a wider set of social and spatial relations. Thus we suggest that it is fundamentally mistaken to conceptualize different kinds of non- or supralocal identities (diasporic, refugee, migrant, national, and so forth) as spatial and temporal extensions of a prior, natural identity rooted in locality and community. Such thinking, we find, often haunts contemporary anthropological approaches to local communities, where "the local" is understood as the original, the centered, the natural, the authentic, and opposed to "the global," understood as new, external, artificially imposed, and inauthentic (Probyn 1990; Young 1990).[11] Such conventional oppositions of local and global often entail, as Doreen Massey (1994) has pointed out, a gendered association of the local with women and with a feminized private, domestic, or natural space. Through such associations, a feminized "local" may come to seem the "natural" basis of home and community, whereas an implicitly masculine "global" is cast as an artificial intrusion on it (Massey 1994:9–10). Only by challenging such deeply entrenched thinking does it become possible for an anthropological exploration of "the local" to proceed without succumbing to a nostalgia for origins.

Mary Crain's essay is a fine example of such a critical approach to "the local." The identity of a new, democratic Spain, she argues, involves a nostalgia for rurality in which the reinvention of regional traditions plays a critical role. One such "local" religious pilgrimage, to the Virgin of El Rocío, has been radically transformed by its incorporation as a nostalgic point of reference in a new "regional-national" narrative. No longer of only "local" interest, the pilgrimage today forms a spectacle in which hundreds of tourists, representatives of the media broadcasting the event live to a worldwide audience, and trendy urban elites all participate. Faced with the transformation of "their" pilgrimage by diverse regional, national, and transnational recon-

structions of locality, villagers in the region have reconfigured the event by shifting the emphasis from the shrine of the Virgin itself to the locations traversed in undergoing the pilgrimage. In so doing, a particularly brazen subgroup of these villagers further distinguish their experience of the pilgrimage from that of the visiting urban *yupeez* who would join them by referring to themselves as "Indians" and to the *yupeez* as "cowboys." To be a "local" in this Andalusian *romería* (pilgrimage) is thus to possess an identity shaped by contestations within the nationalist recuperation of the colorful and diverse regional traditions that make up Spain, transnational representations of the exotic cult of the Virgin of El Rocío, the desire of urbanites to experience a vanishing authentic rurality characterized by knowable communities, and the reappropriation of a frontier narrative imported from Hollywood in which the more rebellious, youthful villagers cast themselves as "Indians" in opposition to "cowboys." This case is an excellent ethnographic demonstration of just how far the meanings of "locality" and "community" are from being self-evident.

In her fascinating and provocative essay, Kristin Koptiuch provides an example of how a neighborhood, a Puerto Rican barrio in North Philadelphia, has been remade as a "third world" imperial frontier by transnational and global forces. The urban ghetto, depopulated by an exodus of the middle class, disciplined by the forces of state repression, saddled by cutbacks in federal monies, and facing increasing unemployment as a result of post-Fordist globalization of production, is transformed into a unique "locality," a "third world at home." Koptiuch points out that the "third world" is "a *name,* a representation, not a place" that can be geographically mapped as distinct from the "first world." The irony is that this place, made by struggles waged by forces of transnational capital, the state, and the residents of the barrio, then becomes a site for ethnographic constructions of "authentic" ways of life, to be recorded by folklorists. By pointing to anthropologists' and reporters' complicity in constructing representations of authentic localities (which thereby become suitable places to do "fieldwork"), Koptiuch highlights the fact that the establishment of spatial meanings — the making of spaces into places — is always implicated in hegemonic configurations of power. Even when displaying continuity with older patterns of urban poverty, the sweatshops, racism, homelessness, gang warfare, unemployment, and so forth of the present are inserted into a new series of global transformations that have altered their relationship with the structures and discourses of

domination and exploitation. Thus, Koptiuch's essay forces us to be vigilant about the historicity of constructions of locality and community, a theme to which other articles in this volume have much to contribute as well.

Like Crain and Koptiuch, John Durham Peters focuses on the spatially dispersed forces — regional, national, and transnational — that mediate the experience of "knowable communities." Drawing imaginatively on his field of media studies and communication theory, Peters argues that one way to characterize modernity is to see it as the condition of "bifocality," in which social actors simultaneously experience the local and the global, possessing both "near-sight" and "farsight." Bifocality is made possible by processes of social representation that first became widespread in the eighteenth century: newspapers, novels, statistics, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and panoramas. Peters points out that both novels and statistics represent invisible social totalities, the one by narrative, the other by aggregation. The irony is that these techniques of social representation in the mass media portray the "global" as a coherent and graspable vision, whereas the "local" environment is experienced fleetingly and incoherently through the senses: our perception of fair weather as indicated by blue skies is undercut by the knowledge disseminated on television that the weather satellite "sees" a storm. In this way, the global circulation of capital, signs, bodies, and commodities actively configures the experience of locality itself rather than imposing itself from the "outside" as a source of confinement or constraint. Like Koptiuch, Peters criticizes the penchant in ethnographic work to prize "the local," suggesting that the romance of spatial confinement was that it contrasted "the native's" supposed enchantment, tradition, culture, and simplicity with the ethnographer's spatial mobility, which stood for enlightenment, modernity, science, and development.

It is not surprising, then, that there is so little ethnographic work on the mass media. The mass media violate the notion that places are containers of integrated cultures: the words and images of mass media travel to you rather than you having to travel to them; they are commonly understood to be alienated discourse, not the expression of the consciousness and worldview of a collective "people" seen as originating authors; and they are mediated by the market, not rooted in place, tradition, or locality. Peters's essay profoundly upsets the commonsensical notions that "nearsightedness" characterizes "the local" and that the way to understand the relation of "local" to "global" is one of

linkage, mediation, or articulation. He instead suggests such concepts as configuration, constitution, construction. and perhaps even emanation: the person who interprets blue skies through the satellite map represented on the television screen reverses the commonsensical reliance on sensory perception and the ontological imperative of presence. The "native's point of view" on even the most local of happenings may be as much formed by the mass media as by immediate sensory perception, because the mass media may form an integral or, better still, constitutive part of the lived experience of face-to-face communities.[12]

While Crain, Koptiuch, and Peters destabilize the spatial certainties inherent in notions of "locality" and "community," George Bisharat, Karen Leonard, and Malkki underscore the contingent historicity of the imagining of place by migrants and refugees. Bisharat demonstrates how the longing for "home" has changed for Palestinian refugees living in camps in the West Bank. Whereas return was previously conceived concretely in terms of a return to specific villages and particular dwellings, the rhetoric of Palestinian refugees has shifted over time toward an emphasis on a collective national return to "the homeland" conceived more abstractly. The society they had to leave behind was one in which attachment to land and to villages of origin, identified by distinctive patterns of speech and intonation, was unusually strong. People continued to be identified into the next generation by "their" villages, and even today many families retain keys to homes that have long since been destroyed by the occupation. As the chances of return became more remote, memories of particular homes were displaced by the memory of the "homeland," an intensely romanticized place sometimes likened to a lost lover. The imagery of exile portrayed the alliance of Palestinian life with the land, with earth and the elements, while seeing the occupation as a perversion of nature and a deviation from history. Bisharat focuses not merely on the connections between enforced displacement and place making in the form of imagining "home" and "homeland" but also poignantly shows how memory itself is exiled and shaken loose as its physical embodiments are erased: when children of refugees are finally allowed to visit the villages that have been enshrined in their parents' memories, they see just shrubs and trees, the villages and homes that once stood there having been systematically removed. In exile, there thus occurs a displacement of community, once understood as being rooted in particular localities, to the level of the nation. The connec-

tion of the idea of "community" to that of "locality" — a link that was once so strong — has now been sundered by the dual forces of memory and displacement.

Some of the same processes linking memory and refuge are found in Malkki's discussion of Hutu refugees from Burundi who now live in exile in Tanzania. She shows how two very different strategies of place making are employed by refugees living in two different contexts. Those living in refugee camps continued to see their displacement as a temporary condition, longing for a return to the "homeland" conceived as a moral as well as a geographical location. In contrast, those who lived in the town had made a new home in Kigoma and no longer saw themselves as a "community in exile." Memory and history played very different roles for these two groups. For the dwellers of the refugee camp, the "homeland" as a location was tied to their identity as a community of displaced people, a nation in exile: for the town dwellers, Burundi was a geographical location but not one that organized their sense of community in Tanzania. Where the camp refugees countered the "sedentarist metaphysics" that dominates Western scholarship with a nationalist metaphysics of their own, locating "the real homeland" in the moral trajectory of a displaced nation, the town refugees subverted "rooting" assumptions even more profoundly by cannily evading or manipulating every national, ethnic, or religious identity that might presume to capture them.

In her article on the superimposition of "Asian" landscapes on rural California by immigrant Japanese and Indian agricultural workers, Leonard provides a vivid demonstration of how the imaginative uses of memory enable people to construct localities and communities. Showing how some of these immigrants remade the geography of California's agricultural regions by faithfully overlaying the image of colonial Punjab on the Sacramento Valley, or that of the three kingdoms of third-century China on the Imperial Valley, paradoxically serves to highlight less the continuity of "community" and more its invention. What is striking about this seemingly wholesale "imposition" of an alien landscape is not its lack of inventiveness but rather the sheer audacity — one might even say, the excessiveness — of its ingenuity. How else could one account for a group of Punjabi men, mostly Sikh and Muslim, who married Catholic Mexican or Mexican American women because both partners could enter "Brown" where the form for obtaining the marriage license asked about "race" and thus not violate California's miscegenation laws; whose descendants spoke Span-

ish and English, practiced Catholicism, and referred to themselves as "Hindu"; whose ashes, if Sikh, were scattered into either the "holy waters" of the Salton Sea or the Pacific Ocean and who, if Muslim, lie buried in "Hindu plots" in rural California cemeteries; who looked out over the Sacramento Valley and saw a landscape *identical* to their beloved Punjabi homeland? Prevented from owning land by California's Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920, these men created representations of their locales and communities that were entirely devoid of the powerful Anglos who owned the land on which they farmed as well as the industries that supplied most of the input to and absorbed the output from agriculture. Imagining their new surroundings through the memories of their homelands was not merely a means to wrap a cloak of familiarity around a new landscape and thereby to reattain an aura of mastery over the land but also a means to construct hybridized, rhizomatic identities for their community of Indian–Mexican American families. Whereas earlier authors had destabilized "locality" by drawing attention to the role of farsightedness, or transnational and global forces, Leonard does so by focusing on the artful instabilities of memory and invention (see also essays in Boyarin 1994).

IDENTITY

Leonard's essay leads us to the second important theme of this collection, namely, the relationship between constructions of "locality" and "community," on the one hand, and identity, on the other. One of the reasons for the multidisciplinary explosion of writing on the subject of "identity" in the last few years (Schiller 1994) is that very different kinds of political and analytic projects can be advanced under this rubric. Although the interest in identity is often assumed to emanate from a poststructuralist emphasis on the multiple, crosscutting, and shifting basis of self-representation, the idea of identity itself is perfectly compatible with theoretical projects that move in a quite different direction. Indeed, discussions of identity, it seems to us, all too easily fall into the model of possession and ownership embodied in discourses about the sovereign subject: an identity is something that one "has" and can manipulate, that one can "choose"; or, inversely, it is something that acts as a source of "constraint" on the individual, as an ascribed rather than a chosen feature of life. In both cases, the individual subject is taken as a pregiven entity, identities as so many masks or cages it may inhabit. Such positions are perfectly compatible

with the observation that identities (like the contents of "cultures" themselves) are historically contingent. But what is missing from such a conception is the crucial insight that the subject is not simply affected by changing schemes of categorization and discourses of difference but is actually constituted or interpellated by them. As Stuart Hall has suggested (cited in Watts 1992), rather than posit an essential temporal stability and continuity of the subject, we might better conceive of identity as a "meeting point" — a point of suture or temporary identification — that constitutes and re-forms the subject so as to enable that subject to act (see also Diprose and Ferrell 1991). It is in this way that we bring together identity and subject formation with the question of agency.

Our goal here is not to offer an introduction to the voluminous literature on the politics of identity but to highlight the contribution of this volume to understanding the specific relationship between place making and identity (Keith and Pile 1993). There is a tension between commonsensical notions of "rooted" localities and communities that imply a primordial and essential group identity and notions of identity which rely on the sovereign individual subject and which imply that it is something nonessential, an instrumental and strategic choice made by preconstituted (often styled "rational") social actors. This division has proved to be an enduring and central debate in the discussion of ethnicity. Perhaps the very terms within which this discussion proceeds needs to be abandoned. By stressing that place making always involves a construction, rather than merely a discovery, of difference, the authors of the essays here emphasize that identity neither "grows out" of rooted communities nor is a thing that can be possessed or owned by individual or collective social actors. It is, instead, a mobile, often unstable relation of difference.

Identity and alterity are therefore produced simultaneously in the formation of "locality" and "community." "Community" is never simply the recognition of cultural similarity or social contiguity but a categorical identity that is premised on various forms of exclusion and constructions of otherness. This fact is absolutely central to the question of who or what it is that "has" such identities (a group? an individual?), for it is precisely through processes of exclusion and othering that both collective and individual subjects are formed. With respect to locality as well, at issue is not simply that one is located in a certain place but that the particular place is set apart from and opposed to other places. The "global" relations that we have argued are constitu-

tive of locality are therefore centrally involved in the production of "local" identities too. As the essays in this volume demonstrate, the construction of difference is neither a matter of recognizing an already present commonality nor of inventing an "identity" out of whole cloth but an effect of structural relations of power and inequality. Questions of identity therefore demonstrate with special clarity the intertwining of place and power in the conceptualization of "culture." Rather than following straightforwardly from sharing the "same" culture, community, or place, identity emerges as a continually contested domain.

Furthermore, as Michael Watts (1992) reminds us, efforts to forge identities are not always successful. Because of the widespread tendency to take identities as self-evident or automatic, not enough scholarly attention has been paid to the frequent failure of projects that seek to map the construction of selves onto the creation of territorial or other sorts of "communities." In other words, the question of identity has often been approached in a manner that tends to diminish the role of processes of legitimation and authentication. Restoring these concerns to the heart of the discussion of identity would enable us to ask not only why certain kinds of identities become salient at particular historical moments but also why some marks of distinction and difference do not form the basis of an identity.

Although all the essays in this volume speak to the various relations of difference and inequality that shape the construction of identities, those most centrally concerned with it are by John Borneman, James Ferguson, and Akhil Gupta. In his essay, Borneman skillfully demonstrates that the same historical event may have very different outcomes for the construction of national identities by comparing what were formerly East Berlin and West Berlin. The two German states formed after the Second World War not only had to distance themselves from the Nazi regime but each also had to construct itself as being different from and superior to the other. The West German state, while periodizing Fascism narrowly as the time between 1933 and 1945, adopted all the norms of citizenship of the Nazi regime. "Belonging" came to be defined through blood ties encoded in the notion of "German descent." Thus immigrants who had become culturally or linguistically "German" found themselves legally excluded from citizenship, even when, as with Turkish workers, they obtained rights of permanent residence, whereas people of "German descent" who had settled anywhere in the world in the past two hundred years were

eligible to join the national "community." By contrast, official East German historiography traced Nazism to the emergence of capitalism after the German defeat of 1918. Citizenship was open to anyone who came from a socialist state: membership in the national community was defined in terms of class identity and socialist pedigree. The West German state constructed a new national identity for its citizens not by emphasizing descent (which could not serve to distinguish West German nationality from East German) but by emplotting the currency reform of 1948 and postwar prosperity as a clean break with the Nazi past. This national narrative found resonance in individual lives through automobile ownership and foreign travel, two symbols that gave concrete form to national prosperity for millions of citizens. By contrast, the East German state was unable, through its rhetoric of people, state, and party, to offer a national narrative that linked up with individual lives. Women in East Germany found socially valued employment outside the home in large numbers, but no parallel domain existed in which men could construct an identity that compared favorably with their counterparts in West Germany. Instead of a close fit, there was an ironic distancing, a dislocation, between individual identities and state narratives. Here, then, is an example of what Watts (1992:124) has termed an "identity failure," as the efforts of the nation-state to construct a national community by emphasizing its difference (and superiority) from West Germany ended up being subverted by citizens' ironic interpretations that emphasized the difference between their inferior Trabants ("sounds like a lawnmower, moves like a racing pasteboard") and the Mazdas, Volkswagens, and Volvos of their capitalist neighbors.

Like Borneman, Ferguson too conceptualizes identity as a relation of difference. In the Zambian case that he examines, however, the identity issues concern not two national communities but the mutually determining and antagonistic relations between "town" and "country." The "country" was employed first by nationalists and later by postcolonial regimes as an imagined locus of purity, cooperation, sharing, and neighborliness. The purported opposition of the values of the countryside with those of the city served both to inspire urban workers to act in the "national interest" and to discipline them. These urban workers included people who displayed a "cosmopolitan" style which asserted distance from rural kin and which indicated a desire to remain in the city after retirement and others who adhered to a "localist" style in which workers invested heavily, both financially and emo-

tionally, in maintaining links with the "home" village, with the intention of moving back after retirement. Thus, discourses about rurality in the urban political arena found echoes in the lives of workers in the Copperbelt. But the enormous economic decline of the 1980s changed the significance and meaning of the opposition between rural and urban. In public discourse, the decline came to be explained by an inwardly directed moral critique that did not spare even the village as a sanctified place. The country lost its moral character and came to be seen as an increasingly corrupt place. "Cosmopolitan" workers who never dreamt of going back to their "home" villages found they were forced to do so by economic pressures. On their return, they were confronted by hostile kin whom they had long ignored. More localist workers, those who had all along kept an eye on the village "home," might have been expected to benefit from this turn of events. But they too found themselves in a difficult spot. For as these localist workers were being squeezed between the expectations of their rural kin (themselves suffering through economic hard times) and their own shrinking real wages, rural villagers in general (previously idealized by such rurally oriented urbanites for their generosity and humanity) came to be perceived as increasingly grasping and demanding. Both sorts of urban workers, therefore, though for different reasons, began to resent the village as a selfish and sinister place. The country, long an imagined locus of goodness and purity ("the real Zambia"), became increasingly the site of a decidedly unromantic social antagonism. Ferguson demonstrates how transformations in global political economy work their way into changing conceptions of place, which are, in turn, fundamental to the construction of identities. In the period before the economic collapse, different sets of workers — cosmopolitans and localists — maintained contrasting urban identities that depended on constructions of community in which the villagers "at home" played roles of other and ally, respectively. These positions of disengagement and affiliation were made possible by a buoyant economy. When conditions changed significantly during the eighties, the particular binary of cosmopolitanism and localism was reconfigured, as both sets of workers, for different reasons, found their relationships with "the village" to be fundamentally transformed. National narratives and individual identities that were both anchored in a common vision of the countryside collapsed, and the meaning of "the village" as a place changed dramatically.

In a manner analogous to Ferguson's historicization of images of

the countryside, Gupta's contribution to this volume situates the formation of national identities within the macrologies of decolonization and late capitalism. By comparing the formation of national identities with those provided by such forms of transnational community as the Nonaligned Movement and the European Community, Gupta focuses on the role of forms of legitimation and forces of spatial organization that make certain identities viable in the contemporary world. Discussions of nationalism often proceed by focusing almost entirely on the historical and cultural practices of place making within a given territory. Yet, in so doing, they leave open the larger question of why nation-states have become the dominant form of organizing space in the contemporary world as well as what challenges other forms of imagining community and constructing identity — transnational, international, or subnational — might offer nationalism at the present time. Gupta emphasizes not only that processes of place making are always contested and unstable but also that relations between places are continuously shifting as a result of the political and economic reorganization of space in the world system. The legitimation and authentication of national identities, therefore, can be understood by opposing it both to other national identities and to commitments and affiliations with other communities that have an altogether different basis of spatial organization. In other words, national identities need to be understood against subnational ones and against supranational identities — and perhaps even against forms of imagining community that are not territorially based.

RESISTANCE

The relation between identity and place illuminates processes of subject construction, which brings us to the third major theme of this collection, namely, resistance. So far, we have emphasized how place making involves a play of differences. The structures of feeling that enable meaningful relationships with particular locales, constituted and experienced in a particular manner, necessarily include the marking of "self" and "other" through identification with larger collectivities. To be part of a community is to be positioned as a particular kind of subject, similar to others within the community in some crucial respects and different from those who are excluded from it. In insisting that these identities are not "freely" chosen but overdetermined by structural location and that their durability and stability are not to

be taken for granted but open to contestation and reformulation, we wish to draw attention to the crucial role played by resistance.

Few concepts in the recent past have proved to be as popular — and as elusive — as has "resistance" (see especially the thoughtful essays by Sherry Ortner [1995], Lila Abu-Lughod [1990], and Martha Kaplan and John Kelly [1994]), and it is certainly not our intention here to rehearse the multitudinous ways in which the term has been overused. We propose to stick closely to the Foucauldian sense of the term in two essential regards.

First, we do not propose to make resistance the property of a sovereign subject who is either transcendental with respect to the course of history or evolving within it (Foucault 1980:117). Rather, the task is to understand that form of power "which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity . . . a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault 1983a:212; see also Althusser 1971). These themes of being attached or fastened to identity will be particularly crucial for our purposes.

Second, we wish to underline the conjunctural and strategic aspects of resistance: affixed or indexed not to particular acts, events, or results — or even to the attainment, development, or secure occupancy of a state of consciousness — but to an ongoing struggle with the ever changing deployment of strategies of power.[13] Power, for Foucault, was not a substance one might have or an essential force one might resist but "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (1978:93). Resistance, in this conception, can have meaning only in relation to such a strategic assessment. One cannot decide whether something is or is not resistance in absolute terms; resistance can exist only in relation to a "strategy of power," and such strategies are shifting, mobile, and multiple. Thus, as Foucault insisted of discourses (1978:101–2): "There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy: they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy." Practices that are resistant to a particular strategy of power are thus never innocent of or outside power, for they are always capable of being tactically appropriated and redeployed within another strategy of power, always at risk of slipping from resistance against one strategy of power into complicity with another. It is a theoretical necessity, then, and not only an unfortunate empirical tendency, that resistance should time and again be linked with processes of co-optation, complicity, and the ironic recycling of former points of resistance within new strategies of power.[14]

Rather than conceptualize resistance in a disembodied duel with power, we would like to emphasize a little-noted aspect of it, which clarifies the connection with place making and identity. That is, we find it useful to think of resistance as an experience that constructs and reconstructs the identity of subjects.[15] As a form of experience, resistance's effects on the identity of subjects may be profoundly transformative. But it may equally result in reconfirming or strengthening existing identities, ironically contributing to maintaining the status quo. In both cases, however, resistance produces not simply tactical success or failure but a formative effect on the resisting subject. Of experience, Foucault once said: "An experience is something you come out of changed" (1991:27), and, "An experience is neither true nor false: it is always a fiction, something constructed, which exists only after it has been made, not before; it isn't something that is 'true' but it has been a reality" (36).

Reading "resistance" for "experience" in the quote above helps one to see how resistance may shape the identity of subjects despite its conjunctural character: it is that which changes subjects, which defines the way in which they are subject to someone else and the manner in which they come to be tied to their own identities through self-knowledge. However, the reconstruction of subjects in each of the two senses requires the retrospective recovery of "experience" — and this brings us to processes and modes of representation. Bisharat's contribution to this volume is a fine example of how the experience of exile, as represented in the longing for a national homeland, profoundly altered the specific relationship that Palestinian refugees had with "their" villages. Resistance to occupation thus reconfirmed and maintained national identity, deepening and naturalizing that identity but simultaneously transforming it.

As Foucault emphasized, it is important that experience, at least to some extent, be connectable to a "collective practice" so that others can "cross paths with it or retrace it" (1991:38–40). So much is implicit in the notion that experience transforms identities, for, as we

have seen, identities can be understood only as relations of difference with others who are seen as categorical entities. For the experience of resistance to alter the identity of subjects, therefore, it has to be connectable to some form of collective practice. It is here that the role of representation looms large. Representations of resistance play a crucial part in the legitimation struggles that take place around the authentication of identities. If one of the modes of operation of power is to attach identities to subjects, to tie subjects to their own identities through self-knowledge, then resistance serves to reshape subjects by untying or untidying that relationship. Resistances, as Foucault insisted, "produce cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds. Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities" (1978:96).

This conception of resistance as "fracturing unities and effecting regroupings," "furrowing across individuals themselves," and "travers[ing] . . . individual unities" allows us to see how it is possible for resistance, conceived as an experience, to be so transformative. Indeed, it allows us to understand the possibility of very radical forms of experience, which may break apart the subject, reconfiguring it so fundamentally that what emerges from it cannot even be spoken of as "the same" subject (Foucault 1991:46–49).[16] Here we see that experience, like identity, is not something that the sovereign subject "has"; rather, the subject itself must be conceived as the unstable and often unpredictable outcome of experience.[17] Parallel to the notion of "identity failures," therefore, lies the concept of the discontinuity of the subject, its "explosion" through transformative experience into something radically other. Such "limit experiences," moments of revolutionary upheaval and reconstitution of the subject, enable us to see the limitations of attempts to historicize the subject that, even while succeeding in undermining notions of the transcendental or preconfigured subject, nevertheless fail to break with a continuist narrative of identity.[18] In such cases, resistance does not merely reconfigure the relationship of subjects to their identities but may sunder that relationship entirely. The strategic struggle between resistance and power

then "shifts ground," happens in a different place, in a new configuration of "community" and "identity."

Of course, such fundamental upheavals of subject constitution are relatively rare; nonetheless, they enable us to problematize what is usually taken for granted, namely, that subjects "naturally" have continuous histories and biographies whose narrativization poses analytical problems but whose constitution is largely self-evident. The possibility of the "explosion" of the subject thus underlines the contingency of continuity in identity. Just as strong and "successful" identities exist within a field of possible and actual "identity failures," so do radical transformations of the subject exist in a field of possible and actual failed transformations. And it is these "transformation failures" that make possible the continuous, apparently "given" identities that social actors are able to take for granted (most of the time).[19]

The contributions of Rosemary Coombe, Lisa Rofel, and Richard Maddox illustrate this intertwining of place making, identity, and resistance especially well. Coombe demonstrates the dialectics of struggle between tactics of power and tactics of appropriation within regimes of signification, considering demonic rumors spread by marginalized populations about the trademarks of transnational corporations. Reinvesting faceless and placeless corporate powers with narratives of origin, demonic rumors situate such powers in the local specificities of relations of hegemony and exploitation. It is significant that these struggles take place around the meaning and consumption of signs, an increasingly important site of resistance in late capitalism. Coombe demonstrates the point with a series of telling examples. For instance, she shows how Procter & Gamble was forced to abandon its 134-year-old man-in-the-moon logo when the company found itself unable, despite a multimillion-dollar campaign, to counter the rumor that the man was actually the figure of the devil. The most fascinating examples of rumor as resistance, however, are those that circulate in African American communities with regard to the role of the Ku Klux Klan in products marketed to African Americans. The rumor that Church's Fried Chicken had tainted their chicken recipe to sterilize black men is one such instance. Coombe offers a historically sensitive reading of this rumor, showing how the entire history of southern race relations is "condensed" in the fear that black men's sexuality should be so targeted. In a similar manner, a Korean American company called Troop Sport, which marketed military clothing to young black

men, also found itself out of business when a rumor began to circulate that it was secretly operated by the Ku Klux Klan. Coombe suggests that the reason rumor, in particular, flourishes in the hyperreal world of late capitalism is that it deploys the same tactics of anonymity, dearth of meaning, excess of fascination, fleetingness, and placelessness as the commercial powers that it attacks. Placelessness and pervasiveness may be key properties of corporate capital, but they become features of cultural subversion as well. Coombe's essay is another fine demonstration of how one might conduct an analysis of the conjunctural and tactical nature of resistance, its mobility and imbrication in strategies of power, and its place in an era in which signs increasingly replace products as sites of fetishism.

In her essay Rofel cautions against universalizing the experience of modernity (and, by extension, that of postmodernity) by extrapolating from the presence of certain modernist spatial practices and styles of architecture and from the fact of incorporation in a global political economy. In the silk factories of Hangzhou, the dictates of scientific management and efficiency led to a spatial layout and design that closely matches those found in other "global" factories. Intended to produce a certain kind of subjectivity, modes of spatial dispersion and discipline are resisted by workers who draw on their memory of previous spatial arrangements. Rofel shows subtle but significant differences in the techniques of resistance used by older workers, who remember what it meant to be a skilled silk worker in the days after liberation; by "radical" workers who came of age during the Cultural Revolution, when leaving one's work site was an indication of revolutionary fervor; and by younger workers, mostly women from the countryside, who make "mistakes" that cause them to be labeled "slow" and "dull witted" by management. Layers of memories across generations thus mediate the microtechniques of power implicit in the spatial positionings of the "modern" factory. As new dominant cultural narratives attempt to reshape subjectivities, from the extremes of the Cultural Revolution to the China that will assume a leadership role in the global economy, quite radical redefinitions of "community" and "identity" have taken place. Rofel's achievement is to interpret these changes initiated by state projects, while being sensitive to the manner in which they have been altered or "consumed" by resisting subjects.

Maddox deals with a similar question. The "consumption" of hegemonic projects, he shows, takes a variety of forms. Maddox makes a well-articulated plea not to equate crudely different kinds of actions

under the rubric of "resistance" but to search for a variety of terms that would do justice to the diversity of acts that are usually labeled "resistance." His essay is especially valuable in that it brings the location of the author into the foreground of the analysis. Maddox argues that those of us who are most interested in analyzing other people's modes of resistance often fail to situate ourselves more fully within multinationalized academic institutions that largely function to reproduce relations of inequality in advanced capitalist societies. Identifying with other people's struggles may be a "symptom of an alienating and repressive sublimation" that "tend[s] to locate the truly critical sites of struggle elsewhere." Maddox therefore raises some politically and ethically disturbing questions that undermine a particular mode of claiming identity that is often employed by anthropologists — that is, by affirming or asserting solidarity with subaltern others. The representation of resistance may make that experience available for other people to "cross paths with it or retrace it," as Foucault claims (1991:40), but quite apart from the question of who those other people are among whom anthropological representations circulate is the larger question of the relationship such representations may have with the structural inequalities that shape the identities of anthropologists and their subjects.

Maddox touches on the final issue we wish to treat here: the question of the social and political location of anthropologists in relation to questions of culture, power, and place. Anthropologists have become increasingly aware that ethnographic representations are not simply "about" such social processes as place making and people making but are at the same time actively involved in such constructions. As a great deal of anthropological work has been concerned to show, ethnographies participate, willy-nilly, in the politics of representation and social construction that they also aim to describe.[20] When this observation is combined with a recognition of the situatedness of all knowledge — a readiness to acknowledge that no "god's-eye view" exists and that every view is a view "from somewhere" (Haraway 1991b) — it becomes clear that the question of the location from which anthropological knowledge is constructed must be a central one.

We are wary, however, of an anthropological tendency (which we have observed both in some of the scholarly literature and, perhaps more often, in informal discussions) to generalize too easily about the location of "the" anthropologist. We have become used to a kind of

anguished self-consciousness surrounding this issue. How can "we" anthropologists presume to speak for "them," our informants? Is not "our" knowledge of "them" inevitably shaped by colonial and neo-colonial power relations that render the whole enterprise suspect? How can "our" anthropological mission of understanding "others" proceed without falling into the familiar traps of exoticization, primitivism, and orientalism? What disturbs us in this line of thinking is not so much that it is misplaced as that it is insufficiently specific. For the whole discussion proceeds as if all anthropologists occupy the same social location — implicitly that of a white, middle-class, Western (often North American) academic — and as if all are equally preoccupied with the liberal political project of sympathetically presenting otherness to "our own" Western society. What this ignores are the significant internal differences that fracture such a complacent anthropological "we." We have in mind here two sorts of differences, which are closely related to each other but analytically separable.

First, and most obvious, by no means all anthropologists today occupy the white, Western "we" position that this discourse ascribes to them. As we argue in the following essay, the "we" versus "they" that frames much contemporary debate on the location of "the" anthropologist ignores this fact and rests on an unproblematized assumption of a Western "we," located "here," and a Third World "they," located "there." Such assumptions fail to consider not only the ambiguous position of Third World anthropologists but also the position of anthropologists who are located within "the West" but are nevertheless in various ways left out of, or marginalized by, the idea of a unitary Western "we" (for example, minorities, women, people of working-class background, and anthropologists in the West's internal periphery, such as Eastern and Southern Europe).

Second, if ethnographic practice inevitably participates in the politics of representation, as has often been suggested, then the location of "the" anthropologist must be specified in relation to practical political commitments as well. Taking this point seriously further fragments the fiction of a single, undifferentiated location for "the" anthropologist, because anthropologists do not share a unitary political project. Indeed, different anthropologists occupy quite different political locations and seek to advance diverse and often conflicting political agendas. Taking ethnographic practice as a form of political practice means recognizing a variety of different ways in which anthropological representations may be engaged with questions of culture

and power, place making and people making, resistance and subjectivity. Such considerations do not mean that discussions of reflexivity and anthropological positioning are unnecessary but on the contrary that they must be pursued much more seriously and less abstractly, in relation to concrete anthropological practices and specific forms of political engagement.

ETHNOGRAPHY AND ITS POSSIBILITIES

We suggested at the start of this essay that a widespread sense of crisis in the discipline of anthropology was linked to fundamental challenges raised in more recent years to dominant conceptions of culture, power, and place. We also observed that the demise of a certain "peoples and cultures" paradigm had left in its wake a host of thorny and unresolved problems for ethnographic practice, which contemporary anthropologists are dealing with in various ways. If one thing seems clear in the present disorderly theoretical moment, it is that there will be no single successor paradigm to "peoples and cultures"; ethnographic work will continue to proceed as it has, along a number of different methodological lines and in diverse theoretical directions. In this context, a collection such as this may contribute the most simply by making available concrete illustrations of some of the existing theoretical directions that ethnographic work has been exploring and some of the useful methodological lines along which it has been possible for an anthropology "after peoples and cultures" to proceed. Such an anthropology cannot confine itself to the conventional ethnographic method of participant observation, as it comes to grips with transnational institutions and processes (Borneman, Gupta, Koptiuch), with such "placeless" phenomena as the mass media (Peters, Coombe), with displaced people such as refugees and immigrants (Bisharat, Leonard, Malkki), with regional or spatial identities (Ferguson, Rofel, Crain), and with self-reflective concerns and questions (Maddox). But neither can it afford to give up anthropology's traditional attention to the close observation of particular lives in particular places. Rather, these essays suggest that it is not necessary to choose between an unreconstructed commitment to traditional fieldwork, on the one hand, and more macroscopic or textual approaches, on the other. Creatively eclectic methodological strategies can allow anthropological tools originally developed for the study of "local communities" to contribute to the project of critically interrogating the very

meaning of "locality" and "community" (Gupta and Ferguson in press and Hastrup and Olwig in press).

We have spoken of these essays as examples of "critical anthropology," but we emphasize that we do not conceive of a critical anthropology as a negative or reactive project. On the contrary, questioning assumptions and deeply entrenched habits of thought is important, for us, not as an end in itself but because doing so enables different kinds of ethnographic work to go forward. The essays in this volume are presented, then, in a positive spirit, one that seeks to explore some of the possibilities for ethnographic work that have sprung up in the wake of two decades of critique.

A time of great uncertainty for anthropology, we suggest that this time is also one of enormous possibilities. The contours of ethnography's emerging landscape are perhaps only beginning to be discernible. But politically important and theoretically challenging opportunities for ethnographic work are surely all around us. The issues that we have discussed here — issues of space and its social construction, of collective identity and its contestations, of subject formation and practices of resistance, of the location of anthropologists and anthropology in the politics of place and culture — all require studying in an ethnographic spirit, and there is much to be done. If we are working in a time when the ground seems to be shifting beneath our feet (as Foucault once suggested), the challenge remains to make creative and usable mappings of the changed terrain and to do what ethnographers have always done: try to find our feet in a strange new world.

NOTES

1 The identification and valorization of distinct "peoples," "tribes," and "nations" are, of course, linked to celebrations of the "folk" that have emerged from nineteenth-century European romanticism, as well as to various projects of building and legitimating European nation-states, all of which undoubtedly predate the anthropological turn to "cultures" (which George Stocking Jr. [1982:202–3] traces to Franz Boas). But while the historical links between the idea of "a culture" and the hegemonic form of the nation-state are strong and important (as Roger Rouse [personal communication] has pointed out), the causal links and temporal sequences are complex and not easily summarized. A proper treatment of this issue would require a major digression into nine-

teenth- and early-twentieth-century intellectual history, which we will not pursue in this brief introduction.

2 The idea of culture is, of course, much less elaborated in British social anthropology. Ideas of "society" and "social structure" in the British tradition, however, do much of the same work as the American idea of "a culture," effectively segmenting the world into an array of discrete and comparable "societies" or "social systems."

3 Indeed, earlier conceptions of culture were often a good deal less committed to the idea of separate, bounded entities than are more recent ones. As Wolf (1982:13) points out, the early-twentieth-century diffusionists, for all their faults, were quite attentive to the connectedness and nonboundedness of cultures. The idea of cultures as so many separate "cases," each with its own internal logic, however, seems to have been well established by the time Ruth Benedict penned her authoritative synthesis *Patterns of Culture* (1934). Later "symbolic anthropology" conceptions of culture as a semiotic system gave only more sophisticated theoretical elaboration to a "peoples and cultures" vision that was already quite firmly in place.

4 It has been justly observed (Ortner 1984:142–43; Marcus and Fischer 1986:85; Hannerz 1987; Clifford 1986a) that political economy approaches such as Wolf's have generally slighted questions of meaning and of cultural difference, tending to give central place to social and economic processes without providing an adequate account of the cultural. Wolf himself noted that in the wake of political economic critique, "we . . . stand in need of a new theory of cultural forms" (1982:19), yet he failed to do much to develop such a new theory. It should be noted, though, that other work in the political economy tradition has been more explicitly concerned with culture, producing impressive analyses that bring together questions of meaning, identity, and cultural difference with questions of political-economic structures and processes (cf., for instance, O'Brien and Roseberry 1991; Wilmsen 1989; Donham 1990; Mintz 1985; Roseberry 1989; and, in a rather different way, Taussig 1980, 1987).

5 Certain lines of the critique that we have referred to here do not, in our view, go nearly far enough in challenging conventional territorializations of "peoples and cultures." George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986), for instance, while challenging key aspects of the epistemology and methodology of classical anthropology, largely remained satisfied with the vision of the world as a mosaic of separate, different cultures. Our objections to this position are developed more fully in "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference" in this volume.

6 The extent to which our thinking about cultural difference remains haunted by ideas of bounded, separate entities should not be underestimated. Paul Gilroy (1992) and Joan Scott (1992) have both shown how fundamental such conceptions are to contemporary debates around ethnicity and multiculturalism. And such ideas may also remain implicit, as we have shown elsewhere

(Gupta and Ferguson in press), in anthropology's own disciplinary practices (from conventions of "the field" and fieldwork to modes of conducting job searches) long after they cease to be seriously defended in the theoretical arena.

7 Here, we think of the now immense literatures following upon Benedict Anderson's (1983) exploration of nations as "imagined communities" and of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's (1983) opening of the discussion on "the invention of tradition."

8 Works that review this literature include Bloch 1985; O'Laughlin 1975; Ortner 1984; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; and Collier and Yanagisako 1987.

9 We would like to thank Roger Rouse for a stimulating discussion of this point.

10 For a sampling of work in this vein, see Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler 1992.

11 We are struck by the extent to which ideas of "the local" and "the global" in practice tend to replicate existing dualisms opposing tradition to modernity, cold societies to hot ones, or *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. In this way, "the local" can take the place of the traditional, "globalization" can take the place of modernization, and a new "transnational anthropology" can wind up bearing a disturbing resemblance to a sort of recycled modernization theory.

12 The decentering of direct sensory experience and the implications of an increasing reliance on machine-mediated perception are explored (in quite different ways) by Jean Baudrillard (1983b) and Donna Haraway (1991a).

13 This is how Foucault puts the matter in his discussion of the body: "Mastery and awareness of one's own body can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power in the body: gymnastics, exercises, muscle-building, nudism, glorification of the body beautiful. All of this belongs to the pathway leading to the desire of one's own body. . . . But once power produces this effect, there inevitably emerge the responding claims and affirmations, those of one's own body against power, of health against the economic system, of pleasure against the moral norms of sexuality, marriage, decency. Suddenly, what had made power strong becomes used to attack it. Power, after investing itself in the body, finds itself exposed to a counter-attack in that same body. . . . But the impression that power weakens and vacillates here is in fact mistaken; power can retreat here, re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere . . . and so the battle continues. . . . What's taking place is the usual strategic development of a struggle. . . . One has to recognise the indefiniteness of the struggle — though this is not to say it won't some day have an end" (1980:56–57).

14 It is this, too, that accounts for Foucault's often criticized refusal to "side with" this or that political struggle unequivocally or to accept at face value the claims of organizations and ideologies that would lead or speak for those who would resist power. For Foucault, all struggles, even those expressions of resistance with which one is most sympathetic, are inherently dangerous, capable of mutations, reversals, and redeployments that may produce the most ironic of results. What such an approach demands, politically, is neither a naïve celebration of resistance for its own sake (a temptation to which anthropologists in

particular have too often succumbed) nor a cold analytic detachment from the compromised ground of real-world political struggles (the curse of American academia in general) but a combination of real political engagement with a skeptical strategic analysis. As Foucault insisted: "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism" (1983b:231–32).

15 In *Remarks on Marx* (1991), Foucault discusses "experience" in a manner that immediately takes one beyond debates of whether experience is discursively constituted or whether it produces discursive formations.

16 Foucault says: "To call the subject into question had to mean to live it in an experience that might be its real destruction or dissociation, its explosion or upheaval into something radically 'other.' . . . Can't there be experiences in which the subject, in its constitutive relations, in its self-identity, isn't given any more? And thus wouldn't experiences be given in which the subject would dissociate itself, break its relationship with itself, lose its identity?" (1991:46, 49).

17 We can understand Joan Scott's view (1992:37) that "it is tempting, given its usage to essentialize identity and reify the subject," to abandon the concept of experience altogether. But there is a compelling reason to resist this temptation, which Scott seems not to appreciate fully — namely, it is only by attending to the question of experience that one may "escape the twin dangers of naïve essentialism (which Scott rightly opposes) and of mechanical understandings of processes of subject constitution (which Scott unfortunately tends to slip into). By decoupling the idea of experience from the vision of an ontologically prior subject who is "having" it, it is possible to see in experience neither the adventures and expression of a subject nor the mechanical product of discourses of power but the workshop in which subjectivity is continually challenged and refashioned.

18 We do not agree with those, such as James Miller (1993), who seem to conceive of Foucault's idea of the "limit experience" as a kind of heroic individual quest for transcendence. We agree with Gary Gutting (1994:24) that in Foucault's later work "transgression and intensity remain fundamental ethical categories, but they are now increasingly rooted more in lived social and political experiences than in refined aesthetic sensitivity."

19 We are indebted to John Peters (e-mail letter to Ferguson and Gupta, 9 November 1994) for having pointed out to us the importance of "transformation failures" and their relation to "identity failures."

20 This issue is treated with great sensitivity in Clifford 1988, and in such feminist writings on location and representation as Mohanty 1987 and Mani 1989.