Introduction

Experiencing the Ethnographic Present: Knowing through 'Crisis'[1]

Narmala Halstead

The volume focuses on anthropologists constructing knowledge through encounters which re-position the ethnographic present. The accounts bring out a notion of the ethnographic present beyond the idea of a privileged and separate time-space as one occupied by the ethnographer writing about the 'timeless' present of others (Fabian 1983). Whilst acknowledging both the use of the term as dualistic modes of the present and the critiques which argue for its necessary construction, 'an encounter outside history' as Kirsten Hastrup notes (1990: 51), this volume identifies another space in which the ethnographic present has to be located. This considers the anthropologist's engagement with doing fieldwork and writing ethnography as an ongoing and reflexive process. Thus, this is about the relationship of the anthropologist to the discipline of anthropology and the processes which constitute and demonstrate the discipline through what I term here as transformative spaces.

In these processes, the consciousness of the anthropologist is foregrounded vis-à-vis multiple influences as different moments of her/his ethnographic present. The accounts probe different aspects of the 'ethnographic present': overall, the chapters also allow for insights into the different trajectories of how the discipline is examined and reflected upon as forms of producing current anthropology. Whilst particular ethnographic moments do occur in field-sites, these moments continue at different times, in the anthropologist's study, work and social encounters to extend what Marilyn Strathern (1999) describes as the simultaneous inhabiting of ethnography's double fields – the field-site and 'back home.' Strathern (ibid.: Ch. 1) points to the notion of the 'ethnographic moment' as the 'effect of engaging the fields together' (ibid.: 6).

She notes: 'We could say that the ethnographic moment works as an example of a relation which joins the understood (what is observed at the moment of observation) to the need to understand (what is observed at the moment of analysis)' (ibid.).

The volume elaborates Strathern's 'observations': it is rather a continual process of discovery that draws on new understandings of past encounters, to result in an ethnographic present as 'multiply constituted'. In engaging with critiques of the ethnographic present, Hastrup urges that the notion should be understood beyond a construct of time between 'us' and 'them' (see also Sanjek 1991). She notes:

> The ethnographic present is a narrative construct that clearly does not represent a truth about the timelessness of the others. We know they are as historical as anybody in all possible ways. But the betweenness implied in fieldwork, and the fact of the ethnographer's sharing the time not *of* but *with* others, makes ethnography escape our ordinary historical categories. (1990: 57)

As an ongoing process, the ethnographic present in the way I am re-conceptualising it here is defined in and out of conventional field-sites[2]. It takes form through the ethnographer's reflections which may be influenced by the serendipitous encounters that occur inside and outside of these sites. In turn, anthropologists experience particular forms of their ethnographic present which contribute to changing understandings of anthropological knowledge. Thus, this construction of the ethnographic present is intertwined with the reflexive practices of ethnographers as those which constitute and re-constitute *present day* anthropology. Further, their practices are embedded in critical engagement with the history of the discipline.

Periods of reflection and scrutiny become *agents* to facilitate an idea of crisis that I argue is *the* mode of anthropological knowledge construction (cf. Kuhn 1962). This converts the idea of crisis from the conventional understanding of it being a problem, to the idea of crisis as a notion that facilitates the transformative spaces in which ethnographers do fieldwork and produce their ethnographies. Note Lila Abu-Lughod's (1991) point, for instance, where she urges that anthropologists should write against culture, a concept that has been critically interrogated in anthropology (see also Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Brightman 1995, Kuper 1999). Abu-Lughod states: 'The critiques of anthropology that have emerged recently from various quarters have encouraged us to question what we work on, how we write, and for whom we write'(1991: 157). She then points to her own work as examples to 'disturb the culture concept' (ibid.).

Matti Bunzl (2005) notes that the critiques of the 1980s vis-à-vis the 'Writing Culture' debates arose from a 'series of transformations' traceable to the 1960s. He reflects:

> … the transformations in the recent history of anthropology need to be understood as engendered by and a reaction to the so-called 'crisis of anthropology.' This crisis

which hit the discipline in the late 1960s stood at the heart of profound reorientations in the discipline – reorientations that have, in the last forty years, shaped the anthropology of today (2005: 188).

Annette Weiner, discussing the crisis mode of the discipline[3] in terms of critical change, notes:

> Some would say that it is anthropology's propensity for crises that keeps it such an intellectually dynamic discipline. And out of these crises, anthropologists as teachers, researchers and practitioners throughout this century have made – and continue to make – profound contributions that challenge the status quo, especially Western beliefs and 'truths' about the rest of the world's populations. (1995: 14)

The idea of epistemological crisis as a framework for critical knowledge construction positions the accounts in terms of an ethnographic present that is constantly changing rather than 'unchanging.' The ethnographic present escapes 'ordinary historical categories' by emerging within and through the transformative spaces of anthropological knowledge construction. The ethnographic present, thus, co-resides and is informed by the anthropologist's engagement with the notion of crisis as the mode of knowledge construction. The chapters bring out an extended field of continual involvement: some of the accounts consider recent and ongoing research, but chapters also focus on earlier research. The authors variously engage with key debates which shift the emphasis of crisis as a problem to that of crisis as a notion that facilitates knowledge construction. Notions of the West as in Western anthropology and as in local people's inhabiting of the West acquire different nuances in the encounters and in theoretical approaches. This also brings out the situatedness of 'being local' and the processes of 'native becoming'.

Crisis and/as the Mode of Anthropological Construction

The notion of Western emerges as a term implicated in the *problem of crisis*. By engaging with positioned approaches to the term Western, the volume references the history of anthropology where this was visible through 'crisis stages.' Anthropology as *Western*, its role in colonialism, and further, its modes of constructing and representing the *other* is marked by critiques by anthropologists in the twentieth century and more recently (see, for instance, Leach 1961, Nencel and Pels 1991, Trouillot 1991, Bunzl 2005). These critiques have allowed for epistemological questioning and doubt with regard to representing the other. Anthropology's contributions to knowledge of the colonised[4] and the limitations of these contributions were explored in terms of the 'mythicising erasure' which occurred in early anthropologists accounts on the colonial presence: the accounts ignored the impact of missionaries and other evidence of the Europeans' presence (Stocking 1983, 1991, Hirsch 2001:

137). Edmund Leach (as cited in Tambiah 2002: 432–433) in an 1987 ASA lecture, discussed how 'tribal ethnographers' ignored this presence where 'in order to bring things into sharper focus palpably European elements in the ethnographer's notes were omitted from the published record or else treated as alien contamination grafted onto whatever was there before.'

Debates on anthropologists' own 'absence' from the field-site in their roles as 'objective observers' were, in turn, marked by other debates about crisis of anthropology and crisis of representation. Richard Fox (1991: 8) notes, for instance, 'how artfully Evans-Pritchard first personified himself among the Nuer and then "disappeared" himself in favor of a scientific omniscience for the remainder of his text.' Consider also Bronislaw Malinowski's diary which was produced as a separate and private journal and was never meant to be published (Malinowski 1967). This diary demonstrated his *very particular* presence in the field-site that was not reflected in his accounts (see Okely 1996: 38). The controversy with regard to the issue of its publication by his widow was, in itself, a crisis of representation within the discipline (see Geertz 1983: 55–56).

James Clifford and George Marcus' (1986) co-edited volume, *Writing Culture* brought together divergent contributions to engage explicitly with erasures and absences in the ethnographic account which also challenged the constructions of the ethnographic voice[5]. These and other expressions of dissent as a constant critical examination of anthropology and the role of anthropologists, whilst reflexive, extended the space for 'hysteria' as a space that was ostensibly self-paralysing (see Kuper 1999). Thus, Geertz (1988: 71) pointed to the 'epistemological hypochondria' which questioned how one could ever know about others with any certainty and, in effect, how one could know how to know. This emphasis, however, overshadowed the reflexive processes of knowledge construction which emerged through these forms of questioning and doubts i.e. crisis became the mode through which anthropologists came to know, as noted.

The West as Inextricably In-between

Anthropologists have had to understand how they positioned *others* from particular Western perspectives. This positioning, in turn, allowed for new perspectives of these others and for the anthropologist, in turn, to be *othered* (see, for instance, Bunzl 2004). This has been further implicated in the emergence and critiques of the so-called native anthropologist as the voice of the *other* (see Strathern 1987: 31, Narayan 1993, Weston 1997, Jacobs-Huey 2002). This voice is not singular and the 'native' anthropologist becomes located in new positions of in-betweenness that also challenges the initial construct of 'us' and 'them'. Abu-Lughod brings out the problematic of this in-between-ness where her emphasis on demonstrating the common

humanity of Arabs to outsiders was viewed askance by the 'insiders' (see also Brettel 1993). She notes:

> My revelation of Bedouin individuals' attachments and vulnerabilities through their poetry, to create for Westerners a sense of recognition, not distance, has provoked several other responses in Egypt. When one woman heard someone read from a book a few of the poems she had recited years earlier, she exclaimed half-joking: 'You've scandalized us!' (1991: 159).

In general, the chapters engage in varying ways with the positioning of Western to demonstrate how the term becomes fluid as a term that is inextricably in-between. This extends the idea of the West beyond a universal category of a dominant political centre and particular ideologies. It shows its redefinition as part of a social imaginary by those who were seen traditionally outside of the West. How the West is extended and inhabited has been discussed in various ways (see Carrier 1995, Halstead 2002, Knauft 2002, Hirsch 2004). Sahlins (1993: 17) notes, commenting on the relations of Pacific islanders to western economy: '(…) The first commercial impulse of the people is not to become just like us but more like themselves. They turn foreign goods to the service of domestic ideas, to the objectification of their own reflections and notions of good life'. Clifford (1997: 4–5) discusses an account by the Indian anthropologist, Amitav Ghosh, to show the idea of the West as a site inhabited through 'travel.' Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2003: 38) discusses the notion of modernity to unveil *the* West: he notes that modernity 'was always plural, just like the West was always plural.'[6] The usage is explored beyond a select interpretation in the encounters between the anthropologist and her/his research participants which allow for different and varying understandings of the West. In this regard, *the native anthropologist, however defined, is part of the West.* The chapters bring out different ways this West is experienced. These emerge as shared experiences of variously embodied forms of knowing.

In some instances, the construction of anthropological knowledge explicitly engages with the connections between the body and person where knowing 'another' has to be experienced both through various forms of sociality and by considering the ways the body as a physical presence is placed in and becomes part of the field. This connects with critiques of the separation between the body and the thinking self. Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders (2006: 11–12) reflecting on how anthropological knowledge is also produced through the experiences of the human body, point to the experiential contexts of the body in physical environments and to the body as a 'means of knowing the world' (see also Lambek and Strathern 1998, Okely, 2007). The ethnographer becomes a particular kind of body, occupying the interfaces between different forms of knowledge and varying periods of data collection and critical engagement.

In varying ways, all the authors engage with and question their own worldviews and particular anthropological lenses to show the shifts in their

knowledge approaches over a period of time. Helena Wulff brings out her positioning of 'native' and 'ex-native' in relation to the world(s) of ballet and anthropology, where non-verbal bodily movements of the dance had to be conveyed through apprenticeship and situated practices. She carried out multi-sited fieldwork in South London and Stockholm and on tour with ballet companies in various countries. As a former dancer, she became a 'familiar other' among her research participants who, in turn, began to observe and mimic her observer pose. She was further able to appreciate and reflect on her insider and outsider positioning through 'bodily memory of dancing ballet' and personal histories. Similarly, Cristina Grasseni reflects on the acquisition of skilled vision through a landscape which incorporates her bodily movements and presence in everyday practices. Through this integrated setting, she examines her locatedness in the everyday and urges for a collapsing of world views in understanding her research participants' perspectives in Northern Italy.

Viranjini Munasinghe considers the collapsing of anthropological and local settings as a problematic which allows for new theoretical insights. Munansinghe offers a different perspective where the views of research participants may be over-privileged as a theoretical blind spot. She notes the danger of taking for granted the lay discourses among research participants in Trinidad in the collapsing of different settings. She urges for an awareness of the power of these discourses to act as substitutes for theory and argues for a necessary separation between different 'worlds'. In a related way, Crandall discusses different systems of knowledge with regard to the Himba in Southern Africa. He challenges and revises his own approach in different periods of reflection on the data. Similarly, Hirsch discusses how his understanding of a particular convention in an earlier fieldwork encounter in Papua New Guinea assumed a different meaning at a later stage to reflect his own changing historical consciousness. Both Hirsch and Crandall explicitly bring out their reflexive engagement as a theoretical repositioning which questions the assumptions of the anthropologist vis-à-vis Western knowledge conventions.

Judith Okely also re-examines the concept of Western by interrogating assumptions in her 'own' culture where she was 'forced' to do fieldwork in her 'home' settings in order to understand the Gypsy *others* in England. Her account also demonstrates the divisions between the West and its other which resurfaced on home territory as 'unanticipated fieldwork in the supposedly familiar' and where she drew on her 'own culture' to add to her understandings. Similarly, Wulff experienced a dualistic Western setting among fellow anthropologists who began to react to her in a particular way as a result of positioning her as a researcher on dance in Sweden.

Narmala Halstead, Vibha Arora and Konstantinos Retsikas engage with constructs of self and other through the ways their research participants locate them as 'Western' and or remake them into *local*. Halstead as a 'native' anthropologist discusses East Indians in Guyana. There are varied exchanges

of knowledge which inscribe and suggest the presence of *persons* as a term which moves them out of bounded ethnic and cultural bodies, but which also relies on their constrasting cultural visibility as *Indians*. These are negotiations of status which define and reposition certain understandings of Western, redefine Halstead's anthropological project and her research participants' understandings of different cultural spaces. Whilst Halstead shows how her research participants position her as both insider and outsider, Arora discusses how she was always strange in the form of the 'Indian anthropologist' even though she was *not* doing fieldwork in a different country. Thus, the notion of the 'non-West' as a competing signifier for the kind of oppression usually reserved for the term 'Western' emerge in Arora's work where her visibility as the Indian anthropologist among the Sikkim in Northeast India *inevitably* attracts the hostility reserved for such outsiders. By contrast, Retsikas points out that his Western identity suggested that he had bases for familiarity with people used to dealing with the foreign (cf. Drummond 1980 and Halstead 2002). His research participants related to him on the basis of 'knowledge' about his foreign body: Retsikas points to the co-optation and refashioning of his body as definitive of the processes of knowledge construction in fieldwork encounters and as demonstrative of the ways the fieldworker's body becomes the point of access. Overall, the accounts further demonstrate an interconnected landscape of 'us' and 'them'. The accounts variously demonstrate that the anthropologist subjective immersion in the field also allows for insights into the inhabiting of *Western as both outsider and native* positions: this is further explored in the more detailed discussion of the chapters below which also demonstrates the varied ways the authors experience the ethnographic present.

The Ethnographic Present: Continual Discovery

The accounts by Crandall, Hirsch and Okely bring out the histories of their fieldwork encounters and ethnographies as complicit in *new moments of knowing* to shift the idea of anthropological knowledge as located in a select 'Western' interpretation. Specifically, these chapters illustrate the positioning of the ethnographic present as one of continual discovery over lengthy periods in terms of their reflections on fieldwork and analysis. Thus, the authors demonstrate the processes of knowing as long-term engagement across the boundaries of the academic and defined field-sites. This illustrates the ethnographic present as shaped by changing historical consciousness and embedded in processes of historicity (see Hirsch and Stewart 2005).

Hirsch points to an omission where he assumed knowledge in an early fieldwork encounter in the 1980s based on his then historical consciousness and disciplinary boundaries. His interpretation of what he was told, about a convention being abandoned, located this practice in the past. It was only later, and through a reflexive process which also demonstrates the ethnographic

present as ongoing, that he was able to appreciate that this interpretation was in itself a point of access into knowing beyond particular disciplinary boundaries. He notes: 'The assumption – by Western trained anthropologists - is that matters abandoned in the past, are of the past. However, this assumption about knowledge and conduct may overlook other ways of knowing and acting that have implications for anthropological knowledge practices.'

Hirsch examines these different periods of making sense of the data by reflecting on how an anachronistic perspective meant that he implicitly overlooked the significance of his historical consciousness. He discusses the different understandings of the separation between past and present which selectively framed *knowledge* of the convention and its practice. This further allows for an appreciation of indigenous perceptions as transformed through local processes and indigenous people's conceptions of past, present and future. Hirsch's self-reflexive approach also shifts the positioning of Western practices as located in a 'Western tradition': the problems and biases of a selective Western anthropology re-emerge as transformative spaces to embody the ethnographic present.

Crandall addresses a similar point by reflecting on a different set of issues. Anthropologists have reflexively engaged with the significance of collapsing the insider-outsider boundary and understanding the position of the other in their work (see, for instance, Geertz 1983: Ch.3). What is significant in both Hirsch and Crandall's accounts is that they show how their work changed over a period of time and how this challenged earlier analysis, which also demonstrate the ethnographic present as embedded in reflexive practices and in the different periods of analysis. Their accounts illustrate reflexive stages of understanding the interfaces between fieldwork and analysis as a re-examination of access modes. Their different stages of engagement bring out a transformative space for anthropological knowledge as a construction that negotiates the positioning of both the anthropologist and his hosts.

Crandall notes that how he came to know about the Himba through an integrated system of knowledge as anthropological had to be revisited through his own appreciation of the inadequacy of this approach in relation to the Himba's forms of knowledge. His chapter on the Himba is also an engagement with the opposition which is often explicitly present in the construct of the Western. But he explores this opposition through a notion of a 'bounded system' of knowledge and by un-bounding this system. By identifying the particular systematisation of knowledge practices under which the anthropologist's account is produced, Crandall shows that this privileged an approach which missed the significance of local unsystematised ways of knowing.

His revisiting of material on the Himba brings out this key point. He considers an article published in 1996 on the Himba homestead and the symbolic dimensions of its organisation. He draws out his analysis in terms of the classificatory divide between male and female, left and right and good and evil. He notes that there were certain contradictions where their physical

arrangements matched some, but not all of these categories: this emerged as a problem which then had to be resolved according to his own anthropological biases. Crandall explains that he later comes to realise that his efforts to fit the material 'in the imaginary world of (his) theoretical/analytical system' conflicted with how the Himba made sense of their world. These efforts produced, in effect, an exchange of a 'less rigid form of intellectual organisation for one of extreme rigidity'.

Crandall is concerned with showing the different 'systems' of making sense of things: he argues that the anthropologists' emphasis on system over-determines the analysis in a way that may overlook other ways people have of apprehending the world. He argues that what 'we come to recognise as a contradiction or cultural puzzle is a reflection of a mode of thinking we thrust upon the world'. This is not dissimilar to Leach's (1954) work on the Kachins where in the *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, Leach demonstrates the contradictory ideas held by individuals in relation to social structure as a distinction between the anthropologist's 'model of social reality and the inconsistencies which emerge in the data to challenge this model'(ibid.: 8).

In tracing the different periods of analysis as new ways of understanding the past and thus, re-embedding the present, Crandall, however, also addresses different kinds of consciousness by the anthropologist. Similar to the accounts by Hirsch, he reflexively examines the implications of bringing together the different periods which also alter the meaning of Western as a select anthropological bias located in 'Western practices:' this demonstrates the meaning of the term as informed through the emergence of 'others' perspectives.

In a related way, Okely's exploration of her extended field-sites synthesises self and other dichotomies: she discusses her long-term field-sites of her 'own' and 'other' culture. As in the other accounts, this emerge both as a re-examination of Western presumptions and also redefines the Western in these multiple, many-sided fieldwork encounters. By anthropologising 'her' culture she was able to extend her field-sites beyond their variously conceived boundaries and beyond the limits of a time-focused ethnographic present. This was also extended in terms of her reflection on different approaches over a period of time. Okely brings out the reflexive stages as the definitive reward for doing fieldwork: she demonstrates the extension of the field through conversations with colleagues, by exploring her own omissions and by encountering strange understandings of her research in social settings. These experiences became forms of note-taking inscribed on her own consciousness and in which she interrogated and reflected on these narratives as ways of reflexively transforming the divisive space which located the Gypsies as other. Okely's research began as a policy-oriented project and she had to convince a 'seconded civil servant' of the merits of doing ethnographic fieldwork. Both the research approach from the perspective of her employers (not just about questionnaires) and the advice about jotting down copious notes as an anthropological standard had to be re-negotiated.

Whilst Okely had to rethink the anthropological emphasis on taking notes among her research participants as an act that had its own difficulties in terms of gaining trust/knowing things, she nevertheless 'took' constant notes, outside of the notebook and in and out of the originally conceived field-sites. This became a way of knowing beyond written notes, but where constant observation brought out the 'present' of anthropologists' ethnographies as intertwined in different periods, sites and key moments of anthropological understanding. In this re-telling, she highlights both key issues affecting anthropological fieldwork when she commenced her own research and the influences and moments of knowing which shaped her ethnographic present. Okely describes the progress of the research beyond this first project where her references to various experiences in social settings illustrate the connections between the immediate research sites and the extended field within and outside academia. She points to her various encounters with those who saw the Gypsies as strange others, believed that she was complicit in their understanding of this strangeness and wanted to share their 'fractured expertise.' Her examples illustrated an unexpected 'anthropology at home.' Her field-site extended beyond the Gypsies local settings to her 'local' settings as she found it necessary increasingly to take on board the stock images which circulated in her 'own' culture and which negatively stereotyped the Gypsies.

Anthropologising the Anthropologist

The accounts further shift the notion of 'fieldwork at home' to consider how anthropologists are seen to occupy both 'Western' and 'indigenous' positions as particular and contextually-bounded categories. Helena Wulff discusses her position as a 'native dancer' to demonstrate her positioning as insider and outsider. As a former dancer, she had a particular kind of access: she was expected to understand dance. Some people knew she had been a dancer just by observing her. Yet she was also clearly visible as a separate body – the anthropologist. Wulff discusses her negotiations around these positions, her eventual awareness of being watched in similar ways to her forms of observation, of being asked not to divulge information of which she knew nothing, being assumed to be critic as part of the usual roles assigned to fieldworkers (see Freilich 1970; Abu-Lughod 1988: 146; Fowler and Hardesty 1994). She draws on these interactions to demonstrate the transformation of her role among her research participants and where this also allowed her to know the role of researcher as confidante.

Her experiences in her 'own' culture i.e. among fellow anthropologists when she announced that she was going to study dance resonate with Okely's reflections. Wulff notes that her experiences were balanced by those who saw her as someone accessible as a result of her research focus on dance. Thus, whilst the reactions of several colleagues unveiled negative understandings of

dancers vis-à-vis their presumed sexual orientation and their gender, those of other colleagues contrasted with these assumptions and positioned her in a space of empathy. She notes: 'A whole new landscape opened up for me in the anthropological community. I remember how someone would stop and look at me, changing a professional expression of efficiency into a relaxed posture radiating personal warmth.'

Her bodily relationship in terms of dance is a recurring theme which allows for a narrative of various significant moments in her personal histories and in her anthropological work. How she knows and is seen to know the dance through her body further emerge through a staged performance by her research participants and reminiscent of the play staged on Kirsten Hastrup by those she studied (Hastrup 1995). Thus, her reflections on coming to know this material also rely on how she became known through the performative spaces of her field-sites. Her participant-hosts performed a sketch of her presence among them, displaying her efforts to remain in the background whilst demonstrating, however, that she was very much visible, and showing how she slowly made friends and became part of the main group.

Thus, the accounts move from a particular kind of 'anthropology at home' to anthropology in the 'extended home.' This demonstrates the dualism of the home setting, the extension of 'home' to the field through the idea of being native and the ways our participants revert anthropological focus, This allows for a more explicit focus on the anthropologist by her participant-hosts to illustrate both access into knowledge through these fieldwork encounters and the negotiation of otherness as necessary exchanges.

The anthropologising of the anthropologist emerges in Halstead's chapter through various reflections on her field-work encounters. Her chapter adds to work by so-called native anthropologists. It shows the non-West as a term which has to be challenged: it becomes contested in locals' redefinitions of the fieldworker and, in practice, in their redefining of the boundaries between West and non-West. This reverts to the theme addressed, if in different ways, by the contributors above and as a re-conceptualisation of the field in the fieldworker's varied understandings of his or her historical forms of consciousness. These forms necessarily alter and re-emerge to express the ethnographic present. She examines the idea of 'own' culture from a presumed insider perspective from which she considers her various forms of visibility as a 'native' anthropologist, woman, East Indian and Western academic. This adds to understandings of 'Western' as a term which becomes embodied through reflexivity and ethics in the fieldwork encounters: the terms of engagement redefine understandings of Western anthropology and demonstrate knowledge through shared encounters as forms of gifting.

Halstead reflects on knowing and constructing knowledge as an ongoing form of access between herself and her research participants: mutual reflections and awareness of select representative spaces allow for constructions of persons and their forms of visibility to emerge alongside the

unfolding of the data. She revists one encounter where she reflects on her materialisation as insider to the culture *and* as other by exploring the implications for analysis over different periods (Halstead 2001). She teases out this process as a questioning and redefining of 'anthropology others' – those who by virtue of being the object of research are theoretically addressed in a space of distance as those who *have to be studied.* The encounters also show the shifting of her native researcher's' role: the interactions with her participant-hosts, and her different modes of representing and knowing people become a negotiation of subjectivity and academic distance. Her account shows her switching roles where she is explicitly repositioned as *participant rather than observer* by her participant-hosts.

Her contextualisation of the material is through the ways East Indians understand themselves in different cultural contexts – this emerges for instance, in the example of a food-sharer's efforts to bring attention to her 'role-switching,' after he provided her with food at a wedding, traditionally eaten in a leaf, without cutlery. Under his gaze, she changes from an observer, presumably detached, to someone being observed i.e. an East Indian woman eating with her hand and in the process *becoming* a legitimate object of anthropological interest. But, based on her experience and knowledge of other encounters, Halstead later understands that in this shift, the fieldworker identifies the display of Indian distinctiveness in a public performative space, and as one which is contextually-occupied by East Indians. In drawing attention to her role as observer/anthropologist and simultaneously to that of a woman visible through cultural practice, the food-sharer also *identifies the space for his own role to shift*. Halstead reflects on these exchanges as gifts of knowledge reliant on the mutual role-shifting of self and other.

Her participant-hosts gaze into and draw conclusions about her research agenda. Their interventions in her role and positioning, in turn, demonstrate their contextual forms of being visible in and out of a culturally-ascribed space. Halstead considers these interactions through understandings of different kinds of space. By interrogating the different gazes as an anthropologising of the anthropologist and as East Indians' interventionist approaches in their public representations, she also brings out the connections between the anthropological project of understanding difference and the ways East Indians construct and erode difference.

Konstantinos Retsikas'chapter on the East Javanese allows for a different perspective to show how he becomes embodied as the other from a positioning where he is explicitly visible as Western and where, for instance, there are efforts by his participant-hosts to challenge his difference or explore the possibility of mutual origins. The contrast of this re-making of his body with classic anthropological ideas of 'going native' is indicative of the changing nature of anthropological knowledge construction and how this emerges through reflexive accounts of fieldwork and ethnography. Further, it again brings out the mutually-interventionist roles of fieldworker and research-participants in the debates on knowledge and reflexivity.

He demonstrates forms of the anthropologist being anthropologised in his reflections on how his body is produced and probed as foreign by people accustomed to dealing with foreigners through their own 'foreign past'. Retsikas explores these fieldwork encounters through the ways he is transformed and where this 'new kind of body' informs his understandings which are always in process – 'incomplete and partial'

In foregrounding his ethnographic present in this incompleteness, he comes to understand how his 'otherness' is refashioned by people who themselves have gone through the process of being from elsewhere in a locality marked by centuries of migration and 'mixed-ness' as part of 'intermingled living'. He notes that the explicit nature of his research assumes new forms in the efforts of the East Javanese to transform his body as 'a moral Muslim human subject': their efforts to refashion his body, in turn, *become* his moments of knowing.

Retsikas discusses the contemporary setting of public violence as one which addresses his visibility as a researcher from the West. His presence added to this violence through the ways his person as an outsider also signified danger. His anxiety about being safe from violence had to be balanced by his need to become part of the setting – to some extent, this localisation required a re-materialisation of himself as a 'safe person'. The chapter brings out this idea of being seen to be safe as a process of becoming *local* through the ways he is scrutinised as Westerner and outsider.

These processes of *becoming* enter into his understandings of the ways locals are visible through 'mixed personhood,' the ways mixedness speaks to an interrogation and claiming of people around their ideas of difference and as those who belong through the visibility of their partial selves. First discussing mixedness as a space for 'intimate others', Retsikas offers detailed accounts of how his body was 'localised' to become 'a living, physical, sensing and experiencing agent enmeshed in practical and intimate encounters,' and how these bodily transformations informed his anthropological understandings.

Mixedness and the localising of the anthropologist emerge in a different way in Arora's work. Although Arora was not in a different country, the area had restricted access and she had to obtain a fieldwork permit which had to be renewed every ninety days. Arora notes: 'I was neither exploring another land nor did I ever feel that I was conducting fieldwork in my own society and culture.' This ambiguous setting allowed for particular political contours where Arora had to constantly assess the political inscribing of her research sites and the ways she entered into an 'ethnically fissured' landscape. Her access of these sites is intertwined with the efforts of her research-participants to 'rescue' themselves from the partiality of mixedness in their attempts to present ethnic and culturally bound identities. At the same time, Arora achieves various partial selves through her hosts' attempts to find meaning for her presence vis-à-vis their own concerns.

Thus, although Arora explores her various roles in a different way to the account of Retsikas who explicitly focuses on the body, she is nevertheless

moulded into a particular kind of localness through moving from 'idiot' to 'aunt' to knowledgeable person who knew doctors. Arora points to serendipity and complicity to argue against expectations of scientific designs in conducting research. In discussing her approach she has to consider her positioned role as 'witness' and her self-reflexive understanding of her presence: she considers ethical issues and her 'privileged access'. Her awareness of occupying a public representative space where she was expected to document the Lepcha and Bhutia groups' ceremonial assertions of their rights frames her efforts to know beyond prescribed spaces. Further, this allows for an exploitation of unexpected events. Yet, this self-awareness has to be balanced in terms of the sacredness invested in the landscape: Arora's focus is also about validating the sacredness of Mt Tendong to others. The emphasis allows her to make use of both ethnographic and archival research and for her to probe her role as circumstantial activist. In coming to understand this landscape in a particular mode, Arora demonstrates choices made by the fieldworker vis-à-vis the aims of the research and how the interventions of research participants relate to these choices. Thus, the Lepcha and Bhutia who focused on her ethnic and researcher's presence to discuss ethnicity and unpack earlier representations of themselves in ethnographic accounts retain distinctive politicised identities in the analysis: this is particularly around the discussion of the Bhutanisation of the Lepcha.

Practising Theory: Seeing through Epistemological Crisis

Grasseni's chapter shifts the discussion on the mixedness of persons and groups to argue for a 'mixedness' in world views. This brings out themes in the volume around the coalescing of knowledge practices by the researcher and researched. In her focus, Grasseni argues for the synthesis of different knowledge settings by attending to other kinds of vision beyond that of the physical eye. In recognising the distinctions between her worldview and that of her participants, she argues for a collapsing of these distinctions through practices which have to incorporate the 'leisurely manner of her research participants' apprehension of their settings. Her initial understanding of this difference and her various attempts to gain an access beyond her worldview draws attention to an 'epistemological crisis.'

Her access to knowledge through crisis teases out the varying 'everyday' modes her research participants have of knowing the world around them as an 'enskillment of the senses,' and the ways she as the 'ethnographic other' has to learn to combine her ways of seeing with these modes. Thus, she emerges as apprentice by going through the processes of acquiring enskilled vision which, in turn, allows her to appreciate the ways her research-participants 'see' through being embedded in their everyday practices. Her accounts focus on residents in the valleys of North of Bergamo in northern Italy among dairy farmers. She explores her 'ethnographic apprenticeship' through her

observations of cattle and her attempts to inhabit shared spaces through 'local ecologies of vision'. Grasseni argues for these forms of enskilled visions as background settings and draws on visual media to develop her accounts of an 'anthropology of the senses.' Grasseni discusses her making of an ethnographic film as an effort to access her research participants' worldview through their practices and demonstrates how film became a 'trace of (her) own outlook on fieldwork' which then allowed her to trace different moments of engagement with varied settings and practices.

She offers an overview of visual anthropological methods outside of traditional ethnographic approaches and brings out the emphasis on human cognition as social. Grasseni discusses the varied development of scholarly dissemination of the visual to demonstrate the way the ethnographer has to go beyond 'simple application of analytical grids' as a way of learning to see through local practices. She points to this becoming of the ethnographer as a space of 'learning how to learn.' Grasseni sees these modes of learning as shared spaces and develops the ethnographer's participation in them by bringing out philosophical connections to the anthropological inhabiting of other worldviews. Her argument draws on Ludwig Wittgenstein and Ian Hacking to bring out different kinds of knowledge practices in *becoming an ethnographer.* The sharing of worldviews is facilitated through her bodily experiences of other people's practices.

Munasinghe's chapter concludes the volume by arguing that we should turn our attention to the need to treat moments of epistemological collapse – the coalescing of theory and data – as ethnographic evidence which then has to be theorised to avoid 'blind spots.' In this regard, she provides a different approach to the collapsing of different settings of academic and lay discourses by arguing that the distinctions need to be carefully re-imposed. She discusses the field as one where the academic setting has to be re-examined in terms of its easy complicity with the research setting and in order to avoid certain discourses to re-merge as givens in the analysis. Munasinghe engages with the idea of the nation to consider the unexamined entanglement of theory and data as problematic for anthropological analysis through the concept of epistemological collapse. Here she discusses the work of Benedict Anderson and Alfred Cobban to bring out the 'schizophrenic nature of this concept' and to draw an analogy with how theory is appropriated through lay discourses. She notes that the recognition that 'our informants are speaking our language' blurs the distinction between researcher and research participant and between theory and data. She argues for the need to reclaim theory by interrogating how theory is confused or substituted with 'layers of historicity.'

Munasinghe draws on her fieldwork in Trinidad to demonstrate this entanglement. She interrogates the concept of Creole to show that while it is inextricably intertwined with the idea of the nation in the Caribbean in both lay and academic discourses, it also represents a specific exclusion from the nation. This is where the East Indian is seen as 'culture- carrier' rather than

someone who is Creole or a 'creator of culture' and in contrast to the Afro-Trinidadian. The symbolic equation of the Afro-Trinidadian with the concept of Creole also became a theoretical failure of addressing how this historical understanding erased the presence of East Indians within this notion. In arguing for theory to be rescued outside the spaces of lay political discourses, Munasinghe also argues for an accounting of the historical perspective as one to be included in the ethnographic material. This entanglement shows how the collapsing of 'world-views' have to be critically re-examined in instances where lay discourses on certain issues appropriate the spaces for theory. Thus, it remains the task of ethnographers to reclaim space for theorising where objects of anthropological analysis are also represented through local discourses. This suggests that while boundaries have to be re-examined in privileging the perspectives of other world views, some caution is necessary in order to retain analytical efficacy.

Conclusion: Knowledge Interfaces between Self and Other

In the chapters, there is a recurring theme of the positioning and re-positioning of self and other which allows for different perspectives, insights and discussion of fieldwork material and theoretical approaches. This is necessarily a discussion of the distinctions which challenge and produce *Western* anthropology: the interfaces between fieldworker, research participants and the extended field are ways of understanding how we come to know by *becoming or re-positioning the other*. The chapters, in dealing with or highlighting particular crises of knowledge construction, offer specific accounts as an integrated landscape of different ways of questioning the boundaries and unveiling the negotiated spaces between the anthropologist, her/his field participants and particular paradigms and debates.

   The focus on historical consciousness which allows for the anthropologist to question assumptions and extend disciplinary boundaries in one example is returned to in another as an explicit discussion of the anthropologist's reliance on a particular system of knowledge construction and the need to question this system. These distinctions and their subsequent collapsing in different worldviews are further brought out where the field-site as the anthropologist's home territory allows for both an interrogation of the narratives within one's 'own culture' as the problem and the need to re-position a maligned other through explicit distancing from this own culture. Subsequent accounts bring out the embodiment of the anthropologist in the encounters between observer and observed: the shifting of this role and particular kinds of visibility for the anthropologist facilitate interventionist spaces. Observer as participant and observed as actor/participant reflect on and *know* each other through 'Western' and 'local' identities which in

themselves become the medium of questioning that which is known and thus both facilitates and dislodges otherness.

It is by being *othered* that the anthropologist comes to see: this is in the sense of occupying distance through the perspectives of those being studied, occupying distance from the perspectives anthropologists bring to the study and or finding a space of distance within the study. This othering becomes a process where the anthropologist moves between self and other as a constant positioning and re-positioning of immersion and distance. In the interfaces, there is an interrogating of the distinctions between different worldviews and the ways these distinctions can collapse. How we come to know is also about how we experience and question what is given: the ethnographic present emerges in this process and is produced as continual.

Notes

1. I thank Eric Hirsch and Judith Okely for looking at several versions of this chapter. I am also grateful to Jaro Stacul and Darshan Ramdhani for their comments.
2. The 'known' field-site, in itself, has shifted from remote places to anthropology at home, in organisations and in 'sites' of people in the study of transnational families (see Jackson 1987; Okely 1992; Olwig and Hastrup 1997; Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 49; Gellner and Hirsch 2001). The field also extends through the changes and gains since the legitimising of the self-reflexive anthropologist and her/his subjective immersion, and in debates about 'the field' and the 'other.' This is where these debates are, in turn, shaped or transformed by the gaze from anthropology's object (see Clifford 1997: 22; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Bunzl 2004).
3. See also Joan Vincent's (1991: 50) discussion of crisis as a 'call for engagement' in relation to departmental and inter-disciplinary imperatives. She further noted: 'Anthropology required in the 1980s, I would argue, not an experimental moment but a sense of crisis: an educated knowledge of unending crisis, or contention' (ibid.: 49).
4. Asad (1991: 314–16) describes the narratives of anthropology and colonialism, in which the initial encounters between Europeans and their non-European subjects are dealt with by the latter in terms of resistance, assimilation and attempts 'to reinvent their disrupted lives' (ibid.: 314). While Asad argues for the role of anthropology in colonialism to be 'relatively unimportant', he notes the centrality of the 'process of European global power' to the anthropological task of understanding colonial populations (1991: 315).
5. See Fox (1991), for instance, for a historicising of the writing culture debate.
6. Bruce Knauft's (2002) volume as a focus on plural modernity and the 'alter-natively' modern also demonstrates different understandings of the term Western.

References

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1988. 'A Dutiful Daughter', in Soraya Altorki and Camilla Fawzi El-Solh (eds), *Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, pp. 139–61.

———. 1991. 'Writing against Culture', in Richard G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. New Mexico: School of American Research Press, pp. 137–62.

Asad, Talal. 1991. 'Afterword: From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony', in George W. Stocking Jr (ed.), *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*. London: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 314–24.

Brettell, Caroline B. (ed.). 1993. *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*. London: Bergin and Garvey.

Brightman, Robert. 1995. 'Forget Culture: Replacement, Transcendence, Relexification'. *Cultural Anthropology* 10(4): 509–546.

Bunzl, Matti. 2004. 'Boas, Foucault, and the "Native Anthropologist": Notes toward a Neo-Boasian Anthropology', *American Anthropologist* 106(3): 435–42.

———. 2005. 'Anthropology Beyond Crisis', *Anthropology and Humanism* 30(2): 187–95.

Carrier, James. (ed.). 1995. *Occidentalism: Images of the West*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Clifford, James. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. London: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, James and George Marcus (eds). 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Drummond, Lee. 1980. 'A Cultural Continuum: A Theory of Intersystems', *Man* 15(2): 352–74.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland and Finn Sivert Nielsen. 2001. *A History of Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press.

Fabian, Johannes. 2002 [1983]. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fowler, Don D. and Donald L. Hardesty. 1994. 'Introduction', in D.D. Fowler and D.L. Hardesty (eds), *Others Knowing Others: Perspectives on Ethnographic Careers*. London: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp. 1–14.

Fox, Richard G. 1991. 'Introduction', in Richard G. Fox (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present.* New Mexico: School of American Research Press, pp. 1–44.

Freilich, Morris. 1970. 'Field Work: An Introduction', in *Marginal Natives: Anthropologists at Work*. London: Harper and Row, pp. 1–37.

Geertz, Clifford. 1988. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

———. 1993 [1983]. *Local Knowledge*. New York: Basic Books.

Gellner, David N. and Eric Hirsch. 2001. *Inside Organizations: Anthropologists at Work*. Oxford: Berg.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1992. 'Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference', *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1): 6–23.

———. 1997. 'Discipline and Practice': "The Field" as Site, Method and Location in Anthropology', in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. London: University of California Press, pp. 1–46.

Halstead, Narmala. 2001. 'Ethnographic Encounters: Positionings within and Outside the Insider Frame', *Social Anthropology* 9(3): 307–21.

———. 2002. 'Branding "perfection": Foreign as Self – Self as Foreign-foreign', *Journal of Material Culture* 7(3): 273–93.

Hastrup, Kirsten. 1990. 'The Ethnographic Present: A Re-invention', *Cultural Anthropology* 5(1): 45–61.

———. 1995. *A Passage to Anthropology*: *Between Experience and Theory*. London: Routledge.

Hirsch, Eric. 2001. 'When was Modernity in Melanesia?', *Social Anthropology* 9(2): 131–46.

———. 2004. 'Techniques of Vision: Photography, Disco and Renderings of Present Perceptions in Highland Papua', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10(1): 19–39.

Hirsch, Eric and Charles Stewart. 2005. 'Introduction: Ethnographies of Historicity', *History and Anthropology* 16(3): 261–74.

Jackson, Anthony. (ed.). 1987. *Anthropology at Home.* London: Tavistock Publications.

Jacobs-Huey, Lanita. 2002. 'The Natives are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists', *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 791–804.

Knauft, Bruce (ed.), 2002. *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Kuhn, T. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. USA: University of Chicago Press.

Kuper, Adam. 1999. *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*. London: Harvard University Press.

Lambek. Michael and Andrew Strathern (eds). *1998. Bodies and persons. Comparative perspectives from Africa and Melanesia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*

Leach, E.R. 1961. *Rethinking Anthropology*. London: Athlone Press.

———. 1954 (2002). *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of the Kachin Social Structure*. Oxford: Berg.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1967. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Moore, Henrietta L. and Todd Sanders. 2006. General Introduction, in H.L. Moore and T. Sanders (eds), *Anthropology in Theory. Issues in Epistemology.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1–21.

Narayan, Kirin. 1993. 'How Native Is a "Native" Anthropologist?' *American Anthropologist* 95(3): 671–86.

Nencel, Lorraine and Peter Pels (eds). 1991. *Constructing Knowledge: Authority and Critique in Social Science*. London: Sage Publications.

Okely, Judith. 1996. *Own or Other Culture.* London: Routledge.

———. 1992. 'Anthropology and Autobiography: Participatory Experience and Embodied Knowledge', in Judith Okely and Helen Callaway (eds), *Anthropology and Autobiography*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–28.

———. 2007. Fieldwork Embodied in Shilling (ed.). *Embodying Sociology: Retrospect, Progress and Prospects*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Olwig, Karen Fog and Kirsten Hastrup (eds). 1997. *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object.* London: Routledge.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1993. 'Goodbye to *Triste Tropes*: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History'. *Journal of Modern History* 65(1): 1–25.

Sanjek, Roger. 1991. 'The Ethnographic Present'. *Man* (New Series) 26(4): 609–28.

Stocking, George W. Jr. 1985 [1983]. 'History of Anthropology: Whence/Whither', in George W. Stocking (ed.), *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*. London: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 3–12.

——. 1991. 'Maclay, Kubary, Malinowski: Archetypes from the Dreamtime of Anthropology', in George W. Stocking Jr (ed.), *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*. London: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 9–74.

Strathern, Marilyn. 1987. 'The Limits of Auto-anthropology', in Anthony Jackson (ed.), *Anthropology at Home*. London: Tavistock Publications, pp. pp 16–37.

——. 1999. *Property, Substance and Effect: Anthropological Essays on Persons and Things.* London: Athlone Press.

Tambiah, Stanley J. 2002. *Edmund Leach: An Anthropological Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1991. 'Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness', in Richard G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present.* New Mexico: School of American Research Press, pp. 18–44.

——. 2003. *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vincent, Joan. 1991. *Engaging Historicism in Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard G. Fox. Sante Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press.

Weiner, Annette. B. 1995. 'Culture and Our Discontents'. *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 97(1): 14–21.

Weston, Kath. 1997. 'The Virtual Anthropologist', in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. London: University of California Press, pp. 163–84.