Anthropology in the new world (dis)order

Keynote Lecture given at the
Conference of Anthropologists of Southern Africa
University of Cape Town, 24th August 2003

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1. Why I’m here: introduction
I want to begin by thanking the conference organisers for their invitation to come here, especially Andrew Spiegel, who suggested the topic of my talk today. He asked me to talk about ethics, and particularly to address the question of whether I thought anthropological ethics were changing. I’ve also taken his question to mean whether such ethics are specific to a particular time and place or whether they are universal – or both.

I don’t of course intend what I say to be prescriptive for this audience, because that would be presumptuous. I understand that the association which runs this conference is in the process of adopting a new Code of Ethics and thus the topic is one that is current here.

To begin, I’ll go briefly over some ethical debates in British and American anthropology over the last 40 years, and try to set them in their wider context, as well as picking out some ideas that I think remain useful. I want then to turn to further issues of context – time and place. The time is now, these times, in a globalised world, a new world order which many consider a new world disorder. Is there a set of ethics appropriate for the times? We are considering this question in a particular place, South Africa, on which I am no expert, but about which I have been hearing and reading for 45 years. But I want to think about place in terms of Africa more generally, and, in my case, especially Tanzania where I have been carrying out research since 1965. What might be some of the ethical issues which particularly concern those of us who work on and in Africa? In the final section, I’ll make some distinctions between ethical principles and codes of ethics, and between
ethics as a form of morality, and an ethics, including ethics codes, for the
time.

I hope I will be forgiven for beginning with two personal anecdotes both of
which raise issues germane to my themes.

In 1959, I was a schoolgirl in Birmingham, UK, studying for my ‘A’ levels
and running the school’s debating society. As part of a youth group in a
Methodist church, we had recently met some students living at the Methodist
International Hostel in the city: Ghanaians, Kenyans, West Indians, Malayans
and South Africans. For the first time, my rather provincial horizons widened. I
began to be aware of the ‘winds of change’ sweeping the African continent
and invited a South African student to come and talk to our debating society. I
think that his audience, including myself, was stunned to hear of the
conditions under which black South Africans lived at that time.

But I was even more taken aback when, at the end of his talk, the speaker
asked me not to spread it around that he had spoken thus as it would be too
dangerous for him. That was the first intimation of the power of the dreaded
BOSS (Bureau of State Security).

For me, meeting and hearing this South African student was a defining
moment in terms of political awareness, and the beginning of a life-long
interest in his country. Apart from resistance to the Vietnam War, South Africa
was probably the major cause for politically concerned westerners, especially
those in the UK, from the 1960s to the 1990s. A few years after the release of
Nelson Mandela, the same South African student who had spoken at my
school and who was now an important figure in the new South Africa, visited
our house in London and I asked him how he saw things. He described with
difficulty his feelings as he sat with his wife on the steps of the Parliament
Building on the day Mandela was released. ‘It was a day I thought would
never happen’. I will return to this theme later in the lecture.

A second personal vignette, almost 20 years later: In 1985 I was asked by
my local AA (Anti-Apartheid) group to go with its Secretary and another
member to see our constituency MP to argue the case for UK government
support for the boycott of South Africa. Our local MP was Margaret Thatcher,
then Prime Minister of the UK, and we made an appointment for one of her
regular local surgeries. We made our case for the British government to
support the sanctions against South Africa. She replied that she would not do so because the sanctions had been instigated by the ANC which used ‘violence’ and ‘terrorist’ tactics, because sanctions would devastate the economy of South Africa, and cause widespread unemployment in both Britain and the UK. They would also jeopardise Britain’s relations with the South African government which she said were important to British interests, especially in terms of the security of the Cape Routes, and the minerals which South Africa produced. She then asked us if we supported violence. We replied that we did not but that we could understand why the ANC, or rather Umkhonto wa Sizwe (‘Spear of the Nation’ - the ANC’s armed wing), had been forced to resort to such tactics. We also drew a parallel with her own government’s response to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas. You will recall that this had resulted in the British sending an armada to the South Atlantic to fight the Argentinians. When I compared the Falklanders wish for self-termination with that of South Africans, she said we did not understand: that the first was WAR (i.e. legitimate), the other (i.e. the struggle in South Africa) was terrorism. She would not change her government policies. In the light of subsequent events, this seems ironic, but it also illustrates the fact that the use of the term ‘terrorism’ has had a history longer than that of September 11th.

South Africa is no longer the fashionable political cause it once was in the West, which is perhaps just as well. And yet it holds a very special place in the imagination of many people there. It is seen as a place in which justice was denied for so long, yet where people struggled and overcame injustice, and liberated themselves. These are heavy burdens for a country to bear and South Africa has perhaps come in for more than its fair share of criticism at least in part because it carries such a heavy symbolic load. This is another aspect of its burden of history, as well as the legacy of years of misrule which have left such large sections of the community poorer and less well educated than they should be in such a rich country.

So what ethical implications does this have for anthropologists working in the new South Africa? Does it mean that you do different kinds of work, or that you do it differently than anthropologists working elsewhere? These are questions which you will answer yourselves, both through debate and through
practice. I'll turn now to some of the ethical debates of the last few decades in the West.

2. On the question of ethics
The history of ethics in anthropology is fraught with controversy, even polemic. Recently there have even been criticisms of an anthropological concern with ethics, and particularly with ethical codes on a number of grounds. In her book *Audit Culture*, Marilyn Strathern has suggested that ethics has, in effect, become a form of audit (Strathern 2000). She is not alone in her views. In the same book, Vered Amit points to the proliferation of ethics committees in institutions of higher education, and argues that the requirements of such committees, based largely on a medical model of 'informed consent', render the practice of anthropology very difficult. Peter Pels, another contributor, suggests that ethics can be viewed as a 'technology of the professional self' – that codes of ethics are devised as part of the professionalisation of an occupation. Perhaps more importantly, Pels has also argued that ethics effectively denies politics. In this, he echoes a much earlier statement by his countryman Johannes Fabian that a professional concern with ethics is the result of the failure to confront the epistemological foundations of anthropology (Fabian1971).

Much depends, of course, on what kind of ethics we are talking about, since, as Sluka has pointed out, since 'radical' ethics are very different from corporatised ones (Sluka 1999). Here we see an interesting historical change in the ethics-talk of western anthropology over the last few decades. In the 1960s and 1970s, a concern with and for ethics was espoused by anthropologists termed 'critical'. By the 1990s, however, ethics had come to be seen as a set of rules to be complied with, part of the obsession with accountability and 'transparency' which now permeates the public sector in many western countries, including that of higher education, and which is linked to ideas about risk, especially the risk of litigation.

In effect, then, a consideration of the recent history of ethics-talk in anthropology reveals a good deal about the epistemological and institutional history of the discipline. Furthermore, such proliferation of discourse, it has been suggested, happens precisely when boundaries are shifting, or
threatened. As we shall see, debates around ethical codes and their re-writing tend to occur at moments of crisis.

A reading of the debates on anthropological ethics in the 1960s and 1970s also reveals that they cannot be understood except in a much wider context than that of the discipline alone. Words like ‘responsibility, commitment, and relevance’ had particular meaning in a situation of the war in Vietnam, the war on campus and the Civil Rights movement in the US, as well as decolonisation in Africa and elsewhere. During this period, anthropologists such as Kathleen Gough (1968b) and Gerald Berreman (1968) were loud in their criticisms of the discipline. Gough argued that it had done little to aid understanding of the world distribution of power under imperialism (1968: 405-6) and Berreman that it was ‘myopic and sterile’ to argue that public issues are ‘beyond the competence of those who study and teach about [hu]man[s]’ (1968: 6).

By the 1970s, other western anthropologists were arguing along similar lines, notably the Dutch anthropologist Gerrit Huizer who proposed the practice of a ‘liberation anthropology’. Furthermore, by this time, another term, ‘accountability’, had been forced upon the discipline by anthropology’s traditional subjects (objects) of study. Third World voices such as Asad (1973), Banaji (1970), Magubane (1971), Mafeje (1976) Owusu (1978) and Said (1978) all produced work which was highly critical of the discipline of social anthropology. Paradoxically, it was just at the moment when such voices were being heard for the first time, that postmodernism questioned not only the authority of the speaker or writer, but also the validity of such grand narratives as colonialism.

Appell suggests that radicalism, at least in American anthropology, had waned by the late 1970s, associating this with the end of the Vietnam war and the relative success of the Civil Rights movement. He was, however, scathing in his criticism of the then current trends in anthropology, arguing that it had become entangled in the economic reward system of American society. In the process what he calls ‘the basic ethic’ - the search for truth – had been forsaken in a search for profit in which ‘things are loved and people are used’ (1978: 2). Appell’s argument was, I think, prescient, since he put his finger on the economic pressures which have had an increasing effect not just on our
own discipline, but on higher education as a whole, resulting, as he suggests, in subtle shifts in disciplinary goals.

In one major respect, however, I would disagree with Appell’s contention that radicalism had waned in anthropology by the end of the 70s, because that would be to ignore the development of feminist anthropology. Although a number of classic works had been produced in the 1970s, the 1980s saw an explosion of important feminist anthropological literature, much of which also raised ethical questions, including many about how we conduct our research and what is the ‘standpoint’ of social scientists (e.g. Hartsock 1987). I think it would be difficult to underestimate the importance of feminism in anthropology since it did achieve something of a paradigm shift.

Nonetheless, feminism also provides an interesting example of where an ethical position based on a universalistic formula (‘sisterhood is powerful’) was actually challenged by Black and Asian women living in the West and by Third World women. They argued that feminist anthropologists could not represent them or the societies from which they had originated, or in which they were currently living (Amadiume 1987, Amos and Parmar 1984). Feminist anthropology was thus forced to reconsider its ethical stance, to draw back from ideas about the universality of womanhood; thus we see that some practices considered ethical in the 1970s were no longer so a decade later.

This suggests, then, that ethical practices may shift gear, and this is most clearly seen in the changing codes of ethics produced by western anthropological associations. It is not insignificant, for example, that the British ASA (Association of Social Anthropologists) did not produce a code of ethics at all until the mid 1980s (ASA 1987), a period when the discipline in the UK was producing far more postgraduates than the academic labour market could possibly absorb. For the first time, there was public discussion in the discipline about other non-academic fields into which Ph.D.s could enter, especially development and other forms of ‘applied’ anthropology. This involved not only considerable debate about the worthiness or otherwise of applied versus ‘pure’ anthropology, but also about the marketability of anthropology in the wider society (Grillo 1985, Stirling 1988, Caplan 2001). Indeed, it could be argued that the British case fits well Pels’ rather cynical argument that codes of ethics are about technologies of the self, especially a marketable self, or
that ethics codes are designed more to protect anthropologists than their subjects.

When I joined the ASA committee in the late 1990s, there was a feeling that the ASA’s original code of ethics, as it had been formulated in the mid 1980s, was no longer totally appropriate, because it was premised upon the idea that western anthropologists went off to study Third World peoples. In fact, for both ideological and practical reasons, many western anthropologists had by this time started working ‘at home’, while there were increasing numbers of non-westerners practising the discipline either ‘at home’ or ‘abroad’. Accordingly, the code was revised to reflect changing contexts (ASA 1999).

In short, then, looking at ethical codes and the debates around them suggests as follows:
- they need to be read in their particular historical context
- they tell us a great deal about the discipline, its practitioners and its institutional as well as intellectual history
- they are interpreted and re-interpreted, they are debated and re-written, in short they change, they have a history, and it is one from which we might want to learn

Perhaps then, as Shore has suggested, paraphrasing Levi-Strauss, we may most usefully consider that ethical codes are ‘good to think with’ (Shore 1999).

But what of the values that underlie ethical codes? Do these remain universal? Can we discern a set of moral principles such as truth, honesty, dignity, integrity, respect? Terms which recur constantly in the literature on the ethics of anthropology are those like responsibility, commitment, relevance, and accountability. Let us look briefly at each of these key terms:

In terms of the responsibility of the anthropologist, the most frequently cited tenet is that of informed consent. But what does this mean exactly? Is it about the subjects of research signing forms, as many institutional ethics committees require? Or it is rather, as other scholars have proposed, a constant process of negotiation on an everyday basis (Fluehr-Lobban 1991, Pels 1999)? Marilyn Silverman has recently expressed this well:
People’s consent must be renewed each day – through their continuing interaction with the researcher and the project, through their help, cooperation and assent... Phrased another way, anthropological research can only take place in the light of informed consent given continuously, openly and graciously because we are behaving, and have behaved, properly (2003: 117).

A second frequent theme under the heading of responsibility is about the primacy of the interests of the subjects of research, including their right to confidentiality and privacy. But does this always apply? Laura Nader, who has long advocated ‘studying up’ (1973, 1995), does not see this rule as applying to those who oppress and exploit others. Presumably in such instances even covert research, or at least research which does not reveal entirely its aims or methods, a practice normally proscribed by anthropology codes of ethics, might be deemed acceptable, at least by some.

What about the term commitment? The American anthropologist Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, who edited an important book on the ethics of anthropology back in the 1980s, has recently revised it (2003). In her introduction she notes the frequent adage that anthropologists should do no harm and asks ‘why not do some good?’ She also asks ‘Are we doing all we can?’ Are we doing all that we should?’ But what might this mean? Is it, as Appell suggests, about considering how much the fieldworker gives of him/herself to the host community (Appell 1992). Does it involve whistle-blowing and speaking out (Barber 2003)? What about intellectual and biological property rights (Fluehr-Lobban ibid)?

Some would go further and argue for ‘taking sides’ (Schepers-Hughes 1995), seeing anthropology as a field of action and engagement (a view also expressed by Polgar, Caulfield 1979, and Huizer 1979a and 1979b). Scheper Hughes (ibid) suggests this is preferable to practising anthropology as a kind of voyeurism, and treating suffering as merely spectacle or aesthetics. Such a position suggests also a relationship between ethics and human rights as some anthropologists have recently proposed (Sluka 1999, Pels 1999, 2000, Laidlaw 2002). It may lead anthropologists to act as advocates, although paradoxically, the most useful advocates may well be those who do not ‘take sides’ but act as ‘objective’ ‘experts’ (Strang 2003).
A third term which regularly appears in ethics codes and literature is *relevance*: for whom is anthropology relevant? The subjects of research? Society as a whole? And relevant to what? The growth of the discipline? Increase in human knowledge? The betterment of people’s lives? When I used to teach the core first year course on research design to postgraduates, we would begin as usual by introducing ourselves to each other. The students would give their names and outline their research projects: several would likely be working on topics such as AIDS, discrimination, the relationship between health and poverty. But others would be working on topics that appeared to have little or no practical relevance. Students in the latter category were sometimes defensive about their interests, feeling that their peers in the first category would judge them wanting. Should we take the view that in a world beset by major problems, it is only legitimate to engage in research which has a chance of ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives?

Finally, *accountability*: to whom are we accountable? The list is much the same as that for the first concept – those to whom and for whom we are responsible. Demands for accountability have come largely from the people with and on whom we work. Yet how may such accountability be put into practice? Does it mean taking written drafts back for discussion before we publish? Does it mean publishing in local languages? Does it mean, as many have suggested (Benthall 1996, Gledhill 2000), behaving as a public intellectual and engaging with an audience outside of anthropology?

These are general debates. What ethical implications do they have for anthropologists working in the new South Africa? Does it mean that you do different kinds of work, or that you do it differently than anthropologists working elsewhere? I note that many papers at this conference are about memory, witnessing, and testimony, as well as about identity. In this regard, you are following classic philosophical advice. When Heidegger was asked what we ought to do, he replied that it was first necessary to find the answer to Kant’s basic question about who we are. So let me now turn to the specificities of place and time. I begin with place.
3. A post-September 11th world and Africa’s place in it

When I began to work on the subject of ethics a few years ago, the hot topic was the so-called Tierney affair – the book entitled *Darkness in El Dorado* which alleges that the anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon and the geneticist James Neel ‘experimented’ on the Yanomami Indians of South America in a variety of ways, and that their vaccination campaign had been effectively a form of genocide (Tierney 2000). The discipline, at least in the West, was briefly convulsed, and for a while, every day produced new reams of emails on the topic, which also made it into the mainstream press (see Sahlins 2001, Ingold 2000, Nugent 2001, 2003).

In the light of September 11th 2001 and its fall-out, this affair, although far from unimportant, seems relatively small beer. Attention has shifted, first to the war in Afghanistan and then that in Iraq, and to the on-going ‘war on terror’. I said earlier in this talk that, in considering the history of anthropological ethics, we might want to learn from history, or we might find history repeating itself. And indeed, some of the issues with which anthropologists are faced today have a strong resemblance to those current in the 1960s and 1970s.

What effects have these cataclysmic events produced in anthropology? Or indeed, in academia generally? In a lecture which I gave to a Canadian audience last year (Caplan 2002), I considered a variety of anthropological responses to September 11th. It did not take very long to list them, but at least there had been some. It would take much less time to discuss anthropological responses to either of the wars which followed, first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. Indeed, as Jonathan Benthall remarked of the first Gulf War, those of 2002 and 2003 also appear to have left anthropologists ‘speechless’, although the amount of media coverage, including on the web, has been enormous.

Yet, while the West’s attention has been focused on these matters and these areas, it has paid little attention to the on-going wars, conflicts, famines and other catastrophes in Africa. While of course it is appalling that some 50,000 people, many of them civilians, were killed in Iraq, the latest estimates for the Congo are that 7 million have been killed, yet media coverage of that war, unlike those in Afghanistan and Iraq, has been minimal. Indeed,
sometimes the western press appears to regard war as simply business as usual in Africa.

It is also sometimes said that if Africa were to drop off the map, there would not be much of a ripple in the world economy. Although it has 10% of the world’s population, it has only 2% of its income and 30 of the world’s poorest 34 countries are in Africa. In the UN Development Report for 2002-3, it is shown that the development indices of many countries have got worse and the majority of these are in Africa (Guardian Weekly July 17th-23rd 2003). Africa is considered to be the world’s basket-case and all the ills known to mankind seem to proliferate here. Recently, the newly-constituted International Criminal Court announced its very first formal Examination of a potential case, which is to be on one area of the Congo. Here is an extract from the report on the ICC’s website:

The Prosecutor will gather information on the situation in Ituri, Democratic Republic of Congo, resulting from ethnic strife, HIV/AIDS, starvation, landmines and the exploitation of natural resources. If a formal investigation follows, criminal charges could include summary executions, systematic torture, unlawful arrest and detention… abductions, mass rape, ritual cannibalization, large scale displacement of civilians, and the forced recruitment of child soldiers. (www.icc-cpi.int/docs/news/pids009_20003-en.pdf)

Here is a 21st century version of Conrad’s vision of Africa as ‘the heart of darkness’. So is this just about Africa behaving as usual? Perhaps it is not so simple. The ICC announcement goes on: ‘There are also alleged links [to be investigated] to the activities of African, European and Middle Eastern companies and the international banking system’.

Perhaps, then, the stereotype of the western media that Africa, in the post-colonial era, was ‘neglected’ by the Western powers, is just that, a stereotype. In fact, of course, the West and western companies have taken a great deal of interest in Africa’s resources, including crops such as coffee, tea, and cotton as well as mineral resources such as gold, oil, uranium, and diamonds. Indeed, it is precisely the scramble for such resources which has fuelled conflict and war, arms sales and corruption, leading in many instances to the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Africa has also been
subjected to the strictures of the multi-lateral agencies, notably the imposition of the IMF’s Structural Adjustment Programmes, and most African nations remain very heavily indebted. But the solution proposed through concepts such as NEPAD (New Economic Programme for African Development)\(^1\) appears to be more of the same through the further integration of Africa into the global economy.

Following the bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, and the naming of a number of East Africans as being on the US’ ‘most wanted’ list after September 11\(^{th}\), many African countries have found themselves viewed as likely harbourers of ‘terrorists’. Driven by a combination of America’s insatiable appetite for oil, its concerns about the stability of the Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia) and the ‘war on terror’, we have recently seen the emergence of a new American policy towards Africa with President Bush visiting the continent for a ‘tour’ of five days. His agenda was clear\(^2\):

- getting more oil from Africa to ease dependence on S. Arabia (currently Africa supplies 15% - as much as Saudi Arabia - but this is forecast to rise to 20-5% within two years)
- expanding American bases across Africa and assisting governments with counter-terrorism and security
- increasing aid, a policy which is, however, both strategic and conditional, and often negated by other US policies (e.g. siding with pharmaceutical companies with regard to drugs, thereby wiping out many of benefits of promised AIDS assistance)
- increasing trade, the benefits of which are mitigated by the competition from products produced under huge subsidies to US (and EU) farmers: cotton, peanuts, etc. and which represent a reneging of the Qatar round of agreements on drugs and agricultural subsidies. The benefits are further diluted by the fact that African access to US markets requires the

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\(^1\) See the NEPAD website [www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org). For further information and criticisms see the Inter-church Coalition on Africa’s website [www.web.net/~iccaf/debtsap/nepad.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/debtsap/nepad.htm)

\(^2\) This is a synopsis of reports taken from The Guardian between July 6\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\) 2003, and from the Washington Post (reprinted in the Guardian Weekly) of July 10\(^{th}\)-16\(^{th}\). These reports are also available on the archive section of the Guardian’s website ([www.guardian.co.uk/archive/](http://www.guardian.co.uk/archive/))
acceptance of US law over all property rights, both intellectual and commercial.

In short, Africa, like much of the rest of the world, is now seen as within the orbit of the world’s only superpower, which is currently pursuing a doctrine of ‘pre-emptive strikes’, ‘regime change’, a perpetual war on terror, and the strengthening of homeland security and for whom the most frequently quoted mission statement is borrowed from a Roman writer of 170 BC ‘Oderint dum metuant’: ‘Let them hate us while fearing us’ (Lucius Accius, Rome, 170-6 BC).

In this geo-political environment, what does it mean to do anthropology in Africa? What kind of anthropology can be carried out, by whom, about whom and for whom? And what possible difference can it make?

I can, of course, only pose, not answer such questions, and I certainly cannot do so for a country in which I only arrived two days ago. Lest it be thought, however, that Africa, or South Africa, is simply one of the victims of superpower imperialism, I want to look briefly at South African-Tanzanian relations, as one way of thinking about some of these issues, before going on to consider my own experience in one of Africa’s poorest countries – Tanzania - where I have been carrying out research for some 36 years.

3. On doing anthropology in Tanzania

Like South Africa, Tanzania had a utopian dream, of development via ‘African socialism’, as articulated by its charismatic leader Julius Nyerere, commonly known as Mwalimu – the teacher. His dream was not to be realised. Falling commodity prices, rising oil prices, the war with Uganda, mismanagement in the state sectors, all combined to hamper Tanzania’s economic development. Yet the Nyerere period did see enormous achievements in primary health care and education, as well as adult literacy. Further, as an independent front-line state, Tanzania, like Zambia, supported the freedom movement and housed many South African exiles and activists.

But in the post-Nyerere period, with the liberalisation of the economy and the imposition of structural adjustment programmes, most of the health and educational indices are getting worse, not better for the majority of citizens. Inequality is also increasing sharply.
At the same time, inward investment is rising, and one of the largest investors in Tanzania is South Africa. This is immediately obvious to any casual visitor to Dar es Salaam: the operator’s voice on the cell-phone system has a South African accent, the supermarkets in Dar es Salaam are South African-owned and run, and those who bother to read the labels of the food sold in them will find that much of it also comes from South Africa. South Africans now own or manage the state airline, the national electricity company, and much more. They have been attracted to Tanzania because of its relative stability, the privatisation of state-owned concerns, and the encouragement of inward investment generally, as well as by the profits to be made.

A recent paper by George Kabelwa (2002), of the Economic and Social Research Foundation of Tanzania, notes that ‘over the past decade…South African companies have become the most noticeable foreign investors of Tanzania’, and that Tanzania in the late 1990s was receiving almost half of all Foreign direct investment in the SADC area (p. 5).

This is of course somewhat paradoxical, as Kabelwa notes: ‘replacing the political activists and refugees of the past… by South Africa business people, who had in some cases presumably been supporters of the discredited regime’ (p. 5).

Arguments for the positive effects of such inward investment are that the South Africans are introducing modern technology to Tanzania’s economy, that they are upgrading skills and training workers. It is said that the competition induced improves product quality, makes additional products available, and expands the market, not least by the ubiquitous and highly conspicuous street advertising and through sponsorship.

However, there is also a down-side. It may be difficult for Tanzanian companies to compete with South African ones and the effect of privatisation

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3 Not all of the companies investing in Tanzania would fit this category, in fact there is a mention of Mirambo Street Properties Ltd. said to be an ANC venture (Kabelwa 2002).
4 In 1998 Inter Africa Outdoor Advertising company, specialising in manufacturing outdoor displays, arrived and by 2002 could produce 400 pieces of metal products per day. Residents of Dar es Salaam can see their city rapidly disappearing under its gigantic billboards. (ref?)
5 South African companies sponsor sports and sporting facilities; for example Vodacom, one of the major cell-phone companies, now sponsors the premier soccer league, while Tanzania Breweries, another S. African-owned company, has contributed to the upgrading of the national sports stadium. (ref?)
generally has been a ‘rationalisation’ of the work force leading to greater unemployment. Further, South Africans have focused on breweries, mining, hotels, transport and the financial sector, while the agricultural sector, the mainstay of Tanzania’s economy, has attracted less than 1% of their investment (Kabelwa 2002: 13).

In Tanzania there are frequent criticisms of this situation, and especially of high-profile sales of national utilities, such as the National Bank of Commerce and the Tanzania Electricity Supply Corporation (TANESCO), and the plans to privatise the Tanzania Railways Corporation. In my research visit last year (2002), I repeatedly heard people say ‘The government is selling the country to the foreigners, especially the South Africans’, even that ‘Tanzania is now a South African colony’. The reply of President Mkapa to such criticism is simple: ‘A critical factor of economic development is capital. South Africa has it, Tanzania does not. We would be patently foolish not to access South African capital for our development… Apartheid South Africa was our enemy. Post-apartheid SA is our friend and our partner in development (Guardian, 23/10/02, quoted in Kabelwa 2002: 14). Is it really that simple?

What are Tanzanian and South African anthropologists and sociologists to make of this situation? Perhaps it is only possible to point out some of the consequences at the local level, for ordinary people.

**A proposed development project on Mafia Island, Tanzania**

Let me give you a specific example from the area where I work, Mafia Island off the southern coast of Tanzania, most recently last year on local understandings of modernity. As it happens, my example does not concern a South African company but an European one.

During my visit in 1994, I had heard that a European company wanted to buy the land behind the beach, just north of the village where I have spent most of my time. In order to build this hotel, it was first necessary to acquire the land, which is planted with coconut trees, the main cash crop on the island. The Europeans were introduced to the area by the then MP. They offered a price of 50,000 Tanzanian shillings per tree, but this was later reduced to only T. Sh. 20,000. A local resident takes up the story:
They came in 1997 and started surveying without any warning or so much as a by-your-leave (bila hodi). Is that the way to do things? They were Europeans and they came in a Land Rover. The DC (District Commissioner) at that time... said that the government had already allocated this land [for development] in 1991. We said that no information [about this decision] had been received from anyone... We were told ‘This place has already been deemed suitable' (mahali hapa kishapendekezwa) [for tourist development] so we must sell.

Five people refused [because the price offered had been reduced]. The rest took the money, but these two sets of owners have not done so. In 199 they took the case further to Kibaha, capital of the Coast Region, and also to Dar to the Land Court of the Region. All five who did not wish to sell signed a letter and sent copies to the District Land Office and to the DC. But nothing happened.

Then this year (2002) the Europeans came again... The DC also came and he told us ‘Why are you resisting these investors? You'll have to sell in the end, so it is better you do so now’. We said ‘We are not objecting to investors but we want the price agreed originally, that is how we do business.’ He said the decision had already been made by the government and if we didn’t agree we’d be forced to do so and thus we’d be robbed. So some people did sell for T. Sh. 20,000 and noone got the T. Sh. 50,000 [originally promised]. But five people stood out... So the DC came again and said he had been put under pressure and threatened us with the police etc. He said we had to sell, he came with police (askari), the Land Officer, half of the Boma (District Administration) was there. We said ‘You can shoot us if you like, but we won’t sell at that price.’ So the DC left and there has been silence since then. But it took a long time for the money to be paid to those who had sold.

Then the son of the European [developer] came again and said [to those who had refused to sell] ‘Why are you still here?’ They said ‘Because we haven’t sold’. He said ‘But we’ve already paid three times over for this land!’ So he went away. They [the developers] are not
using the law. They talk [only] to the leaders and they come to frighten us. They must have been given money, those leaders’.

People thus felt that they had been leaned upon by government officials to sell their land and trees. Not only had their poverty been taken advantage of, but the developers had not kept to their agreements about prices, nor fulfilled their promises with regard to assistance to the village. So people feel that they are not consulted, not kept informed, but made vague promises which they suspect will not be honoured\(^6\).

I discussed these proposals to build hotels with many people in the village. Their fears could be summarised thus:

- developers will not fulfil their promises to give assistance to the community
- once land has been sold it cannot be taken back, and people have lost both their capital assets and their birthright
- they will be denied access to the beach, which is their workplace
- local people will not get work in such a hotel because they are not educated enough, or they will only get low-level work
- hotels will not buy local produce, but obtain everything from Dar es Salaam
- tourists will walk around dressed improperly (ovyo)
- local sexual mores will be threatened
- the local culture will change and be damaged

Such views were based on their own experiences of seeing tourist hotels not only in the south of Mafia, but also in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar.

This is of course not an unusual story either in Tanzania or elsewhere. It raises many issues, not least the difficulty for the anthropologist of confining what was once a village study within its original bounds. Following up this particular case has taken me out of the village to the district capital, the region, the courts, government departments, and eventually, to an NGO set up by a radical lawyer which concerns itself with land issues. I still need to go to interview the investors in Europe. In short, this is becoming a multi-sited ethnography.

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\(^6\). Paradoxically, the aftermath of the bombings at the American embassy, as well as a rise in crime in Kenya, and civil unrest in Zanzibar, has made East Africa an unattractive destination for many tourists, which is perhaps why the hotels in Kanga village Mafia remain unbuilt
But what ethical issues does it raise for the anthropologist? One is that I have to write a detailed report on my work for the Tanzania Scientific and Technical Research Council and have also promised copies of this document to local government officials on Mafia. I have found out a great deal about many controversial issues such as the above which appear to involve at least a degree of heavy-handedness, at worst outright corruption by government officials and political leaders. So do I put all of this into my report? And if I do, how can I protect my sources? If I am too blunt, will I be unable to return to this area? If I write an anodyne report, what use will that be to anyone? In the end, I show my draft report to two Tanzanian academics who tell me to go ahead and send it in, knowing that I am in a better position to speak freely than local academics might be.

What about commitment? I am on the side of the villagers and know that in this scenario, they are the ones with the least power. I have also read the literature on the anthropology of tourism and know perhaps even more than they do what could happen if the village is developed as a tourist resort. On the other hand, I also see that people's lives are getting harder. Mafia Island has not developed at all since my first visit in the mid 1960s and it is probably not going to do so unless either there is some form of social revolution, which appears rather unlikely, or there is some form of large-scale investment by developers. Who am I to judge?

And accountability? On many occasions during my last visit, I was held to account by my friends and adopted kin: ‘What has your research carried out over so many years done for us?’ Sometimes this was said in the context of requesting individual help, but it might also be spoken reproachfully in terms of what some consider to be my apparent failure to do anything tangible to alleviate the increasingly hard life most of them endure. Many would like me to take on the role of advocating their case to the powers that be, or even becoming a fund-raiser, seeking money from donors. Is this a suitably ethical role for an anthropologist? Others have said that the most useful thing I could do is to write a book about the village and the island in Swahili for themselves and their children, so that their history and traditions, which they fear are rapidly disappearing, are available for future generations.
There is a further aspect of anthropological commitment which seems to me important and that is to try and communicate something of what we have learned, indeed been taught by our informants, during the course of our work, to people outside of the discipline. This is perhaps particularly incumbent on western anthropologists who work on Africa in order to counter some of the dangerously stereotypical views - including ‘well it’s all their own fault anyway, isn’t it?’ - which many people in the West hold. This is a difficult task for anthropologists – we may perform it well with our students, but taking on the public is problematic, as anyone who has engaged with the mass media will be only too well aware.

**Conclusion: an ethics for our times?**

Contra the argument adduced by Pels which I quoted at the beginning of this talk, ethics is indeed intimately linked to politics, including the politics of knowledge. While, as Shore has suggested, ethics codes can be good to think with, a means of sensitising us to issues we need to think about, ethics cannot be reduced to texts, much less texts which do not change. So we have to take this on board, and engage with politics and power. We cannot pretend that power and differences of interest are not involved in what we do.

Currently in the West, both in the UK and other western countries which I visit from time to time, there is a dark mood of despair among many thinking people: ‘the world has gone mad’ is a phrase often repeated. In a situation in which the power of force held by global superpowers seems unassailable (shock and awe); the economic juggernauts of globalisation, structural adjustment, capital flight, unfair trade etc. roll on; the environmental implications of how we in the West live, including the threat of global warming, are disregarded, and the whole show is kept on the road by the media, many people feel powerless. ‘What can we do to change things?’ they ask. Yet I can’t help thinking that South Africa must also have appeared unchangeable for a very long time, and yet people did get up and did something, and made it different. That’s a very important beacon of hope.

So what can we as anthropologists do? I’d like to conclude by suggesting that an ethical anthropology, based on principles which actually do not change very much, can still be useful:
- it can provide knowledge of other ways of doing things, other ways of being, in short of alternatives
- its practitioners can act as advocates and also give voice to those whose voices are rarely heard
- it can also it can make the familiar strange, challenge the habitus.

It is perhaps this last which is currently most needed because it shows how power works both locally and beyond. It unmasks the many ways in which consent is manufactured, not least through the production of fear, and the assigning of blame.

Such an anthropology will also be concerned not just with codes of ethics, but with such ethical principles as social justice and human rights, in short it will be a moral anthropology.
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The new direction into Nubian/Nabatean relations initiates a broader cultural analysis of the Old World in the Classical Era. In the following chapters, we have included two case studies in order to show applications of the methodology at two very different levels: In Chapter 2, we describe the more global level, that encompasses the whole of the Society of Jesus, following the description provided in the Formula of the Institute. Effects in the present social order and to lay new and Christian foundations. We are called by the Christian hope to reconstruct our social order in accord with the will of God and the ideal of the kingdom. This is. Will the nations that have learned at such infinite cost the lesson of discipline and control, nevertheless revert to the old order and allow selfishness and injustice to have their way?