Through a Glass Darkly

Kathleen B. Ingersoll
kbingersoll@smcm.edu

Daniel Ingersoll
dwingersoll@smcm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/southernanthro_proceedings

Recommended Citation
CHAPTER 5

Through a Glass Darkly

Kathleen B. Ingersoll and Daniel W. Ingersoll

Introduction

All peoples, societies, cultures, and individuals—even anthropologists—exhibit ethnocentrism at some level. One of the goals of anthropology is to overcome ethnocentrism—to escape cultural gnosticism, absolutism, and prejudice, and, ideally, to come as close to understanding the “mysterious other” as possible.

Function

Looking at culture as if it were a mechanism, that is from a functionalist perspective, a series of organizational categories are framed, in part deriving from how we see our own culture as a system of interrelated categories. If we look at familiar ethnographies (Firth 1957; Heider 1979; Hoebel 1960; Lowie 1956; Warner 1958), we observe the ethnographers presenting information in familiar categories such as religion, kinship, technology, politics, economy, warfare, rites and festivals, magic and medicine, and art. We have made the case elsewhere (Ingersoll 1989; Ingersoll and Nickell 1987) that American culture, and more broadly Western culture, is a categorical culture. The categories are part and parcel of how we perceive the world; we “think” in them and relate to them materially. Examples include the American three-part government system with its thousands of government agencies, occupations, academic disciplines (economics, political science, anthropology . . . ), ranks, statuses, and scientific naming systems (biological taxonomy such as the Linnaean system;
the periodic charts, chemical names, etc.). In terms of material culture, we experience our Western world in dominantly rectilinear terms (like boxes, categories), both cognitively and materially, such as map coordinates, window and door panels, house rooms, storage spaces (bureaus, cabinets, post office mailboxes), framed art, game boards, city grids and rural farm sections, college land grants, and computer chips. It is not surprising that we might project our categorical imperatives onto other cultures. The risk—introducing distortion and misunderstanding.

As an illustration, suppose we Westerners, including anthropologists, view a Navajo sandpainting. We are inclined to interpret the “painting” in terms of our own system of cultural categories: art. As we wrote elsewhere:

We watch in horror as the paintings are erased at the end of a curing ceremony. Even the anthropologist is barred from committing the sandpaintings to museums. Why is that? You need to put away the Western categories and take a holistic view of healing in Navajo culture to understand the drypaintings. Griffin-Pierce [1992, 55] wrote:

“The sandpainting is considered to be a sacred living entity. The Anglo perception of a sandpainting as an artistic achievement misses the true meaning of the sandpainting. The physical beauty of the depicted image is insignificant in comparison to the ceremonial accuracy and sacredness of the depicted forms. The emphasis of the sandpaintings is on process, the dynamic flow of action, and on its ability to summon power through the process of its creation and use.” (Ingersoll and Ingersoll 2013, 27)

For us, art is a separable experiential category that emphasizes individual originality, creativity, and, occasionally, fame. At home, we frame it, special category that art is, and display it on the wall. For
the Navajo, it is not about a special technology or art

. . . but about the power of knowledge, thought, words, mythic symbols, and the efficacy of the ritual itself to restore harmony and balance to a person or group. As the ritual unfolds, the sandpainting grows in depth and morphs, helping to tell stories and to merge past and present. You could not really exhibit a sandpainting in a museum; the upper surface of the sandpainting is just the final surface of a three-dimensional being. If you can grasp this, then not classifying sandpaintings as art makes perfect sense. (Ingersoll and Ingersoll 2013: 27)

Art? Talk about ethnocentrism.

The Mega the Better
In the way of routine technological assessments and evolutionary rankings, we do not seem to be able to help ourselves when encountering the products of other cultures: the bigger the better. If asked to list wonders of the world, we Westerners point to the mega: megalithic marvels like Stonehenge, skyscrapers, pyramids, ornate tombs, massive walls crossing continents, and grandiose architecture. If the culture in question ceases to construct the monumental, we may accuse them of collapse, regardless of whatever genius that culture possesses or possessed concerning ideas, concepts, or even small-scale material culture. When anthropologist H. Russell Bernard polled Americans (United States) in Florida, on what they rank as the great accomplishments of science and social science, he found that they tend to conceptualize science as engineering and technology, identifying “life-saving drugs, computers, space exploration, and so on” (2012, 1). Almost none of his respondents mentioned constitutions, encyclopedias, relativity theory, actuarial tables, time-motion studies, probability theory—ideas that have transformed the world
and that made the technology possible. So, think of a sun circle a meter in diameter with little sticks assisting in the identical mental operations as at a Stonehenge—would we take notice? American cultural “marking” of “success” clearly gravitates toward the material, the physical, and the palpable (Bernard 2010) and, of course, the monumental. Ideas find themselves relegated to the dubious realm of the Ivory Tower (Bernard also quoted in Ingersoll and Ingersoll 2013, 24).

A case in point is Rapa Nui, where we have been doing research for a decade (see Figure 1).

Much of the Western world is enthralled by the giant moai on Rapa Nui, including anthropologists and archaeologists. When the Rapa Nui ceased to make moai, the Western world theorized collapse, catastrophe, ecocide, warfare, cannibalism . . . a veritable behavioral sink. Blinded by “megalomania,” scholars nearly missed

---

**FIGURE 1.** Ahu Tongariki, Rapa Nui (photo by the authors).
what was actually evolving culturally—changes comparable to what happened in the Western world at about the same time. When reviewing the Western world entry into that massive sea change from feudalism to capitalism, from monarchy to constitutional government, from ascribed to achieved status, from peasant horticulture to industrial agriculture, from craft to factory production, from castles to McMansions, what scholars proclaim “collapse!” (although maybe they should)? On Rapa Nui, in many ways, the shifts were from ascribed to achieved status (the Birdman competition), from a received landscape to a totally and highly productive and visibly transformed landscape, from an isolated Pacific island into one in contact with all the oceans (trade with explorers, whalers, sealers), from moai-topped ahu to semi-pyramidal, sometimes containing moai as fill, and ship-shaped ahu (ahu poe poe) thought to imitate Western ships. The fixation on the moai—the Western “megalomania”—was so intense that
it took observers of European derivation almost 300 years to understand that all those billions of rocks littering the landscape were not natural volcanic distributions, but humanly engineered and sustainable gardens as cultural as Arlington’s stony cemeteries (see Figures 2 and 3).

Talk about ethnocentrism.

FIGURE 3. Two cultures intersecting, Oteo, Rapa Nui (photo by the authors).

Nature/Culture
One of Lévi-Strauss’s structuralist axioms, implied or asserted, is that the nature/culture dichotomy is universal. Transformations occurring along a number of lines, featuring oppositions such as raw/cooked and male/female, operate in a dialectical fashion to transform nature into culture. Other social scientists joined in the discussion like Leach, Needham, and Ortner, and that discussion is still going on (see Malviya 2013; Papić 2017; Szpotowicz 2015). We certainly agree that the nature/culture dichotomy figures prominently in Western culture, as does a dialectical thought process that continuously transforms the culture and material culture of the
Western world. In a Weberian sense, we can trace the development of the symbols and their dialectical structures from Judeo-Christian prototypes in religion through their secularization to the present. The matter/spirit dichotomy appears in the first Genesis story as Yahweh systematically creates an entire cosmos of light, sky, water, land, plants, sun and stars, sea creatures, land animals, and, at the end, man. This is the realm of physical matter, emerging in a dialectic of oppositions such as separating light from darkness. Then in the second story of Genesis, the episodic order is somewhat altered, and man is created, then woman from man. Yahweh breaths spirit into dust, Adam and Eve consume the forbidden fruit, and the human cultural adventure begins as the first man and first woman are expelled from Eden to engage in their own creations: descendants, kinship, food, shelter, crime, war, cities, temples, kingdoms, and nations. The first story of Genesis is about matter and the second about spirit, creating a matter/spirit duality and dialectic. The matter/spirit dichotomy moves from there, to merge with concepts from Greek and Roman culture, and then out into the Western world as we know it. Table 1 illustrates some of the more prominent dual structures of the Western ethnographic present that can be traced back to the first two stories of Genesis (Genesis 1:1–2:4 and Genesis 2:4–22).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Dual Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis I / Genesis II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter / Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body / Soul or Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body / Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature / Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature / Nurture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History / Myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood / In-Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical / Mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality / Myth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The continuously evolving dialectic, in both dual and trial variants, is present in the Christian Trinity, in the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy, in Hegel’s and Marx’s dialectical triads, in American governmental structure, in medical practice, and even in Western kinship blood vs. in-law relations (Schneider 1968, 1977) and the architecture of houses (Deetz 1977; Glassie 1975) (see Table 2 below). Anthropologist Lucy Garretson devotes a major portion of her book *American Culture* (1976) to examples of this nature/culture dialectic. A series of figures employing flow charts and boxes illustrates her analysis. In Garretson’s Figure 1.1 (1976, 4), “The Role of the Constitution”: “Nature | Transformed by | Human Rationality | Results in culture” exists parallel to “Anarchy | Transformed by | Law: U.S. Constitution | Results in | Government: Democracy.” Her Figure 1.2 (1976, 7), “Transformation of the Wilderness,” shows “Nature | Transformed by | Human Rationality | Results in Culture” in parallel with “Wilderness | Transformed by | Science and Technology | Results in | Abundance. Similarly, Figure 2.2 (1976, 17), “Love and Marriage,” has “Nature | Transformed by | Rationality | Results in Culture” related in parallel to “Animal sexuality | Transformed by | Law: Marriage | Results in Nuclear family.”

David Schneider’s volume, *American Kinship* (1968), provided a source cited by Garretson, with his similar nature/reason/culture relational concept. Although not an exploration of dialectical structures *per se*, Alan Dundes, in “The Number Three in American Culture” (1980), furnishes hundreds of examples of the utilization of the number *three*.

While Western dualisms such as mind/body show opposition but no apparent movement, Western dialectic in its trinal mode is dynamic rather than static. It moves through oppositions, such as thesis encountering antithesis resulting in synthesis. The Garretson examples above illustrate this process.
While some still subscribe to a universal nature/culture dichotomy, we think other ethnographers have managed to see beyond projections of our own dialectic. As examples, we would cite Claire Farrer’s *Living Life’s Circle: Mescalero Apache Cosmovision* (1991), Ann Fienup-Riordan’s *Eskimo Essays: Yup’ik Lives and How We See Them* (1990), Mark Mosko’s “The Symbols of ‘Forest’” (1987), and Gary Witherspoon’s *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* (1977; also see Witherspoon 1975). What each of these ethnographies explores is the symbol systems central to these societies without reducing them to a dialectic about nature and culture. Mosko, beginning with the largely materialist and empirical literature contributed by Turnbull and others, shows that the Epulu Mbuti do not lack kinship but simply express relationships in a symbolic way not immediately recognizable to Westerners; here the previous researchers were not particularly interested in symbolic representations. He sketches their way of envisioning the world as a series of spheres and wombs (for a schematic representation, see Mosko 1987, p. 901, Figure 1). The contradiction involved, Mosko argues, is about endogamy versus exogamy. We would add it is clearly not about nature versus culture.

Claire Farrer in *Living Life’s Circle* describes the “base metaphor” of the Mescalero Apache, which concerns harmony and balance tied to directionality, not nature versus culture (see Farrer 1991, p. 30, Table 2: Trinal Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trinity: Father/Son/Holy Ghost or Spirit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hegelian-influenced (Fichte and others):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/Antithesis/Synthesis,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being/Nothing/Becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other examples include Freud, Id/Ego/Superego;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garretson (1976), Nature/Human, Rationality/Culture;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 2.1, for a schematic representation). Furthermore, for Westerners, the matter of directionality needs to be considered without thinking about magnetic compasses and latitude and longitude—but rather how they, the Mescalero Apache, conceptualize the sun’s movement.

Similarly, Ann Fienup-Riordan and Gary Witherspoon provide descriptions of core symbolic representations for the Yup’ik and Navajo, respectively—representations not at all about nature versus culture (see Witherspoon 1977, 33).

We suggest that until the equivalents of the “base metaphor” are recognized in any given culture besides our own, we have useful and valuable information but do not really achieve much of an understanding of that culture. We think this is the hardest gravity belt of all to escape. Required are years of exposure to another culture’s thought world and the willingness to be bumped out of your footprints. Furthermore, our recognition as anthropologists probably requires mentoring from members of that culture who are deeply aware of their own symbolic and metaphoric constructions and can help us along.

Space and Time

We Westerners are definitely situated on the map: with longitude and latitude, compasses, transits, theodolites, loran, radar, satellites, and Google Earth. We Westerners are suspended between Creation and Apocalypse. That creation may be secular as in the Big Bang Theory, or it may reference the first two Genesis narratives. The end may be secular cosmic as in the sun becomes a black hole or theological Apocalypse as in Revelations. Either way, it is difficult for us to see things differently.

Regarding space, we will give just one illustration: an archaeological one. Imagine the construction of a Southeastern burial mound taking place over several years. Now imagine the archaeologists
approaching the task of excavation. Should the mound be excavated by metrical levels or cultural and natural strata? The mound would have gradually grown, built by basket loads of earth being deposited in an ever-expanding form. An excavation by strata following the accumulation patterns will appear uneven, irregular, and perhaps even unscientific. Instead of following strata, the excavation could employ nice, even metrical levels, with precise intervals set as centimeters or inches or feet. The metrical levels look very orderly and scientific in the plans and profile views, but it becomes much more difficult to keep track of the original building pattern that way.

Regarding time, recall typical archaeological and cultural divisions, often three-part: Early, Middle, Late; Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic; Savagery, Barbarism, Civilization (Morgan); magic, religion, science (Frazer); separation, transition, incorporation (Van

FIGURE 4. Photograph of a poster for the film *Rapa Nui*, Hanga Roa, Rapa Nui (photo by the authors).
Gennep), etc. We project our ideas of development and evolution into our parsing of our data. How much do these counter the lived experience of the cultures or societies that we attempt to study?

Now we will return to Rapa Nui for our final illustration. Above, we discussed cultural collapse as a label applied when an advanced (in our estimation) culture ceases to construct the monumental. Of course, the collapse could also relate to the apparent failure of a political, economic, or food production system. What happened to the Maya, the Anasazi, the Romans, the Medieval Norse on Greenland, to Ancient Mesopotamian societies? Why did they collapse? Well, not all accept collapse at face value—for example, see McAnany and Yoffee (2010).

There’s a whole realm of apocalyptic stuff out there in the form of comics, novels, films, and science predictions—for instance, see the films Apocalypse Now or Melancholia. In the film Rapa Nui, the end of the moai world is prophesied, as the last palm tree is felled. Now no more moai can be moved; now no more canoes can be built; now no one can leave the island or fish the oceans; now the kinship groups engage in warfare (Figure 4). Apocalyptic scenarios like this tell more about us than them. It is our projection of Biblical creation through Revelations drama, and its secular transforms onto mysterious other.

Talk about ethnocentrism.

Introspection and Ecstasis

Introspection and ecstasis are two ways of approaching cultural analysis. Introspection involves looking into one’s mental, emotional, or philosophical self. We think this is an appropriate approach to analysis in psychology, psychiatry, and philosophy within our own Western cultural sphere. But we do not think introspection works well when applied to non-Western cultures: the risk is projection
of our Western culture, selves, and minds onto others. We look inward, then discover our categories, concepts, values, behaviors, and symbols where they may not actually find expression—as with the example of Navajo “sandpaintings” as art, above. Sociologist Peter Berger comments on introspection:

Since society is encountered by the individual as a reality external to himself, it may often happen that its workings remain opaque to his understanding. He cannot discover the meaning of a social phenomenon by introspection. He must, for this purpose, go outside himself and engage in the basically same kind of empirical inquiry that is necessary if he is to understand anything located outside his own mind. (1969, 11)

Instead, what we really need is to be bumped out of our footprints—to be able to see what’s around us in a new way. In sociology (Berger 1969, 1973) and anthropology (Goulet and Miller 2007), the term ecstasy, from the Greek ekstasis, literally meaning “stepping” or “standing outside,” is employed to reference this approach. While “ecstasy” tends to be used in the literature, we prefer to use the form “ecstasis” to indicate a special analytical term, distinguishing it from the everyday word “ecstasy,” which has a wide range of meanings. Berger wrote:

A useful concept to introduce in this connection is that of “ecstasy.” By this we refer not to some abnormal heightening of consciousness in a mystic sense, but rather, quite literally, to the active standing or stepping outside (literally, ekstasis) the taken-for-granted routines of society. In our discussion of “alternation” we have already touched upon a very important form of “ecstasy” in our sense, namely, the one that takes place when an individual is enabled to jump from world to world in his social existence. However, even without such an exchange of
universes it is possible to achieve distance and detachment vis-à-vis one’s own world. As soon as a given role is played without inner commitment, deliberately and deceptively, the actor is in an ecstatic state with regard to his “world-taken-for-granted.” What others regard as fate, he looks upon as a set of factors to reckon with in his operations. What others assume to be essential identity, he handles as a convenient disguise. In other words, “ecstasy” transforms one’s awareness of society in such a way that givenness becomes possibility. While this begins as a state of consciousness, it should be evident that sooner or later there are bound to be significant consequences in terms of action. From the point of view of the official guardians of order, it is dangerous to have too many individuals around playing the social game with inner reservations. (1973, 136–7; also see Berger 1969, 43)

Experiencing ecstasis can help us understand our own culture, as described by sociologist Berger, but especially so, perhaps, for other cultural conceptions of the world. How does this happen? In the edited volume Extraordinary Anthropology, Goulet and Miller describe the process in their Introduction (2007, 1–16). Goulet and Miller write:

In “Ethnographic Objectivity: From Rigor to Vigor,” the opening chapter of Anthropology with an Attitude: Critical Essays, Fabian maintains that “much of our ethnographic research is carried out best when we are ‘out of our minds,’ that is, while we relax our inner controls, forget our purposes, let ourselves go. In short, there is an ecstatic side to fieldwork which should be counted among the conditions of knowledge production, hence of objectivity.” (Fabian 2001, 31 cited in Goulet and Miller 2007, 1).
Goulet and Miller follow with additional reference to Fabian:

It is in this vein that we explore the contents, preconditions, and ethnographic relevance of the “ecstatic side of fieldwork”—including, but not exclusively, experiences of personality and socially significant visions or dreams in the context of fieldwork. From this vantage point, “ecstasis, like empathy, communication, and dialog, as well as age, gender, social class, and relations of power, belongs to concepts that impose themselves when we reflect critically about what makes us succeed or fail in our efforts to produce knowledge about Others” as we interact with them in their worlds. (Fabian 2000, 280 cited in Goulet and Miller 2007, 3–4)

Many of the contributors to the Goulet and Miller volume in their chapters describe the impact of participation in ritual, dance, apprenticeship, and other forms of experiential participation: not just observing but also taking part. For example, in the chapter by Meintel (2007, 149, 151, 155) Edith Turner’s work was cited, ranging from Edith’s participation in healing events and rituals with the Ndembu (1992) and Alaskans, the sense of communitas that she and Victor felt in their work, and their own embracing of Catholicism helping them to fathom the healing rituals of others.

But intense, ecstatic emotional experience is not the only avenue to understanding. Below, we give examples of how we felt we experienced ecstasis through the contributions of others. One of the first world view breakthroughs one of us attained (Daniel) was through the ethnography of Gary Witherspoon (1975, 1977). After years of reading numerous ethnographies about the Navajo, all that information, while useful, just seemed two-dimensional; but when reading Witherspoon, the whole Navajo thought world came alive for the first time, everything from basic symbols (SNBH) to language and narrative, and all those other ethnographies came into focus.
Maybe part of his edge came from marriage to a Navajo woman—as I recall about fifteen years or so at the time of writing the sources cited above. There’s something to be said about learning from a long-term teacher. An amusing quote illustrates one of Gary Witherspoon’s own insights while he was exploring Navajo syntax, in this case, of a phrase generated by an experiment in transformational grammar—a phrase seemingly grammatically correct but culturally discordant. Witherspoon wrote:

Taking a cultural approach to the explanation of this pattern in Navajo syntax, some years ago I asked my wife why it was so absurd to say *tó at’éd boodlåá*’ ‘the water was drunk by the girl’. She thought long and hard about this matter, unable to see why it was not absurd to me. Finally, she said, “The sentence attributes more intelligence to the water than it does to the girl, and anyone [even you was the implication] ought to know that human beings are smarter than water.” Therein I had a lead to solve this riddle, but I was not sure what to make of it. She went on to say that the water does not think, so how could it have the girl drink it. But, I insisted, the water was not acting or thinking, it just got drunk. She countered by saying that the way I had constructed that sentence made it appear that the water was the cause of the drinking action, not the girl.

From the discussion above I later surmised that maybe the sentence should be translated ‘the water caused the girl to drink it’. I tried this translation out on several Navajos who knew English. They said it was much closer to the Navajo meaning of the sentence than ‘the water was drunk by the girl’ but they were still a little uncomfortable with it. After some further thought and discussion, we came up with the translation ‘the water let the girl
drink it’. Therein we had captured in English not just the covert meaning of the Navajo sentence but the overt absurdity that the meaning expressed. (1977, 67; brackets in the original)

If you have ever played the game of Mad Libs, you can get the sense of how this works in English.

Gary Witherspoon benefitted from working closely with a number of Navajo, but also or especially his wife. Claire Farrer, author of Living Life’s Circle: Mescalero Apache Cosmovision, benefitted from working closely with someone: “Bernard Second was my mentor and the one to whom I owe the primary debt of gratitude. As will be apparent, there would be no book without him; truly this book is as much his as mine. As the earlier epigraph indicates, this book was important to him. My regret is he did not live to see its publication” (1991, xi). Working with Bernard Second, she was able to become aware of what she called the base metaphor, a symbol structure that provides a powerful key to bringing Mescalero Apache ethnography to life.

After reading Eskimo-Inuit-Yup’ik ethnography for years but still not really understanding Eskimo tales or rituals, in this case first insights came from an archaeological report by Robert McGhee (1977), who began wondering why some Thule (about 1000–1600 AD, Alaska to Labrador and Greenland) artifacts he was studying in museum collections tended to be made of antler (caribou) while others tended to be made from sea ivory or sea mammal bone. The distributions could not be resolved by functional characteristics of the materials—either would be satisfactory for any of the artifacts. Having read structuralists like Leach (1973), he began perusing the historic and ethnographic literature on Eskimo myth, religion, taboos, etc. What he discovered was a series of related pairings (we hesitate to use the term “oppositions” because the concepts are not related in
a dialectical or adversarial fashion—it is more like the pairing for us of, say, salt and pepper, and we pass them together at the table):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribou</td>
<td>Sea mammals, sea birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antler</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now the materials associated with the artifact made sense; so did the stories like “Sedna and the Fulmar” from one end of the arctic to the other; so did many of the once odd taboos (to Westerners). It all began with McGhee’s analysis of material culture. The work of Fienup-Riordan (1990) similarly provides a means to a new understanding of the contemporary Yup’ik thought and culture: everything come magically into focus.

Writers like Basso, Farrer, Fienup-Riordan, Griffin-Pierce, McGhee, Mosko, and Witherspoon have helped us to step out of our own ethnocentric footprints, to see relationships within a culture not seen before, to then be able to integrate the varied ethnographic perspectives on a single culture. And then, coming back to our own culture with new tools, we can see our own dialectical existence—of which so much resides at an unconscious level—more clearly, and realize that it is not universal as Lévi-Strauss imagined the nature/culture duality to be.

We conclude, in the way of suggesting effective antidotes to ethnocentrism: of course, being there, in another place, as in conducting fieldwork, is hard to beat; direct participation in another’s emotionally charged world like ritual, dance, or music; and if you cannot get out the door, drawing on the experience and insights of others like anthropologists who have been there. We/you will never be able to totally escape the condition of ethnocentrism—
even as anthropologists—but we can devote ourselves to treating the symptoms.

Bibliography


Firth, Raymond. (1936) 1957. *We, the Tikopia: Kinship in Primitive Polynesia.* Boston: Beacon Press.


Goulet, Jean-Guy, and Bruce Granville Miller, eds. 2007. *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.


