approaches, building different networks with new partners, changing focus, and so on. But as much as I went through some of these universal stances, I also had the good fortune of having met with different particularities of context: same structure, different contingencies, different experience. While I was away in the United States into the mid-1990s, things at home changed dramatically—and for the better, as far as higher education goes. The country had joined the EU. The democratic regime had matured (a dictatorship had lasted until the mid-1970s, inhibiting the development of the social sciences). There was, among many positive developments, much more funding for science and a public commitment to enhancing the scientific infrastructure. Furthermore, the social sciences were taken seriously, much to the benefit of the anthropological community. I thus had the privilege of working in an environment where programs expanded, graduate students were funded, research projects received support, and the discipline gained credibility. Those were my particulars, which every now and then have replicas in other situations (like Brazil in the mid-2000s) but cannot be taken as universals.

What was yet to come, however, may resonate more universally. What was lived as commitment to expand and strengthen research institutions and a political choice of investing in higher education is now challenged by the managerial ideologies that seemingly pervade every institution, turning education into a business with consumers, providers, and products; turning labs into sweatshops producing repetitive outcomes; bringing an insidious precariousness to most academic appointments—all standing upon an alliance of austerity and auditing that leaves little resources and energy to actually pursue research and practice higher education. Regardless of the particular configurations this trend takes locally, the pattern is widespread. Perhaps the World Anthropologies section is a good site to share the modes of resistance that are already in place—be it in Tehran, Lisbon, Brussels, Johannesburg, Rio, or Berkeley. A challenge for a next chapter?

Commentary

Remaking the Craft: Reflections on Pedagogy, Ethnography, and Anthropology in Iran

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I would like to thank *American Anthropologist* for inviting these reflections and Nahal Naficy for her candid ethnographic account of the possibilities, promises, hopes, and institutional blockages in the disciplinary life of anthropology in Iran. Her nuanced portrayal of the difficulties of doing ethnographic work in Iran is itself a welcome and timely piece of ethnography that shows how one can persevere in an ethnographic calling against all odds. Her paper complements other informative insights into the history and the state of the discipline in Iran (Fazeli 2006; Hegland 2009; Manoukian 2011; Nadjmabadi 2009). It is in this history that Naficy's 2009 return to Iran and her reflections on the state of pedagogy and methodology should be situated. Her piece raises questions about reflexivity and Otherness in a climate already marked by generative debates about the stakes of anthropology and how its boundaries are defined in relation to changing ideological territorializations. Not only is the piece an invitation to Iranian anthropologists and anthropologists of Iran to rethink pedagogy, but it is also a call to take seriously the question of disciplinary identity.

One has to rewind the clock back to the 1960s debates on colonialism and cultural identity, the flourishing of folk studies that helped plant the seeds of an indigenous anthropology in the 1970s, followed by the legacies of the 1980–1983 Cultural Revolution in order to contemplate the fate of anthropology in the decades that followed the 1979 Revolution (Fazeli 2006; Hegland 2009; Nadjmabadi 2009). Today's preoccupation of Iranian social sciences with notions of modernity, development, cultural identity, and critiques of "Western" ideologies is rooted, in part, in these historical moments. In the 1960s and 70s, several non-Iranian anthropologists, notably Byron Good, Mary Jo Good, Michael Fischer, William Beeman, Mary Elaine Hegland, Richard Tapper, Mary Catherine Bateson, and several others joined their Iranian colleagues in Iran (including Mehdi Soraya, Sekendar Amanollahi, Fereydoun Safizadeh, Kaveh Safa-Isfahani, and Soheila Shahshahani, among others) and created seminal ethnographic texts (see Hegland 2009). Several of these ethnographies not only impacted the trajectory of American (US) anthropology in the 1980s but also rendered Iran one of the birthplaces of what has now become the established field of medical anthropology.[1] The predominantly interpretive approach of this cohort acknowledged the 1960s debates on cultural authenticity and created a marriage of phenomenology, cultural analysis, cultural critique, and indigenous anthropology. But this work was interrupted by the 1979 Revolution and the 1980–1983 Cultural Revolution, which shut down universities and sought to purge from the academy all that contradicted the ethos of the revolution, including Westernized teachings and teachers.

The *pedagogical* impact of the Cultural Revolution on different disciplines was uneven (see chapter 2 in Behrouzan 2016). Eventually, the more "scientific" and "professional" disciplines (namely, medicine, basic sciences, and engineering) were mostly spared from major curricular

transformations due to a blend of postrevolutionary demands for reconstruction and development, pragmatism in the face of the undeniable weight of the Iran–Iraq War, and, significantly, the technoscientific aspirations of the Islamic Republic. The fate of social sciences and the humanities, however, was less bright. The nativist policies of the 1980s emphasized a revision of cultural identity and promoted a critique of Western schools of thought, reviving the anticolonial debates of the 1960s into postrevolutionary Islamist frameworks. Ideologically driven as the Cultural Revolution may have been in its approach to the social sciences and humanities, its differential treatment of the technosciences resonated with long-standing Iranian hierarchies of knowledge and expertise. One historical continuity in the life of academia has been the placement of the social sciences and the humanities at the bottom of these hierarchies over the course of the twentieth century and the dominance of technocratic values over critical and analytical thinking. Within the social sciences, too, disciplines such as law, sociology, and political sciences have persistently enjoyed a higher regard and accrued prestige in a way that anthropology never has. This history, however, is far from linear.

In discussing the life of anthropology in the 1980s, Fazeli identifies three points of conflict between anthropology and the revolution (tensions that contributed to official evaluation of social science disciplines based on their relationship with secular and imperialist agendas): "Islamic versus pre-Islamic identities; secularism versus religion; and the culture of anthropology versus the political culture of Islam" (2006, 135). However, in the 1990s and during the Reform Era (1997–2005), postrevolutionary ebbs and flows were followed by a surge in translations of Western thinkers and a rise in popular demand, particularly by youth, for the expansion of the social sciences and especially for theoretical discussions. Social science disciplines began to attract a growing body of keen students and gained further visibility in the media. These developments, both pedagogical and institutional, were indeed a reflection of broader social change in the postwar era and the emergence of the reform movement, as were their corresponding obstacles and failures (see Behrouzan 2016; Fazeli 2006). This flourishing of research centers, publications, museums, and a newfound eagerness among youth for studying social sciences in the aftermath of the Reform Era shaped the backdrop of Naficy's return to Iran in 2009. Hers is an account of internal disciplinary tensions, contestations, negotiations, and, eventually, incremental triumphs in an environment particularly dismissive of ethnography. Naficy's gender cannot be disregarded in these navigations, nor should the fact that she, a recent graduate of Rice University (the American home of *Writing Culture* [Clifford and Marcus 1986] and *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* [Marcus and Fischer 1999]), had returned to an academic anthropology landscape that was predominantly Eurocentric (Fazeli 2006) and particularly unwelcoming to the so-called postmodernists (a label used disparagingly in this context and not one claimed by those to whom it was applied) who had trained her. In her description of how her training in "ethnographic form" under "postmodernists" such as Fischer and Marcus was initially unwelcome, it is foremost the marginalization of ethnography (as form and content, method and concept) that stands out.[2] Indeed, Naficy's focus on the University of Tehran as a flagship program should not obscure the fact that, as she points out, the University of Tehran is only one among the many institutional homes of anthropology, some of which (e.g., the women-only Alzahra University) have provided safer havens for ethnographic approaches.

The timing of Naficy's return, too, is significant: generally, as a moment of heightened political contestation following the 2009 presidential election and the emergence of the Green movement, and, more specifically, as a time of uncertainty for the social sciences. The 2000s had witnessed a revival of revolutionary rhetoric that warned against the cultural hegemony and imperialist agendas of the social sciences and the humanities (leading to close scrutiny of the activities of returning academic researchers). Representation was a key concern; looming large was the potential charge of *siahnamayi* (promoting a dark portrayal of society in the interest of Western plots) against anthropology and, by extension, against ethnographic probing that aimed to reveal the nuances of social phenomena.[3] Even though Naficy does not dwell on this context in her account, these debates were in the air at the time of her return to Iran and had seeped into academic and institutional mindsets.

Naficy's reflections remind us that the key tensions inherent in the life of anthropology in Iran seem to be ideological and pedagogical ones. Several factors have contributed to the Othering of anthropology among the social sciences. The crises of identity that Iranian anthropology seems to struggle with is intertwined, in part, with a crisis of *voice* that is rooted in broader and ongoing cultural negotiations. The informal placement of anthropology under the umbrella of sociology or as inferior to the fields of political science and communications has resulted in the obscurity of anthropology compared to the visibility of these other disciplines in the public domain (e.g., in the production of public intellectuals or governmental cadre). This obscurity is as much an outcome of historical contingencies as it is a reflection of a kind of situated know-how that has simultaneously enabled anthropology to survive the tides of time and secure an academic location, albeit at the peripheries of academia. Ethnography, after all, is still alive, and it survives in informal places—for example, in study circles and in non-elite programs, such as Alzahra University. Navigating the malleable and uncertain boundaries of permissible and nonpermissible topics and approaches, Naficy reminds us, anthropologists are faced with the inevitable task of constantly revisiting the very definition of the craft. Over time, Otherness and scrutiny can become internalized and enacted as cultural work and modes of knowledge production.

This precarious mode of being, however, has pedagogical and methodological implications, to which Naficy's

experience testifies. Hers resonates with Fazeli's experience of how, in the 1980s, "the political and ideological conflicts between anthropology and the revolutionaries were reflected in anthropology courses and classrooms" (Fazeli 2006, 159), where he found teaching anthropology difficult not only because the "culture of anthropology" clashed with the "political culture" of the time but also because the students did not seem fully equipped to embrace the critical outlook that was required for "deconstructing" the given, a central tenet of any anthropological pursuit. Significantly, as both Naficy and Fazeli remind us, many anthropology courses are taught by non-anthropologists. As such, the reduction of ethnography to "data gathering," as elaborated in Naficy's piece, points to more than mere contingencies (e.g., lack of funding). It raises questions about particular conceptualizations of the culture(s) of Iranian anthropology and the relationship between "doing fieldwork" and sustaining an academic identity as defined by key actors at elite institutions who regulate the demarcations of the field(s) and the pedagogical life of the discipline. Ongoing debates over the appropriate Persian term for anthropology is a telling reflection: the emphasis on the term *ensanshenasi* over *mardomshenasi* takes the attention away from ethnographic engagement. Ethnography is movement. It is practice and speech. It decodes, reveals, makes visible, and renders accessible the nuances of social forms. The decline of ethnography is, in part, and as Naficy writes, a reflection of fundamentally different, albeit contested, conceptualizations of what the task of anthropology is and should be. Yet it is also an inevitable outcome of a history of disrupted, scrutinized, and at times politicized formulations of what anthropology is, what role is assigned to it in society, who anthropologists are, and where they come from, geographically as well as conceptually.

Naficy mentions international exchanges only in passing. Since the 1990s, several Iranian and non-Iranian anthropologists have returned to Iran and conducted fieldwork, participated in academic gatherings, and produced influential research and publications (see Fischer 2005, 2010; Nadjmabadi 2009). The place they occupy in the landscape Naficy describes cannot be overlooked, insofar as the landscape is not reducible to an insider–outsider dichotomy. Lively discussions have emerged from these exchanges, as Fazeli argued in his 2006 book, along with interest in the "re-establishment of intellectual ties with the West . . . [and] the renewal of contact with Western institutions" (212). While several returnees enjoyed a warm reception at Iranian universities, some others have chosen to conduct fieldwork without seeking academic affiliations. "Doing fieldwork in Iran under heightened political anxieties of the state over social control is not easy," Fischer (2010, n.p.) argues, "but all the more valuable when done well, and able to . . . engage discussion about what matters to all, identifying and eliciting perspectives of all sides."

While ethnographically productive, however, these exchanges have rarely resulted in sustained and systematic institutional and *pedagogical* ties with anthropology departments. Hence, their impact on *pedagogy* has been minimal. For one thing, even though several key ethnographies of this period have been written by Iranian-born ethnographers with deep experience of Iran, they are not taught in Iranian classrooms. Works by Arzoo Osanloo (on law and gender), Afsaneh Najambadi (on gender and sexuality), Homa Hoodfar (on Islam, gender), Shahla Haeri (on temporary marriage), Nazanin Shahrokni (on women-only parks), Shahram Khosravi (on youth culture), Saeed Zainabadinejad (on cinema), Mazyar Lotfalian (on art worlds), and myself (on generational memory and psychiatry) are but a few among many, along with a long list of PhD dissertations (including, but not limited to, theses by Sima Shakhsari, Narges Bajoghli, Alireza Doostdar, Elham Mireshghi, Maziar Ghaibi, Janet Alexanian, and Nahal Naficy herself) that are not read or taught in Iranian university classrooms. Other seminal ethnographies too written by non-Iranian anthropologists with exemplary ethnographic knowledge of Iran (e.g., Michael Fischer, Setrag Manoukian, and Zuzanna Olszewska) also provide a rich, yet untapped, reservoir of teaching material (see Fischer 2010).

Indeed, most of these ethnographies are published in English (or other foreign languages) outside of Iran, and a key issue remains that little of this scholarship is available inside Iran (whether in English or in Persian). Naficy's point about the lack of ethnographic translation as a byproduct of situational contingencies and the institutional politics of anthropology is significant, particularly given the impressive scale and scope of Persian translations in theoretical domains. As such, while informal and individual international exchanges exist, they rarely translate into sustained theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical engagements. Nevertheless, Iranian anthropologists inside and outside Iran continue to build lively and critical discourses and work toward deeper engagement with their counterparts.

Naficy's ethnographic account of challenges is ultimately followed by promising news of shifting attitudes and cultures within anthropology, particularly after the launch of the PhD program at the University of Tehran. Significantly promising are signs of a revival of interest in ethnography as a mode of knowledge production. The post-2010 "change in the air," in Naficy's words, entailed newfound interest in ethnographic texts. Most notably, several private institutes, informal gatherings, and independent (online and print) publications have been launched, creating an alternative academia that promises a widening of debate. But it is primarily the change in voiced student demands that stands out and is bound to result in incremental bottom-up advances. Like most bottom-up pushes in the face of lagging complementary top-down change, they continue to both struggle and make strides. An uncanny and ethnographically significant microcosm, indeed, mirroring the dynamic life of civil society itself.

NOTES

1. Works by Byron and Mary Jo Good, for instance, created a valuable starting point for a new generation of medical anthropologists of Iran after a long hiatus. My own work on psychiatry and memory was an attempt at ethnographically deepening their work by adding a generational analysis for the postrevolution period, institutional histories, and theoretical interventions on trauma, medicalization, and subjectivity.
2. A familiar parallel is the Othering of psychoanalysis and psychodynamic approaches within academic psychiatry, a topic I have explored in writing the pedagogical history of Iranian psychiatry (Behrouzan 2016). Like Naficy, the 1980s returnees who were psychodynamic psychotherapists trained in the UK were advised by senior professors in Iran to steer away from psychoanalysis and psychodynamics in their teaching and their media appearances, and to emphasize instead the "biomedical" aspects of mental health, a fact that reflected psychiatry's own identity crisis as much as it reflected the demands of the Cultural Revolution. Eventually, however, both anthropology and psychodynamic psychiatry have survived, albeit at the margins; it took over a decade and several persistent individual initiatives for psychodynamic psychotherapy to become *institutionally* incorporated into academic psychiatry's training and practice (see chapters 2 and 7 in Behrouzan 2016).
3. This was a specific period of heightened anxieties about surveys on suicide, addiction, depression, and other societal ills as well as about the agenda of incoming researchers from abroad (at one point in 2010, universities were warned about collaborating with visiting social science researchers, particularly those from the United States and Canada). This had implications for how ethnographic work was received by counterparts and collaborators in Iran. At the outset of my fieldwork as a medical anthropologist, for instance, I was advised by more than one clinician to steer away from anthropology and other *boodār* (literally, stinky; a term for that which sounds suspicious and clandestine) endeavors and to stick with my "medical stuff" as a physician. Research on scientific or medical topics was generally perceived as value neutral and thus innocuous, a perception that was itself ethnographically significant.

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Commentary

On Anthropology and Ethnography of and in Iran

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Nahal Naficy gives evidence in this text of the discredit suffered by anthropology, especially ethnography, in Iranian academic contexts. She explains that her account is limited to the University of Tehran. The University of Tehran is not all of Iran (nor is it all universities in Tehran), just like anthropology and ethnography at Rice University is neither anthropology nor ethnography everywhere (including in the United States). It is useful, of course, not to generalize, but Naficy's essay points to an endemic malaise that is very present in the main institution for the instruction of anthropology in Iran. Why, then, do anthropology and ethnography occupy an inferior status? We should try to identify the reasons for this tenacious malady, a malady whose reasons allow me to mention my direct (2006–2008) and indirect knowledge of the University of Tehran. Here I will refine this diagnosis with a more in-depth analysis of the situation of anthropology and ethnography in Iran.

In Iranian academic contexts, our discipline is heavily stigmatized by the "rustic" nature of our objects and their theoretical weakness. In a book that assesses anthropological research in Iran (Nadjmabadi 2009), Mohammad Shahbazi writes: "Anthropologists were seen as living and working in unattractive places and studying the ways of life of backward people to no obvious reasonable end" (2009, 148). Ethnography falls into an old-fashioned empiricism, tied to the collection of tools and dusty knowledge, and should cede its turf to sociology, which is otherwise theoretically