an die Situationen von Sprecher und Zuhörer anzupassen, Möglichkeiten, Beziehungen zu knüpfen, Konflikte zu lösen oder auszutragen und Andere zu überzeugen. Einige dieser besonderen Kommunikationsformen wie beispielsweise die Scherzbeziehungen, die verschiedenen typischen Sprechstile von Griots und Mitgliedern höherer Gesellschaftsschichten, die Übermittlung eines Diskurses durch einen Griot, die Einbindung der Zuhörer durch die Verwendung des persönlichen "Du" anstelle eines unpersönlichen "man", die Formulierung von Nominalsätzen, das Codeswitching, die Verwendung von Sprichwörtern und das Vortragen von Erzählungen, die besonderen Formen weiblicher Persuasion bzw. Verführung und einige andere konnten während des Symposiums angesprochen werden, aber viele konnten nicht im Detail behandelt werden.

Im Verlauf des Symposiums wurde immer deutlicher, dass ein Verständnis des Zusammenspiels von Gesellschaft und Kommunikation einen transdisziplinären Ansatz benötigt. Eine einzelne Perspektive wird den komplexen Beziehungen zwischen Kommunikation und Gesellschaft nicht gerecht. Eben diese Synthese vieler Perspektiven, wie sie das Symposium förderte, ermöglichte den eingeladenen Wissenschaftlern, die zum Teil bereits mehrere Jahrzehnte zum Thema Senegal und insbesondere zur Kultur und Sprache der Wolof arbeiten, ihr Wissen zu erweitern. Viele von ihnen nehmen einige Antworten, neue Anregungen, neue Fragen und einen erweiterten Blickwinkel mit in ihre weiteren Forschungen. Auf Initiative der Organisatoren haben sich die Teilnehmer zu einem Netzwerk zusammengeschlossen, um über die geplante Veröffentlichung der Vorträge hinaus kooperieren zu können.

Capturing Emergent Forms

Response to Vincent Crapanzano

Michael M. J. Fischer

I would like to sharpen the focus on four stakes that lie between Crapanzano and myself as portrayed in his comment on my book, "Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice" (*Anthropos* 100.2005: 229–232): 1) mapping epistemes and sites of responsibility; 2) ethics; 3) positive social analysis and cultural critique of the world we live in; 4) postmodernity versus deconstruction and postmodernism; social institutions of second order modernity.

As he notes, the book is about an adventurous anthropology "not stuck in a world gone by." Crapanzano is himself a colleague in this enterprise. He can be a fine wielder of rhetorical and linguistic analysis as his references to pragmatics and metapragmatics, and "in/out of frame," or his own use of "reflexivity" reminds, and he himself has been one of the leading American anthropologists in nudging anthropology to explore transference, the role of Lacanian "thirds" (what I allude to as topologies), as well as topics that simultaneously have rhetorical and substantive claims ("waiting" for change in late apartheid South Africa, "literalism" in American Christian fundamentalism). It is a little odd then to watch him deploy the plural pronoun "we" on his own critical behalf, but conflate the singular ethnographic observer and the collective ethnographic enterprise in my work. Surely, no individual observer (ethnographer or otherwise) can claim a privileged position of the sort he suggests I claim. On the contrary, I have long insisted that the best ethnographic work today involves the active interlocution with experts and others in the fields under study, collaborative exploration, and where appropriate registering multiple points of view, which can be textually deployed in different ways. It is hardly "imperial."

I am pleased that Crapanzano judges many of the chapters to be "first-rate," and while I might disagree with his grading of those he likes less well, I would only point out that the divided essay on science studies (the first part of which he likes, but the second he thinks is "no doubt outdated") is a future-oriented "call," which I have "updated" in a more recent essay, without thereby, I think, undoing the pedagogical point of the earlier one.

1) Epistemes and Second Order Modernity. I am pleased that my juxtaposing of Velázquez's "Las Meninas" with a photograph of a virtual reality, robotic surgical system "worked" for Crapanzano, as a way of staging and dramatizing the differences between the epistemological worlds of early modernity and our contemporary period, and the instabilities within each. He observes that the surgeon in the photograph remains "in control." Yes and no. Yes, of course, the surgeon remains responsible. And no, s/he is not solely responsible. Control is quite another matter, being dependent on anesthesiologists, electricians, engineers, and many others: the surgeon is definitely not in complete control though s/he likes to project that aura.

But even with regard to responsibility (the issues of ethics and epistemology), not only may the surgeon be directed in real time by a more experienced surgeon miles away, but increasingly our safety systems in hospitals (and other high-risk, critical mission industries such as aeronautics, nuclear energy, chemical industries) depend on a kind of systems management rather than simplistically blaming particular individuals when things go wrong. That is also what is at stake more generally in reflexive social institutions, deliberative democracy experiments, and participatory management experiments in oil refineries.

2) Ethics. Crapanzano dismisses the idea of a "groundless ethics," whereas most of the twentieth century since Wittgenstein, and most of the traditions of the scholastic ethical traditions as well as of common law, affirm such an idea, depending more on a pragmatic, case by case reconsideration of previous cases, looking for modes of interpretation to apply to the case at hand. These, of course, require attention, as Crapanzano says, to the rhetorical as well as evaluations of power and desire. The "antonyms" here are the rule-governed systematic ethics of philosophers or, worse, the dogmatics of fundamentalist "literalisms" of the sort Crapanzano was surprised by in his book on the topic. Indeed, one of the promising moves within contemporary Islamic theology is precisely to raise the status of the ethical against demands for *sharia* "literalist" rules.

Again, what I am interested in here is not the philosophical debates, but rather the creation of new institutions for handling ethical challenges today. In ethics rounds in hospitals for instance the analytic philosopher of medical ethics, along with chaplains, lawyers, nurses, surgeons, social workers, and others, has an important role to play to provide models of regulative ideals, and to help doctors transcend the immediate emotional tugs they have to deal with from patients, families, their professional understandings, and institutional demands. And yet these are only suggestive tools, rarely the way actual individual and ethical decisions are made.

3) Social justice, social analysis, and cultural critique. Like many anthropologists and science studies people, I am primarily interested in positive knowledge, mapping discourses that contest with one another socially and politically, and sociocultural analysis and critique, something that is often dismissed in certain humanist rhetorics as flat and conventional (*con-venire*, bringing together, maybe on a map of power relations and agons?). After rueing that I am not more adventuresome

with tactics like metaphorical shock (though warning against its routinization), what Crapanzano turns out to find "disquieting about Fischer's understanding of the role of ethnography in today's world" (230) is a hand-waving complaint that in talking about cyberspace I do not talk about the "hundreds of millions . . . who have never made a telephone call" (231), or that I, or science studies, do not pay attention to how studies are formulated and what they exclude (good grief: all that Fleck, and Kuhn, Shapin and Schaffer, and the rest of the STS canon; and the concern with the role of hype and speed as part of the business models of contemporary biotech companies). The digital and other technology divides are not only about the generalizing categories of haves and have-nots, but also about many other stratifications, which I point to, as have many others since Marx and before.

4) Postmodernity versus deconstruction and postmodernism; social institutions of second order modernity. Crapanzano conflates a style of writing (postmodernism), a philosophical reading procedure (deconstruction), and a topic of social analysis (postmodernity, the information society, postindustrial society, late capitalism, second order modernity). I am particularly interested in the third, am a reader of the second, and am least interested in the first. I argue that while each of the alternative labels for the structural social changes of the late twentieth century has a slightly different focus, nonetheless together they do point to a constellation of transformations that I would like to see ethnographers explore and help clarify. The particular virtue here of anthropology (along with comparative literature and social history) is that few of the contemporary, more reductionist and instrumentalist, social sciences pay much attention to cross-cultural, comparative, linguistically (pragmatically and metapragmatically as well as semantically) attuned meanings.

Crapanzano at first claims that my writing is either flat and conventional in its implications or that it is postmodernist and evasive in the same way as the philosophical writings of deconstructionists such as Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida (rather nice company). If I were to suggest that all writing is by definition "flat" (and linear), would that make me a literalist or a postmodernist (both charges are levied)? Would that be evasive? Or would it be pointing out the lay of the (political and rhetorical) landscape in which such labeling operates? But note that after a while Crapanzano exonerates me of postmodernism ("he tends to ignore its obsessive self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity

is certainly not one of the principle criteria he uses ..." [230]). Crapanzano seems genuinely puzzled: "[Fischer] seems reluctant to engage with [the deconstructivists] exposure of the mystifications of description and theorization ... with what at times seems a surprising literalism, though he occasionally gives the undersurface a nod" (230). This after he has just associated me with a list of sins of postmodernists who, he suggests, do not know about earlier periods of self-reflexive virtuosity, such as the Baroque. As Crapanzano may remember, I made use of Benjamin's analyses of the Spanish and German Lutheran Baroque tragic dramas in my own analysis of contemporary Shi'ite passion plays, and, further, I did some rather elaborate comparing of the epistemological reflexivity of Derrida et al. with those of several scholastic traditions including Islam, Judaism, and medieval Catholicism. So I make no claim, as he seems to allege, that our age suffers any "greater epistemological anxieties."

Perhaps, after all, I am not as much interested in self-reflexivity as Crapanzano is, but, like many others today, rather more interested in the efforts to create new social institutions of reflexivity: what Ulrich Beck calls institutions of second order modernization, what Latour calls "matters of fact as matters of concern" (in his newfound celebration of Dewey's understanding of democratic publics), what in one of her formulations Donna Haraway calls "biology as civics," what others call "mode two knowledge," and similar such concepts being developed in science studies. This is not the same as Crapanzano's faddish appeal to Heidegger's *Sorge,* which turned out to be a travesty of any worthy ethics or politics, and which indeed tends to place imperial and extravagant claims of knowing in singular hands or minds. Perhaps this has something to do with my "signaling," Jakobson-like or not, in a short framing essay that Crapanzano finds "superficial," but which has some genuinely as yet unworked out "undersurfaces" in the contemporary so-called "wars on terror" in the Middle East and elsewhere, and which attempts to find a language for these undersurfaces in the (metaphorical, but perhaps not shocking enough) effort to fuse Deleuze's (libidinal as well as semiotic) "plateaus" with Levinas's "ethical," as well as with a more politically inflected use than Geertz may originally have intended of "deep play" (Afghan and Austrian politics, bioscience, and biopolitical competitions).

I do try to raise the bar on what might constitute a valuable anthropological voice in the public arena (an "anthropology to come," to paraphrase Derrida, if Crapanzano thinks I "conflate anthropology as a discipline with that discipline's constituted subject matter"). He seems to want me to take on the shifts in anthropology itself (rather than in what he thinks of as "out-of-date" shifts in social theory). To some degree this was done in the introduction to the second edition of "Anthropology as Cultural Critique." But how exactly social theory comes to be out of date is a marker of precisely the structural changes I attempt to chart or map.

In sum, I have now made four further, what Crapanzano might call, "extravagant" claims in this response to his meditation composed of rhetorical puzzles and challenges for contemporary anthropology, only some of which seem really addressed to me:
– that anthropology should not remain stuck in a world gone by, here meaning also an academicism obsessed by self-reflexivity, a feature, no, a bug, of the 1980s;
– that anthropology should be focused on positive knowledge and socialcultural analysis and critique, and that its practitioners should neither be afraid of being called flat or conventional, nor be afraid to utilize the tools of deconstruction where applicable for unveiling or excavating socially contesting meanings, particularly where knotted by intertwined "undersurfaces" and "cultural surfaces";
– that ethics is also a social institutional challenge, not just a personal or philosophical one, nor one that only involves rhetoric, desire, and power; and that many of the most important ethical challenges today have deep interfering undersurfaces;
– that mapping tactics (such as the visual juxtaposition of "Las Meninas" and the VR surgical lab) can stage competing epistemes, disciplines, networks, codes, and responsibilities.