CHAPTER 9

The Sixth Moment

Who must ethnographers be in postmodernity, when science is understood as a primary agency of power/knowledge and when computer simulation and the televisual, more than the novel or even film, give shape to the social?
—Clough (1995, p. 534)

Ethnography's future is the sixth moment (Lincoln, 1995a, p. 40). It remains to return to the beginning and to take up again the task of offering an interpretive framework for understanding ethnography's multiple places in the televisual societies of the twenty-first century. An emancipatory, critical interpretive interactionism, a cultural studies without guarantees (Hall, 1992, p. 282) seeks a proper place for ethnography, the most worldly of all our interpretive practices. This requires a framework that critically reads ethnography back through itself. This framework will show how our interpretive practices are complicitous with the cinematic apparatuses that reproduce the real for society and its members.

In returning to the beginning, it is now possible to reread the ethnographic experiments since 1986 (*Writing Culture* [Clifford & Marcus, 1986]) as more than the vagrant, self-indulgent efforts of a few who were challenging the borders and boundaries of traditional ethnography. Those who would dare to engage ethnopoetics, self-narratives, the New Journalism, performance and standpoint texts, and even poems, mysteries, and novels were threatening the established order and the very essence of science itself (see Clough, 1995; Prus, 1996, p. 227; Shelton, 1995b).

As the boundaries of the traditional realist ethnographic text were being challenged, counterforces were mobilized. The transgressors were policed, punished, mocked, even ridiculed. Resistances to the hegemonic order were marginalized and the deviants were labeled—some called them the new ethnographs (see Farberman, 1991, p. 475; see also Dawson & Prus, 1993, 1995; Farberman, 1992; Kleinman, 1993; Kunda, 1993; Lofland, 1993; Nader, 1993; Prus, 1996, p. 218; Sanders, 1995; Snow & Morrill, 1995a, 1995b). Under this reading, which emphasizes moves and countermoves, the hegemonic order is displaced, resisted by a new tribe of ethnographers who want to do things differently. Progress is at hand. Just as the transgressors are put back in their place, new spaces are opened up for new transgressions.

There is a danger in this model, however. Foregrounding resistance and subversion can lead to the optimistic belief that things are getting better (see Stabile, 1995, p. 406). Under this view, the old way of doing ethnography is being changed, and this is confirmed by the fact that innovative writing forms seem to be present everywhere. This position ignores the recuperative and conservative practices of the traditional, hegemonic ethnographic order—that order that insists on marginalizing the new, not treating it as a version of a new order of things, and always defining it as an aberrant variation on the traditional way of doing things (see Altheide, 1995).

Put bluntly, the verdict for many is in. The old, better than the new, can do the work of ethnography. Therefore, forget all this experimental stuff. There is more at issue, however, then different ways of writing. The material and ethical practices of an entire discipline are on the line.

In this conclusion, I offer preliminary observations on the many possible futures that lie in front of interpretive ethnography. I begin with the policing efforts and the critical reactions of the past decade to the new work. This will lead to a discussion of new models of truth, the ethics and epistemologies of a postpragmatist social criticism. A feminist (Ryan, 1995) communitarian moral ethic (Christians, 1995a, 1995b; Christians, Ferre, & Fackler, 1993; Craig, 1995; Rosen, 1994) will be sketched[1] and contrasted to the ethical systems that have traditionally structured ethnographic, interpretive practice. I will build on recent

arguments calling for a public or civic journalism (Charity, 1995; Christians, 1995a; Fallows, 1996; Rosen, 1994). I will propose a civic or publicly responsible local ethnography that speaks to the central issues of self, society, and democracy. This project implements and extends critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996). Ethnography in the sixth moment will embrace moral criticism. It will advocate a form of participatory democracy without necessarily advocating particular solutions to particular problems (Charity, 1995, p. 146).[2]

Letting the Old Do the Work of the New

To repeat, many of the critics of the new writing presumed a universal ethnographic subject: the other who was not the ethnographer. These critics looked at society from the outside, contending that objective accounts of society could be given by objective observers (Smith, 1989, p. 44). This observer, as Smith (p. 44) argued, was able to write in a way that did not require the presence of a real subject in the world. Social experience and real people were irrelevant to the topic at hand. This lead to the production of an interpretive structure that said social phenomena could be interpreted as social facts (p. 45). This structure shifted arguments about agency, purpose, meaning, and intention from the subject to the phenomena being studied. It then transformed those phenomena into texts about society. The phenomena were then given a presence that rested in these textual descriptions (p. 45). Real live people entered the text as a part of discourse in the form of excerpts from field notes, the casual observations of the theorist, or as "ideal types" (p. 51). The scholars I have examined in this work wish to overturn this picture of social science writing.

This view of social science work has generated the by now familiar litany of criticisms of the new writing discussed in previous chapters. For the sake of convenience, I offer a summary of these criticisms, dividing them into two groups: those from the traditional realist, positivist camp and those from the poststructuralists. I also list the criteria of evaluation offered by the new writers (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1 Criticisms of the New Writing

Positivists	*Poststructuralists*	*New Criteria*
Fiction	The real	Emotion
Not objective	Values	Verisimilitude
Not valid or reliable	Gender	Dialogue
Biased texts unrepresentative sample	Voice	Construction of facts
Too literary	Unified subject	Scenic method
No method of verification	Narcissistic	Multiple points of view
How to read?	Materialist neglect	Language
Inconsequential topics	Oedipal biases	Narrative truth
Journalism	Realist bias	Theory
Not science	The unconscious	Praxis
No hard facts	Is science	Emotion lived experience
Personal biases	Description	
	Inscription	

The Realist-Positivist Attack

The realist-positivist critique focuses, as Table 9.1 indicates, on issues of method, truth, and verification. The positivist challenges the new writing because it fails to use agreed on methods of verification, including random samples, representative texts, and so-called unbiased methods of interpretation. The positivists reject the criteria of evaluation used by the new writers—namely, emotional intimacy, verisimilitude, shared experience, narrative truth, the figurative and self-reflective use of language, the use of the scenic method, multiple points of view, realistic dialogue, multiple voices, treating facts as social constructions, and minimal theory.

The positivist sees these new criteria as assaults on the pursuit of truth. These methods, these strategies of writing, and the persons who use them constitute grave threats to the social sciences. For some (Huber, 1995), the new writing and its "any thing goes" politics explain the dire straits that disciplines such as sociology now confront—namely, an apparent fragmentation of the field, the lack of a core body of knowledge, the underemployment of PhD's, the demise of select departments in the 1980s, and the challenges to others in the 1990s.

The new writing embodies certain self-destructive characteristics that, for observers such as Huber (1995), "increase the probability of attracting negative attention" (p. 200) for the disciplines, including a tendency to recruit reformists, a weak core, and some "affinity for antirationalist ideas" (p. 200). Huber offers four basic strategies to address these self-destructive practices: develop a central core of knowledge, silence the antirationalists,[3] collect solid facts about society that will make sociology useful to the welfare state, and follow a norm of civility. Huber's proposals cut to the core of the politics that are involved in the new writing.

The Irrationalists and Two Social Sciences

First, of the irrationalists, Huber (1995) states, "we should resist our admirable tendency to tolerate differences when it requires tolerance of perspectives that involve aggressive efforts to undermine everyone else" (p. 212). Not only are these people (the irrationalists) uncivil but they do not believe in truth or in the scientific method. She is clear on this: "An unknown proportion of sociologists feel that there are no standards of rationality, objectivity, or truth" (p. 204). Of course, this is a caricature, and there is good reason why Huber names no representative of this position: No one holds it.[4] This unknown, unnamed group is then compared to another sociological group—those who believe that sociology has a viable academic niche as a science (p. 204).

Thus, the field is divided into two camps—the irrationalists and the rationalists. This division creates another—those believing in science who also hold to a conception of a disciplinary core consisting of demography, social organization, and stratification (Huber, 1995, pp. 203-204).[5] Persons working in these three core areas (plus statistics; p. 210) also produce "replicable data most needed to understand how societies work" (p. 204); they "supply the knowledge needed to run welfare states" (p. 213).

The irrationalists resist this definition of a core (even perhaps of a society and its problems), and presumably contribute little to their understanding. Huber (1995) counters the irrationalists with her version of rationalism, arguing that sociology cannot be a science if it tolerates challenges to the belief in the "idea of the disinterested observer seeking objective truth with universal validity that is based on the notion of a reality independent of human thought and action" (p. 204).[6]

For Huber (1995), rationalism is presumably equated with logical empiricism, a belief system that distrusts philosophical and moral inquiry and believes in a disinterested social science observer who applies rational rules to research using methods to produce findings (Schwandt, 1996). Irrationalists question these rules and engage in moral inquiry. The chief rhetorical accomplishment of logical empiricism was its attempt to ideologically separate moral discourse from empirical inquiry (Schwandt, 1996). This is what Huber attempts.

This is a questionable strategy. It again divides the field into two camps, shutting down complex, subtle arguments in the process—for example, those between positivists, postpositivists, critical theorists, and constructivists (see Schwandt, 1996). At the same time, it valorizes one approach to truth and science, thereby ignoring the many criticisms that have been brought to this received approach to data collection, hypothesis testing, and theory construction. These criticisms include the problems of context stripping, the exclusion of meaning, the etic-emic dilemma, fitting general data to specific cases, emphasizing verification over discovery, ignoring the theory and value ladenness of facts, verification versus falsification, the interactive nature of the inquirer-inquired dyad, and a problematic ethical system (Cronbach, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 120-141, 1994, pp. 106-107; Rorty, 1991).

Other Interpretive Criteria

During the 1980s, mainstream American, but not European sociology (Giddens, Habermas, and Bordieu), turned its back on the methodological controversies surrounding positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism that were sweeping across neighboring social science fields (Cronbach, 1989; Geertz, 1983; McCloskey, 1985; Rosaldo, 1989; Smith, Harre, & Van Langenhove, 1995). These controversies, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, challenged the presuppositions of objective social science as well as traditional ways of bringing authority to that research, including the use of terms such as reliability and validity. Many came to reject the ontological, epistemological,

and methodological presuppositions Huber (1995) appears to endorse. Gone were beliefs in ontological realism, objectivist epistemologies, and the use of quantitative methods to verify hypotheses. The notion of knowledge as accumulation was replaced by a more relative, constructionist position (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114).

During the same time period, the so-called irrationalists developed complex criteria for evaluating interpretive work, including credibility, plausibility, context embeddedness, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, dialogue, narrative truth, emotional verisimilitude, and so on (see Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Lincoln, 1995b). Regrettably, Huber (1995) does not address this complex literature, except to dismiss it as another instance of irrationalism and relativisitc sociology (p. 205).

Indeed, Huber's stance effectively dismisses this literature and its contributions to this discourse. This leaves her open to the following questions (see Huber, 1973): Who is to police those who claim they have the correct view of knowledge, truth, or science and knowledge for whom? How can her perspective address the emergent methodological biases that adhere to positivism? How can she determine the truth of any assertion about the world when her methods are directly implicated in the way that world is created and examined? How can she guard against the emergent political or social biases reflected in her assumptions about the study of a so-called objective social world?

Value-Free Sociology

Under the guise of objective, nonpartisan, value-free social science, Huber (1995) would take democracy out of sociology. Her model is taken from ecology and it has Darwinian overtones: "Administrators . . . must choose . . . between a semistarvation diet for everyone, or the starving of weaker units in order to give stronger ones a chance to flourish" (p. 195). This stance leads to her criticisms of those partisans who advocate intellectual relativism, postmodernism, irrationalism, and the inclusion of students on administrative committees (pp. 201, 204-205, 207-209). These people and their ideas have brought "unclear standards, doubtful course rigor, a smorgasbord curriculum, and inappropriate graduate student participation" (p. 206) into sociology. The arguments of these people can no longer be tolerated.

The very people she wishes to quiet, those drawn to antirationalism, came into the field, she argues, in suspicious circumstances. They have given sociology the image of being partisan. If they cannot contribute to sociology's mission (Huber, 1995, p. 213), Huber wants them gone. These dissenters are calling for a pluralistic field that is broader than statistics, demography, social organization, and social stratification. They embrace alternative interpretive models of social science work, including the notion that science is a social institution that has values that often exclude or distort the perspectives of minorities, women, the poor, and the powerless.

These partisans suggest that a science must reflect multiple, interpretive perspectives, even, perhaps, a successor feminist science (Harding, 1991) or a science that embodies the interpretive and epistemological standpoints of different racial and ethnic groups (Collins, 1991; Smith, 1993). Acting as democratic communities, these new collectivities called for more American Sociological Association (ASA) sections that would represent particular standpoint interests. They also suggested that departmental affairs include input from graduate students. These proposals, Huber (1995) argues, had the effect of decentralizing sociology's core (p. 208).[7]

The partisans values make the field vulnerable to attack by administrators.[8] When have we ever been value free, however? Furthermore, how are we to admit new persons into field? Is there a new test that can be administered that will measure the degree to which a person adheres to Huber's values? In contesting these democratic moves, Huber seeks to reinscribe an organizational and disciplinary orthodoxy that will return the field to some historical moment when one view of sociology, its goals, and central interests held steady. This is nostalgia because when did that state ever exist?

It is not clear, however, how Huber's proposals would address, except through unilateral imposition, the core problems she identifies, including consistent standards of teaching and research, norms of civility, course rigor, an extreme ideology of democracy, and a central core in the field. Furthermore, it is not clear that the problems she identifies are the problems that others, who take a more pluralistic view, would locate in the field (Gamson, 1992). Indeed, Stinchcombe (1994, pp. 290-291) finds virtue in a disintegrated discipline, suggesting that it

"represents the optimum state of affairs, both for the advance of knowledge and for the expansion of the minds of undergraduates."

Of course, pluralism in sociology is nothing new; openness and even radical dissent characterized the discipline in its most fruitful moments (the 1950s and 1960s). Ironically, there is even a radical pluralism within Huber's core that is embedded in the field's disciplinary history (Huber, 1995, p. 213), a minimalist canon of Weber and Marx (p. 213) that merges a qualified scientism (Weber's methodological writings) with Marx's radical reflexivity. These two paradigms have coexisted productively within the discipline throughout its history. Paradoxically, extremely narrow visions of sociology, such as Huber's, are new, and they can be seen as threatening the "traditional" pluralistic core of the discipline.

Sociology as an Interdisciplinary Project

It can be argued that Huber's (1995) version of sociology is what got us into this mess in the first place. Although no theory group dominated sociology during the decades she discusses (Wiley, 1995, p. 152), it is clear that mainstream, empirical, middle-range sociology held sway. The discipline divided itself into a series of subspecialities, including stratification, social organization, and demography. It is the work of these sociologists, not the irrationalists, that has drawn negative attention to the discipline (e.g., the two-sex life table; Huber, 1995, p. 202).[9] Huber engages in scapegoating by blaming the field's problems on the irrationalists. Indeed, her examples (pp. 202-203) of trivial research come from the mainstream and not the "radical" margins of the field.

Also, Huber's (1995) proposals stem from a period when departments and disciplines were exclusively "mission or generalist oriented," at which time their functions could be dictated by the needs of society as defined by a specific discipline. Over a period of decades, as disciplinary boundaries have blurred, departments and disciplines have become increasingly "domain oriented." This new emphasis reflects the more specific demands of a society increasingly dominated by and dependent on knowledge that can no longer be provided by a single discipline. The opening up of sociology to diverse interests and to interdisciplinary programs addresses this shift in focus.

This democratic, pluralistic model of science, which Huber (1995) objects to, explicitly addresses one of her central concerns. It creates the conditions for producing a wide range of empirical materials that bear on "nontrivial social problems" (p. 213). Such diverse materials can no longer be provided by a single discipline or a single paradigm within a discipline. Social problems-based interdisciplinary research has achieved wide acceptance in mainstream sociology (Clemens, Powell, McIlwaine, & Okamoto, 1995, pp. 483-484). This interdisciplinary model better describes the actual workings of the field in which "the advance of knowledge goes on with many different methods, many different theories, and with many different relations to ideological, granting agency, and theoretical objectives" (Stinchcombe, 1994, pp. 290-291).[10]

Dichotomous (science and antiscience) and stereotypical thinking will not solve sociology's institutional problems. Nor can sociology's long legacy of radical democracy be quieted. There is, however, too much at stake to allow Huber's voice and reading of the field to go unchallenged. Perhaps these new voices she fears will bring sociology back home to that vital core of concerns C. Wright Mills (1959) called the sociological imagination. It is hoped this will happen because it is clear that objections to the postmodern irrationalists involve more than disputes over epistemology or getting one's house in order. The material existence of an entire discipline is at stake.

The Interpretive Critics

There is a soft, interpretive version of Huber's (1995) realist, positivist critique. This is the version that turns postmodernism into a negative point of reference and then, using the method of guilt through association, criticizes the new writers for being postmodern. Like Huber, this position requires that the critic first define the enemy—in this case, postmodernism. This is done through a listing of names, usually Lyotard, Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida, Nietzsche, Marx, Heidegger, Freud, and Wittgenstein (Farberman, 1991, pp. 475-476; Prus, 1996, p. 218). Then, the author says something such as these works "represent materials that could in themselves provide a lifetime of intellectual reading" (Prus, 1996, p. 218). Nonetheless, the critic offers a summary of these authors, suggesting that they are "highly cynical,

completely relativist, pervasively despairing, intensely antiscientific" (Prus, 1996, p. 218). For those inclined to take such views, postmodernism and its so-called "anything goes" position offers "elements that are radical, fatalistic, absurd and nihilistic in the extreme" (Prus, 1996, p. 218), and perhaps it also "emits a faintly nativist aroma" (Farberman, 1991, p. 476).

The interpretive critic then locates himself in relation to this body of work, noting that postmodernism has "become one of the recent 'hot' realms of academic enterprise and debate" (Prus, 1996, p. 219). Although this fad may pass, it is incumbent on the interpretive critic to come to terms with it (p. 219).

Not surprisingly, the new-writing-as-postmodernism has many of the same flaws Huber brings to the new irrationalism. According to these critics, postmodernism simultaneously rejects the ideas of intersubjectivity and the notion of an objectively located observer in the world.[11] For the postmodernists (according to the critics), this observer has no fixed (or intersubjectively constituted) place from which scientific truths can be launched (Prus, 1996, p. 223). In holding these beliefs, the postmodernists risk violating the "basic notions of an intersubjective/ethnographic social science" (p. 226). This happens when they follow Marxist agendas; use their ethnographies as a way to moralize; fail to respect the life worlds they study; ignore firsthand observations; use their texts to develop self-enchanting representations of the other; exploit ethnography to shock or entertain; use poems, pictures, or contrived fictional accounts to present the view of the other; disregard concepts central to the life world studied; and disavow researcher accountability concerning images conveyed by the ethnographic other to readers (p. 227).

Two key terms define these criticisms: lived experience and the criteria for judging the postmodern ethnographic representation (Lofland, 1995, p. 63; Snow & Morrill, 1995b, p. 360). For critics, such as Prus (1996), Farberman (1991, p. 475), and Snow and Morrill (1995a, 1995b), the so-called postmodern ethnographers reduce human lived experience either to textual reality (Prus, 1996, p. 245) or to self-narratives (Snow & Morrill, 1995a, p. 347). In both cases, everyday lived experience and its representations disappear. With this loss also go the usual criteria for evaluating a representation; that is, the use of theory,

social facts, and the presence of the persons being studied, whose experience is given through quotes from interviews and conversations.

There are also other criteria as suggested in Table 9.1: those that are dangerously close to Huber's positivism, including hard facts, the absence of personal bias, and generic, processual analyses (Lofland, 1995; Prus, 1996, p. 253), and thick descriptions and new and true data based on the correct representation of the empirical facts in a situation (Lofland, 1995, p. 47). Because the postmodern ethnographers lack these kinds of criteria for evaluating their work, scholars are left in a situation in which anything goes. Fearful that others will not know how to handle this ambiguity, the critics then turn to their own criteria, offering the bewildered a way out of this postmodern madness.

Reading the Interpretive Critics

These critics refuse to accept the arguments concerning the crises of representation and legitimation outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. In rejecting the narrative turn in the human disciplines, these authors also reject the forms of textual experimentation that go with that turn. They nostalgically invoke an earlier, more pure historical moment when these arguments about narrative were not present. In that moment, ethnography's golden age, unfettered, theoretically sophisticated, conceptually dense qualitative inquiry took place.

This is the place of Huber's disinterested observer seeking objective truth about a stable reality—only a few words have changed. Reality is now obdurate (Prus, 1996, pp. 246-247), not objective, and the observer is intersubjectively involved with this world of study. Thus, practice and method are privileged, and the notion of objective, interpretive inquiry is maintained. There is no preoccupation with discourse as the material practice that constitutes representation and description, the two terms that are so central to the places of lived experience in the realist ethnographic text.

Therefore, not surprisingly, the realist critique reproduces Malinowski's conception of ethnography, the cultural transmission model that fits ways of thinking and feeling to institutional structures. This model gives value to lived experience as the site at which individual belief and action intersect with culture. Under this framework, texts are

superfluous extensions of culture—mere entertainments. At the same time, these interpretive critics conflate the study of texts with a concern for language and meaning. Folding language into texts reifies language and divorces it, they contend, from the realm of "people, action, and the community in which language takes shape," (Prus, 1996, p. 245).

This is a strategic move because no poststructuralist would attempt to ignore language in use, nor would any poststructuralist fold language solely into texts. In so arguing, however, these critics are able to dispense with Mill's notion of a secondhand, text-mediated world of experience. The argument does not stop here. Texts are not worthy of analysis by sociologists. They have no place in the culture-action-individual ethnographic model.

This text-based criticism takes still another form. This is the critique of "such attenuation devices as poems, pictures, artifacts, and contrived or fictionalized accounts . . . and theatrical productions" (Prus, 1996, pp. 227-278; see also Farberman, 1991, p. 474; Snow & Morrill, 1995b, p. 361). People who do these things may be artistic or postmodern, but they are not social scientists and this is not ethnographic research (Prus, 1996, p. 227). More important, however (Snow & Morrill, 1995b),

> This performance turn, like the preoccupation with discourse and storytelling, will take us further from the field of social action and the real dramas of everyday life and thus signal the *death knell* of ethnography as an empirically grounded enterprise. (p. 361)

(Sadly, under this model there would be no place for Victor Turner or Dwight Conquergood or the work that routinely appears in *Text and Performance Quarterly.*)

The postmodern use of ethnography as a platform for moral, political, or social criticism is also challenged. Prus (1996, p. 227) will have none of this, and Snow & Morrill (1995b) are fearful of ethnographers using their ethnographies in moral ways:

> It is our view that there is little to be gained and much to be lost by making moral claims and engaging in moral posturing. It is far better to jettison such impulses and focus on the question of 'how best to describe and interpret the experiences of other people and other cultures.' (p. 362)

Thus, we have a value-free ethnography, which just tells it like it is. Politics must be kept out of our ethnographic practices. There is no place for Huber's irrationalists in ethnography today. Marxism, feminism, and cultural studies—these interpretive perspectives must be set aside because they bring values into this scientific project.

This move allows the critics to salvage a position of power for those who do ethnographic research. Farberman (1991, p. 477) is explicit: The ethnographs want to make the "competent professional investigator equal to the lay subject in the belief that this is an act of elite bashing that will oust a patriarchal establishment of white, male heterosexuals which will result in democratic redress." There are many reasons for taking what lay subjects say seriously, but this is not one of them. The so-called ethnographs are skeptical of social theory and complex conceptual frameworks because these frameworks impose one interpretive framework on another. Too often, the perspective of those studied gets lost in the analyst's complex grounded theory. This is why ethnographs listen to lay subjects.

Finally, the term postmodernism, as noted in previous chapters, refers to several things at the same time: a movement in the arts; new forms of social theory; historical transformations that have occurred since World War II; cultural life under late capitalism; life in a mass-mediated world in which the symbol of reality (hyperreality) has replaced the real; and a conservative historical moment characterized by a backlash against the political activities of many marginalized voices and communities (racial minorities, gays, elderly, and women).

For its critics, postmodernism carries all the negative implications outlined previously. It is as if postmodernism were a choice or an option. In discussing cultural studies and postmodernism, Grossberg (1992) states,

> Cultural studies' interest in postmodernism is not a matter of accepting that the history of the modern has come to an end; it is rather that postmodernism poses a new project for cultural studies' own rearticulation; that it must critically examine and hopefully delink itself from some of the complexities with the modern. (p. 24)

We inhabit a cultural moment that has inherited (and been given) the name postmodern. A cultural studies and interpretive interaction-

ism informed by poststructuralism, Marxism, feminism, and the standpoint epistemologies aims to make sense of this historical moment called the postmodern. In this sense, it is inappropriate to speak of a postmodern ethnography. The postmodern is our project. We seek, rather, an interpretive accounting of this historical moment—an accounting that examines the very features that make this moment so unique. At the same time, we desire to separate ourselves from the modernist ethnographic project. That project plays directly into the hands of those who would politically manage the postmodern, including giving such individuals words and arguments for attacking the new writing and all it stands for.

To summarize, six strategic moves are used by those who believe the old ways are better than the new. These moves allow those in power to marginalize the new writing forms.

1. The new writing is not scientific; therefore, it cannot be part of the ethnographic project.
2. The new writers are moralists, and moral judgments are not part of science.
3. The new writers have a faulty epistemology; they do not believe in disinterested observers who study a reality that is independent of human action.
4. The new writing uses fiction: This is not science. It is art.
5. The new writers do not study lived experience, which is the true province of ethnography. Hence, the new writers are not participant observers.
6. The new writers are postmodernists, and this is irrational because postmodernism is fatalistic, nativistic, radical, absurd, and nihilistic.

These six beliefs constitute complex discursive systems; separate literatures are attached to each. Taken together, they represent a formidable, yet dubious critique of the new writing. They make it clear that there are no problems with the old ways of doing ethnography. Indeed, the new ways create more problems than they solve. These beliefs serve to place the new writing outside ethnography, outside science, perhaps in the humanities or the arts. Some (Huber) would ban these persons from academia altogether. Others (Farberman and Prus) would merely exclude them from certain theory groups; that is, from symbolic interactionism or ethnographic, qualitative inquiry.

Whose Truth?

Two systems of truth are operating in this interaction that brings the new up against the old. The realist regime holds to the belief in firm and steady truths about the world. These truths are based on the ocular, visual model of verification discussed in Chapter 2. This model asserts that accurate representations of the world can be produced, and these representations truthfully map the worlds of real experience. The many problems with this model were detailed in Chapters 1 and 2, including beliefs in a stable world, a commitment to mimesis, confusions over lived experience and its representation, ignoring the parallax of discourses, and faith in the primacy of voice and vision; in summary, the failures of a ocular epistemology.

This epistemology produces information and knowledge but not understanding. It is suited to a modernist project that privileges one of the four visual regimes discussed in the previous chapter (Cartesian, Baconian, Baroque, and hysterical). These regimes use validity and reliability as marketing devices, obscuring the fact that the observer is not a neutral spectator; truth is always a function of the visual regime that is deployed.

Nor does this realist epistemology fit itself to some version of the seven-part thesis concerning ethnography's future outlined in the Introduction. Ethnography, as a gendered project, has changed because the world that ethnography confronts has changed. Ethnographers inhabit a postcolonial world—the age of multinational, electronic capitalism. This world is defined by difference and disjuncture and shifting borders and borderlines. Center and periphery intersect, making the local global, producing federations of exiles and refugees, and diasporas of twice-hyphenated Americans. Ethnographic texts as commodities and moral texts are grafted into this world. Despite the fact that ethnography is one of the principle moral discourses of the contemporary period, ethnographers do not have an undisputed warrant to study

others; this right has been lost. Self-reflection is no longer an option, nor can it be presumed that objective accounts of another's situation can be easily given. Truth is also always personal and subjective. An evocative and not a representational epistemology is sought.

In contrast to the realist regime, the new writers seek a model of truth that is narrative, deeply ethical, open ended, and conflictual, performance, and audience based, and always personal, biographical, political, structural, and historical. Writing from a moving, unstable place, these experimentalists are neither insiders nor outsiders. They are on both sides of Trinh's and Anzaldua's hyphen, travelers in interconnected physical, social, moral, and sexual borderlands. They search for epiphanal stories that return to the beginning, the loss of innocence, science's seductions: a new way of writing—reflexive, transgressive, and simultaneously feminine and masculine (see Barone, 1995, p. 71).

One version of truth is constructed in the improvised performance, in the coproduced performance text, in mystories, and in storied, postmodern bodies, specularity undone—the truth of life's fictions in which experiences are evoked, not represented or explained. This performance truth involves audiences working with actors who are ethnographers, ethnographers who are performers, and performed texts as lived experience. This is ethnographic theater, Brecht's experiments with thinking audiences, challenges to text-centered ethnography, and dialogical performance art. Writers create texts that reclaim the stories a realist science has reduced to minor literature or to nonscience. Writers resist the efforts of those who would turn ethnography into stable, realist systems of meaning.

In dealing with the truth of life's fictions, the dividing line between fact and fiction is tested, and reality and text become one. Narrative, in its many storied, performance, and textual forms, is all that we have (see Benhabib, 1992, p. 14). Narrative, however, is configured in a specific way. The new writers deal with the facts of experience anchored in specific scenes or situations. Text and dialogue bring composite characters and persons-as-performers alive. Although the narrative advances by moving from scene to scene, multiple timelines and experiential frames overlap within the same scene or performance context (see Zeller, 1995, p. 82). A moral theory of self and society and of gender, sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity is presumed. This theory, as a minimal interpretive framework, provides a platform for performances that detail and criticize life in this postmodern society.

Multiple narrative styles are explored, including ethnographic poetics, narratives of the self, realist, phenomenological, exegetical, testimonial, and notional nonfiction texts. Understanding reality and image to be inseparably fused, the new writers reject the realist move that sees an underlying reality behind the images or symbols that seem to hold a group together. Where realists see facades to be penetrated, the new writers see worlds of experience held together by the most fragile of social and cultural logics. Situating themselves in the worlds studied, stirring it up, so to speak, the experimentalists are not passive observers bearing witness to transsituational, objective truths. There are no stories out there waiting to be told and no certain truths waiting to be recorded; there are only stories yet to be constructed.

The new writers question the "natural" relationship between narratives, truth, and reality—that relationship that sees the text mirroring the external world. The intent, instead, is to create a reflexive text. This text allows the reader to re-experience the events in question, coming to see the truth of the narrative that contains them. This truth is not based on mimesis, but rather it is grounded in the process of self-formation and self-understanding. It is not anchored in the so-called external world. The new writers create a new reader, a reader willing to suspend belief in the efficacy of the older narrative forms. (The critics of the new writing clearly resist this invitation.)

This new reader is willing to confront the unpresentable features of the postmodern world; capitalism's violence in its multiple forms: murder, rape, incest, child and spousal abuse, conspiracies, global genocide, state-sponsored murder, villains-victims-sleuths, corporate enemies, and the public at large as victim. This willingness to confront the unpresentable is based on more than a morbid desire to bear witness to or to be titillated by the Gothic, the decadent, the depraved, and the pornographically violent features of the culture. It reflects, as well, the desire to be informed, to be made aware of this postmodern world and its discontents, and to find in the violence a narrative or story line that will make sense. Also, that narrative repositions the self of the reader, giving the reader a safe hiding place out of the line of fire—a cozy story. Is this bad faith?

Morally tainted, flawed writers engage flawed readers, the walking wounded, in the coproduction of resistance texts, utopian and dystopian works that intervene in the world, making differences in the lives of real people. There is a constant search for a moral center and an ethics of practice in a world that is always moving. The text becomes the agent and the agency of self-discovery. In this way, writers and readers rediscover the truth of the old myths, folklore, the blues, the old stories, and shared moral journeys: Oedipal tales told over and over again (Edmunds & Dundes, 1983/1995)—somebody takes a trip and somebody stays home—and tiny moral tales about the the big picture.

There are now multiple forms of reflexivity, from the methodological and intertextual to standpoint, queer, feminist, and the postcolonial. These reflexive understandings of the new text unhinge science from within, bringing it closer to moral criticism. Now, the criticism is out in the open. The messy text becomes the place where ethnographers write for and not about the other. There is a conscious effort to avoid the telling of stories that reproduce the standard version of the knowing subject of contemporary ethnography. At the same time, writers make their ontologies and theories of existence explicit, connecting those formulations to their theories of the postmodern and its discontents. Constantly working against the sting of memory, the new writer uses personal troubles and lived biography as the starting place for critical ethnography.

Therefore, a performance-based, storytelling, listening, and hearing framework is privileged. Truth is fragile—a coproduction and an interactional experience lodged in the moment that connects the reader-as-audience-member and coperformer to a performance text. Truth is moral criticism—an ethical judgment that moves beyond the objective proclamations of positivism's scientific observer.

Positivism's Ethical Mandates

Not surprisingly, positivism's (and realism's) moral criticisms of the new writers privileged the critics as the morally proper entrepreneurs who were not only saving science for society but were also saving society through the use of science. This meant that the critics had to

locate the new writers outside society and science. The new writers, the critics argued, followed nothing more than a hedonistic or politically correct moral ethic. They had suspended all foundational, evaluative criteria that could be brought to the observational and ethnographic project. Thus, the argument concerning "anything goes" simultaneously joined irrationalism with postmodernism, with the new writing, and with an antifoundational position that said there was no truth. The critics suggested that the persons who held these beliefs were new to the fields of the human sciences. As such, their arguments were based on and embodied an identity politics that was, in its standpoint epistemology versions, antiscience, antireason, anti-Enlightenment, and antitruth (Dickens, 1995, p. 538). In one fell swoop, politics, identity, and science were joined. Those who enacted an identity politics in and through their writing (and research) were no longer part of the scholarly community.

Having banned (or at least labeled) the dissidents, scientists were now free to pursue their modernist, Enlightenment aims in a solidified community that shared the same moral values, including the belief that facts and values should not be confused or intertwined (Sjoberg, Gill, Williams, & Kuh, 1995, p. 9). Central to this community was a set of ethical mandates that provided research guidelines for those who understood this distinction: students, scientists, journalists, universities, internal, institutional review boards (IRBs), granting agencies, journals, publishers, and even entire disciplines (Sieber, 1992; Timmermans, 1995).

These guidelines (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 120-141), based on a utilitarian view of human nature, shored up the modern positivist research agenda. They served to nullify the breaches and negative effects (invasions of privacy, denial of individual agency, and psychological and physical harm to human subjects including losses of personal dignity and self-esteem) that were produced by the informed consent model of science (see Lee, 1993, Chapter 10, 1995; Mitchell, 1993). Utilitarianism, with its emphasis on exchange and rational choice, implemented the belief that rational people will seek the same benefits and avoid the same costs in any situation (Sjoberg et al., 1995, p. 9).

This ethical model, with its informed consent forms, presumably protects subjects from deception, loss of privacy, and psychological or physical harm.[12] It makes science public because subjects agree to be

studied. Hence, their privacy is not being invaded. Confidentiality of identifiable information must be maintained unless the subject gives permission to do otherwise.[13] These are ideals because, in practice, some scientists engage in fraudulent, unethical practices, including lying to their subjects and engaging in deceptions and misrepresentations concerning their research intentions (see Hilts, 1995).[14]

Under this model, three ethical principles (Sieber, 1992, p. 18) should guide research on human subjects—namely, (a) beneficence, or maximum benefits to science, humanity, and the research participants, while risks are kept to a minimum; (b) respect, including protecting the autonomy (and anonymity) of individuals; and (c) justice, involving reasonable, nonexploitive procedures.[15] These three principles generate six research norms concerning (a) the use of valid research designs by (b) competent researchers who (c) identify the possible negative consequences of the research while minimizing risks, maximizing benefits, and displaying respect for privacy and confidentiality. These researchers (d) randomly select representative subjects from a larger population. These subjects (e) voluntarily (freely) participate, giving informed consent, and are (f) compensated for injury (Sieber, 1992, p. 19).

If these norms and principles are followed, scientifically and ethically valid research is produced. Ethical practices are made to conform to scientific protocol (e.g., valid research designs, competent researchers, and random samples). In turn, scientific protocol defines ethical practice. An ideal subject (fully informed and reasonable person) is presumed, as is a fully competent, ethically conscientious researcher.

Exceptions to this system are allowed. Information can be withheld from subjects if full disclosure would invalidate the research. In addition, if any of the following conditions exist, research may be exempted from prior review: existing data, public documents, public officials and public service programs, normal educational practices (including the use of educational tests) are being analyzed; and hair and nail clippings, bodily excreta and external secretions, blood samples, voice recordings, dental records, and the recording of data from subjects 18 years or older, using noninvasive procedures, are being collected. This is a total science model; nothing is hidden. The scientist has full access to all the dark and hidden corners of human experience. This is the modernist project in full glory—a panoptic science for humankind.

Challenges to the Traditional Ethical Model

This utilitarian, modernist model has, of course, been challenged. The modernist faith in a nonambiguous ethical code has failed (Dickens, 1995, p. 539). The twin banners of this code, universality and functionalism, are no longer accepted (Dickens, 1995, p. 539). Not only is the code blind to gender, race, class, and ethnicity (see Benhabib, 1992, p. 14) but no single, universally shared, rational choice model has been found to work. The code (Christians et al., 1993, pp. 193-194) rests on a cognitive model that privileges rational solutions to ethical dilemmas (the rationalist fallacy), and it presumes that humanity is a single subject (the distributive fallacy).

The model perpetuates a traditional, liberal conception of privacy and the public sphere (Benhabib, 1992, pp. 12, 104-105; Denzin, 1995a, pp. 206-207). This framework has excluded women and minorities from public discourse, defined the public good (justice) in masculine terms, and confined the public sphere to the polity and the economy, thus leaving the private sphere to the familial-domestic realm (Benhabib, 1992, p. 13). Under this traditional framework, privacy is defined in very limited terms to include the sphere of moral and religious conscience, the nonintervention of the state in free-market, economic transactions, or actions in the intimate sphere involving "the daily needs of life, of sexuality and reproduction, of care for the young, the sick and the elderly" (Benhabib, 1992, pp. 108-109).

Science inserts itself into this model in a very special way. Informed consent forms open the private to public inspection, allowing the participating citizen to contribute in the public good by being a scientific subject. Indeed, the citizen has a responsibility to participate in public science. In this way, justice is served. The state has now entered the private realm in the name of the public good, which is still defined in masculine terms. The participating scientist, as a competent researcher, embodies these liberal values that carry universal appeal to all parties.

This ethical code thus reinforces the concept of a private space in the postmodern society. This is a myth, however, because there are no longer (if there ever were) any private, sacred places. The scientific voyeur with his or her consent forms sustains the illusion that such spaces do exist. The twentieth-century histories of governmental surveillance and cinematic voyeurism indicate that this myth only operates for the benefit of the state (Denzin, 1995a, p. 207).

This code enforces a cloak, or veil of secrecy, which is supposed to protect the human subject. This veil surrounds the entire scientific project. Rights of privacy translate into procedures that ensure confidentiality. The citizen-as-scientific-subject is participating in a secret project; his or her attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors are private commodities. These are beliefs that define the core, sacred self. If made public, these beliefs could harm the person (and others). Extreme measures must be taken to keep these commodities private, including ensuring anonymity and the use of false names, codes, case numbers, and so on.[16] At the same time, science is a secretive (top secret) project.[17] In the commercial marketplace, scientific products compete for high monetary stakes. The science-as-secrecy model is incompatible with a communitarian view of ethnography as moral practice. This view is committed to a form of ethnographic practice that promotes universal solidarity (Christians et al., 1993, p. 14) while engaging in social critique and moral criticism. The science-as-secrecy model does not advance these aims.

Furthermore, this secrecy model is hierarchical (scientist-subject), noncontextual or nonsituational, logical, abstract, and assumes that a morally neutral, objective observer will get the facts right (Ryan, 1995, p. 144).[18] This system ignores the situatedness of power relations associated with gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, race, and nationality (Ryan, 1995, p. 145). It glosses the ways in which the observer-ethnographer is implicated and embedded in the "ruling apparatus" (Smith, 1987, p. 107) of the society and the culture (Ryan, 1995, p. 144). That is, the powerful university-based scientist ventures out into some local community to do research, carrying the mantle of authority that comes with university sponsorship. Not surprisingly, the IRB guidelines that the researcher follows primarily protect the university from lawsuits should something go wrong. Consequently, the researcher is responsible for "balancing the many interests including interests within which he or she is vested" (Ryan, 1995, p. 144). The researcher is not morally neutral within this system. There were (and are) too many violations of the code—some of them quite monstrous (see Hilts, 1995).

This rights-, justice-, and acts-based system ignores the relational, dialogical nature of human interaction. It does not argue for a politics or ethics of the common good (Christians et al., 1993, p. 45). It seldom asks the researcher to step into the shoes of the persons being studied. A care-based ethical system does just this, asking the researcher to see other's situations as they feel and see them (Noddings, 1984, p. 24; Ryan, 1995, p. 148). The traditional model, in contrast, relegates emotionality and intuition to a secondary position in the ethical, decision-making process. It fails to develop an ethics of caring grounded in the concrete particularities of any given case (see Ryan, 1995, p. 147).

At the same time, this modernist image of inquiry is based on a voyeuristic, conflictual view of science and society. That is, the members of society must be persuaded to participate in the scientific project, and this participation will not always be in their best interest. This framework turns human beings into objects and gives scientists power over them. It does not encourage collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, nonoppressive relations between researchers and those studied (Ryan, 1995, p. 149). It enacts only one view of science—positivism's image of how science works. It does not give an explicit place to the kinds of inquiry explored in previous chapters—namely, a critical, interpretive, feminist, ethnographic project.

Finally, positivism's fact-value distinction is no longer allowed. Feminist (Ryan, 1995), standpoint (Smith, 1987), and postmodern (Benhabib, 1992) proponents challenge the position that accords a "privileged position [to] scientific knowledge " (Sjoberg et al., 1995, p. 9). With this challenge comes alternative moral and ethical guidelines. (Habermas [1990; see Benhabib, 1990, pp. 340-350], for example, has proposed a discourse-based ethical model much at odds with the natural science, rational choice model of positivism.) Communtarians question the concept of autonomous individuals. Human rights theorists challenge those who conceive of ethics and rights within a state- or community-based system (Sjoberg et al., 1995, p. 11). Feminists (Benhabib, 1992; Ryan, 1995) question the patriarchal biases of utilitarianism.

Feminist, Communitarian Ethical Model[19]

I turn now to a feminist, communitarian moral ethic that extends the previous discussion. Table 9.2 summarizes the differences between the positivist and the feminist communitarian ethical systems (see Tong, 1993).

After Christians et al. (1993, pp. 12-17, 194-195), the following assumptions organize this communitarian ethical system (see Lincoln, 1995b, pp. 280-281). It is based on an interactive, postpragmatist (Denzin, 1995a, pp. 215-217) approach to community, self, and inquiry in the cinematic, televisual age (see Schrum, 1995). This historical moment requires new conceptions of truth, the public, science, journalism, self, and community (Wiley, 1995). It breaks with classical liberal ethical models and their revisions that are flawed on two basic counts—the rationalist and distributive fallacies noted previously. It contends that community is ontologically and morally prior to persons, and that dialogical communication is the basis of the moral community. Civic transformation is taken to be the major goal of any ethical (and occupational) practice. This entails a commitment to the common good and to universal human solidarity. It calls for a sacred conception of science (Lincoln, 1995b), a conception that "honors the ecological as well as the human" (Lincoln, 1995b, p. 284), and stresses human dignity, care, justice, and interpersonal respect (Lincoln, 1995b, p. 284).

A personally involved, politically committed ethnographer is presumed and not the morally neutral observer of positivism. Those studied are asked to be active participants in the collaborative research process. A new, local, and public ethnography joined with a public journalism is imagined. This new mode of discourse builds on and extends the innovative work of the literary (new) and investigative journalists (and private eyes) discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. In this framework, every moral act is a contingent accomplishment measured against the ideals of an feminist, interactive, and moral universalism (Benhabib, 1992, p. 6).

By rejecting the rights-based model of positivist inquiry, the communitarian researcher also rejects positivism's three ethical principles (beneficence, anonymity, and justice). In turn, positivism's six research norms (valid designs, competent researchers, minimizing risks, random selection, informed consent, and compensation for injury) are also rejected.

Table 9.2 Two Ethical Systems

Positivism	*Communitarianism*
Autonomous individuals	Community
Utilitarianism	Communitarianism
Justice, respect	Solidarity, care
Beneficence	Love, mutuality
Privacy, secrecy	Public science
Gender blind	Moral identities
Contracts	Convenant
Hierarchical	Empowerment
Neutral observer	Morally involved observer
Subject as object	Subject as coparticipant
Facts	Narrative, dialogical, civic transformation
Harm, exceptions	

The feminist, communitarian researcher does not invade the privacy of others, use informed consent forms, select subject's randomly, or measure research designs in terms of their validity. This framework presumes a researcher who builds collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, and friendly relations with those studied. This individual would not work in a situation in which the need for compensation from injury could be created. It is also understood that those studied have claims to ownership over any materials that are produced in the research process, including field notes (Lincoln, 1995a).

Feminist, communitarian research is judged by its authenticity, its fairness, and its ability to provoke transformations and changes in the public and private spheres of everyday life—transformations that speak to conditions of oppression (see Christians et al., 1993, pp. 194-195; Lincoln, 1995b, p. 277). This research values the connectedness that forms between researcher and researched. A friendly, cooperative relationality defines such inquiry. As Lincoln (1995b, p. 287) observes, "Relationality is the major characteristic of research that is neighborly." This research is rooted in "community, shared governance . . . and neighborliness" (Lincoln, 1995b, p. 287). This sense of neighborliness means this research serves the "community in which it is is carried out,

rather than the community of knowledge producers and policymakers" (Lincoln, 1995b, p. 280).

In this way, the communitarian model sets itself off from the traditional, positivist academic community with its commitments to objectivity, contracts, neutral observers, and utilitarian notions of the greater good. The positivist concept of inquiry destroys community as the feminist communitarians understand that term.

Thus, the charge of ethical relativism, which the critics (Huber, 1995) simplistically bring to the new writing, is addressed (see Christians et al., 1993, p. 59). Indeed, the shoe is put on the other foot. The utilitarians are the relativists. In their system, value judgments are based on cost-benefit analyses, and no individual's analysis is privileged over another's (Christians et al., 1993, p. 57). Relativism must recognize lying and harm as justifiable means "to the greater happiness of the group" (Christians et al., 1993, p. 57). Thus, this is how the cost-benefit model work. It is no accident that it has an escape hatch concerning full disclosure when such would invalidate the research. If it is in the interest of the greater good, deception is warranted.

At the same time, utilitarian relativism is a morally conservative system, grounding its moral judgments in local community practice and in social consensus (Christians et al., 1993, p. 59). "An ethical relativist would have to accept the Nazi death camps . . . as logical extensions of the belief's, grounded in social and historical contexts, of those in control. 'Live and let live' becomes horribly ironic" (p. 59).

In contrast, the feminist, communitarian ethical system encourages moral decisions based on justifications derived from the moral terms listed previously and in column two in Table 9.2. This framework employs a communicative, care-based ethic that presumes a dialogical view of the self. In this model, the connectedness between people is recognized: People care for, are responsible for, and are accountable to one another (Ryan, 1995, p. 147). Extending Patricia Hill Collins's (1991, p. 215) work, this ethic of caring celebrates personal expressiveness, emotionality, and empathy. This feminist ethic values individual uniqueness and, after Collins, cherishes each person's invisible dignity, quiet grace, and unstated courage (Collins, 1991, p. 107), the mothering (and fathering) mind (Collins, 1991, p. 131), love, community, and justice (Collins, 1991, p. 197), and the expression of emotionality and caring in the text. This ethic of personal accountability makes individuals accountable for their values and the political consequences of their actions.

This model seeks to produce narratives that ennoble human experience while facilitating civic transformations in the public (and private) spheres. This ethic promotes universal human solidarity. It ratifies the dignity of the self and the value of human life. It is committed to human justice and the empowerment of groups of interacting individuals. It works to build covenant rather than contractual bonds within the local community (Christians et al., 1993, p. 14). In the workplace, "the mutuality principle . . . in contrast to contractarian individualism, insists that authority and decision making be allocated equitably" (p. 15).

This postpragmatist system situates the interactive moral self within the decisive contexts of gender, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and nationality. It assumes the discursive power of individuals to articulate situated moral rules that are grounded in local community and group understandings. This is a conversational, interactional model. Moral and ethical reasoning occurs in the talk and interaction that goes on between self-aware, self-reflexive, and interacting individuals. Ethical talk (Benhabib, 1992, p. 9) moves forward because individuals are able to share one another's point of view in the social situation. Understanding, based on shared emotional experience (Denzin, 1984, p. 145) and not consensus, is the basis of this discourse, which takes as a given universal moral respect for every individual.

Public and Private Spheres of Experience

Individuals are participants in ongoing, pluralistic, moral communities. In these communities, the divisions between public and private intermingle. As discussed previously, in the contemporary period the distinctions between the public and the private, the civic and the civil, and the communal and the private have become hopelessly confused, if not erased. Accordingly, a new concept or set of terms is needed to describe the multiple moral and social spaces or spheres that exist within the local community. A single word will work: everyday life in the pluralistic, postsurveillance society. The engendered, everyday life world is entangled in the many social spheres that define the public and the private; public culture and private spaces can no longer be separated.

The postmodern, pluralistic, cinematic society, paraphrasing Christians et al. (1993, pp. 188-189), is characterized by multiple associations, a plurality of social structures (family, church, press, and school), and a plurality of ethnic, religious, and sacred cultures. The intermingling and protection of these multiple cultures and their sacred places and practices produces a "world-view pluralism [that is] the axis of communitarian democracy" (p. 189).

If the term public is confined to a narrow meaning—belonging to the people, or to the moral community—then all that is private (belonging to the person) is also public and part of the local and moral community. This distinction conceives of multiple spheres of social experience, from the many spheres of the private to the multiple spheres of the public (see Rosen, 1994, p. 380), including multiple arenas of public life (Charity, 1995, p. 10). Nothing is ever wholly private, and much of what occurs in public presumes confidential (private) understandings and agreements. Everyday life in this postsurveillance, moral community is deeply embedded in the mediated, hyperreal, televisual systems of meaning that bring the global village into the living room. The everyday life world is that moving moral space in which the dialogical self realizes itself in its so-called public and private narrative relations with others.

These relations are always immediate, phenomenologically real within the contours of the present. The moral, dialogical self is a narrative, storytelling production—a production that weaves its way through and into the storied lives of others. A narrative ethic (Frank, 1995, p. 157) that regards self-stories as moral acts is pursued. This ethic is judged by the sort of person it shapes (Frank, 1995, p. 157). This narrative ethic is grounded in the "historically contingent moral languages" (Christians et al., 1993, p. 187) that define everyday experience in the local community.

This moral discourse is ideally mediated by the norms of participatory democracy. These norms articulate free speech and moral respect for the other. This moral respect extends to those representative and participatory political structures that articulate the will and voice of the community. Individuals participate in these structures in three ways: as elected representatives (school board members), as professionals with specialized bodies of knowledge (teachers), and as participants in a communal, participatory system of interaction and governance (town

hall meetings). Participatory politics in a democratic polity work to establish forms of communal solidarity and friendship that honor demands for justice, moral respect, and reciprocal care. With public journalism, the new ethnographies create the spaces in which these public (and private) moral demands can be heard.

Merging Ethnography With Journalism

Now, a paradox is presented. The new or literary journalists opened up journalism (and ethnography) by using ethnographic procedures to write about important public issues. Readers read stories about real people who had real names. Writers, such as Wolfe, Mailer, Didion, Malcolm, and Capote, lifted the veil of secrecy that traditionally surrounds social science and ethnographic inquiry. These writers entered the many spheres of the private and the public that defined everyday life. They focused always on the epiphanal, the problematic, and the link between private troubles and larger, public issues: the what, who, where, when, why, and how of social life (Carey, 1986, pp. 166-167).

Gendered selves were connected to historical structures. Explana-ory accounts of problematic social events were inevitably offered. lunging always, as James Carey (1986, p. 149) argues, into journalism's visible landscape, the dark continent of why and how, these explana-ns took one of four forms: "determining motives, elucidating causes, edicting consequences, or estimating significance" (p. 166). Of course, se writers had no agreed on objective method for assessing the idence that would bear on motives, causes, consequences, or signifi-ce. Hence, explanation was (and is) always problematic and always ral and ideological (p. 166).

Like investigative journalists, the new journalists protected the lic good. As watchdogs, they brought a sense of moral indignation stances of corruption and betrayal of the public trust (Glasser & ma, 1989, p. 4). In so doing, these journalists objectified moral claims aking appeals to self-evident moral authorities, including the law, rts, formal codes, and everyday notions of common decency ey, 1986, p. 167). In these appeals, they created the grounds for the

moral judgments that were stitched into their news stories (Carey, 1986, pp. 166-167).

Four nonnegotiable norms or principles guided this work: stories should be accurate (do not lie) and balanced, reporting should avoid harm (nonmaleficence), readers have the right to know certain information, and writers have as moral obligation to make public the course of action they favor (Christians et al., 1993, pp. 55-56). Truth telling (the need to know) must constantly be balanced against the principle of nonmaleficence, the amount of harm that will be done to an individual or an oppressed group. This often resolves into an assessment of the amount of harm that will be or has been done against or to an oppressed group in question (p. 55).

Writing Culture in the Sixth Moment

In the present context, there are two normative, inscriptive systems—two ways of telling things about life in a democratic society, two ways of writing culture in the sixth moment. Journalism operates under the rule that the public has the right to know certain things and the First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press. Social science operates under another rule—the cloak of secrecy associated with a state-sponsored project that maintains the illusion of privacy within the postmodern world.

These two norms clash. They must be merged. Science's norms of silence, compliance, and complicity must be abandoned. Ethnography must move closer to a public or civic journalism (Christians, 1995a). Ethnographers must learn how to deploy the journalist's norms in the ethnographic context. A public, civic, or everyday life ethnography draws on the legacies of the new journalists. It borrows from the public journalists. It implements the writing culture project in the sixth moment. Like public journalism (Rosen, 1994, p. 376), it willingly breaks with old routines and evidences a desire to connect with people (citizens) and their concerns and biographical problems. It writes ethnographies that move people to action and works that promote serious discussion about democratic and personal politics. It makes readers actors and participants, not spectators, in the public dramas that define meaningful life in these twilight years of the twentieth century.

When modified then, journalism's norms open the door for a public or everyday life journalism (Carey, 1986, p. 195; Charity, 1995, p. 146)—local ethnographies of problematic democratic forms. This is a socially responsible ethnographic journalism that advocates democracy by creating a space for and giving a civic (public) voice to the biographically meaningful, epiphanal experiences that occur within the confines of the local moral community.[20]

This form of discourse transforms journalism's client, always the public, into something new (see Rosen, 1994, p. 370). Local, participatory, civic, journalistic ethnography answers to a new readership—the biographically situated reader who is a coparticipant in a public project that advocates democratic solutions to personal and public problems (Charity, 1995, p. 146).

Taken to the next level, transformed into public-journalism-as-ethnography, this writing answers to the following norms or goals. Public ethnography

- helps citizens make intelligent decisions about private troubles that have become public issues, including helping to get these decisions carried out (Charity, 1995, p. 2; Mills, 1959, p. 8);
- promotes interpretive works that raise public and private consciousness, which works help persons collectively work through the decision-making process and help isolate choices and core values, utilize expert and local systems of knowledge, and facilitate deliberative, civil discourse (Charity, 1995, pp. 4-8);
- rejects the classic, heroic model of those good, investigative journalists who "root out the inside story, tell the brave truth, face down the Joseph McCarthy's and Richard Nixons, expose corruption and go on crusades" (Charity, 1995, p. 9);
- seeks an ethnographer and a journalist who is an expert on public life, knows how to listen to the talk of citizens, to hear and present consensus when it emerges, is also a full-time citizen, and is committed to the belief that public life can be made to work (Charity, 1995, p. 10);
- sees the writer as a watchdog for the local community—a person who writes works that contribute to deliberative, participatory discourse, thereby maintaining the public's awareness of its own voice (Charity, 1995, pp. 104-105, 127);

- values writing that moves a public to meaningful judgment and meaningful action (Charity, 1995, p. 50), with a central goal being civic transformation (Christians et al., 1993, p. 14);
- exposes complacency, bigotry, and wishful thinking (Charity, 1995, p. 146) while "attempting to strengthen the political community's capacity to understand itself, converse well, and make choices (Rosen, 1994, p. 381);
- seeks dramatic stories and narratives that separate facts from stories, telling moving accounts that join private troubles with public issues (Charity, 1995, p. 72; Mills, 1959, p. 8);
- promotes a form of textuality that turns citizens into readers and readers into persons who take democratic action in the world (Charity, 1995, p. 19, 83-84).[21]

These are goals, ideals, and ways of merging critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996), with applied action research (Reason, 1994), with the new public journalism, and with ethnography in the sixth moment. They presume the feminist, communitarian ethical model discussed previously.

These goals assume an ethnographer who functions and writes like a civic or public journalist. This means that ethnography as storytelling will be given greater emphasis. The ethnographer will also take a slightly different approach to interviewing, emphasizing a more aggressive, information-gathering mode of interaction and confronting persons with contradictions in their stories and accounts. This writer, as a watchdog for the local community, works outward from personal, biographical troubles to those public arenas that transform troubles into issues. A shared public consciousness is sought—a common awareness of troubles that have become issues in the public arena. This consciousness is shaped by a form of writing that merges the personal, the biographical, with the public. Janet Cooke's (1980) fictional story, "Jimmy's World," is an instance of such writing. Such stories expose complacency and bigotry in the public sphere.

Writing Norms

The feminist, communitarian ethical model produces a series of norms for the public ethnographic writing project.[22] These norms build on and elaborate the four nonnegotiable journalistic norms discussed previously (accuracy, nonmaleficence, the right to know, and making one's moral position public), The ethnographer's moral tales are not written to produce harm for the innocent (Christians, 1986, p. 124)—those who have been oppressed by the culture's systems of domination and repression (the principle of nonmaleficence). The identity of those written about should always be protected. These tales are factually and fictionally correct, organized under the rule that if something did not happen, it could have happened. When fiction is written or when composite cases are molded into a single story, the writer, having learned a lesson from Janet Cooke, is under an obligation to report this to the reader (see Christians et al., 1993, p. 55; Eason, 1986). Janet Malcolm (1990) reminds us that liberties should not be taken with the real words spoken by real persons.

The reader has the right to read what the ethnographer has learned, but this right to know should be balanced against the principle of nonmaleficence. Accounts should exhibit "interpretive sufficiency" (Christians et al., 1993, p. 120); that is, they should possess that amount of depth, detail, emotionality, nuance, and coherence that will permit a critical consciousness to be formed by the reader. Such texts should also exhibit representional adequacy, including the absence of racial, class, and gender stereotyping.[23]

The writer must be honest with the reader.[24] The text must be realistic and concrete with regard to character, setting, atmosphere, and dialogue. Extending the postmodern detectives (Chapter 6), this text provides a forum for the search for moral truths about the self. This forum explores the unpresentable in the culture; the discontents of postmodernism are documented and placed in narrative form. The new writer stirs up the world, objectivity is a fiction, and the writer's story (mystory) is part of the tale that is told. The writer has a theory about how the world works, and this theory is never far from the surface of the text. Self-reflexive readers are presumed—readers who seek honest but reflexive works that draw them into the many structures of verisimilitude that shape the story in question.

There remains the struggle to find a narrative voice that writes against a long tradition that favors autobiography and lived experience as the sites for reflexivity and selfhood (Clough, 1994, p. 157). As discussed in Chapter 7, this form of subjective reflexivity is a trap that too easily reproduces normative conceptions of self, agency, gender,

desire, and sexuality. There is, to repeat, a pressing need to invent a reflexive form of writing that turns ethnography and experimental literary texts back "onto each other" (p. 162).

Always a skeptic, this new writer is suspicious of conspiracies, alignments of power and desire that turn segments of the public into victims. Therefore, these works trouble traditional, realist notions of truth and verification, asking always who stands to benefit by a particular version of the truth. The public ethnographer enacts an ethics of practice that privileges the client-public relationship. The ethnographer is a moral advocate for the public, although a personal moral code may lead individual researchers to work against the so-called best interests of a client or a particular segment of the public.

The ethnographer's tale is always allegorical, a symbolic tale, and a parable that is not just a record of human experience. This tale is a means of experience and a method of empowerment for the reader. It is a vehicle for readers to discover moral truths about themselves. More deeply, the ethnographic tale is a utopian tale of self and social redemption—a tale that brings a moral compass back into the readers (and the writer's) life. The ethnographer discovers the multiple "truths" that operate in the social world—the stories people tell one another about the things that matter to them (see Straley, 1992, p. 9). Like the public journalist, the ethnographer writes stories that create "pockets of critical consciousness . . . discourse[s] of cultural diversity" (Christians, 1996, p. 11). These stories move oppressed people to action, enabling transformations in the public and public spheres of everyday life.

In the End

I have argued throughout this book that American ethnography is deeply embedded in American culture. As that culture has gone postmodern and multinational, so too has ethnography. Difference and disjuncture define the contemporary, global, world cultural system that ethnography is mapped into. The twice- and thrice-hyphenated American (Asian-American-Japanese) defines the norm. In this world, reflexive ethnography is no longer an option, and the right to study anyone can no longer be presumed. Anthropology's foreign, strange lands have come home. Fragmented discourse and the vaguely unfamiliar familiar are now present everywhere. Magical realism, science fiction, comic book fantasies, and moral allegories define utiopian thought today.

Like American journalism, ethnography's "faults and triumphs are pretty much characteristics of the culture as a whole" (Carey, 1986, p. 194). The faults include obsessive voyeurism; a preoccupation with records, details, and statistics; overreliance on experts; the constant search for rational explanations of problematic conduct; naive realism; a preoccupation with the superficial; failed attempts to be objective; complicity with big business and with capitalism; and race, class, and gender biases.

The triumphs include a willingness to listen to ordinary people; a watchdog of cultural values; powerful stories about the underdog and the production of stories that move people to action; a celebration of, and love for, the concrete and the ordinary; an ability to eventually explain anything; an unwillingness to let go of the newsworthy; disrespect for the rich and the powerful; a voice of empowerment; and a commitment to democracy. Also, the forms of storytelling that ethnographers and journalists use are the same ones that are prized by the larger culture: narratives that draw from the scientific disciplines, popular culture itself (Carey, 1986, p. 194).

Recall the discussion in Chapter 5 concerning the historical relationship between journalism and the social sciences in the 1920s. Both professions were committed to producing factual, scientifically truthful statements about society. Both made distinctions between facts and fictions. Both were committed to the tenets of liberal democracy and to the belief that an informed citizenship was the key to a democratic society. Journalism and the ethnographically oriented social sciences were given the responsibility of producing and disseminating such information to the public at large and to students in the public school and college and university systems.

Recall the following from Robert E. Park (1950): "According to my earliest conception of a sociologist he was to be a kind of super-reporter" (pp. viii-ix). Together, the sociologist-as-reporter and the journalist made and told news—news that was local, timely, still under discussion, and relevant to the lives of community members (Park, 1950, p. 63). Such news addressed "the solid and unyielding structures of social life" (Carey, 1986, p. 195). This commitment kept a focus on

ethnography and journalism as forms of democratic social practice (Carey, 1986, p. 195).

Things changed, however. At some point in this shared and collective history, journalism and ethnography became identified with and defined by either (in the case of journalism) the "breaking news, the news flash, the news bulletin" (Carey, 1986, p. 195), or, as with sociology, anthropology, and education, the hottest new theoretical, methodological, or political issue, which, to repeat, often had little relationship to the "solid and unyielding structures of social life" (p. 195). When this happened, "our understanding of journalism [and ethnography] as democratic social practices was impossibly narrowed" (p. 195).

As Carey (1986, pp. 195-196) observes, journalists started thinking of themselves as "being in the news business." The goal was to get the story first, not to dig deep and uncover the unknown. Ethnographers were in the business of making their practice respectable, confronting and living through crises and too often losing track of praxis and the politics of their trade. In the traditional and modern moments, ethnographers chased positivist science, produced monuments to timeless cultural truth, and believed in objectivity (Rosaldo, 1989, pp. 30-31). Recently, self-doubt born of intense reflexivity has produced a paralysis of form—a fear of the self and its place in the writer's text. We are past this moment, however.

Remember, however, Raymond Carver's (1989b) short story, *Intimacy.* This is a story about a writer who is accused of betraying those he has written about. The writer had some business out west and stops off in the little town where his former wife lives. It had been 4 years since they had seen each other. During that time, he started sending her copies of things he wrote as they appeared in print, even interviews and profiles. He thought she might be interested in his work and the recognition he was getting, although she never responded.

It is 9 a.m. and he has not called ahead. She takes him into the living room and offers him a cup of coffee. Then, she starts in, calling him names: a sick man with no principles, a slyboots, a ruthless, cold-hearted son of a bitch, and a man with a heart like a garbage pail. She charges him with being on a fishing expedition, with hunting for new material to write about. She suggests that he only remembers the low, shameful things, and that when he left it was like she had stopped living. "I loved you to the point of distraction . . . We were so *intimate* . . . The memory of being that intimate with somebody" (Carver, 1989b, p. 446). He figuratively asks for her forgiveness and she gives it. Then he leaves.

In a proper world, this would be every writer's nightmare—being confronted by a former intimate about whom one has written and being told that a confidence was betrayed and that the wrong story was told. The list of writers who have broken promises and betrayed those they have have been intimate with is endless, and we do not live in a perfect world.

We are haunted by the lines quoted previously from Malcolm (1990, p. 4)—"Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he is doing is morally indefensible"—and Didion (1968, p. xiv)—"People tend to forget that my presence runs counter to their best interest. . . . Writers are always selling somebody out."

This will not end, but the guilt quotient should be raised because it is no longer morally acceptable to do as we have done in the past.

Therefore, here at the end, at the beginning of the sixth moment, the promise of ethnography as a form of radical democratic social practice is re-engaged. Marx (1888/1983a, p. 158) reminds us that we are in the business of not just interpreting but of changing the world. A feminist, communitarian, public ethnography, working hand in hand with public journalism, is one way to forward this project.

The final rule: No text can do everything at once. The perfect ethnography cannot be written. Trinh, Raymond Chandler, and Raymond Carver would agree.

Notes

1. To repeat, this is a normative social ethics that stresses the dialogical, narrative foundations of self, community, and society, placing a premium on the values of human dignity, love, care, solidarity, and empowerment. A feminist, communitarianism seeks to " 'engender' the subject of moral reasoning" (Benhabib, 1992, pp. 10) through a narrative-based, interactive dialogic universalism that views every moral position as a contingent accomplishment. This communitarian ethic is grounded in a theory of community and the dialogic self that stands in sharp contrast to classic liberalism's ahistorical, atomistic conception of autonomous, isolated individuals in society (Benhabib, 1992, p. 70; Christians et al., 1991, 1993, p. 15). A communitarian ethic stresses human solidarity,

love, care, justice, stewardship, reciprocity, empowerment, the dialogic self, community, commitment, civic transformation, and mutuality (see Christians et al., 1993, p. 13). Drawing on the works of Taylor, Walzer, Sandel, and MacIntyre, this version of communitarianism is not to be confused with Amitai Etizioni's (1993) project (see Craig, 1995).

2. This is how Charity (1995, p. 146) defines public journalism.

3. For Huber (1995), the antirationalists are the humanists and those social scientists who have been drawn to the humanist's criticisms of positivistic science.

4. Even the most radical relativist holds to some set of criteria concerning truth and reason (see Schwandt, 1996, pp. 130-131).

5. Gamson (1992) suggests that the "core of sociology is political sociology, social psychology and sociology of culture" (p. 4), indicating that "the core of sociology is defined by the particular interests of the definers" (p. 4).

6. Even the most ardent logical empiricist rejects this belief. It is now understood that every observation is theory laden (Cronbach, 1989; Rorty, 1991).

7. During the decades in question, all the human disciplines experienced pressures from these same groups, which Huber (1995) contends helped to destroy sociology. One wonders, for example, why anthropology, a field that embraced these diverse theories and epistemologies, flourished during this period, whereas sociology languished.

8. Gamson (1992, p. 1) questions if this means that those "sociologists who are critical must either shut up or adapt the political line of administrators?"

9. A current example of this negative attention can be found in the media controversy surrounding the recent study of the sexual practices of Americans (see Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Lewontin, 1995; Updike, 1995). This study has been criticized for its theories of human conduct and sexuality and its survey research methodology (see Chancer, 1995).

10. Consider, for example, the list of books nominated for the distinguished scholarly publication award of the ASA in 1989 (see Clemens et al., 1995, pp. 484-488).

11. Of course, no one rejects the concept of intersubjectivity, although since Husserl and Derrida no poststructuralist assumes that intersubjectivity is not easily accomplished. Of course, there is no objective place from which anything can be studied.

12. Some now argue that patient and consumer advocates should be members of IRBs, others suggest that advocates should be involved at earlier stages in research, including serving on the teams that draw up experimental protocols, and still others feel that third parties should interview subjects (patients) after they sign consent forms to ensure that "they understand the research and their choices" (Hilts, 1995). Some feel that consent forms have become like "rental car contracts" (Hilts, 1995).

13. The 1995 proposed Family Privacy Protection Act would require that parents must give written consent before their children can participate in nearly all types of federally funded research. Social scientists are objecting to this proposed legislation, arguing that it is a costly, ineffective procedure that will yield poorer quality research data that will ultimately harm children (American Sociological Association, 1995, pp. 1, 9).

14. For example, schizophrenic patients, uninformed of the risks, are allowed to relapse (stop taking their medication) so researchers can study this condition (Hilts, 1995).

15. Three types of at-risk subjects are recognized: children, newborns, and minors; prisoners, the mentally ill, and the mentally retarded; and pregnant women and the viable fetus.

16. Of course, the citizen may be coerced into participating in a scientific project, not knowing what public good will flow from this participation. The great Ivy League nude posture photo scandal is but another of many recent examples. From the 1940s through the 1960s, undergraduates at Yale, Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Smith, and Princeton were routinely photographed in the nude for a scientific project (long since dismissed) conducted by W. H. Sheldon who believed body type could tell a great deal about intelligence, temperament, and moral worth (see Rosenbaum, 1995, p. 30). Hillary Rodham Clinton and George Bush were among those whose nude bodies were photographed and, until recently, available for public examination at the Smithsonian Institution ("Smithsonian Seals," 1995).

17. Thus, high-level scientific work is conducted behind locked doors, giving rise to industrial and scientific espionage of global proportion.

18. I borrow from Ryan (1995), who is speaking primarily about evaluation theory and practice. She seeks a feminine, morally based evaluation framework. Her evaluator is close to Carspecken's (1996) critical ethnographer and (in some ways) Charity's (1995) public journalist, a moral advocate and a social critic who examines "the everyday life of evaluands" (Ryan, 1995, p. 145) in a democratic society.

19. I thank Katherine E. Ryan and Clifford Christians for their assistance and critical comments on this section.

20. At the same time, it is understood that "participating in a citizen's initiative to clean up a polluted harbor is no less political than debating in cultural journals the pejorative presentation of certain groups in terms of stereotypical images" (Benhabib, 1992, p. 104).

21. I am involved, with Walter Feinberg and Belden Fields, in a study of one community's attempts to bring a form of radical democracy (site-based decision making) into the classroom. We are experimenting with these norms and goals in this project.

22. These are extensions of the norms Christians et al. (1993, pp. 55-57) see as operating for journalists.

23. I thank Clifford Christians for this principle (Christians, in press).

24. The rules in this paragraph plagiarize Raymond Chandler's (1995) "12 Notes on the Mystery Story" (pp. 1004-1011).