

CHAPTER 4

Time, Camera, and the
(Digital) Pen: Writing Culture
Operating Systems 0.1–0.3*Michael M. J. Fischer*

Ethnicity, like race and like the genome, in its double-stranded biological and cultural twists is often a maguffin, the elusive, often specialized-knowledge object of everybody's search and self-construction (despite outbreaks and pandemics of stereotyping and othering). It is as well a Hitchcockian time stamp for an essay in *Writing Culture* a quarter century ago.¹ In these tumultuous twenty-five years, writing culture has gone through at least three versions, or time warps, psychodynamics, and writing technologies: pen, camera, digitization. Writing culture and *Cultural Anthropology* (the journal) have also gone through shifts in building porosities, first with the humanities, then the media, and lately emergent biological and ecological sensibilities. In the following pages I attempt to capture with "pen" (or laptop), for a sedimented print world, the magic pad or 4-D triangulations of historical discourses, operating systems, and sociocultural con-texts.

My own contribution to *Writing Culture*, "The Postmodern Arts of Memory," turned out to be one of a trio of essays on ethnicity, torn religions, and science articulated through monologic, double-voiced, and triangulated autobiographic genre perspectives.² It explored female and male ethnic *identities* that can assert themselves without bidding or conscious desire and that over a life or a text are fused from their multiple sources into a singular voice. These were grounded in a particular historical moment of American life and served as uneasy fit, and thus critique, for the three-generation model of immigration and assimilation of earlier anthropological models of Americanization. The finding of a voice expressed itself in varied narrative forms: the talk stories from fragments and silences of parental or community pasts; bilingual or multilingual *intereferences*;³ psychodynamics

and dialogics of working through and acting out emotional truths through a telling to another; diversions and subversions of humor; and the polysemy and ambi-valences of poetry. For the exploration of modern *torn religions* I looked to *double-voiced* or *stereoscopic* biographies of transitional religious figures by modern transitional figures whose psychodynamically powerful interpretations of the former served as screens for their own and their communities' irresolvable double-bind commitments. And for *technoscientific imaginaries* I looked to the formal homologies of the ways female and male scientists narrate and give meaning to their autobiographical trajectories and to their disciplines' trajectories via *triangulations* with multiple powerful, often conflictual others (mentors, rivals, collaborators).⁴

In this chapter I follow up on these narrative and anthropological threads with three sets of time-stamped reflections. I draw upon often extradepartmental networks and collaborative circles I have had the good fortune to be part of and the work of students I have attempted to encourage to contribute to collective projects of generalized exchange.⁵ Each section uses films, theater, photos, and digital media from Indian, Iranian, Chinese, and American parallel worlds to evoke mood, tense, or temporality as well as reminders of changing technological, environmental, and sociopolitical horizons. An emergent thread traces the growth of a new biological and ecological cultural sensibility, one that explores the increasingly fine granularity shifts from disciplinary societies to more diffuse but more pervasive ones of code and variants of neoliberalisms identified by Foucault and Deleuze.⁶ Throughout, anthropological voices (there are many more) are evoked to help articulate these shifting sensibilities. Ethnographic and anthropological jeweler-eye craftsmanship in teasing out the refractions of everyday life can often upset the echo-chamber master narratives, or aggregating voice, of politicians, political scientists, economists, and the mass media.

1984. Operating Systems 1.0: Times out of Joint, Camera out of Focus, and Pens Running out of Ink

Hello, I am Macintosh. It sure is great to get out of that bag.

Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I'd like to share with you a maxim I thought up the first time I met an IBM mainframe: NEVER TRUST A COMPUTER YOU CAN'T LIFT.

—The 1984 launch video

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2B-XwPjn9YY>)

1 Now fear an IBM dominated and controlled future. They are increasingly and des-
 2 perately turning back to Apple as the only force that can insure their future freedom
 3 (laughter, applause). . . . Will Big Blue dominate the entire computer industry (no!),
 4 the entire information age (no!). Was George Orwell right about 1984?

5 —October 23, 1983 Apple annual sales meeting in Hawaii

6 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTVDWGtf9m4>; [http://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeWnlrcdwPI)
 7 [/watch?v=GeWnlrcdwPI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeWnlrcdwPI))

8
 9 Looking at photographs of middle-class lives in the 1950s–1970s in places
 10 like Iran can produce time-warp shocks. The women and men look so mod-
 11 ern, so much more so than the “retro” veils and three-day-growth beards
 12 of the 1980–2000s. Or perhaps it is a class inversion, with the arrival in the
 13 nouveau riche and new middle classes of recently urbanized members of what
 14 once were less privileged strata, often along with their modernized evangeli-
 15 cal religious sensibilities—as if deploying Max Weber’s modalities of upward
 16 social mobility and sense of cultural distinction, updated with grass-roots or-
 17 ganizing, smartphones, social media, and megachurches. *Retro* is a fashion
 18 term, not a return but a referencing, an interreference (à la Serres) interfering
 19 with, deferring to alternative modernities, insisting on different values and
 20 valuations, calling on different enunciatory communities, mustering often
 21 considerable political weight. California-style ranch houses in Ahwaz (Iran)
 22 and the Helmand Valley (Afghanistan) in 1984 were perhaps enclaves, but
 23 the steel frame and glass-and-concrete townhouse developments in Yazd and
 24 Qum were similar to prefab housing elsewhere in the world. Once accus-
 25 tomed to the aftereffects of the Islamic Revolution, such as increasing black
 26 veiling of women in the Arab, Turkish, as well as Iranian worlds, along with,
 27 importantly, increasing employment of women in the labor force, the gaily
 28 colored and stylish veils of Indonesian and Malay women, affixed and deco-
 29 rated with eye-catching silver pins, can be disconcerting, a crossing of codes.

30 The arrow of time does not move uniformly, as elites and development
 31 pundits of modernization and modernity at large with their finance-scapes
 32 and biopolitical markets sometimes allowed themselves to think. Indeed
 33 time-warp shocks and times out of joint reverberate across many tempo-
 34 ral expectations and false dawns for whole populations or parts of them.
 35 Descartes, watching the Vatican’s imposition of public dogma on Galileo
 36 in 1633 for political control reasons (rather than scientific or truth ones),
 37 defensively tempered his own claims, recognizing that the movement of
 38 history was not necessarily on his side or that of Renaissance mercantile

and capitalist bourgeoisies who believed in science, the ability to understand and control the world, and who tried to consolidate power through parliaments and law courts.⁷ A wonderful cartoon by the Armenian anthropologist Levon Abrahamian shows a globe being thrown at a fleeing Galileo with the caption “The world is round, but not in this case,” as a commentary on ethnic-nationalist claims in bloody wars as the cold war receded, despite the misplaced or aspirational common sense that essentializing ethnic and nationalist claims should be things of the past in a globalized world.⁸ The women’s movement in German social democratic politics in the early twentieth century and the Rosie the Riveter generation of female workers in the U.S. World War II defense industries similarly found themselves pushed back into domestic subaltern positions.⁹ Already in the nineteenth century Friedrich Engels had described industrialization as an initial rise of women’s status and employment, followed by pushing women back into the domestic sphere, offloading the costs of labor reproduction from capital onto a familial division of labor, with employed women and children being paid less.¹⁰ Antonio Negri uses the analogy of Descartes to restage the limitations of the hopes of the autonomist workers social movement in northern Italy during the 1970s “second industrial divide” of small-batch, high-tech, flexible machinist shops attempting to share control of the means of production in an economy of flexible accumulation. He renews the analogy in his postscript to the 2007 English translation as a comment on the limits to the hopes of the “multitude” against globalized capital such as the Zapatista revolt, the Seattle protests, the movement of the World Social Forum, and most recently Occupy Wall Street movements (for which the anthropologist Jeff Juris has become an early ethnographer and analyst).¹¹

Operating Systems I.O of the 1984 era were transitional, upsetting to cultural norms, but mostly still optimistic. They crossed the membranes of first and second natures (the natural environment and the man-made environment) and were only beginning the crossings of third and fourth natures (reworking human nature inside out, using companion species as tools for positive consciousness of living with diversity).¹² The recombinant DNA moratorium of 1975 and its gradual lifting were still fresh in both fear and promise, one of the first great public culture debates of the emerging biotechnology era (to be followed by debates over genetically modified crops, stem cell research, and so on).¹³

The *Writing Culture* essays written in 1984 (published in 1986) were contemporaneous with the year of “You will see why 1984 won’t be like 1984.”

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1 from the famous Ridley Scott ad for the Macintosh computer, aired during
2 the Super Bowl on January 22, 1984, with a woman hammer thrower smash-
3 ing the Orwellian screen. The launch of the Mac two days later ends with
4 Alice (of Alice in Wonderland, and of Alice and Bob, the canonic names in
5 computer science scenarios) standing on a chess board. Ten years later the
6 World Wide Web Consortium was founded at MIT, and the acceleration of a
7 new digital world operating system began, with its early utopian hopes cap-
8 tured in the Grateful Dead songwriter John Perry Barlow's "A Declaration
9 of the Independence of Cyberspace" (1999).¹⁴ Various strands of the com-
10 munication media began to converge, interoperate, miniaturize, and become
11 invisible, leading to a phase shift, a worlding of cyberspace in how we think
12 about time, place, and theory.¹⁵ The discursive and cultural infrastructure of
13 the world was changing. In 1984 Sony and Philips introduced the first com-
14 mercial CD players (which my wife and I missed, having spent much of the
15 year in India and returned thinking CDs were still certificates of deposit).

16 Transitions were not just happening in the West. In 1984 China's Fifth
17 Generation filmmakers exploded onto the international scene with the re-
18 lease of *Yellow Earth* by the director Chen Kaige and the cinematographer
19 Zhang Yimou. Zhang would have a string of successes in film, opera, light
20 shows, and the globally viewed opening and closing extravaganzas of the
21 2008 Beijing Olympics. Richard Havis says of *Yellow Earth* that it was the
22 first Chinese film "at least since the 1949 Communist Liberation, to tell a
23 story through images rather than dialog."¹⁶ In any case, the Fifth Generation
24 became known for its stunning cinematographic tableaux of Chinese history
25 opening allegorical spaces for criticism and critique that could not be made
26 (as easily yet) verbally or in print. By the early 2000s the Internet and social
27 media would be the tools of the demos to circumvent print censorship and
28 create public pressure and new accountability against discriminatory labor
29 laws and ill treatment of migrants and for biosecurity in epidemics such as
30 SARS (2002–3), H5NI (2009), and H7N9 (2013).¹⁷

31 *Yellow Earth* signals moments of cultural phase shifts in style and sensibili-
32 ty. Its story, set in 1939 as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Kuomin-
33 tan are allied against the invading Japanese, and before the postwar victory
34 of the Chinese Communist Revolution, ends with a village rain dance on the
35 dried-up land and failed crops. The fourteen-year-old girl forced to marry
36 an older man so her dowry can be used to pay for her mother's funeral and
37 brother's engagement has drowned in the Yellow River as she attempted
38 to flee and join the CCP forces to fight for a new world. The soldier sent,

quasi-ethnographically, from the CCP propaganda unit into Kuomintan territory to collect peasant folk songs, to rewrite them with communist lyrics, to raise the morale of CCP peasant troops, is now a pretext looking back across the Yellow River of time, across the Great Famine and the destructive Cultural Revolution, and forward to a less tradition and ideology straitjacketed future. The contrast could not be greater: by 1998, with Zubin Mehta conducting, Zhang would direct a lavish production of Puccini's *Turandot* first in Florence and then in Beijing; the film *The Making of Turandot at the Forbidden City* (1999) explores the differences of "work practices" across cultural presuppositions, for instance, about lighting effects, while at the same time celebrating the renewed global interactions after the cold war.

In a parallel way 1984 in Iran marks the shift of Iran's two leading filmmakers and their colleagues toward what would become in the 1990s another international cinema sensation, like the Fifth Generation films of China in the 1980s, as the cynosure of attention. Mohsen Makhmalbaf in 1984 made his last propaganda-style film (*Fleeing from Evil to God*) and began to experiment with docudrama (*Boycott*, 1985; *A Moment of Innocence*, 1996, both drawing from his arrest as a youth for stabbing a policeman) and increasingly incisive social commentaries on Iranian society after the Iran-Iraq War (*The Peddler*, 1987; *The Cyclist*, 1989; *Marriage of the Blessed*, 1989). The last in particular would use the device of a shell-shocked war photographer's camera, as it clicked, working as a shifter back and forth between revolutionary promises and betrayals. Likewise Abbas Kiarostami turned from his shorts and trilogy of parable films using children's perspectives (*Where Is the Friend's Home*, 1987; *The Key*, 1987, *Homework*, 1989) to his films of indirection, eliciting thoughts about social changes in the fabric of social life. *Close Up* (1990) is a meditation on filmic judgment, the use of both close-up and wide-angled cameras, diegetically the former for the courtroom and the latter for things that cannot be introduced in court. The Koker trilogy on an earthquake near Tehran (*Life and Nothing More*, 1991; *Journey to the Land of the Traveller*, 1993; *Through the Olive Trees*, 1994) likewise is more than a portrayal of disruption, loss, and reconstruction, involving the actors both in their diegetic and extradiegetic lives (looking for an actor from a previous film; watching the unfolding of a socially impossible love). *The Taste of Cherry* (1997) and *The Wind Will Carry Us* (1999) stage different strata of society in relation to questions of responsibility, the ability to retrieve another from alienation or acts of self-destruction and suicide, and the intrusiveness of the filmic, ethnographic eye of Tehranis (and foreigners) into villagers' elaborate

1 cultural socialities, conflicts, and ritual tools of repair or boundary policing.
 2 “The wind will carry us” is a line from the poet Forough Farrokhzad, a kind
 3 of Susan Sontag modernist free-thinker and filmmaker (of a leper boarding
 4 school with its own deep allegorical resonances). *The Wind Will Carry Us*
 5 also hilariously and allegorically has the filmmaker within the film constantly
 6 running up the village’s highest hill to try to catch the signal from Tehran for
 7 his mobile phone. In *Taste of Cherry*, set amid construction sites, unfinished
 8 daily social rituals such as tea drinking, an ambiguous (unsuccessful) suicide,
 9 and alternative filmic and video endings, remain unfinished as if a commen-
 10 tary on Iranian projects that can never be finished.

11 The unfinished, sometimes undoing of modernity took other turns as
 12 well, especially in Ahmedabad, India, where my wife and I spent much of
 13 1984, where I did fieldwork with the Jain community, notationally focusing
 14 on mercantile communities (Jains and Parsis) turned industrialists negotiat-
 15 ing between their own communal moralities and those of their labor forces
 16 from other communities. It was a year of three shattering upheavals: (1) the
 17 assassination of Indira Gandhi four months after her decision to attack the
 18 Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, killing the separatist Jarnail Singh Bhin-
 19 dranwale and his followers, and the communal violence against Sikhs that
 20 followed; (2) the Bhopal disaster, an icon of the series of industrial disaster
 21 denials and citizen epidemiology and mobilizations from Minimata (Japan)
 22 and Love Canal (New York) to Woburn (Massachusetts) and Fukushima
 23 (Japan); and (3) the eruption of caste-linked riots in Ahmedabad over affir-
 24 mative action or caste-reservation access to medical and engineering educa-
 25 tion, foreshadowing the parallel worlds of economic growth and some of the
 26 worst communal violence in India since Partition that would occur in 1992
 27 with the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya after a BJP campaign of
 28 *yatras* (religious processions), and again in 2002 beginning in Ahmedabad
 29 after the Sabarmati Express train with Hindu pilgrims from Ayodhya was
 30 burned and riots spread across Gujarat state. The BJP chief minister Narendra
 31 Modi was alleged to have used communal tensions repeatedly for political
 32 advantage and in 2013 was slated to head the BJP slate for prime minister.

33 These events transformed much of the anthropology, cultural studies,
 34 comparative literature, and other social research in India. There was a turn
 35 (as in the ethnographic and contemporary turn in Chinese and Iranian films)
 36 to the workings of everyday life, media of persuasion, spaces of new interac-
 37 tion among castes, and the creation of new public spheres, consumer con-
 38 sciousness, self-help organizations, and civil society organizations.¹⁸

Already in 1984 India was spawning a growing consumer movement, supported by the wildly popular television show *Rajini*, in which every week for half an hour an ordinary housewife would go out into the world to battle for consumer rights. In the next six years India would liberalize its economy and become a leading member of the rising BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) players in the global economy, with information technology leading the way, not only as back office and call center support in a twenty-four-hour global business world but also as a source for transforming public planning through geographical information systems and through modeling public services on information flows, pioneered by such socially as well as technologically innovative companies as Infosys.¹⁹ Not all changes are registered macroscopically; among the most important vehicles of visual suasion in the campaign leading up to the 1992 destruction of the Babri Masjid was the dissemination throughout the visual field of small stickers with the image of Ram or his signs, a tactic that would again prove effective in the 2009 presidential elections in Iran, when green ribbons produced a Green Wave.²⁰

While *Writing Culture* is still firmly set in anthropology's print age, by the 1990s and the decade of *Late Editions* anthropology was writing under the anxiety of the digital but before the digital age fully set in.²¹ The decade of the 1990s is one of accelerating transitions as the world emerged from cold war divisions, undoing and redoing societies of discipline with those of code. For instance, Hong Kong returned to China in 1997 under a one-state two-systems arrangement, with a war of influence affecting both.

Changes at the political surface index only roughly the changes underfoot that anthropology is so good at revealing. The year 1989, the two-hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution, saw the Velvet Revolution in Prague and election of Vaclav Havel; the Polish government holding talks with Solidarity and a gradual transition to democratic governance; the dismantling by Hungary of the border fence with Austria and introduction of multiparty democracy; the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and of Cuba from Angola; the largest labor strike (coal miners in Siberia) in Russia since the 1920s; the resignation of Rajiv Gandhi after his Congress Party lost half its seats; the first Brazilian presidential election in twenty-nine years and the first post-Suharto Indonesian one.

The year 1989 also saw Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie for publishing *Satanic Verses* (1988), a story of migration, and elevating of well-known hadith stories into the global commons rather than keeping them within the world of the *umma*, a story that would be replayed in updated

1 media circuits with boomeranging cartoons fifteen years later.²² Signaled in
 2 these communicative shifts of cultural texture are cosmopolitical interferences,
 3 acknowledgments, and resistances. They are cultural transformations
 4 from eighteenth-century Habermasian public spheres to twentieth-century
 5 Public Culture, always already structured by the culture industries (broad-
 6 casting and “creative” advertising to mass audiences), increasingly, if partial-
 7 ly, reworked by digital many-to-many messaging. One spoke in the 1990s
 8 hesitatingly of “new global orders”—environmental effects of industrial pro-
 9 duction, for which climate change would become a diffuse figure of speech;
 10 financial crises mediated by “structured instruments” such as derivatives,
 11 for which *neoliberalism* became a diffuse figure of speech; and transnational
 12 media productions, for which CNN and Al Jazeera became temporary to-
 13kens, while underneath anime, video games, J-pop and K-pop (Japanese and
 14 Korean popular culture) homesteaded new knowledge economies. These
 15 would become terrains for innovative ethnographic work.²³

17 *1999. Operating Systems 2.0: From it, Genom,*
 18 *and Genome to Omics and Neurons*

20 The content of the global movement which ever since the [1999] Seattle revolt has oc-
 21 cupied and (redefined) the public sphere is nothing less than human nature. The latter
 22 constitutes both the arena of struggle and its stake.

23 —Paolo Virno, “Natural-Historical Diagrams”

25 The shift toward biocapitalism and its alternative sociopolitical-legal forms in
 26 the aftermath of the 1980 Bayh-Dole Act and *Chakrabarty* Supreme Court
 27 decision in the United States has been the subject of increasing anthropo-
 28 logical attention.²⁴ While in the late twentieth century much attention was
 29 focused on reproductive technologies, in the twenty-first century the focus
 30 has shifted to a broader series of biotechnologies, from genomics (both agri-
 31 cultural and biomedical) to the coming era of the brain and neuroscience re-
 32 search along with its ethical, legal, and social armatures and its possibilities for
 33 alternative pathways.²⁵ In a nice turn of phrase, the Italian philosopher Paolo
 34 Virno, building on Derrida’s prescient essay “The Aforementioned So-called
 35 Human Genome,” speaks of *natural-historical diagrams* “in which human
 36 praxis is applied in the most direct and systematic way to the ensemble of
 37 requirements that make praxis human. The stake: those who struggle against
 38 the mantraps placed on the paths of migrants or against copyright [and pat-

ent] on scientific research raise the question of the different socio-political	1
expression that could be given, here and now.” ²⁶	2
The millennium shift from gene and <i>genom</i> to <i>genome</i> (like Abram to	3
Abraham in the Hebrew Bible) and on to multiple “omics” signals a shift	4
toward more fundamental worlds of exploration into third and fourth na-	5
tures. ²⁷ It pushes further also, perhaps, the difference registered by the titles	6
of Johannes Fabian’s two books, <i>Time and the Other</i> and <i>Out of Our Minds</i> ,	7
both recalibrations of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropol-	8
ogy, the one via rhetorical creations of sequentialized parallel (or local) worlds,	9
the other acknowledging the role of psychotropic altered states of mind in	10
the encounters across local worlds (facilitated by drugs or not) and millen-	11
num shifts to renewed research on the brain and neuroscience.	12
The turn of a millennium is one of those loops in “second” or man-made	13
“nature” (2000 C.E., a merely common era-defined millennium), like the spa-	14
ghetti coils of highways traversing modern Asian cities, that accrues symbolic	15
meaning, initially arbitrarily, but then takes on a force of its own. In 2000 this	16
was beautifully instantiated in the apocalyptic Y2K scare, in which it was feared	17
that mission-critical computer systems might fail because their legacy codes	18
had only two digits for the year and might mistake 2001 for 1901. Planes could	19
drop out of the sky; emergency rooms might lose power. Computer program-	20
mers made good money for a short time providing patches and fixes. ²⁸	21
By the new millennium, after a twenty-year incubation, the anthropology	22
of science, technology, and society (STS) had emerged alongside, broaden-	23
ing the purview of, British social studies of science, French actor network	24
theory, the social studies of technology, and the social history of science.	25
Four features distinguish the anthropology of STS: (1) a detailed interest in	26
the sciences and technologies themselves in contrast to cherry-picking cul-	27
tural metaphors; (2) a global perspective, not just an account from Western	28
Europe and North America; (3) strategic multilocal or multisited ethno-	29
graphic access to complex distributed processes such as the global chemi-	30
cal industry or global clinical trials; and (4) a concern with the powerful	31
aesthetics of imaginaries and explorations via bioart, literature, film, and	32
drama of the possibilities of democratizing science, exploring the ramifying	33
effects of technologies, and charting the emotional and psychic investments	34
of both. The task of translating legacy knowledges into public futures draws	35
on four kinds of genealogies: test drives and libidinal drives, protocols and	36
networks, landscapes or ethical plateaus, and reknitting global moieties split	37
by the cold war. ²⁹	38

1 The anthropology of science and technology has produced an impressive
2 body of studies emerging from subservience to the older, merely construc-
3 tive forms of STS. The Duke University Press book series *Experimental Fu-*
4 *tures: Technological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices* provides one
5 venue for exploring the expanded horizons of the anthropology of science
6 and technology, in contrast to neighboring fields more focused on tradi-
7 tional academic philosophy of science debates largely formulated in the early
8 twentieth century.

9 A broader venue can be seen in the topics of recent anthropology of
10 science and technology books and dissertations, which include (nonex-
11 haustively) evidence law and the incorporation or exclusion of visual media
12 (handwriting, fingerprints, PET scans, video animation) from the court-
13 room;³⁰ e-documents in a culture of cryptography;³¹ interpretive meanings
14 of visualizing, amplifying, or proliferation technologies such as medical
15 scans, tissue culture technologies, and clinical diagnoses;³² open software as
16 sociopolitical infrastructure, e-governance in Latin America and e-kiosks in
17 India;³³ e-tools for collaborative work at a distance, and its failures;³⁴ Tai-
18 wanes biostatisticians as providers of bridging tools for global clinical trials,
19 a case of a nonrecognized country using expertise to be a player;³⁵ biological
20 citizenship after disaster, bioethnic conscription in disease studies, and bio-
21 availability as biopolitics;³⁶ surgical training of muscular as well as cognitive
22 memory, pharmaceutical marketing and objective self-fashioning through
23 drugs, and turning of selves into clinical subjects;³⁷ forms of biocapitalism
24 under different national agendas;³⁸ identity contradictions and psychoses
25 mediated by organ transplantation for patients and physicians in Turkey
26 and moral rejection of organ transplantation in Egypt;³⁹ transmission of
27 structural biology through bodily performance;⁴⁰ race and the marketing of
28 medicine, genomics, and diversity;⁴¹ product design and safety law;⁴² nuclear
29 safety;⁴³ executive coaching;⁴⁴ psychiatry, depression, and negotiating differ-
30 ent class- and religion-linked public health discourses in Iran;⁴⁵ epidemic and
31 transgenerational addiction as a technoculture of affect;⁴⁶ computational ar-
32 tificial life and American folk kinship idioms, deep-water marine biology and
33 logics of ancestry, microbiopolitics of bacteria and cheese;⁴⁷ climate change
34 vernaculars in Canadian First Nations, U.S. evangelicals, corporate green
35 audits, climate scientists in the public sphere, climate science under differ-
36 ent national agendas;⁴⁸ biological crafts from do-it-yourself biologies and
37 geometric modeling with yarns and plastics to molecular gastronomy and
38 synthetic biology; citizen epidemiology, gas fracking, and endocrine disrupt-

tors; ⁴⁹ “smart” electricity market making by engineers and traders in contrast to economists, digital mapmaking in contests between First Nations, mining geologists, and forest ecologists. ⁵⁰	1
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Two films of the year 1999–2000, again drawing on different parallel, partially local, Chinese and Iranian worlds may serve to mark a subtle yet profound shift in cultural consciousness parallel to the shift registered in the anthropology of science and technology “in which human praxis is applied in the most direct and systematic way to the ensemble of requirements that make praxis human,” ⁵¹ or in a more anthropological terms, as the subtitle of our book series puts it, attention to “technological lives, scientific arts, and anthropological voices.”	4
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Ning Ying’s <i>I Love Beijing</i> (retitled <i>The Warmth of Summer</i> after censors feared the title would be understood as sarcasm, itself a dynamic feature of the metastases of proleptic and preemptive meanings) is the third of her Beijing trilogy tracking three generations of Beijing residents in China after Deng Xiaoping. Her extraordinary documentary <i>Railroad of Hope</i> (2002), interviewing people on the move West of agricultural labor migrants from Sichuan to the cotton fields of Xinjian, and her seven shorts for UNESCO (<i>In Our Own Words</i> , 2001) on child and women trafficking, on an HIV/AIDS prevention outreach by Buddhist monks, on a center for Shanghai street children, and on a migrant worker’s child, illustrate the turn (also taken up by the Sixth Generation filmmakers). This turn chronicles social issues in more direct, often first-person accounts and realist reportage than was possible a decade earlier. Ning, a former assistant director on Bertolucci’s 1987 <i>The Last Emperor</i> , trained both in Beijing’s Film Academy and in Italy, has emerged as a distinctive voice among the Fifth Generation Chinese filmmakers. She deploys an ethnographic and almost Kiarostami-like gaze on the three generations. <i>For Fun</i> (1993) shows a group of retired senior citizens who gather to play and sing arias from their favorite Beijing operas, a popular pastime one can still see on the streets today in many Chinese cities. A story line is gently formed around the deference given a former doorman at the Grand Beijing Opera House, who gradually takes on an increasingly dictatorial air but does get the group recognition and a performance, until it dissolves under the stress. The film ends as the people begin again to come together. The retired doorman sits and listens from around the corner and then slowly walks back. <i>On the Beat</i> (1995) deals with the middle-aged during a campaign against allegedly rabid street dogs, a bureaucratic comedy amid the tearing down of old <i>houtong</i> neighborhoods. <i>I Love Beijing</i> (2000) turns to	12
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1 the displaced youth, a twenty-something taxi driver who is getting divorced
2 and dates, in turn, a migrant waitress from northeast China, a popular radio
3 show host, a professor's daughter and primary school teacher, and finally a
4 peasant from the countryside, whom he ends up marrying. His journey of
5 comic hard-learned realism is figured (in the original script) by having him
6 first driving a Toyota Crown Salon and ending up driving a beat-up yellow
7 minivan. Extradiegetic reality intervenes: these two cars were already hard to
8 find in fast-changing Beijing by the time filming began. More recently Ning
9 has scripted the cult film *Perpetual Motion* (2005), in which well-known
10 figures in Beijing play fictional characters satirizing their own social types
11 (described in delicious detail by Gina Marchetti).⁵²

12 Ning's work and that of the Sixth Generation filmmakers—such as Jia
13 Zhangke's short documentaries that are studies for his urban-social problem
14 feature films, such as *Unknown Pleasures* (2002) and the documentary *In*
15 *Public* (2001), shot in the coal mining town of Datong, and *Still Life* (2006)
16 and the documentary *Dong* (2006), shot in Fengjie, one of the cities marked
17 for flooding by the Three Gorges Dam—in this sense is not unlike some of
18 the films by Iranians at the same time. One thinks of the anthropologist-
19 filmmaker Ziba Mir-Hosseini's *Divorce Iranian Style* (1998) and *Runaway*
20 (2001, both with Kim Longinotto). One thinks of Rakhshan Bani-Etemad's
21 powerful film *Under the Skin of the City* (2001) on a woman textile worker
22 with an invalid husband, her own occupationally caused asthma, a daugh-
23 ter's abusive husband causing the daughter to run away to prostitution, and
24 her eldest son's failed efforts to go to Japan to earn more money, capped
25 by footage of a woman candidate for political office making arguments that
26 would be taken up again in a documentary on women running for political
27 office (*Our Times*, 2002). Bani-Etemad also has done a documentary on a
28 shelter for women (*Angels of the House of the Sun*, 2009). Like the documen-
29 tary *Divorce Iranian Style* and a full ethnography on divorce courts and the
30 politics of women's rights by Arzoo Osanloo,⁵³ Reza Mir-Karimi's feature
31 film *Under the Moonlight* (2001) presents a nuanced picture of a seminary
32 student on a picaresque journey among the homeless who teach him about
33 mutual care and the way religion might fit into life in a different way than his
34 fellow seminarians might imagine in their scholastic studies.

35 These films parallel the ethnographic and anthropological craft of detailing
36 the unintended consequences and differential refractions to policy initia-
37 tives, “ethnographic pebbles in the way of theory,”⁵⁴ ethnography produc-
38 ing more reality-tested and grounded theory, upsetting the echo-chamber

master narratives that pass from aggregation (abstracting, algorithmizing, modeling, simplifying from the data) to imperative (policy implementation backed by temporary money and jobs). Recognizing this failing, the World Bank is beginning to contract with anthropologists to ground-truth the work of its staff and its economist contractors, who often can't see or access the ground through the distancing abstraction and sophistication of their statistical methods and the blindness of needing to attend to only what is measurable.⁵⁵

A very different kind of refraction of everyday life sometimes caught most powerfully on film accesses another contemporary anthropological preoccupation: social trauma and repair, mental health and PTSD from Peru to Aceh.⁵⁶ Two such films are Ebrahim Hatamikia's *Red Ribbons* (2000) and the anthropologist Robert Lemelson's *40 Years of Silence* (2009). These films explore the psychic aftereffects of violence and war and complement new anthropological work on health care systems after AIDS and increasing patient demands for rights to care from Brazil to Botswana.⁵⁷ In *Red Ribbons* a lone war veteran lives underground and obsessively removes land mines, placing red ribbons to warn of areas not yet cleared; a woman suffering from false pregnancy hysteria returns to the ruins of her home in this mined area and red-ribboned desert land; and a recluse Afghan migrant guards a graveyard of armored tanks, including one buried like a turtle (inhabiting both the land of the living and the underworld). Each lives in his and her own world of delusional reality, communicating with the others through emotional miscues and needs. The Lemelson film follows a number of village characters (this time all too real) and their memories and psychological disturbances stemming from the massacres of 1965 in Indonesia.

War-induced PTSD, however, is not the only cause of disturbances of the brain, and mental health anthropologists were central to the 1996 *Global Burden of Disease Study* (sponsored by the World Bank and the World Health Organization),⁵⁸ which, to the shock and disbelief of many health policy practitioners, identified neuropsychiatric diseases as the leading cause of global disease burden, with enormous costs to national economies as well as to the affected individuals and their caregivers. This was measured by not just premature mortality normalized against expected life spans but also healthy years of life lost to disability. These occur in early life (e.g., autism), in young adult life (schizophrenia, usually diagnosed in late teens to early thirties, just when families have made their maximum investment in education), and at the end of life (neurodegenerative disorders), as well as depression at many stages of

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1 life. The pharmaceutical industry, however, is shutting down its neuroscience
 2 research, leaving governments worried about especially rapidly aging popu-
 3 lations. Thus because of the need to plan for increasing burdens of disease
 4 as well as because rapidly emerging new technologies—neuroimaging, brain
 5 stimulation, brain-computer interfaces, stem cell therapy—promise an engine
 6 of economic growth, neuroscience has become one of the hot new priorities
 7 of government investment, and the twenty-first century is said to become a
 8 century of the brain as the twentieth was of the gene.⁵⁹

10 *2013. Changes under Foot, Playing the Scales, Remending the Silk Roads*

11 Images became live. . . . There is less of the protest art . . . more of the practi-
 12 cal . . . new media beyond activism. . . . Although the Iranian government controls
 13 the Internet and threatens to close down the connection to the outside world, digital
 14 culture is expanding. . . . *Lawful intercept technology* . . . activists were still trying
 15 to gather cases where Nokia[-Siemens] intercept technology had led to . . . imprison-
 16 ment . . . [and] death. . . . If this case advances in court in favor of activists, . . . Nokia
 17 intercept technology could become unlawful.

18 —Mazyar Lotfalian, “Aestheticized Politics, Visual Culture and Emergent Forms
 19 of Digital Practice” (2012)

20 I think words operate like musical notes that the eyeball hears. “Cloud Atlas” is the
 21 name of a piece of music by the Japanese composer Toshi Ichiyanagi, who was Yoko
 22 Ono’s first husband.

23 —David Mitchell, author of *Cloud Atlas* and *The Thousand Autumns of*
 24 *Jacob de Zoet*

25 Already descriptions of events are chronicled faster, better, cheaper, and out
 26 of control on YouTube. If you wish, you can hear and see “the rhythmic beat
 27 of the [Iranian] revolution” in a series of YouTube videos, shifting some of
 28 the referencing of writing culture from library to audiovisual instant access.⁶⁰
 29 One of the images that instantly went viral and “live” is the death of Neda
 30 Agha-Soltan, shot on the streets of Tehran in 2009. Lotfalian’s “images
 31 become live” points to the flourishing of digitally mediated collaborative art
 32 beyond the event and out of the control of authorities who wished to deny
 33 and reframe what everyone saw.

34 When Agha-Soltan’s dying went live, the image multiplied. It was en-
 35 hanced, abstracted, schematized, collaged into multiplying semiotic mes-
 36 sages.

sages, and otherwise moved hand to hand, keyboard to keyboard, up the use and value chain as a multivalent signifier, symbol, and allegory. The artists and transmitters, professional and casual, who created socialities with the cell-phone-captured video are people in whom Lotfalian is interested as enlivening the image beyond simple representation, remaking public culture vital and anew. Similarly Orkideh Behrouzan draws attention to the Persian digital blogosphere as a dynamically functioning *affective* space where the 1360s (1980s) generation for the first time can recognize itself, recalling generational experiences that now turn out to be not just individual traumas, as they were experienced at the time, but cultural subjectivations that can be processed and worked through with one another.⁶¹ Experience can, through call and response, posting and commenting, affirming and contesting, be transmuted from alienation and passivity into new active sociocultural life.

For the moment (like Galileo and Descartes), the activists are losing in court cases under the Alien Tort Act: two Iranian plaintiffs sued Nokia-Siemens Networks, and several Chinese citizens have signed onto a case against Cisco, both cases alleging that use of intercept technology by the Iranian and Chinese governments have violated their and others' human rights and have led to torture and death. The U.S. Supreme Court on April 17, 2013, dismissed Esther Kiobel's suit against Royal Dutch Shell Petroleum in the 1995 torture and execution of her husband in Port Harcourt, Nigeria on jurisdictional grounds that there was not sufficient "touch and concern" or "sufficient force" on U.S. soil. A number of international lawyers, however, observe that this decision goes against the trend of providing some international accountability and a venue for victims of abuses in places where suits cannot be brought in domestic courts.⁶²

The argument for international accountability of suppliers in the information technology industry seems not unlike that used by the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES), founded in 1989, the year of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. CERES proposed principles first named Valdez then CERES Principles. As described in Candis Callison's ethnography of different, not always mutually understood vernaculars of concern about climate change, by getting Fortune 500 companies to sign on to green sustainability audits, advocates and the public can gradually hold these companies to more and then more stringent sustainable practices.⁶³ Water governance struggles over tweaking local and international regulations and models of use rights and the common good, with networks to share experiences of particular local experiments around the globe, have also become the site of ethnographies of

1 iterative efforts to make the results come out in ethically acceptable ways.⁶⁴
2 Similar struggles perhaps can be seen in the evolution of how some patient
3 advocacy groups are trying to move beyond fundraising into the scientific dis-
4 coverry enterprise and in Brazil the judicialization of constitutionally guaran-
5 teed rights to health care.⁶⁵ The creation of web tools for database creation to
6 track the environmental and health damage of shale gas “fracking” across the
7 United States changes the nature of both public culture and ethnography.⁶⁶

8 In all these and other circumstances of the new millennium, anthropo-
9 logical fieldwork and writing culture is not, as they say, what it used to be.⁶⁷
10 Nor is it always where it is expected to be, as in the growth of anthropolo-
11 gists hired by Fortune 500 companies to rethink work practices or user re-
12 sponsiveness, and by the World Bank to ground-truth anomalies in the work
13 of their staff and their contractors.⁶⁸ Where ethnography, anthropology, and
14 writing culture is most useful is not necessarily the on-the-ground and local
15 worlds alone, but rather the ability to play up and down the entire scale
16 from ground to theory, policy to reality, and across globalized, distributed,
17 or value-chain accumulated processes from locus to locus (defined both by
18 geography and by professional and lay occupation in those processes), and
19 increasingly across comparative genomic species boundaries to what is bio-
20 logically conserved across species and what has mutated, generating diversity
21 or restriction. Attention to what Ulrike Felt calls “archaeologies of [sociopo-
22 litical] engagement” can identify also multiscale loci and historical openings
23 where alternative imaginaries and policies to those of master narratives of
24 progress and risk management led by expert and economic lobbies can be
25 envisioned and alternative technological futures promoted, “an approach to
26 innovation governance which [gives] space to pondering over benefits for
27 society and the ‘public good’ [rather than] limiting their frames of reference
28 to narrow economic benefits or issues of direct risks.”⁶⁹

29 In the picture of the world in 2013, a frequent sight, for instance, is of
30 students at the National University of Singapore holding textbooks open
31 with one hand, the other checking their teacher’s archived video lectures
32 on their smartphones. Truth lies in the triangulation between constantly
33 updated lectures as research updates the science and canonic platforms of
34 knowledge codified in more slowly updated textbooks. Truth lies in the
35 shifting of heads between smartphone, textbook, and colleague at the next
36 table, sharing, correcting, testing, reconstructing, and forging new paths,
37 skills, and understandings. These students, as they turn their heads back
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and forth, and cycling through their phones from lectures to chat and back,	1
are looking into the sociocultural and technological infrastructures of new	2
globalizing universities, and they do so with humor, social critique, and a	3
sense of new possibilities. At Tembusu College at the National University	4
a collaborative student-painted mural adorns a classroom building hallway	5
with rebus puns: A book titled <i>All About Me</i> replaces the head (Facebook)	6
of a lad seated cross-legged, thumbs up. A girl presses the <i>send</i> button on her	7
iPhone and the trap doors of her skull open, releasing a bird (bird brain?).	8
The bird is chased by a large grinning figure (Roald Dahl's Friendly Big Giant) with	9
a butterfly net, logos of Facebook, LinkedIn, and other commercial icons	10
on his chest, seeking to capture the desires released for resale to marketers.	11
The bird flies toward a barefoot girl in tank top and jeans with a camera for	12
a head who, holding up her hand, signals "Hi." Nearby a fish-headed figure,	13
standing next to a tombstone labeled "RIP Meg Aupload 2005-2012," with	14
a fishing pole goes phishing for passwords into the skull of a bespectacled	15
figure walking with a cane, perhaps to upload the terabytes of previous gen-	16
erations' knowledge. A wind-blown tourist couple with cameras float above	17
a ghostly woman's head with Microsoft icon eyes, while a detached hand	18
tosses an open-jawed, eye-popping head, and a conveyor belt carries more	19
eyes on strings (i-devices). Torsos of a man in bathing trunks and a woman	20
in a shift hold their detached heads on strings, signifying the disconnect be-	21
tween characters online and real people. Each of the caricatures is signed in	22
English and Chinese or Tamil by their respective artists.	23
Tembusu class projects tend toward role play and visual media. A project	24
blue-skies an "aging in place" residence, dubbed O'Town (Old Town)	25
after Tembusu's location in the new University Town (New Town), with its	26
New England-style commons lawn, eating places, coffee shops, and sports	27
facilities. The project is, in part, a response to and a critique of readings on	28
government policy concerns about the aging population. In part it knowl-	29
edgeably, hence pragmatically, draws on and tweaks already existing policy	30
frameworks and initiatives. And in part it suggests new ways to integrate	31
government concerns to decentralize health care, such as routine physio-	32
therapy, from an overly hospital-centric system and support changing needs	33
and desires as seniors today become better educated and active than previ-	34
ous senior generations. The role-play format stages conflicts of interests and	35
perspectives, allows otherwise shy students to speak up through a mask, and	36
when filmed produces an archivable, sharable, digital product that if done	37
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1 well enough could even be fed into public debate, as, increasingly, student
2 films, such as the powerful *Before We Forget* (on two families taking care of
3 disabled seniors) already are.⁷⁰

4 Not all of course is digital or filmic. A Tembusu student-organized debate
5 series called “The Elephant in the Room” allows sensitive topics, such as
6 racial harmony, to be debated under Chatham House rules. (Material can be
7 used outside of the meeting but with no attributions to anyone in the meet-
8 ing.) Students at the nearby University Scholars Program put on a tightly
9 choreographed student-written musical, *White Collar*, satirizing the career
10 pressures of Singapore families, workplace gender relations, maid-madam
11 tensions, hierarchy and arbitrary promotion and demotion decisions, status
12 competition, parent-teacher association politics, tiger moms and no-more-
13 arguments-please dads, the drone work of bureaucrats, and their relations
14 with their less educated working-class parents.

15 What I want to indicate with these small ethnographic notes, with no
16 space for providing further contextual significance, is something “under
17 foot” in the cultural texture of fast-changing Asian cities. Singapore is nei-
18 ther China nor India nor Southeast Asia, though it has deep roots and live
19 interactions in each of these global arenas of social and cultural change. A
20 new geography of science, of media technologies such as the animation busi-
21 ness described by Ian Condry,⁷¹ and of knowledge production in a variety of
22 worlds is already at hand all under the stress of intense global competition.

23 The largest genomic sequencing center in the world, for instance, is BGI
24 in Shenzhen and Hong Kong, with labs also now in Philadelphia, Copenha-
25 gen, and Davis, California. It is not, as popular accounts often claim, just a
26 government-supported, cheap labor factory. Far more interestingly, it grew
27 out of graduate student experience at the Universities of Copenhagen and
28 Washington (Seattle), and those lineages and connections remain strong.
29 Early funding came from starting a small diagnostic startup company and
30 from a municipal loan from the provincial hometown of one of the founders.
31 Sequencing machines were on loan to be paid for over time thanks to a men-
32 toring network connection to the then management of Solexa (now Illumina),
33 the maker of sequencing machines. Again through the mentoring lineages they
34 secured a role in the Human Genome Project to sequence 1 percent of the
35 human genome. Only then did the Chinese government take notice. For in-
36 dustries such as animation, large “creative industry” parks are being readied
37 in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing, and Chengdu in the hopes that biotech,
38 clean energy, the culture industry (animation, cartoons, games), consulting,

software, and education industries can provide new, higher value economic engines than the factories of the recent past. Since 2007 Guangzhou's International Animation Festival has been the largest in the country, with over a thousand enterprises participating in 2009 and 150,000 attendees.⁷²

As a new geography of science, culture industries, and global universities takes shape, older geographies, histories, and cultural interpretations are also being rewritten. Some are in a traditional scholarly manner, as in the expanding turn to histories from the perspective of ocean diasporas and sea-traveling peoples, such as Engseng Ho's work on the Hadramut network from Yemen across southeast Asia;⁷³ Kenneth Dean and Zheng Zhenman's work on irrigation expansion in Putian (Fujian Province), adjudicated by hierarchies of temples resisting and accepting incorporation into state ritual frameworks and the extension of clan houses and temples to southeast Asia;⁷⁴ Daphon David Ho's work on sea lords and the maritime frontier in seventeenth-century Fujian (from where many overseas Chinese are descended);⁷⁵ and Herman Kulke et al.'s edited volume on the Indian Chola kingdom's trade and naval expeditions across southeast Asia.⁷⁶

Some of these new geographies place local and global stories in compelling regional contexts, hinting at other possible histories, such as Warrick Anderson's account of the competition in 1960s population genetics and virology over whether Papua New Guinea was to be Australian or American scientific turf.⁷⁷ This was in the context of the International Biological Program spearheaded in part by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and the search for the causes of the neurodegenerative *kuru* disease (a celebrated case in 1960s medical anthropology).

Other of these new geographies, equally interesting, are new creative arts across borders, of which three from the dramatic arts may stand in for a profusion. Kuo Pao Kun's *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* (1995 in both Mandarin and English) is a powerful imagining of Zheng He, the great Ming Dynasty admiral who led seven expeditions across the Indian Ocean, as an emigrant cut off from his roots: as a man (made a eunuch), as a Muslim (taking on a Chinese name and culture), as a family descendant (a Persian ancestor, a Yunan upbringing). These severances function as a powerful allegory for Singaporeans cut off from much of their past in a migrant and globalized world ("To keep my head / I must accept losing my tail / To keep my faith / I must learn to worship others' gods"). Kuo Pao Kun has become a cultural icon himself, having been imprisoned in Singapore for five years and yet the founder of three important theater institutions. Ten years after

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1 his death, his work, most recently in 2013, was celebrated with four twenty-
 2 minute experimental tributes to his play *Lao Jiu* by four prominent Asian
 3 theater practitioners from Beijing (Li Liuyi), Taipei (Li Bao-chun), Hong
 4 Kong (Danny Yung), and Macau (Lawrence Lei).⁷⁸

5 *Awakening*, the brilliant interpretation of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*
 6 with an all-female cast starring the gay Hong Kong-based pop star Denise
 7 Ho playing the male lead Baoyu, is done with pop songs, contemporary
 8 dress (heels, black skirts and jackets), minimalist geometric sets, and lively
 9 choreography in twenty fast-paced scenes. Directed by Edward Lam, along
 10 with Danny Yung, a founder of Zuni Icosahedron, the experimental arts
 11 group in Hong Kong, and written by Wong Wing Sze, it uses a fairy tale and
 12 a hothouse of emotions from the aristocratic red chamber of concubines to
 13 explore the impossibilities of correcting past mistakes so they do not repeat.
 14 Denise Ho comments, “We cannot possibly overturn the errors from our
 15 ignorant youth, so they remain irrevocably etched in the record of our lives.
 16 As we see the protagonist head down the same path, helplessly reliving his
 17 own ignorance, and experiencing the loss of each one close to him all over
 18 again, would this not serve as a mirror for the audience?”⁷⁹

19 From the India side of Southeast Asian history comes another brilliant
 20 reworking, *Glimpses of Angkor*, a classical South Indian dance interpreta-
 21 tion of “the churning,” the central motif of Angkor Wat, the cosmological
 22 churning of the cosmic ocean by the *devas* and *asuras* pulling on the *naga*
 23 (snake) coiled around Mount Meru, and out of the froth is born the elixir of
 24 immortality, the *asparas*, and the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi. In Cambodia
 25 the churning is celebrated in the Festival of the Reversing Current (Bonn
 26 Om Tuk), when people flock to dragon boat races on the Tônlé Sap to cheer
 27 the river flow returning to its downstream direction. During the rainy season
 28 water backs up the Sap River from the Mekong, flowing into the Tônlé Sap
 29 Lake and causing it to swell five times its dry season size. As the rainy season
 30 ends, the river changes direction again, and the lake empties back into the
 31 Mekong. The Tônlé Sap is rich in freshwater fish and the surrounding farm-
 32 lands rich in sediment. The churning is, as well, says the director, Aravindh
 33 Kumarasmay, “the churning of our pure conscience in the constant battle be-
 34 tween good and evil as we strive towards excellence, the amrita. As artists we
 35 battle between spiritual evolution, perfection of our craft and the effects of
 36 commercialization in our pursuit of artistic excellence.”⁸⁰ Aravindh himself is
 37 the son of refugees from communal violence in Sri Lanka, and for his family
 38 the churning also has a deep reference to this history. The founder of the As-

para Arts Dance Company, Neila Sathyalingam, also born in Sri Lanka, leaving a house burned down behind her, trained in the Kalakshetra Academy in Tamilnadu and brings with her to Singapore a rich socio-aesthetic history of human form moving rhythmically in a series of sculptural poses embodying emotion. *The Churning (Manthan)* is the title also of Shyam Benegal's 1976 Hindi film about Amul, the Gujarat milk cooperative, financed by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Federation.⁸¹ It tells of the churning struggle for just return to labor and increased wealth through cooperation. These several loci tie together Hindu mythic resonances across South and Southeast Asia from India via the Khmer Empire to the Cham of Vietnam, but more important for the contemporary world from labor struggles to dealing with communal violence, making and remaking pluralist worlds under new tourist economies, visual spectacles, and renewing aesthetic approaches to acknowledging both emotion and wisdom.

Beyond mere multisited to also multiscalar and cross-temporally resonating, stuttering, and recommended cultural writing, perhaps the aesthetic form most ethnographic as well as historical are novels, particularly those that, for a post-cold war world, remind and remend the once and now again skeins of the sea and land Silk Roads shuttling from East to West and back again. Among these I would invoke, first of all, the anthropologist Amitav Ghosh's *Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), *Hungry Tide* (2004), and *River of Smoke* (2011), and then Philip Caputo's *Acts of Faith* (2006), Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* (2009), David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004, and the 2012 film), and *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet*.⁸² My own sense is that there is more to be learned here about playing the scales of culture than from flat-footed talk of global assemblages, neoliberalisms, hybridities, and the like, which, however corrective and useful in their place, capture only limited dimensions, even of political economy, not to mention cosmopolitics, and listening to the harmonics of cross-cultural and historical interferences and inter-references. As Mitchell nicely says in an interview, "In early drafts I was always trying to devise ingenious ways around the language barrier—and then I realized that this barrier could work for, and not against, the novel. So I stuck my characters into language prison and watched them try to get out."⁸³ The same might be said of Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008), where it is we readers who are thrown into a rich polyglot of seafarers.

Playing the scales of ethnographic insight and spatially traveling farther along with the migrants, registering their harmonic repeats, reprises, and multimedia mutations, going on from the *Sea of Poppies*, from eighteenth-century

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1 Bihar into the twenty-first century, Indian documentary and ethnographic
 2 filmmaker Surabhi Sharma says, “It is actually my experience of tracking music
 3 in the Caribbean, in Trinidad especially, that layered my understanding [of
 4 Bhojapuri Bihari music in Mumbai].”⁸⁴ She is speaking of the newly politi-
 5 cally charged annual *chhath puja* and *Ram Lila* performances on Juhu beach
 6 (where Mumbai film stars and industrialists live), the parking lots filled with
 7 autorickshaws and taxis of Bihari migrants, many of whom live in the Jari
 8 Mari slum next to and directly under the flight paths of Mumbai International
 9 Airport. Mirroring the Maharashtra *Ganesh puja* a month earlier, this increas-
 10 ingly scripted and megaspectacle *mela* has become a demonstration of visibil-
 11 ity against the Shiva Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena’s attacks on north
 12 Indian migrants. “In the one song, if you noticed, she named every district [in
 13 Bihar, from which the migrants come], and the song is basically ‘we have come
 14 here with our labor and the whole country belongs to us, you cannot throw us
 15 out’; and that was soon after that particular year [2008] when the Shiv Sena
 16 said we will never allow chhath puja to happen on the beaches of Bombay
 17 and Lal Prasad, the famous [Bihari] leader from back home [and minister of
 18 railways], had famously said I will perform it at his doorstep if he doesn’t allow
 19 my brother to do it on the beach.”⁸⁵

20 In Trinidad Sharma was filming how Bihari folk music traditions had
 21 crossed over into the popular music industry, infusing chutney, soca, and cal-
 22 lypso with the sounds of the *dholak*, *tabla*, and *dhantal*,⁸⁶ and upon her
 23 return to Mumbai she was suddenly impressed with how similarly Bihari
 24 “folk music comes to the big cities (in Mumbai and Delhi and Patna) and
 25 becomes a music industry, pop music, that goes back to the village but which
 26 gets further enriched, so [for instance] the mobile phone is a very common
 27 theme in the music that goes back to the villages, and is reinvented into a
 28 story there that comes right back, a constant” cycle of renewal and transfor-
 29 mation. It is a *chutney* of political *visibility*, of rhizomic labor roots across
 30 India, from Shilong in the northeast to Mumbai in the west, and across the
 31 globe to Trinidad and Surinam, of an organized music industry megaspec-
 32 tacle and of women’s-family *pujas*. It contains moments of terrifying massed
 33 power, displays of two *lakhs* (200,000) of hands in unison going “Jai, jai,
 34 jai!” (victory, victory, victory), and moments of “knowing he is the vulner-
 35 able sweatshop worker the next morning, the very vulnerable taxi driver
 36 or watchman or whatever, someone in the service sector where there is no
 37 security.” Sharma says, “I am not so sure I can fix the meaning completely.
 38

Although it is a terrifying moment, but then the small details within the crowd sort of started to make me feel I do not want to complete the story.” It is, after all, alive, constantly shape-shifting, taking on new valences, growing, changing as culture does. In Trinidad “musical culture is the space where identity, politics, racial tensions are played out,” and similarly in Mumbai: “I realized that this musical culture back home was entirely centered around the notion of leaving home. . . . And suddenly I found this entire music industry that was so completely confident of themselves and self-contained, it was not bothered by the big music industry that is Bollywood music; they were completely banking on their culture, the folk tradition, and in fact very confidently said that it is Bollywood that needs to steal our tunes, because this is where the real music is.” Had she not gone to Trinidad, she might not, she says, have seen all these interconnections and transmedia slides from folk music to pop culture industry and from labor migration to scripted megaspectacle and back again, all around her in Mumbai.

The notion of ethnographic insight is crucial: it is both a grounded style of investigation demanded in proliferating places and for multiple checks upon theoretical claims, models built by aggregating analysis, and hegemonic assertion; it is also a kind of yoga, a recognition of the shape-shifting illusions of fixed categories, comparisons, opinions, and perceptions. Ethnographically informed anthropology is the speech, account, reason, or logics of the animal operating semiotically, psychically, emotionally, intro- and projectionally between the bestial and the divine.⁸⁷ The anthropo-logics and aesthetics of writing culture include affects and actions that—after giving reasons for actions run out and yet decisions and actions must be taken—leave enduring legibilities, traces, hints, or cues in the rhythms and sounds, the catacoustics of the social text.⁸⁸

A Note to End On

Lévi-Strauss was right: culture is both symphonic and amoebic.⁸⁹ Apologies for trying to score it.

Notes

1 A maguffin (or MacGuffin or McGuffin), Hitchcock said, is an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands, where there are no lions.

- 1 2 Fischer, “Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory,” “Autobiographical
- 2 Voices (1, 2, 3) and Mosaic Memory,” and “Eye(I)ing the Sciences and their
- 3 Signifiers.”
- 4 3 Michel Serres’s pun on epistemologies or grammars or cultural frames that
- 5 interfere and inter-reference one another.
- 6 4 Biographies of the Gandian social worker and Jain monk Santibalji; the Jewish
- 7 gnostic Shabbatai Zvi and founding figure of both a modernist circle around
- 8 Attaturk (the Donmeh) and a kabbalist strand of Judaism; Rabbi Nahman
- 9 of Bratslav, a founder of Hassidism and perhaps a manic-depressive dealing
- 10 with his followers’ dilemmas of entering a modern world; the Muslim mystic
- 11 al-Hallaj, executed for his ecstatic utterances and revered by sufi traditions).
- 12 These biographies are written, respectively, by the former Jain Gujarat minist-
- 13 er of education and leading social reformer Navalbhai Shah; Gershom Scho-
- 14 lem, who transformed the scholarship of modern Judaism; Arthur Green, who
- 15 helped introduce a modern orthodox Judaism in America during the cultural
- 16 turmoil of the 1960s; Louis Massignon, one of the generation of French schol-
- 17 ars who found through Islam what they missed in Catholicism.
- 18 5 In the three time-stamped periods alluded to here these are (1) the Rice An-
- 19 thropology Department, the Rice Circle, the Rice Center for Cultural Studies,
- 20 the Chicago Center for Psychosocial (later Transnational) Studies, the journals
- 21 *Cultural Anthropology*, *Public Culture*, and the *Late Editions* project; (2) the
- 22 MIT Program in Science, Technology and Society, the Program in Anthropol-
- 23 ogy; the Harvard “Friday Morning Seminar” in Mental Health and Medical
- 24 Anthropology; the Harvard Departments of Global Health and Social Medi-
- 25 cine, Anthropology, and the Harvard STS Circle; (3) the Asia Research Institute,
- 26 the Biopoleis Project, and Tembusu College of the National University of Sin-
- 27 gapore, the journals *Cultural Politics* and *EASTS (East Asian Science, Technology*
- 28 *and Society)*, the Duke University Press book series *Experimental Futures: Tech-*
- 29 *nological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices*; the Irvine- and Chicago-
- 30 based workshops in Knowledge/Value, and Irvine Center for Persian Studies
- 31 workshops on Ethnographers, Scientists, and Health-Related Air Quality.
- 32 6 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, and *The Birth of Biopolitics*; Deleuze, “Post-
- 33 script on the Societies of Control.”
- 34 7 Negri, *The Political Descartes*.
- 35 8 Levon Abrahamian reproduced in Fischer, *Emergent Forms of Life and the An-*
- 36 *thropological Voice*.
- 37 9 Bourke-White, “Women in Steel”; Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*; Field, *The*
- 38 *Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*; Coleman, *Rosie the Riveter*.
- 10 Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.
- 11 Juris, *Networking Futures*.
- 12 Haraway, *When Species Meet*; Fischer, *Anthropological Futures*, chapter 3.
- 13 For a different account, and outcomes, of such debates in a distinctively non-
- 14 U.S. context, see Felt, “Keeping Technologies Out” on Austria; Jasanoff, *De-*

- signs on Nature*, on Germany and the United Kingdom. The Asilomar conference attempted (and succeeded) to allay public fears about recombinant organisms escaping into the environment by proposing a series of biosafety measures, triggered by Paul Berg's experimental design of inserting fragments of monkey virus SV40 and bacteriophage lambda into an *E. coli* bacterium. Before doing this third step, in response to concerns voiced, procedures were proposed for ensuring that a series of biocontainment measures were in place, under oversight by a National Institutes of Health review process, that could be lifted only as the scientific community gained experience and assurance of safety. The most vigorous public debates were those held in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, City Council meetings in June 1976 and again when the moratorium was extended in September 1976. The debates were videorecorded by the historian Charles Weiner and are available in the MIT archives.
- 14 "Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather."
- 15 Fischer, "Worlding Cyberspace"; Kelty, "Culture in, Culture Out."
- 16 Havis, "Interview with Chen Zaige."
- 17 Fischer, "Biopolis."
- 18 See Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* and *Fear of Small Numbers*; Cohen, *No Aging in India*; Das, *Critical Events* and *Life and Words*; Fortun, *Advocacy after Bhopal*; Hansen, *The Saffron Wave*; Pradhan, *When the Saints Go Marching In*; Rajagopal, *Politics after Television*; and the journal *Public Culture*, and later the design of covers of the journal *Cultural Anthropology* by an Indian graphic artist.
- 19 Infosys is not just one of the leading Indian software support companies but an engine of social change, and a social hieroglyph itself, as well as in the careers of its founders, of a history of transition in India's technoscientific imaginaries. Founded in 1981 by N. R. Narayana Murthy, who gathered a team of five young visionaries, including Nandan Nilekani, now chair of the Unique Identification Authority of India, to build not just a company but an innovative, and architecturally beautiful, socially and environmentally designed campus in Bangalore with its own back-up water and electricity supplies and satellite connections. Narayana Murthy had worked at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, under J. G. Krishnaya, who had spent time at MIT's Project MAC and ran the computer systems at IIM Ahmedabad, attempting to introduce personal computers to a resistant mainframe environment. Krishnaya then started an early geographical information system company in Pune, bringing Narayana Murthy with him. They provided among the first such systems for public planning for the governments of India, Maharashtra, and Pune. Narayana Murthy also had experience in Paris developing software for the subway system. (I had the pleasure of interviewing both Krishnaya in Pune and

1 Narayana Murthy at Infosys in Bangalore in the 1990s.) Nihilani succeeded
 2 Narayana Murthy as CEO of Infosys and became involved with advocacy for
 3 new forms of governance in Bangalore (and India). His wife, Rohini Nilekani,
 4 endowed the Arghyam (Skt. “offering”) Foundation, which initially experi-
 5 mented with neoliberal models to extend water systems to the slums outside
 6 the Bangalore municipal pipe system when the city could not afford to do
 7 so. This controversially involved user payments to contribute to capital costs.
 8 It now operates a web-based platform, India Water Portal, that shares water
 9 management knowledge among practitioners and the general public across
 10 states and jurisdictions.

- 20 Fischer, “The Rhythmic Beat of the Revolution in Iran.”
 21 Fischer, “Before Going Digital.”
 22 Fischer, “Bombay Talkies, the Word and the World”; Fischer, “Iran and the
 23 Boomeranging Cartoon Wars.”
 24 Fortun, *Advocacy after Bhopal*; Callison, “More Information Is Not the Prob-
 25 lem”; Wylie, “Corporate Bodies and Chemical Bonds”; MacKenzie, *An En-
 26 gine, Not a Camera*; Tett, *Fool’s Gold*; Lepinay, *Codes of Finance*; Condry, *The
 27 Soul of Anime*.
 28 Rabinow, *Making PCR*; Dumit, *Drugs for Life*; Petryna, *When Experiments
 29 Travel*; Fischer, *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice and An-
 30 thropological Futures* and “The Rhythmic Beat of the Revolution in Iran”;
 31 Franklin and Lock, *Remaking Life and Death*; Kuo, “The Voice on the Bridge”;
 32 Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories*; Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital*; Sunder Rajan,
 33 *Lively Capital*.
 34 Franklin, *Dolly Mixtures*; Franklin and Lock, eds., *Remaking Life and Death*;
 35 Jasanoff, *Designs on Nature*; Biehl and Petryna, “Bodies of Rights and Thera-
 36 peutic Markets” and *When People Come First*; Fischer, “The BAC [Bioethics
 37 Advisory Committee] Consultation on Neuroscience and Ethics.”
 38 Virno, “Natural-Historical Diagrams.”
 Schroedinger, *What Is Life?*; Fischer, *Anthropological Futures*, chapter 3.
 Fischer, “If Derrida Is the Gomez-Pena of Philosophy, What Are the Genres
 of Social Science?”
 These two paragraphs are adapted from Fischer, “Anthropology of Science
 and Technology.”
 Mnookin, “Images of Truth.”
 Cole, *Suspect Identities*; Dumit, *Picturing Personhood*; Blanchette, *Burdens of
 Proof*.
 Landecker, *Culturing Life*.
 Keltly, *Two Bits*; Chan, “The Promiscuity of Freedom”; Coleman, *Coding Free-
 dom*; Kumar, “The Yellow Revolution in Malway.”
 Schwarz, “Techno-Territories.”
 Kuo, “The Voice on the Bridge.”

36	Cohen, “Where It Hurts” and “Operability, Bioavailability, and Exception”;	1
	Petryna, <i>Life Exposed</i> ; Montoya, <i>Making the Mexican Diabetic</i> .	2
37	Dumit, <i>Drugs for Life</i> ; Greenslit, “Pharmaceutical Relations”; Prentice, <i>Bodies in Formation</i> .	3
		4
38	Sunder Rajan, <i>Biocapital</i> : Jasanoff, <i>Designs on Nature</i> .	5
39	Sanal, <i>New Organs within Us</i> ; Hamdy, <i>Our Bodies Belong to God</i> .	6
40	Myers, “Modeling Proteins, Making Scientists.”	7
41	Kahn, <i>Race in a Bottle</i> ; Pollock, <i>Medicating Race</i> .	8
42	Jain, <i>Injury</i> .	9
43	Perin, <i>Shouldering Risks</i> ; Masco, <i>Nuclear Borderlands</i> .	10
44	Ozkan, “Executive Coaching.”	11
45	Behrouzan, “Prozak Diaries.”	12
46	Garcia, <i>The Pastoral Clinic</i> .	13
47	Helmreich, <i>Silicon Second Nature and Alien Ocean</i> ; Paxson, “Post-Pasteurian Cultures” and <i>The Life of Cheese</i> .	14
48	Callison, “More Information Is Not the Problem”; Lahsen, “Seductive Simulations,” <i>The Role of Unstated Mistrust and Disparities in Scientific Capacity</i> and “Knowledge, Democracy and Uneven Playing Fields.”	15
49	See Wylie, “Corporate Bodies and Chemical Bonds.”	16
50	Ozden, “Vernacular Economics and Smart Electricity Grids”; Schilling, “The Social Implications of Digital Mapmaking among Insect Ecologists, Geologists, and Aboriginal First Nations Heritage Consultants.”	17
		18
		19
51	Virno, “Natural-Historical Diagrams.”	20
52	Marchetti, “From Mao’s ‘Continuous Revolution’ to Ning Ying’s Perpetual Motion.”	21
		22
53	Osanloo, <i>The Politics of Women’s Rights in Iran</i> .	23
54	Fischer, <i>Anthropological Futures</i> .	24
55	Adams, “Against Global Health?”; World Bank, “Indonesia’s PNPM Generasi Program,” 3 para. 3, and finding 2; p. 32 on MIT’s Poverty Action Lab, and inexplicable findings, p. 39.	25
		26
56	Theidon, <i>Intimate Enemies</i> ; Good et al., <i>A Psychosocial Needs Assessment of Communities in 14 Selected Districts in Aceh</i> ; Good and Good, “Indonesia Sakit”; Grayman, “Humanitarian Encounters in Post Conflict Aceh.”	27
		28
		29
57	Biehl and Petryna, <i>When People Come First</i> ; Livingston, <i>Improvised Medicine</i> .	30
58	Murray and Lopez, <i>The Global Burden of Disease</i> ; Kessler et al., “The Global Burden of Mental Disorders”; Heyman, “Neuroscience and Ethics”; Kleinman, Das, and Lock, <i>Social Suffering</i> ; Cohen, Kleinman and Saraceno, <i>World Mental Health Casebook</i> .	31
		32
		33
59	For instance, the new billion-euro ten-year Human Brain Project funded by the European Union, the \$100 million Canada Brain Research Fund, boosts in funding for the United Kingdom’s Brain Bank network, the 2004 U.S. National Institutes of Health Blueprint for Neuroscience Research, the 2013	34
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1 ten-year \$100 million initiative on concussion-related brain damage among
 2 professional football players; in Singapore the \$25 million Singapore Transla-
 3 tion and Clinical Research in Psychosis program, and the new SINAPSE (Singa-
 4 pore Institute for Neurotechnology) at the National University of Singapore
 5 funded by the University, A*STAR, and the Ministry of Defense.

60 Fischer, “The Rhythmic Beat of the Revolution in Iran.”

61 Behrouzan, “Prozak Diaries.”

62 Since 2011 a Telecommunication Industry Dialogue (a group of eight major
 8 telecommunications companies, including Nokia-Siemens Networks, Alcatel-
 9 Lucent, France Telecom-Orange, Millicom, Telefonica, Telenor, TeliaSonera,
 10 and Vodafone) has established a set of guidelines aligned with the United
 11 Nations “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.” A common
 12 platform to exchange best practices, learning, and tools is to be provided by
 13 the Global Network Initiative, a coalition of companies, human rights organi-
 14 zations, and freedom of the press groups (Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, Center
 15 for Democracy and Technology, Committee to Protect Journalists, Electronic
 16 Frontier Foundation, Human Rights First, Human Rights in China, Human
 17 Rights Watch, Index on Censorship, Calvert Group, Domini Social Invest-
 18 ments, F and C Asset Management, Folksam, the Berkman Center for Inter-
 19 net and Society at Harvard, Center for Freedom of Expression and Access to
 20 Information—CELE at Palermo University, Argentina). Aside from the three
 21 cases mentioned, there is a case brought by Turkey’s Turkcell against MTN,
 22 headquartered in South Africa, for using bribery to get a contract to supply
 23 Iran with surveillance technology. Not yet a court case, but on free press,
 24 human rights, and digital democracy activists’ watch list, U.S. companies Ne-
 25 tApp and Hewlett-Packard along with Italian AreaSpA have been negotiat-
 26 ing to provide Syria with the capability to read all emails and track people’s
 27 location.

63 Callison, “More Information Is Not the Problem.”

64 Ballestero, “Expert Attempts.”

65 Fischer, “The Peopling of Technologies”; Biehl and Petryna, “Bodies of
 28 Rights and Therapeutic Markets” and *When People Come First*.

66 Wylie, “Corporate Bodies and Chemical Bonds.”

67 Faubion and Marcus, *Doing Fieldwork Is Not What It Used to Be*.

68 Cefkin, *Ethnography and the Corporate Encounter*; World Bank, “Indonesia’s
 31 PNPM Generasi Program.”

69 Felt, “Keeping Technologies Out,” 16.

70 Singaporean filmmakers Lee Xian Jie and Jeremy Boo were Singapore Poly-
 34 technic seniors when they made the film. Both are now studying in Japan.

71 Condry, *The Soul of Anime*.

72 Xuan, “The Global Diffusion and Variations of Creative Industries for Urban
 35 Development.”

73 Ho, *The Graves of Tarim* and “‘Empire through Diasporic Eyes.’”

74 Dean and Zheng, <i>Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain</i> .	1
75 Ho, “Sealords Live in Vain.”	2
76 Kulke et al., <i>Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa</i> .	3
77 Anderson, <i>The Collectors of Lost Souls</i> .	4
78 “Salute to Pao Kun” at the Esplanade Theater in Mandarin and Cantonese with English subtitles, April 5–6, 2013. The Taiwanese producer Vivien Ku set the rules: Each director was allowed one table and two chairs, three lighting effects, and twenty minutes of stage time. The sequence of the plays is shuffled for every performance. Each work is an artistic response to Kuo’s play <i>Lao Jiu</i> (1990, English version 1993, musical 2005 restaged in 2012). The title character is the ninth and only male child of a Teochew family who has a chance to win a coveted scholarship but can’t make himself finish the exams, preferring to pursue puppetry. He wishes not to be a puppet with his path determined for him but to be able to hold his fate in the palm of his hand, like a puppet master. He has grown up around a family friend, Shi Fu, a traditional Chinese puppeteer, and goes to his house when stressed. In the middle of the exams he suffers a crisis of confidence and cannot decide whether to follow his artistic dreams or the more realistic career option strongly advocated by his parents.	5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
79 Denise Ho, program notes.	17
80 Aravinth, program notes.	18
81 Screenplay by Vijay Tendulkar, Shyam Benegal, and Samik Banerjee, published by Seagull Books, 1984.	19
82 There is no space here to do analytic justice to of these works, but they are all well known. One of the dilemmas of ethnographic writing continues to be the impatience of many readers (and publishers) with the details of the unfamiliar that are required to understand lived worlds. This is less complaint than writing challenge. The solutions of novelists are not entirely those anthropologists should adopt, but there are lessons to be learned. It is of course not surprising that novelists who deeply research their work should parallel the work of anthropologists. Nonetheless I was deeply mesmerized reading <i>Calcutta Chromosome</i> while I was interviewing molecular biologists working on malaria in Delhi and Bombay in 1996, and later went on a pilgrimage to all the sites mentioned in the novel and the histories of Sir Ronald Ross. The history of curing syphilis by malaria fever, and of theosophy, is beautifully done, as is the insistence on local knowledge and assistants who helped the scientists who get the credit in history books. So too is the satire of total computerized water resources control, taking on both at-a-distance management systems and watershed projects such as the Mekong Valley Authority. <i>Hungry Tide</i> came out just before the 2004 devastating tsunami broke over the Indian Ocean from Aceh to Bengal and proleptically described the coming destruction. It also provides a compelling account of the settlement frontier in the Sunderbans between colonials and islanders, along with an exploration of cetology and dolphins as sensors of cross-species and ecological interactions. <i>River of Smoke</i> is a mesmerizing	20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38

1 account of the European opium merchants in Canton (Qangzhou) and the ef-
 2 forts of the Chinese officials to stop the trade, and a sympathetic account of the
 3 mediation instruments and constraints of the Chinese merchants. This novel
 4 follows after the account of the manufacturing of opium and export of labor
 5 chronicled in *The Sea of Poppies*. Mitchell's *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de*
 6 *Zoet* does similar work for Nagasaki, while his *Cloud Atlas* explores a series of
 7 interlocking vignettes across the generations (much as Neal Stephenson more
 8 massively does in *Cryptonomicon*, another of my favorites). Philip Caputo's *Acts*
 9 *of Faith* brings together in interlocking form the humanitarian aid industry,
 10 missionaries who free Nuba slaves from seminomadic Arab raiders only to have
 11 them be reenslaved later, the South Sudan People's Liberation Army fight-
 12 ers, Khartoum-recruited Arab and Islamicized black Janjaweed fighters, Dinka,
 13 Nuer, and Turkana known to the anthropological archive in an earlier era. It is a
 14 rich, only lightly fictionalized tableau of the dilemmas of a second (twenty-two-
 15 year-long) civil war that puts in context more specialized anthropological, po-
 16 litical science, and development studies. Importantly it tells each acting group's
 17 story from its own point of view. Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* begins just before
 18 the bombing of Nagasaki (where Margaret Duras's *Hiroshima Mon Amour*
 19 also begins, with the burned shadows of vaporized souls imprinted on stone)
 20 and weaves extraordinary scenes of cultural sensibilities, moods, and change
 21 across time (from Hiroshima to Delhi to New York and Karachi), illuminat-
 22 ing through the historical sweep of intense crises the postwar history from the
 23 Partition of India to the Taliban's ensnaring of youth. What intrigues me in all
 24 these works is the ability to play the scales with explanatory depth and explora-
 25 tion of nonintuitive connections.

83 Mitchell, "The Art of Fiction."

84 The quotes in this paragraph are taken from the question-and-answer period
 following a presentation of three short films at the Museum of the National
 University of Singapore, May 16, 2013: *Airplane Descending over Jari Mari*
 (2008), *The Enactment of Exile in Mumbai* (2011), *Tracing Bylanes* (2011).
 Sharma's longer films on these topics are *Jari Mari: Of Cloth and Other Stories*
 (2001), *Above the Din of Sewing Machines* (2004). Sharma has a bachelor's
 degree in anthropology and psychology and speaks of her documentary meth-
 ods as ethnographic. Just to complete the circle of references to Singapore in
 this chapter, one of her shots is of interviewing a man in a Jari Mari garment
 shop while he is packing pajamas with skull prints on it and affixing labels of
 \$9.99 in Singapore dollars. "He says 'we have to complete this order, other-
 wise the entire money will not be given to us.' It was being shipped to Singa-
 pore and it is being produced in that slum," a residue of closed factories, with
 labor devolved into putting out systems, the whole slum being illegal, requir-
 ing getting water and electricity through extrastate nonlegal connections.

85 See the YouTube videos of the *chhath puja* on Juhu beach from 2009, 2010,
 2011, and 2012. In the press the dance between MNS leader Raj Thackeray,

- his cousin Uddhav Thackeray, and Bihari politicians, most recently Congress Member of Parliament from North Mumbai Sanjay Nirupam, who in 2011 countered Shiv Sena and MNS provocations with his own, saying that North Indians can bring Mumbai to a standstill and daring Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray, his son Aditya, and MNS's Raj Thackeray to step out without security. In September 2012 Raj Thackeray had threatened to brand Biharis as "infiltrators" and force them out of Maharashtra, and earlier Uddhav Thackeray said a permit system should be implemented for Biharis wanting to live in Mumbai. Both Thackerays claimed that Biharis were the majority contributors to the crime rate in Mumbai. Bihar's chief minister Nitish Kumar strongly objected, and the Janata Dal (United) from Patna issued a statement: "Biharis are not a burden on anyone. They have made Mumbai and we have full rights on the commercial capital of the country. Bihari are there because of their deeds and hard work." In 2012, after Bal Thackeray, father of Uddhav and uncle of Raj and a longtime leader of the Shiv Sena, died, both sides toned down their language, lest real violence be provoked at that year's puja and festival. (For one of many press accounts, see "JD (U) Takes on Thackeray Brothers over Biharis in Mumbai," Z News, September 4, 2012, http://zeenews.india.com/news/maharashtra/jd-u-takes-on-thackeray-brothers-over-biharis-in-mumbai_797643.html.)
- 86 Chutney music has roots in Surinam, Guyana, and Trinidad at least back to the 1940s and was first recorded in 1958 by the singer Ramdew Chaitoe and became popular with Dropati's album *Let's Sing and Dance* (1968). In the 1970s Sundar Popo (King of Chutney) added guitars and electronics, and Ras Shorty (Garfield Blackman) infused soca (soul-calypto) with Indian instruments. In 1987 Drupatee Ramgoonai (Queen of Chutney) fixed the term *chutney soca* with her album *Chatnee Soca*, with both English and Hindi versions of the songs. The producer Rohit Jagessar in the 1980s took chutney soca worldwide with shows in stadiums and cricket fields, and in 1991, at Weston Outdoor Studios in Mumbai, digitally recorded the all-time highest grossing album *Leggo Me Na Raja*. In the 1995–96 Trinidad Carnival season, the Chutney Soca Monarch Competition became the venue for the world's largest Indo-Caribbean concerts. Various spin-off styles of chutney soca have emerged, including *chutney rap*, *chutney jhumari* (from Baluchistan), *chutney lambada* (from Brazil), and mixes with Bollywood film music. (See Wikipedia's entries on chutney music and chutney soca for more details and references.) Sharma's film is *Jahaji Music: India in the Caribbean* (2007, 112 min.).
- 87 Fischer, *Anthropological Futures* and "Anthropologia and Philosophia."
- 88 I take the term *catacostics* from a brilliant essay by the philosopher Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "The Echo of the Subject," and have used it in several essays, especially one several years ago on trauma and depression in Iran (Behrouzan and Fischer, "Behaves Like a Rooster and Cries like a 'Four-Eyed' Canine") and on musicality and rhythm in the aesthetics of politics in Iran

1 2009 (Fischer, “The Rhythmic Beat of the Revolution in Iran”). It refers to
2 the “phenomenon of a ‘tune in one’s head’ that ‘keeps coming back’” (150).
3 Lacoue-Labarthe finds “the most striking example (and for good reason . . .)”
4 in the opening of Theodore Reik’s essay, “Kol Nidre,” an uncanny tune that
5 Reik hears (but only later identifies and recognizes from his youth) in Max
6 Bruch’s Op. 47 “Kol Nidre,” triggering powerful emotions.
7 89 Lévi-Strauss, *Naked Man*.