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Contesting the Politics of Ethnography: Towards an Alternative Knowledge Production

We were free, but our bellies were empty. The Master had become the Boss–Medouze, in the film Sugar Cane Alley

Chandra Mohanty, an Indian feminist scholar, in her influential essay "Under Western Eyes" critiques Western feminist scholarship as universalizing and rendering static the lives of Third World women in terms of "underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism, and 'overpopulaton.'"[1] Documenting the numerous books and articles that have shaped the discourse of "Third World women" in the West today, Mohanty observes that the above terms get operationalized as objective indicators of well-being such as life-expectancy, sex-ratio, nutrition, and educational level, which have become the predominant categories of analyses found in social scientific studies of women in developing countries. Arguing that these indicators fail to adequately portray the lives of Third World women, she says:

> While such descriptive information is useful and necessary, these presumably "objective" indicators by no means exhaust the meaning of women's day-to-day-lives. The *everyday*, fluid, fundamentally historical and dynamic nature of lives of third world women is here collapsed into a few" frozen" indicators of their well-being.[2][our emphasis].

One of the consequences of not paying attention to the dynamics of *everyday lives* is that in the dominant knowledge produced by Western scholarship, Third World women are invariably rendered victims of patriarchy and tradition and stripped of agency.[3] To redress this problem Mohanty calls for studies of everyday lives of women not only to represent Third World women as active subjects, but also to acknowledge the subtle ways in which women resist their subordination and create a social space for themselves:

> In other words, few studies have focused on women workers as *subjects*–as agents who make choices, have a critical perspective on their own situations, and think and organize collectively against their oppressors.[4]

> Questions of political consciousness and self-identity are a crucial aspect of defining third world women's engagement with feminism. And while these questions have to be addressed at the level of organized movements, they also have to addressed at the level of *everyday life* in times of revolutionary upheaval as well as in times of "peace."[5][our emphasis]

Mohanty's statements regarding the absence of studies of Third World women as subjects and studies that address their everyday lives give us an indication of the intimate links between scholarship, representation, power, and knowledge. Mohanty is one leading voice among several others that have explored the links between knowledge and power in representations of the Third World–some others being Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gyan Prakash, Gayatri Spivak, V.Y. Mudimbe, Stuart Hall, Anthony Appiah, Lata Mani, and Arturo Escobar. These voices have focused attention in European and North American academies on issues of representation and the critical need to interrogate the *processes* which produce "knowledge" as much as "knowledge" itself.

Following the critiques by the above scholars we see the need for the production of "alternative knowledge" that can challenge and replace previous hegemonic knowledge of the Third World. One process of knowledge production–ethnography–used to enjoy a hegemony in the past by claiming to produce authentic, empirical, and "real" knowledge. Ethnography's claim to "realism" has led to overwhelmingly distorted representations and hence knowledge of the Third World in historical and anthropological scholarship from the First World.[6] There is therefore a need for alternative knowledge to contest such hegemonic ethnographic knowledge. It is our argument in this essay that such contestations are possible through ethnographies which engage themselves in a *different way* with the everyday lives of people–a political way in which ethnographies acknowledge the struggles of Third World people and view them as capable of self- knowledge. We focus on *ethnography of everyday life* as one method that can produce alternative knowledge. In arguing thus, we seek to clarify some of our disagreements with those scholars who have heralded a "textual turn" in ethnography which we feel relies too much on the *rhetorical and writing* skills of the ethnographer to produce alternative knowledge. Instead we seek a transformation of the politics of the ethnographer to allow for self-knowledge of Third World people. Here we find it useful to distinguish two sites of political struggle: one within the U.S. academy and one outside the U.S. academy. As scholars we consider it important to negotiate the first, but we observe that debates in the U.S. academy over knowledge and power have increasingly come to stand in for political struggles of the second kind.[7]

Consequently (as Third World scholars situated in the U.S. academy), we argue for an ethnography with a different politics to bring into focus the "everyday lives of Third World people" as *the primary site* where power is negotiated[8] and to claim the enterprise of "ethnographies of everyday lives" *as* political praxis. Ethnography, we note is not the *only* method which can produce alternative knowledge. For instance, there exists a growing body of knowledge from India that has used methods other than ethnography to produce alternative knowledge; some of which is based on historical work,[9] some in the field of literary criticism,[10] and others on building postcolonial theory.[11] We further note that ethnography as a possible route to produce alternative knowledge has limitations, some of which are pointed out in debates regarding the ability of ethnography to effect change.[12] Nevertheless since contemporary everyday lives of people are hard to access through methods other than some form of ethnography, we have chosen to focus on ethnography.

In this essay, we explore the potential of *ethnography* in its "post-experimental moment"[13] to contest hegemonic First World knowledge of the Third World *and* build alternative knowledge that empowers and allows for self-definition. In order to do this we discuss and evaluate key debates on *ethnography* within the U.S. academy. Our discussion comprises three parts. The first part discusses how a particular Western discourse–Orientalism–which produced hegemonic knowledge of the Third World for the past two centuries up to the present always accompanied the twin dominating practices of colonialism and contemporary Third World development. This discussion historically situates the need to develop alternative knowledge of the Third World. The second part explores the potential of ethnography for producing such alternative knowledge. Here we find it necessary to discuss and evaluate some major debates which have raged in the U.S. academy around the issues of representation and ethnography in order to negotiate a pathway which would allow us to formulate ethnography as a political praxis without getting trapped in "academic angst" over the limits of representations–an emotional condition we find characterizes contemporary debates in the U.S. academy. In the third part we then articulate our own conceptualization of everyday life and briefly examine select *ethnographies of everyday life* which in our opinion are good examples of "careful, politically focused, local analyses."[14] Finally, in our conclusion, we speculate on the related issues of identity and location of Third World scholars in the First World since we feel that these issues assume critical significance for a politics that can situate everyday life struggles as the central focus of ethnography.

Orientalism: The Dominant Framework of Knowledge Production

The last two decades have witnessed a major proliferation of works focusing on "representations" in the fields of anthropology, literature, communications and other human sciences. One such work which has generated critical inquiry into the connections between "representation," "knowledge," and "power" with specific regard to the Middle East is Edward Said's influential book *Orientalism* published in 1978. This book marks an important point in the scholarship by "Third World" scholars writing about representations of their own societies in "First World knowledge" about the "Third World." Said presents Orientalism as a discursive formation that "can be discussed and analyzed as a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient"[15] and argues that "representations" constitute the basis for dominance. Said's work was not the first scholarly work critiquing knowledge produced by Orientalist "representation" (nor is it even the first to speak of "Orientalism").[16] Nevertheless it is a pioneering effort to systematically analyze the *production* of knowledge of the Third World through forms of representation that have been maintained and perpetuated over the last two centuries. In this sense *Orientalism* paved the way for a legitimate "space" within the metropolitan university for inquiry into what Aijaz Ahmad calls "Colonial Discourse Analysis."[17] Although Said's work focused on Orientalist knowledge of the Middle East, its insights are equally valid for Indological knowledge of India.[18]

The power of Orientalism (or Indological knowledge) derives from its complete control over "representation" especially of the "cultural Other." The knowledge which arises from such representations establishes the Other as passive: as only something which is to be known, not something which knows; as something subsumed within social structures; and as part of a cultural order composed of a series of essences. Specifically, as Ronald Inden shows, by rendering non-Western people passive, this knowledge accomplished the crucial purpose of establishing hegemony over all other forms of knowledge including the self-knowledge of the "Orientals" themselves:

> The knowledge of the Orientalist [or the Indologist] is therefore, privileged in relation to that of the Orientals and it invariably places itself in a relationship of intellectual *dominance* over that of the easterners. It has appropriated the power to represent the Oriental, to translate and explain his (and her) thoughts and acts not only to Europeans and Americans but also to the Orientals themselves.[19] [our emphasis]

Making similar observations Gyan Prakash, an Indian historiographer writes:

> Orientalism was a European enterprise from the very beginning. The scholars were European; the audience was European; and the Indians figured as inert

> objects of knowledge. The Orientalist spoke for the Indian and represented the object in texts. Because the Indian was separated from the Orientalist knower, the Indian as object–as well as its representation–was construed to be outside and opposite of self: thus, both the self and the other, the rational and materialist British and the emotional and spiritual Indian, appeared as autonomous, ontological, and essential entities.[20]

The self-definition of the West as essentially opposite of the "Orient" provided the ideological power initially for the colonizing mission and later for the modernizing/developing mission . We first discuss Orientalism's complicity with colonialism and then move on to a discussion of its role in developmentalism.

By generating "authoritative" knowledge about the "Orient" at a historical juncture when Europe was embarking on its expansionist missions in Asia,[21] Orientalism supported and reinforced the relationship between knowledge and power. Said's description of the features of Orientalism clearly illustrates the intimate links between Orientalism as *ideology* and colonialism as *practice* :

> To restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modern West; to subordinate or underplay military power in order to aggrandize the project of glorious knowledge acquired in the process of political domination of the Orient; to formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition, with full recognition of its place in memory, its importance to imperil strategy, and its 'natural role' as an appendage to Europe; . . .to make out of every observable detail a *generalization* and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and, above all, to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality mainly because nothing in the Orient seems to resist one's powers: these are the features of Orientalism. . . . [22] [our emphasis]

In the above quote Said eloquently makes his case for the critical role knowledge and the *control* over knowledge played in colonization. The power of Orientalist knowledge generated authoritatively through generalizations as Said points out above–shapes conceptions of the "culture" of the colonized.[23] Such a theorizing of "culture" successfully links the otherwise seemingly disconnected activities of "knowledge production" and "political-economic control."

The theoretical separation of "knowledge production," "culture," and political-economic control is a legacy of (among other things) years of scholarly work on imperialism and colonialism done within a traditional Marxist framework that had no room for the concept of "culture." Making a distinction between "political-economic colonization" which has a popular connotation of not having a civilizing mission and "cultural colonization" which is based on the representational dichotomy of civilized and savage, Nandy writes:

> It is now time to turn to the second form of colonization, the one which at least six generations of the Third World have learnt to view as a prerequisite for their liberation. This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their *cultural priorities* once for all. In the process, it helps generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is *now* everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds.[24] [our emphasis]

Nandy's insights regarding the impact of cultural colonization speaks volumes of the resilience of the domination of the West that has survived "the demise of empires."[25] The purpose of our discussion of knowledge and colonization (both political-economic and cultural) is to make an explicit connection between Orientalist ideology and colonialist practice. If political-economic colonization was achieved through administrative, commercial, and military apparatuses, *cultural* colonization was and continues to be achieved through discursive truths, i.e. Orientalist knowledge, generated by authoritative texts, literature, scholars, missionaries, and the mass media.[26] The importance of control over "culture" has also been at the core of writings by revolutionaries such as Amilcar Cabral and Aimé Cesaire[27] and is seen in the contemporary phenomena of military and revolutionary takeovers of nations where the primary institutions sought to be controlled are the bastions of "culture," the mass media and universities.

This focus on the realm of "culture" demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between colonization and the production and dissemination of knowledge, that is, colonial power and Orientalist knowledge depended on each other for continued sustenance.[28] This symbiotic relationship is explored in the edited volume, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (1993), in which particular essays by Rosane Rocher, David Ludden, and Arjun Appadurai examine how the political and economic imperatives of colonial rule made possible the *systematic* transformation of Orientalist knowledge into colonial practices.[29] For example, Rocher shows how the canonization of the Gita as a text by Orientalist scholars provided the basis for British formulation of "Hindu" law; Ludden traces the reification of "caste," "religion," and "village" as the primary categories through which India could be known and ruled to the formalization of "empiricist" data collection techniques; and Appadurai's essay draws explicit connections among the Orientalist obsession with "number," the colonial practice of classification of land and people, and the contemporary policies of reservation in India. It is only by paying attention to the ways in which Orientalist knowledge operated within local contexts have the above scholars been able to provide a dynamic view of Orientalism in all its complexity. For Orientalist knowledge to support and reinforce colonialism–which was a dynamic force–it could not have been monolithic, static, and seamless; it changed according to economic, political, and social imperatives.

Illuminating the changing face of Orientalist representations of India, Prakash provides a brief periodization of Orientalist knowledge. From visualizing India as an advanced civilization that was a precursor to European civilization during the initial years of colonization, Orientalist knowledge visualized India as lacking civilization during the later years when the British began their mercantile and political expansion in India. Thus as Prakash points out, "The old Orientalist, buried in texts and devoted to learning Sanskrit and Persian, was replaced by the official, the scholar, and the modernizer."[30] Extending this argument to the contemporary global politics, Inden assures us that Orientalist knowledge is far from extinct; the colonial modernizer has been replaced by the "development specialist:"

> Once his special knowledge enabled the Orientalist and his countrymen to gain trade concessions, conquer, colonize, rule, and punish in the East. Now it authorizes the area studies specialist and his colleagues in government and business to aid and advise, *develop* and modernize, arm and stabilize the countries of the so-called Third World.[31]

It is to this "developmentalist turn" that we now focus on in an effort to delineate how Orientalist knowledge lives on albeit inspiring a practice "different" from formal colonization. Further, just as Orientalist knowledge played a destructive role in the colonial period, it continues to do so in the post-colonial period as the "modernization of the Third World." If the institutional support for Orientalist knowledge during colonialism was provided by colonial institutions, the support for Orientalist knowledge during post-colonial times is provided by development institutions.

The post-colonial transformation of Orientalist knowledge into developmentalist practice was initiated at a time when colonial regimes were being overthrown and nation-states were emerging in the so-called "Third Word." As World War II was entering its final stage, leaders of the U.S. and England organized a conference to plan the post-war global economy. Held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in July 1944, the meeting established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the so-called "Bretton Woods Institutions."[32] These institutions replaced the colonial institutions to develop and modernize the "natives" who could no longer be ruled. Development institutions became a means of intervening in the affairs of independent Third World nations by generating a discourse which constructed developmentalism as the solution to Third World problems. James Ferguson in an insightful analysis of development discourse demonstrates how institutions such as the World Bank construct Third World nations as needing interventions from development agencies. Focusing on Lesotho he writes: " .. 'development' institutions generate their own form of discourse, and this discourse simultaneously constructs Lesotho as a particular kind of object of knowledge and creates a structure of knowledge around that object.[33]

Ferguson then argues that interventions are based on this structure of knowledge. Modernization theory and development models emerging from this structure of knowledge support the maintenance of power structures in which ex-colonial powers now occupy the dominant positions of controlling development projects in the Third World. The analyses of history and the role of colonialism in producing an "underdeveloped Third World" contained in dependency theory and alternative development models born in grassroots movements in the Third World are ignored by the Bretton institutions which rely on modernization theory and neo-liberal policies for the Third World.[34] In fact the category "Third World" itself became "naturalized" in postcolonial discourses as the "three worlds theory."[35] Anthropology became implicated in developmentalism the practice of developing the "natives" and anthropologists joined economists in assessing the sociocultural impact and "feasibility" of development projects. The fact that most people's conditions not only did not improve but deteriorated with the passing of time did not seem to bother most experts. Reality, in sum, had been colonized by the development discourse, and those who were dissatisfied with this state of affairs had to struggle for bits and pieces of freedom within it, in the hope that in the process a different reality could be constructed.[36]

Accompanying the hegemony of First World discourse on developmentalism was also the internalization of its philosophy by leaders of the newly independent nation states. Here, we focus on India as a good example to discuss the impact of the internalization of developmentalism on knowledge production from the Third World itself. In independent India, national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru articulated a vision of India breaking the shackles of superstition and tradition and racing towards an industrialized utopia where science and technology would liberate the "benighted" masses.[37] In Nehru's modern, rationalistic, and European world view Western science and scientific rationality, and technology seemed to present the solutions to India's problems. As Partha Chatterjee paints him, Nehru comes across as an eager modernizer, a kind of Hegelian who understands that the West is the advanced civilization of his time, and India has no choice but to follow the European lead.[38] Thus Nehru forged ahead with project modernity in India, a project better known as "development," which was modeled after Western developmental agendas. To realize his vision Nehru rallied support from other political leaders, the general population, economists, industrialists, and critical to this paper, intellectuals in universities and research centers. Developmentalism as Gyan Prakash calls it was just the older project of colonial modernity disguised as economic development.[39]

The preoccupation with developmentalism was not restricted to political leaders of Third World nations alone. It was also the dominant paradigm through which social scientific research in the independent Third World nations was conducted;[40] for example, academic research and teaching in independent India focused on explicating, analyzing, and proposing solutions to her "backwardness." During the first three decades after independence, research in the social sciences in India in disciplines like economics, sociology, political science, communications, etc., followed the developmental agenda. This concern with development will become obvious to any beginning student in the social sciences interested in the Third World; libraries in universities today are packed with development literature. Drawing on First World institutions both financially and intellectually, Third World scholars and government officials conceptualized and launched development projects. Not realizing that they were dependent on Orientalist assumptions and beliefs, bureaucrats and academicians in newly independent Third World nations unconsciously reproduced the very hegemonic colonial discourses that produced domination in the first place.

We argue that the belief in objective, rational, and scientific knowledge, which led the British to begin compiling exhaustive information on India in the form of "regularized and professionalized" surveys,[41] also underlies developmentalist projects where socioeconomic indicators have become the dominant representations of the lives of Third World peoples. The belief in unitary essences, also continues to manifest itself in the form of dichotomized and hierarchized categories; the earlier oppositions of Occident/Orient, Colonizer/ Colonized, Ruler/Native and Civilized/Primitive have given way to the oppositions of First World/Third World, developed/undeveloped, rich/poor, modern/traditional, and democratic/despotic. In fact we echo Aijaz Ahmad's contention that the "Three Worlds theory" is a product of such essentializing and dichotomizing ways of viewing "reality."[42] If the positing of a radical *difference* between the above opposed entities formed the base of *Orientalist* "knowledge," this *difference* was maintained by positing the ahistoric existence of a First World *separate* from a Third World. The essentializing of the Third World as the oppositional "Other" of the West, allows the crafting of a history and a sociology in which colonialism and "underdevelopment" are viewed as "natural" and "progressive" and people of the Third World are viewed as "acted upon" and never as actors. Power drops out of the equations of history and consequently people in the Third World are easily rendered passive and denied human agency. Such a representation underscores the need for the production of a new knowledge of the Third World, a need whose urgency becomes even more apparent given the continued Orientalist representations of the Third World in the mass media (mainstream films, educational films, magazines, newspapers, travelogues, and novels).

A study of representations of India in the United States print media, conducted in Bloomington, Indiana, shows that three themes dominated across media like The *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *National Geographic*, *The Economist*, and local Bloomington papers; these three themes are "India as over-populated and impoverished, India as exotic and primitive, and India as a land of turmoil"[43] Specifically discussing the United States media's coverage of violent situations in India, the authors of the study note that the pervasiveness of reporting on religious riots and political unrest "naturalizes" these events as endemic to India. The persistence of depictions of India in the United States mass media as impoverished, exotic, and violent serve to not only constitute India as a "backward," but also to reinforce the superiority of Western civilization. These representations are not confined to India alone, but can be found in representations of other Third World nations/peoples too.[44] Each part of the world becomes characterized by a particular "problem" that is seen as endemic to that area thus masking the role of historical and political forces; South Asia becomes signified by overpopulation and illiteracy; Sub-Saharan Africa by famine and internecine wars, Middle East by fundamentalism and patriarchy; and Latin America by drug traffic, corruption, and civil wars. It is no coincidence that these media representations become the basis for expert knowledge which justifies the practice of developmentalism.[45]

So far we have attempted to show the links between Orientalist knowledge on the one hand and colonialist and developmentalist practices on the other. Inquiring into the conditions of possibility that enabled Orientalist knowledge to give rise to these two practices, we find that over the last two centuries Orientalist knowledge remained within a broad philosophical framework that views "reality" in an unproblematic manner. Drawing on Foucault, Inden identifies this philosophical framework as an "episteme" that is based on a "representational theory of knowledge." He outlines the assumptions underlying such an "episteme": that true knowledge merely represents or mirrors a separate reality; that the knower somehow transcends this reality-knowledge thus becomes objective, natural and apolitical; that the real world consists of essences and is unitary; and finally that there exists a human nature which consists of a unitary essence most fully realized in Euro-American culture-rational, scientific thought and the institutions of liberal capitalism and democracy.[46] The continuation of the power of Orientalist knowledge *after* colonialism through developmentalism is possible because these assumptions continue to inform knowledge production of the Third World. Our discussion of the assumptions underlying Orientalist knowledge is to point toward the need for alternative knowledge of the Third World.

Towards an Alternative Knowledge: Revisiting the Politics of Ethnography

In the previous section, we discussed how Orientalist knowledge was linked to power and the twin practices of colonialism and developmentalism. The link between knowledge and power has been the subject of many scholarly works over the last two decades. One crucial way in which these scholars have advanced understanding of this link between knowledge–which is discursively produced–and power–which operates both discursively and non-discursively–is by theorizing the role of "authority" in mediating this relationship. Ethnography–an open-ended *process* which includes writing *and* fieldwork, usually presented in the form of a text (print and audiovisual media) representing people's lives–has been an important source for investing knowledge with authority, an authority which as we showed in the previous section enabled knowledge to attain the power to dominate and subordinate. In the last decade we have seen numerous critiques of "ethnography," the most pioneering being the works of James Clifford, George Marcus, Michael Fischer, and Dick Cushman, which have questioned the "authority" of traditional ethnography. These scholars have sought to erode "ethnographic authority" by calling for alternative ethnographies where the ethnographer's role in the construction of "reality" becomes apparent.

In this section we first provide a brief overview and evaluation of these influential debates over "ethnographic authority." The central question that will guide our evaluation of these debates is: What is the possibility of producing alternative knowledge given a "politics of ethnography" as espoused by scholars engaging in these debates? We find the politics of ethnography offered by these scholars inadequate to our task of building alternative knowledge due to its focus on experimentation with genres of writing which we argue, reduces politics to politics within the academy. We then articulate the kind of politics that would allow for the production of alternative knowledge, a politics that would primarily engage "everyday life" without minimizing the value of politics within the academy. We argue that "everyday life" rather than the academy is the *primary* site for political struggle and thus worthy of being subject matter for alternative knowledge.

The questioning of the "authority" of the ethnographer was initiated in the pioneering works published in the 1980s, *Writing Culture*, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, *The Predicament of Culture*, and "Ethnographies as Texts," within the field of anthropology–the traditional home of ethnography.[47] Although critical focus on "fieldwork" as a method had engaged anthropologists for almost three decades with the publishing of Malinowski's *Diary*, "ethnography" itself had not been viewed critically as producing knowledge of cultural others. It is in this sense that the above works may be seen as indexes for a body of scholarship focusing on anthropology's most "sacred" method/strategy/ tool/ product. Much of the inspiration for these works is drawn from "poststructuralist" theories which theorize the relationship between language practices and knowledge formation. Although these works fall mostly within the academic discipline of anthropology, they have also influenced related debates on representation across the academic disciplines of history, communication studies, and literary criticism.

Since the early 1980s, the field of anthropology has witnessed a growing number of its practitioners interrogating anthropology's practice of ethnography by treating ethnographic accounts as literary texts. Marcus and Cushman's essay, "Ethnographies as Texts," outlines recent "experiments" in ethnography which question "how ethnographies achieve their effect as knowledge of "others".[48] In their view these "experiments" challenge the genre of "ethnographic realism" which employs certain *writing* practices which confer "authority," "plausibility," and "authenticity" to ethnographies. They identify nine writing practices, some of these being the absence of the ethnographer in the text, references to fieldwork experience, and statements of typicality and generality. Marcus and Cushman's description and analysis of "ethnographic realism," reveals how most ethnographies so far claimed a "spurious" authority to produce authentic knowledge. The inability of ethnography to claim its traditional authority to represent reality is the "crisis of representation" in Marcus and Fischer's work *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*. Going beyond critiquing the authority of traditional ethnography, this work offers incisive analyses of ethnographies that the authors deem to be representative of an "experimental moment in the human sciences." Two bodies of "experimental ethnographies"–one representing experience of personhood and the other representing the anthropological subject within global and historical structures of political-economy–are offered as examples of ways to counter the ideology of "ethnographic realism." Finally, Marcus and Fischer suggest that anthropology can fulfill its historical goal of "knowing the Self through the detour of the Other" by doing a "cultural critique," that is, examine the assumptions of Western societies.

A related and more ambitious project, *Writing Culture* took shape in the collection of essays published in the same year and co-edited by Clifford and Marcus. Continuing the earlier focus on ethnographic authority, this book identifies "ethnographic realism" as "an ideology claiming transparency of representation and immediacy of experience."[49] Since the locus of authority according to Clifford and Marcus lies in the *writing* of ethnographies, they choose to separate form from content and make writing "central to evaluation of the results of scientific research."[50] These collection of essays which reflect on ethnographies as texts highlight the constructed and artificial nature of ethnographic accounts while undermining modes of authority. In fact Clifford goes so far as to call ethnographic writings *fictions*, that is, of "inventing things not actually real."[51] In admitting the "inventiveness" of ethnography, Clifford seems to anticipate his own later work *Predicament of Culture* where he takes up the issue of how culture itself is invented. Here he defines culture as a predicament it is impossible to treat culture as a bounded object and therefore the study of culture also as a predicament that is, how can we produce knowledge of a culture, especially in contemporary times when the politics of cultural production is palpable? The implications of this question are fleshed out in Clifford's final chapter in his book, which is a long description of the Mashpee Indians' case for land rights. In our brief discussion of the above works we have selected certain threads in their scholarship that pertain to ethnography to show that these four scholars have collectively paved the way for intense debates over "ethnography," and representation within the academy. No longer is it possible for ethnographies to be written without engaging the issues raised within these works, specifically that of the "authority" associated with objective, empirical science. Further, these works also strain the traditional disciplinary boundaries between the "social sciences" and the "humanities" by genuinely attempting to make these boundaries "blurred."

Despite these obvious positive contributions which have generated critical reflection within the U.S. academy, the works of these scholars have been critiqued by other scholars: Marcus, Cushman and Fischer for their "gendered and mistaken reading of modernism and anthropological analysis";[52] the contributors in *Writing Culture* for reproducing power and hegemony even while they strive to delegitimate authority;[53] and Clifford and Marcus as editors of *Writing Culture* for excluding and dismissing feminist scholarship.[54] These critiques have done much to extend the arguments put forth in these works. Whilst we acknowledge the value of these critiques, we feel the need to articulate our own critiques of these works *as* Third World scholars in the First World.[55] Our critiques are formulated with specific reference to how the works of Marcus, Fischer, Clifford and Cushman often fail to pursue their questioning of the ethnographic enterprise to move towards our vision of conceiving ethnography as capable of producing "alternative knowledge" that empowers and allows for self-definition, not domination and subordination. In fact we argue that occasionally their "alternatives" are at direct variance with our vision.

Some of the critiques we address are related to the following: the unproblematic acceptance in these works of anthropology's traditional mission of "knowing the Self through the detour of the Other"; the continuity with earlier Western scholarship in casting the Third World as passive; and finally the inadequate engagement with issues of power beyond that of the power of representation. In their book *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Marcus and Fischer reaffirm anthropology's commitment to a critical self-reflection on Western society based on prior experience with non-Western societies, that is, they advocate anthropology as cultural critique. Recommending ways in which anthropology as a form of cultural critique could be enriched, they write:

> We argue, moreover, that the potential for developing a distinctive anthropological cultural critique of American society is *inherently* linked to the vitality of experimentation on the other front, the traditional arena of research *abroad* .[56] [emphasis ours]

By arguing for the centrality of location abroad Marcus and Fischer uncritically privilege a particular epistemology that has enjoyed a dominant position within Western thought historically. According to this epistemology, the route to "knowledge" of the Self is through the "detour of the Other." Such an epistemology which privileges a location *abroad* masks the power relations upon which traveling abroad to do fieldwork is predicated. If one can know the Self *only* by knowing the Other, and one has to travel in order to do fieldwork among the Others, then verily only a select few are capable of self-knowledge! For several centuries the "power to know the Self and the Other" was concentrated in the hands of certain citizens–colonial administrators, missionaries, anthropologists, to name a few–of economically dominant nation-states who had the "power/position/mobility to travel." We saw this phenomenon during colonial times when colonial administrators and anthropologists, both of whom *traveled* to the colonies, appropriated the right to "know" the native better than him/herself. Given the dominance of Western Europe and North America in today's global political-economy, the emphasis on traveling abroad perpetuates a relation of intellectual dominance in which scholars from the First World remain the agents of "knowledge production." We argue that the goal of questioning "ethnographic authority" is incomplete in a crucial sense if the focus of critique remains at the level of experimentation with genres of writing (to enable better cultural critique at home) without interrogating the moral and ontological status of "going abroad." Refusing to view the act of going abroad as derived directly from a "power position" fails to engage the question of how the ethnographer has historically appropriated the authority of "knowing the native better than the native him/herself." We are then left with a reinstating of "authority," *only* this time to "experimental ethnographers" who are writing within different genres.[57]

While the avowed purpose of Clifford and Marcus in *Writing Culture* is to chip away at the edifices of power within which ethnography is located, they do little to include historically disempowered voices as participants in this enterprise. Clifford in his introductory essay confesses that their book "gives relatively little attention to new ethnographic possibilities emerging from non-Western experience and from feminist theory and politics."[58] Engaging the reasons for the exclusion of feminist scholarship, Clifford provides a brief justification that feminism has not "produced either unconventional forms of writing or a developed reflection on ethnographic textuality as such"[59] and therefore could not be included in their work which focuses on textual theory and textual form. While Clifford's exclusion of feminist scholarship has been critiqued on many fronts, in our critique we address his treatment of non-Western writings. Clifford does not address the exclusion of non-Western writings until the end of his explanation for excluding feminism where we find that he groups feminist scholarship with non-Western writings as having contributed more to changes/experiments in the content of ethnographies rather than form.

Without even questioning the truth value of such a sweeping statement regarding non-Western scholarship, Clifford's argument may be challenged on the grounds that he does not seriously examine the relationship between scholarship and politics which we contend has led many non-Western scholars to focus on content rather than textual form. Similarly the work of non-Western scholars is marginalized by Marcus and Fischer in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* where they define their category of "experimental ethnography" based on an analytical separation of form from content. In the examples of "experimental ethnographies" provided we see the absence of non-Western scholarship which goes unexplained. The refusal to debate the exclusion of non-Western writings in both the above works has the unfortunate consequence of continuing to represent previously disempowered groups as passive and as having no role in producing "knowledge of themselves." In fact, the role assigned for these previously marginalized groups is only that of readership of emerging anthropological works produced exclusively in the First World.[60]

Our final critique of these works which have attempted to politicize ethnography is that they do not adequately engage with issues of power beyond that of the power of representation. For these scholars the "crisis of representation" is to be solved through "experimentation" of genres of writing alone, not through more political engagement on the ground. A good illustration of what we mean here is provided by feminist scholars Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen who discuss the questions which are not raised in Clifford's extended representation of the Mashpee Indians Case for land rights: "Who is the intended audience for this analysis; the Mashpee or other scholars in institutions under Western control? And whose interests does it serve?"[61] In raising these questions these feminist scholars clearly seek to question the limitations of "the appearance of multiple voices" in Clifford's text to counter hegemony. We argue that this limitation arises from scholars' engaging with the power of representation (in the realm of writing) alone and not including another critical sense in which "representation" has been conceptualized. We refer here to the twin senses in which Marx enunciates "representation": *Vertretung /representation*, or "speaking for" (in the political sense), and *Darstellung / re-presentation*, or "making present" (as in art or philosophy).[62] It is only with *re-presentation* that debates over "ethnographic authority" have been waged by the proponents of "experimental ethnography." Restricting the debate over ethnography to the level of *re-presentation*, Marcus, Fischer, and Clifford seem to implicitly follow the recommendations of Gayatri Spivak who advises feminists to disavow *representation.*[63] The rationale behind Spivak's recommendations to avoid "speaking for" Others is that underlying the act of *Vertretung* is the *naive* claim that the investigator's project allows the "voices" of the subjects to speak. We argue that while Spivak's insights on the problematic relation between *representation* and *re-presentation* are invaluable for ethnography in terms of questioning ethnography's potential to reflect "reality," her recommendation to disavow the ability to represent has problematic political implications. Disavowing *representation* rests on a arguable assumption that "speaking for" and "making present" can be separated, a separation which we think is impossible and even undesirable. All acts of *re-presentation* contain an element of *representation*. The dangerous consequence of calling for disavowals of "speaking for" is that this will allow ethnographers to continue to *represent* and *re-present* while claiming to only engage in the latter.

Concentrating on *re-presentation* further allows scholars who focus on experimentations with textual forms to seek solutions for the "problems of description of social reality," that is, "crisis of representation" exclusively in the realm of writing.[64] Consequently we see in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* a predominance of discussion on the poetics of ethnography and very little serious engagement with the politics of ethnography.[65] When Vincent Crapanzano in his essay speaks of ethnographers he waxes poetically about the romantic mission of the ethnographer likening him [sic] to the Greek god Hermes, a trickster god, who uses his cunning to *convince* his audience of the veracity of his message by concealing his rhetorical strategies.[66] The role of the ethnographer when envisaged in such a narrow manner becomes one of wielding power primarily through control and manipulation of rhetorical strategies. What gets elided here is the issue of the ethnographer's power to write about the natives in the first place thus diluting questions of power and knowledge. How can the power to convince an audience be confined to control over rhetorical strategies at the expense of not acknowledging the prior power relations which creates some as ethnographers and some as subjects? Ethnographers (as Hermes, the Greek god) are able to represent not merely because of their control over rhetorical strategies but largely due to their power derived from institutional privileges and historical legacies.

Reading the works of these scholars, one is thus left with a politics *only* of writing. Texts and debates over how texts get constructed at the level of writing render the boundaries within which these scholars seem to consider "politics" parochial–politics gets done where writing gets done, i.e. *within* the academy. By confining their discussion to politics within the academy, the ethics of being in the field is avoided. Instead, their arguments derive from a "realization" that "culture" is produced and is changing, not knowable and known through the writings of anthropologists who craft ethnographies. Consequently, their question becomes, "How can we produce better ethnographies to *capture* culture?" Their response to this question has in our view led to an excessive focus on representation and its limits. Reducing the politics of ethnography to politics of representation and discourse (within the academy) does not allow for production of an alternative knowledge which draws on struggles *outside* the academy. Here we find Benita Parry's concern with Spivak's assertion of the "irretreivability of the subaltern voice" as accurately reflecting our concern with the politics of ethnography being a "crisis of representation" alone:

> . . . because their [Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha] theses admit of no point outside of discourse from which opposition can be engendered, their project is concerned to place incendiary devices within the *dominant structures of representation* and not to confront these with another knowledge.[67][our emphasis]

We find the "politics of ethnography" offered by scholars such as Marcus, Fisher, Clifford, and Cushman inadequate to our task of building *alternative knowledge* which contests First World knowledge of the Third World a knowledge that has been instrumental as discussed earlier, in dominating and not allowing for self-definition of Third World peoples. We feel the need to go beyond representation because alternative knowledge cannot be produced if we remain mired on the level of representation.

Alternative knowledge, in our opinion, must have as its underlying basis certain key related considerations. Given the overwhelming depiction of Third World people as passive, foremost among these considerations should be the awareness of an urgent need to include the subjects of our inquiry as active agents of their own history.[68] This will mean that we acknowledge that people have always been actively participating and making choices in their lives, prior to and outside of the scholarly work of representation. Another consideration would be a knowledge in which Third-World peoples are represented as able to *define themselves*–that they can define and articulate their own interests and that they devise strategies and tactics that are part of their struggles in their everyday lives. Finally the above two considerations will be made possible only if researchers operate from an epistemology different from the Orientalist knowledge wherein self-knowledge is predicated upon knowledge of the Other. In this different epistemology whose goal is to produce alternative knowledge, "knowledge" is viewed as *production* which always takes place in a political space. An acknowledgment by the researcher that knowledge production is political would engender an understanding that some knowledges are *made* more valid and legitimate than others: historically and structurally knowledge produced within the metropolitan academy attains an "expert" status vis à vis the self-knowledge of the subjects of research, a situation that arises due to the differential associations with power. "Disavowing" the power/authority of the ethnographer at the representational level does nothing to mitigate the power relations that enable the researcher to go to the field in order to write. We argue that differential power relations between researcher and the researched can be genuinely contested not through rhetoric but by researchers drawing on their power to write against the grain. This would mean that researchers define their roles as agents who should help create the conditions of possibility for self-definition of the subjects of research. Consequently alternative knowledge would be more concerned with how the subjects of research actively engage their everyday lives with issues of difference both within their groups and outside while attempting to define their group's interests, than with efforts at diffusing the ethnographer's authority in representation alone.[69] It seems ironic that academies within nation-states claiming a *representational* form of government, where "speaking for" is at the core of its functioning, attempt to practice research wherein *representation* is sought to be delinked from *re-presentation*..

By viewing *representation* and *re-presentation* as inseparable components of research, we seek a politics which engages issues of disempowerment and identity, and which has as its *primary* site the everyday life struggles of Third World people against domination and subordination. We do not deny the importance of the struggles to better *re-present* the "cultural Others" of the First World, a struggle predominantly waged in the First World academy. We only want to reinstate the *primary* position of struggles against colonial legacies, imperialism, racism, capitalism, sexism, State repressions, and developmentalism in scholarship that attempts to be counter-hegemonic. Our justification for privileging *everyday lives* of Third World people as a site of struggle over the academy draws inspiration from a similar attempt made by Stuart Hall when he grapples with the political project of cultural studies:

> ...I want to go back to that moment of "staking out a wager" in cultural studies, to those moments in which the positions begin to matter. This is a way of opening the question of the "worldliness' of cultural studies, to borrow a term from Edward Said. I am not dwelling on the secular connotations of the metaphor of worldliness here, but on the worldliness of cultural studies. I'm dwelling on the "dirtiness" of it: the dirtiness of the semiotic game, if I can put it that way. *I'm trying to return the project of cultural studies from the clean air of meaning and textuality and theory to the something nasty down below.*[70][our emphasis]

We wish the debates over the "politics of ethnography" to engage with the "dirtiness," "worldliness," and the "nasty down below," since it is this engagement which distinguishes the "organic intellectual"[71] from the traditional intellectual who waxes poetic within the academy and the anti-intellectual who is anti-theoretical. Such an engagement allows scholars within the academy to take on the responsibility of "transmitting those ideas, that knowledge, through the intellectual function, to those who do not belong, professionally in the intellectual class."[72]

Disengagement from the "nasty down below" allows scholars within the academy the luxury of not constantly evaluating their work with respect to its ability to effect social change.[73] In a discussion of the urgency of the problem of AIDS, Hall raises an important question regarding our accountability to the subjects of our research: "What is the point of the study of representations, if there is no response to the question of what you say to someone who wants to know if they should take a drug and if that means they'll die two days later or a few months earlier?"[74] Hall's question brings to the foreground the importance of engaging with the politics of the struggles of everyday life outside the academy. By making *everyday lives* of Third World peoples the subject of ethnographies, we argue that alternative knowledge becomes directly concerned with the question of domination because its very subject–the Third World- is defined by its dominated status.[75] In the next part we delineate what we mean by everyday life and how our conception of everyday life makes possible a different politics, a politics which goes beyond the politics of "textual representation." We draw on examples of ethnographies from India to show how ethnographies of everyday life can produce alternative knowledge. We focus on India because that is the area we are most familiar with since our own dissertations are proposed ethnographies of everyday lives in India.[76]

Ethnographies of "Everyday Life"

Everyday lives of Third World peoples has been the focus of anthropological studies for over a century. Many ethnographies of the everyday lives of Third World "natives" function as the classics of anthropology. In traditional anthropology, the everyday lives of "natives" have been studied by obsessively recording details of various aspects of the lives of natives in an attempt to fulfill anthropology's claim to a "holistic" understanding of humanity. Thus we have long and careful descriptions of the sexual lives, the ritual practices, the food habits, the kinship relations, the political organizations, the economic patterns and the cosmologies of various groups of natives. Underlying these descriptions and analyses is a presentation of the *everyday lives* of Third World peoples as *objects* to be described, observed, documented in order to be known. Our call to study everyday lives differs from the way in which it has been studied in the classics of anthropology. Drawing on Dorothy Smith's distinction between "everyday life as object" and "everyday life as problematic," we argue that ethnographies should focus on the latter. As Dorothy Smith argues, focusing on everyday life as an object of inquiry would mean constituting it as a "self-contained universe of inquiry" separated from the "larger social and economic relations that organize its distinctive character."[77] Continuing her analysis, Dorothy Smith goes on to define what everyday life as problematic could mean:

> The concept of problematic is used to relate the sociologist and the sociological inquiry to the experience of members of a society *as knowers* located in actual lived situations in a new way. It is used here to constitute the everyday world as that in which questions originate.[78]

> This problematic is, I suggest, present in the everyday world as it is given to any of us to live. For the everyday world is neither transparent nor obvious. Fundamental to its organization for us is that its inner determinations are not discoverable within it. The everyday world, the world where people are located as they live, located bodily and in that organization of their known world as one that begins from their own location in it, is generated in its varieties by an organization of social relations that originate "elsewhere."[79]

Chandra Mohanty, who also draws on Dorothy Smith to understand the "complex relationality that shapes our social and political lives," insists on the centrality of everyday life to make sense of structures of domination as well as the "dynamic oppositional agency of individuals and collectives and their engagement in 'daily life.'"[80] In the fields of cultural studies and communication studies, there has been an increased focus on popular culture as the site of "everyday resistance."[81] In their haste to invest audiences with agency, these analyses of popular culture as resistance have not interrogated issues of power and domination adequately. A more fruitful approach would be to study everyday life with a conscious awareness of the fine line between totalized oppression and overcelebrated resistance.[82] Instead of viewing everyday life unproblematically as a site of resistance, it is more fruitful to view it as a site of "struggle,"[83] which would mean that failed efforts against domination become as important as successes.[84] By examining everyday forms of struggle, ethnographies of everyday life will enable Third World peoples to define themselves as active "subjects."

We bring up the issue of subjectivity since certain forms of Foucaldian and postmodernist critiques have argued for doing away with the notion of "subject." In a book titled *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories*, Nita Kumar introduces the need to view South Asian women as subjects to problematize these critiques of the "subject." Addressing the predicament of feminist scholars who are attempting to install women as subjects, she speaks about developing an approach which would use Foucauldian insights of power while not giving up the notion of a subject:

> A modified Foucauldian approach would also retain the subject for, let us say, political reasons, being unable to live up to the epistemological task of giving up subjectivity on having been denied it for so long and just discovering it. For the relatively new approach of feminist social science (and for the relatively new politics of feminism) the postmodernist questioning of subjecthood is a luxury, it seems at times, that we cannot afford; or as Braidotti put it, "in order to announce the death of the subject one must first have gained the right to speak as one."[85]

Extending Nita Kumar's argument for the need to retain the notion of a subject to all Third World peoples, ethnographies of everyday life would be part of the struggle to enable Third World peoples to speak as subjects. The importance of speaking as subjects instead of being cast as objects is eloquently stated by bell hooks:

> As subjects, people have the right to define their own reality, establish their own identities, name their history. As objects, one's reality is defined by others, one's identity created by others, one's history named only in ways that define one's relationship to those who are subject.[86]

In the past few years, there have been many ethnographies from all over the world in which everyday life has been viewed as a problematic yielding much needed alternative representations of Third people[87]. With specific reference to India, one important way in which Third World people are constructed as active subjects in ethnographies is by challenging hegemonic knowledges through an analysis of the way power is negotiated in everyday life situations. These ethnographies have engaged the everyday lives of historically disempowered groups: some have focused on women's struggles within patriarchy [88] and others have focused on certain groups that have been marginalized in their own societies.[89] Our discussion of these ethnographies is not designed to provide in-depth analysis and critiques of them, nor to paint a broad survey of the extant ethnographies of everyday life from India. Instead our purpose is to highlight the recent work of certain scholars whose innovative ethnographies have the potential to inspire similar projects across disciplines.

In her ethnography, Kalpana Ram contests the homogenous representations of Indians by focusing on women in a Catholic fishing community in South India. Her work is in part, framed as a response to the work of scholars such as Louis Dumont who she finds have been guilty of representing the Indian as only "a 'subject-effect' of numerous social roles dispersed across collectivities of caste, kin, and village."[90] Stating clearly at the outset that the task of her ethnography is political, she seeks to represent the Mukkuvar women in a manner that will challenge assumptions about the Mukkuvars that the dominant majority culture has set up. Subsequently she challenges two hegemonic assumptions within which Mukkuvar women are traditionally conceptualized–as dependent and passive subjects of a "South Asian" patriarchy and as a passive minority within a caste-driven society. By exploring the everyday lives of Mukkuvar women, Ram finds that women, far from being passive, exert their informal power through their activities in "the underground female economy" in which they devise strategies to control scarce cash resources to meet familial needs.[91] Similarly, she finds that the Mukkuvars, drawing on traditions derived from their "difference" as a fishing community in an agrarian society and as Catholics in a dominantly Hindu society are able to carve out a social space where they are not subsumed within the structures of caste. Throughout her work Ram argues for "culture as a field of conflict internally split by relations of power and contestation between dominant and subordinated groups."[92] This conception of culture as a field of struggle, which allows Ram to find expressions of autonomy among the Mukkuvars, results in a representation where Mukkuvar women are active subjects.

A representation of active subjects who have a degree of autonomy from dominating structures, is a theme which has been explored in innovative ways by some scholars who have chosen to focus on aspects of oral cultural practices of women. It is in this domain, hard to access unless one is looking for alternative discourses, that one "finds" negotiations of power in everyday life situations. Much like Lila Abu-Lughods's work on Bedouin women's poetry,[93] Gloria Raheja's work on rural North Indian women's ritual songs and proverbs as genres of oral culture and Veena Talwar Oldenberg's work on Lucknow courtesans' lifestyle represent women expressing their critique of patriarchal practices and dominant society's discriminatory practices respectively. The rural North Indian women's songs in Raheja's study articulate the contradictions in patriarchal structures thus challenging the view of patriarchy as a seamless, monolithic power structure. The life stories of Lucknow courtesans in Oldenberg's work contain expressions of resistance to traditional roles assigned to women, strategies to manipulate men for improving women's material status and an affirmation of the strength they derived from living in an all-women's space. These two ethnographies seem to respond to Elizabeth Enslin's concern for a politics of ethnography which relies primarily on textual experimentation that "reveal" multivocality to contest hegemony.[94] What she seeks instead is a politics that goes beyond poetics. Raheja's and Oldenberg's works are good examples of a politics that moves beyond writing strategies of the ethnographer to view the self-knowledge of Third World peoples as a legitimate and as a primary everyday site of counter-hegemony. Verily ethnographers in academies do not have to mourn the lack of counter-hegemonic practices in social reality and instead take on the burden of initiating counter-hegemonic practices through representation.

Another ethnographic study that seeks to capture moments of counter hegemony is Purnima Mankekar's study whose goal is not only that of contesting representations of Third world women as victims of patriarchy, but also that of depictions of audiences as passive. Strongly interdisciplinary, her work cuts across the fields of anthropology, women's studies and communication studies. Ethnography in recent years has increasingly been used as a methodology to study audiences of popular culture.[95] Many of these studies were attempts to show that viewers' interpretations of popular culture allowed them even if only in subtle ways to resist hegemonic constructions of their subjectivity. In the spirit of this tradition that views audiences as "active," Mankekar studies working-class Indian women's interpretations of constructions of "Indian womanhood" on television to understand how discourses of nation, gender, and sexuality overlap. The women in Mankekar's study use the portrayal of the "disrobing" of Draupadi, one of the most important female characters in India's ancient epic Mahabharata, on television to critique power relations in their own lives; women identified with Draupadi's plight to articulate their own vulnerable positions in life, to question the failure of society to protect women, to mock at society's construction of the male as protector, to voice their concerns regarding sexual violence against women, and finally to challenge the conception of the Hindu woman as tolerant and accepting. Given the paucity of work in the Third World on audiences, Mankekar's ethnographic study is a welcome contribution and can inspire more work in this direction.

While the above ethnographies have focused on women as a group that has been historically represented as passive subjects of patriarchy, Khare's ethnography explores these same issues amongst the Chamars of Lucknow, an ex-untouchable caste which has historically been viewed as passive vis à vis dominant upper-castes. Khare finds that the cultural ideology of the Chamars permits a self-knowledge which enables them in their everyday lives to contest their devaluation by the dominant caste ideology; Chamars are knowing and acting subjects who trace their heritage beyond that of the confining structures of caste to critique their social conditions while devising strategies to cope with their situation. The focus in Khare's ethnography on the ideological realm of Chamars shows us how marginalized groups use their self-knowledge to challenge representations of them as passively accepting upper caste strictures. The problem in this ethnography seems to be its relatively short discussion of the realm of everyday life activities in which the Chamars must be transforming their ideology into practice to negotiate power relations. This realm of everyday life may yield many "surprises" for the ethnographer who may be agonizing over how to represent subjects as active. Nita Kumar in her work on another historically disempowered group, the artisans of Banaras "discovers" this previously unknown realm in their everyday lives. In her attempt to gain access to the slippery area of the world of leisure activities of the artisans, Kumar finds that "bahri alang" is a major leisure activity among the artisans only by observing their everyday life practices rather than by relying on verbal responses alone:

> . . . I initially tried to ask point-blank, "What are your favorite entertainments?" and such questions. I was seldom given any answers but the polite and evasive one of "*Are*, sahab, what entertainment can we poor people have?" I had to fall back on observation.[96]

Combining historical and anthropological methods, Kumar successfully shows that "bahri alang" was historically a pan-Banarasi leisure activity that only recently came to be associated exclusively with the lower classes. This allows her to problematize the relationship between culture and poverty by assigning a central place to the self-knowledge of the artisans which in all its richness and complexity brings out the inadequacy of approaches that ignored the multidimensional world of the artisans by emphasizing their economic conditions and those that envisioned the artisans as a passive group with no control over their own history. While Kumar's ethnographic work brings out the previously invisible activities of an occupational group which have traditionally been "artisans," R. Srivatsan's work on film hoardings (or billboards as they are called in the United States) extends the concept of "artisans" itself to include a group that has never been visible in scholarship. Hoarding artists who paint film hoardings (huge billboards, painted in bright colors, and depicting scenes from films), a common sight in urban and rural India, are seen in Srivatsan's ethnography as central to an understanding of the workings of capitalism in late capitalist countries like India as well as to understand the politics of the visual in constructions of gender and sexuality. Srivatsan lays out the economics of the production of hoardings in India where it is still cheaper to have a system of labor that uses skilled mixing of paints. In his interviews with these artists, he finds that they paint hoardings keeping in mind the location and the audience. Drawing on their film experiences, their feelings for the stars, and their preferences for colors, the painter translates the layout supplied into living images of desire and feeling. In Srivatsan's innovative work, these largely invisible painters who invest images with their interpretations emerge as far more sensitive and intelligent instruments of "reproduction" than the machine. Describing the significance of his work, Srivatsan writes:

> The aesthetic would be a social, historical product, emerging from the experiences of *daily* existence in a specific society, and tied to a conceptualization of maleness, femininity, sexuality, pleasure, pain, desire, frustration, anger, and all the emotions felt in the body. It would be tied to cultural practices of caste, class, community, and gender, all of which shift and change in their emphasis and content with time, responding in part to these very imaging processes they inflect .[97]

Srivatsan's work in many ways illustrates Arjun Appadurai's concept of the life career of an object by bringing to life a completely commodified and unproblematized object hoardings–by showing hoardings as an active site for the transfer, translation, exchange and struggle over meanings.[98]

Our discussion of the above ethnographies was intended not only to show how ethnographies of everyday life can produce alternative knowledge but also to show some of the directions that future work could take. One area that we feel needs more ethnographic exploration is popular culture in the Third World. In the case of India, for instance, psychoanalytic and cultural analyses of films and analyses of the production and distribution of music cassettes, need to be complemented with ethnographic work to understand how people actively engage with cultural products in their everyday lives.[99] In a world where media products from the First World are part of the everyday lives of many people in the Third World, ethnographic work about everyday struggles with "modernity" in the Third World can suggest narratives that differ from a grand narrative of global homogenization.[100] Grounding ethnography in everyday life forces scholars to view "categories," "concepts," and "structures" as *historical* phenomena which happen in human relationships.[101]

Conclusion

We began this essay by laying out the need for ethnographies of everyday life given the distorted and disempowering representations of Orientalist knowledge. We argued that alternative knowledge cannot be produced by a politics of ethnography which engages the politics of *re-presentation* (making present) and disavows the politics of *representation* (speaking for). Drawing on Stuart Hall, we suggested that ethnography should *primarily* engage itself with the struggles of everyday life outside the academy whilst negotiating politics within the academy. We then outlined "everyday life as a problematic" and discussed how this view of everyday life enables ethnographies which can challenge hegemonic knowledge of the Third World and represent Third World peoples as "active' subjects. Our essay has taken this form consciously because our goal was to point to the importance of ethnographies of everyday life given the current predominance of debates over writing, identity, and location. It is our assertion here that this particular form arises because of our identity and location as Third World scholars in the First World. In our conclusion we briefly address the issue of identity and location that constitute the political space within which Third World scholars work as ethnographers.

For Third World scholars in the First World it is necessary to address the implications of the politics of identity and location for alternative knowledge production. In a recent essay on "native anthropologists," Kirin Narayan cites the example of the Indian anthropologist M.N.Srinivas in order to suggest that "native anthropologists" had traditionally been accorded a privileged status because their "insider's eye" allowed them to produce authentic knowledge of their own societies.[102] Narayan argues that given today's global flows in trade, politics, and the media, the distinctions between "native" and "non-native" anthropologists are not useful since identity according to her has become "multiplex," "shifting," "situational," and "hybrid." Arguments such as Narayan's that do not engage the importance of politics in the shaping of identities, especially of Third World scholars in the First World are problematic. In viewing the "native anthropologist's" traditional position as having been "privileged" due to his/her "nativity," Narayan does not examine how this "privilege" was accorded *only at the expense* of denying them their subjectivity as "natives." "Native anthropologists" are not just "natives," they are individuals who by becoming "Westernized" and "Western trained" are popularly viewed to have gained the expertise and objectivity to represent their own cultures.[103] It is not adequate as Narayan does to only question Srinivas's Indian origins as his "perpetual qualifier" for gaining "privilege." We argue that Srinivas's "Westernization and Western training" ought to be just as problematized. As Third World scholars studying our own cultures while being located in the First World, we as graduate students experience the contradictoriness of this "privileged" position.

Firstly, we question the assumption of a "privileged" status for "native anthropologists" within the U.S. or European academies on the grounds that we are forced to engage with "experts" who are ever ready to let us know that our knowledge of our cultures is subjective, or that it is merely restating what Eurocentric theories have already suggested, or even that our knowledge is not "expert."[104] Secondly, Narayan's argument for "hybridity" oversimplifies the issue of identity of the anthropologist because it does not investigate adequately the complex politics of the location of Third World scholars in the First World. Kalpana Ram addresses the consequences that arise due to the depiction of Indians in the past as part of collective hierarchical structures in opposition to the Western, modern, autonomous individual:

> The possibility of a reflexive and critical theory of one's own society, culture and history is rendered redundant for Indian subjects.. . .The Indian as critic of Indian society disappears from sight. This is not to say that there are no Indian theorists, but rather that such constructions of Indian *identity* render it impossible to speak both as an 'Indian' and as a social theorist at the same time. 'Indians' enter the field as speaking subjects *only at the price* of consenting to recognize themselves in the 'we' of Western anthropology, modernity, and so on.[105] [our emphasis]

In light of Ram's observation's regarding the struggles faced by Third World scholars who can claim authority only by allying themselves with "Western science," Narayan's attempt to dislodge the native anthropologist from a supposedly "privileged" position seems premature. Consequently her call for hybridity as a more useful way to conceptualize identity than the essentializing of 'native" anthropologists can be problematic for devising strategies of intervention. Third World scholars in the First World encounter charges of inauthenticity from two fronts; from the First World academy which is in the quest for the "authentic" informant and from the Third World academy which accuses them of "selling out." For Third World scholars in the First World academy who work in this double bind, claiming a hybrid identity may not help to negotiate the *politics* of location:

> In the face of this discourse of authenticity, some Third World intellectuals working in the First World have reterritorialized themselves as hybrid. This strategy is compelling when such a demonstration of hybridity becomes, as in Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands* (1987) an enabling moment for the possibility of a collective politics attentive to difference and contradiction. When, however, the elaboration of hybridity becomes an end in itself, serving to undo only binary oppositions, it runs the risk of dodging entirely the question of location. To this one must say, 'necessary but insufficient'.[106]

Clearly a politics of identity which advocates hybridity does not contribute to our conception of a politics that will enable producing alternative knowledge. A critical problematized awareness of the difference between "native" and "non-native" may be better suited to counter hegemonic knowledge rather than a call for the dissolution of distinctions between native/non-native.

In conclusion, we affirm that the path to countering hegemony is by interrogating our own stake in what we produce, in considering how our knowledge will be used, and in acknowledging our responsibilities to the people we write about. For Third World scholars using ethnography to produce alternative knowledge in the First World it is important to move beyond textual experimentations and hybrid identities as counter-hegemonic strategies. Alternative knowledge may be better produced if Third World ethnographers write about the everyday lives of Third World people with an awareness of the political need for claiming legitimacy as Third World scholars.[107]

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NOTES

1. Chandra Mohanty. "Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle," in Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, eds., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, 1-47. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 5-6.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

3. We are fully aware of the problems associated with using the term "Third World." We use the term self-consciously; Chandra Mohanty points out that the term not only makes concrete the economic relationship between the First and the Third World, but it also takes into account our history of colonization and relationships of dominance between First and Third World peoples. See ibid., pp. 74-75. Even today people from post-colonial and developing nations continue to be classified as "Third World people" within the dominant discourses of the West, for instance, in reports of the United Nations and the World Bank. For a perspective that adopts the stance of an Anti-Third Worlds Theory see Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures*, London: Verso, 1992.

4. Ibid., p. 29.

5. Ibid., p. 33.

6. See Douglas Haynes and Gyan Prakash, eds., *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991 for references to representations of South Asia.

7. See Aijaz Ahmad for a brief critique of the relationship between knowledge production and the location of the intellectual in the academy to question a politics that is preoccupied with representation and views the politics of representation as political praxis. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures*, London: Verso, 1992.

8. See Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," in R. Samuel, ed., *People's History and Socialist History*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981;

Amilcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973; and James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985 for an elaboration of the importance of everyday life as a site of struggle.

9. See the edited series *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, vols. 1-7, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983-1989; Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal 1890-1940*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989; Lata Mani, "Cultural Theory and Colonial texts: Reading Eyewitness Accounts of Widow Burning" in Larry Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, eds., *Cultural Studies*, New York: Routledge, 1991; Gail Omvedt, *Cultural Revolution in a Colonial Society: The non Brahman Movement in Western India, 1873-1930*, 1st ed., Bombay: Scientific Socialist Educational Trust, 1976.

10. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory*; Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989; Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

11. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994; Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 1-23; Gayatri Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, London: Routledge, 1990; Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.

12. Elizabeth Enslin, "Beyond Writing: Feminist Practice and the Limitations of Ethnography," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 4 (1994), pp. 537-568; Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 11, no. 1 (1988), pp. 21-27; Richard Fox, ed., *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1991.

13. George Marcus and Michael Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

14. Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, p. 65.

15. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 3.

16. See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 175.

17. Ibid., p. 172. Here we note that Said's work has been critiqued by scholars such as Denis Porter and Aijaz Ahmad for constructing a monolithic Western discourse and thus not noting counter-hegemonic narratives within the West. See Denis Porter, "Orientalism and Its Problems," in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, pp. 150-161, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994 and Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 166. While we recognize the problems with Said's book there is no gainsaying the fact that Orientalism was the dominant discourse about the Third World in the First World and continues to manifest itself even today in various forms.

18. Ronald, Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1986), pp. 401-446; Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 2 (April 1990), pp. 383-408; Kalpana Ram, "Modernist Anthropology and the Construction of Indian Identity," *Meanjin* 51, no. 3 (1992), pp. 589-614. See also V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, Bloomington: Indiana Univer-

sity Press, 1988 for a good introduction to Orientalist knowledge with respect to Africa.

19. Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," p. 408.

20. Ibid., pp. 384-385.

21. See Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* for how Orientalism preceded Europe's colonization of Asia.

22. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 86.

23. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfield, New York:Orion Press, 1965, p.85.

24. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, p. xi.

25. Ibid.

26. See Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," p. 406

27. See Cabral, *Return to the Source* and Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

28. Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, New York: Humanities Press, 1973.

29. See Rosane Rocher, "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century," David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism," and Arjun Appadurai, "Number in the Colonial Imagination," in Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

30. Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World," p. 387.

31. Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," p. 408.

32. See the literature put out by the "5o Years is Enough" movement, especially *Global Exchanges* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1994).

33. James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization, and the Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. xiv.

34. See Kate White, "Defining Space in the Field of Social Change: 'Development' as Hegemonic Cultural Practice, Paper presented at XVIIIth Scientific Conference of the International Association for Mass Communication research, August 16-21, 1992, Sao Paulo, Brazil for a critique of development agents who claim to be privileging "indigenous knowledge," yet operate to maintain the hierarchy of power with the Western expert who uses the tools of "componential analysis" and "ethnoscience' and systematizes the knowledge of the "comprador class"- the chieftains, the medicine men, and the trading classes- in the "Third World."

35. Ahmad, *In Theory*, pp. 287-318.

36. Arturo Escobar, *Anthropology and the Development Encounter*, 1995, p. 5

37. See Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 235 for a critique of Gandhi's ideas also being Orientalist.

38. Partha Chatterji, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, London: Zed Books, 1986.

39. Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World," p. 393.

40. See Jayant Lele, "Orientalism and the Social Sciences," in Breckenridge and van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament*, pp. 45-75.

41. Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World," p. 386.

42. Ahmad, *In Theory*.

43. Wes Cecil, Pranav Jani, and Stacy Takacs, "India Is (n't): Misrepresentations of India in the United States Media," *Samar* (Summer 1994), pp. 4-9.

44. Catherine Lutz, *Reading National Geographic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

45. See Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine* for a path breaking analysis of the World Bank's country report of Lesotho where he successfully shows how the World Bank discursively constructed Lesotho as a "less developed country."

46. See Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," p. 402 and Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology: Social Scientific Issues*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

47. James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986; George Marcus and Michael Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1988; George Marcus and Dick Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 11 (1982), pp. 25-69.

48. Marcus and Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts," p. 25.

49. Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, p. 2.

50. Ibid., p. 24.

51. Ibid., p. 6.

52. Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 85.

53. Steven Sangren, "Rhetoric and the Authority of Ethnography," *Current Anthropology* 29, no. 3 (1988), p. 407.

54. Frances E. Mascia-Lees, Patricia Sharpe, and Colleen Cohen, "The Postmodern Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective," *Signs* 15, no. 11 (1989), pp. 7-33; Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, Deborah Gordon, "Worlds of Consequences: Feminist Ethnography as Social Action," *Critique of Anthropology* 13, no. 4 (1993), pp. 429-443; Ruth Behar, "Introduction to Women Writing Culture: Another Telling of the Story of American Anthropology," *Critique of Anthropology* 13, no. 4 (1993), p. 307-325; Margery Wolf, "Writing Ethnography: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," in *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism and Ethnographic Responsibility*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

55. Ruth Behar cites African-American literary critic Barbara Christian who says, "I know, from literary history, that writing disappears unless there is a response to it." We like to think that a similar effort is needed to inscribe the Third World writing culture. See Behar, Introduction to Women Writing Culture," p. 313.

56. Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, p. 4.

57. For different critiques of neglect of "place" in anthropology see Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Place and Voice in Anthropological Theory," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (1988), pp. 16-20; Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992), pp. 6-23; James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," in *Cultural Studies*, pp. 96-116.

58. James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in *Writing Culture*, p. 19.

59. Ibid., p. 21.

60. Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, p. viii.

61. Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen, "The Postmodern Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective," p. 25.

62. See Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth-Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, eds., Selected Works, Moscow, 1962.

63. See Gayatri Spivak, "Imperialism and Sexual Difference," *Oxford literary review* 8, no. 1-2, pp. 225-240, and "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, pp. 271-313, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

64. Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, p. 8.

65. Clifford in his introduction to *Writing Culture* goes so far as to draw inappropriate analogies between an academic ethnographer who is in a considerable position of power and privilege and a Cree hunter who has just lost his hunting lands and is appearing in court only to proclaim his powerlessness to know the truth. See *Writing Culture*, p 8. For a critique of elitism in the writing styles of experimental ethnographies, see Wolf, *A Thrice Told tale*, p. 138

66. For Third World scholars, reading about the ethnographer as a dilemma of Hermes does nothing to reduce power and authority. In fact it only continues the domination and privileging of Eurocentric standards. See Vincent Crapanzano, "Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description," in *Writing Culture*, pp. 51-52.

67. Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (Winter 1987), p. 43.

68. Here we note some of the major debates which have addressed the tension between resurrecting an autonomous, transcendental subject and a subject determined by structures. See E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, London: Merlin, 1978 and Rosalind O' Hanlon, "Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1988), pp. 189-224. We argue that situating the subject in the context of everyday life *struggles* is one way that this tension may be negotiated. Struggles implies that people are struggling against external structures which constrain the possibilities of their actions. However, the active subject implies that they are able to analyze, articulate, and devise strategies to counter, even if only subtly, the hegemony of structures.

69. We understand the difficulties involved with defining group interests because there are contradictions present within groups. Nevertheless the task of the ethnographer, we argue, should be that of describing how solidarities are struggled with and negotiated by the people in their everyday lives.

70. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," in Grossberg et al, eds., *Cultural Studies*, p. 278.

71. Ibid., p. 281. Here Hall draws on Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual.

72. Ibid.

73. We argue that the position of Third world scholars (even those located in the First World) makes it difficult for them to disengage with the "nasty down below" because they are constantly called upon to justify their work by their own communities. For example, in our graduate classes, scholars like Bhabha and Spivak get called upon for their obscurantist writings by Third World graduate students, almost as if they should know better where their responsibility lies.

74. Hall, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies," in *Cultural Studies*, pp. 284-285.

75. Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World," p. 407.

76. Radhika Parameswaran's dissertation work focuses on how women negotiate their sexuality as well as understand the West as a psychological category through an ethnographic exploration of young, middle class, Indian women's interpretations of popular fiction produced and published in the First World. Balmurli Natrajan's dissertation interrogates questions of power, culture, and ideology through a focus on how artisans in the vicinity of a huge industrial complex negotiate the "gaze" of the Indian State.

77. Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987, p. 90.

78. Ibid., p. 91.

79. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

80. Mohanty, "Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, p. 13.

81. See for example, John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

82. For a discussion of a more fruitful way to study resistance as a diagnosis of forms of power see Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1(1990), pp. 41-55.

83. Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," in R. Samuel, ed., *People's History and Socialist History*.

84. See the edited series *Subaltern Studies*, vols. 1-7 and Scott, Weapons of the Weak for examples of "failed" resistances.

85. Nita Kumar, "Introduction," in Nita Kumar, ed., *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories*, Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994, pp. 8-9.

86. bell hooks, "feminist scholarship: ethical issues," in *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, Boston: South End Press, 1989, p. 43.

87. Some examples are June Nash, *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1979; Elizabeth Povinelli, *Labor' Lot: The Power, History, and Culture of Aboriginal Action*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993; Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1987; Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin stories*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

88. Kalpana Ram, *Mukkuvar Women: Gender, Hegemony, and Capitalist Transformation in a South Indian Fishing Community*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1992. Veena Talwar Oldenberg, "Lifestyle as Resistance: The Case of the Courtesans of Lucknow," in Haynes and Prakash, eds., *Contesting Power*. Gloria Raheja, "Women's Speech Genres, Kinship, and Contradiction, in Nita Kumar, ed., *Women as Subjects*. Purnima Mankekar, "Television Tales and a Woman's Rage: A Nationalist Recasting of Draupadi's 'Disrobing,'" *Public Culture* 5 (1993), pp. 469-492.

89. Ravindra Khare, *The Untouchable as himself: Ideology, Identity and Pragmatism among the Lucknow Chamars*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984; Nita Kumar, *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988; R. Srivatsan, "Looking at Film Hoardings: Labour, Gender, Subjectivity and Everyday life in India, *Public Culture* 4 (1991), 1-23.

90. Kalpana Ram, "Modernist Anthropology and the Construction of Indian Identity," p. 596. Ram repeats this assertion in her book *Mukkuvar Women*, p. xi.

91. Ram, *Mukkuvar Women*, pp. 145-163.

92. Ibid., p. 232.

93. See Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin stories*.

94. See Enslin, "Beyond Writing: Feminist Practice and the Limitations of Ethnography."

95. Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984; Andrea Press, *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class, and Generation in the American Television Experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991; Angela McRobbie, *Jackie: An Ideology of Adolescent Femininity*. Birmingham: The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1978; Mary Anne Moffitt, *Understanding Middle-Class Adolescent Leisure: A Cultural Studies Approach to Romance Reading*, Ph. D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990.

96. Kumar, *Artisans of Banaras*, p. 230.

97. Srivatsan, "Looking at Film Hoardings," p. 9.

98. Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction," in Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, pp. 3-63, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

99. See Sudhir Kakar, *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989 for a study of films and Peter Manuel, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 for an analysis of music tapes.

100. See Anand Patwardan's ethnographic film *Ram ke Nam* of working-class Hindus, which gives us an alternative representation of Ayodhya to counter hegemonic discourses of the Hindutva movement. This is an example of documentary film as resistance. Other possible areas which can be explored through ethnography are adolescent perceptions of MTV and the consumption of popular fiction in India.

101. Edward Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1963, p. 9.

102. Kirin Narayan, "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist," *American Anthropologist*, 95 (1993), 671-686.

103. This goes back to the point we made in the second part of our essay about how the proponents of the politics of ethnography privilege the epistemology wherein the self is known only through the other, thus privileging the ability to travel. With respect to the native anthropologist, this travel needs to be complemented by training in the methods of Western science.

104. A most recent example which illustrates the need for a radical change in knowledge production and its epistemology is a short 10 minute clip on "dynastic rule" in India, aired on National Public Radio (February 24, 1995, 9:40-9:50 a.m..), the "liberal" voice of the U.S. The theme of this program was the "fact" that India although priding itself on being the world's largest democracy was in fact functioning as a dynasty! The focus of discussion was Sonia Gandhi, the wife of the assassinated prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. The presenter Eric Weiner had as his main informant the ubiquitous Western fieldworker in India, Mark Tully (BBC correspondent) whose words were constantly portrayed as containing more "truth value" than two other "native voices"-Ashis Nandy, a long time social critic and activist and Ms. Swaraj, a Member of Parliament and a leader of the oppositional Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The dominant picture painted was that of an India desperately seeking Sonia to lead the country. Supporting this assertion were factually erroneous statements such as the "fact" that Sonia's picture appeared *everyday* in India's newspapers, that she met with all top officials regularly, and that she *hand picked* Narasimha Rao, India's current prime minister, to succeed her. Throughout, Nandy and Swaraj's voices were treated as only secondary to the voice of the "objective, non-native" observer Mark Tully. It was also amusing to note the attempts to reconcile India's "xenophobic" image in the Western media with the image of an India seeking a foreign-born person to lead the country.

105. Ram, "Modernist Anthropology and the Construction of Indian Identity," p. 598.

106. Lata Mani, "Multiple Mediations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception," *Feminist Review* 35 (1990), p. 31.

107. Given the power imbalance between the First World and the Third World, there are some scholars who call for the Third World to write about the First World in order to counter First World hegemony. See James Fernandez's review of Clifford's *Predicament of Culture* in *American Anthropologist* 92 (1990), p. 824 where he calls for African anthropologists to study the History of Consciousness program at Santa Cruz to enable an authorizing strategy that would challenge the authority of the First World to write about the Third World. Such a call does not recognize the need for Third World scholars to write about their own societies so that alternative knowledge of the Third World becomes available.