Critique of Anthropology

Whither Anthropology without Nation-state?: Interdisciplinarity, World Anthropologies and Commoditization of Knowledge

Kacper Poblocki

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://coa.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/2/225

Published by:
$SAGE
http://www.sagepublications.com

Additional services and information for *Critique of Anthropology* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://coa.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://coa.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations http://coa.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/29/2/225

Whither Anthropology without Nation-state?

Interdisciplinarity, World Anthropologies and Commoditization of Knowledge

Kacper Pobłocki

Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract ■ Debates on 'native anthropology', 'anthropologies of the South', 'peripheral anthropologies' and so forth have usually focused on colonialism as the main culprit of asymmetric relations between anthropological knowledges. By bringing the recent dispute between Western and 'native' anthropologists of post-socialism into the 'world anthropologies' debate, I seek to highlight those aspects of current epistemic inequalities that are not postcolonial in nature, but result from global commoditization of knowledge. I ponder why Western anthropologists who started visiting Eastern Europe from the 1970s, concluded that 'native' academic knowledge is inferior to their own output. This was not due to a prejudice brought from afar, I argue, but rather was a result of their field experiences. I discuss how three types of native 'captive minds' (communist, nationalist and neoliberal) emerged, and how encountering (or learning about) them made Western anthropologists uninterested in (and distrustful of) local epistemic production. I focus on the putative nationalist 'captive mind', and argue that the straw man of East European 'positivist' science (as opposed to the superior 'theory-oriented' Western anthropology) emerged due to recent changes in the political economy of the academia. I show how the 'theoretical turn' was experienced differently in Western and Polish academia, and how these changes, explained by the different regimes of value, show that there has been an increase only in 'ritual' exchange between parochial and metropolitan anthropology rather than meaningful communication.
Keywords ■ commoditization of knowledge ■ historical anthropology ■ post-colonialism ■ post-socialism ■ world anthropologies ■ world-systems analysis

As the good old anthropological tradition disallows making general statements without invoking the particular, I would like to take up Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar's invitation to carry out an 'exercise of double critique (critique of power over and power within)' (2005: 101) on world anthropologies by discussing the hierarchies of anthropological knowledge in a region unmapped in this debate so far, i.e. East and Central Europe. This is especially relevant as a similar discussion has recently emerged between Western and 'native' scholars of what is called 'post-socialism' (Buchowski, 2004, 2005; Collier et al., 2003; Durand, 1995; Hann, 2005;

CRITIQUE *of*
ANTHROPOLOGY

Hann et al., 2007; Kelertas, 2006; Moore, 2001; Otiou, 2003; Stenning, 2005; Verdery, 2002, 2004). It seems that confronting this debate with what had been said about 'world anthropologies', mainly from the vantage point of Latin American anthropology, may help us separate the wheat from the chaff in both discussions and push them, hopefully together, forward.

Unlike most previous voices in this ongoing controversy, published recently in *Critique of Anthropology* and written earlier on the subject of 'native anthropology', 'anthropology with an accent' and so forth, the anthropology of post-socialism has no colonial heritage to struggle with. Although analogies to postcolonialism have been made (cf. Buchowski, 2004; Hann et al., 2002; Verdery, 2002), and one may argue that the region had been subject to German and/or Russian colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Anglo-American anthropology of (post-)socialism started in the 1970s. This unusual condition of anthropology of post-socialism may help highlight such aspects of current hierarchies of anthropological knowledge that are a result of the way anthropology is structured and practised today, rather than due to what occurred a century ago. Tracing contemporary links between today's anthropology and the global political economy rather than focusing on the historical links with colonialism (and hence eschewing the notorious 'natives should talk back' approach) was, I believe, the direction that Restrepo and Escobar (2005) were advocating for in their opening article. Most responses to their text, however, hinged upon arguments confined to the domination–resistance metaphor and aimed primarily at 'decolonizing the field' (Degregori, 2006: 469). The various authors only mentioned in passing issues such as 'really existing globalization' (Ribeiro, 2006: 370), the worldwide 'intellectual/ academic market' (Ribeiro, 2006: 365), and the 'free trade agreement' prevailing in academia today (Degregori, 2006: 465). If postcolonial anthropology was a brighter future to strive for thirty or so years ago, today 'international circulation of ideas' (Ribeiro, 2006: 372) exercised by a 'global community of anthropologists' (2006: 380) is a fact hard to deny. Like some decades ago, today's anthropology is plagued by inequalities, but they are not result of the (post)colonial institutions but rather are the workings of the global market for ideas and commoditization of knowledge. I agree with Pina-Cabral that 'we need the mechanisms of present-day imperialist academic silencing to be exposed' (2006: 468) and with Ribeiro that 'heteroglossia in anthropological production should start with the recognition of an enormous production in different world locales' (2006: 371). The world anthropologies debate, however, has been so far surprisingly general, and did not scrutinize the 'watery realm of interconnectedness' (Pina-Cabral, 2006: 469) between current metropolitan and parochial academic bodies of knowledge.

By putting the (post-)socialist case on board, I will show how 'positivism' was the central notion (surprisingly absent in the debate!) that structured the recent 'terms and conditions of anthropological conversability

worldwide' (Restrepo and Escobar, 2006: 486). We are, as Restrepo and Escobar stressed, beyond the liberal and Marxist moments, and indeed 'world anthropologies' are part and parcel of the post-structuralist movement. Post-structuralism (postmodernism, postcolonialism, etc.), however, has had many faces, and only some of its versions, in Gavin Smith's phase, 'gained purchase' (2006: 472) on the global market for academic goods. This global market has 'dialogue' (a nicer word for market exchange) as its basis, and therefore we cannot really speak of 'asymmetric ignorance' any longer but rather of 'reciprocal lack of interest' between various actors operating in the global knowledge market, or rather in its many and only partially overlapping niches. What I have in mind is not the process of 'Othering', but rather the practice of manufacturing straw men that are utilized in waging academic battles and in, as Clifford Geertz once put it, 'mutual exchange of intellectual insults' (1973: 10).

Manufacturing straw men

Let us first trace how such 'reciprocal lack of interest' was achieved by the metropolitan scholars of (post-)socialism. Unlike Malinowski and the colonial lot, Western anthropologists who came to Central and Eastern Europe in the 1970s and later had a vast body of written knowledge, some of which could pass for an equivalent of 'their anthropology', to confront. They generally, however, to this very day bracket it. This was the concern of Michał Buchowski (2004, 2005), who pondered how was it possible for anthropologists fully proficient in 'native anthropology' debates and well attuned for 'subaltern voices' to engender what he dubbed a neo-positivist and neo-Orientalist science and assume that objects of their analysis themselves have nothing interesting to say. It was not, it seems, due to a prejudice brought from afar, but was rather an outcome of encounters in the field. Individual efforts to explore the local epistemic production – that have certainly been made – were made in vain, because even those who had spent months in local libraries – as one 'culprit' has recently told me – had a difficult time incorporating outcomes of such research into their anthropological work. Somehow, Malinowskian fieldwork turned out to be the best (and the most reliable) research method of socialism and of 'what came after'. In other words, various local bodies of knowledge have become discredited, distrusted, deemed irrelevant or incommensurable in a contingent process. This process had three critical moments.

First and foremost, Western anthropologists coming to the region before 1989 learned from Cold War propaganda as well as from the natives they met, that the official (communist) sources were not worth a brass farthing, and hardly bothered to explore them. Instead, they turned to the voices of 'opposition' – as anthropologists are inclined to do. As Katherine Verdery wrote:

> [T]he orientation I am advocating would give voice to the 'natives' as analysts of their own condition. Although it is not yet clear who would be the Franz Fanon of this corpus, his or her forerunners surely include the CEE [Central and Eastern Europe] dissidents and other scholars – people like Rudolph Bahro, Pavel Câcpeanu, Györgi Konrád, István Rév, Jadwiga Staniszkis and Iván Szelényi – whose writing spurred us to seek an understanding of socialism different from that offered by Cold War categories. (in Buchowski, 2004: 6)

These figures (sociologists and political economists exclusively) published in English in the 1980s and the 1990s, and are indeed read and discussed. They are not, however, full-fledged East European Franz Fanons because most of them turned out to be politically and/or epistemologically entangled in the building of the post-socialist order, and hence imbued with another ideology: this time neoliberal or neo-conservative. Finally, such 'Fanons' were not even sought among local anthropologists, because these were discredited as *Volkskundler* (ethnographers or ethnologists) – working within an outdated paradigm (positivism), and/or serving the nationalist project. As John Davies put it already in 1977:

> . . . a contemporary ethnographer from France and England or America, carrying the very latest lightweight intellectual machine gun in his pack, may be suddenly confronted by a Taylorian or Frazerian professor appearing like a Japanese corporal from the jungle to wage a battle only he knows is still on. (in Buchowski, 2004: 10)

So, in short, confronted with an object of analysis that seemed unique (socialism) or wholly new (the allegedly clean slate of post-socialism) and disillusioned with the existing bodies of knowledge, Western anthropologists were left to themselves, as lonely Malinowskian riders surrounded in the field by 'captive minds' of three sorts: communist, neoliberal/neo-conservative and positivist/nationalist.

I use the term 'the captive mind' on purpose – it is an *emic* notion, popularized by Czesław Miłosz's (1953) bestseller. Anthropological neo-positivism was, therefore, achieved partially by assuming the 'native point of view'. Natives were perhaps even more distrustful first towards the communist 'propaganda', and second towards the eulogists of neoliberalism (who were under an avalanche of criticism from the grassroots in the 1990s) than the foreign anthropologists themselves. The motives behind bracketing of the local anthropological production are more complex and more relevant to our discussion. A standard Western opinion about how anthropology was practised behind the Iron Curtain reads as follows: 'scholars in CEE countries tended to share a traditional, nationalist preoccupation with peasant traditions, and their work had little theoretical content or comparative range' (Adam Kuper in Buchowski, 2004: 10). On one hand this stems from a classic Cold-War myth, holding that state socialism is merely a smokescreen that mystifies lurking nationalisms, hence the only alternative to communist propaganda is epistemic nationalism. On the other, this is a standard critique of 'positivism', this time displaced onto a geographical

'Other' (Buchowski, 2004, 2005) and 'incarcerated' (Appadurai, 1988) in Eastern European academia.

What is telling is that, in Kuper's rendering, methodological nationalism seems to go hand in hand with lack of 'theoretical content'. Just as Western anthropology freed itself from the shackles of methodological colonialism and has become reflexive, critical and, by now, ripe with 'theoretical content'. The anthropology of nation-building, unlike the anthropology of empire-building, is portrayed as happily immersed in the everlasting now of naïve positivist anthropology, and waiting for its turn to undergo the critical revolution that came in the West after the 1960s, and deprived of the latest intellectual weaponry. Lack of 'theoretical content' is a euphemism for being 'backward'. Theory has become, unfortunately, an intellectual battleground, so to speak. Only 'research that demonstrates a clear link to anthropological theory and debates, and promises to make a solid contribution to advancing these ideas', can get funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation (2007) for example. Within such a 'theory-centred' framework, works that are labelled 'positivist' cannot contribute with any theoretical (and current!) insights, 'theoretical' being the very word that replaced 'critical' and 'objective' as the main criterion for separating good from bad science. Theory (or 'useful concepts'), in such an approach, is a 'thing' extracted from the raw data, put preferably in the plainest way possible (so it is not confused with 'some*thing*' else) and marketed. It is only the postcolonial self-aware epistemic tool-kit that guarantees the right balance between epistemic distance and proximity of the object to the subject, and hence facilitates the successful production of an intellectual commodity.

One may wonder how Kuper arrived at his conclusions about the value of East European anthropology without knowing any of the local vernaculars (Buchowski, 2005: 10), but the issue is more serious, since the issue of methodological nationalism has been raised by scholars who are perfectly familiar with the region. For example Chris Hann, in a reply to Buchowski's 'open letter', admitted that he does not find much local anthropology useful, and when, for example, two Polish anthropology students visited him at his research site in a Carpathian village in the 1980s, they 'could not really understand my concern to document the prevailing economic and political structures, just as I could muster little intellectual interest to photograph and catalogue the roadside religious monuments of the region' (Hann, 2005: 195). Then Hann advised Buchowski and other locals that if they 'wish to be as widely read as some of the outsiders who write about CEE, then they need to put in the field time and write monographs of equivalent depth and sophistication' (Hann, 2005: 195). That is, they should do 'proper' fieldwork, and proper fieldwork is, according to Hann, staying in a foreign country for 12 months. In fact writing about their home countries ought not to be 'the only career option' for CEE scholars, and they would actually be better off if they do not 'try harder to write books

about CEE that compete with the products of foreign scholars for publication by Cornell, Cambridge, or some other prestigious player in the market that is dominated by the Anglo-Americans' (Hann, 2005: 196). Instead of 'doing fieldwork at home and confining [their] foreign trips to academic institutions', he continues, they should 'take advantage of post-socialist freedoms and embark on anthropological projects outside their home countries'. They have failed to do so, and therefore 'the CEE ethnographers/anthropologists are still confining themselves to their national frames', just as their academic forefathers did. Only the experience of doing fieldwork abroad, Hann insists, would free CEE scholars from their 'national frames' and place them 'in a better position to undertake similar in-depth work in [their] own country, and thus to compete more effectively in that sector of the market'. Hann also provides a positive hero story of a CEE scholar who, thanks to his research in a foreign (albeit post-socialist) country 'has contributed the concept of *sovkhoism* to the anthropological tool-kit' and whose work is much more valuable than the local 'intellectual pyrotechnics' (Hann, 2005: 196). Since CEE anthropologists' work still boils down to 'document[ing] the vanishing folk culture by making two-week excursions to the countryside, just as [their] predecessors have done since the nineteenth century' (Hann, 2005: 196), they also lack the critical distance towards their own intellectual endeavours.

Of course Hann is completely right. But he is wrong too. He is right, because the intellectual output of many an East European anthropologist does suffer from the deficiencies he so openly pointed out. But, and this is the crucial point, one could also find many counter-examples. No body of knowledge is uniform. The naive romanticism of folk culture has been vehemently criticized in internal East European debates. I will limit myself to the Polish case, which I know best (for other countries, see: Benovska, Bošković, Podoba, Skalník and Uherek in Hann et al., 2007). The reason why there is no single recent volume in CEE anthropology comparable to Edward Said's *Orientalism* could be simply because such a debate had occurred long time before. Even literature, which is in theory more susceptible to romanticizing, has ridiculed the intellectuals' passion for rustic lifestyle, for example in a play from 1901 by Stanisław Wyspiański titled *The Wedding* – one of the classics of Polish literature. High-school, or even primary school curricula, are awash with such works – for example Stanisław Mrożek's 1959 short-story *A Wedding in Atomville* which mocks the socialist attempts to modernize the countryside and adore its folklore at the same time is compulsory reading for 14-year-olds to this very day! Even the monumental Nobel-winning novel *The Peasants* by Władysław Reymont (written between 1904 and 1909) has nothing to do with nostalgia for the lost *Gemeinschaft*, but provides, among other things, a suggestive analysis of how capitalist property relations encroached on the Polish countryside in the late 19th century. Although (or maybe because) the very village where *The Peasants* unfolded became one of the icons of folklore after 1945, there

is a very thorough monograph on it where it is socio-economic structures, not religious signs, that are the subject matter (Jarecka-Kimlowska, 1989). Such examples are abundant. To show that local anthropologists criticized the nationalist project and even positioned their own endeavours in opposition to it, I could mention that one of the towering figures of Polish anthropology, Jan Stanisław Bystroń, published in 1935 a book with a telling title *National Megalomania*.

Theory fetishism and reification of knowledge

In fact Chris Hann's empirical work (1985) is far more favourable to East European intellectual production than his reply to Michał Buchowski. This is why I suggest reading the Buchowski–Hann exchange as merely *discursive*, i.e. displaying not so much authors' real intentions, but rather latent 'rules of the game' that are structural in nature, and are interesting because they teach us about the power relations underpinning knowledge production. Theoretical fetishism means that anthropologists are pushed to confront each other on the grounds of theory, and argue that their theoretical output is not only superior to the work of others, but also that it *fundamentally* differs from them. In other words, today's academic world rewards making enemies more than making friends and, just as literature reviews a few decades ago tended to stress intellectual continuity and 'standing on the shoulders of giants' (often one's own teachers), today's academic publications tend to be more confrontational and in the most extreme cases are written in the 'they-all-got-it-wrong-but-here-I-come' vein. It seems that the kernel of the Hann–Buchowski exchange lurks in the main battle within Western anthropology, that between the cultural and social strands. Hann has been one of the most outspoken proponents of social anthropology, struggling against the domination of 'culture-talk' in the discipline. His impressive empirical work is a valuable proof of the pertinence of social anthropology. And it seems that his argument against lingering positivism in East Europe is a direct extension of his struggles against culture-talk in Western academia. Implicitly, he suggests not that 'positivist' East European anthropology is devoid of any theoretical content, but rather that it is not the type of theoretical 'machine gun' that he values, precisely because it reminds him too much Western cultural anthropology. This is an important point.

It leads us to note that East European anthropology, is not a 'pristine precipitate', to borrow Eric Wolf's (1982: 76) phrase, of positivist anthropology, and has not been impervious to the 'theoretical revolution'. The anti-positivist battle has also been waged behind the Iron Curtain, only the means were *different*. The 1970s and 1980s gave birth to a 'writing culture' turn in Polish anthropology that eventually led to a practice of anthropology as a 'purely theoretical, almost philosophical enterprise' (Buchowski,

2004: 8), closely related to, if not even more extreme than, the Western post-modern cultural anthropology. Such anti-positivist, anti-communist and anti-materialist efforts (all these being each other's metonyms) elevated anthropology as the 'European science par excellence' (Kołakowski, 1984, 1990) and cherished it as the most 'comprehensive' and all-encompassing of all possible bodies of knowledge. Its mission was to free humanism from the 'determinisms' of positivist Marxism and to free the individual – now understood thanks to anthropology in his or her 'totality' – for action. This was close to the spirit of the 'Solidarność' movement, and coincided with the post-Vatican II evolution of the Catholic Church, which in the mid-1970s turned its discursive interest towards the 'human being as such' and placed him/her at the very centre of its rhetoric. Anthropology started to mean simply a 'science of the human', a science that took over humanism and optimism from the increasingly 'deterministic' Marxism, even though it was closer to the arts (performative arts especially, and inspired some of the 'alternative cultures' of the 1980s), rather than the sciences. Just like the 'neo-positivist' social anthropology of (post-)socialism, it was an ontological project, hostile towards (communist) captive minds, and interested in clearing the ground in order to generate a new kind of knowledge that would be adequate for the new era, or even for the New Age (Domańska, 2005: 276–88). This is why it kept to the letter rather than to the spirit of *anthrop*-ology, by being particularly interested in exploring the cultural and metaphysical origins of humankind, and revolved around issues such as myth, gift, ritual and sacrifice. Such 'theological anthropology' had its moments of glory, when for example anthropology-inspired theatre groups (most notably Jerzy Grotowski's *Laboratorium*, and more recently Włodzimierz Staniewski's *Gardzienice*) received world-wide acclaim, and especially when a version of it was made global in the multiculti-ecumenism of John Paul II (cf. Pobłocki, 2004). Still today it is largely 'in the swim', and not only books, but even book-length interviews with Western giants of that market niche such as René Girard (2006) are quickly translated into Polish and eagerly discussed.

To be sure, such theory-oriented local anthropology is as ripe with short-comings as any science that reifies 'theory'. A lot of it is, in Buchowski's words, 'recycled good[s]' (2004: 9), and many locally produced articles, including those written by scholars from other disciplines, typically take a foreign 'concept' and investigate whether or not it applies to the local reality. Just as locals compete in demonstrating proficiency in foreign 'theories', the production of 'concepts' by metropolitan scholars usually does not require a familiarity with the local epistemic production. It could even impede it, since 'recycled goods' of often foreign provenance may 'corrupt' their ethnographic material (cf. Conklin, 1997). Such goods are also not so interesting, since their value on the global market jammed with such 'recycled' ideas is extremely low. 'Original' ideas, such as the concept of *sovkhoism* mentioned by Hann, or the 'dividual person', which allegedly

captures a Polish idea of personhood that is distinct from the Western notion of an 'individual' (Dunn, 2004: 125–6), have a much better chance on the global market. Local anthropologists also hardly quote Western scholars writing on CEE, because if they borrow 'ideas' from Western scholars then they refer to 'tyrants' well-known for engendering 'ideas', such as Zygmunt Bauman, Richard Rorty, Clifford Geertz and James Clifford (Buchowski, 2004: 9). This is why local anthropologists do not do research *à la* Hann, but travel to foreign academic institutions, where they turn into '*flâneur* [s] wandering in the library and searching for ideas' (Buchowski, 2004: 9).

Ships passing in the night

So, we see that the 'reciprocal lack of interest' between metropolitan and local anthropologists is a result of the different regimes of value structuring the academic markets in which they operate. This peaceful coexistence in reciprocal ignorance was broken only recently. Perhaps because the Anglo-American anthropology of (post-)socialism has established itself (in Western academic institutions) it can no longer be ignored by the locals. This, coupled with general weariness with the teleologies of 'transition' theory, as well as with a willingness to rejuvenate a local anthropology that has become a little too 'cultural' and has somehow lost the 'social', sparked the recent native interest in Anglo-American anthropology of post-socialism (e.g. see Gdula, 2006). Metropolitan scholars also realized that 'history matters' and even embarked on joint research endeavours with local scholars. Katherine Verdery, for example, confessed recently in a 'self-criticism':

> I saw Romanian ethnographers' work as antiquarian, and I believed my use of 'theory' – in my case, world-systems theory – marked my own work as superior. I have since become more humble, especially in my collaborative project with two Romanian ethnographers. (in Hann et al., 2007: 48)

A number of books and collected volumes have been translated, and some of them sparked nation-wide discussions. In Poland, translations of Elizabeth Dunn's *Privatizing Poland* and David Ost's *Defeat of Solidarity* (Ost also uses the ethnographic method), received immediate attention, not only in academic milieus, but also from the general public.

At the face value, any type of intellectual interaction is a good thing. Yet, if we look closely at how this exchange unfolded, we can see that facilitating such exchange does not really solve anything. Dunn's and Ost's contributions were simply 'imported' as superior, Western knowledge that nobody had been able to produce locally. On the one hand, both have helped 'to break away from the neoliberal hegemony' and the 'naive modernization theory' that were the hallmark of Polish intellectual life of

the 1990s, as one observer (Nowak, 2008: 7) pointed out. Yet 'it is interesting that Poland as a semi-peripheral country had to wait for a voice from the core to describe its condition – even if it this was an anti-hegemonic voice', he continued. 'An argument in defence of the Polish workers is resonant only when it is a voiced by somebody from the core, despite the fact that meticulous and thorough analyses of Polish labour have been made much earlier' (2008: 7). In this sense, importing Dunn's analyses of neoliberal governmentality as a superior Western view differs very little from the earlier import of neoliberalism as a superior theory suitable for explaining local conditions. Dunn's work was more attractive than 'meticulous and thorough' local analyses of labour because it was written by a foreigner, and because it offered a new theoretical language (analysis of the neoliberal subject) that has not been employed in Poland before (e.g. Borejza, 2008). Unfortunately, Dunn's book did not spur young Polish scholars to do more ethnographic work in factories – but was one of the many books of Western authors that provided them with new theories that they want to employ for rethinking the Polish reality.

This stems from the 'regime of value' structuring the local intellectual market. This is why, as Katherine Verdery (in Hann et al., 2007) pointed out, the import of 'superior' theories is not neocolonial: the initiative comes from the local end. In order to compete in the local market, local anthropologists have to seek theories and paradigms outside of their own realm. External voices can be utilized in waging local battles against colleagues who can now be labelled 'positivists', 'idealists', 'culturalists' and so forth. Or, as in Dunn's case, they can be used by a new generation of intellectuals who wage war against the neoliberal 'captive mind' (this term has been even re-used by young authors in a volume on neoliberalism titled *Captive Mind 2*, see: Majewska and Sowa, 2007). As Jerzy Jedlicki pointed out a long time ago:

> paradoxical as it may seem, in the course of the last three centuries, many developing countries [Poland included] have found themselves with too many educated people . . . this phenomenon has always caused strong social tensions. . . . Those who have spent years studying tend to feel they deserve to occupy a higher rung on the ladder of income, prestige, and political influence. If society, the government and producers are unable to fulfil these hopes, then educated people turn against the prevailing system. (1999: 173)

It is striking that in Poland there is such a generational turnover every two decades or so. The import of Dunn's work has been precisely utilized for waging such a generational battle.

Such battles are based upon manufacturing intellectual discontinuity, which precisely allows a new generation of intellectuals to 'break away' from captive minds. As result, the rule is that local authors do not build on their own previous work, but rather relate to one anther *via* the West, and theories imported from there. Only foreign books can change paradigms, and works such as Dunn's seem far more attractive to locals than their own

production, however 'meticulous and thorough' it might be. The benefits springing from such a strategy are often greater than their necessary downsides. This is why, it seems, local intellectuals are sometimes surprisingly eager to accept the 'intellectual insult' that is part and parcel of the import. Polish sociologists surprisingly easily concluded that, before Ost and Dunn, they had never noticed the working class. And this was in spite of the fact that Ost's book is actually based on a thorough use of local academic production, including local studies of labour and labour unions, and even Ost himself stressed in interviews that his voice is in unison with some local scholars. This is hardly surprising: the value of any theory is higher if it is new, therefore it is sometimes better to swallow a straw man because it can turn into a more powerful 'intellectual machine gun'. This is so especially since straw men are usually swallowed with a pinch of salt. Local scholars typically conclude (hidden transcripts!) that the cosmopolitans have only a 'shallow' understanding of the subject matter and that they themselves know it better anyway (Buchowski, 2004: 10). This was no different with Ost's book: the very same person who praised Ost's book publicly, told me behind the scenes that it was nothing that 'a Polish sociologist would not be able to do' and hence the attention it received was largely undeserved.

All this is, of course, not limited to Poland. Straw men are key element of the academic merry-go-around – 'new' theories can be born only after other ones have been flogged to death. It is perhaps time to draw conclusions from the post-Fordist restructuring of institutions – quite well described with regard to numerous industries, but only recently 'discovered' in academia (e.g. see Purcell, 2007). For one thing, post-Fordism in academia means increased competition and commodification of knowledge production, manifested on the one hand by interdisciplinarity and on the other by theory-reification. If the Weberian pyramid-like organizational model, often used to describe the Fordist enterprise, allowed for a peaceful coexistence in academia of various branches of knowledge immersed in their own (seemingly) independent research agendas, today's typical organizational model resembles, writes Richard Sennett:

> a circle with a dot in the centre. At the centre, a small number of managers make decisions, set tasks, judge results. . . . The teams working on the periphery of the circle are left free to respond to output targets set by the centre, free to devise means of executing tasks in competition with one another. . . . In the Weberian pyramid of bureaucracy, rewards came for doing your job as best you could. In the dotted circle, rewards come to teams winning over other teams. (2001)

In academia, this increased competition is euphemistically referred to as 'interdisciplinarity'. This is why militant literature reviews with an increasingly short life-span are a must in today's publications; authors have to put as much effort into arguing that they have something interesting to say as into actually saying it, and academic audiences are much more impatient today and much less forgiving than they used to be. Huge conferences where speakers have up to 10 minutes to market their academic product in

a flashy Powerpoint presentation are a relatively novel phenomenon. The accelerated competition between metropolitan and parochial anthropologies is only a small offshoot of this larger process.

Towards a new universalism?

Our task, of course, is not to lament the current situation, but to find in it what can be utilized for envisioning future world anthropologies. And that we need a new cosmopolitan theory is beyond doubt. The fate of socialism – one of the most powerful universal theories ever – that became something local, incarcerated in particular spaces, places or even people is instructive. A pre-1914 socialist would find it wholly hilarious that socialism can be studied, and even more so that it is studied by anthropologists. I do not, however, advocate for a metropolitan appreciation of the 'theological anthropology', or other examples of 'native' theoretical reflection, but rather for a post-socialist theory that would not be a theory of post-socialism, but rather a new cosmopolitan, and potentially universal, theory that would grow out of both parochial and metropolitan efforts to effectively combat the commoditization of knowledge. In the remaining part of this article, I suggest a few possible strategies for achieving that.

The first point is that theoretical fetishism is largely a result, not of 'silencing' and lack of intellectual exchange, but precisely of the increased volume of communication. This – as well as reification of ideas into things – is not a novel phenomenon. I see the recent evolutions within anthropology and the 'world anthropologies' debate as an excellent opportunity to revisit the little remembered criticism of Marx by Bakunin (1972). Bakunin argued that Marx differed little from Bismarck as he did not desire workers' emancipation, but hoped to grasp increasing state power by mobilizing a labour aristocracy that would lift the ascending group of 'socialist scientists' to become the fourth ruling class and establish the 'reign of scientific intelligence, the most aristocratic, despotic, arrogant, and elitist of all regimes' (Bakunin, 1972: 319). In fact it was a Bismarckian minister, Johann Karl Rodbertus, who coined the notion of 'state socialism' and Marx was often accused if not of plagiarizing him (Kautsky and Engels put a considerable effort into defending Marx's authenticity as an author, Shatz, 1989: 86), then at least, in Wacław Machajski's phrase, 'lending weight of pure science' to Rodbertus' basic positions (Shatz, 1989: 87). Machajski, following Bakunin, argued that Marx wished to replace 'private capitalism' by a statist order that would guarantee the 'perpetual existence of national capital' and hence refine the method's of workers' exploitation. Marx's real enemy, Bakunin and Machajski argued, was not the capitalists, but what Bakunin called the 'flower of the proletariat', the uneducated, the unskilled, the 'dregs of society' disdained as the '*Lumpenproletariat*'. Machajski suggested that 'socialism' was a movement of

the new bourgeoisie that sought to combat its 'elder brother', and argued that the Paris June Days of 1848 proved that struggling for political goals such as universal suffrage actually impedes workers' real emancipation (the chamber of deputies that was elected thanks to the June Days shut down the national workshops for the unemployed that were, according to Machajski, the prime achievement of 1848), hence 'struggle for universal freedom is a bourgeois deception' (in Shatz, 1989: 59), and so was the International. Before he was expelled from it, Bakunin argued that the International ought not to promote political solutions to economic problems, because workers of all countries cannot have a single, common 'interest', and that only a considerable degree of decentralization and allowing workers in various world locales to develop their own political agendas and to struggle for their own *particular* interests, would create real unity in diversity in the workers' movement. Anthropology's early recognition that there is no single working class, but rather 'working classes' that vary in gender, ethnicity, race, age and so forth (Wolf, 1982: 277, 358–60), its embracing of the subaltern and, above all, its recognition of the enormous and signifying differences in various world localities that by no means can be simply reduced to a single common denominator, bears a striking resemblance to the Bakuninian argument. Only for that reason, to argue that CEE anthropology or ethnology was serving the nation-state project is wholly unfair, because even if it was utilized for mustering national allegiances, then still, as a body of knowledge, unlike all other 'positivist' sciences, it was based upon this key awareness of the often radical differences between the many (geographical, ethnic, religious, etc.) singularities comprising the nation-state.

After the roll-back of the nation-state swept state socialism into the annals history, we may find Bakunin's points helpful. So far, however, a Bakuninian critique of Marxism/statism, has come mostly from the right. Bakunin's most outspoken disciple was Friedrich von Hayek, who – in a famous argument *pace* Oskar Lange – condemned socialist planners' arrogance in their belief that they would be able first to aggregate and then to process all relevant human knowledge. Hayek is really worth quoting at length:

> today it is almost heresy to suggest that scientific knowledge is not the sum of all knowledge. But a little reflection will show that there is beyond question a body of very important but unorganized knowledge which cannot possibly be called scientific in the sense of knowledge of general rules: the knowledge of the particular circumstances of time and place. (Hayek, 1945: 521–2)

Hayek rebels against reification of knowledge into things as 'statistical aggregates' and turned economists' attention towards what anthropologists later called 'tacit' or 'local' knowledge. He offered two solutions to the problem of the reification of knowledge by bureaucratic science: planners should be replaced by 'experts' who do not reduce knowledge to numbers-things, and planning should be replaced by the price system.

How can the price system express 'tacit knowledge'? Hayek relies here on a pre-20th-century understanding of number, and, just as 'statistical aggregates' had become for him clearly reified, he argues that the price system is primarily symbolic. Lorraine Daston (1995) showed that quantification never necessarily implied reification, or even reliance on numbers. She described the various phases of quantification and showed that, for example, it employed geometrical figures as well as numbers, and it did not seek accuracy, only 'rough' precision. Daston argued that the movement towards quantification was in fact driven by the desire to enhance scholarly communication. Leibnitz put it this way: '[w]e need not to be surprised then that most disputes arose from the lack of clarity in things, that is, from the failure to reduce them to numbers' (in Daston, 1995: 9). In other words, quantification was a result of accelerating communication and it evolved into hegemony of reified number-things due to the separation of thought and emotion. She draws here on the ideas of Ludwik Fleck, who argued in the 1930s that:

> the uniform agreement in the emotions of a society is . . . called freedom from emotions. This permits a type of thinking that is formal and schematic, and that can be couched in words and sentences and hence communicated without major deformation. The power of establishing independent existences is conceded to it emotively. Such thinking is called rational. (Fleck, 1979: 49)

Disillusioned by the hegemony of statistics that may have been good on 'clarity', but, reified as an 'independent existence', was epistemologically poor and useless for social practice, Hayek pointed to an alternative 'mechanism for communicating information' (1945: 526) with the expressive potential statistics had lost. What the price system could do, and statistics could not, is to facilitate communication between people who otherwise have nothing else in common. His closing remarks are telling:

> the problem which we meet here is by no means peculiar to economics but arises in connection with nearly all truly social phenomena, with language and most of our cultural inheritance, and constitutes really the central theoretical problem of all social science. . . . We make constant use of formulas, symbols, and rules whose meaning we do not understand and through the use of which we avail ourselves of the assistance of knowledge which individually we do not possess. We have developed these practices and institutions by building upon habits and institutions which have proved successful in their own sphere and which have in turn become the foundation of the civilization we have built up. (Hayek, 1945: 528)

The price system is hence an archaic and nearly unconscious institution, a common tradition to rely on, and so flexible that any local idiosyncrasy can be voiced through it. I believe that we are in a similar moment to that Hayek commented on, although it is not statistics that we need to dethrone. Hayek's project for localizing economics ended in the dead end of the Nash equilibrium, which, according to Philip Mirowski (2002:

331–49), is the pinnacle of the 'autistic' approach to science that wholly divorces it from reality. 'Local knowledge' also became 'big business' and today no expert panel can do without a discussion on how to 'tap it' (Kalb, 2006: 579). In anthropology itself, the sheer volume of increased communication in recent years inevitably led to a process germane to quantification as described by Fleck and Daston, i.e. the hegemony of ideas-as-things, reified knowledge; but if the hegemony of statistics was largely a result of the rising bureaucratic nation-state apparatus (Desrosières, 1998; MacKenzie, 1981), then today's epistemic ills stem from post-Fordist global knowledge commoditization. Unfortunately, because 'theory' has been the major battlefield (or nexus of exchange) on which the metropolitan and parochial anthropologies meet, intellectual communication has been limited to mere rituals of empty gestures (i.e. quoting without understanding of the real differences in respective research agendas; Buchowski, 2004: 9). Therefore it is not a lack of communication between anthropologies practised in various world locales ('asymmetric ignorance'), but coping with its increased volume and transforming the *mode of communication* that is our main task. For a Bakuninian cosmopolitan theory such as I argue for not to share the fate of Hayek's attempt to eliminate 'things' from human thought, and to establish a democratic, universal and above all effective medium of communication, it may have to cease to be 'theory' the way it is generally understood today.

Anthropologies of peripheral capitalism

If world anthropology today is largely a 'study of how capitalism or globalization, or violence etc. is *experienced*' (Smith, 2006: 472, original emphasis), and if world anthropology is to become body of knowledge that ties the various local 'structures of feeling' generated by the different experiences of one phenomenon into an universal theory, then we need to rethink our analytic tools in such a way that they allow movement beyond the 'theoretical turn'. Our theoretical reflection cannot be reduced to the production of 'concepts' or 'ideas' that are marketed and then swept away, into the intellectual rubbish bin at every whim of the academic market. One strategy for dealing with theory fetishism is to struggle against intellectual discontinuity: and here I concur with Chris Hann (in Hann et al., 2007) that a strategy of 'importing' a discipline of 'social anthropology' (or any other) into the local academic life is not the best way of forging East–West intellectual alliances. Instead, Hann suggests turning to ad hoc projects that cross not only national boundaries, but also disciplinary ones. And, as I will discuss below, it is precisely between institutional boundaries that an East European equivalent of 'social anthropology' could be found. This pertains especially to the border line between anthropology and history, and Hann's

advice to build 'social anthropology' by promoting interdisciplinary ventures between anthropology and history is an excellent one. There are a number of traps that we should eschew, though.

The very last thing we want to do is to 'import' a new and superior intellectual commodity into a 'parochial' intellectual landscape. How difficult it is to avoid doing that can be seen if we compare the actual blueprints for things devised by Western and local scholars. Hann's (2007) recipe for historical anthropology is largely based upon the strategy of engaging with the classics of anthropology, such as Malinowski and Frazer (or, implicitly, 'positivist' Eastern European ethnology), and pointing to the temporal naiveté of that body of knowledge. Ultimately, it boils down to supplementing anthropological fieldwork with archival research. If we compare this with local blueprints for merging anthropology and history, then we see that there is hardly any intellectual overlap. In a typical manner, a Polish anthropologist (with background in literary studies), Like Hann writing an essay on history and anthropology, engaged with the 'history-cold' classics such as Lévi-Strauss, and then suggests that the Western tyrants of historical anthropology were Mikhail Bakhtin, Norbert Elias, Vere Gordon Childe, and, more recently, Jack Goody, Eric A. Havelock and Walter J. Ong (Mencwel, 2004). Such a canon is completely different from what would be considered historical anthropology in the West. Mencwel's intention, again, is to follow the Western trend, holding that the 21st century 'will be that of history'. His concern is fundamentally theoretical, trying to probe the coming-of-age of a new global paradigm. Likewise, when historians turn to anthropology for inspiration, then they, again, import a Western 'idea', such as Girard's notion of the scapegoat (Woźniak, 2001). A young historian starts her otherwise brilliant book thus:

> This volume is a study of private life and belongs to a domain of research that is novel in Polish historiography. Such research has been initiated by a group of French historians belonging to a strand of a non-classical historiography, dubbed historical anthropology (*nouvelle histoire* or *nouvelle nouvelle histoire*), and rooted in the *Annales* school. (Klich-Kluczewska, 2005: 11)

The rich tradition of Polish economic history, that was not only inspired by anthropology, but that many anthropologists contributed to (Piasek, 2004: 5), is deemed irrelevant. Historical anthropology is presented as something new, Western and attractive. It is completely different from what Chris Hann means by historical anthropology, and it is wholly different from what had been practised (without giving it a label) as historical anthropology in Poland.

I perhaps should give an example here. Bohdan Baranowski (1915–93), an author and editor of over 30 books, worked for his whole life in the faculty of history. He wrote the very first Polish book on witchcraft, wrote a monograph on the history of Polish millers, the anti-feudal struggles of peasants, on the counter-reformation, coffee houses and village inns, edited a number of city monographs, wrote a book on the history of

Georgia, on everyday life and material culture. He would be an ideal figure to build historical anthropology upon. To be sure, Baranowski never did 'fieldwork' the way social anthropology defines it today, and most of his data is drawn from, and concerned with, the region surrounding the city in which he lived and worked. From the perspective of Wenner-Grenn guidelines, this would smack of 'armchair anthropology'. But his double-vision as an historian and anthropologist allowed him to see (and reach beyond) the methodological limits of the two disciplines. All of his books present a fascinating interplay between oral and written sources, and one of his most theoretically sophisticated books shows how elements of folklore, normally regarded as 'oral' by anthropologists, were actually versions of older stories usually disseminated by the Catholic Church in a written form. He shows the interplay of orality and literacy, and how localities and local cultures have always been embedded in larger fields of power. Yet his name, and work, is never mentioned in the canon of Polish historical anthropology.

Figures like Baranowski (and he is but one example) show that anthropology has always been a fundamentally historical discipline in Poland, and hence trying to import it anew now is particularly absurd. Historical anthropology is concerned with a study of capitalism, both close on the skin and in the *longue durée* perspective. It should draw on the work done by people like Baranowski. This is precisely how, for example, Wallerstein's world-systems approach was conceived. Wallerstein, according to his own testimony, was fascinated by the decolonization movements of the 1960s and the writings of Franz Fanon which he enthusiastically reviewed, and developed his world-systems theory largely as a result of his encounter with Polish and Hungarian economic history (Wallerstein, 2002: 360–3). His work, to this very day, is one of the best examples of a most fruitful blend of metropolitan and parochial intellectual achievements, and, if one wishes to build bridges between Anglo-American and CEE science, then Wallerstein is a much better starting point than Frazer. In fact the 'unfinished project' of Wallerstein's theory lacks classic anthropological insights: it seems that he drew too hasty conclusions from the work of Marian Małowist, which he knew best, and failed to reincorporate local criticism of his own argument. Małowist's data was drawn mainly from the coastal Gdańsk area, where – because of the city's role as a node for the export of grain – the manorial economy was most connected to Western European markets. This was not, however, the case with other regions, where internal markets were equally (if not more) important for the manorial economy. So this weakness of Wallerstein's theory lies in his inability to tap research carried out in regional centres (Topolski, 2000: 41–5). Work by people such as Baranowski, which was immensely 'localized', could prove particularly useful here.

This is why I suggest that a study of CEE capitalism (which by no means began in 1989) should engage with Wallerstein's work, but not by

'importing' the world-systems approach as a 'superior theory' (this has already been done by both Anglo-Americans and locals), but rather by re-enacting the type of intellectual adventure Wallerstein once embarked on. Wallerstein argues that '[t]he term theory . . . denotes the end of a process of generalization and therefore of closure, if only provisional' (2002: 358), and warns against theory fetishism by giving an 'itinerary to resist becoming a theory' for what he sees primarily as a *method of analysis*. We should follow his advice and try at least to bracket the commoditization of intellectual production, even if it is not realistic to advocate for a frontal assault on it. Straw men, who populate today's intellectual landscape, should be made redundant. This can be done only after theory fetishism – the main tool for manufacturing positivist straw men – has been rejected. Such an approach necessarily separates theoretical and empirical contributions, and values the former more highly, since only they can be 'sold' in the academic market. Since only contributions with 'theoretical' input, in contrast to those carrying merely 'empirical value', can be communicable to 'outsiders', only the former are deemed relevant for cosmopolitan community. And since volumes published before the 1990s seldom work within such a clear-cut theory/empirical data dichotomy, they can very easily be labelled positivist, and their raison d'etre is reduced to – too simply by today's standards – 'filling in the gaps'. But this is a problem posed even by some of the Western classics that were hardly ever labelled 'positivist'. For example E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1980 [1963]), perhaps the most brilliant piece of native anthropology written by an Anglo-Saxon author, would seem obscure, lengthy, and overly detailed to such a contemporary reader looking for new theoretical insights.

We should not seek 'convergence' of the erstwhile national anthropology with any of the Western theories, but by resurrecting the dead horses that are being flogged to this very day by cosmopolitans and natives alike, we should recuperate what is inspiring in the former 'anthropology of nation-building' and forge a locally anchored anthropology 'without a nation-state' that is oriented towards talking to other 'world anthropologies'. My next positive hero is Józef Burszta. His book (Burszta, 1950) on the role of vodka in the making of class relations between the Polish peasantry and the manorial class does not feature a literature review with a discussion of recent fads in consumption studies. It emerged as an attempt to account for how vodka became an integral part of the everyday life and folklore of peasants, and it describes the various ways the Polish gentry forced their peasants to consume vodka since the 16th century. It is as innovative and inspiring as Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1986) written three decades later, and features some 'concepts' that could be fished out and sold on the academic commodity market.

For example, his notion of 'double moral bookkeeping' (*podwójna buchalteria moralna*), which captures the divergent moral, legal, political and economic standards used by the gentry with regard to the economy at large

and in relation to the villages and peasants they owned and administered. The complete freedom of trade the gentry enjoyed (no import duties) was null and void with regard to their own villages – there, monopolies were imposed, and peasants were forced to buy vodka only in the inns owned by their legal master. This double moral bookkeeping was particularly visible in the constant efforts of local gentry to attract peasants from adjacent villages to drink in their inns, and hence to undermine the monopoly in vodka marketing of their own neighbours. Burszta describes at length how the nobility and the Catholic Church used moral preaching in trying to turn manorial peasants into docile labourers and consumers, while undermining this very 'moral bookkeeping' by their own economic practices, and sees the origins of the notorious 'immorality' of the manorial peasant in this. This notion bears some similarity to Thompson's 'moral economy', and could have had an equally global career. The similarity lies also in the fact that neither Thompson nor Burszta run around flagging up their 'concepts' and arguing that they are useful for cosmopolitan theory, nor did they consider their work to have primarily a theoretical value. Instead, their value was *both* empirical and theoretical: Burszta's virtues are in the way he explained the growing importance of the production and consumption of vodka for the manorial economy in Poland. By today's standards, such a 'filling in [of] the gap' is not enough. The point is, however, that this filling of a gap was significant for the theory within which Burszta operated – trying to explain the rise, the nature and the demise of the manorial economy in Poland, the classes it produced and the heritage it had left. It could seem 'so little' by today's standards, but if we are interested in how capitalism has been experienced at the grassroots in the *longue durée*, books like Burszta's are indispensable.

Hence flirting with 'captive minds' is my recipe against theory fetishism. A brilliant proof that dangerous liaisons with the 'captive minds' could turn out very fruitful is provided by my last positive hero – the historian Stephen Kotkin. His compelling *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (1995), describing the emergence of the Soviet steel-town Magnitogorsk in the 1930s, is based almost exclusively on official sources, mainly local newspapers. In theory Kotkin embarked on a mad venture – he decided to find clues about everyday life by reading official newspapers from the 1930s – the heyday of Stalinist terror – issued in one of the icons of Soviet industrialization. It turned out, however, that he could find a lot of insightful information in such sources, and his volume (Kotkin, 1995) is one of the very few books that successfully escapes Cold War dichotomies of socialism/capitalism, totalitarianism/democracy, state/market economy and so forth. In fact, Kotkin also published a monograph (Kotkin, 1991), in which he described how Magnitogorsk urbanites lived in the socialism of the late 1980s, based upon classic anthropological fieldwork, which he could do every day after the local library shut. These two volumes brilliantly feed one into another and demonstrate how one may most successfully

blend historical and anthropological research methods under contemporary 12-month research time constraints. In fact Kotkin did what Buchowski (2004) argued for: he eschewed the Cold War epistemic traps by altering his units of analysis – in short, instead of thinking in terms of socialism vs. capitalism he put on urban/rural lenses. Of course, all dichotomies are problematic by nature, and Kotkin actually shows how industrializing Soviet society remained surprisingly rural. Yet it seems that this is a viable direction for anthropology of/in the region. Rural/urban lenses, for example, immediately lift any study into a completely different comparative framework, which helps to 'lift the region out of its obsession with its putatively singular post-socialist predicament and out of its singular orientation on a putative West' (Kalb in Hann et al., 2007: 28) much more than thinking in terms of socialism/capitalism, market/planning and so forth. The anthropology of post-socialism has been too much engaged with 'transitology', and, as a corollary, was unable not to share some of its basic tenets. One of them was that capitalism really started in Eastern Europe, and this is why doing participant observation is enough for describing how it works. Even Dunn, who criticizes the neoliberal vision of what was going on in Poland, assumes that the periods separated by the year 1989 were fundamentally, almost ontologically, different. Socialism has become an experience incarnated in particular territories, and in the biographies of particular persons, and ceased being a universal theory. The creation of a unit of analysis called 'post-socialism' rested upon the creation of three types of 'captive minds' and the respective 'irrelevant' bodies of knowledge. Neither Baranowski, nor Burszta wrote extensively on socialism, let alone on post-socialism, hence omitting their work is unproblematic for those working on an anthropology of post-socialism. But, if we shift the entire discussion to the problematic of capitalism, or universal processes such urbanization, to give one possible direction, and deal with *longue durée* social, economic, political, cultural and so forth processes unfolding in the region, then engaging with their work is not only relevant, but can also offer new insights that might contribute to the building of a new universal theory. World-systems analysis is a veritable lodestar in that respect.

Beyond the 'anthropology of anthropology'

Thus, there are very specific limits to anthropological methods, and, as I have tied to show, the formation of the discipline of the 'anthropology of post-socialism' rested upon a number of silencings, especially of bodies of knowledge that were written, and hence traditionally outside the scope of interest of 'anthropologists'. It seems that we are past the moment when anthropology is defined by its method, and when one can be called an anthropologist without carrying out research for 12 months in a village in a foreign country. Only then, I insist, will world anthropologies be fully

heterogeneous and polyvocal, and only then can such anthropologies aspire, as a body of knowledge and a method of generating it, to contribute to the forging of a new universalism. For that, however, anthropology has to be fully aware of its power-laden origins. And this is why it is erroneous to assume that an 'anthropology of anthropology' is fully sufficient to do that.

In order to lift the discipline from its 'putatively singular predicaments', relationships to other bodies of knowledge, and especially to 'hard' sciences, should be scrutinized. And this is still largely virgin territory. The only anthropological work that tackles this issue is Michael Adas' *Machines as the Measure of Men* (1989). Written in a truly Wolfian spirit, this book became a classic in science and technology studies, but has not provoked so much interest in anthropology itself. This is a great pity, since Adas's analysis of how technology replaced religion as the central criterion for measuring the 'worth' of human beings (and societies at large), how machines became the central meeting ground for European travellers and the non-Europeans they encounter, and how gradually the idea of one universal material world that is measurable and can be accounted for by European machines (and physics) became dominant, is ripe with clues that could rejuvenate even the most classic anthropological themes, such as the conundrum of fetishism. Adas shows in detail how European travellers thought they alone were skilled enough to use Western machines, and that the natives were either unable to use even the simplest Western tools, or that they used them for other purposes, and hints that the notion of fetishism could have emerged as the Western misconception regarding the alleged native misuse (i.e. worship) of the machines Europeans brought with them (cf. Adas, 1989: 126, 158–61, 224–5, 237, 380). And that unmasking the most basic beliefs about hard sciences may enrich anthropology can be seen in the acclaim for Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's brilliant essay *Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism* (1998), which was a tribute to Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993); in the illuminating discussion of Durkheim and African religion in Anthony Appiah's *In My Father's House* (1992: ch. 6); or in the compelling volume edited by Laura Nader (1996), where 'native science' is taken seriously.

In fact such a move has already been initiated from another quarter – Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions* (is one notable example, and more recently *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps* by Peter Galison (2003) is another. Galison shows not only that the central issues of Einstein's theory of relativity were the sorts of questions that he encountered as a clerk in a Bern patent office, but also that the questions of simultaneity of time in various spaces (i.e. synchronizing distant clocks) was a general and burning concern in Einstein's time, for example for coordinating railroad schedules. He shows that Einstein's thinking on time and space run smack into projects undertaken by Henri Poincaré at the French Bureau of Longitude, such as mapmaking with the use of submarine cables (establishing relative distances

between places by sending electromagnetic signals through them), agreeing on where to locate the prime meridian, the decimalization of time, and the long-fought battle to measure the exact distance between Paris and London. Following Lorentz, Einstein rejected the principle of ether, arguing that only relative speeds of moving objects could be determined, and the speed at which Earth moves through the ether is impossible to measure, thus abandoning the last objective, absolute frame of reference (vestige of the Christian and Newtonian worldview). Poincaré, unlike Einstein, never fully rejected the principle of ether, perhaps because the idea that there is no unifying substance that our world is immersed in was too horrifying to accept. Sure, he thought that time, space and frames of reference were mere 'conventions' subject to arbitrary decision. Yet, unlike Einstein the deliberate exile, he was struggling (as during the campaign to establish the prime meridian in the vicinity of Paris and not in Greenwich) to keep the tools for coordinating the global panoply of clocks in his, or rather in France's, hands. He was a loyal subject, a French patriot, a respectable engineer and a clerk. Einstein, on the contrary, 'was never out to repair and uphold any empire – neither the French, nor the Prussian, nor the Newtonian' (Galison, 2003: 310). For Poincaré there was 'local time' as contrasted to 'true time'. For Einstein there was only a multiplicity of local times (Galison, 2003: 317), no centre but only a plurality of time-spaces (2003: 292–3). Therefore it is an irony that, as Galison argues, Einstein continued the nationalist project of General von Moltke, who, inspired by his quick military victory over France thanks to his dextrous use of precision-synchronized trains, set out to unify the German hodgepodge of mechanical and electrical time systems as early as 1889 and to use time as the unifying tool of the hodgepodge of the German peoples (Galison, 2003: 156–9). Of course, he drew on the older military tradition of mastering the methods of 'keeping together in time' (McNeill, 1995) and did it while *Volkskundler* were working on the concept of 'culture' for essentially the same purposes, but only through the use of humanities.

I believe that such turn from physics to hermeneutics in both Einstein and Poincaré was taken a step further by Malinowski, who set out to map in greater detail the local time/spaces when the colonial empire were already on the wane. The link is direct – Einstein was inspired by the writings of Ernst Mach, who criticized Newtonian notions of absolute space and time as medieval and naïve, and he called Mach the 'forerunner of theory of relativity' (Galison, 2003: 236–7). It was on Mach's philosophy of science that Malinowski wrote his dissertation (Flis, 1988), and Malinowski followed Mach's advice to examine Western science in its 'lower phases of maturity', what he later dubbed the 'ethnoscience' of primitive peoples (Gonzalez et al., 1995: 867–9); and just like Ludwik Fleck working in nearby Lviv, he was well aware of the 'conventionalist' trends in philosophy of science, and both Malinowski and Fleck befriended Leon Chwistek, whose idea of the 'multitude of realities', which all exist with equal rights,

contiguous to one another and based upon mutually incompatible axiomatic systems, was inspired chiefly by Poincaré and Duhem (Gonzalez et al., 1995: 867). Einstein's lack of political allegiance to any nation-state or empire, and his idea of the plurality of time-spaces was leaning towards anarchism (although because of his belief in the power and universality of science, he argued that economic socialism is undoubtedly superior to 'capitalist anarchy', and actually cheered on socialism), and it was in fact the anarchists who, through a bomb assault on Greenwich, set out to destroy the symbol of time uniformization and control promoted by state officials such as Poincaré. The bogeyman of 'anarcho-clockism' was well known in Europe at the time (e.g. the Jura watchmakers were one of the strongest footholds of anarchism in Europe, and Kropotkin's stay there sealed his rejection of socialism in favour of anarchism; Galison, 2003: 226), and it was the world of electro-coordinated clocks organized by the modern state that was to free humanity from this bogeyman (Galison: 226–7). Although Malinowski was even further from anarchism than Einstein, he must have been aware of such time/space struggles, if only from reading Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, which describes the anarchists' attack on Greenwich.

Still we have a vast discussion of Malinowski's anthropology, a volume on Malinowski the Pole (Ellen et al., 1988), some works on Malinowski the artist (e.g. Clifford 1988: ch. 3; Wright, 1991), but only one short article that merely sketches Malinowski's portrait as a natural scientist (Gonzalez et al., 1995). And there are multiple paths to take: one could compare Malinowski's field trips to earlier cartographic ventures such as Poincaré's Quito Mission (Galison, 2003: 191–8), or, for example, trace whether there are any links between the Malinowskian idea of 'fieldwork' and the natural sciences. Malinowski's commitment to empirical research was part of Mach's legacy (Flis, 1988: 123–5), but the notion of 'fields', as well as of 'local time', was developed by Hendrik Lorentz, and the concept of 'work' became one of the linchpins of 19th-century physics (Rabinbach, 1992). And that looking at 'philosophers' or 'social thinkers' as hard scientists is possible, and above all fully legitimate, can be seen by the fate of Hobbes' physical treatises, which were first translated from Latin in . . . 1985, as an appendix to Schaffer and Shapin's brilliant study (1985) that effectively buried the dichotomy between the hard sciences and the humanities. It is also crucial for an effective 'anthropology of anthropology' to bridge that gap because physics has long been replaced by cybernetics as the 'first' ontological science (Bowker, 1993, Mirowski, 2002: 57–61), and the latter's interest in information, symbols, language, etc. made the 'hardness' of hard sciences even more problematic. In fact anthropologists keenly partici-pated in such developments, for example by taking part in the Macy Conferences that were crucial for shaping post-war cybernetics (Edwards, 1996: 189). There is a compelling study on the relationship between economics and both physics (Mirowski, 1989) and cybernetics (Mirowski,

2002), but although the increasing number multi-sited ethnographies of anthropology and development, and volumes such as the one on audit cultures (Strathern, 2000), are very illuminating, the critique of anthropology as a body of knowledge embedded in global politics is still not much more than patchwork, and we still await a synthesis showing the recent history of our discipline in a fully comprehensive and critical manner.

Acknowledgements

References

Adas, Michael (1989) *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Appadurai, Arjun (1988) 'Putting Hierarchy in its Place', *Cultural Anthropology* 3(1): 36–49.

Appiah, Anthony (1992) *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Bakunin, Mikhail (1972) *Bakunin on Anarchy.* New York: Vintage Books.

Borejza, Tomasz (2008) 'Jak nas sprywatyzowano' (How We got Privatized), *Trybuna* 13 June.

Bowker, Geof (1993) 'How to Be Universal: Some Cybernetic Strategies 1943–1970', *Social Studies of Science* 23(1): 107–27.

Buchowski, Michał (2004) 'Hierarchies of Knowledge in Central-Eastern European Anthropology', *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 22(2): 5–14.

Buchowski, Michał (2005) 'Reply to Chris Hann', *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 23(1): 198–200.

Burszta, Józef (1950) *Wieś i karczma: rola karczmy w życiu wsi pańszczyźnianej* (The Role of the Country Inn in the Life of the Manorial Village). Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza.

Clifford, James (1988) *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature, and Art.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Collier, Stephen, Alex Cooley, Bruce Grant, Harriet Murav, Marc Nichanian, Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak et al. (2003) 'Empire, Union, Center, Satellite: The Place of Post-colonial Theory in Slavic/Central and CEE/(Post-)Soviet Studies. A Questionnaire', *Ulbandus* 7: 5–25.

Conklin, Beth A. (1997) 'Body Paint, Feathers, and VCRs: Aesthetics and Authenticity in Amazonian Activism', *American Ethnologist* 24(4): 711–37.

Daston, Lorraine (1995) 'The Moral Economy of Science', *Osiris* 10: 2–24.

Degregori, Carlos Iván (2006) 'Responses to "'Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise': Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework" by Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar (June, 2005)', *Critique of Anthropology* 26(4): 463–7.

Desrosières, Alain (1998) *The Politics of Large Numbers: A History of Statistical Reasoning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Domańska, Ewa (2005) *Mikrohistorie: spotkania w międzyświatach* (Microhistories: Encounters in between Worlds). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

Dunn, Elizabeth (2004) *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business and the Remaking of Labor*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Durand, Jean-Yves (1995) '"Traditional Culture" and "Folk Knowledge": Whither the Dialogue Between Western and Post-Soviet Anthropology?', *Current Anthropology* 36(2): 326–30.

Edwards, Paul (1996) *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ellen, Roy F., Ernest Gellner, Grazyna Kubica and Janusz Mucha (eds) (1988) *Malinowski Between Two Worlds: The Polish Roots of an Anthropological Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fleck, Ludwik (1979) *Genesis and Development of Scientific Fact*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Flis, Andrzej (1988) 'Cracow Philosophy of the Beginning of the Twentieth Century and the Rise of Malinowski's Scientific Ideas', in Roy F. Ellen, Ernest Gellner, Grazyna Kubica and Janusz Mucha (eds) *Malinowski between Two Worlds: The Polish Roots of an Anthropological Tradition*, pp. 105–27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Galison, Peter (2003) *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps: Empires of Time*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Gdula, Maciej (2006) 'Po Frugo – transformacji' (The Frugo-transition), *Krytyka Polityczna*, 25 May, URL (consulted November 2006): http://www.krytykapolitycza.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=951&Itemid=76

Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Girard, René (2006) *Początki kultury* (Orig. French: *Les Origines de la culture*). Kraków: Znak.

Gonzalez, Roberto, Laura Nader and C. Jay Ou (1995) 'Between Two Poles: Bronislaw Malinowski, Ludwik Fleck, and the Anthropology of Science', *Current Anthropology* 36(5): 866–9.

Hann, Chris (1985) *A Village without Solidarity: Polish Peasants in Years of Crisis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hann, Chris (2005) 'Reply to Michał Buchowski', *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 23(1): 194–7.

Hann, Chris et al. (2007) 'Anthropology's Multiple Temporalities and its Future in East and Central Europe: A Debate with Comments from Milena Benovska, Aleksandar Bošković, Michał Buchowski, Don Kalb, Juraj Podoba, David Z. Scheffel, Petr Skalník, Michael Stewart, Zdeněk Uherek, Katherine Verdery and a reply from Chris Hann', Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers, vol. 90. Munich: MaxPlack Institute.

Hann, Chris, Caroline Humphrey and Katherine Verdery (2002) 'Introduction: Postsocialism as a Topic of Anthropological Investigation', in Chris Hann (ed.) *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practice in Eurasia*, pp. 1–28. London: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna (1989) *Primate Visiond: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. London: Routledge.

Hayek, Friedrich (1945) 'The Use of Knowledge in Society', *American Economic Review* 35(4): 519–30.

Jarecka-Kimlowska, Stanisława (1989) *Zanim Lipce stały się Reymontowskie* (History of Lipce Reymontowskie up to 1945). Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza.

Jedlicki, Jerzy (1999) *A Suburb of Europe: Nineteenth-century Polish Approaches to Western Civilization.* Budapest: Central European University Press.

Kalb, Don (2006) 'The Uses of Local Knowledge', in Charles Tilly and Robert Goodin (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, pp. 579–96. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kelertas, Violeta (ed.) (2006) *Baltic Postcolonialism.* Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Klich-Kluczewska, Barbara (2005) *Przez dziurkę od klucza. Życie prywatne w Krakowie (1945–1989)* (Through the Key-hole: Everyday Life in Krakow, 1945–1989). Warsaw: Trio.

Kołakowski, Leszek (1984) *Czy diabeł może być zbawiony i 27 innych kazań* (Can the Devil be Redeemed? And 27 Other Sermons). London: Aneks.

Kołakowski, Leszek (1990) *Cywilizacja na ławie oskarżonych* (Civilization in the Dock). Warsaw: Res Publica.

Kotkin, Stephen (1991) *Steeltown, USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kotkin, Stephen (1995) *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Latour, Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

MacKenzie, Donald (1981) *Statistics in Britain, 1865–1930: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

McNeill, William (1995) *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Majewska, Ewa and Jan Sowa (eds) (2007) *Zniewolony umysł 2: Neoliberalizm i jego krytyki* Captive Mind 2: Neoliberalism and its Critiques). Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art.

Mencwel, Andrzej (2004) 'Historia i antropologia: wstępne uwagi teoretyczne' (History and Anthropology: Some Preliminary Theoretical Remarks), in Helena Borowik and Henryk Hoffman (eds) *Światopogląd między transcendencją a codziennością* (*Weltaunschaung*: Between Transcendence and the Everyday), pp. 223–33. Krakow: Nomos.

Miłosz, Czesław (1953) *The Captive Mind.* New York: Octagon Books.

Mintz, Sidney W. (1986) *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History.* New York: Penguin.

Mirowski, Philip (1989) *More Heat than Light: Economics as Social Physics, Physics as Nature's Economics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mirowski, Philip (2002) *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moore, David Chioni (2001) 'Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique', *PMLA* 116(1): 111–28.

Nader, Laura (ed.) (1996) *Naked Science: Anthropological Inquiry into Boundaries, Power, and Knowledge.* New York: Routledge.

Nowak, Andrzej W. (2008) 'Przyszłość nie jest już tym, czym była kiedyś' (The Future isn't What it Used to Be), preface to: Immanual Wallerstein, *Utopistyka* (Utopistics), pp. 1–27. Poznan: Trojka.

Otiou, Adrian (2003) 'An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: The Postcolonial, the Postcommunist, and Romania's Threshold Generation', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East* 23(1–2): 87–105.

Piasek, Wojciech (2004) *Antropologizowanie historii. Studium metodologiczne twórczości Witolda Kuli* (Anthropological History: A Methodological Study on the Work of Witold Kula). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

de Pina-Cabral, João (2006) 'Responses to '"Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise': Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework" by Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar (June, 2005)', *Critique of Anthropology* 26(4): 467–70.

Pobłocki, Kacper (2004) 'Europe, the Pope and the Holy Left Alliance in Poland', *Focaal. European Journal of Anthropology* 43: 123–33.

Purcell, Mark (2007) '"Skilled, Cheap, and Desperate": Non-tenure-track Faculty and the Delusion of Meritocracy', *Antipode* 39(1): 121–43.

Rabinbach, Anson (1992) *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Restrepo Eduardo and Arturo Escobar (2005) '"Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise": Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework', *Critique of Anthropology* 25(2): 99–129.

Restrepo Eduardo and Arturo Escobar (2006) 'Responses to '"Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise': Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework" by Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar (June 2005)', *Critique of Anthropology* 26(4): 483–8.

Ribeiro, Gustavo Lins (2006) 'World Anthropologies: Cosmopolitics for a New Global Scenario in Anthropology', *Critique of Anthropology* 26(4): 363–86.

Schaffer, Simon and Steven Shapin (1985) *Leviathan and the Air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sennett, Richard (2001) 'A Flexible City of Strangers', *Le Monde diplomatique* February, URL (consulted November 2006): http://mondediplo.com/2001/02/16cities

Shatz, Marshall (1989) *Jan Wacław Machajski: A Radical Critic of the Russian Intelligentsia and Socialism.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Smith, Gavin (2006) 'Responses to '"Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise': Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework" by Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar (June 2005)', *Critique of Anthropology* 26(4): 471–4.

Stenning, Alison (2005) 'Out There and In Here: Studying Eastern Europe in the West', *Area* 37(4): 378–83.

Strathern, Marilyn (2000) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics, and the Academy.* London: Routledge/EASA.

Thompson, E.P. (1980 [1963]) *The Making of the English Working Class.* London: Penguin.

Topolski, Jerzy (2000) *Przełom gospodarczy w Polsce w XVI wieku i jego następstwa* (The Economic Breakthrough in Poland in the 16th Century and its Consequences). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.

Verdery, Katherine (2002) 'Whither Postsocialism?', in Chris Hann (ed.) *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia,* pp. 15–31. London: Routledge.

Verdery, Katherine (2004) 'Anthropological Adventures with Romania's Wizard of Oz, 1973–1989', *Focaal. European Journal of Anthropology* 43: 134–45.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo (1998) 'Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4(3): 469–88.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (2002) 'The Itinerary of World-systems Analysis; or, How to Resist Becoming a Theory', in Joseph Berger and Morris Zelditch Jr (eds) *New Directions in Contemporary Sociological Theory,* pp. 358–76. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Wenner-Gren Foundation (2007) URL (consulted April 2007): http://www.wennergren.org/programs/programs_show.htm?doc_id=367834&attrib_id=13232

Wolf, E. (1982) *Europe and the People without History.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Woźniak, Marek (2001) 'Między antropologią a historią: mechanizm kozła ofiarnego w narracji historycznej' (Between Anthropology and History: The Scapegoat Mechanism in Historical Narratives), *Kultura i Historia* 1, URL (consulted April 2007): http://www.kulturaihistoria.umcs.lublin.pl/archives/47

Wright, Terrence (1991) 'The Fieldwork Photographs of Jenness and Malinowski and the Beginnings of Modern Anthropology', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 22(1): 41–58.

■ **Kacper Pobłocki** is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Central European University, and currently a fellow at the Center for Place, Culture and Politics, CUNY Graduate Center. His dissertation, 'Landscapes of Class' is based upon ethnographic and archival research in Łódź, Poland.He argues that the changing capitalist landscape sof Poland – manorial, industrial and post-industrial – were fundamentally enveloped in a class structure dating back to the 16th century, and analyses how the (post)manorial notion of *chamstwo* structured public space in post-war Łódź. [email: kpoblocki@gmail.com]