

Anthropology, Asian Studies, Asian American Studies

Open Systems, Closed Minds

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A series of papers written in 1957 and 1958 culminated in prominent British anthropologist Max Gluckman's 1964 edited volume, *Closed Systems and Open Minds: The Limits of Naivety in Social Anthropology*. The subtitle of this chapter inverts that title: open systems and closed minds. That early volume's methodological interest in how anthropologists define and delimit their "field"—both in the disciplinary and ethnographic sense (that is, field site)—was indeed prescient of debates to come in anthropology (for example, Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Lavie and Swedenburg 1996). Gluckman and collaborators (Devons and Gluckman 1964a, 15) champion naiveté—the treatment of complex social phenomena “as simple, crude, or gross”—so as to “get on with the job.” In parallel, they defend interdisciplinary naiveté or “artlessness” in order to be disciplined—as anthropologists, that is. They explain: “We have confined naiveté to the situation where the anthropologist disregards the researches and conclusions of other disciplines about aspects of the events he is studying, as irrelevant to his problem” (Devons and Gluckman 1964b, 212). Both the introduction and conclusion to the volume assert that one of the essays, although included, is in fact outside of their venture: namely, that of William Watson (on social mobility and social class in industrial communities), who became overly entangled in bordering social processes (in a disciplinary sense). Devons and Gluckman (1964b, 211) matter-of-factly declare, “In short, he ceased to be a social anthropologist and became himself a sociologist.” That is, they defended an eyes-open and humble eschewal of geographic, processual, and disciplinary borderlands.¹ Eyes-open humility refers, then, to the “open minds” in the equation: namely, that while necessarily “closing his [sic] system” the anthropologist nonetheless recognizes the “entanglements” of the “web of reality” and by exten-

sion the necessary artifice and arbitrariness of closed systems (ibid., 185). In this chapter, I consider the costs of that artifice and arbitrariness, both in the institutional life of the academy and in our classrooms.

In another vein, the final passages of *Closed Systems and Open Minds* turn to the divisions between “poetry and prose,” and the human and social sciences, cautioning, “in [t]hose borderlands trespass is dangerous save for the genius” (Gluckman 1964b, 261). Thus they argue that the anthropologist must opt for the secure bounds of the social sciences generally (as against the human sciences), of anthropology (as against other disciplines), and of the particular closed systems of analysis. These options refer in parallel to “discipline” (for example, anthropology), “area or site” (for example, closed systems), and literary conventions (for example, prose over poetry). This single classical anthropological volume thus reveals (as would many others) the intellectual constellations implicated in anthropology, fieldwork, and the social sciences. In this chapter, I consider the ways in which divisions such as these have been drawn and sustained in the academy (in research, writing, and teaching). In so doing, I challenge the sort of naiveté promoted in the Gluckman et al. volume.²

Arjun Appadurai (1999, 237), one of contemporary anthropology's most important thinkers on diaspora and displacement—the terms around which the conference that inspired this book was organized—makes a compelling argument about the workings of these homologously closed systems. Like Gluckman and collaborators, he takes up the very nature of research, noting that it represents a particular Western set of techniques, requirements, and expository conventions. In a sense, Gluckman's work, if ironically, prefigures Appadurai's precisely by underscoring the active naiveté entailed in closing systems. But these anthropologists' projects run counter to one another: Gluckman sets out to close systems, Appadurai's to open them. Appadurai's writings argue that locality (here I take “systems” to be localities of a sort) is itself a *work*, something produced, “not a fact but a project” (231). And again, paralleling, but opposing, Gluckman et al. on prose and poetry, Appadurai (1999, 237, emphasis added) asks: “Is there something for us to learn from colleagues in other national and cultural settings whose *work* is not characterized by a sharp line between social scientific and humanistic styles of inquiry?” Thus, contra Gluckman, he invites the non-geniuses among us to blur those lines, to allow for “undisciplined” voices. In this chapter, I will offer examples of what I call “culture” talk that both disrupt received ideas of locality and demand “humanistic styles of inquiry.”

Indeed, contra the rules of naiveté of Gluckman et al, trespassing of all the borders sketched in that volume has become quite commonplace in research and writing today, in anthropology and beyond.³ In this chapter, I am primarily

interested in the trespassing within the academy, and in that entailed in our students' lives.⁴ I mean to think about the ways that some of this trespassing takes place, takes shape, and makes trouble.

Chapters of this length lend themselves to the anecdotal, a comfortable space for many ethnographers.⁵ Note that the anecdotal is neither the incidental nor the accidental.⁶ I introduce here two clusters of anecdotes: the first about the micropolitics of academic localities (departments, disciplines, and the like); the second, on (mis)communication in those localities, and particularly on the student body at the millennial fin de siècle.

In making the connection between academic politics and student worlds (and classrooms) I mean to assert that parallel occlusions and elisions mediate against effective communication and understanding among and within these academic spaces. For both contexts, Appadurai's notion of the "work" of locality reviewed above is helpful. Fields, departments, and classrooms are all "works" of locality; that is, they have their own rules, their own systems of naiveté—rules and systems that I argue have become increasingly untenable. Thus this chapter first examines the way that academic localities beyond the classroom are maintained and policed, just as that very work is rendered invisible; it then turns to the classroom and the lecture hall, to the ways in which talk, students' talk, manages to disrupt comfortable boundaries. For each case, I suggest that the work entailed in locality making is disrupted, or revealed.⁷

The Politics of English

In February 2000 I received a formal letter from the chair of our Anthropology Department's Courses and Curriculum Committee indicating that the committee "enthusiastically supports" my efforts to cross-list "The English Language Ethnography of Korea," a new course that I developed for East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALC).⁸ The letter then goes on to ask, "Will you reconsider your decision to *limit* the course by design just to the English literature (specifically, the "English Language" qualification in the course . . .)? Given that the medium of instruction at UIUC [the University of Illinois], in all but the language training courses, is English, it follows that the bias of this medium is *inherent* in everything we teach" (emphasis added). These two sentences (a query and a mandate) are fascinating in juxtaposition. The first seemed to suggest that I might reconsider my decision to limit the course to English-language materials; the second, on the other hand, makes it entirely clear that the objection is not to the limits that I had imposed but rather to my having explicitly referred to those limits in the course title. In Gluckman's idiom above, my insertion of "English language" in the course title had broken, I think, with the department's (the field's?) unstated (or "inherent") naiveté—about the "closed system" of many (most?) of the syllabi (works) we teach.

I do not in any way offer this anecdote as a personal hardship tale of university administrivia, but rather because I think it is substantively revealing of larger issues. By underscoring implicit rules, marking the inherent naiveté of our pedagogy, I had transgressed the rules by which we name or mark our practices. I decided to name the course that way in appreciation of the English-language anthropological academy as but one academic circle among many, including importantly the South Korean anthropological community. Syllabi are implicitly constructed to "cover" topics, to delimit fields. Although in my teaching I always insist that coverage (of this or that topic) is not my aim (some syllabi lend themselves more easily to those caveats; it is more difficult to make such claims for those with ethnic-national signifiers such as "Korean" or "Korean American"), I think that syllabi nonetheless imply such coverage. In this small example even a symbolic attempt (I acknowledge that it was nothing more than that) to suggest the confines, the work of locality, of our (my) pedagogy was refused. I do not, however, mean to single out anthropology or, by omission, to praise EALC. Generally, the politics of language in area studies programs are of a very different variety: in such areas, materials in the vernacular are often prized, if not fetishized, as "authentic," nearer to the source.⁹

In the university culture I know, faculty are encouraged to put their courses "on the books"; formal course numbers make for easier accounting (in all senses of that word). In the era of so-called responsible budgeting (in which student numbers—at my university we frequently hear about "student feet"—are the bottom line), "the books" matter. Putting things on the books is clearly a disciplinary practice; one must, then, play by the books or rules. It is in these sorts of details that we can observe the boundary making and maintenance work of our institutions.

I turn now to another locality, one where the boundaries of knowledge and fields are quite obviously policed: an encyclopedia (*The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*). The anecdote I offer in this vein is one that again takes up questions of language and of "national" academies.

Just as the letter cited above arrived from the Department of Anthropology, I was agonizing over an encyclopedia article on the anthropology of Korea (Abelmann 2001); limited to 2,500 words, English-language citations,¹⁰ and fifteen bibliographic entries, the article was becoming moment by moment more political as I wrestled over who and what to include or exclude; the assertion of genealogies or fissures; and how to best refer to the anthropology beyond English. A number of generous readers, among them a number of South Korean anthropologists of South Korea in training in the United States, were quick to note very critically the many silences and contradictions in my drafts: that while I sought to tell at least partially the story of an anthropology beyond English and the United States, the allotment of my sentences—most of them devoted to the works of white anthropologists working in the United States—

told another story; that while I sought to document the coordinates of a transnationally shared anthropological history of the portrayal of "Korean" "culture" (while problematizing both terms), I had in fact conflated distinct histories and subjectivities. My point here is that a community of "diasporic" scholars¹¹ was insisting that my own attempts at exposing the naiveté (in Gluckman's sense) of my article and of the prescribed narrative conventions were neither loud nor bold enough. They were right.

I eventually submitted the article, running over by some 500 words and eight citations. Caught, I was asked to cut the 500 words and the extra citations; I did. It felt as if I had been asked to erase the very traces of my feeble attempts to broaden the article's scope and stretch. I do not mean to dismiss my own responsibility; we are, as is so often repeated in acknowledgments, solely responsible for our writings (including our syllabi). In fact, I am complicit in the limitations of the "English language" in both instances: my naiveté is, in the final analysis, my own work, much as Gluckman et al. suggest. Efforts to the contrary, I am nonetheless party to the localities I have been sketching here.

I will close this discussion of university localities with another instance of the mechanics of cross-listing, this time an anthropology course with the EALC. In the same semester that the Anthropology Department tinkered with my EALC offering, EALC decided against cross-listing a new course I was developing for the Anthropology Department, "The Ethnography of Asian America." The departmental letter explained that if the department cross-listed this course, where would it "draw the line?" (for other courses into the future). Along other bureaucratic trails (and trials), "The Ethnography of Asian America" was rejected five (!) times by the College (Liberal Arts and Sciences) Courses and Curriculum Committee because they failed to see how this course differs sufficiently from an existing course that introduces Asian American communities. Although the proposed new listing aimed to situate the ethnographic literature on Asian America in the context of theoretical and textual developments in anthropology, the "University" could not see beyond the overlap of ethnic domain or geography, hence the assertion of redundancy.¹² (It was eventually accepted and has to date been taught twice.) In each case, university localities are at work. In the first instance, an area studies program decides that an ethnic studies offering (although one with an explicitly transnational approach) is beyond its purview. In the second case, it becomes apparent that college committees exercise their own understandings of "ethnic" when it comes to anthropology offerings: that, in this case, Asian American ethnography is somehow not entirely viable as a literature through which to interrogate anthropological theory and practice, but that anthropology can be comfortably mobilized to portray Asian America.¹³

What these ever so micropolitics reveal, I think, is a university—and I do not take ours to be exceptional or uniform—*closing its systems*, and not neces-

sarily *open-mindedly*. In the letter from the Anthropology Department, the apt criticism from my readers, and the mechanics of the Asian American Studies course offering, we can see people (myself included) struggling over fuzzy borders, wanting to retreat to their own naiveté. It is, it seems, unsettling when the bounds of regional studies, ethnic studies, the social sciences, or English (-only!) academia, are unsettled. This said, however, I want to emphasize that these comments are not meant to vilify departments (my own), university committees, or particular individuals. It is unreasonable and unproductive to point the finger of blame narrowly. Rather, I mean to suggest that the practices mentioned here are implicated in long-standing organizational, institutional, and ideological configurations.

Talking "Culture": In and Beyond the Classroom

I turn now from the politics encircling disciplinary and pedagogical spaces to the communication therein, and particularly to that of students. I am especially interested in the myriad miscommunications that take place in classes and forums devoted to the presentation of nationally or ethnically circumscribed knowledge (such as area and ethnic studies). Here I am necessarily an interested observer because of the teaching I do on Korea and Korean America, domains that are increasingly blurring in my own research and teaching life. In this section I am interested in the articulation between ethnic and area studies—between the ethnic and the national. In parallel with the above discussion of institutional localities in the academy, I will suggest that culture talk disrupts and decenters received configurations of knowledge. Chakrabarty (1998, 474) writes of the effects of "diasporic life-forms" in a similar vein: "They move us away from all conceptions of centers. Area studies scholarship has been focused on centers—cultural, statist, bureaucratic, familial. Diasporic studies lead us away from the imagination of centralizing structures." A similar logic or observation is revealed in the comment that I have heard repeated by older white, male scholars of East Asia over the last few years: namely, that with the large numbers of Asian Americans in their classes, they can no longer teach the way they always have. I choose a sympathetic reading of such comments: that the changing demography of these professors' classes has made them aware of problems (that have always been there) in the way they parsed and packaged knowledge on East Asia, problems with the "closed systems" in which they have long worked.¹⁴

Although I appreciate the many sensible critiques of transnationalism run wild,¹⁵ I nevertheless think that the complex social networks and spaces inhabited by immigrant or second-generation Asian Americans in our classes *do* demand new pedagogy and disallow facile assumptions about the transparency of knowledge transmission; of course, it never has been transparent. As mentioned (see

note 4), I think that these disruptions can be highlighted for the student body at large, not just for its ethnic or immigrant members.

I turn now to an exchange from a conference on Korean and Korean American Christianity held at the University of Illinois in the fall of 1999. At the conference, a Korean American Christian student in the audience posed a somewhat rhetorical question to a senior Korean immigrant sociologist (a practicing Catholic, secular in his scholarship—subject positions that he had made clear) who had noted in his remarks that because Confucianism is a system of social ethics, not a religion (that is, that there is nothing divine or transcendent about it), it is entirely compatible with Christianity—and indeed has, as such, in turn facilitated Korea's Christianization. The clearly devout student queried, "Isn't Christianity also a system of social ethics?" and he proceeded to talk briefly about the guiding idea of the "self as servant" in his own church; unstated was the implication (my read of this moment) that a Confucian social ethics might be an odds with a (his) Christian one. The senior scholar responded with great interest and empathy that *indeed* Confucianism and Christianity comprise radically different world views in that Confucianism is always about the self immersed in, and inextricable from, collectivities.¹⁶ He went on to elaborate in some detail his own more collectivistic identities in spite of his many decades living in the United States. Implicit in this senior scholar's response was his understanding of particular lines of contrast between "collectivistic" Confucianism and "individualistic" Christianity.¹⁷

Further exchange, however, clearly revealed that the student had wanted to contrast the self-abnegation of his Christian practice with the self-aggrandizement of what he understands as the Confucian-inflected Christianity of his parents. I understand this exchange as a moment of profound confusion across a generational (and perhaps religious, and other) divide: the professor spoke of compatibility; the student alluded to more fundamental difference. The professor acknowledged difference, and in so doing stood on its head the students' sense of Christian differences of selfhood, instead assigning himself to collectivistic norms he considered generational.¹⁸ This is a very partial ethnographic vignette, sketched through the lens of my ongoing research on Korean American students, among them evangelical Christians.¹⁹ Elsewhere I have sketched some of the elements at work in this failed communication.²⁰ It would take further ethnographic exploration to really understand this particular conversation and the specificity of its interlocutors. I think that to really trace what was happening in this moment would be quite complicated indeed, and would no doubt extend to the student's culturally inscribed sense of intergenerational difference, to the particularity of the immigrant life and trajectory of the *émigré* scholar, to the heterogeneity of Korean American Christianities, and so on.²¹ I take this moment to be illustrative of how complicated it is to locate or fix "culture" or cultural discourse. In this example the cultural signifiers—

Korean, Korean-American, Christian, Confucian—are disruptive in their work. In the terms of this chapter, they disrupt localities. I call particular attention to the student in this communication because I think that in this exchange his words go furthest in the work of disruption—against locality.

I submit that *all* cultural representations (be they in traditionally configured Asian studies or Asian American courses or in ones more transnationally organized, or in all courses, for that matter) begin in the middle for most students.²² Unraveling the maze of received understandings, moored to the specificities of students' lives and histories, is not a simple matter; beyond that, trying to have a conversation is quite a feat.

In a fascinating critique of the university—arguing that its enlightenment mission is entirely out of synch with today's society—Bill Readings (1996, 12–13) suggests that the university must be rethought in a transnational framework (no longer the voice of "national culture in the modern nation-state"). Readings (1996, 19) champions the notion that the pedagogical exchange "*hold open* the temporality of questioning so as to resist being characterized as a transaction that can be concluded, either with the giving of grades or with the granting of degrees."²³ I appreciate this line of argument because I think that the "temporality of questioning" in today's classrooms must, as Readings suggests, be "held open." Gluckman and collaborators' comfortable (comforting?) closed systems and naiveté fly in the face of students' lived realities.²⁴

Readings's critiques of the university and the complexity of student networks and movement aside, there is no question that there remain, in Gluckman's sense, meaningful "systems" that constitute students' worlds. Smith and Guarnizo (1998, 7) aptly note that "nationalist projects and identities" remain salient and that "Transnational practices, while connecting collectivities located in more than one national territory, are embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times" (11). In this vein, I can also appreciate the "corrective" voice of senior anthropologist Sidney Mintz (1998, 131) who explains that contra transnationalism, the teaching anthropologist will meet (in her classroom) "some unruly [i.e., against disciplinary fashion] youngster [who] wants to know where the folks we contemplate come from, what they speak, when they began traveling, what they prefer to eat, and how one may elicit information from them." A long-time champion of transnational realities and techniques in anthropology, it is interesting that Mintz closes his article with warnings: "The new theories of transnationalism and globalization are not respectful enough of history, especially of the history of exploration, conquest and the global division of labor. . . . Anthropology has traditionally aspired to get its information in a manner other than *by imagining it*, and its traditional methods still work" (emphasis added). I, too, subscribe to the empirical bias of the ethnographic method—and continue to live and work with/through it—but

I think that it is critical that we pay attention precisely to the *imaginings* of our students and anthropological interlocutors, like those at the heart of the intergenerational exchange I introduced above. And, in this spirit, I continue to admire the writings of Arjun Appadurai (1999, 231) and others on the imagination (such as Rushdie 1991), that “faculty which informs the daily lives of ordinary people in myriad ways . . . which allows people to consider migration, to resist state violence, to seek social redress, and to design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries.”²⁵ Here we can recall Gluckman et al. on poetry and prose—the warning to not trespass across those divides. The social world, though, demands such trespass.

So, then, how does that imagination render its effects on our classrooms and on our disciplinary lives? It is constitutive of the identities and identifications of our students; it demands of us an *open mind* about what is taking place between the lines and lives of our students. Two anecdotes come to mind. The first comes from the first time I taught the aforementioned “English Language Ethnography of Korea.” Over the entire course of the semester a number of South Korean international graduate students (from Anthropology and other departments) struggled to understand the heightened emotional responses to the readings of a Korean American first-year graduate student; likewise, the Korean American student struggled to understand their seeming dispassion. This came to a head when the Korean American student finally threw up her arms and wondered aloud how she or anyone—and especially the South Korean “nationals” in the class—could themselves take part in *any* representation of the Koreans. I would be hard pressed to summarize or neatly package this semester-long unfolding exchange. I would submit that this exchange can not be thought of independently of the limits of the “*English language ethnography of Korea.*” But, this sort of exchange challenges the sorts of closed systems according to which many of us divide our lives, syllabi, and so on. As with the earlier anecdote (on the Korean American Christianity conference), it would be no small feat to closely analyze these relations. In brief, however, let me suggest that here too the complexity of the work of the signifiers “Korean,” “Korean American,” “diasporic,” and so on would disrupt the received boundaries of ethnic studies, area studies, and anthropology. Such disruption is entirely necessary, I argue, if we are to make sense of, or do justice to, our students and classrooms.

The final anecdote is one I learned of secondhand through Hyunhee Kim, a graduate student anthropologist from South Korea in my department, who has been assisting me with my research on Korean Americans in Illinois public higher education. Recently, Ms. Kim has spent some time with South Korean international student undergraduates (a relatively new and still very small group on our campus) who often spend dormitory and dorm cafeteria time with so-called 1.5 Korean immigrants (typically high-school-age immigrants who remain more comfortable speaking Korean than English). The international

students complained to Ms. Kim that these immigrant students have no *yōyu*—space of mind, largesse of spirit—most particularly because of their stinginess with food, their unwillingness to open their parents’ Chicagoland homes to them (particularly when they travel to and from Chicago), and their narrow career and intellectual focus. The immigrants, on the other hand, remarked that the cosmopolitan futures of the elite international students are secured (by their class privilege) and that they have little understanding of the struggles and insecure futures of immigrant students. No doubt the immigrant students, if confronted with the allegations about *yōyu*, would answer that they do not have that privilege. Although these groups of students find each other because they can talk together, and because they enjoy eating together (and supplementing dorm fare with Korean foods), they are divided by diasporic diversities—diversities that constitute our classrooms. And these diversities have everything to do with diaspora and displacements, and with thinking anew the university and its boundaries.

THIS CHAPTER HAS discussed in turn institutional (micro-) politics in the academy (research, publication, and pedagogy) and the social /discursive worlds of students at a large public university. My aim has been, following Appadurai, to call attention to the ways in which everyday practices in the academy elide or obscure the *work* of locality: the necessary, and quite constant, policing that a conviction about local autonomy (of disciplines, of departments, of national academies etc.) entails. Through the anecdotal, I have considered how localities are produced, policed, and maintained in the academy. It seems fair to issue a call for *open minds* to contend with *open systems*.

I would like to end with some practical considerations for institutional practice in the academy. The calls I make here are ones that are, I think, already being considered or implemented at many colleges and universities, including my own. We all know that universities necessarily classify (as do all institutions) in order to create course catalogues, to delineate requirements, and so on. There are times, however—and today is one of them—in which some of the categories need to be reconsidered. Dichotomies such as the “West” and “non-West,” for example have become problematic, as have those between the “homeland” or “nation” and its “diaspora”; these dichotomies remain ones that count and are counted at my university—although happily there is movement afoot to disrupt them (much need in anthropology, area studies, and ethnic studies). Faculty and administrators, regardless of disciplinary home and/or training, need to be able to transgress these sorts of neat dichotomies as they configure their programs, courses, degree requirements, and so on. In a related vein, faculty need to continually consider anew their student body and to appreciate the often boundary-crossing nature of their backgrounds, be it the remarkably cosmopolitan life-course of a so-called international student or the

active ties to the homeland of the so-called ethnic student. Similarly, faculty need to appreciate the local complexity of the culture talk of one or another student population so as to understand the complex, and often surprising, valence of one or another matter. These calls have implications for the day-to-day work of our universities: work that constantly assesses worth, determining, for example, who is well trained, who deserves to be admitted, funded, celebrated, hired, tenured, and so on. It is, I submit, in the smallest of our practices that we exercise the institutional logics that we need to continuously reassess; this is very hard work—it is always easier to parse the world, to classify, in just the way that we have always done.

Finally, I would like to make a plea for college and university practices that foster faculty and administrator learning. If it seems absurd to make a call for institutions of higher education that allow its nonstudent constituents to learn, I submit that it is not. It is costly and time consuming, not to mention often frightening, to learn. This means that professionals need to be given the time, safe spaces, and collaborative settings in which to collectively rethink—with open minds—the transforming systems of our times.

NOTES

I am deeply grateful to Hyunhee Kim and Martin Manalansan for having read and commented on several drafts of this chapter. I am also appreciative of several colleagues who offered insightful readings of an encyclopedia article that I discuss in this chapter (Abelmann 2001): Roger Janelli, Laurel Kendall, Soo-Jung Lee, and Laura Nelson. Finally, this paper benefited greatly from the research assistance of Hyunhee Kim, Hye-Young Jo, and Katherine Wiegele.

1. I use the word "borderlands" with caution, recognizing that academic borders, and their policing, are of an entirely different sort from those on which lives and well-being turn. I have learned a great deal from scholars who suggest caution in using these terms so that we do not inadvertently equate all social barriers with those that impose greater political costs (such as national borders) (Lugo 2000, Manalansan 2000).
2. To those who charge that I make straw men of Gluckman and collaborators in this paper, I plead guilty. I do, however, mean also to pay tribute to that work for its eloquent articulation of the more often unarticulated conventions of the field of anthropology and of anthropological fieldwork and field sites. Furthermore, my arguments are meant to serve as critiques not of their work but rather of ongoing academic practices that were articulated interestingly in that early work.
3. See note 1 with regard to this use of "trespassing."
4. Although the examples I take up here are limited to Asian American and Asian international students, I would be willing to make this argument more broadly for all students.
5. This chapter was initially drafted for a round-table discussion of pedagogical issues. This revised version is still meant as a discussion piece.

6. As Dipesh Chakrabarty (1998, 475) writes, "I use anecdotes merely to present the ethnographic evidence one inevitably collects from life."
7. Before proceeding I will briefly outline my own disciplinary homes and allegiances, as these are the locations, the localities, from which I experience the university. I have a split appointment—we are always reminded to say "joint" appointment—between the departments of Anthropology and East Asian Languages and Cultures. I also have a so-called zero-time appointment in Women's Studies (zero refers finally to money, I think). And I have been a member of the UIUC Asian American Studies Executive Committee since its inception in 1997. It is only very recently that Asian American Studies has become a "program." Before becoming a program, let alone a department, although there was a group of us that presided over seven hires, our work there remained quite invisible, while its locality was not yet firmly established. This sort of invisibility, of course, has real implications for Asian American (and ethnic) studies generally, and for untenured faculty in particular. Today I am happily a teaching faculty member of our Program in Asian American Studies.
8. Although this book (and the conference on which it was based) focuses on the research and teaching of the diaspora, a number of the examples I draw on here take up the politics of Asian studies and anthropology. I do this in the confidence that the production of academic locality is necessarily dialogic: a co-production in dialogue with other academic localities.
9. See Harootunian (2000; see especially p. 25–42, second paragraph, notes 160–161) for an illuminating discussion of this notion of authenticity and particularly of the "field" in the study of East Asia. See also Rafael (1994) for a discussion of a similar logic.
10. This was recommended, not required.
11. See Rafael (1994) for an important discussion of the problematic concept of "indigenous intellectuals."
12. The quotes are meant to underscore the fact that the university is not a monolith, nor is it populated by like-minded people.
13. It is the determination of this committee against approving these offerings that has led me to postulate (perhaps unfairly) that such is the logic at work. Please note, however, that the Anthropology Department has been entirely supportive of these two listings.
14. The matter of the professoriate adjusting to the changing demography of their student body would make for very interesting ethnographic exploration.
15. Critiques made, for example, in response to declarations of the demise of the nation-state or of national culture (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999, 219; Smith and Guarnizo 1998, 7) or of free movement and border crossing (see note 1).
16. See Dirlik (1995) for an interesting discussion of critical transformations in the transnational apperception of Confucianism. See Sharf (1995) for a brilliant discussion of ethnographic, historical, and philosophical naiveté in the long-standing Western perception of Japanese Zen Buddhism. I take these as exemplary of the sort of archaeology or genealogy demanded by transnational analyses.
17. Needless to say, these are well-worn tropes in anthropology and cross-cultural study generally (e.g., Markus and Kitayama 1991). See Abu-Lughod (1991) for an anthropological critique of this sort of "culture" concept.

18. See Leonard (2000, 186) for a fascinating discussion of "culture" (and religion) talk in the Hyderabad diaspora that makes points similar to those I make here.
19. I was assisted in my research on Korean American Christianity by Katherine Wiegele.
20. See Abelman and Wiegele 1999.
21. Lisa Lowe (1996) cautions importantly that we not collapse "incommensurabilities of class, gender, and national diversity among Asians" to those of generation.
22. I am grateful to campus workshops on teaching for making this point about pedagogy generally: that the teacher encounters students (that is, persons), not blank slates.
23. In what I take to be a similar spirit, Fredric Jameson (1996, 358) remarks, "I propose a notion . . . of what I call 'cognitive mapping' . . . to . . . suggest that our task today as artists or critics or whatever is somehow to reach some way in which we recapture or reinvent a new form of representation of this new global totality."
24. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the ethnography presented in Hye-Young Jo's (2000) dissertation on Korean Americans in college Korean-language classrooms.
25. I appreciate the balanced position taken by Lavie and Swedenburg (1996, 13, see also 17): "We wish to stake out a terrain that calls for, yet paradoxically refuses, boundaries, a borderzone between identity-as-essence and identity-as-conjuncture, whose practices challenge the ludic play with essence and conjuncture as yet another set of postmodernist binarisms. This terrain is old in experience and memory but new in theory: a third time-space."

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