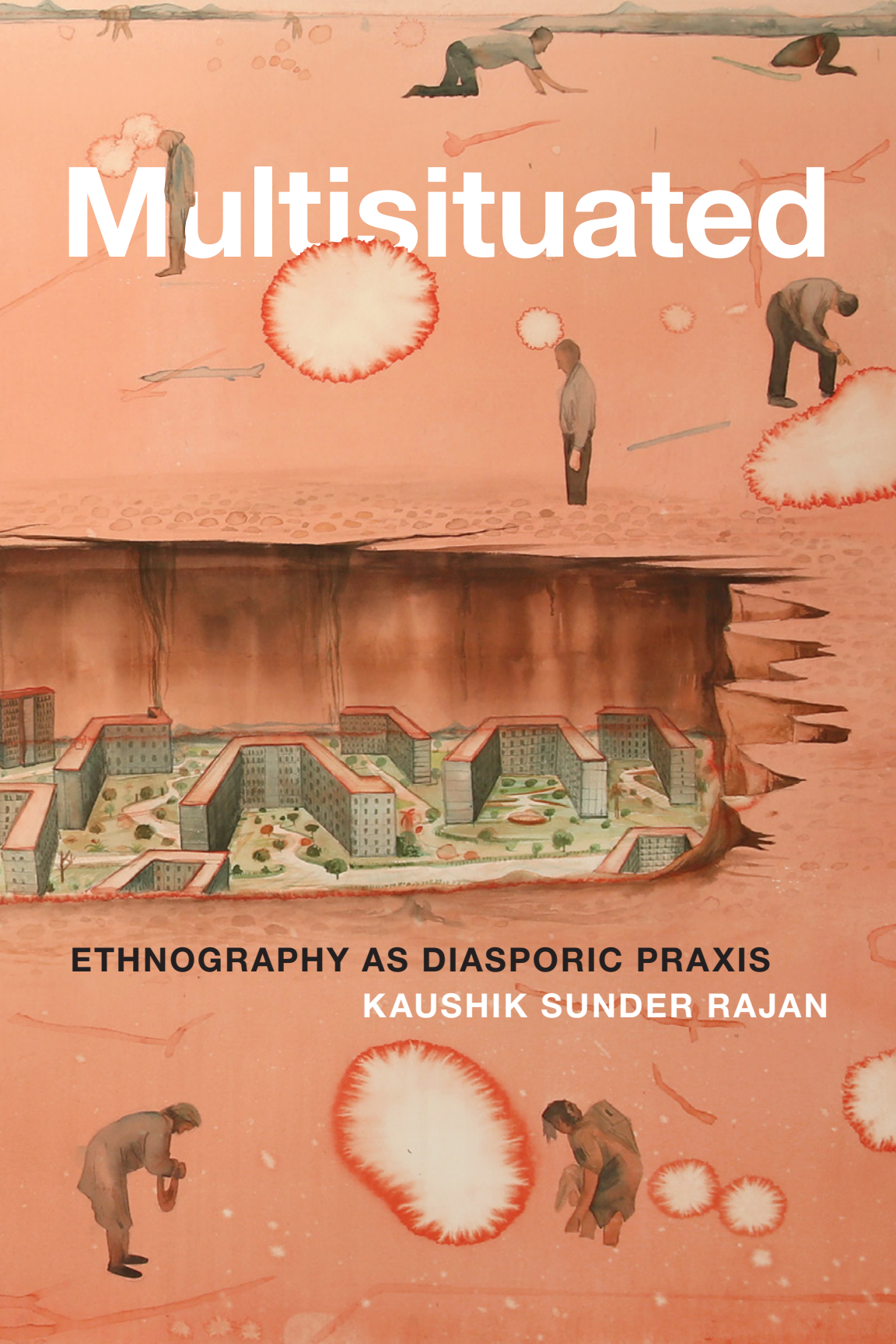
Multisituated



ETHNOGRAPHY AS DIASPORIC PRAXIS

KAUSHIK SUNDER RAJAN

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For Gayatri di

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Acknowledgments

This book is an homage: to my teachers, to key collaborators and friends, and to my students. I acknowledge how they figure in to my thinking, because they inform the structure of this book and its argument.

My first and biggest acknowledgment is to Michael Fischer and George Marcus. I write this book under the sign of their work, which has been foundational to my even being able to think the research I have done over the past two decades. Fischer, as my dissertation advisor, taught me not just how to do ethnography, but also how to develop an ethnographic sensibility and why I should care to do so. Marcus taught me how to teach ethnography, by teaching alongside me and helping me develop an investment in a pedagogy of ethnography.

A second acknowledgment is to Gayatri Spivak. It was Spivak who brought Derrida to the Anglophone world with her translation of *Of Grammatology* (Derrida [1967] 1976). In significant measure, she also thus brought Derrida to India. This has autobiographical resonance for me, since my mother, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, was teaching English at Delhi University at the time. Even though I was too young to have any inkling of (let alone inclination toward) the significance of this work, I was old enough to know that something exciting was afoot—not just in the endless confabulations over cups of tea between my mother and her friends in our flat, which would drive me somnolent with boredom, but also in recognizing that these were people who, inspired by scholars such as Spivak and Edward Said, were reformulating the pedagogy of English literature

in the university. A certain "decolonizing" moment was actively underway, even if it was not called thus at the time. This was also, in directly entangled ways, an emergent intellectual and political moment in Indian feminism. Years before I had occasion to read Spivak, and well before I thought I would live a life in which I would want to, her immense intellectual and political influence had already imprinted itself upon me. Since becoming an academic myself, her work has become foundational to my thinking. Hence, this book is dedicated to her, for debts that cannot be repaid.

A third set of acknowledgments is to my peers. I obtained my PhD in a small, interdisciplinary program (Science, Technology and Society at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and had perforce to develop an intellectual peer group beyond my program. I was lucky to be among a generation of scholars being taught and brought into the emerging field of the anthropology of science, and I developed close and enduring conversations and friendships with a number of them while still a graduate student. Of special personal importance to me was my friendship with Kristin Peterson, a doppelgänger of sorts, in that our dissertation projects paralleled each other in significant methodological ways. Of equal importance to my intellectual growth were Joseph Dumit, another of my PhD advisors; and Kim Fortun, who was in the process of finalizing her extraordinary book *Advocacy after Bhopal* (2001) while I was a PhD student.

What was important about this peer group for me, in ways that endured well beyond my dissertation and common research investments, was their shared and continuing investment in pedagogy. (This indeed was true of my mother's generation and her friends at Delhi University in the 1980s; it is equally true of friends I have made recently in South Africa, who are actively intervening in the "decolonizing" moment in their country through pedagogical and curricular development.) My peers have been at the forefront of developing creative modalities of teaching ethnography, especially in ways that recognize the changing nature of the research university. Thus, they do not merely teach with the assumption that the endgame of pedagogy is disciplinary reproduction in the ivory tower of the metropolitan university; they are actively intervening in a pedagogy *of* the university itself through their teaching of ethnography. Kim Fortun (with Mike Fortun) spent many years teaching ethnographic method in the Science and Technology Studies (STS) Department of an engineering school, where the primary student demographic consisted of engineering students. How to think the stakes of ethnography in such a

situation, especially alongside epistemic modalities that emphasize design-based learning? The Fortuns have answered this question through their teaching and also through the expression of that teaching in their own design-based ethnographic experiments, The Asthma Files and their Platform for Experimental Collaborative Ethnography (PECE) (http://theasthmafiles.org/; http://worldpece.org/), and in their respective multisited ethnographic monographs, *Advocacy after Bhopal* (K. Fortun 2001) and *Promising Genomics* (M. Fortun 2008). Joseph Dumit developed his "implosions project," initially, as an explanation of Donna Haraway's research method, articulating her pedagogy and praxis of vigilant curiosity (Dumit 2014). It has become part of a methods pedagogy toolkit in a number of anthropological graduate student teaching situations. Dumit has since proceeded to develop pedagogical articulations between anthropology, STS, and performance studies, developing a consideration of ethnography as bodily practice, with attention to both improvisation and fascia work (http://dumit.net/embodying-improvisation/; http://dumit.net/fascia-lab/). His exploration of the bodily work of ethnographic praxis is undertaken in pedagogical contexts where the terms under question (such as "improvisation") mean very different things depending on what any particular student is training to be (an anthropologist or dancer, for instance). Dumit develops these pedagogies through theoretical engagements with contemporary Black radical thought and feminist conceptualizations of practices of bodily relationality. Kristin Peterson joined the University of California at Irvine just as George Marcus and I had developed our initial iterations of the "Methods" pedagogy there. She developed our curriculum along more elaborated and systemic lines with Valerie Olson, producing a syllabus and curricular structure that I have borrowed from extensively myself while developing my "Methods" pedagogy at Chicago. Peterson and Olson are currently writing a book that will elaborate some of their key pedagogical concepts. Irvine has more generally been a forging ground for this book. I am grateful to have had an opportunity to present an initial series of lectures at the Critical Theory Institute there in 2018, which provided the first occasion for me to even think of my investments in ethnography as a book. I was subsequently invited to present chapter 3 of this book at Irvine's Center for Ethnography in early 2019. George Marcus, Kim Fortun, Mike Fortun, Kris Peterson, and Gabriele Schwab were gracious hosts and extraordinary interlocutors on both occasions.

Additionally, this book owes a debt of gratitude to Timothy Choy, Emilia Sanabria, and Kelly Gillespie, as well as to George Marcus, James Faubion, and Dominic Boyer, as the editors of the collection *Theory Can Be More Than It Used to Be*. I have largely learned to read the work of Marilyn Strathern, which is integral to my argument in chapter 2, in conversation with Choy (initially) and Sanabria (subsequently). Both Choy and Sanabria have read and commented on this manuscript in detail at different stages of its production. Choy organized a conversation with Kris Peterson at the University of California at Davis in February 2019, at which I received invaluable feedback: I am grateful to him and to members of the Anthropology and STS Departments there for their generous engagement. Sanabria spent days of her time in patient reading of and conversation with this work, especially consequent to readers' comments on a first draft of this manuscript, pushing hard at its lacunae and pulling forward its most generative threads. Gillespie's invitation to present chapter 2 at the "African Ethnographies" conference she co-organized at the University of the Western Cape was essential to the last stages of its conceptualization, especially in a postcolonial locale where questions of pedagogy and of the university are urgent and acutely political. Conversations with her at and beyond that conference have been both inspirational and sustaining. Meanwhile, an earlier version of my research on the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute of India (THSTI), elaborated in chapter 4, appeared in a different form and context in the aforementioned collection by Boyer, Faubion, and Marcus, and my initial capacity to think through that unpublished research owes greatly to my conversations with, and the editorial input of, the coeditors.

A final set of collaborators are my students. Not just those who have been subjected to my "Methods" pedagogy over the years (for which, a special debt of gratitude is owed to those in my initial "Methods" classes at Irvine with George Marcus, above all those who have continued conversations with me in years since in ways that constantly push me to think my stakes. Thank you, Janet Alexanian, Asya Anderson, Andrea Ballestero, Cristina Bejarano, Allison Fish, Philip Grant, Alexandra Lippmann, Marisa Menna, Joanne Nucho, Seo-Young Park, and Robert Werth). Thanks also to those who were members of the seminar I taught at Chicago in the winter of 2018 on the topic "Multi-si(gh)ted," which became the forging ground of and inspiration for this book. Thank you, Winston Berg, Ji Yea Hong, Rachel Howard, Melissa Itzkowitz, Alexandra Kaul, Jeanne Lieber-

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Introduction

A Problem, a Paradox, a Politics . . . and a Praxis

This book stems from a problem, a paradox, and a politics.

The problem is this: ethnography is a practice that is suited to intimate, experience-proximal observation and interpretation, yet it increasingly tackles and theorizes problems of global scale and complexity. How does a method that in its very conception is oriented toward the local, the particular, and the contingent draw conclusions that are at scale, generalizable, and structural and systemic?

The paradox is this: anthropology as a discipline still largely presumes the metropolitan university as the locale, and disciplinary reproduction as the purpose, of graduate pedagogy. Yet diasporic students, who have accountabilities to multiple communities of practice, such that disciplinary reproduction is not the only stake for many emergent practitioners in the field, increasingly inhabit metropolitan anthropology departments. There is also increasing discordance between a pedagogical aspiration to disciplinary reproduction and the grim realities of metropolitan academic job markets.

The politics is this: over the past decades, anthropologists have explicitly disavowed their discipline's colonial inheritances; yet ethnography remains a knowledge practice based on the epistemic objectification of

the native informant, which is at the heart of colonial reason. Thus, the intentional disavowal of a colonial desire to know the Other does not necessarily nullify modes of knowing that are objectifying in ways that are of colonial provenance and colonizing consequence.

I argue that this knotting of problem, paradox, and politics brings up questions for contemporary ethnographic method. In addition, it presents problems for pedagogy in relation to the discipline (and disciplining) of anthropology, at least as it is currently taught in the metropolitan research university. This book reflects on these intercalations of method, pedagogy, and institution through considering ethnography as *multisituated*. It espouses an idea and ideal of ethnography as a *sensibility*: a mode of attunement and orientation to the stuff of the world under question, one simultaneously curious and vigilant, open and sensitive, whose potential and ambit go beyond a formally articulated set of methodological techniques and institutional concerns with disciplinary reproduction. It situates such an expansive, experimental, and ethical ethnographic sensibility out of the arc of the epistemic critiques of the 1980s.

The 1980s saw the "crisis of representation" ripple through the human sciences. Forty years later, we seem to be facing another generational inflection point. Old disciplinary norms still endure. They presume intimate experience-proximity as the sine qua non, methodologically and ethically, of the ethnographic encounter. They implicitly center the metropolitan university. They depend on the epistemic objectification of the native informant. At the same time, anthropology concerns itself increasingly with questions concerning global political economy, becomes avowedly postcolonial or decolonizing, and questions the modes of epistemic constitution of the native informant. In other words, there is a disjuncture between the ideological inheritances of anthropology as a discipline, with its established norms and forms of ethnographic practice, and its emergent aspirations.

Ethnography is an example of what Michael Fischer has called an "emergent form of life" (Fischer 2003), a sociality of action, forged within and outside the walls of the university, whose practices are, in Fischer's rendering of the term, "outrunning the pedagogies in which we were trained" (37). What kinds of pedagogy would be adequate to our times—times that see the forging of new configurations of and challenges for the research university even as they see a diversification of the "we" who practice ethnography? How do our inheritances structure our practices in both enabling and constraining ways? This book thus concerns itself with,

in Raymond Williams's formulation, the *residual, dominant, and emergent* formations and horizons of ethnography, as constituted within and out of the metropolitan academy (Williams 1978).

This disjuncture between ethnography's ideological inheritances and emergent aspirations points to a *postcolonial* paradox. A strongly diasporic graduate student population in many American anthropology departments intensifies the paradox. This process of the formation of an anthropology that is postcolonial not just in sentiment but also in its demographics started decades ago. Then, however, such students would have likely come to a university such as the University of Chicago, where I currently teach, to study their native country, given the well-consolidated history of area studies in the metropolitan university. Consider, for instance, the Kannada short story "Annayya's Anthropology" by A. K. Ramanujan, who had himself taught at the University of Chicago's South Asian Studies Department for many years. In this story, the protagonist Annayya, who has come to America for higher studies, marvels at the knowledge the American anthropologist has of his Brahminical ritual practices, knowledge that he himself did not possess growing up in India. The purpose of going to America was to know one's culture and civilization better: "You want self-knowledge? You should come to America. Just as the Mahatma had to go to jail and sit behind bars to write his autobiography. Or as Nehru had to go to England to discover India. Things are clear only when looked at from a distance" (Ramanujan 1973).

While browsing in the university library, Annayya comes upon a recently published monograph on Hindu customs and rituals. He reads the book's description of funereal and cremation rituals in detail, fascinated, only to learn that the cremation that the book describes is that of his father, of whose death he had not yet been informed. It was only from the ethnography—and the familiar photographs of his neighbors' house and of his cousin Sundararaya performing the ceremony—that Annayya finds out.

"Annayya's Anthropology" speaks to the disfigurations of the relationship between knowing subject (the ethnographer) and the object of knowledge (the "society" being described) when the university becomes increasingly diasporic. It speaks not just to ethnography as an epistemic problem-space but also to the structure of metropolitan pedagogy, which welcomes the student from elsewhere, knowing fully well that her "elsewhere" is here; but it (still) educates her within a disciplinary genealogy that assumes the metropolitan ethnographer to be "here" and the social

object of ethnography to be "elsewhere." If, as is often pronounced, anthropology is about making the familiar strange and the strange familiar, then the diasporic practitioner invariably has to code-switch between the disjunctures of "familiarity" and "strangeness" that often exist between her own personal, intellectual, and political biographies and that of a metropolitan disciplinary history that is professionalizing her.

The postcolonial conjuncture of anthropological knowledge production thus poses some notable pedagogical problems.[1] The diasporic question concerns not just the anthropologist's *identity* but also her *addressee*. By addressee, I do not mean audience, which is a reductive, instrumental idea of the market for one's work. Rather I mean the multiple communities of practice to which the ethnographer feels herself accountable, including those who remain outside the calculable metrics of the professionalized metropolitan academe. This is especially so in the context of the politicized and changing nature of the research university around the world. I think, for instance, of friends in South Africa who did PhDs in the United States and went back to South Africa to teach even as student movements to decolonize the university erupted there over the past few years; alternatively, of transformations in the Indian university today, such that students coming to the United States from India travel from a milieu that sees new forms of radicalism (for instance, of the Dalit Left) emerging in the context of an authoritarian attack on the university itself by the Narendra Modi government; of Korean students who come out of the praxis of pro-democracy student movements there; or of Iranian student activists I have encountered, especially while teaching at the University of California at Irvine, who were active in the pro-democracy Million Signatures Campaign, itself a diasporically situated political movement.

Therefore, we can no longer assume that the *epistemic* consequences of what it means to be a diasporic student in the metropolitan university sit comfortably within area studies paradigms. These students bring with them accountabilities to communities of practice elsewhere in the context of changing mores of disciplinary conversation and what it even means to be (in) a research university in transforming (xenophobic, authoritarian, decolonizing) times. Resonances of this constantly emerge (and sometimes erupt) in the classroom, not just in relation to postcolonial diasporic questions but also very much in relation to racial, indigenous, and feminist politics. At stake here is not just the practice of ethnography but its *praxis*: how to think this diasporic conjuncture within the context of

metropolitan disciplinary pedagogy? What does it mean to develop ethnographic sensibilities and attunements in such a context?

This diasporic question is not just about students who have traveled from one country to another: it speaks to all manner of intersectional intellectual, political, and biographical trajectories, and it calls for a "decolonization" of method and discipline. In other words, the politics of a disciplinary disavowal of its colonial inheritance encounters an actual, demographic trend toward decolonization by its diasporic practitioners. These encounters are rarely seamless and on the contrary are often conflictual. This *de*colonizing moment exists in a potentially antagonistic relationship not just with explicitly colonial genealogies of anthropology from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also a more proximal generational sensibility, harkening back to the 1980s, which we might call *post*colonial. This latter sensibility maintains a vigilant, even we might say adversarial, relationship to Europe (as place, imaginary, and forging ground for epistemic assumptions about how we know the world), without quite rejecting its intellectual and political inheritance. Student movements for decolonization, most dramatically in South Africa, are in part a rejection of this colonial inheritance that the "post" of postcolonialism necessarily acknowledges and lives with (however critically or uncomfortably). A radical repudiation of white heteronormative masculinity, which entails asserting a certain radical identitarian difference, is thus potentially at odds with a postcolonial sensibility. Meanwhile, virulent and energized right-wing, xenophobic, and autocratic views attack any humanistic investment in difference altogether.

This book argues that a multisited sensibility provides better descriptions of the world we live in and the stuff of the world our research projects interrogate. Further, a multisited sensibility can and should be postcolonial and feminist in its ethos (hence my shift in nomenclature to "multisituated"). I emphasize not just the importance of multiple objects of research or of following objects to multiple places (speaking to a literalist conception of multisitedness). I am invested instead in what Donna Haraway (1988) would call the multiple and multiply situated perspectives (including of individual ethnographers in their variously and variably diasporic personae) that are brought to bear in such an ethnographic sensibility. Thus, this book considers the 1980s as a seminal moment that articulated a set of promissory agendas for anthropology through calls for multisited or multilocale ethnography, even as it saw critical conceptual,

methodological, and pedagogical developments in postcolonial and feminist studies.

At its core, this is a reading of George Marcus and Michael Fischer's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986), alongside and through feminism and postcolonial studies. Marcus and Fischer share two allied concerns as they develop their epistemic critiques of representation and their calls for novel kinds of humanistic inquiry. One is structural, systemic, and global in its scope: how might we understand contemporary political economies of global capitalism? The other is intimate, psychobiographical, and concerned with personhood. Considering ethnography in terms of the former requires attending to its scalar and comparative dimensions. In terms of the latter, it requires consideration of ethnography as a practice of and attention to encounter and dialogue.

All ethnography is inherently comparative, even if our "sites" are "single," because the generation of ethnographic knowledge is based on what we as ethnographers already know, how we assume what we know, and the background assumptions that ground our observations. Encounter is not just about proximity or participation: it is about the qualities of relationships and intimacies that develop in the process of responsible commitment and accountability to others, whom we as ethnographers constitute and draw upon as native informants. This cannot be reduced to a formal procedural ethics, such as of informed consent, as enshrined in institutional review boards. By definition, all encounter contains within itself the possibility of violence. It is risky. Understanding and negotiating this is at the heart of developing a feminist practice of ethnography. Hence, praxis: there is a politics to comparison and to encounter, to the work of scalar attentiveness, scale making and dialogic interlocution, such that ethnography is not just a question of doing but of the stakes involved in its practice. Why and how do we encounter others, the Other, and in what ways do we objectify the subjects of our research, and why does it matter? These concerns with ethnography as an encounter and comparative, scalar and dialogic, are at the heart of all ethnographic projects, "multisited" or not: but they are highlighted and exacerbated in a multisituated problem-space, as I hope this book will explain.

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Why multisituated, why now, and why from here? This question speaks to the place of a set of practices (ethnography) in relation to a discipline (anthropology), at a moment when disciplinarity cannot contain these

practices that define it. The relationship between ethnographic practice and the disciplinary history of anthropology calls for a deconstruction and decentering of the project of disciplinary reproduction, even as these times call for an investment in, and a preservation of, the discipline of anthropology as a humanistic social science that contains within itself some of the best aspirations of both scientific and avant-garde experimental practice. Such "preservation" must involve a rejuvenation of its core method, ethnography, through an elaboration and multiplication of its norms and forms.

What is at stake is a relationship of method to discipline, but also of discipline to the metropolitan university, and the vexed place of disciplinary reproduction in anthropology's raison d'être, at odds with other investments that ethnographers might have, especially those with variously diasporic trajectories. Hence, this becomes a question of the nature of the metropolitan research university, at a historical moment of its corporatization and financialization, a moment that is also one of xenophobic and authoritarian attack on the university itself, such that it becomes an essential institution to fight for and preserve. The place of the American university, at once the quintessence of a globalizing, imperialist, and corporate institutional form, but also a relatively safe space that preserves and articulates an ethic of the Enlightenment when it is societally under attack, is especially vexed. Thus, the university has come to be recognized as the site of the expression both of the most virulent elements of contemporary capitalism (neoliberal, corporate, financialized, imperialist) and of a vibrant ethic of cosmopolitanism and struggle for decolonization.[2] This entwining, to reiterate, materializes in the articulations between ethnography as *practice*, anthropology as *discipline*, and the university as *institution*, between the *doing* and *teaching* of ethnography.

The question of situation is one of time, place, and inheritance.[3] It is a question, respectively, of conjuncture; of locale, event, and the mise-en-scène of the ethnographic encounter; and of autobiography and intellectual genealogy. There are multiple lineages out of which situation has been thought as a structuring methodological principle of analysis. Gregory Bateson, for instance, demonstrated the analytic potential of ethnographic situation in his account of the Naven (Bateson [1936] 1958), using it as a device of comparison and juxtaposition to generate an account of society and culture from multiple actors' perspectives. Another possibility is to use situation as the ground from which politics can be theorized. Situated analysis of this sort is central to Karl Marx's historical

writings, such as *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* ([1852] 1977) and *The Civil War in France* ([1871] 2009), and to Antonio Gramsci's accounts of contemporary Italian politics in the 1920s, such as on "the Southern Question" (Gramsci [1926] 2000). A third analytic modality is provided by John Dewey's situational theory, articulated especially in his treatise *Logic, the Theory of Inquiry* ([1938] 2007), which arguably breaks new ground in analytic philosophy in the way in which it articulates the importance of situation as something beyond mere context. Dewey thereby moves analytic philosophy beyond the realm of a formalist logic toward something akin to anthropology, even as it articulates a logical mode of inquiry. It is perhaps telling that Bateson, Gramsci, and Dewey, themselves writing out of such different situations, were doing so in the interwar years, a transformational moment in world history with resonances of the kinds of global trends one sees today. This time period simultaneously witnessed world-historical movements toward authoritarianism and fascism alongside aspirations toward new forms of collectivity. What is the epistemic milieu this signifies for social thought? What kinds of social thought emerge out of such a milieu?[4]

These elaborations of a situated methodology speak to the comparative, historical, and philosophical-anthropological dimensions contained in this spatiotemporal concept. Of even more importance to the argument of this book is the explicitly feminist ethos that animates situation, as articulated by Donna Haraway in her essay "Situated Knowledges" (1988), which in many ways structures its argument writ large. In this essay, Haraway refutes the idea and ideal of objectivity as a "view . . . from nowhere" (589). This is an epistemic refusal, an insistence on other and Other ways of knowing that do not purport to a disembodied Cartesian rationality. Haraway's call for situated knowledges is resolutely not a relativist repudiation of fact per se. Rather, it is a development of a critical stance regarding the scopic privilege of heteropatriarchal modes of objectifying the world in order to know it in possessive ways. It is an espousal of an ethics of the Enlightenment, even as it is a refusal of its most appropriative elements. Thus, it provokes us to think about other, less possessive ways of knowing. There is another call alongside, a haunting one that animates the text, at the moment she asks "with whose blood were my eyes crafted" (585)? This is a reflexive, autobiographical, and transferential question, a question of *inheritance*. Thus, situation for Haraway is inherently a partial perspective, a function of where one comes from. It is not just a question then of time or place, or mode of logical inquiry or sociocultural under-

standings of personhood (all dimensions of situation given to us by the methods of Marx, Gramsci, Bateson, or Dewey), but also one of what can any one person say about this? The answer to this latter question is a function of one's biography and itinerary.

By following the epistemic ethos that Haraway calls for, what I will say about ethnography in this book is necessarily provisional and partial, a function of my biography and itinerary, both personal and intellectual. This is not just an epistemic limit of this analysis but also its explicit politics. This book is resolutely not an overview of the field of anthropology or a comprehensive review of the large oeuvre of ethnographic work that reflects a multisituated ethos and method. There are many critical, exemplary works that would belong in such a review, which I do not reference or account for. I will instead speak to the genealogies out of which I am thinking the problem-space of ethnography, which is in part the genealogy in which I was taught and the genealogy that I teach. Nor does this book provide or insist on a "correct" definition of multisituated ethnography, in some programmatic sense. Rather, it is about the *idea* and *ideal* of certain sensibilities and modalities of ethnographic practice, which are necessarily personal and autobiographical. It does not describe "how to do," but why we might care. This is a question of stakes, of what kind of work one wants to make and, again, is at least in part a function of where one comes from. I argue both that ethnography itself is a situated practice and that my own argument about ethnography as practice is a situated one. So it is not an objective declamation about what ethnography *is*, in some absolute sense, but a situated reflection of what ethnography has come to mean for me in the course of my research and pedagogical dialogues and itineraries.

The genealogy that is most directly explicated traces back to *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*. In this, Marcus and Fischer call for what they refer to as a multilocale ethnography. Marcus subsequently reframed this as a call for multisited ethnography in his seminal essay "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography" (1995). Both the essay and the term have become canonical points of reference in anthropology, especially in the articulation of a certain kind of research method and agenda that performs a complex or systemic ethnographic analysis involving more than one field site. "Multisituated" is an obvious play with and extension of these notions of multisited or multilocale ethnography, which both decentered and expanded ideas of ethnographic site and location that occupied a hitherto privileged place in the anthropological canon, especially in its Malinowskian ideas and ideals of fieldwork.[5] This

was happening at a time when the notion of "the field" was more broadly being brought into question in the discipline, for instance, in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson's *Anthropological Locations* (1998). It was also a time that saw an explicit disciplinary and methodological turn toward anthropologies of globalization and modernity, for example, in the "Alternative Modernities" and "Late Editions" conversations of the 1990s and in the establishment of journals such as *Public Culture* and *Cultural Anthropology* as central to the discipline, at a fin de siècle moment of reflection upon and invigoration of the objects and projects of ethnographic analysis.

The notion of a multisituated ethnography *supplements* that of multisited or multilocale ethnography. Jacques Derrida developed the idea of the supplement as something that is allegedly secondary to the "original" but comes to aid it (Derrida [1967] 1976). Thus, "multisituated" takes faithfully and inhabits the genealogies out of which ideas and ideals of multisited and multilocale ethnography were developed, out of the milieu of epistemic critiques of the 1980s that participated in articulating and responding to the "crisis of representation" in the human sciences.

In foregrounding questions of conjuncture, location, and inheritance, a "multisituated" perspective draws attention to two things. First, there is the situation of ethnography itself, in relation both to the discipline of anthropology and the institution of the research university. This is a question of the place of method and practice: how is the method of ethnography taught, and the practice of ethnography disciplined, by anthropological histories as they materialize in contemporary institutions that are meant at once to teach students and to reproduce these disciplines? How does the practice of ethnography also, in both its aspirations and its epistemic potential, *exceed* the constraints of both disciplinary history and institutional rationality? These are questions of pedagogy: how do we teach and learn the practice of ethnography within disciplinary and institutional constraints and confines, in ways that take seriously the value of disciplinary genealogies and inheritances and the institutional affordances of the research university, while also seeking to exceed—and specifically decolonize—these structures and inheritances?

Second, being "multisituated" highlights the situation of ethnographic practitioners, who are increasingly diasporic across multiple axes. What would it mean to take into account the necessary excess, dislocation, and decentering that stem from the diasporic embodiments of ethnographers? How does one create the disciplinary space and institutional affordance

for the expression of the multiplicity of aspirations and investments of these practitioners, such that they (we, for I myself am one) benefit from an acknowledgment of the genealogies from which their (our) stakes derive, but also such that they (we) are not forced to constantly justify themselves (ourselves) in relation to disciplinary and institutional norms that are grounded in colonial, masculinist histories? This is an especially important question at a moment of financialized, neoliberal resource constraint in the metropolitan university, such that work that is coded as nonnormative, even if deemed acceptable, is imagined and internalized as professionally risky, especially by graduate students navigating increasingly precarious job markets. In other words, the conversation about decolonization that is being had, in vibrant and transformative ways in universities across the world, emerges in the context of these structural, political economic cross-currents that place a burden of risk upon diasporic, decentering, nonnormative, excessive, but also potentially experimental, feminist, and decolonizing modalities of ethnographic practice (unless they can be rendered legible to disciplinary and institutional expectations whose provenance is often at odds with these very kinds of transformative projects). I articulate my sense of, and case for, a multisituated ethnography out of such a conjuncture, marked both by epistemic affordances and structural constraints and by the double binds of a moment that is at once neoliberal and authoritarian and radically decolonizing.

.....

The stakes that I articulate in this book are pedagogical. The form of the book is the *seminar*.

The form of the seminar is reflected in this book in three ways. First, it is a set of actual lectures that I wrote and delivered, initially in a graduate seminar called "Multi-si(gh)ted" at the University of Chicago in the winter of 2018 and subsequently as a series of mini-seminars at the University of California at Irvine.[6]

The second element to the seminar is the syllabus. The syllabus for me is one of the most difficult parts of designing a seminar, because the argument of a seminar is contained in its syllabus. One of my PhD advisors, Joseph Dumit, would often set this as an exercise for me when I was a student. He would ask me, if you want to articulate the knowledge of a field of study, how would you do so as an annotated syllabus? It proved to be an enlightening exercise for me, as it would force me to imagine and distill

what I would ask a hypothetical set of students to read in the course of ten to fourteen weeks, and to justify the selection of certain readings rather than others. This book is, in its essence, an annotated syllabus. The pedagogical imperative of the syllabus, in the way I teach, is that it must serve as an articulation of how one wants to make an argument. Even as the syllabus reflects my very particular investments, however, I do not wish it to be simply a regurgitation of the particular kinds of work that I myself do. Hence this book engages with a number of ethnographic, theoretical, and meta-methodological works that inspire me and in which I have invested. Yet many of the exemplary ethnographies that I discuss adopt very different ethnographic modalities to those that I myself adopt in the course of my own research. I do not want the space of the seminar to be one where my students learn to reproduce what I *do*. I wish rather for it to be a space for the articulation of possible ethnographic norms and forms that reflect a *politics* of ethnography. This politics is one that deconstructs, decenters, and repudiates the positivist, objectivist, masculinist colonial gaze of ethnography, what Jacques Derrida (1978) has called phallogocentrism. While an anti-phallogocentric politics is unconditional to the argument and ethos of this book, I nonetheless insist upon and attempt to show a range of possible approaches to realizing such a politics. During the course of the seminar, different readings resonated with different students in differential ways. There are tensions, methodological and political, between various texts that I discuss, and I do not expect consensus or an equally enthusiastic embrace of all the ethnographic modalities that I teach and discuss during the course of the seminar. I do not expect that of the readers of this book either: there are bound to be different bodies of work that resonate in different ways with different readers, no doubt a function of your own varied biographies, itineraries, investments, and locations. This is as it should be.

The third element of a seminar is that it is dialogic. What begins as a monologue gets interrupted. Once students start responding to texts and lectures, one's own sense of the argument as a teacher changes. This book reflects the ways in which my lectures in the seminar came to be interrupted by students' own reading of various texts. In writing this book, I have gone back repeatedly to the postings that students wrote in response to each of the readings we did in the class. At various points, I draw upon and cite these interventions. Thus, in addition to being a meta-methodological enunciation, this book also implicitly (and unintentionally has come to be) an ethnography of the class in which its ideas were

dialogically developed. The citational form that I adopt at various points in the book is an attempt to preserve and expand the sensibility and ethos of this dialogue, of this book itself as an emergent form of life and a sociality of pedagogical action and response. Thus if one important sense of situatedness that structures this book concerns its time and place (and the time of and for a multisituated ethnographic sensibility), another speaks to a set of partial perspectives that emerged dialogically out of a pedagogical space. It did so in an experimental manner, speaking to a notion of "experiment" articulated by Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (1997), as a structured set of practices with a certain open-endedness built into them, such that the potential always exists for the conversations and arguments to end up somewhere else, other than or beyond where they began, exceeding their initial structuring.

I initially designed my "Multi-si(gh)ted" graduate seminar to take stock of some of the theoretical genealogies that feed into my investments in multisited ethnography. The seminar, however, turned into a charged, intimate pedagogical space. Importantly, it turned into an explicitly feminist space. Some of this was undoubtedly because the class was constituted almost exclusively of women (except for a male political science PhD student and myself); yet also, the epistemic investments and sensibilities that were articulated had to do with more than just demographic identity. The students in this class educated me, in generative and generous ways, to see some of the feminist stakes and investments of what I was trying to get across about ethnography. They were always kind, often patient, and relentlessly probing and questioning: they offered and modeled the best kind of dialogic and pedagogical political praxis. These students also engaged, in their own lives, with other forms of creative practice: there were writers, poets, photographers, and artists in the room, all of whom were also training to be ethnographers. There were moments of searing autobiographical implosion of intellectual and biographical trajectories in our classroom conversations, in ways that not just reflected the stakes of a discipline or a practice in some abstract and abstracted sense, but also responded directly to the dark, masculinist, and racist times we currently live in. There was no moment in the class when we did not consider ethnography as praxis, and no moment when its praxis was taken for granted, romanticized, or unreflexively celebrated.

Thus, this book deliberately falls between genres. It is neither a research monograph nor a review of literature. It is personal and situated. I leave it to the reader to see whether it nevertheless succeeds, even provisionally,

in speaking to the serious methodological and pedagogical challenges of the day.

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My investment in writing this book has emerged from my own academic trajectory and teaching practice. I initially trained as a biologist, but I left science because I hated laboratory work. I did my PhD in science and technology studies (STS), working on the political economy of biotechnology for my dissertation and then on global pharmaceuticals for my second project. My work has been situated between India and the United States, initially studying the global political economy of genome science as constituted between the two countries, and subsequently following the global political economy of drug development, clinical trials, and access to medicines as seen from India (K. Sunder Rajan 2006, 2017).

I am from India. Not only was I not trained in anthropology, I had never trained in the United States when I moved here for my PhD. It has been an extraordinary boon and privilege to study in the United States, because it has given me a training that I am sure I would never have received anywhere else. Yet it means that I come to my investments in anthropology and ethnography as a diasporic intellectual. I do not—indeed cannot—fully inhabit the metropolitan disciplinary and institutional investments that I find in America. I have a set of interlocutors elsewhere to whom I want to be accountable—especially those working in an activist context in India and globally—and that drives me more than professional metropolitan academic concerns.

Therefore, I am concerned with the double agency problem in academic and especially anthropological work: how do we activate, animate, and maintain accountabilities to the communities of practice with whom we inhabit our practice, whatever they may be, in ways that do not have to be reduced to corridor talk and side labor? There is a way in which American academe professionalizes us toward ivory-tower concerns such that other (more activist or worldly) concerns are kept in their place. Yet a lot of what shapes us as ethnographers involves accountabilities to these other communities of practice, often nonacademic and sometimes nonmetropolitan, which means that we often inhabit multiple worlds at once and often live two lives, both of which take up enormous time and labor. Usually, only the former is going to be legible on a professional résumé. That second life is one that is not often legible in America. When such nonacademic, nonmetropolitan investments do come to count as pro-

fessionally legible, they are increasingly couched in terms of "benefits to society" metrics—a reduction of complex political stakes, dialogues, and investments to top-down, measurable audit culture imaginaries.

I am not arguing for some kind of zero-sum game between being an "academic" or an "activist." Rather, I am wrestling with the fact that our academic work is worlded differently in other situations in which we might be intimately invested. I care about cultivating a stance or disposition that allows for, and building institutional arrangements that foster, a fuller expression and inhabitation of these multiple investments. This differential accountability to different communities of practice, especially including those that operate outside metropolitan and academic circles, is a central stake and question for this more expansive idea and ideal of ethnography, as "multisituated," that I wish to explore in this book. This requires not just looking back at the disciplinary history of anthropology in order to reproduce it, but also looking outward and beyond the purely disciplinary confines of anthropology to learn from ethnographic practitioners in other fields and domains. Hence, even as I am concerned with a certain disciplinary history of anthropology, I seek to go beyond it. A number of conceptual resources I draw on in developing my argument are from outside the discipline. Furthermore, a number of exemplary ethnographies I cite are not by anthropologists, even as some are.

This is because, quite simply, the practice of ethnography exceeds the discipline of anthropology. A range of academic disciplines or interdisciplines uses ethnography as a core or ancillary method—from oral history, to qualitative sociology or political science, to literary studies, to creative arts, to critical legal studies, to the interdiscipline in which I trained, STS, to name but some. Ethnography is also practiced outside academe.[7] Ethnographers also collaborate with practitioners in other fields and domains in order to generate ethnographically rich knowledge that may not take the form of the conventional anthropological monograph.[8] To be sure, different standards may obtain as to what constitutes "good" ethnography in these other disciplines and domains, and part of a disciplinary function is the imposition of rigor, ethics, and reflexivity into its core methodological practices. Yet it is also the case that some of the practices at the frontiers of methodological development in ethnography, developing new norms, forms, and praxiological orientations, are occurring outside disciplinary anthropological spaces.

This speaks to the risk that disciplines might fetter or constrain modalities of practice or at least generate disciplinary anxieties about nonnormative practice that might constrain experimentation with, or fuller

exploration of, the potential of a method. Learning ethnography in an STS department, I did not experience a set of predominantly Malinowskian disciplinary anxieties that I have commonly found among anthropology graduate students that I have subsequently taught (as I will elaborate). This is not to make some kind of adjudication about the relative possibilities or impossibilities of certain kinds of ethnographic work within or outside anthropology, but simply to say that a lot can be learned by staying attentive to the ways in which ethnography as a practice exceeds disciplinary boundaries, not least about how one might conceptualize, elaborate, and decenter some of its norms and forms in salutary ways. Certainly, even as many of the ethnographers who have most inspired me are anthropologists, many others who have done so are not.[9]

There is a diasporic politics to my insistence in thinking ethnography beyond anthropology in this book, even as it is concerned as well with disciplinary inheritance and reproduction. This is a xenophilic cosmopolitanism that, I feel, should attend any community of thought and action: disciplines ought to behave no differently than nations in welcoming and learning from those outside their boundaries, especially disciplines such as anthropology that now base themselves in an inclusive, antiracist politics. A drawing of boundaries against and lack of receptiveness to nondisciplinary influences of method at the altar of a closed, internalist reproduction of norms and forms is dangerous. This does not preclude rigor or disciplinary standards and does not require uncritical acceptance of every modality of ethnographic practice; it does, however, behoove an openness to other norms and forms, even (indeed necessarily) to the point of putting one's own at risk. If decolonization entails learning from diasporic, nonmetropolitan practitioners of ethnography, so too does it require learning from diasporic, nondisciplinary practitioners.

My investment therefore is to think about ethnography as providing a capacious set of resources to engage the world through a multiplicity of stakes, which go beyond the goals of disciplinary reproduction. The question of developing stakes is also a question of developing one's ethnographic voice. Here, questions of diasporic biographies, of race, of gender, of disciplinary backgrounds and investments, matter in ways that are not simply epiphenomenal.

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I have taught some version of an "anthropological fieldwork methods" class now, by myself or with others, for over a decade, first at the Univer-

sity of California at Irvine with George Marcus and then at the University of Chicago, where I have been developing a "Methods" curriculum with my colleagues Julie Chu and Michael Fisch. "Methods" in both departments occupies a similar place in the graduate curriculum. It is compulsory for second-year PhD students, and it follows theory-heavy first-year core courses (called the "Pro-Seminar" at Irvine and "Systems" at Chicago). Both departments are similarly oriented, with a strong research emphasis on political economic issues broadly conceived. Both are also in some ways anachronistic, being elite top-tier universities (one public, one private), primarily training their students for disciplinary academic positions. They do so in an increasingly precarious academic labor market.

When I teach my "Methods" class at Chicago, I base it on an argument about ethnography that consists of the following four parts. As I have stated it in my syllabus:

- The aim of this class is not to tell you how to do fieldwork in a narrowly mechanical sense: how to interview or transcribe or code, how to do surveys, how to do participant observation, how to get access, what questions to ask and so on. No doubt, all of these things are important in the course of research projects, but they are also things that are best done by figuring out. No predetermined template or formula for how to do these things will be adequate for the messy encounters with the stuff of the world that ethnography in fact involves.
- Instead, the fundamental problem of fieldwork involves the *cultivation of attentiveness*. Ethnographers rarely know things that their interlocutors do not. What makes good ethnography work—as surprising, insightful, novel, useful, meaningful—is the fact that the ethnographer is capable of attending to things that her interlocutors might attend to differently (ignore, naturalize, fetishize, valorize, take for granted, etc.).
- Attentiveness is always cultivated, and there are many different *modes* of attentiveness. One can learn to slow down, listen deeply, listen further, converse, elicit, observe nuance, piece things together, interpret, map, connect dots, situate, historicize, contextualize, improvise, in order to shift perspective and move beyond constrained modes of attentiveness toward more expansive and self-reflexive ones. Some projects lend themselves better to certain modes of attentiveness. Some people are better at being attentive

in certain ways rather than others. The nature of the ethnographic encounter—who one's interlocutors are, in what contexts and circumstances relationships get made and forged, and so on—can help us re-cultivate or expand our modes of attentiveness in different ways. This is why the norms and forms of ethnographic practice and narration are not singular or uniform. This is a major strength of ethnography.

– All of these questions of the cultivation of ethnographic attention are never purely concerns of fieldwork; they are always, simultaneously, acts of conceptualization. Hence, "theory" is never ideally done just after the act (and fact) of fieldwork; it is always enmeshed in every aspect of fieldwork, from identifying research objects and projects, to engaging in ethnographic encounters before, within, and beyond "the field." Rather than think about a binary of fieldwork and theory/narration, I wish to think about the deeply imbricated actions of fieldwork and *concept work*—the active labor of conceptualizing the stuff of the world that ethnographers constantly engage in.[10]

Fieldwork is a technical activity, even as it is about figuring things out in contingent fashion "in the field." In my "Methods" pedagogy, I attempt to articulate an expansive conceptualization of technique. I argue for a mode of movement and engagement that is not about a mechanistic performance of method, as something reduced to formulaic or programmatic practices. Rather, there is an active relationship between the performance of method and the conceptualization of project design, one that is iterative, recursive, and ongoing, even (especially) through the process of fieldwork. It is important to embed methods in project design, which requires concomitant concept work.

Hence, technique is essential but cannot be merely instrumental (how to do interviews, how to transcribe, how to code, etc.). Providing some kind of mechanical formula for participant observation in the classroom will not magically produce ethnography. Furthermore, a narrow and instrumentalist conception of technique is phallogocentric, because it is predicated upon a gendered separation of intellectual and manual labor, relegating methods to a mere "doing," privileging "Theory" as intellectual labor performed before and after fieldwork, through an acquaintance with the relevant literature and some kind of post facto conceptual synthesis. I push for an idea and ideal of technique that refuses this kind of temporal-

ity and purification. Thus, my pedagogy is not a refutation of technique, but its expansive rearticulation. This epistemological and political insistence lay behind Chu's, Fisch's, and my decision to rename the "Methods" class at the University of Chicago "Modes of Inquiry." This suggests that the conceptual development of a research project—which, for ethnography, must perforce be empirically driven and accountable—is at the heart of ethnographic technique. Technique is inextricably linked with project development and with the concomitant identification of suitable ethnographic objects of study.[11]

My "Methods" pedagogy is located within three genealogies. The first concerns the reformulation of the norms and forms of ethnographic practice, especially as they emerged out of the mid-1980s and the "*Writing Culture* moment" (Clifford and Marcus 1986), which was also the moment of publication of *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Marcus and Fischer 1986). The kinds of reflections upon ethnography generated at this time have seen serious conversations with STS over the past three decades in the process of the development of anthropologies of science and technology that have drawn on and gone beyond the foundational impulses of both fields of inquiry. In significant measure, therefore, this genealogy operates at STS/anthropology interfaces.[12]

The field of postcolonial studies was in formation at the very same time as the "*Writing Culture*" moment. Meanwhile, feminism that was also exploring epistemological issues came into its own. The critiques of representation of the 1980s did not have a single voice, but they did share an ethos. These critiques have to some extent been internalized and regurgitated into the disciplinary anthropological canon as it has since developed; but these were never just negative critiques (as I am afraid they are too often misread as being) and contained within them a promissory call that has not necessarily been responded to. This call asks, once one has acknowledged the epistemic violence of the colonial, patriarchal representational gaze and its objectification/textualization of the primitive, raced, sexed, gendered, colonized "Other," then what? How, now, do the *norms and forms of ethnographic practice themselves come to be at stake*?

A third personal genealogy is the most speculative and experimental, and it is borne of a deepening photographic practice over the past few years. As I have done so, I have asked myself what it means that when making photos, the world looks different. This is not just a representational question (does the photograph document the world as is?) but also a creative and evocative one (of being able to see the world differently, and

the possibilities and potentialities of being able to do so). This speaks to a broader emergent genealogy of relationships between ethnography and the creative arts, which is a lively subject of debate and practice in anthropology today.

These genealogies, in related but distinct ways, constitute epistemological problem-spaces for the conceptualization, practice, and, importantly, teaching of ethnography. The space of the classroom, however, is not just one of the transparent reflection of a teacher's intellectual inheritance. It is also an immediately institutional space, one that reflects both the specific ethos of particular departments at moments in time and the affordances, constraints, expectations, and ideologies that structure and animate the contemporary research university itself.

My own pedagogical investments seek to teach a rigorous ethnographic research practice that is feminist and decolonizing in its ethos, that addresses global, systemic complexities through an ethnographic practice that focuses on the situated and the particular in ways that are open to the creative and evocative potentials of humanistic and artistic ways of knowing and doing. How one does that in relation to a phallogocentric epistemic history is a methodological question that is not reducible to a technical one. Thus, my interest in teaching "method" is praxiological. It does not concern how one "does" ethnography in any programmatic sense; it is concerned with the praxis of ethnography, one that is always both practical and ethical—not ethical in the liberal, instrumental sense of informed consent that institutional review boards concern themselves with, but by being accountable to the stuff of the world under question within our research projects, including the insistence on certain kinds of refusals.[13] It would also simultaneously encourage the proliferation of ethnographic modalities.

In privileging the teaching of a multisituated research sensibility, I found two things about how Marcus and Fischer's call for a multisited or multilocale ethnography was internalized or responded to. The first was an anxiety among students about the feasibility of multisited research projects, especially at the dissertation stage: an anxiety that I suspect is not entirely self-generated but instilled by disciplinary norms and forms as they reproduce themselves pedagogically. The second was a proliferation of actual dissertation research projects that nonetheless proposed or promised to do multisited work, albeit often conceptualized and articulated in formulaic, reductive, and technical ways ("I will go to so many places . . . ," etc.). What idea of multisitedness has led to this con-

tradictory anxiety toward multisited work alongside a formulaic investment in it, I wondered? From what ideas (and ideals) of ethnography does this stem from? How is it suited, or not, to the realities and challenges of contemporary ethnographic research projects, especially at the dissertation stage? Yet even within the context of these resistances and anxieties, I found, over the years, a certain kind of student finding her (yes, it is usually, though not exclusively, her) voice within this pedagogical environment—with a certain kind of project. These tend to be students with diasporic trajectories of various kinds (not just cross-national) and feminist and anticolonial investments in ethnographic work, wishing to explore multimodal ways of doing ethnography.[14]

What was happening via these dialogues with institutional transformations and constraints on the one hand and student desires and resistances on the other was a personal and pedagogical investment on my part in ethnography. This book offers me a chance to take stock: what are my own stakes in method, such that they have formed a constitutive part of my own pedagogy for so long? Why am I so invested in arguing not just for the feasibility but also for the desirability and necessity of multisited projects? What are the implications for adopting a multisited sensibility for research design, in the process of conceptualizing projects across site and scale; for developing multimodal pedagogical offerings, as arguments for proliferating the norms and forms of ethnographic practice; for arguing for a multisituated praxis?

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Given this biographical itinerary and intellectual trajectory, the situated perspective this book provides is written not from the margins of ethnographic practice but from its various *borders*.

My own research and teaching is located at, and constituted by, national, disciplinary, and praxiological borders (India/United States; anthropology/STS; academe/activism). This book, therefore, does not take the form of speaking *to* the discipline from a marked subject position, as some very important meta-methodological critiques have done.[15] Rather, it inhabits that awkward diasporic space that shuttles back and forth between different locales and commitments. It is inspired by the practice of scholars such as Marilyn Strathern, who articulates her own awkward relationship between anthropology and feminism, and Gayatri Spivak, who attends to and writes from her diasporic location as a postcolonial, South Asian feminist scholar and teacher of the humanities within the elite

metropolitan university, "outside in the teaching machine" (Strathern 1987a; Spivak 1993). It contains situated perspectives that are hybrid, embodying forms of what Homi Bhabha, following histories of Black radical thought from W. E. B. Du Bois to Frantz Fanon, has called double consciousness (Bhabha 1994).[16]

This has consequences for the kind of book this can be and for the kinds of spaces it can claim to speak from. Mine is an elite trajectory: I am an upper-caste, middle-class, Hindu male from a caste-ridden, patriarchal, increasingly majoritarian society, who is a tenured professor in an elite, private American university, in a department that has long been central to the discipline of anthropology. It is also a trajectory that has some sense of what it means to be caught within the folds of empire, folds that at different times and in different ways both provide refuge and suffocate. The sense of alienation that I, like so many others, still feel while passing through immigration checkpoints at Euro-American ports of entry, even as my mobility reflects a privileged itinerary, is mirrored by the alienation that the discipline of anthropology sometimes thrusts upon me, especially at moments when it parses center and periphery onto its objects and subjects of research in ways still deeply marked by its colonial inheritances. It is further mirrored in the sense of alienation that the American university sometimes thrusts upon me, as it does upon so many others when it fails to attend to the subjective experience of those who might inhabit it from elsewhere, even as it provides an Enlightenment sanctuary and physical safe haven.

Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* ([1987] 2012) and Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Nielsen's *Border as Method* (2013) are works that inspire this understanding of the "border." These important works teach us that "the border" is not just an object but also a method. By paying attention to what constitutes a border, to the work done by such constitutions, one can understand something significant about contemporary global capitalism: in this instance, about the epistemology and ethics of ethnographic research, and the ethics and labor of a pedagogy of ethnography, conducted within capitalized worlds and institutions. This involves being attentive to the border not just as something that excludes but also as something that creates new and differential forms of inclusion, which can be as productive and as violent as exclusion. What is at stake here is an attention to the translations that attend the production of a diasporic ethnography in metropolitan institutions and disciplines with colonial inheritances, with all the impossibilities and infidelities that translation

necessarily entails.[17] At stake in writing (and teaching) from the borders is, necessarily, a consideration and reimagination of norms and forms of ethnographic practice, in order to decenter the colonial inheritances of anthropology that separate center from periphery, inside from outside, self from other, ethnographer from native.

Simply put, as a book written from the borders, this is—perforce, must be—an anti-Malinowskian book. It writes against an ideal of the romantic Malinowskian fieldworker (always, implicitly, "from here") who was "there" and in the process could generate an authoritative account of the authentic Other, by becoming Other—an act that can only be one of appropriation and possession. My attempt to think ethnography otherwise and Otherwise, from the borders, as a diasporic practice, is not a polemic against fieldwork. On the contrary, it is a provocation to rethink the pedagogy of fieldwork without reproducing the phallogocentrism of its Malinowskian ideology. This ideology is not just colonial in the way in which it presumes an inscription of center and periphery; it is also deeply masculine in its imagination of how the fieldworker is embodied.[18]

The answer to the question that I am asking—is it possible to have a decolonial, non-phallogocentric ethnographic practice?—is yes, if it is multisituated in its ethos. This ethos, as already mentioned, is a sensibility, a mode of bodily attunement to the stuff of the world under question. However, that attunement alone can never suffice unless it destabilizes and reinvigorates pedagogical modalities of teaching research design in ways that institutionally interrogate the metropolitan research university and reorient it toward postcolonial and decolonizing praxis.

I do not have programmatic answers to how this might be achieved. I do not want to suggest a formalizing or totalizing "manifesto" for anthropology. Rather I attempt to puzzle through the epistemic, ethical, and political problems these questions pose, especially to the imaginary of ethnographic research design and pedagogy. Answers do exist, however, in the form both of exemplary ethnographies that have performed, and of meta-methodological reflections that have conceptualized, non-phallogocentric modes of fieldwork and analysis—including, importantly, from within the metropolitan university. This book provides a reading of works that chart some such avenues. These do not articulate a singular method that is reducible to a technical formula. One does not achieve a decolonial practice by following a fixed path or program, but by proliferating possibilities—many of them partial, provisional, and frictioned with respect to one another—and by thinking ethnography otherwise and Otherwise.

Nor does one do so, simply, by rejecting "white male" anthropology. We have to live with and learn from our inheritances in order to be able to deconstruct, subvert, or torque them. My argument for decolonizing ethnography is resolutely not one that refuses a white male intellectual lineage: it is not an idea of "decolonization" based in identitarianism.[19] At its core, I argue for an imagination of the fundamental method of ethnography as *being something other or more than participant observation*, at least as constructed in its colonial, masculinist, Malinowskian guise. I wish to signal and develop non-Malinowskian approaches to the practice of ethnographic fieldwork: not just by exploding understandings of what constitutes locality, but also by dispensing at a deeper intellectual and political or ethical level with wanting to position ethnography as comprehensive knowledge of alterity. This involves questioning the status of the native informant in ethnographic practice, reorienting the spatial imaginations of ethnographic practice beyond those of core and periphery, and considering the obligations of ethnographic encounter.

This book consists of four chapters, each of them searching for forms of praxis that deal with the problem, paradox, and politics with which this book is wrestling. How to study complex systems and structures using experience-proximal practices? How to do so at a moment of the becoming-diasporic of the discipline and the metropolitan university? How to decolonize a practice that is dependent on the native informant, who is fundamentally constituted through colonial epistemic genealogies? The book considers these questions through the problem-spaces of scale, comparison, encounter, and dialogue.

Each of these problem-spaces exceeds participant observation. One cannot scale an analysis simply by expanding one's presence beyond the local: other conceptual maneuvers beyond authorial presence are required. Comparison can be effected physically, but it is also an epistemic practice, a function of how one constitutes figure and ground: a constitution that never simply occurs "in the field" but begins as a set of structuring, often implicit assumptions, about what, where, and who is central and which peripheral. Encounter and dialogue are, by definition, about twos (and threes, as I will argue), not about the solitary fieldworker. Fieldwork is at the heart of the problem-space of each chapter, but the romantic, authorial presence of the fieldworker, an ideological inheritance that is both colonial in provenance and masculinist in its ideal-typification of the ethnographer, is deconstructed.

Chapter 1, "Scale," elaborates an idea and ideal of multisituated ethnography as conceptual topology rather than literalist methodology. It is, in significant measure, an engagement with chapters 3 and 4 of *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*. I think through potential modes of feasible operationalization of a multisituated sensibility without reducing it to a formalist program, considering exemplary works that attend to global political economic structures and systems on the one hand and personhood, biography, and subjectivity on the other. I suggest how the two are imbricated with one another in a multisituated sensibility, including very different modalities of ethnographic research design and practice. Thus, I build discussion of fieldwork about, and in the age of, globalization beyond early multisited concerns with how to "follow" objects and processes across multiple sites and locales.

Chapter 2, "Comparison," considers how we might compare otherwise and Otherwise, in ways that do not reproduce colonial, masculinist center-periphery assumptions. This chapter sees the beginning of a sustained engagement with Spivak's work, here in part through a dialogue with Clifford Geertz's considerations of experience-proximity and experience-distance in relation to an ethnographic articulation of "the native's point of view" and with Marilyn Strathern's *Partial Connections* (Geertz 1974; Strathern 1991). I question the status of the native informant in ethnographic practice and as a basis for anthropological comparison, as I consider how to cultivate an openness to others that would recognize not just their answers to comparative human questions, but also the different questions, and thus comparisons, those others might enunciate in the first place.

Chapter 3, "Encounter," considers ethnography through an engagement with Lauren Berlant's conceptions of intimacy and with theorizations of literature and photography, especially those of Gabriele Schwab and Roland Barthes, respectively (Barthes 1980; Berlant 1998; Schwab 2012). I am specifically interested here in the relationship between representation and evocation, as well as the ways in which modes of attentiveness and attunement to the world can be made ethnographically resonant in multisituated ways. I am grasping here for an idea(l) of multisituatedness that is accountable rather than innocent, that is cognizant of the constitutive risk of encounter, with all of its potential for appropriation and violence. I am also arguing for a sense of ethnographic ethics that is not just about abstinence from acts that might harm one's interlocutors, but is rather a more

positive socialization of the research process itself, one that fully explores the creative and humanistic potentials of ethnography, which can never escape the unanticipated third entity (reader/viewer) who is constitutive to the praxis of ethnography (and literature and photography).

Chapter 4, "Dialogue," is an elaboration of Douglas Holmes and George Marcus's call for para-ethnography (Holmes and Marcus 2005). Drawing in part on some of my own para-ethnographic work studying the establishment of India's first biomedical translational research institute, I elaborate how the activation and inhabitation of what Michael Fischer calls "third spaces" are vital to a multisituated sensibility, specifically in the ways in which they can reconfigure relationships with native informants away from masculinist, colonizing ones toward ways that are more dialogic (Fischer 2003). I consider the epistemic and political consequences of this rescripting and realignment of the ethnographer–native informant relationship, which is necessarily also a reimagination of the forms and spaces of ethnographic encounter. In contrast to the Malinowskian understanding of a field site as an already existing object that the fieldworker must come to know and be able to represent, I think of para-sites as designed from the start as dialogical spaces where interlocutors develop questions and answers instead of providing raw material. The conceptualization of fieldwork here is as conference rather than interview.

Scale, comparison, encounter, and dialogue are all elements of ethnographic practice. The relationship between these elements, and the conversations between the chapters, is not seamless. The trajectory of the argument across these chapters is not synthetic: there is not a *solution* to phallogocentrism to be found at the end of it all, just different modalities of working against, working around, and working through the difficult inheritances of ethnography. These modalities are often in tension with one another. For example, I presented a version of chapter 2, on comparison, at the conference "African Ethnographies" at the University of the Western Cape (UWC).[20] The conjuncture of this conference is inseparable from that of a continuing conversation about decolonizing the discipline and the university in South Africa in the burning embers of the #FeesMustFall student movement. In such a site, I encountered important questions about why I remained invested in the project of comparison itself, a project that, as my interlocutors pointed out, is of colonial provenance. There was a sense there that one should think scale *instead* of comparison as the means to thinking decolonization.[21] Yet there remains an important postcolonial and feminist function to rescripting comparison, as I argue

through the works of Spivak and Strathern. Similarly, chapter 3 is in part an engagement with certain trajectories of psychoanalytic thought, a consideration of questions of encounter through questions of transference and affect as articulated, for instance, in the works of Schwab and Berlant. Yet if one reads these genealogies through Strathern, one would be forced to decenter the very notion of personhood that is at the heart of psychoanalytic reasoning, as a quintessential Western construct.[22]

Thus, all of these modes of analysis—scalar, comparative, encountering, dialogic—provide ways of thinking ethnography beyond Malinowskian phallogocentrism. None of them provides, in any simple way, an escape from the colonial and patriarchal inheritances of ethnographic practice. Deconstruction is not absolution, which does not make it any the less important. Even if there is no synthesis to be found in this book, there *is* a trajectory. The book begins with this question: how does an ethnographer make a structural analysis of systemic complexity while decentering the romantic authorship of the social analyst, which depends on both her grounding epistemic assumptions and the native informant? This is a deconstructive move, one that the ethnographies I describe in chapter 1, Marcus and Fischer in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, and scholars such as Geertz, Strathern, and Spivak whom I engage with in chapter 2, all engage in, in different ways. Nonetheless, this deconstructive project retains the form of the monologue, as the form of the production of social theory. Theory making, as the labor of the conceptualization of the stuff of the world that we live in, as articulated by the theorist, is at the heart of the endeavor—as, indeed, it is for this book. This speaks, in some sense, to the *sociological* functions of ethnography.

When I move to chapters 3 and 4, I move resolutely to the dialogic dimensions of ethnography, not just as a means to a monologic authorial end, but potentially as an end in itself. I further consider it as a *trialogic* practice, one that operates between the ethnographer, her interlocutors in "the field," and an unintended subsequent third entity, the reader of the (usually) monologue that is generated through the fieldwork encounter. This draws upon Schwab's argument of ethnography as a form of *literary* knowledge, wherein the function of literature involves the transferential relationships established by the unintended and subsequent third, the reader of the novel. This triad is about much more than production, consumption, and reception constituting a communicative idea of readership. It is about responsibility, about the work of ethnography in a world full of appropriative and overdetermined discursive spaces. The relationship

between ethnographer, her interlocutors (native informants, brought into decentered relationships or not), and the unintended, subsequent third reader is both noninnocent and politically vital. This speaks to the *evocative* function of ethnography, one that is about more and other than its aesthetic function. It shares skin not just with the epistemology of literature, but also with the praxis of photography, which I explore alongside in chapter 3, as I consider the simultaneous violence and transformative potential of both writing and seeing. What other ethnographic norms and forms does this give rise to, and how might those be scripted through reconceptualizations of both research design and the means and ends of ethnography? I ask this in chapter 4, through an exploration of paraethnographic possibilities and experiments.

Ultimately, what is at stake is a question of ethnography as what the organizers of the "African Ethnographies" conference at UWC called a *difficult* practice, one that is difficult to perform and that constitutively occupies a politically difficult space.[23] It is alongside this a question about the place of ethnographic knowledge today: about, if you like, the *ends* of ethnography (its ultimate objectives; the points at which its practices and explanations run out; whether, in fact, it has exhausted itself in times that are both financialized and decolonizing).[24] What kind of knowing is this, especially as its colonial and heteropatriarchal inheritances are acknowledged and decentered? Why is it important? What are the grounds upon which one can simultaneously be committed to it while remaining ambivalent about so many of its genealogies, to the point even of loathing some of its histories? Through what emergent norms and forms can one recommit to its most radical potentials, in ways that cannot deny or excise its painful histories but that can potentially script them toward Other futures? These are the questions for this book. They are praxiological questions, at once epistemological, pedagogical, and institutional.

Notes

Introduction

1 I experienced some of these problems acutely the one year that I co-taught the introductory "Systems" course in the Anthropology Department at the University of Chicago in 2013. This course is legendary in departmental and disciplinary lore. My pedagogical colleague was John Kelly, who accepted my suggestion that we design a syllabus to teach the disciplinary canon alongside a postcolonial, feminist counter-canon. The class would meet twice a week. On Thursdays, we designed a sequence that began with Boas and proceeded sequentially through twentieth-century metropolitan anthropology. On Tuesdays, we began with Mahashweta Devi—feminist, postcolonial, non-anthropological literature about indigeneity—and worked backward. I am deeply indebted to the enthusiasm and generosity with which Kelly embraced this experiment. Yet it ultimately failed, for various complex reasons, not least of which was the fact that the subject positions of the teachers mapped on to the content that we respectively designed, such that the diasporic anthropologist became the bearer of the counter-canon: the marked subject taught by a marked subject position. The ways in which this double marking was received by a cohort that itself was constituted by both metropolitan and diasporic anthropology students, including indigenous students and students of color, revealed in stark ways the violence and discordance between canonical inheritances and the ways the discipline is currently being peopled.

2 In this regard, Christopher Newfield's *Unmaking the Public University* (2011) is particularly important. Also see Chris Newfield, "As Trump Privatizes

Education, Dumping Identity Studies Is the Worst Possible Advice," Remaking the University, November 25, 2016, http://utotherescue.blogspot.com/2016/11/as-trump-privatizes-education-dumping.html, for a more recent analysis in the wake of Donald Trump's election. Bill Reading's *The University in Ruins* (1996) is a classic that remains relevant.

3 See Lionel Trilling's story "Of This Time, Of That Place," which contains the haunting question, asked by Tertan, a student of modern drama, "Of this time, of that place, of some parentage, what does it matter?" (Trilling 1980: 78). The form of this question, asked within the space of pedagogical interaction in the American university, engendering reflexive questions about the nature of pedagogy and the modern university in a manner that is attentive to history, location, and inheritance, inspires the form of analysis that this book undertakes.

4 For an elaboration of the relationship between an epistemic milieu and histories of social thought in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany, see Dominic Boyer's *Spirit and System* (2005). For a postcolonial exploration of intellectual milieus in the thought of Caribbean anticolonial thought, see David Scott's "The Temporality of Generations" (2014).

5 I am thinking of the programmatic importance of *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Malinowski [1922] 2014) in structuring a disciplinary imaginary of what fieldwork ought to be.

6 The critical theory mini-seminar, "Multi-si(gh)ted: Pharmocracy, Postcoloniality and Perception," consisted of three lectures delivered at the Critical Theory Institute, University of California at Irvine, March 2018. In the course of writing this manuscript, I came to recognize that it was situation, not sight, that was at the core of the supplementarity to multisited and multilocale ethnography that I was after. Hence, this book is called *Multisituated*, even as the seminar and lectures that gave it form were called "Multi-si(gh)ted."

7 The examples of this are too numerous to cite, but I think especially of the formative importance of the ethnographies facilitated out of Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) in the 1980s and 1990s, which opened new directions in the anthropology of science and technology even as it proved to be a harbinger of corporate-based ethnography in high-tech worlds for purposes such as user interface studies. For important examples of this earlier work, see Lucy Suchman's *Plans and Situated Actions* (1987) and *Human-Machine Reconfigurations* (2006: especially chapter 1, in which Suchman tells the story of some of her early research at Xerox PARC) and Julian Orr's *Talking about Machines* (1996).

8 Again, there are far too many examples of this to do justice to in a note, but I especially want to mention recent work at the intersection of ethnography and the environmental sciences that has experimented with and expanded possibilities for what one can do ethnographically with environmental data.

See, for instance, Sara Wylie's work in this regard, which intervenes in the generation of environmental health knowledge, with an orientation toward making extractive corporate practices visible, through methods that combine ethnographic research, sociological analysis, design, and the creative arts (see https://sarawylie.com/, last accessed November 15, 2019). This does not preclude the anthropological monograph, as her extraordinary book *Fractivism*, written alongside this collaborative work, testifies (Wylie 2018). This is part of a broader body of work on environmental data justice that is emerging collaboratively, for instance, through the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative, of which Wylie is a founding member along with other historians, sociologists, geographers, philosophers, and STS scholars who adopt an ethnographic approach to visualizing, preserving, and reflecting upon environmental data in the age of Trump (see, for example, Dillon et al. 2017). See also the work of the Disaster STS Network and The Asthma Files, platforms developed by Kim and Mike Fortun and their collaborators, which demonstrates a similar ethnographic ethos that is designed toward a combination of description, conceptualization, advocacy, and accountability (https://disaster-sts-network.org/, https://theasthmafiles.org/, both last accessed November 15, 2019).

9 It is hard and not particularly useful to draw definitional boundaries about who "is" or "is not" an anthropologist. Nonetheless, I wish here to acknowledge STS scholars Donna Haraway and Sheila Jasanoff, philosopher of science Sabina Leonelli, geographer Gail Davies, literary scholars Gabriele Schwab and Lauren Berlant, art historian Winnie Wong, and political scientist Lisa Wedeen. Each of them is an ethnographer who is not trained or located in an Anthropology Department (though most are, to paraphrase Haraway, "anthropologists with a transit visa"), and I have learned enormously about the practice and conceptualization of ethnography from each of them from the examples their work has set and also from personal conversations over the years. I do not engage specifically with all of their work in this book, but each of these scholars has provided significant inspiration for its ethos.

10 The term "concept work" was introduced by Paul Rabinow (2003) and has developed in generative ways through conversations in the Anthropological Research on the Contemporary (ARC) Collaboratory over the past decade and a half (http://anthropos-lab.net/, last accessed July 21, 2018). I prefer the term to "theory," which is often reified as a "thing" rather than as a process with its own praxis and method that can be learned and cultivated.

11 See chapter 1 for an elaboration of the distinction between the research topic and object of study, which is at the heart of ethnographic methods pedagogy developed by Kristin Peterson and Valerie Olson at the University of California at Irvine.

12 I might add, at an earlier iteration of these interfaces than those seen recently in the course of the so-called ontological turn in the human sciences, as seen in the interest that anthropological journals such as *HAU* took in STS. (See the "colloquium" on the ontological turn in *HAU*, edited by John Kelly, in its 2014 summer issue.) This more recent interest constructs a genealogy for STS that derives very much from Michel Callon's and Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to trace its conversations with (especially French philosophical) anthropology. It does not do justice to the multiple other genealogies of STS that have informed anthropological work and ethnographic sensibilities for the prior two decades, especially those that come out of feminism and are in strong conversation with and debt to the "1980s moment" in the human sciences. This genealogy would, for instance, consider Sharon Traweek's *Beamtimes and Lifetimes* (1988) to be equally or more foundational to an STS/anthropology interface than Latour. This speaks to other kinds of long twentieth-century genealogies of the anthropological discipline: Traweek was trained by Gregory Bateson, and the Batesonian methodological echo is strong in this seminal comparative ethnography of high-energy physics communities in the United States and Japan. Yet Latour, in a remarkably ungenerous review, attacked the book as not being the kind of ethnography that STS should do (Latour 1990). Kim Fortun and Michael Fischer, in separate articles in the *HAU* colloquium, argue for a broader historical understanding of the anthropology/STS interface than the ontological turn-obsessed moment allowed, one that especially attended to questions of the political in less masculinist and Eurocentric ways (Fischer 2014; K. Fortun 2014). My own training and investment in the anthropology/STS interface comes out of this *longue durée* genealogy that emerges out of the strong feminist and postcolonial commitments of the 1980s, as this book will explore.

13 See, for instance, Simpson 2007 and Jackson 2010.

14 At Chicago, this led Julie Chu to elaborate the "Methods" curriculum into a two-part sequence (now renamed "Modes of Inquiry"), the second part of which is exclusively dedicated to students doing small practicums using two creative forms that go beyond participant observation. This class has thus far had two iterations: the first taught by Chu and myself; the second by Chu and Mareike Winchell. Students have explored practices such as documentary filmmaking, photography, digital cartography, drawing, poetry, and fiction writing.

15 These critiques span postcolonial, feminist, critical race, and indigenous perspectives, and they are too numerous to cite exhaustively. Two seminal examples that continue to inspire me are Talal Asad's "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology" (1986), for how power enters into processes of metropolitan cultural translation, and Audra Simpson's "On Ethnographic Refusal" (2007), for a method of writing about the

Mohawk in ways that decenter colonial assumptions of "self" and "other" that structure the legacy of anthropological writing about indigeneity.

16 Bhabha's *Location of Culture* is a seminal postcolonial intervention into thinking the question of postcolonial diaspora along and through postcolonial Black radical thought, especially Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* ([1952] 1994). See also Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* ([1903] 2016), where he introduces the important notion of double consciousness.

17 For an articulation of the postcolonial stakes and resonances of translation, see Niranjana 1992 and Sakai 1997.

18 I am grateful to my students in the "Multi-si(gh)ted" seminar for relentlessly pointing this out, in myriad explicit and implicit ways. See also the virtual session "Mother Antihero: Reports from a 21st Century Field," organized for the 2018 Society for Cultural Anthropology meetings by Amber Benezra, Hanna Garth, Ann Kelly, Tina Harris, Dana Powell, Emilia Sanabria, Megan Carney, Cari Maes, Daisy Deomampo, Jessica Hardin, Olga Soodi, Laurie Willis, Rosario Garcia Meza, Clare Chandler, and Emily Yates-Doerr (https://displacements.jhu.edu/mother-antihero-reports-from-a-21st-century-field/, last accessed July 23, 2019).

19 The politics of such refusal is complex and emerges out of political conjunctures. I was at a talk at the University of Cape Town in 2017 that discussed genealogies of English studies in the country; at the end of the talk, a student eloquently responded that we do not need to be reading Shakespeare in this decolonizing moment because he was a white man. Closer to home, I had a student at the University of Chicago drop my seminar on multi-si(gh)ted ethnography because we were reading Clifford Geertz, whose own white masculinity (which does manifest quite strongly at many moments of his writing) was antithetical to her expectations from a seminar concerned with postcolonial and decolonizing politics. My attempt to think ethnography Otherwise is not simply based in an identitarian quest for authorial radical alterity. Having said this, the politics of these identitarian refusals, of course, contains its own genealogies; it is impossible to understand the conversation in Cape Town without situating it within the politics of the student protests there in the aftermath of the #RhodesMustFall campaign. In the context of anthropology, one cannot think of the white male history of the discipline in South Africa without understanding, among other things, the history of anthropology as a racist "science of the people" (*volkenkunde*) that provided epistemic justification for apartheid. There are good reasons to refuse white male authorial histories, at least for some people, some of the time. At the same time, I take seriously Dipesh Chakrabarty's insistence on the importance of understanding postcolonial thought (including the possibility for even thinking the political in the postcolony today) through its European inheritance in ways that do not reduce a decolonizing politics to a quest for what Leela Gandhi has called "postcolonial revenge" (Gandhi

1998; Chakrabarty 2000). In other words, we do not have to like the people we have read or the identities they represent, but we do need to understand their thought to understand the postcolonial worlds we inhabit today. My point here is not to take sides on what constitutes an adequately decolonizing epistemic politics. It is necessary both to remain engaged and invested in imperial genealogies of knowledge production, and also to understand decolonial demands for its absolute repudiation in certain places and times. I am grateful to many friends and colleagues, especially Jean Comaroff, John Comaroff, Thomas Cousins, Colleen Crawford-Cousins, Kelly Gillespie, Stacy Hardy, Julia Hornberger, Charne Lavery, Achille Mbembe, Daniel Moshenberg, Neo Muyanga, Leigh-Ann Naidoo, Michelle Pentecost, and Hylton White, for providing me a range of perspectives on movements to decolonize the South African university.

20 See Centre for Humanities Research, "African Ethnographies," June 6, 2018, http://www.chrflagship.uwc.ac.za/african-ethnographies/.

21 I do not fully explore the genealogy of scalar analysis, either in anthropology or in the human sciences more generally. Anna Tsing's *Friction* (2004) is the seminal meta-methodological reflection that brought the question of scale to prominence for my generation of anthropologists. Yet thinking of scale and scale making in the world, and using scalar analysis as a method, has, of course, been at the heart of the practice of critical geography for decades; this cross-disciplinary influence on ethnographic practice is equally important to consider.

22 This critique can be found throughout Strathern's work. Some of its most radical implications, especially in relation to its consequences for conceptualizations of property and Western/colonial notions of possession (as dependent on the prior ontological purification of persons from things), are to be found in her *Property, Substance, and Effect* (Strathern 1999).

23 See Centre for Humanities Research, "African Ethnographies." Thanks to Kelly Gillespie and Annachiara Jung Forte for this formulation.

24 I think here of John Comaroff's provocations on the "end of Anthropology" (Comaroff 2010).

1. Scale

1 I take this essay as a point of departure because it is where Marcus most clearly articulated his call for multisited ethnography, and because it has come to be the most cited point of reference for multisitedness, especially in graduate student dissertations and grant proposals. Thus, it has become an almost programmatic referent. It is important to recognize that this is not the first or last time or place where Marcus has concerned himself with the concept, and subsequent re-visitations have significantly developed or