

Introduction

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*Quitate el ropaje del pudor para decir
con libertad y déjate guiar por el
corazón.*

—Vera Grabe, *Razones de Vida*

Most of the women and men I know who work in war zones and on the front lines of conflict never meant to go there. By there, I mean into the heart of the conflict—not just its geography or its physicality, but into the very everydayness of war, misery, and social struggle. Most of us ended up in these zones by looking for an explanation for some kind of disruption or dislocation of the everyday. Indeed, despite the fact that specific locales may be labeled as dangerous (by police departments, embassies, national governments, and international institutions), those who live in these zones of “danger” have a different scale of referents in the face of variable insecurity (Osorio Perez, forthcoming). The seemingly inexplicable and yet mundane everyday life is what draws us in to these zones where “no one goes” but where real people actually make and remake their everyday lives as best they can. Whether refugee, exile, undocumented immigrant or internally displaced person, survivors of massacres, genocide, and other crimes against humanity must face the daily challenge to remake everyday life (Sanford 2004). Whether in refuge from violence or struggling in its midst, the everyday needs of human life must be met in order to survive (Nordstrom 2004). In the end, these very survival strategies challenge our initial conceptions of the everyday as well as our research practices.

For example, in 1982 my mentor Philippe Bourgois began fieldwork in a Salvadoran refugee camp in Honduras to explore peasant ideologies of revolution. Much to his surprise, “the refugees desperately wanted foreigners to reside in the camps with them,” as did the church and United Nations organizations working in the camp (1990: 48). In short order, he was invited to accompany the refugees crossing the border back to their village in El Salvador. Recalling the experience, Bourgois writes: “My 48-hour visit to El Salvador was prolonged into a fourteen-day nightmare when the Salvadoran military launched a search and

destroy operation against the region. . . . The population was composed of a typical cross-section of peasants . . . grandmothers, grandfathers, young and middle-aged men and women, pregnant mothers, suckling infants, children, and so on. . . . We were all the target of the Salvadoran air force and army" (49).

Bourgois survived the assault and returned to the United States, where he described his experience in expert testimony to Congress, an opinion editorial, and an interview with the *Washington Post*: "A young woman gave birth on the second night of our flight. She was up and running for her life the next day, along with the rest of us. Those of us who were young and healthy were lucky. It was the law of survival at its cruelest: the slow runners and the elderly were killed" (50).

Shortly thereafter, Bourgois was accused of having violated the ethics of anthropology by: illegally crossing a border; not notifying his dissertation committee of his decision to explore a new and potentially dangerous research site; violating the privacy of research subjects (including those soldiers shooting at Bourgois and the other civilians from helicopters) by contacting the media and human rights groups; and potentially jeopardizing future research opportunities for colleagues in Honduras and El Salvador by violating immigration laws and "calling attention to government repression in public forums" (50). Significantly, as Bourgois writes, "had I not gone to the media with my testimony of human rights violations, anthropological ethics would not have been violated in as serious a manner. . . . By remaining silent I would not have violated anyone's rights to privacy nor have threatened my colleagues' access to the field, nor offended my host country" (50). Nonetheless, Bourgois was obliged by his "own personal sense of moral responsibility . . . to provide public testimony" (50). Although perspectives on the professional responsibility of the researcher in the field have shifted significantly since Bourgois's experience in El Salvador, anthropologists and other social scientists continue to struggle with these ethical issues. Indeed, as a founding editor of the University of California's Public Anthropology Series, Bourgois himself has remained a public intellectual at the forefront of scholarly endeavors in engaged research.

How do ethics, scholarship, and the rights of communities collide? How do ethical obligations of the researcher shift in war zones and areas of ongoing conflict? How does this affect one's scholarship and one's own worldview? And what are the implications for the academy? Advocacy, activism, and the response of the academy are the fault lines of engaged anthropology. Philippe Bourgois, like other public intellectuals before and after him, challenges narrow interpretations of anthropological ethics "premised on a highly political assertion that unequal power relations are not particularly relevant to our research" (51). Although the recent scholarly emphasis on public anthropology and activist anthropology might indicate that these concerns are new, Bourgois and other engaged researchers are following a tradition of public critique largely begun by people of color, immigrants, and women who have often been on the front lines

of public debates challenging unequal power relations (Dubois 2005; Wells 1912; Malcolm X 1965; Davis 1983; Said 1978; Arendt 1968; Yasui 1987).

Politics, Ethics, and Advocacy

Anthropologists have raised ethical issues relating to advocacy and politics since the early twentieth century. For example, during World War I, Franz Boas condemned anthropologists spying for the U.S. government. And during World War II, Malinowski warned that anthropologists “should not act as spy or agent provocateur,” but rather “should equally study the motives, intentions, and ways of action of the European community” (Pels 1999). In the 1990s, ethical codes in anthropology became hotly debated topics in anthropological associations in the United States, Britain, Holland, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, and France (1). In his “Prehistory of Ethical Codes in Anthropology,” Peter Pels suggests that “the cultural politics of modern ethics is built around the discursive oscillation between the absolute denial of politics that is implied by ethical standards, and the equally absolute affirmation of politics that the necessarily partial use of these ethical standards bring with it” (2).

Indeed, a case in point appears in the 1971 American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics: the section on Responsibility to the Public, which affirms the politics of research by highlighting the professional obligation of researchers to contribute their expertise to public policy debates. The 1971 code states: “As people who devote their professional lives to understanding people, anthropologists bear a positive responsibility to speak out publicly, both individually and collectively, on what they know and what they believe as a result of their professional expertise gained in the study of human beings. That is, they bear a professional responsibility to contribute to an ‘adequate definition of reality’ upon which public opinion and public policy may be based” (AAA 1971). In the Responsibility to the Public section of the revised 1998 Code of Ethics, what had been a “positive responsibility to speak out publicly” became optional—here, the discursive oscillation to which Pels refers. In place of the “positive responsibility,” the 1998 Code stated that: “Anthropological researchers should make the results of their research appropriately available to sponsors, students, decision makers, and other non-anthropologists. . . . Anthropologists may choose to move beyond disseminating research results to a position of advocacy. This is an individual decision, but not an ethical responsibility” (AAA 1998).

Thus, while recognizing the politics of inequality that might drive the researcher to take an ethical position, the 1998 code makes the ethical responsibility “optional.” Yet, as Pels points out, “Western ethics discourse is not only suffused with notions of rights, responsibility and individual freedom, but also of protest (against illegitimate arrogations of rights) and unmasking (of false ethical frameworks and identities).” Citing Foucault’s work on truth and power,

he further challenges us to recognize that the relationship between politics and ethics becomes all the more complex when claims to “truth, openness and objectivity that are grounded *scientifically*” (emphasis in original) are brought into the mix because “truth shares with ethics the need for individual responsibility” (3).

In *Fearless Speech*, Michel Foucault traced a genealogy of truth as a societal concept back to the writings of Euripides and the practice in ancient Athenian democracy. He argued that truth, rather than being defined by a Cartesian system of evidence, is grounded in the risk one will take to speak truth to power out of a sense of duty. Within this schema, the requisite characteristics of truth are: courage in the face of danger, a duty to speak, risk in speaking, speaking to power, and a social or moral status from which to speak the truth (2001: 11–32). In this way truth goes far beyond breaking official silence, because underlying the duty to speak the truth is the belief that there is a corrective quality to truth when it is spoken to power (Sanford 2004). And truth can be politically transformative because “truth is a thing of the world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it has regular effects of power” (Foucault 2001). Thus it is not surprising that issues of truth and power permeate most aspects of field research from methodology to writing ethnography. As Skidmore poignantly notes about her work with frightened Burmese citizens in her chapter in this volume, “The bond formed between anthropologist and informant is necessarily deep as we are both in danger when we speak truth to each other.” And these truths bring a significant weight of responsibility to the anthropologist and worry to informants because “Burmese people must trust that I will safely take my notes out of the country and that I will never identify them or put their family into jeopardy. Sometimes this causes a large amount of anxiety, especially when the cities are undergoing curfew or other heightened ‘security’ measures.” Reflecting on the implications of research in such conditions, Skidmore asks, “How could one justify a research methodology or project in contemporary Burma in which these turbulent lives are peripheral to the research questions at hand?”

In his work on the Ok Tedi Mine in Papua New Guinea, Stuart Kirsch suggests that “activism is the logical extension of the commitment to reciprocity that underlies the practice of anthropology” (2002: 178). Kirsch reminds us that our first commitment is to the communities in which we work. Further, he makes a convincing argument for the uses of anthropological field research in local struggles for social justice—particularly struggles with large transnational corporations. Focusing on his participation in a legal and political campaign to stop ongoing pollution of rivers and forests as well as assist communities in gaining compensation for damages already caused by the mines that were dumping more than 80,000 tons of tailings and other mine wastes into the local river systems each day, Kirsch makes a compelling argument about the inextricable links between ethics and advocacy. Following Strathern and Stewart (2000: 55),

he suggests that the recognition of proprietary rights of communities to knowledge that was produced “*in interaction with the communities themselves*” (emphasis in original) clarifies the obligations of anthropologists to the communities who have contributed to the anthropologist’s understanding of local conditions and interests. He concludes that “the resulting commitments may mandate engagement and advocacy on our part, rather than a scholarly, neutral stance. The notions of right and wrong can be invoked not only in relation to the truth, but also with regard to the cause of social justice” (2002: 193). In this volume, the contributors consciously struggle with notions of truth and social justice, especially the conflicting truths of those with power and those who are marginalized by it. In the end, our research has taken us to places of engagement regardless of our initial intentions. Our experiences in the practice of anthropology point to ethical engagement as a primary responsibility of the researcher rather than an optional mode of dissemination.

Anthropology and Unequal Power Relations

This book is a meditation on the contradictions one confronts when conducting field research in zones of social conflict and in ambient violence—the very terrain of unequal power relations and struggles for social justice. Through ethnographies of survival, the authors offer their own reflections on the role of anthropology. These reflections are themselves grounded in engaged research with survivors of war, occupation, marginalization, incarceration, displacement, dispossession, and massacres in Africa (Angel-Ajani), Italy (Angel-Ajani), Chiapas (Hernandez and Speed), Guatemala (Sanford and Warren), Vietnam (Sanford), Colombia (Sanford and Civico), Palestine (Collins), El Salvador (Silber), Burma (Skidmore), France (Bosia), Cambodia (Culbertson), and the United States (Davis and Bosia). These seemingly disparate themes and sites of field research lead to common thematic underpinnings such as:

- the human experience of rural to urban and forced urban to rural migration
- the limits of political democracy without economic and social reforms
- the lived results of neoliberal development schemes and agrarian colonization projects

In *A History of Bombing*, Sven Lindqvist reminds us that numerical and percentile representations of economic and population growth hide the fact that economic growth is mostly experienced in the already wealthy world, and population growth primarily in poor countries and communities. He writes: “Throughout this century, it has been clear that the standard of living enjoyed in industrial countries cannot be extended to the world’s population. We have created a way of life that must always be limited to a few. These few can make up a broad middle class in a few countries and a small upper class in the rest. The

members know each other by their buying power. They have a common interest in preserving their privileges, by force if necessary. They, too, are born of violence" (2000: 186).

It is the very unequal power relations produced by wealth that enable anthropologists to travel the world and carry out research. We are few and we are privileged. The authors in this volume struggle with this position of privilege as we seek to understand the marginalization of the communities we study. Moreover, recognition of these unequal power relations enable us to problematize not only the conditions in the communities in which we work but also our own conditions as researchers and our role in these relations of inequality. Our ethnographic method gives us the lived experiences of those hidden behind the numbers of economic and population growth.

Indeed, the authors in this volume go beyond a mere counting of the numbers of dead, disappeared, marginalized, landless, and displaced. Each ethnographic essay brings the people of the field sites back into the conversation with the researcher who self-consciously struggles with the unequal power relations and contradictory privileges of the ethnographer at work in the field. Angel-Ajani writes in this volume: "We fail to fully question the conditions that make our work possible as well as critically assess the consequences of our ethnographic production." These critiques move beyond self-conscious reflections of the researcher in the field to challenge official discourses about development, democracy, and peace-building. They heed Bourgois's call "to venture into the 'real world' not just to 'interview' people but to actually participate in their daily life and to partake of their social and cultural reality" (1990: 45).

Issues of truth, the role of the academic, the contract of testimony, the politics of memory, and the race, gender, age, and social position of the researcher are common points of concern for the authors in this volume. Violence, experience, access, representation, witnessing, and analysis are not abstract theoretical issues for these authors. On the contrary, they are tangible and immediate to the lives of those who live in the communities where we work and they are as much markers for our practice as researchers as they are a framework in which we each try to build an intellectual context in territories where survivors are often denied not only agency but their very subjectivity. On the basis of her work in Burma, Skidmore meticulously details the urgency to document lived experiences of ongoing state violence to prevent academic dismissal of citizen subjectivity—dismissal that ultimately supports the military regime's historical denial. Specifically, she sees ethnography as playing an important role in highlighting the various subjectivities that are recreated under authoritarianism in order to identify the potential forms of political agency. And, as she concludes, "The problem is with speaking to the present, not the past."

There is also a concerted effort to trace our intellectual genealogies and our own lived experience not only as anthropologists and field researchers but also

as political subjects with histories that have shaped us as human beings and as anthropologists. Indeed, as Angel-Ajani suggests, perhaps our own subject positions raise different and difficult questions in our research and analysis. Likewise, Hernandez Castillo points to the “double challenge” of academics writing on violence: developing theoretical explanations without losing the meaning of the experience of violence for social subjects. Just as Hernandez Castillo challenges academics to develop intellectual contexts relevant to real life, Angel-Ajani highlights the way scholars often feel forced to “clean up” the messiness of social conflict by combining theory with emotional distancing. With great candor, Angel-Ajani writes, “I know that through the incorporation of ‘theory’ I have learned to water down difficult emotional moments so as not to appear too sentimental.”

Ethnographies of Survival

Each chapter offers a self-reflective essay on engaged observation and the anthropological project, but field research and its representation are at the same time in conversation with what can be called ethnographies of survival. For example, both Collins and Silber reveal the limits of political democracy without economic and social reforms through, respectively, poignant ethnographies of contemporary life marked by regret, detachment, and personal isolation of the former Intifada youth in Palestine and the remarginalization of women survivors through the crushing bureaucracy of democratization in El Salvador. In her work with postrevolutionary women living in a repopulated community in a former combat zone in El Salvador, Silber pushes not only to develop a context but also to maintain the ambiguity and contradiction of postwar El Salvador. Working with former Intifada youth in a Palestinian refugee camp and exploring the contradictions of popular memory of Intifada as a living event, Collins raises similar questions about the “conflict between an idealized (albeit tragic) past and an unsatisfying present.” In both cases, as suggested by Angel-Ajani, the lived experiences of survivors offer a path to understanding the production of new subjectivities.

Moreover, as Davis argues in her work with battered women, low-income and poor women, and young girls of color, the most marginalized and silenced members of society are those who live out their lives at the very center of policy. Thus she writes of institutional time and the “peculiar regulation of poor people” through the required meeting of social service mandates—in order to meet one’s daily needs, one must submit to the hyperengagement and micromanagement of one’s life by social service agencies and a constant ritual of waiting for this engagement or management. It should not, therefore, be surprising that Davis’s critique of the neoliberal project at home mirrors the findings of Hernandez in Chiapas or Silber in El Salvador. In each case, poor women experience

the very agencies supposedly designed to serve them as vehicles of control and revictimization.

Throughout this volume, the authors meditate on truth, the contract of testimony, the politics of memory, and the moral imperative to witness and listen. These reflections are significant for each of the contributors. Although Skidmore has never lost sight of her positioning as an outsider, living in Burma to conduct field research under the “gaze” of the Office of the Chief of Military Intelligence heightened her identification with Burmese informants as she became fearful of the military regime and, like most Burmese, sought to hide her thoughts, feelings, and actions. To be an engaged anthropologist in such conditions is not to be taken lightly. Skidmore notes that it is not an easy decision and “as the mother of two young children, it is a decision I constantly reevaluate.”

Speed writes of her activist position supporting human rights work in Chiapas while simultaneously conducting field research. She acknowledges how her own position as a feminist, anthropologist, and activist enriched her field research and analysis. Seven months pregnant at the time of a brutal massacre in Chiapas that became part of her research, she writes: “Feeling my daughter move in my womb, I felt physically ill with the horror of what had happened. . . . While the violence at Acteal was a message to all, the threat to women specifically edged forcefully to the front of my consciousness.” This type of transformative experience for the researcher is implicit in other chapters as well and, sometimes, the researcher is compelled by circumstances to take a position on the veracity of the truth claims of communities in which we work (see, for example, Hernandez, Davis, Angel-Ajani, Sanford, Skidmore, and Bosia). This positioning of the researcher is not without contradiction.

The Politics of Witnessing in War and Pain

In “Excavations of the Heart,” I suggest that individual, communal, and national memories of “bare life” (Agamben 1998; Benjamin 1978) in ambient violence offer trajectories of meaning for survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, and others who later come on the scene to witness the reconstruction of everyday life amid the remains of a violent past. Further, it is one’s location on a given trajectory of meaning that locates one’s structure of understanding—which ultimately shapes the contours of “understandable” truth. This is not a relativistic argument that all truths are equal. Structures of understanding serve as a kind of filter; one that does not always, or easily, allow for the absorption or processing of truth—particularly difficult, painful, grotesque truths that can so rupture the structures of understanding that an individual, communal, or national trajectory of meaning in the world is forever shifted. I consider my own life experiences growing up during the Vietnam War and my field research in Guatemala

and Colombia to develop a theoretical framework for structures of understanding and argue for engaged anthropology.

Based on her vast experience as researcher and director of the Institute on Violence and Survival at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Roberta Culbertson offers reflections, both philosophical and practical, on the study of postwar cultures. In particular, she underscores the importance of explorations of survival and the contributions these explorations can make to seemingly intractable debates about survival, truth, memory, and reconciliation. Throughout her essay, and like others in the volume (see Collins, Bosia, and Skidmore), the language of memory and identity are cornerstones to her exploration. Just as Collins found incomplete memory to be relevant, Culbertson finds that a “faulty” memory does not negate one’s knowledge of place or ability to move through it. She further suggests that because war is an embodied experience, and thus a visceral memory, survivors often experience “perpetual alarm and a sort of half-life of limited hard awareness” after conflict, rather than a sensation of peace. Significantly, Culbertson believes that the perspectives, analytical tools, experience, and perception of engaged researchers can help us to better understand the metaphysical dimensions of survival and, thus, the very world in which we live.

A commonality in these truth-encounters is that researchers working in marginalized communities often find the people with whom they work labeled as subversive, deviant, or criminal. These very stereotypes cast doubt on the veracity of testimonies. Working with African immigrant women incarcerated in Italy, Angel-Ajani found that despite having little knowledge of the operations of carceral systems, society “imagines and even pleasurably envisions powerfully vivid images of crime, criminals, and prison life.” Like Hernandez-Castillo, she experienced colleagues doubting the truth of testimonies because the testimonials were given by women in prison, by women labeled as criminal by the state. In “Expert Witness,” Angel-Ajani offers a provocative discussion about the anthropologist as witness and the anthropologist as police. Her essay cautions us to remember that the recovery of truth, assembling of evidence, and providing our own testimony before our peers remains a powerful space in anthropology despite ongoing debates about representation and the practice of field research.

In her essay on the politics of engagement in Burma, Skidmore addresses the issues confronted by the engaged anthropologist in Burma and by scholars of Burma in the academy. She provides a self-reflective view of conducting field research under authoritarian rule and points to the easily elided conflicts of interest under which some political scientists with lucrative contracts have conducted “research” for international companies with investment interests in Burma. Not surprisingly, these researchers have provided reports to international lending agencies that urge financial cooperation with Burma’s military regime. Skidmore also acknowledges that these same scholars have not only dismissed her ethnographic work about the political subjectivities and social

suffering of the Burmese people under dictatorship but have also attacked Skidmore's work as "lurid," "emotive," and "full of dead facts." Skidmore concludes that this type of academic posturing does much violence to Burma and the Burmese people, and makes ethnographic work in Burma all the more important because "being an engaged anthropologist is to advocate for the histories of terror and misery to be retained in the contemporary world." Skidmore's work reminds us that "never again is now" (Kellner 1998: 235).

Lessons from Agents of Change

In "Moral Chronologies: Generation and Popular Memory in a Palestinian Refugee Camp," Collins examines what happens to popular memory when mass mobilization gives way to the logic of political negotiation and state building, and when the generational solidarities of "youth" give way to the economic and social pressures of "adulthood." He presents a collection of personal narratives of former Intifada youth and suggests that, taken as a group, these narratives comprise a moral chronology of the Intifada "that is rooted in a markedly different interpretive framework from the linear, triumphant story associated with official nationalism." It is a poignant moment when he writes of the realization of these former Intifada youth that "while they may not always be young, they may always be refugees, and the suspicion that because of this, they may always be poor."

Michael Bosia uses discursive analysis to refocus research methodologies on the physical experience of the politics of AIDS in "In Our Beds and Our Graves." He argues that any representation of AIDS that removes the physical experience from the center of sexual identity and HIV leaves little opportunity for understanding the emergence of barebacking (intentional intercourse without condoms) and other forms of unsafe sex. He sees a definitive link between testimony and understanding. He suggests that what is revealed in testimony is "the sense of the physical as meaningful, a sensitivity to the body as the location of pain and pleasure, as the origin of social and political ostracism or action." Indeed, he points to the discourse that has removed physical experience from the nature of the disease as the heart of the tension in AIDS politics today, because without physical experience, AIDS politics is no more than a politics of representation.

Significantly, though Bosia is a political scientist, he believes that the tension in AIDS politics today can best be addressed through testimony and ethnography. He writes: "We must avoid theories and sciences that search for the general, simply deconstruct the social, take knowledge for granted, find in the body only the location of subjectivity and thus isolate social action as primarily a creation of social forms." While not discounting the importance of representation, he challenges us to include the physical experiences that "drive our most intimate sense of belonging and community." He argues that "empathy for physical experience gives meaning to our studies of social action."

Many of the ethnographic essays in this volume self-consciously reflect upon the contract of testimony. Aldo Civico's "Portrait of a Paramilitary" may be one of the most disturbing essays on the anthropologist's relationship with so-called informants. Civico takes us through his field experience from the fear of his first clandestine meetings with heavily armed Colombian paramilitaries to the development of a familiar rapport, or even comfortable ease, with a paramilitary leader. He writes of this very personal experience of developing a kind of friendship with and discovering the human dimension of a paramilitary leader who terrorized Colombian villages and barrios and ordered at least one known massacre. Still, he asks himself and his readers, "Is it possible to have benevolent feelings for someone whose ideas and deeds I not only disapprove, but I despise and abhor forcefully?". Civico tells of the reciprocity of listening and reflecting with this paramilitary leader as well as the personal loss he felt when the leader disappeared and was presumably killed. He writes: "After all, participant-observation is not possible without being physically present and personally involved."

Trauma, Violence, and Women's Resistance in Everyday Life

In "Fratricidal War or Ethnocidal Strategy?" Hernandez Castillo carried out field research on a brutal massacre of indigenous women in Chiapas and listened to survivor testimonies of the atrocities and mutilation of female massacre victims. The Mexican media reported on particular cruelties carried out against pregnant women. Soon after, a rumor began to spread that the atrocities were exaggerated by human rights groups and the media. Academic circles picked up these same unsubstantiated rumors and soon the national magazine *Proceso* repeated these rumors as fact. Hernandez found herself compelled to defend the truth. Although she had numerous survivor testimonies, it was autopsy reports that confirmed the atrocities to those who doubted the truth-quality of the testimonials. Hernandez Castillo concludes that the contestation of rumors, practices, and discourses of terror has become a priority in contemporary research.

In "Indigenous Women and Gendered Resistance in the Wake of Acteal," Shannon Speed analyzes the testimonies of women who have participated in acts of resistance. She also interrogates the images of these women—media images that circulated nationally and internationally, as well as official discourse about them. She explores the gendered nature of these indigenous women's acts of resistance and how they have been understood and responded to in within a gendered ordering of the world and their significance for women's rights in Chiapas and beyond. As she draws on debates in new social movement theory, feminist theory, and resistance theory, she argues that: women's resistance is a gendered response to gendered violence; this resistance constitutes a new form of participatory citizenship that has emerged in new political spaces resulting from the Zapatista uprising; indigenous women's resistance has blurred binary categories

such as feminine and feminist; and public discourses about women's resistance silenced both the voices and the experiences of those involved in the resistance. Speed's insistence on the centrality and importance of a gendered analysis resonates with Hernandez-Castillo's research in Chiapas and also with Silber's experience in postwar El Salvador. Like Speed, both Hernandez Castillo and Silber offer an analysis of institutional violence where the state has little to no regard for the lives and personal integrity of civilians—particularly women.

On the basis of extensive ethnographic research in the former conflict zone of Chalatenango, El Salvador, Irina Carlota Silber responds to Angel-Ajani's concern about cleaning up ethnography for the academy. Silber challenges those who would compartmentalize former revolutionary women as either "agentless victims" or "heroic mother fighters." She resists the ease with which others have written about the "demoralization of women's participation" as she offers a "corrective to more celebratory work on women's social movements." She fills the gap between these binary representations by highlighting the gendered limitations of societal reconstruction in postwar El Salvador. She heeds Bourgois's call "to check the impulse to sanitize and instead clarify the chains of causality that link structural, political, and symbolic violence in the production of everyday violence" (2001: 29–30). She does this by juxtaposing the societal construction of "deviant community women" to the ambiguities of unresolved injustices of the past with the bureaucracy-laden dangers and opportunities of the new democracy. Like Collins, Silber finds the deepest community contestation in the gendered coming-of-age stories shared in testimonies of survival. Like Angel-Ajani, she sees new subjectivities in lived experiences.

The Engaged Observer: Inside and Outside the Academy

The essays in this fourth and final section of the book offer two different entry points to engaged anthropology: Kay Warren meditates on the dilemmas presented by engaged anthropology, and Dana-Ain Davis makes a passionate case for politically engaged anthropology.

Seeking to take on the dilemmas confronting engaged anthropology, Kay Warren reaffirms the "importance of the ongoing examination of our roles as anthropologists and the sociopolitical contexts from which our work emerges." In the same way that Collins notes the importance of the generation of community members when collecting field testimonies, Warren points to the significant impact that our own historico-intellectual generation plays in how we conduct anthropological analysis and how we teach anthropology. She suggests a genealogical approach to theory and practice as a means for recognizing how our own generational belonging affects our work. She expresses a concern that the work of anthropology (a concern found in other disciplines as well) has become regionally compartmentalized, and notes with irony that the same people uninterested in

reading “outside their region” are “eagerly and critically consuming works on globalization.” No doubt, we must cross the borders of our own area literature to better understand our discipline as well as the world in which we live.

In the final essay of this volume, Dana-Ain Davis challenges us to cross theoretical borders as well, as she interrogates her own positioning as a black feminist anthropologist and politically engaged academic. In this way, she responds to Warren’s call to place ourselves generationally through our own intellectual genealogies and further challenges us to recognize our responsibility to bring our research to bear in the service of social change when our agendas are tied to issues of inequity. She thoughtfully describes the relationship between academics and practice in her own research experiences as an illustration of politically engaged anthropology. Like others in this volume, she consciously seeks to challenge the “homogenous views” of the communities in which she works—specifically the ways in which women on welfare, black women, and battered women are portrayed in the academy and beyond. Davis acknowledges that her work as a politically engaged anthropologist began the moment she was asked to do something to help make a difference. She explains, “My accountability was a moral and political issue, not so much because I am in academia, but rather because my responsibility as a moral agent is no different from the responsibilities of others. . . . I am, first and foremost, a person concerned about fairness and equity. Concerned that the voices of those on the margins be centered.”

Engaged Anthropology

As Collins notes in his work on Intifada youth, Alessandro Portelli’s observation about the timing of the researcher in the life of the research subject can produce different outcomes, analyses, and reflections on the part of the research subject. Pointing to scholars who survived academia marked by the Cold War, Warren indicates that analytic shifts can be found in research and its representation depending upon the generation of the scholar. Thus timing in the life of both the researcher and the research subject may yield different outcomes for each. Still, there is an underlying resonance cutting across all the chapters of this book from Vietnam to Guatemala, from Palestine to Burma, from Cambodia to Italy, from former Intifada youth to Zapatista women, from gay men in Paris to poor women in New York, from former Salvadoran revolutionary women to Colombian paramilitaries; that resonance is the desire to be heard and contest official histories. In this way, the chapters of this book also serve to mediate between politics and the economy, the Cold War and globalization, and neoliberal triumph and utopian dreams of revolution. The accretion of marginalized voices transforms experience into collective memory. The representation of lived experience in engaged anthropology subverts official memory, institutional time, and homogenized culture. As Tischler Visquerra suggests, the subversion of official time

opens the door to a multiplicity of time and experience which, in turn, allows for the inclusion of diverse subjectivities with new visions of the past, present, and future (2005). In this way, changing political, economic, and cultural subject positions are central to the lived experiences represented in this volume.

It seems that, as many of the authors in this volume suggest, in attempts to encapsulate a culture, anthropologists often seek to categorize and compartmentalize rather than problematize experience. This is particularly dangerous when one seeks to reveal truths about violence, survival, and social conflict, for it is a slippery slope to reifying survival, difference, and terror, and thereby eliminating all possibilities for understanding. As Davis indicates, advocacy and activism, if not the initial impetus for research in zones of social conflict, are its inevitable outcome when one achieves an understanding of the everyday lived experience of violence and survival. It is not uncommon within the academy for lived experience to be dismissed as unscientific or not relevant to real, objective scholarship. This is completely backward, because it is the academy that needs to be relevant to the reality of lived experience. Advocacy and activism do not diminish the validity of one's scholarly research. On the contrary, activist scholarship reminds us that all research is inherently political—even, and perhaps especially, that scholarship presented under the guise of “objectivity,” which is really no more than a veiled defense of the status quo. And, as Bourgois reminds us, the challenge of ethnography is to “elucidate the causal chains and gendered linkages in the continuum of violence that buttresses inequality in the Post-Cold War era” (2001: 5).

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