



Modernism is the New Radical Alterity: Exploring the Dialectics of Anthropological Critique in Modernity

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ABSTRACT This article is concerned with Ghassan Hage's dialectics of anthropological critique—constituted by the tension between modernism and primitivism. Hage argues that modern ethnographers who encounter other primitivist worlds become equipped with potential critical thinking about politico-organisational matters of modernity. So far, so good. However, what if there is a crisis of modernity, in the sense that “modern” political projects are inspired by primitivism? As Strathern emphasises today, there seems to be a problem of pursuing the dialectics of anthropological critique concerning the new imperialistic tendencies “at home”. Such a problem, I argue, can be observed by the emergence of the world of innovation politics that is constituted by a form of primitivism. This leads to the question, How can we maintain the dialectics of anthropological critique in the context of innovation politics? This article aims to explore the dialectics of anthropological critique by placing it in a dynamic, capitalist modern context.

Keywords: Critical anthropology, modernity, creativity, innovation politics, ethnography, inversion, Ghassan Hage

Introduction

In his work, “Critical anthropological thought and the radical political imaginary today”, Ghassan Hage (2012) puts forward the ethos of primitivist anthropology – as a premise to be maintained for critical anthropological thoughts. Hage treats the anthropology of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2014) as an avant-gardist for critical anthropology because it is used for radical politics. Throughout his argumentation of the need for new and experimental ideas, Hage follows the trope that the “world could be otherwise” than how modern Westerners typically think in their everyday lifeworld. Consequently, he argues, the anthropological discipline is in a prominent position to make the modern world aware of living in “minor realities”, which involves this display “take[s] us outside ourselves to see how we can be radically other to ourselves” (Hage 2012: 295; see also Hage 2013, 2015). However, it appears that Hage attacks contemporary anthropologists who conduct fieldwork in non-modern, as well as in modern, societies. He explains,

While there are still many anthropologists working on non-modern cultural forms within relatively remote tribal cultural formations, only a minority are interested in seeing in their findings something that speaks to the societies and the modernities they come from. On the other hand, the number of anthropologists working on modern ‘all kinds of things’ is rapidly increasing, but not many see a critical continuity between their work and the early

anthropological tradition. They mainly see the relation as one of method, ethnography, and a general interest in ‘culture’. (Hage 2012: 304)

As a reader, one could, imaginably summarise Hage’s confrontation that many contemporary anthropologists circumvent the application of the intrinsic potential of ethnographic critique, which results in a tensionless monologue rather than a tensional dialogue (see Friberg forthcoming). His quarrel is with the last kind of anthropologist who works in the modernities, and claims “[...] the anthropologies that deal with the modern world can only lose their anthropological critical edge if they are to abandon the ethos of primitivist anthropology and distance themselves from it” (2012: 306).

Hage’s sophisticated reasoning reveals the dialectics of anthropological critique—constituted by the tension between modernism and primitivism in ethnography. While modernism, here, is understood as the aesthetic of rational straight lines that differentiate institutional and conceptual domains (see Ingold 2007), primitivism is considered as the aesthetic of creative network relations that connect institutional and conceptual domains (see Mauss [1925] 1966). In this sense, Hage seems to claim that the tensional relationship between modernism and primitivism is a prerequisite for criticism. For example, when modern ethnographers encounter and experience other primitivist worlds, they are equipped with potential critical thinking about politico-organisational matters of modernity. Hence, Hage’s argument echoes a long disciplinary tradition that tentatively takes a departure from Stanley Diamond’s (1974) anthropological, dialectical project that is, criticising inside Western socio-political issues with the help of conclusions drawn from research from the outside peripheries.

However, in the new emerging context of innovation politics, Marilyn Strathern (2000, 2004) has pointed to the problem of pursuing the dialectics of anthropological critique concerning the new imperialistic tendencies “at home” (within public universities) in their attempt to strive towards *one* world. As the intentionality of innovation politics is that of acquiring control over other worlds (cf. Schutz 1962), such as the university world and the industrial world, it could be comprehended as an extension of power and influence through imperialism (see Friberg forthcoming). With this in mind, How can we maintain the dialectics of anthropological critique in the context of the imperialistic innovation politics? The overall purpose of this article is to explore the dialectics of anthropological critique by placing it in a dynamic, capitalistic modern context (Friedman 1994, 1996, 2019; Florida 2004a, 2004b) and to provide expression of its logic of inversion (Marx and Engels 1947: 14; Chambers 2013). In other words, the paper is meant to be a largely suggestive statement for contemporary anthropologists who attempt to explore the possibilities for an anthropological critique.

Background

To answer the central question of how to maintain the dialectics of anthropological critique in context, it is useful to outline a (back)ground of how modernity is transformed (Friedman 1996) and its close relation to the emerging ethos of creativity (Florida 2004a) as situated in the new knowledge economy. This relational background thus attempts to show that modernity is not one coherent stabilised unity; instead, I argue, today we ought to observe it as a dynamic unit (based on modernism) with embedded potential units *within* its own structure (such as primitivism, traditionalism, and post-modernism) that are occasionally

expressed in various political projects.¹ Consequently, as modernity is changing, so is the dialectics of anthropological critique, primarily because of the tension constituting the relation between modernism and primitivism.

The Dynamic Modernity

The anthropologist Jonathan Friedman (1994, 2019; see also Lash and Friedman 1992) has written extensively on how to comprehend global phenomena in a world system framework. In “The Implosion of Modernity” (1996), Friedman takes a historical departure from various identity projects around the world: The attempt to re-establish the Hawaiian nation as a self-governed political unit, the return of territory to First Nations tribes in Canada, the endeavour of Native American tribes to become self-supporting and thus independent of the United States of America, and the Sami’s strive towards a potential “nation” within the Swedish nation-state. Friedman’s analytical point is that these phenomena of identity are meaningful if anthropologists with a broad global perspective become involved. According to Friedman, the ethnification, as a global course of events, is not random. In addition, these phenomena are not to be understood as mere expressions of various states’ promotion of “multiculturalism”, or increased global forms of communication. Instead, Friedman points out that here we are dealing with a hegemonic decline, which means that the centralised model of identity, modernism, is broken up and provides the way for the expression of various forms of “multism”. Friedman’s historical model could thus be grasped as an overall clarification (or context) of the recent anthropological–theoretical development concerned with multiculturalism, multinaturalism, and multinationalism (see Fischer 2014).

Friedman (1996; see also Rata 2013) emphasises that the structure of modernity, as an identity space, is to be considered as the foundation in all attempts to understand and explain the contemporary. Within this space, modernity is the dominating identity—based on the resolution of previous holistic structures of identities. Modernity constitutes an ego that appears flexible in the sense that there are always other potential identities and existences. Consequently, modernity forms a differentiated world in which the private becomes authentic and the public is taken as artificial or constructed. The ego is something that one is developing or creating, which implies a tendency and openness to change. It is the principle of trial-and-error that lays the ground for change and development—one goes on and becomes better, wiser, and more efficient. According to Friedman, change and development are key in order to understand that “thing” we call modernity. Modernity as an identity space, however, is dependent on external conditions, that is, one needs a direction towards something (e.g., the belief in a certain future). There must exist a place to begin and proceed towards and a past that is left behind. This spatial and temporal imagination appeared as a result of Western expansion in the late 14th century, which later resulted in a modern social and economic European center with alternative peripheries. In a world system model, we recognise this formation as the center–periphery structure, significant for the modern epoch (cf. Ekholm Friedman and Friedman 2011). The main point here is that modernism is dependent on real expansion to maintain itself as a strategy; it needs a future of social and individual mobility.

¹ Within the anthropological discipline, researchers have noted that this form of findings and reasoning—units (here, primitivism) within the unit (here, modernism)—appears to make a contribution to a post-plural approach (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Candea 2017). However, this is not the place to develop the notion of post-pluralism, as it demands more textual space than is available in this article.

As the economic and political conditions of modernism are failing, the consequences are expressed as “a crisis.” In the crisis of modernism, there is no longer any reliable and certain future or social mobility, according to Friedman (1996). Hence, the notion of development will be likened with a catastrophe, and the search for alternative identities will begin. The crisis in the modern world system is about a crisis of accumulation in the center, which means decentralisation of the capital. The increasing welfare in the center might lead to the question that the cost of production is too expensive when compared to the underdeveloped peripheries. The re-localisation of production from the center to peripheries means cheaper human resources, lower taxes, and more favorable economic conditions. During such a time, according to Friedman, the “people” in the center attempt to relocate the capital in various forms of fictive investments, speculations in properties, bonds, and stocks. I argue that today we can understand these economic phenomena as venture capitalistic processes in which people are willing to invest in “things that do not exist”, as characteristic for the notion of innovations.

Friedman (1996) emphasises that during the crisis of modernism, it becomes exposed to various confrontations. As advocated by Friedman, modernism could be reduced to an identification that stands in contrast to nature (pleasure, childishness, and obscenity) and culture (superstition and traditional absolutism). By outlining a four-panel figure, Friedman contrasts modernism with traditionalism, primitivism, and post-modernism. When it comes to *traditionalism*, he argues that this is the most common reaction to modernism, as it speaks for culture (traditional authority, order, and accepted codes for meaning and values) and turns its back against nature (lack of control in an anarchistic world of pleasure). Regarding *primitivism*, he explains that it embraces nature (creativity, innocence, earnest intimacy) while standing in opposition to culture (power and authority according to traditions). *Post-modernism*, in turn, is both pro-culture and pro-nature (both considered to be the carrier of traditional wisdom and human creativity). In a time of crisis, according to Friedman, various conflicts emerge between the four directions. The latter three directions ought to be considered as potential spaces of identification that are usually suppressed by modernistic identities. It follows then that the Western hegemonic crisis is the crisis of modernism, which means that the modern identity space implodes. Consequently, those identities that previously were restricted become liberated.

One could consider Friedman’s emphasis on the social fact that contemporary, modern, Western societies consist of potential multiple political projects, which means that modernity is not a simple, fixed, homogenised dialectical political unit, especially as there are potential political units *within* the political units, such as the case with primitivism. In light of such reasoning, I will raise a concern for the emergence of creativity and its association with a political form of primitivism.

Creativity as a Form of Primitivism

Sociologist Richard Florida’s seminal work, *The Rise of a Creative Class* (2004a), reveals the emergence of a new social and economic formation in modernity. Supported by statistics and interviews, his overall thesis focuses on the perception that human creativity is the driving force in today’s knowledge of economic development. Even though Florida’s thesis has been questioned and debated in various situations (see Florida 2004b), I can see similarities in his expressions that I found in my own fieldwork (which I will return to momentarily). Florida writes:

Thus creativity has come to be the most highly prized commodity in our economy—and yet it is not a “commodity”. Creativity comes from people. And while people can be hired and fired, their creative capacity cannot be bought and sold, or turned on and off at will. This is why, for instance, we see the emergence of a new order in the workplace. (2004a: 5).

Today, the everyday lifeworld is permeated by the creative ethos. The transformation of everyday modern life is most visible with the emergence of the creative class (such as scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, educationalists, artists, and designers). In this new creative form of economy, Florida emphasises that this class lives a different lifestyle. In particular, Florida mentions four points: (1) workplaces are undergoing a sort of soft control rather than strict modern authoritarian governance, as it attempts to liberate creativity; (2) the identity formation is creative in itself as work, home, and leisure blend; and (3) the time frame is changing, which means that the boundaries between various modern domains become dissolved. The modern liquefied domains depend on the matter that creativity is not something that can be switched on, respectively shut off, and (4) the form of communities is encouraged to become creative. Taken together, according to Florida, our contemporary era is not simply technological; instead, it is a socio-cultural era constituted by creativity.

We might consider Florida’s statement in alignment with Friedman’s (1996) general notion of primitivism as a political project, especially as it fosters creativity and thus rejects modern authoritarian power and control. In this sense, creativity in primitivism is about the possibilities to hybridise or intertwine modern opposed institutions and concepts. For example, this form of creativity is free to mix the private domain of business with public institutions such as the university (known as the “entrepreneurial university”) as long as it creates uniqueness and innovations for the future public good in the welfare society.

The transformation of modernity from power and control to human creativity can be seen in how it expresses itself in the economic world. Florida, thus, discusses the creative ethos (understood as the fundamental character of culture) in the formation of everyday society. Even though the creative ethos has been seen in modern history, Florida points to the social fact that creativity is essential for how we work and live today. Hence, that is why policymakers and politicians would like to harness creativity in various forms. Among other things, policymakers and politicians attempt to set up various units and institutions in the hope of being able to control and direct the creative ethos.

Florida refers to Joseph A. Schumpeter’s ([1934] 2017; see also McCraw 2010) work on creativity and entrepreneurs as essential for capitalistic, innovative development. It is from creativity that we can develop innovative “knowledge”, which, in turn, becomes today’s basic economic resource. The aim of these creative processes in the knowledge society is for the outcome of innovations that can generate value (see Gibbons et al. 1994; Nowotny et al. 2001). In this sense, which can also be seen in my own fieldwork, policymakers are loaded with a mission to create a social structure of creativity, a structure that is characterised by three aspects: (1) new systems for technological creativity and entrepreneurship, which are often connected to research in universities because they accelerate the processes of establishing new firms and create commercial innovations; (2) new efficient models of producing goods and services, which usually involves employees contributing with their creative ideas as well

as their physical labour; and (3) a broad socio-cultural, regional milieu beneficial to various forms of creativity (Florida 2004a).

Here, the socio-political milieu described by Florida is to be considered as supporting the fundamental ecosystem, in which creativity as a form of primitivism takes root and flourishes in the world of innovation politics.

Ethnography, Theory, and Puzzle

The relation between ethnography and theory is seldom pre-determined during fieldwork. As noted by Michael Agar (2013), fieldwork has its abductive logic since the ethnographic material consistently interacts with the theoretical concepts throughout the whole analytical process. One could argue that the disappearance of the contradictions between the ethnographic material and the analytical concepts gives the ethnographer an indication that (s)he has reached a reasonable point from where it is possible to explain the phenomenon concurrently as new puzzles appear (Agar 1987).

In the following section, I illustrate how an ethnographic “problem” emerged when I studied innovation politics and how it connected to theory—an analytical process that later constituted my concerns with the dialectics of anthropological critique in context.

Innovation Political Expressions

While observing the relatively novel expressions of political innovation in the context of the Öresund region (southern Sweden and the Copenhagen area in Denmark), as an ethnographer, I struggled to make a general sense of various situations. However, as the sensemaking process seemed to take a departure from the structure of relevance that belongs to the modern academic world, an ethnographic “problem” emerged.

At the Medicon Valley Alliance’s 2015 Annual Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, Danish entrepreneur Lars Tvede served as a keynote speaker. The main reason for inviting Tvede was because he recently published *The Creative Society: How the Future Can Be Won* (2015). As most people in the audience associated with life science research in the public and the private sector, the expected context was that of innovation politics. Life science might be considered to include a large number of scientific traditions studying living organisms such as plants, animals, and human beings. The knowledge production in life sciences is commonly done “in-between” public universities and private industries (see Friberg 2017). With this in mind, policymakers and politicians treat life science as a creative way to improve life in society, notable when it comes to agriculture, medicine, and health. Policymakers consider the collaboration and the hybridisation between two different modern domains—the public and the private—as the mediums for creating more life science types of “innovation”.

As participants, we received a free copy of Tvede’s book upon arriving at the Annual meeting. While sitting in front of the scene, Tvede entered with a big smile while the chairman beside him claimed, “We need creativity and innovations to increase economic growth in the Öresund region”. The chairman’s statement implied that we all could learn something from listening to the keynote speaker, and continued by emphasising, “Two words are important here, that is, innovation and economic growth. Take your ideas and foster them for the market. Such an act depends on creativity”. In this situation, Tvede began to explain some “surprising things that he has learned about innovation”, and he

further enlightened us about how global creative thinking emerges from Western countries. Hence, his book is about Western creativity. While reading about creativity, he argued, he saw a pattern beginning in the 16th century which became crystallised in the Western dominance of the world in the 1950s. How then, he asked, was it possible for the West to dominate the world even though they make up only ten percent of the world's population? Tvede's generalised answers refer to "Western de-centralisation processes", which mean that more ordinary citizens were able to use their creativity in their working lives.

For Tvede, creativity is one of the most unique and fundamental forces as part of the progress of civilisation, as it solves difficult problems while creating new opportunities. With creativity and innovation, economic growth follows naturally. He declared, "Centralisation kills creativity"! and exemplified this by referring to the Roman Empire's attempt to control the socio-political environment using centralisation, which led to its own demise. The creative society should be understood in contrast to the static model of society (see Tvede 2015: 384-399). In such a creative society, according to Tvede's narrative, people think of their destiny in terms of control and that they are in control of their own destiny.

Later during the so-called expert panel discussion, the participants listened to Swedish life science coordinator and social democrat politician Anders Lönnberg, who stated, "The public and the private ought to collaborate to make more creative innovations in the future". Regarding life science research, he argued that the university world and the world of business ought to collaborate more intensely. He further claimed,

We need a better innovation fund—trying out creativity and innovations in new ways. Every political party in Sweden agrees that the creative Triple Helix model is the future. No matter what party succeeds in grasping political power, the Triple Helix will prevail since it is not political.

In contrast to a centralised model (in which the state controls the worlds of the university and industry) and the laissez-faire model (in which the university, the state, and the industry collaborate to a certain extent across explicit boundaries), the Triple Helix model undertakes hybrid and collaborative relations between the three worlds (Etzkowitz 2008). The Triple Helix model is used by policymakers and politicians to generate creativity, and thus, innovations to increase social and economic growth.

We could understand such expressions in terms of a distinct shift in governance of the public sector, that is, from neo-classic economic theory with a focus on competition (as the main driving force of innovation) to economic theories concerned with collaboration (as the main driving force of innovation) (see Hedensted Lund and Vaaben 2014; Vaaben 2014). In contrast to the New Public Management principles that follow neo-classic economy (with its focus on *homo economicus*, self-interest, market mechanism, and investment in existing things), the recent New Public Governance (NPG) principles take their departure in the altruistic collaborative human being, shared interests, the idea of creativity, and investment in things to come (Wiesel and Modell 2014). By using the NPG principles, politicians and policymakers imagine that they can create synergy effects in the context of the new emerging economy based on producing and selling knowledge. The key actors in these settings are universities (scientists), industries (entrepreneurs), and the state (policymakers). The

collaborative hybridisation of the three actors is explicated in the logic of the expression of the Triple Helix policy model and as a prolongation of “The New Production of Knowledge”, (Gibbons 1994) founded in the early 1990s (Shinn 2002).

Hence, the ethnographic “problem” arising in these situations was the expression of a seemingly primitivist political world—the preoccupation of creativity, the pushing for collaborative hybridisation of separated domains (such as the private and public), and the creation of innovations for the uncertain future—all *within* the “modern” everyday lifeworld.

Theoretical Inspiration and a New Puzzle

To make sense of the ethnographic expression presented above, I had to capture it with a specific *world*, especially because this innovation political world expresses its objectification, intentionality, and attitude in contrast to that of the aesthetics of modernism.

As such, by treating the innovation political project as an expression of its world, I took theoretical inspiration from Alfred Schutz (1962: 207–45), who clearly states that the modern everyday lifeworld consists of multiple worlds. For example, the world of art, the world of social science, the business world, and the political world. Schutz’s (1962) main point was that every world has its structure of relevance, which gives meaning to specific conceptual and material *objects* in well-defined situations. For example, in the world of social science “truthfulness” and “the law of non-contradictions” could be considered as two meaningful and relevant objects in seminars and peer review processes, but this might not be the case in the political world, where we find “lies” and “inconsistency and contradictions” in public situations (cf. Weber 1977). The difference between the world of social science and politics could be understood as a matter of diverse *intentionalities*, that is, directions towards the distinctive state of affairs. Furthermore, the main differences between the separated worlds could be comprehended in terms of two distinct *attitudes* (a doxic belief in the being of the world, in which the person takes the surrounding reality for granted).

With this social phenomenological theory (conceptual relations) at hand and in combination with the ethnographic expression above, the innovation political world could understand its own intentionality as directed towards the notion of an uncertain future. If considering this statement at the backdrop of Friedman’s (1996) reasoning on the implosion of modernity as an identity space, the imagined future is that of uncertainty. Consequently, the politicians and the policymakers embrace a creative and innovative horizon to make certain the uncertain future (see Nowotny 2008, 2016), here, predominantly with the help of life science. With an increasing number of innovations, many innovation policymakers and politicians believe that they can control better and predict the future—they consider creativity and innovation to be the best way to transform uncertainty into certainty (Godin 2015, 2017; Godin and Vinck 2017).

Moreover, the ethnography demonstrated the relevance and meaningfulness of the objectification of “creativity” (see Florida 2004a, 2004b) in the world of innovation politics. As I have suggested elsewhere (Friberg forthcoming), the world of innovation politics is constituted by *lateral thinking* (De Bono 1970), which is a form of creativity. As the lateral thinking stands in contrast to vertical thinking (i.e., congruent with the modern thinking in logic and mathematics), it follows that policymakers and politicians can avoid modern conceptual and institutional boundaries, such as the separation of private and public domains. In other words, when policymakers imagine or utilise creative, lateral thinking,

there is no resistance to the hybridisation of the public university (with its associated scientific researchers) and private industry (with its related business entrepreneurs).

As can be seen in the ethnographic material, the hybridisation finds its creative logic in the Triple Helix model and could be perceived as imperialistic politics, that is, making *one* world out of three distinctly differentiated worlds (see Figure 3). Additionally, the ethnography exemplified the attitude in the innovation political world, which may be interpreted as an expression of primitivism, particularly as it celebrates creativity, anti-authoritarian modern conceptual and institutional boundaries, and collaborative hybridisation.

Having established the notion of an innovation political world, with a distinct attitude of primitivist aesthetics *in* modernity, evoked an anthropological feeling of being in an analytical, inversed position (see Chambers 2013: Ch. 4) and was something that puzzled me considerably. As trained anthropologists, we are socialised towards the assumption that Western political projects (the inside) are constituted by modernism while the Others are socio-organisational expressions of primitivism (the outside). The first-mentioned political project we learn in textbooks and during lectures is imperialistic, in the sense that it extends its power and influence over other worlds by colonisation (Stocking 1993). In these situations, modern anthropologists who study other “primitive” worlds become analytically equipped to critique their own “modern” everyday lifeworld, which implies the dialectics of anthropological critique (Mimica 2010; Kapferer 2018). But then, what are we supposed to do with the dialectics of anthropological critique when an inside imperialistic political project (such as innovation politics that attempts to extend power by hybridising the world of public university with the world of private business) is constituted by the attitude of primitivism? My first thoughts went to Stanley Diamond’s (1974) anthropological project for inspiration, but then I was reminded of Hage’s (2012) updated view concerned with critical anthropological thinking.

Critical Anthropological Thinking

Because Hage (2012) is interested in the nature of the critical anthropological tradition, he initially searches for the general notion of social scientific critique. He points to the similarities between critical sociology and anthropology, as both disciplines associate themselves with a type of criticism that challenges the taken-for-granted socio-cultural order, that is, a form of an imperialistic politics. Hage treats critical thinking as constituted by a dialectic between “the outside” and “the inside” concerning inter-personalities, cultures, societies, and states. By transcending such, this dialectic will thus enable us to reflect upon the present context of politics, which consequently makes it possible to “move outside ourselves”. When Hage (2012: 288) reaches the specific critical nature of the anthropological discipline, he claims:

It is well known that anthropology as a project began as a study of human cultures that are situated outside the dynamic of our capitalist modernity. This was so even if, paradoxically, it was that dynamic itself that was behind the very possibility of the anthropological encounter between modern and non-modern peoples. And even if that very process was part of making what was outside modernity inside modernity. It is in this sense, as many have argued, that we can say that early anthropology captures what was outside modernity in the very process of it becoming inside modernity, with anthropology itself being part of that very assemblage of capture.

In this historical–anthropological situation, the dialectics of the modern inside and the primitive outside presents itself in the distinction between “modern and non-modern people”. Hage’s approach echoes a Marxist–anthropological tradition (Dumont 1992; Wolf 1999, 2001) in which the anthropologists’ missions are about to expose the socio-cultural processes that imprison human beings in the West by using the primitives as a mirror. By showing the Others as less alienated, it provides an image of the primitives in ourselves, which creates new political possibilities for ourselves. Hage’s critical project is thus also an expression of the classic logic of inversion—the dichotomy of the true inner essence and the distorted outer appearance (Marx and Engels 1947; Chambers 2013).

As a prolongation of this form of anthropology, Hage appears to consider capitalistic modernity as a singular inside unit while placing non-modernity as outside plural peripheral cultures. As a logical consequence of this reasoning, the modern anthropologist is required to be involved in studies of the primitive “radical alterities” (see also Baudrillard 2008), such as the case of Viveiros de Castro’s (2014) studies of Amazonian Indians. Thus, the knowledge of cultural alterities spontaneously works as a transcendent criticism when brought back home to what appears to be a singular unit of modernity. Hage (2012: 289) writes,

One should immediately note here how this critical anthropological knowledge differs from other disciplinary critical thought. It differs not just in the fact that it takes us outside of ourselves culturally rather than temporally, socially or psycho-logically but also in the way it posits a relation between the outside-of-ourselves space it takes us to and the space in which we are dwelling.

Perhaps it is reasonable to outline Hage’s general notion of critical anthropological thinking, as shown in figure 1.

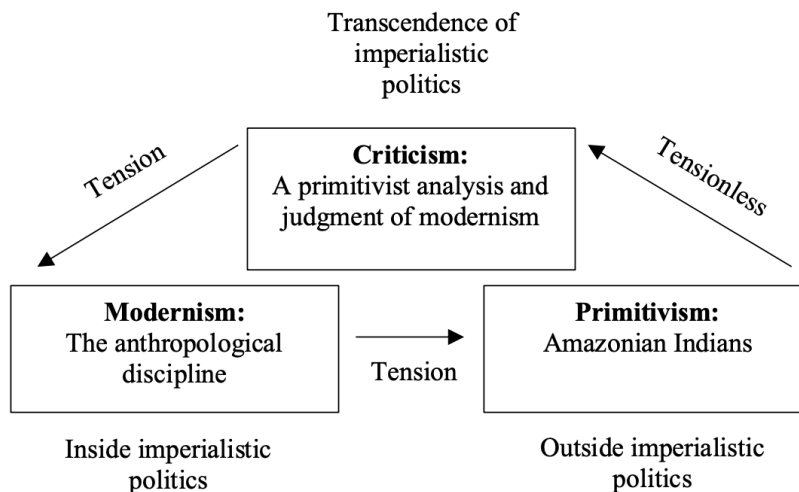


Figure 1. Hage’s structural reasoning

Thus, Figure 1 shows Hage’s structural reasoning—the dialectics of anthropological critique—constituted by three spaces: modernism → primitivism → criticism. To maintain

an anthropological critique in the context of innovation politics, I argue, would demand that ethnographers ought to shift the ideological content in the space of the inside and the outside (a *reversal* logic of inversion), as follows in Figure 2, which also implies that the modern anthropological discipline logically becomes the radical Other (positioned on the outside).

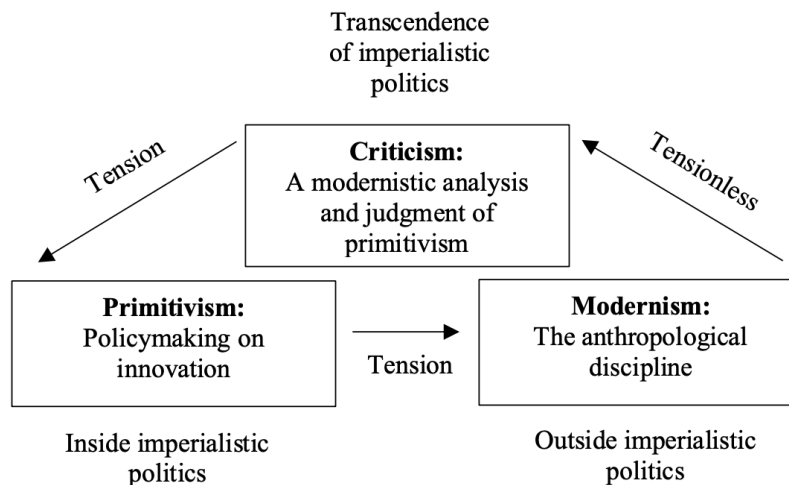


Figure 2. The maintenance of anthropological critique in context

To argue that the modern anthropologist is the radical Other in the context of innovation politics might be considered as controversial at the backdrop of our disciplinary, imperialistic legacy (Stocking 1993). However, the point here is to explore the possibilities for a logically, critical anthropological research space in which we can observe our imperialistic tendencies from the outside.

Performing Anthropological Critique

This part will demonstrate an anthropological critique from within the imperialistic political world (here, the primitive policymaking on innovation), followed by a radical anthropological critique from the outside.

Anthropological Critique from the “Inside”

It might be a thought-provoking idea to take part in an anthropologist’s experience of being inside the political world of innovation. An online interview (see Human Show 2010) with an anthropological colleague, who has operated in the science-industry-state relationship in the last decade, might give some insight into anthropological critique.

The interviewer is asking about how to ethically move between the world of the university and the corporate world during fieldwork:

The anthropologist: I started with observations. I was sitting in an open office so I could observe what was going on in everyday life. I was enrolled in projects on different matters of how to change the organisation. In the beginning, I was trying to build up some kind of organisational sensibility in order to understand what was going on. I think it was important to improvise during my work there. Of course, to be critical but critical in a constructive way. I was not there to deconstruct everything, but I tried to say: “Okay, I am in a position where I can say things that perhaps an ordinary employee cannot”. I got a license to be critical, so to speak. That was something that the management and the employees accepted. Some of my interlocutors came to me and told me about some of their everyday work issues, some of their challenges, because they could see that maybe I could share this problem with the management. [...] They could use me like a person that could maneuver between different layers in the organisation.

The anthropologist’s mode of critiquing organisation is that of being constructive rather than deconstructive. One way of practicing this form of critique is as a carrier of moral messages between various organisational units.

Continuing to ask about the struggle between the perspective of the university and the organisation, the interviewer is given the following answer:

The anthropologist: I don’t think I experienced any struggle. Of course, people in my department were asking about my position because I was an industrial Ph.D. I was hired by the company. So how to make a critical, distanced analysis of an organisation if they pay the salary? So, for me, it was important from the beginning to make an agreement: “Okay, I am not a consultant working in the organisation. Yes, I participate in different projects, and I am a form of recourse. But still, I need time to distance myself from the organisation to analyse the data. To reflect and to write my PhD”. Traditionally people have done their fieldwork abroad. [...] I did my Ph.D. here [...], and I went to X University and Y University. I left my home country to do my analysis because I needed to get away—they wanted more time and recourses to different projects. In that sense, it was important to find a space to reflect, to write up. But I didn’t experience problems with academia. Yes, we had some discussion on how to balance these different kinds of interests. But I think it is an experience in all kinds of fieldwork. It is not only in [the world of] innovations—people we study have different kinds of interests.

The anthropologist’s notion of critique balances different interests and physically distances the researcher from fieldwork to practice reflection, write an anthropological text, and analyse the collected data.

Moving towards the anthropologist’s recent research, that is concerned with the collaboration between private industry, the public university, and the civil sector, the interviewer wonders about the critical, collaborative, and creative process:

The anthropologist: Something that has been important for our work, and actually maybe something that stands in contrast to science policy of Triple Helix idea of collaboration, converge into new innovative consensus spaces... The most important thing that we have learned is that we, as anthropological researchers, while engaging with these other disciplines, different organisational fields, have also established a self-awareness of our own discipline. So, when we meet people from other institutional disciplines or fields, we open a space where we

see ourselves in relation to others. While engaging with other disciplines, we experienced this kind of reflection of self-awareness of what it is to be an anthropologist.

As listeners, we understand that the critical, collaborative, and creative anthropological moment generates a self-awareness of the own discipline.

As the dialogue between the interviewer and the anthropologist remains, the discussion moves onto the future of being in the political world of innovation:

The anthropologist: [let us] try to design particular futures—from an anthropological perspective. How can we, through social analysis, predict certain desirable futures? Of course, we can't predict them, but we can make some social practice imaginaries in order to direct other developments—influencing research policy. [...]. I think this focus on the future is quite interesting. Talking about collaboration. We are trying to establish experimental spaces between people from different disciplines, people from different organisations: In spaces where we are not controlled by institutional disciplinary backgrounds. I try to be in the space not to be so anthropological if you understand what I mean. Not so much as a researcher but being part of this team (this experiment). And this is how I see collaboration. In this space, we try to free ourselves from certain organisational, institutional, disciplinary code of conducts. We are trying to make these spaces where we can experiment.

The thought of the future, in the collaborative situations, seems to imply a critical notion of freeing oneself from “organisational, institutional and disciplinary code of conducts” with the help of experimental spaces. In these experimental, collaborative spaces lie the anthropological possibilities to influence future research policy.

Being “Inside”

The above anthropological thought is about being inside: being critically constructive *in* the organisation where the anthropologist is conducting fieldwork; becoming critically self-aware of the code of conduct *in* the anthropological discipline; being able to create critical, experimental spaces *in* the context of research policy. Accordingly, the anthropological thought of critique from the inside seems to be stuck in the primitivist innovation political world because it takes as given the hybridised-collaborative relationship between industry, university, and state (see Figure 3).

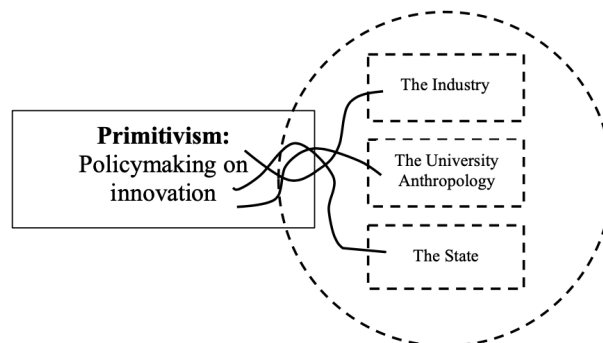


Figure 3. Anthropological critique from the “inside”

What makes the primitive space (policymaking on innovation) a creative space is the lack of the modern aesthetic of rational straight lines that differentiate institutional and conceptual domains, such as the industry, the university (including the anthropological discipline), and the state. In this sense, creativity is a form of lateral thinking (De Bono 1970), meaning that policy-linked researchers and policymakers are unbound to act out of specific institutions, concepts or boundaries. On the one hand, they are free to crossbreed or intertwine all kinds of subjects and objects. On the other hand, however, they are captive “inside” a world without any possibilities to move outside themselves, especially as there seems to be no encouragement for critical dialectics from the outside. It follows that the logic of primitivism attempts to hybridise all modern domains—creating one collaborative world out of competing worlds. In this situation, we might consider Marcel Mauss’ notion of a “total social phenomenon” (1966: 76-77); that is, there are no explicit boundaries between modern economic, critical, and political domains.

However, such primitive processes connect to modernism’s rationality because this form of creativity is to be seen as a continuation of securing the modern belief in a certain future. To hybridise the modern domains in various creative manners would mean that we can now produce “innovations” to secure the social and economic order for the future welfare society: without a dialectic critique.

Anthropological Critique from the “Outside”

As the innovation political imperialistic tendencies encapsulate the anthropological discipline, it is possible to argue that the “inside” anthropological critique is directed further inwards, which could be comprehended as a narcissistic tendency (cf. Baudrillard 2008). Therefore, there is minor space for the existence of Hageian radical alterity. The inside anthropological thought is left with a selfishness that fails to distinguish itself from external objects. The result is an admiration of its own organisation, discipline, or research policy. The remedy for the lack of analytical empathy—an anthropological critique from the outside—, I argue, could be outlined in six straightforward steps:

1. Objectifying the political phenomenon (such as innovation politics) to escape a narcissistic anthropological thought.
2. Outlining a dynamic, historical background to get at the appearance of the contemporary phenomenon.
3. Studying the ethnographic material to make sense of the phenomenon’s ideology, aesthetic, and conceptual relationships.
4. Treating the phenomenon as an expression of a different world than the anthropologists’ world.
5. Utilising a *reversal* logic of inversion to create temporary dialectics of anthropological critique.
6. Assuming the radical Other’s space, and exploit the critical position to figure out how to make a Hageian passage to “move outside ourselves”.

However, the six straightforward steps are not to be considered as constituting a conclusive

programmatic approach. On the contrary, the steps are to open for all forms of critique, especially if the assessments depart from ethnography.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I suggested that ethnographers ought to inverse Hage's (2012) structural reasoning concerned with the dialectics of anthropological critique in the context of innovation politics *if* they would like to maintain a critical attitude about new emerging imperialistic tendencies (Strathern 2000, 2004).

To validate my suggestion, I outline a background of dynamic modernity that gives the expression of political ideologies other than that of modernism (Friedman 1996; see also Rata 2013). Hence, I focus on primitivism as an expression of the ethos of creativity in the emerging modern knowledge economy (Florida 2004a). As modernity is changing, the ideology of modernism seems to transform into primitivism (among other things), which can be observed in the expressions of innovation politics. With the help of my ethnography in the Öresund region, I illustrated how innovation political expressions—such as the promotion of the creative ethos, hybridisation of private and public domains, and innovations for an uncertain future—make sense before the backdrop of a changing modernity. Moreover, I demonstrated how my encounter with the political world of innovation also laid the ground for the origination of the puzzling thoughts concerning the dialectics of anthropological critique.

From the contextual background to my fieldwork observations, I then deepened the discussion of Hage's structural reasoning concerned with the dialectics of modernism and primitivism, which make possible a third space of criticism. To maintain the scope of criticism, in the context of the political world of innovation (that is constituted by a form of primitivism) thus demanded a logic of inversion (cf. Marx and Engels 1947). The inversion at hand meant a shift of the content in the space of the inside and the outside in which modern anthropologists become the radical Other. My illustration of how to perform an anthropological critique from within the political world of innovation was then followed by a Hageian step-by-step critique from the outside.

Such an anthropological critique from the outside could extend the disciplinary conversations concerned with the radical alterity in “modernities”. When radical alterity seems to fade away in modern politico-organisational contexts, critical anthropologists should search for new analytical tools and positions. The essential critical tool is the *reversal* logic of inversion (see Chambers 2013) that makes possible a temporary dialectical position as the radical Other.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the editors and the reviewer who laid the ground for significant improvement of the paper.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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