

OBSERVING ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Professional Knowledge, Practice and Lives

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Anthropologists are experts at studying cultural ‘others’ and, in the process, elucidating hidden aspects of their own society. These twin perspectives have typically been seen as the aim of good ethnographic writing. This book reverses the analytical lens to focus on the anthropologists *themselves*: their works, lives and subjective encounters in the field and beyond. In doing so, it explores the relationship between personal experience and knowledge production, taking us behind some of the key concepts that have shaped the discipline, both its past and its present. The anthropological encounter not only changes our ideas about the world and provides a lens for understanding other people’s worlds; as the narrative accounts in this book show, it can also fundamentally change who we are.

This book sets out to answer four key questions that are practical, political and epistemological in nature. First, what exactly is it that distinguishes anthropology as a professional practice and as a way of seeing and knowing the world? Second, how has the discipline changed in the past forty years, and does the geographical location of its practitioners affect the ways anthropology is practiced? Third, what are the most exciting innovations and directions that are reshaping anthropology today, and where have these ideas come from? And fourth, how do anthropologists engage with the urgent problems facing societies around the world, and how do they understand that engagement? In addressing these questions, we also hope to illumi-

nate broader issues, including the constitution and reproduction of the discipline, the shifting identity of anthropology as a profession, its applications and its ethical entanglements.

There have been a number of works that have tried to shed light, in one way or another, on the practice of social anthropology. Many of these have highlighted the practice of fieldwork as the pillar of anthropology (Sanjek 1990; Borneman and Hammoudi 2009); others have explored anthropology as a form of writing, deconstructing the literary tactics and artifice of writing ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988). Still others, following the literary turn of the 1980s and calls for more self-reflexive accounts (Marcus and Cushman 1982), have adopted the genres of personal memoirs and 'confessional' writing (Nordstrom and Robben 1996; Coffey 1999; De Neve and Unnithan-Kumar 2006; Collins and Gallinat 2010). Most of these texts focus exclusively on fieldwork experiences. Sometimes they have been highly personal and often (embarrassingly) revealing; for example, Paul Rabinow's 'sensual interactions' with prostitutes in Morocco, which, he informs us, 'seemed to be too good to be true' (1977: 65, 69); Peter Wade's account (1993) of the sexual motivations that led him to do ethnographic research in Colombia; or Kenneth Good's (1991) romantic tale of 'going native' among the Yanomami in Venezuela. While these accounts have provided some valuable insight into the processes of anthropological knowledge formation, like most autobiographies, they tend to be selective and skewed towards the concerns of their authors. As observant critics have often noted, an autobiography typically reveals nothing bad except the author's memory and vanity. In a similar vein, there have been a number of fascinating anthologies of anthropologists' personal accounts of their relationships with key informants (Casagrande 1960; Watson 1999; see also Dumont 1978). Some of these accounts are humorous and self-deprecatory and are aimed at a more general public audience (Barley 1983); others are fictional narratives that set out to lampoon the practices of the anthropologist (Parkin 1986; Lodge 1991; McCall-Smith 2005, 2006a, 2006b; see also MacClancy 2005).

This book differs in three important ways. First, our concern is to examine the practice of anthropology in its wider sense. Anthropology as a profession is not simply a matter of 'doing fieldwork' or 'writing ethnography'; it also includes teaching, social activism and performing the role of public intellectual. These are not simply add-on components to practising anthropology; rather, in this book we demonstrate the close and dynamic relationship between these different dimensions, including how activism and teaching shape our

fieldwork experiences and anthropological sensibilities. Second, our aim is to understand how the major theoretical tropes and paradigms that have influenced contemporary social anthropology have arisen not only through fieldwork, but as a result of other personal, historical and scholarly influences. And third, the process of creating these personal histories and narrative accounts is deliberately different from that of most of the works cited above. Rather than inviting contributors to send us their unmediated autobiographical musings and reflections on their own experiences, we met with them personally and led them through a set of semi-structured questions that sought to tease out the connections between personal history, intellectual influences and disciplinary formation. As a result, their answers were spontaneous and unrehearsed. Even though they later had a chance to revise their contributions, the resulting chapters strive to maintain the informality and conversational style of our interviews. Perhaps more important, this approach meant that our contributors were often asked to speak to topics that they may not have chosen themselves – sometimes putting people on the spot by asking questions that took them outside of their comfort zones. In a curious sense, our authors thus also became our ‘informants’. Much like the collaborative process of ethnographic fieldwork, we engaged with them to elicit answers to the questions that we found most compelling. This represents a very different and perhaps uniquely ‘hybrid’ genre of anthropological writing – not quite an ‘anthropology of anthropologists’ (Kuper 1996) but somewhere between raw interview and reflexivity; autobiography and collaborative analysis (Fluehr-Lobben 2008); or between emic and etic perspectives on one’s own professional practice. This also enabled us to look across the interviews to draw out unifying themes and key differences that highlight not only individual idiosyncrasies, but also generational patterns, national contexts and career trajectories.

The twelve individuals who are featured in this book have all dedicated a large part of their professional and personal lives to anthropology. Many of them are at the cutting edges of their respective fields: scholars whose work and writings have transformed anthropology as a discipline and who have inspired subsequent generations of students both nationally and internationally. Many of them have also had careers that span different countries, acting as public intellectuals and engaging in the major concerns that occupy anthropologists – and policy makers – in different settings. While not intended to be representative of particular national traditions, their work necessarily reflects some of the major intellectual currents and socio-economic and political changes that have occurred not only in New Zealand,

Australia and Britain, but in the discipline on a global scale. By exploring their individual works and lives, we aim to grasp some of the wider social and contextual changes that are occurring within the discipline, as well as within academia as a whole. Our authors also both reflect, and reflect upon, some of the generational shifts that have occurred in anthropology, from the 1950s, when Joan Metge and Nelson Graburn embarked on their studies, to the 1980s, when Christopher Pinney and Nigel Rapport received their doctorates. These accounts thus offer a glimpse into the ways in which the discipline produces and reproduces itself or, more precisely, how its practitioners remake the profession. Significantly, the early education and training of these authors reflects much more the influence of the British tradition of *social anthropology*, with its focus on social structures and social relations, than the North American tradition of *cultural anthropology*, with its characteristic concern with debates around meaning and symbolism (Kuper 1999; Spencer 2000). If one of our goals was to understand what has happened to that British anthropological tradition once it was exported to the colonies, another goal was to examine how practitioners in the so-called periphery have engaged with and redefined that legacy and the intellectual contributions that peripheries can make to challenging and rethinking the established normative orders and assumptions that emanate from the centre.

The Value of ‘Peripheral Visions’

A major rationale for this book was to examine the relationship between knowledge production and anthropological location as understood in a broader sense than simply fieldwork (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Our aim was to explore the extent to which the discipline of social anthropology in two post-colonial settler societies (Australia and New Zealand) differs from its counterparts in Britain’s mainstream metropolitan centres. We have a personal stake in this question having both grown up and undergone much of our own professional training in anthropology in what could be described as the metropolitan centres of the discipline (Britain and the United States, respectively). Having both resettled in New Zealand in the last ten years, we continue to be struck both by the differences, yet more so by the *continuities* that define the discipline and practice of anthropology in these distinctive locales. Australia and New Zealand are often perceived to be on the periphery of global academic knowledge production. While the term ‘periphery’ may be viewed as a Eurocentric way of framing the issue,

it is nonetheless useful for distinguishing between the financially well-endowed universities in the Northern Hemisphere's core metropolitan centres and universities in more marginalized sites. One important observation that arises from our authors' accounts is the rich intellectual *cross*-fertilization that occurs between core and peripheral sites in academia. This is partly a reflection of the increased movement of academics in the ever-more globalized world of academia, with New Zealand in particular having one of the most international academic labour forces in the world (Bonisch-Brednich 2010). The traffic works both ways, however. It would be impossible to attempt to draw national boundaries around the work and influence of antipodean anthropologists such as Raymond Firth, Roger Keesing, Bruce Kapferer, Michael Taussig, Michael Jackson or Anne Salmond. Moreover, most of these authors have spent substantial parts of their careers shifting to and from their countries of origin.

Nonetheless, New Zealand and Australia also provide specific contexts in which anthropology has developed, and they have given rise to several distinctive domestic concerns, from debates over post-colonial identities and subjectivities and the politics of indigeneity to applied anthropology and questions of ownership, appropriation and land rights (as we explore below). Antipodean perspectives have contributed more broadly to mainstream anthropology in various ways. As well as producing leading scholars, the Pacific region has given rise to many key concepts and distinctive disciplinary themes, including those of political leadership, chiefs and big men; gift-exchange and reciprocity; the politics of apology and post-colonial reconciliation; indigenous identity and rights; cultural genocide and the politics of forced assimilation; and theories of adolescence and childhood. As our contributors demonstrate, Australian and New Zealand anthropologists have contributed substantially to these debates, their development and, in particular, to their application.

Anthropology in New Zealand has also been the scholarly training ground for a number of leading Maori public figures, political and social activists, and intellectuals, including Robert Mahuta, Pita Sharples, Sir Hugh Kawharu, Ranginui Walker and Pat Hohepa. These leaders have all championed Maori rights and have been part of the movement that has gained wide public recognition for Maori culture with the result that *te reo Maori* (the Maori language) is taught in many public schools and that the New Zealand government now funds a Maori-language television station. There are also preschools (*kōhanga reo*), higher education institutions (*wānanga*) and alternative approaches to penal reform based on Maori cultural principles. While

it has by no means overcome the inequalities created by its colonial legacy, New Zealand's Treaty of Waitangi partnership arrangement is often cited as an example of a more successful approach to indigenous-settler relations.

There is a long-held anthropological ideal of using voices from the margins to critique the core, or as Marcus and Fischer put it (1999: 138), bringing 'the insights gained on the periphery back to the centre to raise havoc with our settled ways of thinking and conceptualisation'. In the antipodes, the perspectives of indigenous peoples have gone a long way in challenging the assumptions of Eurocentric thinking. However, as Maori scholars and activists argue, this process could be taken much further, particularly in the areas of land rights and social justice (Smith 1999; Muru-Lanning 2010; Mutu 2011; Kawharu 2011). As Justice Eddie Durie notes (2011: 135), 'While both of New Zealand's founding cultures are passionate about property rights and expound the need to respect them, they differ on what those rights are.' He concludes that considerable work is still needed 'to close the gap in cultural comprehension'.

The subversive potential of peripheral perspectives may have an even greater transformative role. Using the metaphor of 'peripheral vision' in astronomy, June Nash (2001) has argued that sometimes the only way to see an object of study (like the cluster of stars known as the Pleiades) is to stare beyond it and catch a glimpse of the whole.

If we look straight ahead with the tunnel vision of disciplines that concentrate on core institutions in the centres of global power, we miss the manifold processes known as globalization that occur on the margins. These core institutions are so intertwined with regional, national and local clusters that it is difficult, if not impossible, to perceive the macro formations. (Nash 2001: 15)

Like Nash, we suggest that an added dimension of the intellectual value of perspectives from countries like Australia and New Zealand arises precisely from their marginal positions. In much the same way as the 'upside-down' (or 'south-up') map compels us to recognize the taken-for-granted bias towards the Northern Hemisphere – and its attendant psychological effects (Meier et al 2011) – so views from the periphery can help to dislodge the normative values and assumptions inherent in Eurocentric perspectives. The value of peripheral viewpoints is borne out in much of the anthropological scholarship on the cultures of colonialism (Dirks 1992; Thomas 1995), and in the anthropology of post-colonialism (Werbner 2012, globalization and neoliberalization, and 'supply chain capitalism' (Tsing 2009) and citizenship (Partridge 2011). That process of foregrounding perspec-

tives from the margins is largely what characterizes anthropology's keystone method of ethnographic fieldwork.

Professions and Identities: Anthropology as Seen from Within and Without

Ever since Malinowski, the most notable defining feature of social anthropology has been that of an individual embarking upon cross-cultural fieldwork. The idea of knowledge gained from empathetic understanding derived from long-term immersion in a different cultural milieu – be it in the Amazonian rainforest, a remote village in Africa or a small South Sea island on the brink of cultural extinction – has long been a central motif in both anthropological practice and representations of the discipline (Kuklick 2011). The romantic figure of Bronislaw Malinowski spending years living and working in seeming harmony with the Trobriand Islanders both epitomized and set the bar for what proper anthropological field research should entail – notwithstanding the disclosures about his personal life that came to light following the posthumous publication of his private diaries (Malinowski 1967).

All professions seem to acquire an external image which, however inaccurate it may be, substantially influences the people engaged in that field. In some cases this may also be a key factor in why individuals embark upon a career in that discipline. The allures of being a supermodel, famous musician, professional athlete – or nowadays a celebrity chef – are readily apparent; these careers appear to need little or no explanation. However misunderstood they may be in practice, these professions – like those of doctors, teachers and police officers – are instantly recognizable and enjoy a certain kudos. By contrast, those who work in what might be termed the 'knowledge industries' are harder to classify, as their work is neither particularly visible nor widely recognized. For example, most anthropologists can recount umpteen occasions when their response to the question 'So what do you do for a living?' has produced bafflement.

Anthropology as a profession seems to conspicuously lack serious public recognition. Or if it does enjoy notoriety, it is usually for the wrong reasons. The popular public image of anthropology has been shaped largely by negative stereotypes or romanticized caricatures. Among the most pervasive of these are the anthropologist as eccentric boffin and merchant in exotica; neo-colonialist and pith-helmeted butterfly collector; permanent tourist or deranged Westerner who sadly 'went native'; or government spy and intruder into other people's

privacy. Perhaps a more appealing but equally problematic image is that of the anthropologist-as-hero. This trope includes popular figures such as Indiana Jones or the forensic scientists who feature prominently in popular television police dramas like *CSI*, *Bones* and *Cold Case*. Other less heroic but nonetheless appealing figures include Scarlett Johansson's rendition of the anthropologist-cum-accidental nanny in *The Nanny Diaries* or the young protagonist in the popular drama *Fierce People*, who models himself on his famous but distant anthropologist father by examining social relations among a rich and eccentric New Jersey family. These populist depictions invariably trade on images of anthropologists' engagement with the eccentric, the exotic and the seemingly 'primitive' Other. While these portrayals might seem unconvincing to most professional anthropologists, anecdotal evidence suggests that many students are drawn to the discipline by their allure. Indeed, a number of the contributors to this volume admit that their initial attraction to anthropology arose from its promise of exotica.

The question of what attracts individuals to anthropology – and what kinds of individuals are drawn to it – is important, because it raises issues that lie at the heart of this book, i.e. the sense in which anthropology entails a foray into other people's lives and worlds and the implications of that engagement for the people themselves, for anthropologists, and for the development of knowledge about our own and other cultures. How some of the leading practitioners in the discipline came to anthropology was one of the questions we wanted to answer, as it set the stage for understanding what anthropology is all about. To what extent have any of these external images influenced people to take up a career in anthropology?

The personal accounts in this book are not intended to be representative of the discipline as a whole, but they do, nonetheless, provide rich and instructive insights into the factors that have influenced people's decisions to devote their lives to this endeavour. What unites the authors in this book is the extent to which practicing anthropology is experienced as a vocation; i.e. not just an occupation and a profession but a mission and a passion. As Max Weber (1948: 84) famously wrote in his essay 'Politics as a Vocation', 'He who lives "for" politics makes politics his life, in an internal sense'. In similar vein, the authors in this book have shaped their lives around anthropology and have, in turn, had their lives reshaped by the discipline in a manner reminiscent of a 'calling'. And yet, for most of them, discovering anthropology came about largely by accident. Perhaps that itself is indicative of the ambiguity surrounding anthropology as a profession. This sense of the incidental and ephemeral nature of anthropology is well cap-

tured in Lévi-Strauss's autobiographical work, *Tristes Tropiques*. 'Anthropology', he wrote, is 'an ambiguous enterprise, oscillating between a mission and a refuge'. The ethnographer strives to understand other people's worlds both from intimate and distanced perspectives:

The conditions of his life and work cut him off from his own group for long periods together; and he himself acquires a kind of chronic uprootedness from the sheer brutality of the environmental changes to which he is exposed. Never can he feel himself at home anywhere; he will always be, psychologically speaking, an amputated man. Anthropology is, with music and mathematics, one of the few true vocations; and the anthropologist may become aware of it within himself before ever he has been taught it. (Lévi-Strauss 1961: 58)

Many of our authors echo Lévi-Strauss's description of anthropology as something they felt attracted to even before they understood what it was (an entrée into other worlds or alien modes of thought? An escape from their own reality? A chance to discover – or remake – oneself?) Most anthropologists, however, would not share Lévi-Strauss's hyperbole or his pessimistic portrayal of the psychological impact of anthropological fieldwork. Nor would they share his assumption that anthropology can be discovered within oneself, even without any formal teaching or training. The reasons how and why people come to anthropology are both complex and subjective. Sociological factors also play an important role in drawing people to the discipline.

Coming to Anthropology

From the narrative accounts in this book we can deduce several distinct trajectories into anthropology. As mentioned, for several of our authors, discovering the discipline seemed to occur largely by accident. Part of the reason for that is almost certainly because anthropology is not taught in the mainstream school curriculum. It therefore retains a certain aura of mystery, as well as enticement about it. However, many were drawn to the discipline as a result of early childhood encounters with cultural 'others', experiences which had fuelled a fascination with different cultural worlds. For some, particularly Salmond, Jackson and Gillian Cowlshaw, those alternate worlds held out a promise of escape from their own seemingly dry and mundane cultural universes – even an opportunity to remake oneself. For others, particularly Marilyn Strathern and Susan Wright, it was about intellectual curiosity and dissatisfaction with the limitations of other subjects. There were those (such as Graburn, Wright and Salmond) who

were attracted to the discipline through their personal encounters with charismatic teachers, while still others (like Rapport) initially came to anthropology to study archaeology or biological anthropology but migrated to social anthropology. For most of our authors, coming to anthropology entailed a combination of several factors.

The Accidental Anthropologists

The phrase 'accidental anthropologist' has been applied to a number of leading figures. Eric Wolf was famously described in his *New York Times* obituary as a biochemistry major at Queens College in New York who 'stumbled into an anthropology class one day and realized that the broad field embraced just about everything he was interested in, which was just about everything about every aspect of the human experience' (Thomas 1999: 10). Significantly, 'accidental anthropologist' is also the title of Jackson's memoir. As Jackson observes (in this volume), 'I stumbled on anthropology for reasons I can't fully fathom. And I remained in anthropology more by chance than design ...'

This metaphor of 'stumbling' is a far cry from that of the heroic adventurer who purposefully sets forth to discover the world and encounter exotic others. But in many respects the accidental nature of the encounter with anthropology is consistent with the discipline's methodology, i.e. the importance that 'serendipity' plays in anthropological fieldwork (Hastrup 1992). The contributors to this volume highlight the importance of the accidental and the contingent as a defining element of anthropological research: as Graburn observes when asked about his current projects, 'I generally don't have "projects" ... It's a little like that first fieldwork, [the research focus] just hits you'. Like many anthropologists, Graburn insists that none of his major research discoveries 'would have happened if I'd set out to plan them'. Most anthropologists relish the haphazard quality of anthropological engagement because of the unexpected – and sometimes un hoped for – insights it reveals. Indeed, as our authors vividly recount, a large amount of critical anthropological knowledge is acquired as a consequence of mistakes and blunders made in the field. But not all anthropologists 'stumbled' upon anthropology unawares; some actively seek out not only the discipline's promise of encountering difference but also the possibility of internalizing alterity.

Encountering Otherness

It has often been noted that anthropology attracts those who somehow feel themselves to be misfits or outsiders. It is precisely that sense

of dislocation – and the realization of alternative social realities – that makes anthropology so appealing to some. Pinney, with characteristic panache, sums it up eloquently: ‘I think my own experience fits a very common anthropological pattern. Many anthropologists – rather like brutal dictators – have marginal childhoods. They move in from the periphery to the centre and there’s something in that dislocation which then makes them susceptible to anthropology as a practice.’

Equally striking is the fact that many of our contributors confess to having felt, even from a very early age, an attraction to other people’s cultural worlds. For the New Zealand anthropologists, all of whom are *Pakeha* (i.e. New Zealand born and of British descent), the encounter with Maori was arguably the most important influence on their desire to step beyond the boundaries of what was defined as their ‘own society’. Cowlshaw, Salmond, Metge and Jackson all speak to the importance of the Maori-*Pakeha* divide and its significance for their respective generations. All grew up in small towns which had, in Metge’s words, ‘Maori enclaves which were marginalized on the periphery of society’. For Salmond, ‘[T]here was no real way to participate [in Maori life] . . . as the two communities were quite divided from each other. . . [T]hey coincided at *school* or in *sport*, but otherwise very little’.

Or as Jackson writes, ‘It wasn’t “apartheid”, but in the bourgeois imagination there was an unspoken assumption that these people were not respectable enough to be true companions or neighbours.’

While for some this exotic and marginal status was a large part of the appeal, for others it was the richness and warmth of the ‘Maori world’ itself that was the main attraction. Jackson vividly recalls the shock of seeing ‘exotic’ elderly women ‘with *moko* (traditional Maori tattoos) on their chins, smoking pipes’ who ‘inhabited a different world’ and ‘mysteriously came and went’:

Why did they live in this other place and where was it? What was it like? I gradually fantasized an identification with Maori as the embodiment of the misfit that I felt I was. I grafted my own sense of alienation onto these people who appeared to be living on the margins of society.

For Cowlshaw, the pull of Maoridom derived largely from a deep dissatisfaction with her own milieu and the ‘restrained’, ‘repressed and boring cultural arena of dairy farming’:

As a *teenager* I had this sense of being in a very tight, closed and conventional world which I and other members of my family felt was like a prison, a prison of others’ opinions and narrow moralism expressed in gossip. I was very conscious of the possibility of exploring the wide, varied and sophisticated world out there . . .

For Salmond, Maoridom similarly offered the chance to step into an alternative reality:

It gave me a different sense of the world ... I could walk out and look at a mountain or a hill that I've been looking at all my life, and all of a sudden, I'd see a totally different side to that place ... it's not 'Young Nick's Head,' a headland in Gisborne which was the first place named by Captain Cook, it's Te Kuri a Paoa, named after his dog by Paoa, one of the first Polynesian explorers to arrive in New Zealand. There's a 'double history' here, a double dimension to the landscapes that I was living in every day. Feeling like that about your own country all of a sudden is unsettling. It's not exactly *Alice in Wonderland*, but it's almost like that: i.e. everything I thought was stable and familiar started to take on radically new meanings.

Jackson took this even further, not only seeking to remake his social world but, more important, himself: first by identifying as a 'white Maori', symbolically severing ties to the *Pakeha* world of his parents, and subsequently by self-consciously placing himself in dangerous war-torn parts of the world in order to expose himself 'to extreme conditions of radical otherness' as a means of 'remaking' himself. For many anthropologists fieldwork encounters can result in radical, though sometimes equally subtle, realignments of their identities, moral values and outlooks on the world. Jackson may be unusual in consciously aiming for such a conversion, but, as our interviewees attest, being transformed by fieldwork is not a unique phenomenon.

Post-colonial social relations also captivated the interests of future anthropologists growing up in the metropolitan centres. Nicolas Peterson and Graburn, for example, both grew up in extraordinarily cosmopolitan households due to their family's close involvement with colonial and post-colonial enterprises. Peterson spent his childhood in an East London social and philanthropic settlement which was a magnet for visiting scholars. He describes how, 'As a boy, every day that I was at home I'd have lunch with ... a number of ... sociologists and intellectuals from across the British Commonwealth'. Similarly, Graburn's household included 'people who spoke foreign languages, talked about "the natives" and who enjoyed cuisines that were definitely not English'.

Talking to People Who Talk Back

Others took a more circuitous route to social anthropology; several of our authors were attracted to anthropology after first taking up either archaeology or biological anthropology. This includes Jackson and Rapport, as well as Strathern, who spent her teenage years going on

archaeological digs unearthing Roman remains in southern England. For Strathern, the appeal of studying at Cambridge was that it offered a degree in both archaeology and anthropology:

I thought this was absolutely perfect; it would allow me to indulge my passion for archaeology but then go on and be serious and do anthropology. Of course, I was eighteen years old and that now sounds really pompous!

While archaeology and biological anthropology held appeal, there were a number of factors that made social anthropology particularly alluring. A further factor that drew many of our other contributors was the influence of a charismatic teacher or practitioner. Edmund Leach was a particularly important influence on Strathern, Graburn and Rapport – as well as a whole generation of other students, including Fredrik Barth and Stephen Hugh-Jones. For Wright it was the ‘transfixing’ character of David Brookes (‘dressed in a Bakhtiari robe [and] enacting a lot of dances and talking about Bakhtiari politics’) that lit the fire. In New Zealand, Ralph Piddington shaped the careers of Metge, Salmond and Jackson.

Yet it was not only charismatic teachers, but the possibility of directly engaging with ‘ordinary folk’ as part and parcel of their intellectual enterprise that confirmed for many that anthropology was the right discipline for them. Some, like Wright, came to anthropology out of dissatisfaction with another discipline that they had originally chosen to study. For Wright, anthropology offered a way to explore the ordinary lives of those who had been largely eclipsed by the grand narratives of official history and connect their hidden histories to the major events that have shaped the world.

Indeed, what was often felt to be missing in other subjects were accounts of *ordinary* people’s lives – in all of their complexity. Anthropology, as Ingold (1992: 696) observes, ‘is philosophy with the people in’. This was something that Howard Morphy discovered after confiding to his geography schoolmaster that he wanted to study geography in order to better ‘understand the needs of developing societies’. The reply he got was that ‘human geography is the poor man’s anthropology’.

In similar vein, Metge’s original ambition had been to study archaeology, but she was told by the Auckland War Memorial Museum’s education officer that she would do better ‘to work with people who can talk back’. One of the distinguishing features of anthropology, as Metge’s work testifies, is that it entails a constant conversation between ‘informants’ and researcher. Dealing with human subjects who have agency – and who are able to articulate their own thoughts and

feelings – has profound implications for the production of anthropological knowledge. It makes the research process necessarily dialogic and open-ended, although as Metge points out, all too often people ‘talk past’ each other, and due to cultural misunderstandings their words fall on deaf ears (see also Metge and Kinloch 1978). Being receptive to those other voices and different ways of seeing is not only of crucial practical and political importance, it also expands the limits of our own thinking.

As Strathern also points out, anthropology is fortunate in that it is constantly challenged and renewed through its sustained dialogues with actors outside of academia who compel us to question our own disciplinary biases and assumptions. This makes anthropology arguably the most reflexive (some would say neurotically so) discipline in the social sciences. What we extrapolate from these encounters can be analyzed on at least two levels. First, what they reveal to us about humanity and the human condition in its widest sense, and second, what we can learn about specific societies and the cultural dynamics of particular locations. The art of anthropology lies in teasing out connections and mapping the myriad relationships between these domains.

Many anthropologists are drawn to the discipline precisely because of that challenge. If reading Rousseau first kindled Strathern’s desire to explore the notion of ‘society’, it was Evans-Pritchard’s vivid accounts of everyday Nuer life – ‘the order of the descriptions and the details’ – that convinced her to pursue anthropology. In contrast to Strathern, who was captivated by the minutiae (or ‘imponderabilia’) of everyday life, Jackson had, by complete chance, picked up a battered copy of Lévi-Strauss’s *Elementary Forms of Kinship* in the Congo and was struck by the notion of anthropology as the study of the human mind.

For others, the primary appeals were not only intellectual concerns but also a desire to engage with political issues and pressing social problems. As David Trigger reflects, ‘[A]nthropology’s apparent alliance with the romance of tribal societies provided an alternative means of critiquing the establishment.’ Despite criticisms of anthropology’s supposed complicity in the colonial project, much of the discipline’s attractiveness lies in its apparent associations with the perspectives of the subaltern, the marginal and the peripheral. As Pinney admits, anthropology seemed to offer a ‘fourth international’ version of politics that was both radical and internationalist. Metge, too, was drawn to anthropology out of a Christian-inspired commitment to social justice.

If the motivations for pursuing anthropology lie in a combination of learning about oneself and learning about our own and other people's worlds – and perhaps even being a catalyst for change and social justice – what are the possibilities for creating knowledge from such an enterprise? And what kinds of insights, understandings and knowledge does anthropology produce?

On the Production and Reproduction of Anthropological Knowledge

These questions beg a more profound issue of defining what exactly is anthropological knowledge. Following Plato, some philosophers would argue that knowledge is 'justified true belief', although this position is widely disputed by proponents of Continental philosophy. The Platonist approach holds that the basis for knowledge is reason and evidence, which enlighten us about the deeper abstract objects or concepts that are independent and timeless. By contrast, most anthropologists, wherever they may situate themselves on the spectrum between relativism and rationality, would probably ask *whose* reason and evidence? This recognition that concepts are always socially and historically situated is central to the anthropological sensibility or, to adapt C. Wright Mills's phrase, the 'anthropological imagination'. It is this *unsettling* of basic assumptions and categories – a constant questioning and contextualizing of common sense and received wisdom – that is the hallmark of anthropological thinking. This perspective is captured eloquently by Michael Herzfeld, when he writes:

Social and cultural anthropology 'is the study of common sense.' Yet common sense is, anthropologically speaking, seriously misnamed. It is neither common to all cultures, nor is any version of it particularly sensible from the perspective of anyone outside its particular cultural context. (Herzfeld 2001: 1)

The anthropological sensibility derives largely from a concern to take seriously the multiplicity of different perspectives and practices across cultures. This recognition of our own and other people's modes of thinking – and the oscillation back and forth between them – generates discomfort and uncertainty. But from that disorientation there usually arise a series of insights that eventually culminate in anthropological knowledge.

If context is everything in anthropology, so too is comparison. In many respects comparison is an implicit component of anthropologi-

cal practice. The most influential anthropologists have always been those who are especially adept at drawing out the comparative connections and making intellectual leaps across cultural fields. Strathern, for example, illustrates how our assumptions about what constitutes 'sharing', 'stealing' and 'borrowing' are radically undermined when viewed from the perspective of societies that operate a very different logic of property and ownership (see also Durie 2011). The concept of 'borrowing' in Western discourse usually suggests taking a possession that has been given willingly for a short period of time. However, at Xavier High School, in Chuuk, Micronesia, students regularly 'borrow' one another's possessions without permission and with no intention of returning them. In a context where 'persons deploy things to enhance their spheres of influence' such acts enable students to injure one other while deflecting the wrath of school authorities who would punish outright 'stealing' but tolerate supposedly 'local cultural practices of communal sharing'. 'Xavier borrowing' thus allowed students to influence one another's power and prestige while retaining a modicum of dignity before the foreign school authorities (Strathern 2011: 27–30).

Anthropological knowledge is reproduced along two main axes that are both mutually constituting and intersecting. The first is anthropological discourse in its broadest sense, which includes the various theories, debates, concepts and general principles that have shaped and defined anthropological thinking since the nineteenth century. While we would hesitate to label this a 'canon', there is, nonetheless, a body of literature, a way of framing our research problems and subjects, and a set of overarching concerns (which have traditionally included kinship, culture, social relations, symbolism, ritual, language and power) that most anthropologists are well acquainted with. The small size of the discipline, the impact of its key scholars (sometimes international but often more local), the influence of inspirational teachers and the uniqueness of its participatory method of research all combine to create ways of seeing and thinking that are distinctively anthropological. Each generation tends to be schooled (at least initially) in the theoretical approaches and debates specific to their time. For those trained in the 1950s (such as Metge and Graburn) the legacy of functionalism still hung heavily around the neck of the discipline; those trained in the 1960s (including Strathern, Jackson, Peterson and Salmond) found intellectual excitement in a number of new theoretical directions, from cultural ecology to structuralism. The 1970s generation (which includes Wright, Cowlishaw and Morphy) was particularly influenced by debates around Marxism, feminism and the

critique of colonialism, whereas the post-1980 generation (including Pinney, Rapport and Trigger) contended with Orientalism, Gramscian and Foucauldian perspectives, post-modernism, cultural studies and the rise of indigenous activism.

Part of the anthropological sensibility, however, also includes sensitivity to the contingent nature of social events, to being open to changing circumstances and being willing to shift one's research focus, theoretical stance, or even one's entire research project, in response to events on the ground. Anthropological knowledge is generated largely through the dialectic between theoretical insight and ethnographic encounter. While all ethnographers may enter the field with research interests that are theoretically informed, most find their theoretical stance challenged, sometimes even totally undermined, by their informants and their fieldwork encounters.

The second axis to anthropological knowledge is disciplinary *practice*, which is largely shaped by ethnographic fieldwork, i.e. long-term participant observation in the everyday lives of peoples and cultures. The fieldwork encounter remains arguably the most central and distinctive means of generating anthropological knowledge and certainly the anthropologists' most recognizable professional practice. The expansion of fieldwork to include many previously unimaginable field sites and research topics – from the rituals of nuclear-weapons scientists (Gusterson 1998) and the cultures of biotech laboratories (Rabinow 1999) to the transnational worlds of corporate capitalists (Bourgouin 2007) and the practices of Wall Street traders (Ho 2009) – only serves to confirm the continuing utility and centrality of fieldwork based on face-to-face encounters as a defining anthropological method. Notwithstanding the critique of empiricism (i.e. the assumption that social reality can simply be deduced from immediate observation), the ontological imperative of 'being there' has not lost its importance – nor should it (Geertz 1988, but cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1997). The value of fieldwork is that it provides a corrective against disembodied theorizing (or 'armchair sociology') of the kind often found among the more scientific or positivistic disciplines. It also provides a creative arena for questioning our theoretical models and generating new theoretical insights.

Anthropological knowledge is therefore partially created through this restless shifting between the insiders' (or 'emic') viewpoint and the outsider ('etic') or analysts' perspectives; a constant tacking backwards and forwards, which, as Geertz (1985) argued, generates a sense of permanent motion central to hermeneutic understanding. Whether the outcome of such an understanding results in the ability

to 'enter into' other people's lifeworlds or, to a more limited capacity, to engage in cultural mediation and translation, is an issue hotly contested among anthropologists themselves.

Another dynamism that helps to shape anthropological understanding is the constant movement between the universal and the specific, or as it is often framed, between global and local levels. There are at least two aspects to this jumping between scales. One is using observations of culturally specific events or processes to shed light on generalized understandings. For example, Serena Nanda's (1990) observation that in traditional Hindu society there is a recognition of three genders (male, female and *hijra*) was subsequently used to reflect critically on the socially constructed nature of Western gender dichotomies. The second aspect lies in showing how global processes are localized – or regionalized – and embedded. Anthropologists are particularly adept at tracking the way concepts travel, how certain discourses and practices take on unanticipated meanings as they cross boundaries and enter into new domains – as has been vividly demonstrated, for example, in the spread of new public management and the rise of 'audit culture' in higher education (Shore and Wright 1999; Strathern 2000; Shore 2008).

Given their engagement in this anthropological process characterized by the creative interplay between theory and fieldwork, local, global and intermediary scales, and emic and etic perspectives, what particular insights have our individual contributors produced?

Key Contributors to Anthropological Knowledge

The contributors to this volume, in many respects, have been witnesses to, and analysts of, some of the great transformations and major historical events that have occurred over the last five decades. These include Iran on the eve of the 1979 revolution (Wright); India as it underwent rapid industrialisation (Pinney); the post-1960s opening up of Papua New Guinea (Strathern); the dislocation of the Inuit (Graburn); the emergence of indigenous art as a commercial category (Morphy); the civil war in Sierra Leone (Jackson); the expansion of Jewish settlements in Israeli-occupied territories (Rapport); post-colonial race relations (Cowlshaw, Metge and Trigger) and the rise of indigenous activism over land rights in Australia and New Zealand (Peterson and Salmond).

Beyond the specificities of these particular events, their work has contributed to wider understandings of some of the major concepts of

contemporary social science. The recognition of gender has become arguably one of the most important influences in reshaping social theory and the human sciences in the period of late modernity (Hall 1992: 285). Central to this has been the concept of 'gender ideology' and the ways that power is deployed through discourses around sex and gender. However, in the early 1970s, the concept of 'gender ideology' had not yet been articulated. It was Strathern, working in Papua New Guinea, who first brought this phenomenon to light: 'I had, as it were, discovered both gender and ideology', she muses, 'except that the term "gender" wasn't there yet'.

Similarly, the concepts of 'subject' and 'subjectivity' have been given fresh impetus thanks to the work of Foucault. The processes of neoliberalization have added further layers of complexity to the way in which modern political subjects are constituted. Wright's work has been pivotal in showing the linkages between neoliberal policies, government-inspired political technologies and the assemblage of new kinds of individuals such as the 'enterprising self' promoted by the Thatcher government in 1980s Britain. The work of Wright and Strathern have thus pushed anthropology to new understandings of the relationships between identity, personhood and discourse, opening up a major terrain for further scholarship on subjectivity and power.

The question over whether the proper focus for social sciences should be on individual actors, socio-cultural domains, or the universal dimensions of the human condition has long been a topic of heated debate within academia. Jackson and Rapport have each contributed their own unique perspectives on this issue. Rapport uses the term 'cosmopolitan anthropology' to describe his theory of the 'ontology of selfhood'. Anthropology's mission, according to Rapport, should be to recognize and promote the agency of individuals, as conventional sociological categories of 'nations, communities, ethnicities and classes' are merely 'epiphenomenal' when compared to the 'concrete realities of individual and species'. Equally uncomfortable with the conventional focus on culture and society, Jackson has pioneered 'existential anthropology' (Jackson 2005), a phenomenologically inspired approach that sees anthropology's aim as a striving towards greater understanding of the universal human condition, a marriage between raw experience and intellectual reflection. The positions espoused by Jackson and Rapport represent two extreme perspectives in the debate that all anthropologists, to a greater or lesser extent, engage with in their work.

In the broad fields of aesthetics, economics and production, Graburn's writings have brought to our attention the vital importance of

tourism and indigenous art as social and economic practices – subjects that had previously been ignored by academia. Similarly, Pinney's work has opened up new ways of thinking about the relationship between aesthetics and culture, while Morphy has elucidated how art, far from being a static representation of culture, can constitute a mode of political action.

Dispossession, racism and the ways in which indigenous people and their worldviews have been marginalized in post-colonial settler societies are among the key themes reverberating through the work of Metge and Salmond. Both have made particularly significant contributions to foregrounding Maori voices and demonstrating what can be learned by listening to them. Whereas Metge has focused particularly on cross-cultural communication and the difficulties that arise when cultures 'talk past each other', Salmond's originality has been to look at history from an ethnographic perspective. Her rereading of Maoris' first encounter with Captain Cook in the East Cape of New Zealand invites us to acknowledge that the history of European exploration must be viewed from multiple perspectives.

In the Australian context, Cowlshaw, Trigger and Peterson have made significant contributions to understandings of race relations and indigenous rights, showing how anthropology can be successfully brought together with applied policy work. At the same time, each of these authors has helped to challenge the often one-dimensional and simplistic renditions of a static Aboriginal culture. Cowlshaw, like Salmond and Metge, was a pioneer in studying indigenous culture within an urban context and thereby highlighting the limitations of constructions of 'classic' Aboriginal culture. However, as these authors point out, anthropologists themselves have sometimes unfortunately encouraged such simplistic constructions, often in response to the legal imperatives of establishing 'traditional rights' to land as part of native title claims.

How Anthropologists Think – About Ownership and Appropriation, For Example

In bringing together these twelve accounts, our aim was to elicit deeper insights into the general processes involved in anthropological knowledge formation. Many of the key issues our authors highlight concern the different cultural concepts that shape other people's worldviews or cosmologies. Similarly, many of the topics they address (including property, the individual, concepts of the self, culture and society) are central theoretical themes in anthropological writing itself. These

interviews offer a critical window onto the differing ways that contemporary anthropology deals with these issues. If anthropology is typically concerned with 'how natives think' (Sahlins 1995), these interviews show us something of the complexity of 'how anthropologists think'.

The issue of property rights is particularly sensitive in post-colonial settler societies. Not surprisingly, this theme features prominently in the lives and work of New Zealand and Australian anthropologists. In Australia, anthropologists have significantly influenced the judicial process by expanding the definition of what constitutes legitimate legal evidence of long-standing tribal relationships to specific territories. That evidence now includes cultural maps, songs, dances and material culture, as well as oral histories and genealogies (Strang 2000). Being called upon to give expert testimony in court in defence of indigenous title claims is another important aspect of the work of anthropologists in these countries and can have quite profound implications (Simons 2003; Sutton 2009). Both Peterson and Morphy were integral to the Blue Mud Bay native title claim, which resulted in Aboriginal ownership of 80 per cent of the inter-tidal zones of the Northern Territory. Similarly, Graburn proudly recollects how his ethnographic evidence helped to secure for the Canadian Inuit commercial fishing rights, resulting in their ownership of a \$6 million (US) shrimp industry.

Property rights are just one aspect of the categories of 'ownership' and 'appropriation'. These concepts cover a range of different meanings and circumstances, from the conventional Western legal tradition of 'possessive individualism' and the more socio-centric conception of property typical of many Pacific cultures to contests over who has the authority to represent a particular culture or religion and questions over whether translating across cultures is necessarily an act of domination and appropriation rather than empathy and dialogue (Pállson 1993). A perennial concern amongst anthropologists, as well as indigenous scholars and activists, is the question of 'cultural survival' and whether commercialization of indigenous culture represents a form of 'cultural genocide' (Greenwood 1989). Graburn has long criticized this stance, arguing that there is nothing ethically wrong with indigenous groups commodifying aspects of their own culture in order to make a profit, 'which is something everybody has to do'. In similar vein, Morphy points out that the Yolngu of northeast Arnhem Land do not view the incorporation of their art into Australia's national self-representation as an act of 'appropriation': rather, they see it as making their culture more visible and placing their artwork on a par with European and other artistic traditions.

Politics of Representation: Culture, Society, Self and Other Sites of Contestation

A less obvious dimension of 'ownership' is ownership of *oneself*. This is a central concern for Rapport, who asserts that 'the only form of ownership worthy of that title is self-ownership' and who defines appropriation as the imposition of cultural categories upon the 'sovereign individual' or 'others telling me who I am and how my life should proceed'. For Rapport this is the foundation for what is both an intellectual and political project: namely, cosmopolitanism as the means of defending 'each individual's freedom to author' their own life according to their own standards 'of beauty or pleasure or duty ... or truth'. Anthropology, according to Rapport, begins 'from the ontology of selfhood'.

A very different concept of the 'self' emerges from Wright's analysis of neoliberal subjectivities. Wright shows how the self as 'individual project' is more a political rhetoric and tool of government (or, *pace* Foucault, a 'technique of the self') than an ontological fact. Not everyone is able to be author of their own lives. As Wright exemplifies through her fieldwork vignette of meeting a woman who announces, 'I've become one of Mrs Thatcher's individuals', this is a heavily politicized view of the self that forces people to become enmeshed in the state's project of neoliberalization and self-management – whether they choose to or not (see Rose 1999).

Representing other cultures is a central aspect of the anthropological project, although anthropologists have different understandings of the concept of culture. Salmond's work illustrates the perspective that cultures have distinct and sometimes irreconcilable worldviews. This is reflected, for example, in the seeming impossibility of finding a Western translation that does justice to the Maori term *tapu*. In part, this is because understanding and representing another culture is not just a scholarly or intellectual exercise; for Salmond it entails bringing 'my whole *self* to my scholarly practice and not just my head'. To truly come to know another culture, she warns, is a lifelong endeavour – 'It never ends: you're always learning, trying to enter into another language, to engage deeply with another philosophical tradition and another conception of the world'.

While Salmond's portrayal suggests a singular 'Maori culture', other anthropologists highlight the fact that even within an apparently unified cultural field there usually exists a multiplicity of perspectives, all of which are inflected by relations of power. Strathern exemplifies this in her account of Papua New Guinea on the eve of in-

dependence and how her initial view that the unpaid local magistrates were working for the public good was later disabused by the recognition that these individuals had their own, often tyrannical, interests at heart. The point here is the need to recognize that even in colonial and post-colonial contexts indigenous peoples do not have a singular cultural perspective or set of class interests (see Rata 2011).

The political nature of culture has been ably demonstrated by numerous scholars (see for example Dirks 1992; Thomas 1995; Kuper 1999). Cowlshaw gives a further twist on this theme by highlighting the political entanglements created when governments try to intervene to protect or 'restore' cultural forms and practices that are considered on the verge of extinction. In her case this involves suburban schoolteachers in Sydney taking it upon themselves to rediscover and teach Aboriginal children their 'ancient and unchanging culture'. This is complicated further by the fact that some indigenous people 'find iconic symbols of Aboriginal culture [as] irrelevant to their lives' when counter-posed against the needs for literacy and other skills for modern living. This highlights the familiar yet arguably irreconcilable anthropological dilemma of engaging in cultural difference without simplifying or essentializing other people's cultural perspectives or condemning indigenous peoples when they engage in strategic auto-essentialism (Spivak 1987; Turner 1991).

The need for indigenous people to define their own culture and identity and determine their own political agendas is particularly salient in post-colonial societies across the Pacific. The critique of colonialism, which developed within anthropology during the 1970s, was particularly acute in New Zealand and Australia, as our authors highlight. The authority of the anthropologist to represent the non-European other came under sharp attack. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 11), all Western disciplines are implicated in imperialism, but 'many indigenous writers would nominate anthropology as representative of all that is truly bad about research'. These tensions increased during the late 1980s, when a number of anthropologists took up the work of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and began to analyze the 'invented' nature of aspects of indigenous cultures (Hanson 1989; Jolly and Thomas 1992; Thomas 1992; Van Miejl 2001). By the 1990s, a number of separate departments of indigenous studies, Maori studies and Pacific studies had been forged. This brought greater autonomy for indigenous writers but also resulted in the politics of gatekeeping and a fragmentation of ethnographic research on indigenous cultures (Webster 1998).

Ethics, Advocacy and Politics in the Academy

If representing peoples and cultures is contentious in anthropology, so too are the ethics of anthropological engagement and advocacy. Anthropologists who conduct long-term fieldwork usually become personally involved with the livelihoods and well-being of their informants. Indeed, according to the ethical guidelines of the American Anthropological Association, it is incumbent upon practising anthropologists to treat these as primary considerations. However, there may also be a tension between the requirements of scholarly objectivity and engagement in outright advocacy (Kirsch 2002). While the conventional anthropological stance is often deemed to be one of cultural relativism, some anthropologists become *less* willing to tolerate or accept various kinds of local cultural practices as their familiarity with a society increases. Pinney, for example, was moved to abandon his previously held relativist assumption that caste hierarchies in India are inevitable, through his attempts to establish a local village health clinic that would also assist Dalits and other marginalized social groups.

The issue of how to use anthropology not only to document and interpret other people's lives but to change them is particularly central to applied anthropology. Engagement with land-rights claimants and policy makers is particularly prominent in antipodean anthropology, given the importance of government-sponsored settlement processes, which often call upon the expertise of anthropologists. This can sometimes result in expert anthropological witnesses appearing on both sides of a legal dispute. It has also created a market for university master's programmes in applied anthropology geared towards creating a cadre of professionals who understand the cultural implications of both government and corporate policies across a range of areas, including development, aid, public health, human rights, refugees and migration. As it does in the United States (but not in the UK), applied anthropology enjoys a higher public profile in Australia and New Zealand – so much so that Peterson, Trigger and others argue for recognition of applied anthropology's contribution to anthropological theory.

Applying disciplinary skills and insights to policy and politics may require a willingness to take controversial stances. As Trigger argues:

The way to handle politically and ethically *difficult* forms of engagement in the great world outside of the academy is not by sitting on the sidelines and refusing to get your hands dirty. It is *not* professionally responsible to say, 'I won't engage with government or industry – or indeed with community organizations – because I can take the higher moral ground within the academy, writing critiques of the Native Title Act or the environmental impact legislation that I can feel good about,

and publish in academic journals read by a small number of my professional colleagues'. We need to be a profession that can make compromises when compromises are needed. We need to focus more effort towards making practical contributions outside the academy, joining those efforts to our intellectual work inside the universities.

However, this can place anthropologists in a dilemma, as intervening to improve people's social and economic conditions may change their culture in unanticipated and arguably undesirable ways. As Peterson notes, it is basic anthropological knowledge that 'if the conditions of production, consumption and exchange are radically altered ... [y]ou cannot expect the cultural and ideational systems to remain unaffected'. The downside to advocacy, of course, is that one may misunderstand the local situation one is trying to observe (Low and Merry 2010). Whether it is better to be an advocate (and run the risk of getting it wrong) or to strive for noncommittal impartiality is a decision that most anthropologists are likely to face at some point during their professional lives.

The nature of ethnographic fieldwork necessarily entails close and intimate interaction with other people and therefore demands a particular sensitivity and respect on the part of the researcher. Nonetheless, it is almost inevitable that unforeseen events will arise that place the fieldworker in an ethical conundrum, such as being witness to the outbreak of ethnic cleansing (Bringa 1995) or a military coup (Trnka 2008); encountering community violence over witchcraft accusations (Strong 2004) or being obliged to take sides during an election campaign (Shore 1999); dealing with the grief of the death of a loved one (Rosaldo 1993; Watson 1999) or even falling in love (Blackwood 1995). One kind of ethical dilemma that can arise is the problem of disclosure if the ethnographic material could cause harm to one's informants. This may be particularly acute in situations of violence or political oppression. Wright's fieldwork on tribal groups in post-revolutionary Iran highlights some of these difficulties. Due to the ongoing tensions between the reforming Iranian regime and Iran's tribal minorities there was a potential danger that Wright's fieldwork data could be abused and therefore she took the bold decision not to publish her findings. Making choices about how to protect one's informants is something many anthropologists have to face, sometimes against a subpoena and at the cost of compromising one's career (see Brettel 1993).

If research entails protecting one's informants against potential harm, often the reverse is also true. Field researchers may themselves need defending by their informants. As Metge confides, *Pakeha* anthro-

pologists working with Maori in the 1970s and 1980s were sometimes accused by Maori activists of 'building a career on the backs of Maori' or 'making money out of them'. In Maori society one does not normally defend oneself; if one's actions or person are worth defending, then someone else will stand up and do so. On most occasions, when subject to hostile criticism, Metge's Maori supporters would rally to defend her. But on one occasion her companions remained silent. That, for her, was a harrowing but instructive experience. Even more traumatic, perhaps, is for a fieldworker to find him or herself the target of another person's malice. As Trigger reflects, being 'ensorcelled' by an Aboriginal elder was a serious assault on his safety but one that, fortunately, mobilized his Aboriginal friends to take active steps to counteract that supernatural attack. One lesson he draws from this is that you know you have become fully integrated into a host society when people feel comfortable enough not only to defend you in public, but also to publicly vent their anger at you.

A more conventional measure of immersion is when members of the local community seek to adopt the fieldworker by treating him or her as a member of the village or family. For Salmond, her main informants were like surrogate parents – and became godparents to her children. Fictive kin relations of this kind can set the framework for lifelong ties and enduring obligations to support the family. These relationships both enrich the ethnographic fieldwork but can also impose severe limits on what kind of research and analysis is possible.

Another set of factors that both enable and constrain anthropological research are the institutional regimes and contexts under which most professional anthropologists work. There is a plethora of variables that shape what constitutes 'valid' anthropological research, from peer-review processes and journal publications to university boards, ethics committees, government-funding priorities or the criteria governing private research foundations and granting bodies. Arguably, the most significant of these are government policies towards the funding of universities and post-graduate education. But making one's research 'relevant' and keeping within the boundaries of what is considered 'appropriate' can be challenging. This is something that each generation of scholars has had to confront in one form or another. For example, Jackson recounts the poignant story of Ralph Piddington, the founding professor of anthropology at the University of Auckland, who as a PhD student in the early 1930s was sanctioned for writing polemical articles in socialist newspapers about the plight of the Karadjeri people of northwestern Australia. As a result of what was at that time deemed an unacceptable 'indiscretion' (Gray 1994;

Metge 2000), he was censured by the Australian National Research Council, which withdrew promises of future funding support, and was told he would never be find employment in any Australian university (Joan Metge, personal communication). Piddington, as Jackson observes, had 'stepped beyond the boundaries of what anthropology students were supposed to do. They were expected to do *academic* studies, not go out and bat for the people they were working with'.

Regrettably or not, having to adapt one's research to what governments or private funding bodies demand has always been a necessary exercise. In certain periods government research-funding policies have opened up, as well as closed down, opportunities to undertake innovative and independent ethnographic research. In the case of Morphy, it was only because universities in Britain were expanding during the 1960s and early 1970s, with increasing numbers of scholarships from the Economic and Social Research Fund (ESRC), that he was able to do a master's. However, that good fortune later became an obstacle, as the ESRC rules made it impossible to apply for further funding. Morphy eventually obtained a PhD scholarship from the Australian National University, and partly as a result of the scholarship's stipulation that he *had* to study Aboriginal art, he went on to become one of the foremost experts in this field.

While it is a truism to say that political and economic circumstances have always determined the conditions of academic existence, the current era seems to herald something different – a qualitative shift in the relationship between universities and government, as the state increasingly divests its responsibilities for funding higher education. As a result, university education has increasingly come to be perceived as a private investment rather than a public good (Marginson and Considine 2000; Wright and Rabo 2010). In this new environment academic knowledge is being redefined by government regulatory frameworks and bureaucratic requirements for demonstrating performance and productivity. In Britain, Australia and New Zealand, research-assessment exercises have been introduced to encourage greater competition and research output that is deemed more relevant for industry and commerce. The rise of so-called 'Third Stream' activities based on commercializing university knowledge and assets is radically redefining the meaning and the mission of the university in these countries (Hoffman 2011). Just as in the early 1980s, New Zealand and Australia once again have become laboratories for experimenting with neoliberal reform (Kelsey 1997; Shore 2010).

As Strathern notes in her chapter, this raises interesting questions about the conditions for knowledge production, which anthropolo-

gists are uniquely well placed to analyze. Unlike most other disciplines, anthropologists are trained to 'find out how things look from other points of view'. That is not only a valuable source of intellectual insight, it also enables its practitioners to 'have lives outside of their own conditions of reproduction', which then allows them to critically examine those conditions themselves. In short, anthropology's reflexivity includes reflecting on the conditions of its own existence, as well as oscillating between perspectives from the core and peripheries.

In many respects, those goals guide this volume. In presenting these twelve highly personal accounts, we hope to elucidate what distinguishes anthropology as a professional practice and a way of knowing – and engaging with – the world. We start with the 'periphery', foregrounding New Zealand and Australian anthropologists yet recognizing that many of these individuals have biographies that span the continents and should not be construed as exemplars of 'national traditions'. Most of these individuals have also conducted research in the antipodes and have anthropological expertise in the cultures of their 'home' (be it natal or adopted). These peripheral perspectives are counter-posed against those of four British anthropologists who teach in what are arguably more mainstream sites of anthropological knowledge production but who have also conducted fieldwork among people in more peripheral communities. However, most of these ethnographers have also shifted field sites during the course of their careers, which highlights another aspect of the fluidity and mobility that characterize anthropology as a discipline.

Above all, these accounts reveal the diverse ways in which ethnographic observations about how people conduct their lives can be used to generate much more profound insights into the principles that underlie contemporary social and cultural life. By combining rich vignettes of personal experience with more reflective philosophical musings on the nature of knowledge production, fieldwork and disciplinary practice, these chapters also take us behind the scenes of the anthropological endeavour to reveal some candid backstage views of how anthropologists conduct their professional works and lives.

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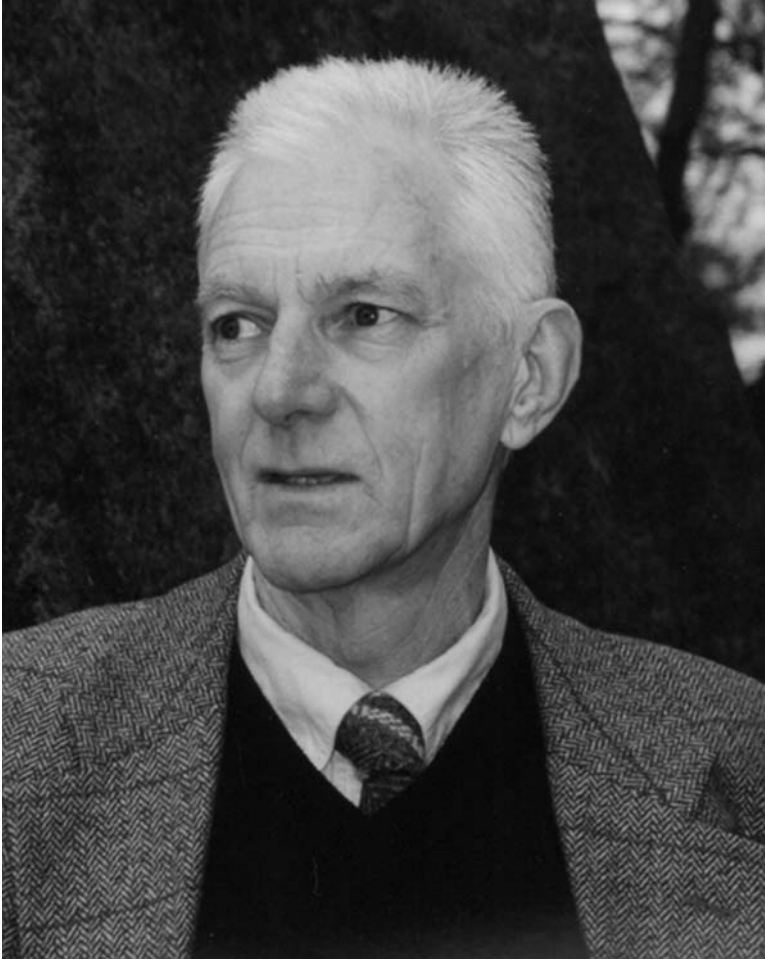
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Major works

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