
Reflections on Anthropology in Canada: Introduction

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This issue was conceived as an opportunity to foreground, at the turn of the century, some of the current trends in anthropology in Canada acknowledging their historical antecedents and projecting their possibilities for the future of the discipline. Consistent with the character of Canadian contexts that several of the authors here describe, the result is an eclectic (in its positive sense) and wide-ranging forage yielding both overlapping and divergent perspectives and agendas. Several contributors have complemented or located their discussions of anthropological theory and practice within personal narratives that explore their own careers and will be rich sources for future disciplinary historians. These articles profile: the persistence of psychological thinking in anthropology; the importance of political economy; the dialogues of the local and the global; of class and gender; the colonial and neo-colonial contexts of anthropology; the relationship with First Nations people; the training of students; the development of participatory research protocols; interdisciplinarity; and the rewards of strong reflexivity. If these resonate for readers with their own experiences in contemporary Canadian anthropology, we think we can safely diagnose the discipline as healthy.

Tom Dunk (PhD McGill, 1989) in "National Culture, Political Economy and Socio-Cultural Analysis in English Canada" seeks an (English) Canadian tradition of anthropological research and theorizing. He outlines Howes' structuralist model of English Canadian bicentrism (in contrast to American "concentricity") characterized by "an inability to imagine a whole that is not internally divided." Bicentrism—"the tradition that is not one"—Howes argued, is explained by reference to a unique Canadian psyche and is reflected in policies like multiculturalism and institutions like the Constitution. Adopting a Marxian-influenced perspective, Dunk argues instead that a neo-colonial mentality lies at the heart of the culture of English-Canadian anthropology departments and that the

difficulty in identifying a distinctively English-Canadian anthropology stems, in part, from the nature of the anthropological labour market and this neo-colonial mentality. The anthropological labour market in Canada which has relied on imported skilled labour and awards higher status to that labour parallels, Dunk argues, patterns in Canadian history that stem from its history as a staples-based economy. Harold Innis's theory of staple development, first expressed in the 1920s, offers Dunk a "uniquely Canadian" theoretical perspective within which to understand Canada's political, economic and cultural life—including anthropology. A distinctive characteristic of English-Canadian anthropological writing, Dunk notes, is that it highlights the local, the regional and the national and does not project its research interests and theoretical arguments as having universal significance. He sees this anthropology as reflecting the internal colonial and neo-colonial relations that are the products of Canada's staples-based history and its entanglement in global economic processes. Dunk argues that understanding this history will help formulate traditions of English Canadian anthropology.

In "D'une certaine anthropologie et de quelques anthropologues," Marie-France Labrecque (PhD CUNY, 1982), in the form of a personal narrative, offers her perspective and experience of coming to and practising anthropology in Quebec. To a youthful interest in aboriginal peoples in Quebec, an incidental reading of Margaret Mead's *Male and Female* and a solid foundation in Marxism at Laval, Labrecque's graduate studies with Eric Wolf added American culturalist anthropology to political economy and produced the theoretical perspective which has motivated her career of field research in Mexico and Latin America. As a practising anthropologist, what has become most important to Labrecque has been her discovery of the links between research and social change. In this narrative she builds on her response as discussant to Micaela di Leonardo's plenary address "Patterns of Culture Wars" at the 1998 CASCA/AES meetings in Toronto. There di Leonardo spoke of anthropologists' place in the public sphere as "culture experts." Labrecque, in contrast, speaks of an anthropological life in the trenches—in "the field"—where her concerns are with training, dialogue and participatory research in local/global contexts of social change. Most important to Labrecque are the social relations of research with colleagues, communities and students in the field, what she calls "the social functions of anthropology." Labrecque sees the discipline's sustenance and renewal as coming from the young people who continue to enter the discipline precisely because of these social functions.

Jean Briggs (PhD Harvard, 1967) in "Emotions Have Many Faces: Inuit Lessons" takes a reflexive look at how personal and professional experiences combined to launch the anthropological questions that have guided her more than 35-year career of field research in Arctic Canada. She describes her lifelong study of Inuit emotion concepts and socialization practices and how this research grew out of her attempt to understand her own experience of being ostracized for inappropriate expression of emotion during her very first field season in 1963. This is a highly intimate and personal retrospective on an anthropological career in psychological anthropology that links the "romantic motives" of early 20th-century culture-and-personality studies to early 21st-century work on the social construction of emotions. Briggs is one of the scholars most responsible for re-casting emotion not as destructive, gendered and to be feared but, rather, as a useful and central cognitive process located in specific cultural and social contexts of interaction—in other words, as part of "the usual stuff of anthropology" as she says. If the anthropology of experience and social constructionist analyses of emotion have become current, Briggs' career reminds us of some of the historical steps needed to establish their legitimacy. Jean Briggs received the Victor Turner Prize for Ethnographic writing and the Boyer Prize from the Society for Psychological Anthropology for her book *Inuit Morality Play* (Yale University Press, 1998). In *Inuit Morality Play*, she analyzes how Inuit children learn to think by thinking through emotionally powerful problems presented to them in a particular kind of play (both game and drama). Briggs discusses this work here and suggests how the anthropology of emotion reveals how emotions construct social life and meaning for participants and can help observers understand what it *feels* like to live in Inuit society. Briggs' work shows that emotions are far too important for anthropologists to leave "to advertisers and the odd politician" to understand.

Drawing on another theme in culture-and-personality studies in early 20th-century anthropology, Regna Darnell (PhD Pennsylvania, 1969) explores Canadian "national character" in her essay "Canadian Anthropologists, The First Nations and Canada's Self-Image at the Millennium." Incorporating a personal narrative on her more than 30 years as anthropologist, ethnographer and insider-outsider in Canadian contexts, Darnell describes the elusiveness of Canadian "identity" at the same time that she locates its identity in recurring patterns of "shifting binaries," in the integral role of First Nations people and in a general acknowledgment of internal diversity. Darnell further identifies as "Canadian" "the penchant for social cohesion

based on small-scale, local and intermeshed patterns of identity” and the practice of the Royal Commission as a particular Canadian political process by which Canadians “both envision and re-envision their nation.” She elaborates, as a case study, the recent Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

In “The Post-Anthropological Indian: Canada’s New Images of Aboriginality in the Age of Repossession,” David Scheffel (PhD McMaster, 1988) asks for honest debate within the discipline about the future of the anthropology of First Nations cultures and societies and the relationship between First Nations political movements and anthropological practice in the current political contexts of decolonization, multiculturalism and environmentalism and intellectual contexts of minority studies, deconstruction and postmodernism. If anthropology has lost a former authoritative stance based on conventional claims to scientific knowledge, are we still doing anthropology if we remain silent rather than voice anthropological interpretations that might contrast with what Scheffel calls “post-anthropological” indigenous interpretations? In a case study close to his home in Kamloops, Scheffel examines school texts recently produced by the Shuswap nation of British Columbia that describe aboriginal Shuswap society. He traces the origin of their descriptions to selective, and un(der)acknowledged excerpts from the early 20th-century ethnography of James Teit. Teit, a local resident, had married into the Thompson band near Kamloops and began working with Franz Boas in 1894 to produce three massive texts on the Thompson, Lillooet and Shuswap, published by the American Museum of Natural History between 1900 and 1909. The Shuswap school texts produce new public and positive stereotypes of Indianness that appear authoritative and ethnographic but that often distort and contradict Teit’s meaning. Scheffel asks: what should be our reaction as anthropologists to schoolbooks based on plagiarized and distorted versions of ethnographic classics? Scheffel draws cross-cultural comparisons with events in other contexts of indigenous emancipatory movements. He allies with the late Roger Keesing to critique anthropological “solipsists” who resort to the “invention of tradition” paradigm rather than the critical study of emergent elites and the mobilization of culture in ideological struggles.

In “Anthropologie québécoise, études amérindiennes, et la revue *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*,” Claude Gélinas (PhD Montréal, 1998) examines the more than 1500 documents of all sorts, papers, research notes, archival material, etc., published in *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* over the past 30 years. He

identifies the topics of these publications according to geographical area, areas of research and aboriginal population and he classifies authors according to nationality, professional status, language and place of work. The analysis reveals that consistent with the objectives of the founders of the journal the majority of authors are francophones in Quebec writing about Aboriginal Peoples in Quebec, although this is less so in more recent years. Paradoxically although the journal was created outside the university walls by independent scholars and researchers the majority of its contributors have been university academics concerned with the fate of Aboriginal Peoples within Quebec and beyond. His paper raises the important issue of the relationship between professional anthropologies within and outside the university in a changing society.

In “Domesticating Spaces in Transition: Re-reading Politics and Practices in the Gender and Development Literature, 1970-99” Lynne Phillips (PhD Toronto, 1985) and Suzan Ilcan (PhD Carleton, 1993) apply an interdisciplinary spatial lens to key texts that represent three decades of scholarship on gender and development. They explore how gender has been situated within development through a process they call “spatial domestication:” “a process that ranks, orders, tames and monitors spatial domains (such as households, rural settings, market towns, informal and formal economies, industrial factories) and the people who engage with them.” Phillips and Ilcan identify three paradigm shifts in the gender and development literature each associated with a decade—“modernization” (1970s), “dependency”(1980s) and “knowledge/power” (1990s)—that have challenged the dominant narratives of development. Although each paradigm has furthered thinking on gender, the authors argue that the spatial domains that development processes produce and that socially and discursively construct women and men remain undertheorized. They explore the links between women’s and men’s connections to particular spaces (places of work and places of consumption, for example) and the construction of gender identities. And, they propose a frame for analyzing notions of space that will further our understanding of the place of gender—specifically, the consistent domestication of women’s lives—in the practices and politics of development and that will help envision new sites for women to live and work in.

In “Soins, lien social et responsabilité” Francine Saillant (PhD McGill, 1986) and Eric Gagnon (Doctorat École des hautes. Études en sciences sociales, 1993) begin with the observation that in our postmodern societies the issue of autonomy, conceived in terms of pro-

ductivity, leads us all to distinguish between individuals either as productive (and autonomous) or as unproductive (and non-autonomous). This distinction is obvious in the intense public debates surrounding the social and economic costs associated with supporting and providing care to a greater and greater number of individuals who due to old age and sickness are “useless.” This question also opens the field to the birth of a new type of caregiver, the stranger, most often a female, who, substituting partly for the vanishing Welfare State, literally walks into the private space of individuals who have lost their

autonomy to assist them in various ways. Based on a study in three regions of Quebec the authors analyze how this type of social relationship is thought of and lived by the ones who construct these relationships and interact within them in the first place. The authors thus illuminate a key issue that eventually everyone has to consider closely.

Clearly, great potential for dialogue and debate among these articles and essays exists. We look forward to readers’ and authors’ responses in the form of letters, comments and future articles.