Introduction

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The questions this book addresses about the place of media in the world are not new; Raymond Williams, among others, wrote about them over a quarter-century ago. But the questions feel more pressing now because the ubiquity of media worldwide means that anthropologists encounter it in the diverse places where we work. This empirically driven sense of urgency led Arjun Appadurai to invent the concept of "mediascapes" in an article whose subtitle—"Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology" (1991)—deliberately recalls an earlier period of disciplinary self-definition in order to signal the centrality of mass media to life in the late twentieth century and the concomitant requirement that anthropology explore its analytic and practical significance. A decade later, this collection of essays by anthropologists suggests that we need no longer lament, as Debra Spitulnik did in her comprehensive review essay in the early 1990s, that "there is as yet no 'anthropology of mass media'" (1993: 293). We now recognize the sociocultural significance of film, television, video, and radio as part of everyday lives in nearly every part of the world, and we bring distinctive theoretical concerns and methodologies to our studies of these phenomena.

As we have recognized the place of media in a critical anthropological project that refuses reified boundaries of place and culture, so we have attempted to use anthropology to push media studies into new environments and examine diverse media practices that are only beginning to be mapped. Media reception occurs "beyond the living room" and media production "beyond the studio" not only because they occur in places like the Amazonian rainforest or the Australian outback but also because, as Roger Silverstone notes, regarding television watching, for example, they occur as part of "a set of daily practices and discourses . . . through which that complex act is itself constituted" (1994: 133). It is the anthropological commitment to a

wider concept of ethnography that gives us purchase on the wider social fields within which media practices operate. Collectively, then, our work takes advantage of and pushes forward the theoretical insights and methodological sophistication of our own discipline as well as neighboring fields with which we engage.

Ethnography of media expands "what counts" in a variety of ways. Anthropologists, for example, track the social players involved when one "follows the thing" (Marcus 1995)—a film or television serial as it moves from elite directors to consumers (Abu-Lughod 1995, 1997; Dickey 1993; Mankekar 1993a, 1993b; Skuse 1999) or an object like a cassette recorder (Manuel 1993), a radio (Spitulnik, this volume), or even radio sound itself (Tacchi 1998) as it circulates through various milieux. Such strategies help us see not only how media are embedded in people's quotidian lives but also how consumers and producers are themselves imbricated in discursive universes, political situations, economic circumstances, national settings, historical moments, and transnational flows, to name only a few relevant contexts.

As anthropologists, we take for granted a "global" perspective on media. Cross-cultural work is fundamental to our project; indeed, some have expanded on the textual traditions of film studies to show how one might look at "a film's anthropology" (Caton 1999; Fischer 1995). The kind of alternative circuits that we routinely encounter in our work—the spread of illegal cable networks or the widespread presence of pirate videos as a means of media exhibition outside the West—are rarely counted in the statistics about the U.S. or global media industries on which many accounts of transnational media are based. Indeed it is one of our arguments that the construction of media theory in the West, with rare exceptions (e.g., Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994), has established a cultural grid of media theory with the effect of bringing into visibility only certain types of media technologies and practices. These lacunae are now being addressed from both within and outside media and cinema studies, and the work in this volume is aimed at remapping the diversity of media worldwide.

While anthropologists are always firmly grounded in the local, we recognize that certain sweeping technological and institutional changes have had irreversible consequences over the past decades. The strong historical link between broadcast television and twentieth-century nation-building, for example, relied on a capital-intensive terrestrial technology that could be controlled and tied to state interests with relative ease. Satellites and Internet technologies, however, have opened up other kinds of spaces that cross cultural and geopolitical borders more easily, have increased privatization of media ownership, and have created new markets. They have also facilitated new social configurations. This occurs through access determined by class distinctions or diasporic connections. New technologies have also exacer-

bated what Toby Miller has termed "the new international division of cultural labor"—exporting media labor to the Third World—that has accompanied "the shift from the spatial sensitivities of electrics to the spatial insensitivities of electronics" (1998: 377). These technologies have facilitated the creation of privatized media empires (Schiller 1969, 1991), and at the same time, research on video culture and other forms of decentralized "small media" suggests the emergence of a "new media era" that is more fragmented and diverse in its economic and social organization (Larkin 2000), more characteristic of the expansion of informal markets under neoliberalism and the fluidity of late capitalism than the older forms of mass media. Situating media as a social practice within these shifting political and cultural frames enables us to speak to the larger concerns we share with many of our colleagues in media studies: how media enable or challenge the workings of power and the potential of activism; the enforcement of inequality and the sources of imagination; and the impact of technologies on the production of individual and collective identities.

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND MEDIA

For many years mass media were seen as almost a taboo topic for anthropology, too redolent of Western modernity for a field identified with tradition, the non-Western, and the vitality of the local. As a result, anthropologists came to the study of media a little later than colleagues in some other fields. Despite some singular efforts to study feature and propaganda films as cultural documents in the 1940s (Mead and Metraux 1953; Bateson 1943), the social relations of the film world of Hollywood in the 1950s and the impact of mass media in Africa (Powdermaker 1950, 1967), and Navajo filmmaking in the 1960s (Worth, Adair, and Chalfen [1972] 1997)—what Sol Worth called "the anthropology of visual communication" (1980)—it was not until the late 1980s that anthropologists began to turn systematic attention to media as a social practice.

The anthropology of media emerged from a particular historical and theoretical conjuncture: the ruptures in anthropological theory and methodology of the 1980s and 1990s, and the development of an "anthropology of the present" (Fox 1991) that engages and analyzes the transformations of the past half-century in which media play an increasingly prominent part. Alongside a growing acceptance of work in North America and Europe came more attention to the economic, political, and cultural traffic between urban and rural and "First" and "Third" Worlds. This relocation of geographic and theoretical focus meant that anthropologists were both working in societies where media were more central and confronting the fact that forms of electronic media were penetrating societies once seen as beyond their reach.

These shifts, in turn, catalyzed a critical rethinking of one of our most productive notions—culture—and the parameters of our key methodology: in-depth, intensive, and long-term ethnographic fieldwork (Abu-Lughod 1997; Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, 1997b; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Ortner 1999). Increasingly, our theory and practice are unbounded, multisited, traveling, or "itinerant" (as Schein proposes in this volume), a transformation that is particularly evident for those studying media.

Anthropologists doing research on and writing ethnographies of media have come to this work in different ways. The chapters in this book reflect diverse and often overlapping intellectual legacies from within the discipline and drawing from related fields. For many of us, our interest was first piqued by unexpected encounters with the popularity, power, or passion of media in particular locales (e.g., Fischer 1990; Kottak 1990; A. Lyons 1990; H. Lyons 1990). A number of the contributors to this volume (Ginsburg, Turner, and Prins) link their work to the rethinking of visual anthropology over the past couple of decades (see, e.g., Banks and Morphy 1997; Ginsburg 1994, 1998; MacDougall 1998; Ruby 2000; Taylor 1994). This critical revision of the field has been catalyzed by the increasing accessibility of media to people who traditionally had been in front of the lens, as well as by an intellectual shift that has expanded questions about the politics and poetics of documentary representation—how anthropological filmmakers represent others (e.g., Prins 1997; Ruby 1991, 1995)—to encompass issues of how media are being taken up and made meaningful in different societies and popularized in our own. This revisionist work in visual anthropology also draws on postcolonial studies (as well as film practices) addressing the complexities of cross-cultural representation (Marks 2000; Rony 1996; Russell 1999; Shohat and Stam 1994), as well as minority (Juhasz 1995; Downmunt 1993; Riggins 1992), diasporic (Cunningham and Sinclair 2000; Gillespie 1995; Kolar-Panov 1997; McLagan 1996; Schein, this volume; Naficy 1993), and small media practices (Manuel 1993; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994). For those whose emphasis is on the institutional sites for the production of media work, Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) framing of the field of cultural production—the system of relations (and struggles for power) among agents or institutions engaged in generating the value of works of art, while creating cultural capital for themselves—has been especially influential.

Others were influenced by the contemporaneous turn toward ethnography in cultural studies, which opened up a common intellectual and methodological space, especially for those interested in media (Gurevitch et al. 1982). British cultural studies explored mass media's centrality to contemporary projects of cultural hegemony, focusing on media consumption as one of a wide range of active forms of social engagement through which it is reproduced but also altered and resisted (Fiske 1987; Hall 1980, 1997). This work, in turn, laid the groundwork for a range of groundbreaking re-

ception studies, such as Radway's influential study of women's interpretations of romance novels (1984), research on the responses of culturally diverse viewers of American exported television shows (Liebes and Katz 1990; Ang 1985), and ethnographies revealing the creativity of an appropriative and irreverent fan culture for television shows such as *Star Trek* (Bacon-Smith 1992; Penley 1997; Jenkins 1992). Equally influential were those who looked more broadly at the place of television in the construction of "the nation" (and other abstractions) in everyday life (Morley 1986, 1992; Silverstone 1994; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992), and the construction of the notion of audience on the part of media industries (Ang 1996), to mention only a few key works.[1]

Many anthropologists found media a rich site for research on cultural practices and circulation that took seriously the multiple levels of identification—regional, national, and transnational—within which societies and cultures produce subjects. The work of Benedict Anderson (1991) and Jürgen Habermas (1989) have been central to those concerned with studying and theorizing the cultural effects of flows of people, ideas, and objects, flows crucially mediated by communication technologies. Both Anderson and Habermas have had a considerable influence in anthropology because their supple concepts—"imagined communities" and "the public sphere" respectively—offered means of theorizing the formation of collectivities that cross ruptures of space and are outside formal definitions of "culture." In the case of Habermas, the well-known criticisms of his work (Calhoun 1992; Fraser 1993; Robbins 1993) have forced attention to the formation of alternative or counterpublic spheres (see Himpele, this volume; Baker 1994; Diawara 1994; Eickelman and Anderson 1999). A number of writers—in anthropology, cultural studies, and other fields—have also used these ideas to extend Lacan's psychoanalytic notion of the imaginary (1967) as a way to comprehend the construction of "national imaginaries," when media are harnessed by state and commercial interests as technologies of personhood.[2]

Appadurai's work on public culture and global cultural flows draws on Anderson and on Habermas, synthesizing these frameworks with contemporary anthropological concerns and methods as well as newer media forms. His influence for this volume is most felt in his insistence on the centrality of these media to the articulation of national and transnational with local processes and to the significance of "the imagination" in the production of culture and identity in the contemporary world (Appadurai 1991). Along with other recent work that rethinks material culture and exchange theory (Marcus and Myers 1995; Miller 1995; Thomas 1991), Appadurai's work draws on anthropology's longstanding theoretical interest in the complex subtleties of exchange—of objects, narratives, and technologies—and the implications of these processes for culture-making and personhood (Mauss 1967; A. Weiner 1992). Objects shift in meaning as they move through

regimes and circuits of exchange. This argument, like that of active audience theorists, challenges the ontology of the text, arguing instead that the meaning of texts or objects is enacted through practices of reception. The usefulness of exchange theory to media studies can be seen clearly in the work of Daniel Miller (1992), whose study of American soap operas in Trinidad, part of a wider project on consumption under capitalism, reveals an active process of societal self-production through which people incorporate objects into their own social value systems.[3]

The anthropological studies of media presented in this book challenge stereotypes of media ethnography as narrowly empiricist versions of market research—querying television watchers in their living rooms about what they *really* think of certain programs, without placing them in wider structures or recognizing their complexity. The contributors, drawing on a range of scholarly traditions, take for granted the necessity of linking media production, circulation, and reception in broad and intersecting social and cultural fields: local, regional, national, transnational. They examine a range of phenomena in order to understand the social impact and cultural meaning of media in the everyday lives of those we study. Through grounded analyses of the practices, cultural worlds, and even fantasies of social actors as they interact with media in a variety of social spaces, we have begun to unbundle assumptions regarding the political economy and social relations shaping media production, circulation, and reception, and the impacts of media technologies themselves.

THE SOCIAL FIELDS OF MEDIA

Although the essays in this book reflect diverse intellectual legacies, they all bring to the study of media anthropology's capacious methodology. Many ethnographies of media strategically include both producers and audiences in the query, as well as intertextual sources through which meaning is constituted, as Sara Dickey did in her groundbreaking study of the significance for the urban poor of Tamil popular cinema, an industry that has a remarkable influence in the creation of political celebrity in South India, part of a "vast system of popular literature, greeting cards and posters, clothing, fashions, gossip, legends, memories, and activities supporting the stars" (1993: 41). Others have underscored the importance of the neglected area of distribution. Power and status are signified through spatial and temporal dimensions of exhibition, a central process through which media help constitute and reflect social and religious difference in nation-states (Himpele 1996; Rajagopal 2001). Others also point to the significance of exhibition sites—from the architecture of movie theaters as a diacritic of social class and modernity (or its lack), to the social space of cinema as an arena of social experimentation (Armbrust 1998; Hughes 2000; Larkin, this volume).

Film festivals are analyzed as loci for the consolidation of new cultural formations (Bikales 1997), professional subcultures (Lutkehaus 1995; Nichols 1994), and regional and national claims (Ganti 1998).

Although the authors all situate their work in particular historical moments and political economies, producing what Purnima Mankekar aptly calls "conjunctural ethnography" (1999: 49), the different kinds of media practices represented in this volume can be placed on a sociopolitical continuum reflected in the different sections of the book. On one end are the more classic formations of mass media produced through large governmental and commercial institutions intent on constituting modern citizens and consumers. Anthropological research on these kinds of mediations, which include popular soap operas, telenovelas, and melodramatic serials focuses on the complex ways in which national cinemas, television, advertising, and development media operate from production to distribution to consumption (see Abu-Lughod, Dávila, Ganti, Hamilton, Mandel, Mankekar, Wilk, and Yang, all this volume; Hamburger 1999). This work assumes some social segregation between producers and audiences and tracks the often unstable relation between intention and effects.

In the middle range are more reflexive processes in which practical and imaginative encounters with cinematic or televisual images and narratives may express and/or constitute a variety of subaltern social and cosmological worlds. Such work is typical of diasporic and minoritized communities as they are reframed under different regimes of power and in diverse cultural contexts through video, television shows, films, and even popular graphics (see Hobart, Morris, Pinney, Schein, and Yang, this volume).

On the other end of the continuum are more self-conscious practices, often linked to social movements, in which cultural material is used and strategically deployed as part of a broader project of political empowerment by indigenous and other disenfranchised groups (Ginsburg, Himpele, Prins, Turner, and McLagan, this volume). Such work can provide a "third space" (Bhabha 1989) for the representation of their concerns. However, the negotiation of mass media forms for counterhegemonic purposes is not without compromises. While the authors in this section tend to stress the activism of the people with whom they work, they also point out how media can facilitate the penetration of state power as well as consumer capital in local societies. In the remainder of this introductory essay, we introduce and discuss key theoretical issues raised in the various sections of the collection.

CULTURAL ACTIVISM AND THE ACTIVIST IMAGINARY

Since the early 1980s, indigenous and minority peoples have begun to take up a range of media in order to "talk back" to structures of power that have erased or distorted their interests and realities. Faye Ginsburg has called this

kind of work "cultural activism," to underscore the sense of both political agency and cultural intervention that people bring to these efforts, part of a spectrum of practices of self-conscious mediation and mobilization of culture that took particular shape beginning in the late twentieth century (1993, 1997). Similarly, George Marcus has coined the term "the activist imaginary" to describe how subaltern groups turn to film, video, and other media not only to "pursue traditional goals of broad-based social change through a politics of identity and representation" but also out of a utopian desire for "emancipatory projects . . . raising fresh issues about citizenship and the shape of public spheres within the frame and terms of traditional discourse on polity and civil society" (1996: 6). The section focuses mainly on indigenous media as a key arena where these processes are being enacted but includes other processes of cultural objectification for strategic political purposes, as in McLagan's essay on Tibetan Buddhist activists and their supporters.

Indigenous media incorporate a distinctive form of cultural activism that has attracted scholarly attention (Asch 1991; Aufderheide 1995; Berger 1995; Carelli 1988; Fleming 1991; Ginsburg 1991; Leuthold 1998; Meadows and Molnar, 2001; Philipsen and Markussen 1995; Prins 1989; Roth 2002; Turner 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1995; Vail 1997; Weatherford 1990; Wortham 2000).[4] It developed in response to the entry of mass media into the lives of First Nations people, primarily through the imposition of satellites and commercial television. In almost every instance they have struggled to turn that circumstance to their advantage, a point effectively made by activist researcher Eric Michaels in the Central Desert of Australia where, in the 1980s, he worked with Warlpiri people to develop their own low-power television as an alternative to the onslaught of commercial television.[5] Such formations seem particularly well suited for anthropological inquiry: small in scale and sustaining an alternative to the mass media industries that dominate late capitalist societies, they occupy a comfortable position of difference from dominant cultural assumptions about media aesthetics and practices. In addition, indigenous media projects have often been a site for activist participation on the part of anthropologists; they and native peoples alike have been quick to see the political promise and cultural possibilities of indigenously controlled media-making. In this volume, those working with Native Americans (Prins), Aboriginal Australians (Ginsburg), and Amazonian Kayapo (Turner) have helped to produce and/or promote as well as analyze the making of film and video as part of indigenous cultural projects of cultural revival, whether through recording traditional rituals or through the use of video, film, and media events as a persuasive tool for claims to political sovereignty.

Most indigenous media are produced and consumed primarily by people living in remote settlements, although the work circulates to other native communities as well as to nonaboriginal audiences via film festivals, human rights

forums, court hearings, and broadcasts. The range of the work is wide, moving from small-scale community-based videos, to broadcast quality television, to major independent art films. Indigenous people who live in or closer to metropoles, such as the urban Australian Aboriginal filmmakers discussed by Ginsburg, participate in a wider world of media imagery production and circulation (e.g., national film and television industries), and feel their claim to an indigenous identity within a more cosmopolitan framework is sometimes regarded as inauthentic. Debates about such work reflect the changing status of "culture," which is increasingly objectified and mediated as it becomes a source of claims for political and human rights both nationally and on the world stage. As Terry Turner has shown regarding the work of Kayapo media-makers, cultural claims "can be converted into political assets, both internally as bases of group solidarity and mobilization, and externally as claims on the support of other social groups, governments and public opinion all over the globe" (1993: 424).

This activist objectification of culture encompasses not only indigenous work but also media being produced by other colonized and minority subjects who have become involved in creating their own representations as a counter to dominant systems, a framework that includes work being done by people with AIDS (Juhasz 1995); Palestinians in Israel's occupied territories (Kuttab 1993); the transnational Hmong refugee community (Schein, this volume), and African American musicians (Mahon 2000a). Appadurai suggests the word "culturalism" to denote the mobilization of identities in which mass media and the imagination play an increasingly significant role (1996).

Part of the attraction of media for these groups is the publicity they generate, a critical component of political and cultural activism in late modernity. Meg McLagan shows the tensions inherent in the Tibet Movement's efforts to publicize their positions in the United States by analyzing celebrity benefits, Buddhist spectacles, and cultural performances. Her analysis of the use of public relations specialists by Tibet activists reveals the contradictions involved in objectifying culture as a strategy for gaining access to media venues and projecting a political movement into national and international visibility (McLagan 1997; also this volume).

The broader question this raises—whether minority or dominated subjects can assimilate media to their own cultural and political concerns or are inevitably compromised by its presence—still haunts much of the research and debate on the topic of the cross-cultural spread of media. In the context of indigenous peoples, some anthropologists have expressed alarm at these developments (Faris 1992); they see these new practices as destructive of cultural difference and the study of such work as "ersatz anthropology" (J. Weiner 1997), echoing the concerns over the destructive effects of mass culture first articulated by intellectuals of the Frankfurt school.[6] Other schol-

ars actively support indigenous media production while recognizing the dilemmas that it presents. Lorna Roth, for example, queries whether a state-supported Aboriginal People's Television Network in Canada is a break-through or a "media reservation" (Roth 2002). Ginsburg suggests that in-digenous media present a kind of Faustian contract with the technologies of modernity, enabling some degree of agency to control representation un-der less-than-ideal conditions (1991). However, the capacity to narrate sto-ries and retell histories from an indigenous point of view—what she calls "screen memories"—through media forms that can circulate beyond the lo-cal has been an important force for constituting claims for land and cultural rights, and for developing alliances with other communities (this volume). Harald Prins (this volume), who has catalyzed indigenous filmmaking for Native American claims to land and cultural rights, nonetheless points out "the paradox of primitivism" in which traditional imagery of indigenous people in documentaries about native rights, though effective (perhaps even essential) as a form of political agency, may distort the cultural processes that indigenous peoples are committed to preserving. Chris Pinney, in contrast, makes a compelling argument that despite the colonial origins of photog-raphy it is now so firmly inserted into everyday religious and secular prac-tice that it is best seen at the confluence of overlapping visual regimes rather than as the province of one (1997: 112).

Meanwhile, as anthropologists and media scholars debate the impact that media technologies might have on the communities with which they work, indigenous media-makers are busy using the technologies for their own pur-poses. Activists are documenting traditional activities with elders; creating works to teach young people literacy in their own languages; engaging with dominant circuits of mass media and projecting political struggles through mainstream as well as alternative arenas; communicating among dispersed kin and communities on a range of issues; using video as legal documents in negotiations with states; presenting videos on state television to assert their presence televisually within national imaginaries; and creating award-winning feature films.

Rather than casting aspersions on these efforts to use media as forms of expressive culture and political engagement, a number of us see in the grow-ing use of film and other mass media an increasing awareness and strategic objectification of culture. As Daniel Miller has argued regarding the grow-ing use of media more generally:

> These new technologies of objectification [such as film, video, and televi-sion] . . . create new possibilities of understanding at the same moment that they pose new threats of alienation and rupture. Yet our first concern is not to resolve these contradictions in theory but to observe how people sometimes resolve or more commonly live out these contradictions in local practice.
> (D. Miller 1995: 18)

Whatever the contradictions, as new technologies have been embraced as powerful forms of collective self-production, they have enabled cultural activists to assert their presence in the polities that encompass them and to more easily enter into much larger movements for social transformation for the recognition and redress of human and cultural rights, processes in which media play an increasingly important role (Castells 1997).

CULTURAL POLITICS OF NATION-STATES

Although many people consider themselves to belong to subnational or transnational communities, the nation is the primary context for the everyday lives and imaginations of most of the people who produce media and constitute its audiences. Even if nations are always in relations with other nations and transnational entities or ideas (and may be losing sovereignty and power, as Appadurai [1993] and Hannerz [1992] among others have argued), the nation is still a potent frame of reference, especially in the many countries where the state has been the prime actor in the creation and regulation of media networks.

If we accept Anderson's (1991) insight that nations are "imagined communities," we must recognize that media, from the novels and newspapers Anderson discussed to the television broadcasts and video cultures analyzed in this book, play crucial roles in producing nations and shaping national imaginaries. One can analyze, for example, the ways that radio helped create the postcolonial nation in Zambia by formalizing language hierarchies in a multilingual state, influencing speech styles, signifying modernity itself, and even embodying the state (Spitulnik 2001). Or one can, as Mankekar does in this volume, ask how certain popular television serials in India, in this case the televised *Ramayan*, "might have participated in reconfigurations of nation, culture, and community that overlapped with and reinforced Hindu nationalism" in the early 1990s (see also Mankekar 1999). As she argues, the serial was part of a sociohistorical conjuncture in which the discourse of Hindu nationalism was increasingly voluble, even though it was not the intent of the producers to foster communal violence, to create the exclusions felt by some viewers, or to conflate Indian with Hindu culture. Finally, the sense of belonging created in nationalist structures of feeling can also be commodified or produced for specific commercial imperatives, as Arlene Dávila's examination of the construction of "Latinidad" by the U.S. Hispanic advertising industry shows (Dávila, this volume).

Perhaps the most complex theoretical issues arise when we begin to consider the implications of the political uses of media by national or state apparatuses. Most radio and television has been state-controlled or in the hands of culture industry professionals who, as Stuart Hall (1980) has argued, tend to share the "dominant codes" of the nation-state. Censorship and antici-

patory self-censorship are the norms. Whether to create loyalty, shape political understandings, foster national development, "modernize," promote family planning, teach privatization and the capitalist ethos, make good socialists, or innocuously entertain, media have been viewed as powerful tools for hegemony or social transformation.

The connections between media and politics can be quite direct, as when state media is controlled, as it is in Egypt, not by the minister of culture but by the minister of information. By contrast, media are often counterhegemonic to certain state interests, as when a Bolivian television host uses the Aymara audience for his program to create a new political party which he heads (see Himpele, this volume); or when Tibetans in exile seeking freedom from control by the Chinese state hire public relations consultants to manage their media campaign in the United States (McLagan, this volume); or when clerics used "small media" like audio cassettes in Iran to mobilize people for a religious revolution (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994); or when Palestinians use faxes and cell phones in the *intifada* to coordinate their resistance to Israeli rule.

Three key intellectual issues emerge from these links between media and national politics. First, what is the relationship between media professionals in the "culture industry" and the state? These producers are critical mediators, articulating and translating larger projects. However, it is important to remember that these producers of media are creative individuals, working with their own professional codes, their own career interests, and their own visions, sometimes oppositional because of training under earlier and different conditions or because they represent a new generation with other influences. They also work within organizations—such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (Born 1998), the U.S. Public Broadcast Service (Dornfeld 1998; and this volume), or the training program for would-be soap opera writers set up by the British Know How Fund in Kazakhstan (Mandel, this volume) that establish dynamics of knowledge and power that intersect with state projects in complicated ways. Early studies of cultural imperialism rightly stressed that cultural domination was exported through models of professionalism and professional standards instituted through Western training of non-Western media producers. What Mandel, Born, and other ethnographers of production show, however, is that frequently there is slippage between the standards insisted on by professionals and the way those standards are adopted and transformed in local settings.

Second, one must ask what happens to media when state interests are complex and contradictory. This is especially obvious in many of the countries in which anthropologists work today, places where neoliberalism or structural adjustment policies have been adopted or where socialism is being replaced by "reform" or "transition to the market." Ruth Mandel (this volume) tracks the complex crosscurrents at work, and the conflicts that arose, in mak-

ing *Crossroads*, the first Kazakhstani soap opera. Initiated by the British Know How Fund to "teach capitalism to the communists," it brought BBC professionals trained in the genre of British realist drama to Kazakhstan to train writers, many of whom had worked in the tradition of Soviet socialist realism, to develop the program. The emerging nation-state tried hard to control the product while the commercial interests it welcomed and its citizen-audiences, newly enamored of American soap opera imports, made other demands. As Mayfair Yang (this volume) notes for post-Mao reform China, a reemergent pan-Chinese nation or alternative community that eludes the state has been encouraged by the introduction of new media forms and the access to films, popular music, and television from beyond the mainland, mostly from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Although eager to keep control over media, the state's cautious embrace of capitalism and encouragement of links (for investment) to overseas Chinese have led to the development of transnational subjectivities and desires that threaten to shake its authority.

Third, one must ask how effective state media products—or any media products, for that matter—are in achieving their goals of influencing audiences. The thorniest questions in media studies are those about reception; the history of attempts to assess the impact of media is discouraging. What anthropology is able to bring to these questions is an exploration of the multiple levels at which failures and successes occur by studying the social fields that structure these engagements and the actual ways that audiences engage with media. Anthropologists have revealed ironies such as the way commercial broadcasts uncontrolled by the state or not linked directly to state interests can have the unintended consequence of bolstering national identity or pride. This seems to have been the case with a popular television show in Puerto Rico that was a vehicle to promote Budweiser beer (Dávila 1999) or with the hookup to satellite that brought U.S. television directly to Belize (Wilk, this volume). But they have also examined the way programs have backfired. State-sponsored television soap operas intended to bolster national sympathies instead foster debate and dissent. In Syria, the debate focused on who has the right to control public representations of Syrian history (Salamandra 1998), while in China the dissent revolved around state repression of intellectuals' challenges to state power (Rofel 1994). Annette Hamilton (this volume) analyzes how the state used mass media to create a sense of the nation in Thailand via a distinctive set of programs aired on national television, alongside intense mass-mediated public spectacles of the royal family, while other media technologies, such as cable and videocassette recorders, were embraced to serve local social concerns.

The challenge is to trace both how and why media messages go awry and yet also how they shape lives, treating audiences neither as resistant heroes to be celebrated nor as duped victims to be pitied. In Thailand, Hamilton argues, the disjunction people perceived between the way national television

represented the news and their knowledge of what was going on in the streets may have led them to join in democracy protests. In Egypt, Lila Abu-Lughod (this volume) traces how television melodramas produced by professionals with middle-class assumptions about modernity and the kinds of individuals appropriate to it help stage, and thus foster, the kinds of selves that make good citizens. But she also notes that even those viewers most involved with television participate in other social institutions and engage in other practices, most notably of contemporary religious groups, that powerfully reorient subjectivity. If the messages of state television "go wrong," they do so in patterned ways linked to the larger social fields that offer audiences other interpretive frameworks.

TRANSNATIONAL CIRCUITS

The capacity of mass media to circulate beyond national boundaries implicates it in most transnational processes, whether the borrowing by Australian Aboriginal activists of American songs like "We Shall Overcome" during the heyday of the U.S. civil rights movement (Ginsburg, this volume); or the more contemporary use of Western media for the representations of cultural differences meant to mobilize support for a political cause in another part of the world, as in the case of the Tibetans (McLagan, this volume). Unfortunately, the dominant frameworks for thinking about media's transnational reach have been either globalization or cultural imperialism, which tend to privilege media originating from or dominant in the West, with less attention to other circuits (but see Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996).

One of our central concerns, then, is to develop a media theory that is genuinely transnational and helps remap the presence and circulation of specific media forms. From our perspective, media studies deploy a culturally specific cartography whereby only particular media forms and flows have been made visible and are considered sociologically significant. The category "Third World cinema," for instance, has had a somewhat ambiguous relationship to some popular forms.[7] Hindi cinema remains perhaps the most striking example of a non-Western media form with a deep history and wide global reach that has remained largely absent from debates on cultural imperialism and global media in the Western academy. In particular, the popularity of Indian films with Indian and non-Indian audiences in places as diverse as Egypt, Kenya (Fugelsang 1994), Japan, and Nigeria (Larkin 1997) underscores the significance of alternative circuits of media flows that operate outside the West.

A more recent example of media that are "off the map" are video films in Nigeria and Ghana.[8] These video films are commercial and rarely circulate on film festival circuits where the concept of "African cinema" is pro-

duced and maintained. Unlike many African films, they circulate locally and are extremely popular. In 1999 the Ghanaian film industry produced over fifty of these narrative dramas, which were shot on video, released at the cinema (through video projection), and sold in markets. This output is perhaps larger than the entire repertoire of Ghanaian feature films, but it pales in comparison with the over 500 films that were produced and released in Nigeria in 1999 alone (Ukah 2000). This staggering growth of an industry that was virtually nonexistent in 1990 is redrawing the media map of West Africa. Ghanaian directors have been overwhelmed by the success of these more violent Nigerian films and feel forced to conform to their narrative styles. The negative influence of Nigerian videos is much more pressing locally than the influence of films from the United States or Hong Kong.[9] Nigerian video films, the regional dominance of Egyptian media in the Arab world, the popularity of Hindi cinema, Aboriginal television productions, and Latin American telenovelas are all examples of alternative productions and circulations of media that are being brought into focus by an emergent transnational perspective in media studies.

Anthropological studies of media in "other" places can reveal the existence and power of circuits that do not include the West. Mayfair Yang and others are critical of the cultural imperialism framework that assumes Western hegemony. Yang's work on mass media and transnational subjectivity in Shanghai tracks a new phenomenon, what she calls a Chinese "traveling culture." Over the past century, media have played a part in transformations of the Chinese state, first in the development of a new national community, then in the creation of a powerful state subjectivity and its effects on the modernist project of the nation-state. In the case of post-Mao China, it is not Western domination but regional/ethnic Chinese capitalist modes of power that are contesting the power of the Chinese state. The result is a "transnational Chinese global media public," a subjectivity detached from the state and linked up, across imaginary space, with other far away Chinese subjectivities, created through the interaction of mainland people with popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan. All this is facilitated by satellite dishes, the introduction of new music and programs from other Chinese sites, and the availability of films and television shows that explore what it might mean to be Chinese abroad.

"Transnational subjectification" occurs, with the help of small media, in a different way for a diasporic group living within a nation but with links to distant homelands. Louisa Schein describes how the Hmong, who came to the United States after the end of the Vietnam War, have developed both a pop music world of their own and a thriving video industry. Through these media, Hmong not only create a community and shape its memories and desires, but mark it as transnational, beginning with efforts to show the cru-

cial role played by Hmong who were recruited by the CIA during the Vietnam War. Among the most popular videos are documentaries about "homelands," particularly China, and feature films that involve stories about Hmong who go to these other places where Hmong are supposed to have originated. Some are nostalgic and picturesque representations of Asian homelands and brethren; others are about the relationships being forged between Miao (the Chinese counterparts of the Hmong) and U.S.-based Hmong, relationships that are fraught because of the inequalities apparent in the imbalance of camcorder ownership.

Because anthropologists often site themselves outside the West, even when they examine media circuits originating in the United States or Europe, they find that the local consequences of media flows are not so predictable. Mandel's work on the exportation of British "know-how" about media and capitalism to Kazakhstan shows both that cultural imperialism, built on a particular political and economic scaffolding, is alive and well and that imported formulas, ideas, expertise, and codes of professionalism enter into a local field whose historically specific dynamics of state power, class, ethnicity, consumption patterns, and access to other media products subvert and derail intentions. Richard Wilk, in contrast, shows that, ironically, the introduction in Belize of direct access to U.S. television through satellite hookup actually produced a new sense of coevalness that allowed people in Belize to stop seeing themselves as backward or lagging behind the metropole. Instead, they could come to understand themselves in terms of cultural difference, a process that reinforced a sense of nationhood. Mankekar (1999: 346) has analyzed the introduction of satellite television to India, noting how commercial success for transnational television channels like Star required "Indianization" of their programming and thus a "reterritorialization."

And finally, a key set of issues that anthropologists working with new media maps are well positioned to consider concerns the role of media in the emergence of alternative modernities (Martin-Barbero 1988; Gaonkar 1999; Morley and Robbins 1995; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996). In his study of media in northern Nigeria, for example, Brian Larkin uses the trope of "parallel modernities" to describe the worlds of those who are not mobile but who nonetheless, through media, "participate in the imagined realities of other cultures as part of their daily lives" through media. Hausa youth can choose between "Hausa or Yoruba videos, Indian, Hong Kong or American films, or videos of Qur'anic *tafsir* (exegesis) by local preachers" (Larkin 1997: 409). He argues that the spectacle and plot of Indian films and their indigenization in a local genre of *soyyaya* books (love stories) as well as in locally produced videos (Larkin 2000; Haynes 2000) offer Hausa youth a medium through which to consider "what it means to be modern and what may be the place of Hausa society within that modernity" (Larkin 1997: 434). Sim-

ilarly, in his study of youth in Kathmandu, Nepal, Mark Leichty argues that Bombay and Hollywood films, "teen" magazines, pirated cassettes, and interactive radio shows—the cultural economy of a transnational public sphere—provide the experience of modernity as a space of imagined possibilities contained within a commodified logic (1994: 194).

Clearly, any analysis of the subjective and imaginative must be linked to the economic and social. The transnational circuits of media that enable the circulation of ideas and images cannot be understood apart from the political economies that underwrite this circulation, not to mention the technologies. States everywhere attempt to control the mediation of their own representations, and that of others, through regulation, censorship, and control over the means of distribution. Yet as media are implicated in constructions of alternative modernities and local appropriations, they can also uncover the ways in which transnational media flows can decenter nations and produce transnational subjectivities, whether in geolinguistic regions or across long distances.

THE SOCIAL SITES OF PRODUCTION

If mass media presented a kind of forbidden object to anthropologists in non-Western settings, the final boundary (breached only by Powdermaker's prescient study of Hollywood in the 1950s) was fieldwork in the social worlds of media institutions where "dominant ideologies" are produced, in our own as well as other societies. Anthropologists are bringing new methods and insights to the territory already established by a small but significant body of work by sociologists of media who focused in particular on the production of "news" (Gitlin 1983; Pedelty 1995; Silverstone 1985) (a tradition that Bourdieu joined in his lectures and subsequent 1998 book on television).

The more recent work is bifocal, attending to both the institutional structures and the agency and circumstances of cultural producers (Faraday 2000; Mahon 2000b; Marcus 1997). The essays in this volume that focus on media producers cast a wide net, from American educational television, to the Hispanic advertising industry, to decision-making in Bombay's Bollywood, to a popular political talk show in Bolivia. In every case, they make clear the impossibility of separating ideas of the audience from the process of production. Some, such as Barry Dornfeld (1998), call for a radical rethinking of the very divide between production and reception. In his research on the production unit that created a seven-hour educational documentary series on childhood for American public television, he shows the complex negotiations through which a piece gets made. He demonstrates Ang's argument (1991, 1996) that in mass media, audiences not only are empirically "out there" but also are prefigured in nearly every dimension of the production

process, as public television workers bring certain assumptions about the particular class fraction of "the American public" that they imagine (and hope) will watch their work.

Given the close institutional and ideological association between television programming and commercial capitalism, it is not surprising that stereotypical notions of audiences undergird operations in TV and in the advertising industry. But what happens when both advertisers and their markets are from the same minority ethnic group, as Dávila (this volume) asks in her study of advertisers, "creatives," and producers in charge of the commercial imagining and representation of "Hispanics" in the U.S. Latino advertising and marketing industry? Their mission is not only to sell products and help sustain a niche for this ethnically based market but also to challenge stereotypes and educate corporate clients about Hispanic languages and cultures. In the end, Dávila suggests, it is difficult for advertisers to untangle their imagery from U.S. racial and ethnic hierarchies, despite claims to be a "politically correct" alternative to mainstream advertising.

Like the work of Dávila and Dornfeld, Tejaswini Ganti's work on film production in the Bombay film industry shows how decisions are predicated upon an act of imagined consumption (Ganti 1999; and this volume). Her analysis, which joins a small but growing body of ethnographic studies of non-Western cinema industries (Sullivan 1993; Armbrust 1996, 2000), provides a critique of prevailing ideas about how media producers imagine audiences, as well as an incisive look at the actual routines whereby processes of cultural imperialism become internalized, enacted, and transformed. Ganti examines the remaking of Hollywood films by Hindi filmmakers, focusing on the decision-making processes whereby the "copy" is transformed to conform to conventions of Indian film narratives. This process makes the Hollywood original seem less like a hegemonic text than a resource to be strategically raided and incorporated into the bold intertexuality of Hindi cinema as a strategy for trying to manage the vagaries of box-office outcome.

Very different notions of a national audience—what Jeff Himpele calls the televisual public sphere—shape the production of *The Open Tribunal,* a popular television talk show in Bolivia that he studied as part of a broader research project on the circulation of media in Bolivia. The show, which features indigenous urban poor who describe their social problems and request (and sometimes receive) aid, also became the basis for a major political party led by the program's charismatic host. Himpele, along with the other authors in this section as well as other anthropologists who found themselves unwittingly cast on popular television (Gordon 1998), demonstrates how ethnographies of cultural production open up the "massness" of media to interrogation. They reveal how structures of power and notions of audience shape the actions of professionals as they traffic in the representations of culture.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF TECHNOLOGY

The "ethnography of media," as a category of media studies, involved de-centering the textual content of media technologies in favor of analyzing the social context of their reception. Refiguring the ethnography of media necessitates a further expansion by taking into consideration the physical and sensory properties of the technologies themselves and examining the materiality of communication across cultures. This scholarship draws on two main traditions. First, media technologies are not neutral. Each new medium imposes on society new relations to the body and to perception, time, and space, as theorists from McLuhan (1964) to Goody (1977), Ong (1991), Baudrillard (1984), and Kittler (1999) have argued. Those who highlight the materiality of communication insist on understanding this physicality of media and the form of its mediation, rather than any particular information being carried. The limiting of ethnography to content or its reception plays down the means by which technologies, through their very form, impose new social relations. The role of the subject in this tradition is submerged to the circuit of information, and focus is placed on the method of recording, storing, and transmitting data—what Poster has called the "mode of information" (Poster 1990; see also Kittler 1999). In this poststructuralist mode the subject of media has no autonomous existence outside of its enunciation as an address of the discursive operation of media flows.

Mapping the physical operations of media, as several essays in this volume do, avoids the mistake of presuming, rather than examining, the diverse ways that media technologies are manifest across different social spaces. The dropouts on pirate video images, the temperature of cinema halls, and the multiple shadows that appear on poor television reception all constitute what Russian formalists referred to as the "semiotics of interference," the process whereby the physical qualities of media create noise that threatens to overwhelm the message itself (see Tsivian 1994). These tactile physical qualities suggest a need to focus on media as technology.

Larkin's chapter on the introduction of cinema theaters in northern Nigeria, for instance, examines the ways in which cinema halls were part of the construction of public space under colonial rule. These new spaces—libraries, parks, theaters, and cinema halls—created new modes of racial, social, and sexual interaction that raised anxieties about social hierarchies and spatial segregation in Nigeria. What the cinema was allowed to be—who could attend, how it was built, where it was to be located—was the outcome of a specific project of colonial modernity. This subject is also taken up by Spitulnik in her examination of a few days in the social life of a radio set. By tracking the placing, possession, and circulation of radio sets in Zambia, she provides a clear example of the precise ways in which the material environment of technology determines its use and presence as an icon of status and modernity.

In an earlier paper on the introduction of radio sets as consumer items in Zambia, Spitulnik (1999a) unpacks the complex of meanings associated with the "radio listener." In her examination of advertisements for radio sets, Spitulnik describes how "listening to the radio" was constructed as a social act involving specific modes of dress, consumption, education, and family organization—in short, the production of the ideal colonial subject. This connection between the materiality of media technology (in this case as a consumer item) and colonialism is also brought out by Rudolf Mràzek in his examination of the rise of radio in the colonial Netherlands East Indies. He argues that as well as being a site for communication flows, the radio was also seen as a "shiny little furniture thing" and possession of it "became a tool to define a modern colonial space" and a significant organizing principle for the arrangement of the modern colonial home (Mràzek 1997: 10, 9). Mràzek and Spitulnik both point toward the double signification of media technologies, the fact that viewers and listeners are addressed by the content of media and at the same time interpellated by the technology itself, which often carries with it the larger ambitions of the colonial and postcolonial state. Electronic media in the colonial period, for instance, were part of the introduction of other forms of technology such as cars, electricity, factories, and railroads and thus part of the much larger discursive complex of science, rationality, time, personhood, and colonial rule. As technologies, media often carry the burden, prestige, and controversy of being made to speak for specific ideological projects. Zambians who circulate radio sets as icons of status and modernity (Spitulnik); Muslim Nigerians who oppose the construction of cinema halls as a "kafir," or un-Islamic activity (Larkin); and Thai spirits who refuse embodiment and media representation (Morris) all suggest ways in which technology mediates larger ideologies of modernity and postmodernity.

Several essays in this section examine the consequences of technological mediation for religious performance. In analyzing the production of Balinese plays in theater and on television, Mark Hobart insists on interrogating the precise circumstances and discursive traditions that create distinct acts of mediation. Hobart analyzes the difference between live theater performances and their televisual mediation, not to lament the replacement of an "authentic" cultural production with its televised other, but to see how both consist of dialogic productions, albeit rooted in different discursive regimes. In this, his concerns are shared by both Chris Pinney and Rosalind Morris. Pinney, for instance, critiques Benjamin's argument that mass reproduction destroys ritual and magical qualities of images. He argues instead for an understanding of the magical and spiritual power involved in mass images and interrogates this by looking at the "zone of mutuality" whereby filmic and chromolithographic images act upon viewers and vice versa. Icons of Hindi religious figures, for instance, demand a mode of viewing based on

Hindu concepts of *darshan,* the conferring of spiritual benefit through the act and presence of looking. According to Pinney, this direct spiritual benefit insists on the materiality of representations, especially their surface levels, and results in the sensation of the image acting upon its viewer in the moment that the viewer acts upon it (through looking). This tactile, embodied, engaged form of looking creates, for Pinney, a form of visuality that is radically different from the paradigm of the disinterested, exterior, and objectified gaze that marks the dominant mode of Western visuality, what Heidegger (1977) referred to as "the world as picture."[10]

The process of mediation is explored most provocatively by Morris through an examination of the absence, or refusal, of mediation. Thai spirits manifest themselves through embodiment in a spirit medium, the convulsing body, vomiting and jerky movements providing the outward signification of internal and invisible possession. Morris focuses on the story of a spirit who refused to become manifest and claimed to communicate without the need to materialize. Morris ties this event to the political economy of a modernist Thai state that has commodified spirit possession, repackaging it through its electronic mediation on video and television as an object of desire and longing. It was at the point when possession became an icon of alterity, of history and authenticity, that stories appeared of a spirit that refused mediation. Taken together these chapters invite us expand our concept of the ethnography of media to take into account the phenomenological experience of diverse forms of media technologies.

COMPLICITY AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF MEDIA

Studying media is, for anthropologists, particularly useful in attempts to write against the grain of global inequalities because, as Abu-Lughod has argued, "it forces us to represent people in distant villages as part of the same cultural worlds we inhabit—worlds of mass media, consumption, and dispersed communities of the imagination" (1997: 128). Yet the social and geographic positioning of anthropologists working on media places them in complex relations to their objects of study: usually engaged, sometimes complicit, rarely neutral. More important, perhaps, for the kinds of political engagements our work on media entails, is the fact that anthropologists, like many of our informants, are mobile, moving back and forth from Native American reservations to U.S. law courts (Prins), from Amazonian communities in Brazil to protests at the national capital (Turner), or from Aboriginal outstations to international video festivals (Ginsburg). We circulate both geographically, as we move between "home" and "field," and socially, as we move up and down social hierarchies in our association with people often quite different from ourselves. This mobility gives us privileged knowledge of, and sometimes ability to intervene in, situations involving media, but it also can

create dilemmas. Intervening in complex political arenas where the consequences for the local groups cannot be foreseen is tricky. As some have been quick to point out, participating in the processes of cultural objectification that media facilitates and the internal social and political jockeying that new media production inevitably occasions can place anthropologists in the position of potentially transforming, rather than observing, societies other than their own. What are the consequences? Finally, advocacy of subaltern groups makes criticism, public or otherwise, of any aspects of these groups' projects awkward.

Anthropologists' mobility across social hierarchies is just as crucial as geographic mobility for the kinds of engagements that mark their work on media. Often doing fieldwork among and thus sympathizing with dominated groups, anthropologists feel a responsibility to support projects by non-Western or postcolonial groups who are resisting the impositions of Western or global capitalist media; and to support media use by subaltern groups (e.g., women, peasants) or minorities within nation-states. The flip side of the coin is the sense of responsibility to critically analyze the instrumental use of media by the powerful, whether the state or transnational capitalist enterprises, or some combination. Thus Mankekar unveils the links between televised religious epics and the growth of religious nationalism and communal violence, while Abu-Lughod shows how Egyptian television melodramas and the projects of development and "modernization" both implicitly devalue the uneducated and carefully skirt the representation of Islam (1993b, 1997, 1998).

Yet the dilemmas entailed by a critical stance regarding the links between media and hegemonic projects are no less complex than those created by working actively with indigenous media-makers. Anthropologists' social mobility, for example, allows us access to both sides—the reception by subalterns and the production by the powerful, even in foreign countries. But our stance as intellectuals is what enables us to articulate and make public our critical analyses. When we do research in and write about countries other than our own, we may appeal to or consider ourselves to be joining with critics and intellectuals on the national scene. But it can be awkward for those living and working "outside," in the more powerful West, to criticize national projects and the professional elites who participate in them.

Most relevant is the fact that we are professionals and intellectuals like those who produce and analyze media anywhere. Media professionals are not only our peers; they are also often similarly engaged in processes of cross-cultural translation, as Pedelty's (1995) study of U.S. foreign correspondents and McLagan's analysis of a public relations strategist make clear. When we actually begin to study what they do, whether in our own backyards or on PBS (Dornfeld) or in the Hispanic advertising industry in the United States (Dávila), or elsewhere, such as Bollywood (Ganti), we find our positions un-

clear, and our ability to assert a privileged claim for cultural representation is sharply limited. Given our access to their work processes, we may find it difficult to see producers simply as tools of the state or commercial interests. We come to know the conflicts and compromises involved. How different are these from the conflicts raised by our own work as academics and professional representers of cultures, communities, and social issues?

In fact, the parallels between what we are doing as anthropologists studying media or analyzing and representing social and cultural life in general and what media professionals are doing are unsettling, as Himpele's analysis of his research on a Bolivian television program brings out clearly. He suggests that being suddenly invited to appear on the show and questioned in ways that served the host's intentions reversed the usual authority of anthropologist and subject. More problematic was what he called, following Taussig (1993), the "mimetic vertigo" he experienced when drawn into a rival, and parallel, arena of cultural production. What are the differences between himself as an anthropologist and Palenque, the show's host, in the elicitation and cutting off of participants' voices, in the appeal to lived experience to validate one's account, in advocacy for the marginalized, in the deployment of testimonials of suffering to mobilize popular sentiment, and in the construction of larger political analyses to frame individual accounts? Anthropologists now recognize that we are implicated in the representational practices of those we study; and we are engaged or complicit, as the case may be, in complex ways, with all those communities for whom media are important.

CONCLUSION: REMAPPING MEDIA

This book explores the dynamics of all these social processes of media consumption, production, circulation, and theorizing while making a strong case for the new kinds of knowledge to be gained from ethnographic work that studies practices in "out-of-the-way places" (Tsing 1994). Our work also underscores that oppositional logics are insufficient for grasping media practices; rather, our models must allow for the simultaneity of hegemonic and anti-hegemonic effects as we examine how "technologies of power" are created and contested within intimate institutional cultures, shaped by ideologies ranging from public service, to audience appeal, to aesthetics, to political empowerment.

While the media we study may be "off the map" of dominant media cartographies, they are no less crucial to the transformations of the twenty-first century and must be studied. Anthropologists seek to grasp the ways media are integrated into communities that are parts of nations and states, as well as transnational networks and circuits produced in the worlds of late capitalism and postcolonial cultural politics. We recognize the need for multi-sited research strategies to track the relevant social domains of contempo-
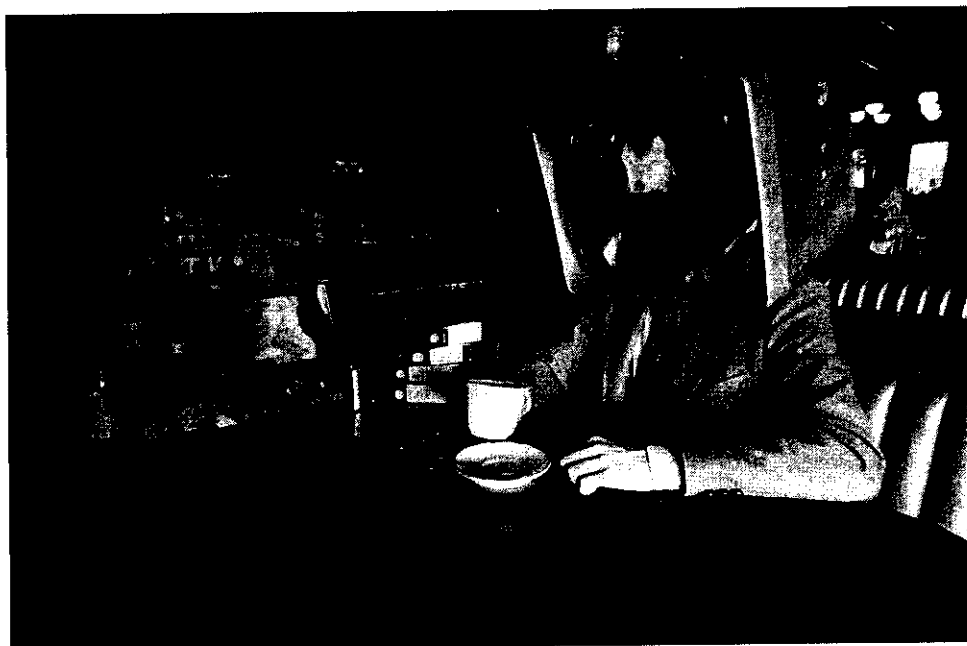
TV Head at ChuckBurger restaurant, San Leandro, California, 1988. (Photo: Jules Backus, courtesy estate of Jules Backus)

rary life (Hannerz 1992; Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, 1997b; Marcus 1995). Our relations with those we study are changing as our cultural worlds grow closer in ways that push anthropology in salutary directions; it is difficult to exoticize others or to maintain fictions of bounded or untouched communities of difference when one includes media in one's purview. Our work crosses disciplinary boundaries as it intersects, overlaps, and sometimes displaces work not only in other social science disciplines such as sociology, with which we share ancestors, but also in cultural studies, history, literary studies, and cinema and communication studies. Ethnographic studies of media offer an interesting and important perspective on the arguments of Giddens (and others) that one of the distinguishing characteristics of modernity is "the lifting out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across infinite spans of time-space" (Giddens 1990: 21; see also Tomlinson 1999). Because anthropologists generally work "close to the ground" and at the "margins," we can intervene in specific ways in academic and wider debates about media and cultural imperialism or the dangers of cultural homogenization represented by globalization. Our documentation of local uses and meanings of media and of comparative political economies of media production and consumption (including the constraints posed by the unreliability of electricity and the vicissitudes of poverty) suggests the

persistence of difference and the importance of locality while highlighting the forms of inequality that continue to structure our world. Media practices are clearly central to these processes but not necessarily in the ways we might have expected. It is this unpredictability and often vitality of responses that anthropology helps us to understand, allowing us to better grasp how these "restructurings" are taking place.

NOTES

This essay draws on Faye Ginsburg's article "Shooting Back: From Ethnographic Film to the Ethnography of Media" (1999). Other comprehensive reviews of the current literature in the anthropology of media include Dickey 1998 and Spitulnik 1993.

1. For an overview of the influence of cultural studies on work in the anthropology of media, see Spitulnik 1993 and Traube 1992. The vitality of this tradition of media research influenced by cultural studies continues in two new journals, *Television and New Media*, launched in 2000 and edited by Toby Miller, and the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, which began publication in 1997.

2. The use of the term "imaginary" as a dimension of national identity construction in which media play a central role became widespread in the 1990s. It appropriates Lacan's psychoanalytic use of the term as the mirror phase in human development when the child sees its own reflection as "other" (1967), and resignifies it through the work of Benedict Anderson (1991), Edward Said (1978), and others who have been central to our contemporary understanding of how nations are constituted as cultural collectives. Annette Hamilton, for example, in her seminal article on Aboriginals, Asians, and the national imaginary in Australia, writes: "Imaginary relations at the social, collective level can thus be seen as ourselves looking at ourselves while we think we are seeing others," citing such icons of Australian national culture as the film *Crocodile Dundee* (1990: 17). For a useful discussion of the concept of the imaginary, see Lilley 1993.

3. See, for example, the work of the Material Culture Group at University College London and the elaboration of this revisionist approach to this topic in the *Journal of Material Culture*.

4. Although indigenous can index a social formation "native" to a particular area (e.g., *I Love Lucy* is "indigenous" to America), we use it here in the strict sense of the term, as interchangeable with the neologism "First Peoples" to indicate the original inhabitants of areas later colonized by settler states (Australia, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, most of Latin America). These people, an estimated 5 percent of the world's population, are struggling to sustain their own identities and claims to culture and land, surviving as internal colonies within encompassing nation-states.

5. *Bad Aboriginal Art: Tradition, Media, and Technological Horizons,* a posthumous collection of Eric Michaels's writings based on his activist research in Australia, was published in 1994.

6. For this debate in the context of indigenous media, see the Spring 1997 issue of *Current Anthropology* (e.g., J. Weiner 1997) and the Spring 1998 issue of *Lingua Franca* (Palatella 1998).

7. For example, Solanas and Gettino in their famous 1971 essay "Towards a Third

Cinema," explicitly condemned both Hollywood (first) cinema and auteurist (second) cinema, favoring a militant documentary genre. Others called for a politicized auteurism that could incorporate popular culture (Rocha 1987). Thanks to Bob Stam and Ella Shohat for their comments on this.

8. For Nigeria see Haynes 2000; Ukah 2000. Knowledge of Ghanaian video production is based on Meyer 1999a, 1999b, and personal communication.

9. See Meyer 1999a; personal communication between Brian Larkin and the directors Willy Akuffo and Seth Ashong-Katai (thanks to Birgit Meyer for facilitating this conversation).

10. Drawing on Heidegger, J. Weiner (1997), for instance, makes the argument that visual technologies such as cameras are predicated on a culturally specific mode of vision—"the world as picture"—which is inherently Western and based on Western ideas of perspective, objectification, and surveillance. The cultural construction of the technology itself, Weiner thus argues, denies the possibility of appropriation by indigenous, subaltern, or even non-Western groups for whom use of the technology represents subjection to Western modes of visuality and subjectivity. Heidegger's concept of the modern roots of Western visuality remains intriguing, though many of the essays in this book make a powerful argument for media's often successful translation into other cultural fields.

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"The Consumers," 1984, by Michael Leunig (Courtesy Michael Leunig)