

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world . . . : the point is to *change* it.

—Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*

Provoked by Marx's well-known, oft-cited statement, countless scholars have committed their intellectual labor toward deciphering the inner workings of the modern world with the view that such endeavours might serve in some way to transform it. Among those incited by this declaration of purpose and challenged by Marxist analysis are numerous anthropologists whose efforts in ethnography and theory have been devoted toward generating a critical body of knowledge, directed ultimately at contributing toward political programs of change. In *Culture, Economy, Power* the work of some of those anthropologists is presented. This volume brings together a group of scholars who share the view that anthropological knowledge implies critique—a critique of the modern world and a critique of capitalism—and that to engage in and with anthropology represents an act of praxis. As such, our work in anthropology is committed to the emancipatory projects that find their origins in historical materialism, the critique of political economy, Marx's thoughts on class conflict and programs for social equality. Indeed, such ideas have laid the foundations for the massive social and economic transformations that have been inaugurated in many different national contexts in the twentieth century. Yet as we live in our contemporary world, in a period that extends well beyond the lifetime of Marx, such ideas and programs for change have become discredited. Indeed, the decline of socialism and the triumph of a neoliberal political and economic order in recent years have fanned the flames of criticism ignited by Marx's detractors and supporters alike. But criticisms of his framework and declarations that he was wrong are as old as Marxist thought itself. Turn of the twentieth century populist and liberal critiques, as well as more recent poststructuralist, feminist, and Foucauldian assaults on Marxist analysis (and also responses to them) have come to be so familiar, and to some extent mantric, that to review them here would be an exercise in

redundancy. While the contributors in this volume agree that there is much to criticize in Marxist analysis, they nonetheless assert through their essays that there is much that has been of value and will continue to be of value as we confront the changes in the modern world in our intellectual and everyday lives and as we seek to understand the lives of the anthropological subjects with whom we are privileged to work.

The authors here are concerned therefore to explore the ways in which the precepts of Marxism continue to illuminate and enhance our understanding of culture, economy, and politics, both in the contemporary world as well as the past, despite and also because of the turns in recent history. But in their efforts to do this, they do not slavishly follow any doctrinal orthodoxy. Because, as their essays will show, much has been learned from challenges to Marxist analysis, the authors make significant attempts to modify and move beyond strict and structured analytical frameworks. This is done, however, not by rejecting the fundamental precepts of Marxist analysis, but by extending and expanding upon its framework. As all Marxist inspired programs, visions, and activities have been initiated by individuals who act in concert, it is fitting to begin with a history of the way in which this collectivity of contributors to *Culture, Economy, Power* was formed.

Our Past

The essays in this collection emerge from a process of collaboration among a group of anthropologists whose work is informed by a materialist approach to understanding and analyzing culture. We share the view that culture, a pivotal concept in anthropology, is a phenomenon that is produced and reproduced in its relation to material forces. Our collaborations began in 1991 as a series of impromptu conversations that took place at the meetings of the Canadian Anthropology Society/Société Canadien pour Anthropologie (CASCA).¹ At that time, our efforts were galvanized by the way in which our discipline was responding to the postmodern “turn” in scholarship and the neoliberal “turn” in the larger political and economic order. The postmodern turn was inclining our discipline toward the textual approach, and a growing preoccupation with an ungrounded “culture” was coming to displace questions that were critical to address in the increasingly neoliberal world. To many of us, it was critical to confront the precise ways in which neoliberal economic policies and practices were engendering the restructuring of capitalism. It was a matter of urgency to understand precisely how the forces of globalization were altering processes of production, patterns of consumption, and relations in work. Furthermore it was important to understand how these forces related to social and political movements that were appearing and reappearing on the political and cultural

landscape. Finally, to many of us, an analysis that was devoted to understanding how contemporary capitalisms were sustained and perpetuated reached a new immediacy. Despite the fact that overall, in anthropology, the space devoted to these questions became diminished, many of us individually pursued these concerns in our academic and everyday lives. From our individual research programs, it was clear that neoliberal forces were engendering new class configurations, new forms of domination and new contours of power, while older forms of subjection and exploitation were coming to be intensified. In the 1991 meetings, building on conversations that were taking place in the halls, over coffee, and at book exhibits while panel after panel focused on discourse, voice, self, identity, and narrative, a group of us gathered to talk about reinvigorating an agenda for anthropology that addressed domination, exploitation, class, structure, social process, political economy, and the production of culture.

Since those first conversations, a series of workshops, symposia, and sessions that focused on materialist approaches to the production of culture have been initiated both as part of the program of CASCA meetings and also apart from them. For those who participated² in these different fora, the point of departure was that to be engaged in anthropology is inherently a political act and that as individual anthropologists we continually make choices about how to express those politics through our intellectual orientations. Therefore, the consequences of these choices became reinforced at that 1991 meeting where reflexive and textual anthropology was coming to occupy more and more hegemonic space. Yet, as many of the contributors to this volume point out in their essays, hegemony is seldom total, and so we claimed a space for pursuing alternatives. Our efforts became focused on developing an understanding of culture as an inseparable part of daily and historical praxis. In general, we focused on three key areas of concern. First, we addressed the question of analysis. We pursued the problem of understanding the ways in which class allows us to grasp the dynamics of social relations under the different spatial and temporal configurations of capitalism. We also considered how an interpretively sensitive approach to culture in our analysis might affect our understanding of the relationship between culture and class. The second key area we explored focused on methodology. We addressed the implications for ethnographic method of considering culture as a phenomenon that is not *sui generis*, but produced and reproduced in relation to political and economic forces. Finally, we confronted the question of politics. We focused on the problem of the organizational and strategic questions that disempowered people face in their projects of collective action and we posed the question of what our relationship as anthropologists should be to such cultural/class projects. Our exchanges on politics were framed overall by certain fundamental epistemological concerns, particularly the question of the ways in which political context influences the formation of knowledge. We were concerned to examine the ways in which different intellectual projects are sustained

or constrained within changing economies and structures of power. As the questions we broached in this area are foundational in nature, it is apposite to begin the volume by addressing the ways in which the culture of anthropology is produced and reproduced within different national settings.

In Part 1, *Nations and Knowledge*, the contributors explore the ways in which anthropologists both participate in contemporary political economies and are affected by historical changes in capitalism as intellectual workers who are engaged through their labor in the production, transformation, and reproduction of bodies of knowledge. Each author begins from the proposition that intellectual production is a process that is at once strongly institutionalized and politically charged. They explore the ways in which historical and contemporary conjunctures and conditions within nations privilege distinctive trajectories of inquiry within the field of anthropology, while deterring others. In recognizing that the influence of such conjunctures is not delimited by national borders, they also explore how conditions within one nation exert an influence over and define research agendas in other national contexts. Focusing on the Canadian context for social anthropology, Dunk (chapter 2) for example argues that agendas for research in anthropology in Canada can be determined by ideas, issues, and problems largely generated from outside its national borders. These emanate from countries that occupy a place of prominence in the intellectual field, usually Britain and the United States, where the majority of anthropologists are trained. Dunk argues that much of the work that is characteristic of Canadian anthropology reflects more the out of country training of the anthropologist concerned than the nature of Canadian society itself. Given the political and economic forces that have shaped the academy and intellectual pursuits in the United States and Britain, where Marxism and political economy have been relegated to the periphery (see Roseberry, chapter 5 and Gledhill, chapter 6), Canadian anthropology has reflected these trends. Thus, Canadian anthropology has suffered from the marginalization of Marxist anthropology and political economy, and the displacement from research agendas of the priorities and problems specific to Canada.

Narotzky's contribution (chapter 3) continues the discussion introduced by Dunk, on the nature of power relations in the development of anthropology in specific national contexts. She is concerned with the ways in which those relations have shaped anthropology in Spain and the anthropology of Spain. Her contribution is an examination of the ways in which both the changing political climate of Franco and post-Franco Spain as well as the intellectual influences emanating from non-Spanish nations have been critical to the shaping of Spanish anthropology. Narotzky emphasizes that the legacy of fascism not only involved the marginalization and the active persecution of Marxist intellectuals under Franco but it also meant the persistence of the intellectual dominance of culture and folklore studies, into the post-Franco era. This was a field of inquiry

permitted in Fascist Spain and one that is still pursued by once and still powerful anthropologists who dominate Spanish anthropology. The consequences of these forms of intellectual domination for reinforcing certain webs of power, as well as its economic consequences for the privileging of particular research trajectories and defining the discipline within Spain, are drawn out by Narotzky.

Pursuing the theme of relationship between power, knowledge, and anthropology in Mexico, de la Peña (chapter 4) examines the relationship between Mexican anthropology and the state's quest for a unified national culture. He identifies three phases in the formation of Mexican anthropology that are linked to the official policies concerning the relationship of indigenous peoples and the peasantry to the state. While the state has tried to incorporate anthropology into its project, in practice materialist anthropology has provided a counterhegemonic discourse, opposing the homogenizing strategies of the state, making class a central concern, while downplaying the significance of "ethnic" difference. The question of "ethnic" difference is taken up also by Gupta (chapter 7). He focuses on the problem of how the state addresses the central political and economic tensions generated by ethnic divisions that exist within the nation-state that is inclined toward generating homogeneity in the creation of citizens.

At the other side of what some have called a "colonial relationship" are Britain and the United States, with their long histories of producing anthropologists, and in the process, reproducing colonial relationships with anthropological subjects (Asad 1973; Wolf and Jorgensen 1970). Within both these contexts, the space for a materialist anthropology has been squeezed with shifts in the political economy of contemporary Britain and the United States. Roseberry (chapter 5), like Narotzky, identifies processes in the United States that have marginalized political economy within the academy and within anthropology itself. He articulates the implications of this for left-oriented academic inquiry in terms of an academic enclosure, on the one hand, and anthropological enclosure, on the other. Like Dunk, Roseberry takes up the issue of the production of academics in anthropology and suggests that this has serious implications for generations of graduate students and marketplace decisions about who become members of the anthropological force of intellectual workers and who do not.

The British context for anthropological political economy has also been affected by the conservative retrenchment of the 1980s and 1990s. Examining the nature of university institutions, Gledhill (chapter 6) argues that the restructuring and globalization of education, and specifically the legacy of Thatcherite economic and cultural policies in Britain, has had radical implications for the contemporary politics of doing anthropology and the roles of anthropologists as public intellectuals. Under fiscal crises produced by the Fordist-Neo-Keynesian mode of capitalist regulation, education tends to be targeted for reduction in public expenditures. Gledhill argues that the restructuring of education is

intended to produce people who might serve the ends of the capitalist accumulation process, thus higher education must fit that role, that is, train people in this way in order to qualify for the public purse. According to Gledhill, these dynamics are a reflection of the ideological dimensions to the neoliberal climate of regulation, which produces the university as a kind of battlefield where fights are fought over the nature of research, and where socially and politically critical research is declining. Within the academy a Foucauldian climate of self-regulation defines who is in and who is out as the internal politics intensify.

In Part 1, then, authors raise crucial questions, which are posed directly in Gledhill's contribution. They attend to the question of whom anthropologists produce knowledge for and they address the problem of whose interests are served by anthropological knowledge. From this set of essays also emerges the different political and economic circumstances in different historical contexts that enable or disable intellectuals to openly define themselves as Marxists, or invoke and teach Marxist literature and the implications that distinctive configurations of power have had for shaping the discipline. The contributions discussed above make clear the ways in which contemporary anthropology is contingent upon shifts and continuities in the political economies of the states in which it is practiced. Such shifts not only are critical in shaping the discipline, but they also shape our fields of inquiry and influence the subjectivities of the people we study.

In Part 2, *States and Subjects*, therefore, the contributors are engaged in an analysis of the ways in which hierarchies of power and forms of state domination figure in the formation of subjectivities in ethnographic settings that differ in time and place. Through case studies, the authors analyze the ways in which people experience and respond to nation-state practices over time. They also address the question of the processes that foster differentiation and the assumption of an identity based on difference that consigns particular categories of persons to the margins, while other classes are integrated into the centers of power. For example, Gupta (chapter 7) focuses his discussion of the question of ethnic difference and pluralism within the Indian nation-state. He argues that in the context of India, where universal franchise and minority rights came with independence, multiculturalism became integral in the formation of the postcolonial state. He suggests further how the interests of minority groups and minority group identities can be sustained so long as they do not come into conflict with the binding force of the "root" metaphors of the nation-state. Gupta's presentation is also an example of how anthropologists can study the nation-state. His perspective is derived from working within a context in which the political prerogatives involved in reconciling diversity with the homogenizing tendencies of the nation-state exists as a central political and economic tension. The contributions in Part 2, then, raise questions concerning the state, how the state governs its subjects and how subjects are incorporated into the state. Clark (chapter 11) pursues this

question by examining the ways in which Ecuadorean Indians/peasants were drawn into the modernizing project of the state during the liberal period in Ecuador. She examines the ways in which the state intervened in the conflicts between the coastal elite and the highland elite by using a liberal discourse in which a common language and common categories actually marked differences in ideas and projects. By focusing on the keywords that emerged in liberal discourses, she argues that the state was able to support the interests of certain classes or class factions, and was in turn supported by certain classes and certain interests. The issue of how state strategies ensure support for the state is also addressed by Blim (chapter 10), and he directs attention to the struggles that occur within contending political parties to develop a form of a welfare state that would remedy Italy's employment problem while securing consensus for the new Italian state.

It is clear from these contributions, then, that the authors are concerned with specifying the "political" of political economy by examining structures of power and how power is exercised in different contexts. Questions are explored that concern the processes of class formation, class structure and interests, with the position of various groups to each other structurally, spatially, and historically, as well as with the structure and role of states as they reflect the concerns raised in Marx's political and historical surveys (Roseberry 1997). As the position of various groups to one another and *vis à vis* the state is often that of subordinate to superordinate or of the powerful to powerless, that relationship often involves domination. Often that domination occurs not as a simple display of strength or force, but as the authors above show, in the execution of certain projects and the implementation of specific visions of the nation and the national economy. This has involved projects of modernization in manifold contexts. Therefore, the forms that the state's (usually, but of course not always) modernizing project takes also require careful interrogation since it is the practices of state power, among other things, that give rise to certain forms of collective action and preclude others.

Striffler (chapter 8) and Vicencio (chapter 9) both provide cases in which state power is invoked and exercised to manipulate histories and shape subjectivities in their respective research settings. Striffler addresses the question of how and why dominant groups succeed in turning their history into the version of history that prevails over others. He examines how history was and is produced following the worker takeover of the hacienda in Ecuador. His analysis touches on the way in which the state constructed the takeover as communist-led and how this had the effect of simplifying and fixing the events, so that they would fail to serve the purpose of invigorating political projects in the present. As Striffler argues, where alternative histories are repressed, future oppositional projects are much more difficult to envisage.

The reinforcing role of state strategies and the effects that state power has in defining the past is also a central concern of Vicencio's chapter. Vicencio uses

oral histories of a factory-owning couple in Franco's Spain to highlight the contradiction between the discursive construction of the past, characterized apparently by harmony and unity, and a material lived experience, characterized by divisiveness and suspicion. She argues that the reconstruction of the past, including a failed attempt at a producer cooperative among *capacho* (sisal basket) makers, impedes peoples' ability to imagine alternative forms of collective action in the present under changing global political economies. The effect of state strategies in both Vicencio's and Striffler's case studies is to constrain attempts at resistance. As these writers show, resistance and consent are not natural states and political quiescence an immemorial cultural attribute. They are produced and reproduced through material conditions.

The essays in Part 3, *Hegemonies and Histories*, are concerned precisely with an exploration of material conditions that are implicated particularly in the production of culture. They do this through their examinations of the ways in which class, gender, ethnicity, racialized forms of ethnicity, as well as regional and national identities are configured through the relationships involved in making a living under late capitalism. This is done in many contributions by problematizing the role of history and by elucidating upon the subtleties of the process of hegemony. Gordillo (chapter 13), for example, presents us with insights on the ways in which hegemonic visions and values are challenged in his analyses of the ways in which the social memory of the Tobas, an indigenous group in Argentina, is constructed. He illustrates the ways in which ideas about free and unfree labor are used in the Tobas' construction of the past. Gordillo argues that in these constructions there is a tension between past vision and present forms of consciousness. Tobas remember their ancestors as free, though innocent of their exploitation. In the present, however, they are dependent on, and clearly conscious of, their exploitation by the state. Gordillo discusses the ways in which the Tobas reconstruct old battles to represent themselves as victors, in ways that belie the facts of dominant histories. He argues that this process of reconstruction evokes and captures meanings of resistance to domination. But downplaying the terror and suffering of the past, while it permits people to draw on heroic qualities in their own more recent experiences of terror and suffering, undermines their capacity to turn these memories into a more critical political tool.

Indeed, many authors in this volume use the idea of hegemony to explore questions of conflict and struggle in which working people are engaged and they also explore the ways in which different forms of compliance are secured. Leach (chapter 14), for example, shows that for steelworkers in Ontario the outcome of industrial restructuring is a much less militant approach to politics. Turning to Gramsci and his ideas on the way in which the social subject becomes created under different forms of capitalism, she argues that the system of disciplining labor in unions operates to constrain political action. Barber (chapter 15)

also examines the effects of industrial collapse, and she explores the ways in which hegemony is negotiated and tradition reworked in the contemporary struggles amongst mine workers in Cape Breton. She explores the conflicts engendered by the retreat of both the state and capital from its bargain with labor and its abdication of its role in the sustenance of Cape Breton communities. Her analysis focuses on the ways in which differential meanings in the language of community inform contemporary struggles to make a living under conditions of industrial restructuring. The effects of restructuring are also pursued by Lem's discussion (chapter 16) of the agrarian economy in Languedoc. Again, drawing on Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Lem focuses on the question of consent and discusses the ways in which rural women, the wives of small farmers, have become assimilated to key political and economic projects during particular periods in the capitalist transformation in France. Her discussion focuses on the ways in which the assimilation to one political project, particularly the project of modernization, has resulted in the alienation of women from another political project, the project of regional nationalism and the consolidation of regional culture and identity. The question of regional identity is also explored in Menzies's (chapter 17) discussion of fishers in Brittany. Menzies argues that the collapse of the industrial fish canning industry stripped away the class basis of identity (and, also, in this case a militant past), and opened the way for Bigouden regional identity. He thus explores the ways in which nationalist identity superseded class-based identity and asserts that in fact what underlies the shroud of identity politics was the class interest of a group of petty capitalists struggling to maintain their social and economic position.

From the essays in Part 3, and throughout the volume, it is clear that many of the contributors make an attempt to move beyond some of the conceptual and analytical boundaries of Marxism. They do this not by jettisoning the precepts and suppositions embedded in his analytical framework but, in fact, by reconfiguring them in ways that attempt to remedy some of the shortcomings or omissions that have been identified in his work and to pursue some of the questions that are raised. This is shown in the contributions that discuss gender and the attempts by many writers to modify and extend the analysis of capitalism in terms of gender analysis. For example, the question of how surpluses are extracted necessarily raises questions concerning gender, since capitalism tends to use men's and women's labor differently, in different times and places. In Part 3, for example, several contributors explore the question of the ways in which women's labor has been transformed by and inserted into the global economy. Labrecque (chapter 12) focuses on the women maquiladora workers in the Yucatan to trace the changes in gender relations that result from the economic crises and changing power relations that follow in the wake of the process of new forms of global capitalism that are emerging. She examines the ways in which the redefinition of gender relations results from economic crisis, and the

troubling forms those take under specific conditions of gendered production. In her contribution, and also in the cases examined by Barber, Leach, Lem, and Menzies, gender is seen as embedded in social institutions and in ideologies, highlighting the gendered nature of capitalism and of local resistances to it.

While the framework for the analysis of capitalism has become extended through the contributions of many anthropologists whose work explores gender relations, identity, and women's labor, this has been accomplished within attempts to grasp the transformations of capitalism itself.³ Indeed, contemporary capitalism has become altered in ways that were not altogether anticipated in Marx's writings. One of those changes, which some would argue reveal the limitations of Marx's framework, is often referred to as globalization. Yet globalization and also economic restructuring are probably the most cited and least understood contemporary processes. Globalization, taken to mean the process by which production, distribution, and exchange have become increasingly and intensively internationalized, is, as Roseberry (chapter 5) argues, a trend that is often taken for granted by anthropologists, and used either as a backdrop for ethnographic studies or as the theoretical underpinning for reflecting on population flows, cultural shifts, and the emergence of new social identities. Yet, some anthropologists have taken as central to their work the analysis of globalizing processes and its implications for men and women whose lives are directly touched by those forces. Labrecque's work particularly shows that anthropology is uniquely situated to address issues central to the changing organization of the global economy by drawing attention to the ways in which global processes are historically and regionally contextualized. In turn, this shifts our thinking about social movements that have arisen in late capitalism and the way that social subjectivity is constituted. Instead of seeing social movements as "new," we can see them as necessarily continuous, and in certain ways discontinuous, with older, often localized, forms of political mobilization, but always underpinned by material relations and situated practices.

Leach (chapter 14) and Barber (chapter 15) both discuss locations of industrial work in Canada and they trace the economic consequences of restructuring on the lives of people working in primary industries, where the global changes in systems of production have resulted in the deindustrialization of specific localities. Such discussions attend to local forms of change that are consequent upon such macro forces and they reinforce the analytical significance of the local and locality. In some work on globalization, especially that focused on diaspora, transnationalism, and mobility, the local has been effectively erased, considered as irrelevant to what is happening globally. Yet in many of the chapters here we pause to think about the nature and significance of locality in this highly mobile world. Smith (chapter 18), for example, suggests that the argument that presents contemporary economic reality as a radical break with the past, is one that actually derives from a failure to conduct locally and historically

specific studies, and consequently to see the precise ways in which contemporary processes build upon older ones. Indeed, recent debates on the nature of globalization (Lash and Urry 1987; Smart 1993; Giddens 1990; Harvey 1989) point to the need for finely grained ethnographic studies that keep the global and the local in play simultaneously, so that the kinds of restructuring that globalization requires can be understood in a nuanced and locally specific way.

As a volume of essays that are written by anthropologists who approach their discipline through a commitment to the framework of political economy, *Culture, Economy, Power* is both an illustration of the relationship that prevails between anthropology and Marxism and a recent chapter in the history of that relationship. Indeed, anthropology and Marxism, as bodies of thought, modes of analysis as well as fields of investigation, have been shaped and reshaped through a long history of interaction and mutual influence. Any history of anthropological thought will no doubt outline the ways in which Marx's ideas have influenced the discipline of anthropology. But it is important to recall, as several writers have pointed out, that anthropology also influenced Marx in the development of key ideas in his work.⁴ In recent years, many works have appeared that have given much attention to the critical relationship that has prevailed between Marxism and anthropology.⁵ What these studies reveal is that while this relationship has been fraught with tension at times,⁶ overall the relationship has been of a deep dialectical nature. Moreover, they expose the multiplicity of thematic areas and critical issues that have been the focus of anthropological attention in Marxist anthropology. While it is well beyond the scope of this introduction to review them, we will end this introduction by exploring some of the fundamental themes and the ways in which the essays attend to them.

Political Economy and Capitalism

The analysis of capitalism is clearly a key thematic area in Marxism and anthropology and those engaged in it would identify themselves as political economists. Yet it is often recalled that Marx actually engaged in a critique of political economy. This has led to questions of the compatibility of political economy and Marxism as modes of analysis. Marx critiques political economy in two senses. On the one hand he critiques the assumptions of the classical political economy of Smith, Ricardo, and Mill, and he also critiqued political economy as a body of knowledge and an intellectual tradition that claims to grasp the reality of the nature of material life (Levine 1979). As a critic of political economy, he rejected neoclassical explanations in economics for the workings of capitalism. On the other hand, his critique is also directed at material life itself, and through his critique of classical political economy as a body of knowledge,

he intended to reveal the contradictions of the system of political economy itself, that is, capitalism (Levine 1979). In this respect, then, a Marxist approach and the approach of political economy are not incompatible. It is important to remember that while Marx begins with a critique of political economy, he also ends with it. As Roseberry (1997) reminds us, Marx is a political economist who worked within, while writing against, the basic ideas contained in the political economy of the day. So as a political economist Marx was nonetheless most concerned with the organization, mobilization, and appropriation of labor under capitalism, as well as how surplus labor is extracted from direct producers. In anthropology, continuing attention is being directed at these issues in studies of the question of the transition to capitalism (see, for example, Clark, chapter 11 and Striffler, chapter 8) and the dynamics within it. More recently, many writers concerned with the analysis of capitalism are also engaged in the effort to extend Marx's analysis to take into account the contemporary working of what has been called late capitalism, and to understand what capitalism means following its reorganization in the 1970s under what is often called post-Fordism. For example, what is often revealed is that the organization of contemporary capitalism is indeed different from the organizing principles that Marx so meticulously analyzed. Yet, as Labrecque (chapter 12), Leach (chapter 14), Barber (chapter 15), Menzies (chapter 17), and Lem (chapter 16) reveal, it is clear that the fundamental logic of surplus appropriation and the essential dynamics of capitalist economies remain unaltered.

Materialism and History

Perhaps the most important starting point of the approach in anthropology that has come to be known as political economy is its grounding in history and historical materialism. As anthropologists concerned with studying the political economy of past and present societies and cultures, each of the contributors uses, as a point of departure, notions contained in the historical materialism of Marx as well as in his analysis of capitalism and his analysis of political consciousness and collective action. The point of departure for Marx's materialism was the idea that through human actions, people enter into relations and act collectively in and on nature. In so doing, they commit their labor to the transformation of nature and the material conditions necessary for the reproduction of life. These ideas are summed up in one of the most famous passages that Marx ever wrote, in the *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859)*. Hence, the concept of labor and the ways in which labor is organized are central precepts in Marx's notion of materialism. But the materialism of Marx is a historical one. It is historical in the sense that modes of organizing labor, the relations involved in mobilizing labor, are historically situated. As Striffler (chapter 8), Barber (chapter

15), and Clark (chapter 11) show, history itself is constituted by people acting collectively to reproduce and transform relations, institutions, and practices.

The thematic area of historical materialism is explored by most authors in the volume as they seek to problematize the special historical and material circumstances by which the labor of anthropological subjects and anthropologists themselves are organized. Pursuing the issue of how labor is organized for social reproduction, many of the contributors have focused on work contexts and the organization of livelihoods in distinctive periods under distinctive power configurations. Thus, for many of the contributors in this volume, the anthropological subject is constituted as people who labor, people who work. Many of the essays, therefore, use an analytical framework that views the social world as made of classes—members of the laboring class and members of classes who do not make a living employing the labor of others. Menzies (chapter 17), for example, focuses on small-scale fishers in Brittany and explores the relations and different interests of skippers and deckhands. He poses the question of why they persist despite the trend of the concentration of capital. Leach (chapter 14) argues for attention to class aspects of broad-based political mobilization in southern Ontario and describes how the specificities of the changes in the labor market militates against political action. The anthropological subjects in Labrecque's (chapter 12) contribution are again members of the laboring class. Workers and members of the laboring classes in Italy also represent the focus of Blim's (chapter 10) discussion. However, his intervention presents the other side of the question of work and employment that has come to configure the experience of increasing numbers of people in contexts of globalization and economic restructuring, that is, the experience of being out of work and unemployed. His contribution traces the different political initiatives taken on by the political Left and Right in contemporary Italy to address the question of regional differences in patterns of unemployment. These examples again illustrate the importance of locality and local processes in shaping class relations and politics, and together they reinforce Smith's view that questions the importance to which people's embeddedness in place remains significant in developing an understanding of the contemporary world. The field of inquiry, for anthropologists who are concerned with production and workers, is political and economic transformations in the conditions and circumstances within which people live and work.

In many of these contributions there is an attempt to move beyond what is often perceived as a strictly materialist focus. This is often interpreted as a form of materialist determination in Marx's work; for example, that the form of the state as well as ideas, beliefs, and consciousness, in other words the cultural realm and subjectivity, are all determined materially. Clark (chapter 11), Gordillo (chapter 13), Lem (chapter 16), Leach (chapter 14), and Barber (chapter 15) are concerned with the question of how subjects and subjectivities are created, and each addresses this issue, not by jettisoning materialism in favor of

an epistemological idealism, but by employing Gramsci's concept of hegemony to shed light on the intricate connections between the material and the ideal.

As these essays illustrate, Marx's version of materialism involves change, history, and temporality. The temporality embedded in a Marxist framework has translated itself into a concern in anthropology with history, not simply as temporal change, but as change that specifically involves the forces of power and its relationship to economy. The critical importance of a historical approach is evident from all the chapters. Those dealing with the context within which anthropological knowledge is produced show clearly how those contexts change over time. In other chapters, historicizing present-day processes becomes a key methodology for developing a better understanding of those processes. Attention to history permits deeper knowledge of the shifts in forms of domination and exploitation, concepts that take a central place in all the work presented here. Historical analysis also reveals the vicissitudes of capitalist formation and reformation, and the forms of social differentiation that they engender. Correspondingly, class, as the way in which collectivities of people are inserted into relations of production and reproduction (Smith 1999, 92), and what class "means," both discursively and materially, emerges most forcefully through a historical approach. In the ways in which history is invoked, it becomes clearer to the analyst how processes of domination and exploitation come about, move in this and that direction over time. It also becomes clear how they are discursively reconstructed in the present, in many cases to enable and also to constrain political action in social movements.

Politics and Consciousness

Many of the authors are concerned with analyzing the structures of power and specifying how power is exercised in different contexts in an effort to also analyze how power can be seized, overturned, contested, and resisted. As the contributors in this collection self-consciously concern themselves with history, class, exploitation, and domination, problematics explored in Marx's historical and political surveys, the question of the distinctive character of social movements and also the absence of them, is broached in their papers. Leach (chapter 14) and Menzies (chapter 17), for example, undertake to examine forms of collective action by pursuing the historical continuities and discontinuities that give them shape, rather than assuming radical breaks between "old" and "new" social movements. They examine movements engaged in class-based, regional, national, gender, and autochthonous struggles, and their relationship to overarching state projects in different phases of capitalist development. Taking up the theme of collectivity, they explore some of the questions that were raised in the Eighteenth Brumaire on how the "feeling of community" is generated, and how

people acting in their relations with others transform the worlds in which they live. The concern with the political runs not only to understanding how the material relations and historical understandings of the past and present infuse identities, and how consciousness of the collective ignites forms of collective action, but there is also a concern with understanding what mitigates against the creation of communities of interests. For Striffler (chapter 8) and Vicencio (chapter 9), this is a historical question, while for Lem (chapter 16), this is a question that concerns the interplay between the state, modernization, culture, and hegemony.

In these various ways, then, each of the authors addresses the multidimensional thematic areas that arise in part as Marx's intellectual legacy, but also in part from the real world of shifts and changes within capitalism in its early, modern, and late forms. We acknowledge a great debt to what has been called the "postmodern turn" in the social sciences and anthropology, for it gave us the impetus to think in concert about how some of the key concerns in anthropology might be rethought. We conclude, then, with two propositions. We propose that the realm of the cultural—in other words culture itself—should be explained and not taken as an untheorized catchall tool for explanation. To this we add that theorization necessarily involves a confrontation with the economic and political realm in history. We also propose that the agenda for anthropology should be reinvigorated by a commitment to exposing the "innermost secret" of the social structure of a system of economic and political organization based on the appropriation of labor, the appropriation of surplus (Marx 1967, 791). Inasmuch as some may take these propositions as provocations, we are eager to rise to the challenge of debate.

Notes

1. At the time, the society was called the Canadian Ethnology Society/Société d'ethnologie canadien.

2. The people involved have changed from year to year, with a fairly consistent core attending each year, others taking part as schedules permitted. Among some of those who have participated frequently over the years and whose ideas have shaped the collective agenda but whose contributions do not appear in the present collection, are: Claire Bélanger, Malcolm Blincow, John Calagione, Kirk Dombrowski, Lindsay Dubois, Glynis George, Leslie Jermyn, Tania Li, Micaela di Leonardo, David Nugent, the late, Daniel Nugent, Nicole Polier, Stuart Philpott, Albert Schrauwers, Veronica Schild, Gerald Sider, Krystyna Sieciechowicz.

3. There is a voluminous literature on these issues. For useful anthologies see di Leonardo (1991); Lancaster and di Leonardo (1997); Lamphere, Ragoné, and Zavella (1997).

4. See for example, Donham (1990) and Levine (1979).

5. See for example, Bloch (1985), Donham (1990), Kahn and Llobera (1981), Roseberry (1997), Sayer (1991), Vincent (1985), Wessman (1981).

6. Donham (1990, 3) has pointed out that anthropology and Marxism are in some ways opposed in their critical perspectives. Anthropology at its best, so he asserts, has stressed an unceasing respect for cultural differences. At its worst, it has descended into a wearied relativism that is devoid of any critical edge. On the other hand, Marxism at its best has been devoted to the deconstruction of ideologies that perpetuate human oppression. But at its worst, it has degenerated into a disregard for other ways of living and indeed contempt for people who do not share in the vision of an emancipatory project.