

Historical Anthropology and Ethnic Studies:

Interview with John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan

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ABSTRACT: On 30th June, 2008, Professor John D. Kelly (University of Chicago) and Professor Martha Kaplan (Vassar College) were invited to have an academic visit to Sichuan University. After the lecture of “Recent Research Trends in Anthropology and History”, both of them were interviewed by graduate students of the Literary Anthropological Institute. Centred on the case study of South Asian and Pan-pacific Island countries, they’ve placed the heated debate regarding nation-state and neo-colonialism under the anthropological scrutiny, and therefore offered a reference when it comes to the Chinese ethnic problems as a whole.

KEY WORDS: anthropology, nation-state, ethnic studies, Fiji

JK: John Kelly

MK: Martha Kaplan

AQ: An Qi

GL: Gao Lan

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Academic Backgrounds and Research Interest

AQ: *Can I start from asking both of your academic backgrounds? Did you grow up in an academic family? What brought you to be anthropologists?*

JK: I was not from an academic family, my father and my mother are both workers, but my father worked in business, in a corporation, and my mother actually found her own small company, tried a lot of different things. But my mother's brother is a medical doctor, so higher education is definitely part of the family tradition. I was the first one in the family to go ahead for a masters' degree, and a PhD degree and the academic field. So it made me unusual, it's very common for the people from the academic family, but I was not. And I went to Harvard University to do my undergraduate work, and I was straight to do my PhD work in the University of Chicago. That's where I met Martha.

MK: My mother is an anthropologist; my father is a scholar who worked in academic history, so I have academic parents.

AQ: To what parts of the world have your professions taken you?

JK: That's a good question, too. We have done the research in Fiji of several times over the years, we've also done research in Pune, in Maharashtra in India, where I was doing work on the history of Sanskrit, and Martha was doing work on the history of garage, the British rule, comparing to other parts of British Empire. Originally Martha has been pursuing new research on corporation and commodity, and I've been pursuing the research on the history of sports. Partly because my work in the ministry made it impossible to go to Fiji and India for a longer period of time, so I chose the topic where I can study something close at home, so I read a lot of the history of baseball.

AQ: If you look back, how are you going to judge your academic research? How are you going to judge your achievement? How do you see the path you've taken?

MK: Well, interesting question, personally I think I let other people judge the academic achievement. When you look back in your life, you will get your children, family, and those things, I'm very happy with that. But the academic part, you know, it's very wonderful to make contributions, and to make people read what you write. That's what I thought.

JK: I think it's very important to keep publishing new works. One of the great risks in academic career is that you start wondering how much people like the things you've already published, how many copies of your books have been sold, which universities used your work as the textbook. I think you should always have your eyes on it. I think it's very worthwhile to look forward, and figure out what you think is the best contribution to make to the next generation. Too many academic slow down, and publishing the result of their thinking, they get a little bit more conservative about their academic reputation, especially if they've been successful. They start thinking that I have to defend my reputation, and they tend to tell the same story over and over, rather than opening up a whole new research. That's no reason to slow down like that. You should never stop working on new project, and it is always more and more interesting that the thing you are writing now than the things you've already written in the

past. I think that is a very important trait of a good scholar: he is always more interested in what he is writing now than the things he's written in the past, because no matter how your writing is, it's likely that, in fact, the better it is, the more likely it is that other people will write critically about it, and will come up with ways going to pass it. You cannot have the final word, that's the key thing.

MK: I agree with that.

AQ: As you have achieved great success have had a kind of influence in academia, would you call yourself a kind of academic superstar?

JK: Ah, I don't know about that, it's tough. Last decade I've done a lot of work, taking care of other scholars as first of all the Deputy dean, and chair, and involved in other ways as administration. So I worry a lot about whether I am a superstar. What I care most about is how much work I do helping the students. We have very very strong graduate programme of my university, university of Chicago, it's extremely important to help students to find place in the world, being in the tradition in committing their own style of research. I think that's another criterion. I am very proud of that. If I want to be a superstar, I want to be as a teacher than other anthropologists.

AQ: Apparently you are part of the think-tank, then how much do you involve your academic life with the whole map of American politics?

JK: I've done some of that, but most of my work is directly scholar.

MK: I think the United States does not have a huge place for public academic intellectuals. There are wonderful opportunities, not so much in newspapers, I mean there are a few columnists, but it's a limited number and there are many other kinds of journalists but it's certainly not the same as France.

JK: I think that's right, (not the same as France) or India where there's a great role for people who have academic and intellectual reputations to make a statement. If we published a letter in the newspaper saying who we thought people should vote for, it would be just be taken as any citizen's arguments? It wouldn't be said, oh look here are a couple of important thinkers. That just doesn't happen that way in the United States. There has to be a pundit on television, which we have never tried nor wanted to do.

MK: I think that you can make your mark as a teacher.

JK: Yeah, there is a role for supporting organizations, back to the NGO world. I get involved in the US campaign for Burma because I care a great deal about trying to solve the political impact in that country and to help come up with some kind of system that will provide rights for people in a desperate situation. So I'm very happy to give talks for them or be involved in study trips or when I'm in Thailand on the Thai-Burma border teaching seminars for the Burma Lawyers Council, that sort of thing, because then I can do what I do in a way that helps directly. But most of it, still, is what you write as an intellectual, reaching an audience with more general ideas. So I'm interested in both parts of that. But if we told everybody to vote for Obama, I don't think that would change the election.

Fieldwork Experience

AQ: *Both of you chose Fiji and Pan-pacific area as your field area, what made you do that?*

MK: John was studying Sanskrit and very interested in the deep history of the south Asia. And I was actually studying Hawaii, the history of Hawaii, Hawaii in the early 18th century, the point when you have a complicated relation of chiefdom, the people and the missionaries. So Professor Solomon said to us: "Oh, you are studying Pacific, you are studying India, both of you should go to Fiji.", it was a good advice.

JK: Definitely a good advice.

MK: So I think the lesson being: you should listen to your teacher.

JK: I think it can work very well for the anthropologists, who are married, find a way to work on the same project in the same place. If you do the fieldwork together, you can keep the relationships much stronger, than you have separate fields to do your research.

AQ: Can you tell us something about your fieldwork in Fiji? What's impressed you most? How do you be with the local people?

MK: I think that's probably a misunderstanding that lots of people might think that anthropologists want to be accepted as exactly the same as the people they are studying. But if I'm doing research in an advertising company in New York, they know that I'm not an advertiser, I'm there as an anthropologist visiting there. But people in Fiji were very kind and interested in sharing their lives and information and very generous in that way.

JK: We learned a lesson about ethnicity along these lines very early in our research. The prediction was made by other Fiji scholars that it would be much easier for us to make connections and get along with ethnic Fijians than with indo-Fijians, because they had always been invited to various villages and given tours and invited to meals by ethnic Fijians, but not by indo-Fijians who they thought were very standoffish. But from the moment I set foot in Fiji I was getting invitations to visit indo-Fijian temples, to visit indo-Fijian homes and be part of them, and why? Because when I found something or I would meet someone on the steps of a Hindu temple so that somebody has some sense that I care about them or I know what I'm seeing, or if I'm in a shop and I'm looking at a place of prayer and presence of divinity in a shop, even the shopkeeper can glance and know that what I'm looking at. The conversation opens up very naturally. With Martha, it was much easier to make friends and contacts with ethnic Fijians who she had been studying.

MK: And language helps.

JK: Language helps enormously, but that's a chicken-and-egg problem. So, what I learned from that is the subtle cues of social life are quite profound. When you think you're meeting the whole society, you are meeting the portion of any social field that you have adjusted yourself towards. For ethnography there are always people you get very close to and see through their eyes what's going on, but it's always important to remember that you are in a certain position in the social field rather than you know the whole village. You know the whole village along the

lines of the way you see it with this certain group of men or women who you spend your time with and you see their perspective on things. I know people in a caste village who only know what the village looks like from the point of view of the caste in which they live. It's important to always remember as an ethnographer how complicated social sects can really be.

AQ: Professor Kaplan majored primarily in the ethnic-Fijians, and Professor Kelly's field work has mostly focused on the indigenous regions. Why did you choose to focus on separate groups?

MK: That was our background training. When we met we were close to beginning our PhD research. So, I had been studying the Pacific and he had been studying India, we had serious interest already. Also for Fiji that was a place where most books written by people from Fiji, Australia or anywhere in the world only were either about ethnic Fijians or about indo-Fijians. There were very few studies that were about both groups. So although we first wanted to do our own separate research for our PhD, I think over time that's what caused us to be interested in writing about life in communities, and tried to look at the histories of two ethnic groups within a society as entwined.

JK: This isn't just in Fiji, this is true of scholarship in general, that scholars of a place tend to write as if they're writing about the whole place. There is one ethnic group that is the protagonist of their narrative, but there are other ethnic groups there. And it's very hard to figure out a way to write not in that way. It's an interesting problem for all ethnography. In Fiji, it's made more acute, because first of all, 90 percent of the published works in anthropology is about the ethnic Fijians, the original islanders who have lived there longer, and only 10 percent about the plantation descendants. But then when there are these military arms and political violence, it's always directed against the Asian descendant population and they are the victims of an enormous set of raids and blockages of their civil rights. So that means we've got a duty to make sure that the indo-Fijian point of view is out. But we also knew, this happened many times over this decade, that when I'm invited to tell the indo-Fijian point of view, I don't want to do that.

AQ: Why not?

JK: Because if you create a situation in which everyone is speaking from an ethnic point of view, the tensions can never die. We wanted ways of looking at issues that would focus on the right of issue, like what kind of democracy should Fiji be or what should the rules of business be.

MK: Not which ethnic group is right or wrong, but what is the larger picture.

JK: Otherwise there will always be the next grievance on the list. And you are encouraging your informants to tell you what they like and what they don't like about other ethnic groups. Just by the way you're framing your inquiry. The scholars can have enormous power by the way they frame the way the society is shaped and the way their books describe the ethnic groups. That can have an impact in the long run.

MK: It's important to think beyond the group.

JK: But also in Fiji politics in particular, there's another answer to your question. We've written about this in some of our writing in the 90's. In Fiji politics in particular, it was the

ethnic Fijians who wanted to insist that the country had serious racial problems, and that they needed to have a government that was sensitive to racial issues and keep it in the law. But it was the indo-Fijians tended to try to avoid portraying themselves as having a racial political interest. They wanted one set of rules for all citizens and one set of institutions for all citizens, not separate schools by religion or race, not separate government jobs. So the irony was that when you portrayed something as in the indo-Fijian profile system or interest, you're playing into the idea that the government had to have separate systems for separate races.

MK: Just to make clear, Fiji was a place where people didn't have "one citizen one vote", but registered by ethnic group or race for an electoral role, so that ethnic Fijians voted for one set of candidates and had one type of representation and indo-Fijians another.

JK: When you applied to university, you had to check a box saying what community you were from. And then the same examinations needed different scores to keep quotas of the two groups in balance. It made a giant difference.

MK: We don't want to go into too much detail about Fiji history.

JK: We didn't go to Fiji thinking that we were going to a place about to have political coupes, or as the perfect example of the nation-state in crisis where the model of the nation-state that didn't fit very well. We went to Fiji because it brought our personal interests together in an interesting way. I was interested in the history of capitalism and the plantation history I thought would be a good background to the things I wanted to study, and for Martha, the dynamics and political culture of the hill tribe people she was working with attracted her a lot.

MK: We were involved in what is sometimes called in the anthropological literature a millenarian movement or a cargo cult, a political religious movement.

JK: They were anti-colonial rebels that Martha was studying so that interested her right off the bat.

MK: So that's how we began.

AQ: Were you in Fiji when the coupes took place in 2000?

JK: No we weren't. We heard about it. One summer we were on the internet all the time reading the news trying to understand everything. We remember there were very different views. In 1987 when the coupe was happening we got tiny pieces of information. We were writing our theses at the time and we had to fight very hard for scraps of information. In 2000 and the last two years when there have been major political events, we could read the whole daily newspaper right online, it was like being in the capital city. You realize how much you know about politics comes from television and newspapers.

Nation-state and Neo-colonialism

AQ: *Can I ask you a question about Anderson's Imaged Community. I want to know on what grounds do you disagree with the Anderson's argument?*

MK: First of all, one thing we don't disagree with Anderson is his idea that nation-states are

created political communities, that they don't reflect primordial things created by nature or God. However, we disagree on the one hand with his, and those who follow him, the stress on the idea of imagination without a clear definition. We have a stronger argument of what institution creates a nation state and they aren't all to be found in colonial boarding schools. Secondly we have a very strong critic of his period and of his sense of where the nation state comes from. This is not just our critique. You might notice that Partha Chatterjee in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* argues that it's highly problematic to have the independent nation state presented as a European creation that has been in a modular way exported.

JK: So we start with the irony that Anderson is a political scientist but he has become famous by writing about nationalism in effect as a kind of public culture. So it becomes an argument about how political scientists need to learn the ideas of nationalism begin in newspapers and in novels, and it begins in people's imaginations about whom they are. Anderson argues that nationalism is the culture of modernity, so that's why it becomes so modular and portable. We read this and know that decolonization comes from particular decisions about voting groups and voting rights, who is going to have the vote and who isn't. It's not something that the imagination of people reading newspapers is going to decide. It's the law officers of the crown in London writing a constitution that is going to govern independent Fiji or Jamaica or Nigeria or India. India didn't just imagine itself out of British rule. It's a very significant struggle with the British that ended in political negotiations to decide on what form of government would follow including the partition of the place in the two countries. So we think the imagination point went past its usefulness. We then wanted to know how institutions of representation really get built and how those negotiations really happen. That's when we find more and more evidence that decolonization happens in a particular way in a particular time, and that was only partly the story of the European empires giving up their power. There was also partly the story of the United States asserting its power. The United States didn't want the European states to have empires. It determined to change the financial rules around the planet so that their empires were unaffordable. The British used to have a sterling rule where you could invest in the British empire and anybody could turn their currency into British pounds to invest in the empire but no one could take the pounds back home. So once you put your capital into the British Empire it had to stay there. That was very advantageous to the business development of the British Empire. Well, the Americans insisted on the end of that policy. They required an open door for Europe too, and that made the empires unaffordable. Now you could read *Imagined Communities* with a microscope and you'll never find that kind of pact and its impact on what constitutes a nation. So what we're saying is that the Americans at the end of World War Two in a series of negotiations insisted the future of the planet would be a United Nations. There would be no more wars between the nations or between states. A central authority would insure that by punishing countries that violate it. And all political power would go down to the nation states. And all political empires would have to break up and decolonize and so all these large political units break up and become small ones. The one political unit, by the way, that really managed not to be taken apart was China, which was very large then and is very large now. The Soviet Union was taken apart. They resisted joining this American plan for more than 40 years. A guy named Moletov negotiated for the Russians and the Americans thought they could get the Russians to agree with general agreements with tariffs and trade and to join the World Bank, to

join the International Monetary Fund and to agree to all these UN rules for capitalists development because they wanted enormous American loans. The Russians turned down the loan, and they did not sign up and decided to go their own way from 1945 all the way to the changes of the 1990's. That's the Cold War emerged in this period.

Some people say we need to think how the Cold War influences, but we think beyond what happens in a world government, we need to look more closely. It tells Fiji as it approaches decolonization that they don't have any choice but to join the UN as a nation-state with these particular rules about how they shall operate. They have a certain amount of scope for what kind of representative government they'll have, what kind of democracy, and that's what makes Fiji particularly interesting because they use race to divide the voters much more than any other country. Another country I've become very interested in with a much sadder political history is Burma. Where again, Burma had civil wars begin within a year of the British leaving and those wars led to a military dictatorship which is still in power now. It's been a military dictatorship for decade after decade. They have at least 137 different ethnic groups at least, most of which are hill groups, but the Burman's depending on where you draw the line are only 40 to 60 percent of the overall population. So when they declare their country as Myanmar, it's a very aggressive act on the part of these military rulers. So that's another nation state that for very different reasons to come out with a representative governmental system that everyone can accept. Today it's an important problem.

So, to finish up the first and the major part of the argument, when you see on the ground this question of what people think their identity is the question of Benedict Anderson needs to approach to. He says they get it from newspapers and novels. We say, well, those newspapers and novels portray that boundary and identity because of political processes that already happened and negotiations that already took place, so the process doesn't begin with that process of imagination. And the artists and novelists can resist that as well, but they do not just go with what's represented in the newspaper about politics and the legal representative structure of the state. When the army takes over in Burma, the newspaper cannot change the imagination of what constitutes Burma. So we want to start looking at this in a different place. In other words, we talked about how part of the nation states theme is the idea of the nation state as sovereign. This is in a technical sense what I don't want to go in detail. This is a legal fiction, "legal fiction" comes out of the work of Henry Maine, and it's a powerful tool. For example, when the American courts decided in the late 19th century that corporations could be treated as legal persons, meaning you could sue a corporation, which is a standard that's now used globally, that is a legal fiction. Now we believe corporations are living, breathing person. But, in court they are treated as if they were, and it has advantages and disadvantages. This began in the Roman Empire when the Romans would allow foreigners to be treated by court as if they were Roman citizens when they wanted to sue another person who wasn't a Roman citizen. The judge wasn't confused, they knew this was a foreigner and not a Roman citizen, but they allowed the legal fiction to enable the court case to happen. We're saying that it's a legal fiction that the nation is the sovereign. The legal institutions are designed as if everyone believes that the nation built the state, but when you look at what really happened, especially at the post-colonial nations, all their legal institutions are designed by the departing colonizers. It's of great utility of the state to portray itself as nearly the servant of the nation, but that doesn't mean it's true.

The interesting thing about this order is that everyone is supposed to have this type of relationship going. No state claims any other legitimacy, they claim to represent the nation, and thus the institutions of representation become very important. How does the state claim to represent the nation?

The other thing I wanted to say, I will say very briefly, is that the thing about Pax-Americana is real. The amount of death we've had on the planet since the end of World War II is shockingly low. It's very, very very low. The human population is now pushing towards 6 billion. At the end of World War II it was close to 3 billion. The numbers of people who died decade after decade, if you start from 1930s, and go through World War II, was very high. In the imperial era there were always wars between empires and rebellions within empires frequently with deaths in the millions. For example, 2 million died at the partition of India. In the era of Pax-Americana, from 1945 to 1990, however, there was never a decade with more than 5 million deaths by military violence. Now the 1990s and 2000 the count is rising again, so we have a problem that the world is getting more violent again, but in proportion to the population that number is still very low compared to World War I and World War II eras. If you read H.G. Wells or Wilson or public newspapers of the period, they were aware that the world was too violent and dangerous place, and that weapons were growing more powerful. Even in Chinese history violence is absolute. It's unbelievable how many people died by violence in the period we're talking about, and now it stops. It stops even though we have the Cold War and fundamental tensions. That's because they really did ban the wars between the nations and between the states, and that was a fundamental change in global politics that limited the power of sovereign states very effectively. On the backside rise now, even though we may say that the nation state may no longer look like the only legitimate or good form of government, but it's important to remember how effective it has been at preventing real death. That's a very important element of its history that is very different from the period of empires which encouraged political violence and rewarded it with death growth.

GL: Could you please briefly talk about how you both think of Adam Smith and the Wealth of Nations?

JK: That's a big question, I teach this book a lot so I have too many things to say. Adam Smith views the nation as a synonym for commonwealth. And he is one of the people who developed the idea that there is a commonwealth. And he is trying to tell the King that he needs to think of the commonwealth of the people of the country. And there is the other usage of "nation" in European history before Smith as well. There was even a kind of debate over whether a national state is a better idea than a dynastic state or a state organized around one particular class or interest group. But they are not going with the theory of sovereignty that the nations are truly sovereign, rather, they are saying you should act in the interest of the nation. Adam Smith is warning the King that natural forces will change the wealth of the nation and the only thing that the King can do is go with them or go against them. But he's treating the nation as a natural phenomenon, not as a built environment. He gives a counter-example. An interesting example, if we look up the word "nation-building" or "nation-making" in the dictionary, this is a concept that only shows up after World War II. You can't find a 19th Century person who said, "let's go nation build in China." It doesn't make sense.

MK: Because at that point, nations were just people.

JK: You build one with the idea that you're going to decolonize an empire. Now Botswana needs to be a nation state, so you better build a nation to go with the state, because it's the sovereign. The word "nation-state" appears in the English dictionary for the first time after World War II. By 1970 it's in all the major dictionaries of the English language. Another thing that happens is that the definition of "nation" changes. The further back you go, the more common that the first definition of "nation" is a group of people who have commonalities, which appears as a very naturalizing definition. Whereas again, after World War II a nation is defined as a kind of group that connects itself to the state or to power that exercises power in the state. The state was mentioned sometimes in the past definition in early dictionaries where now that's the definition of a nation- unless it's connected to a state, it's not really a nation. So that part is interesting to see how the words shifting it's meanings with the politics. So generally speaking, Adam Smith pushes a strong model where the laws of nature constrain the sovereign. We are a little sceptical that the laws of nature constrain the sovereign as much as Adam Smith thinks. Corporations don't seem to have any trouble in changing the way that markets and states to their benefit can to do when they want to.

GL: Then do you think of China is a nation?

JK: That's a good question, that's a great dilemma, isn't it? We're back to the legal fiction problem. There is no doubt whatsoever that there is a group in China who has endeavoured in nation-building enterprise trying to convince the Chinese public that there is one Chinese nation. You can imagine a counter-argument that would say, "we'll take 10 million people here, and 10 million people there, and here are all the nations of China;" Is there an underlying truth to this? You can imagine some one making political changes in the state institutions, justifying them in the logic of "see Sichuan is really a nation." So of course there was political trouble when there was a "Sichun state", but that wouldn't prove that it was somehow a force of nature. It would just be that's what they wanted to make true by the way they act politically. Another example of this I know more about is India, the partition of India. One question is why does India exist? Why do they become one India instead of being several countries? That's the first question. The second question is, they decided to make religious divides and to take all the Muslim parts out, which was disastrous from the point of view of how many people die. Europe of course, in our lifetime has been building itself more as a union, they look at China and the US and India and say, that's a good idea, the big nations are strong in the current system, and they are getting stronger, so they have a reason to stay unified. It's a good idea to stay together.

GL: This morning you mentioned another definition of neo-colonialism, could you please explain it?

JK: Here's the problem. Suppose you want to know the way NGO's operate in Katmandu. The NGOs have a budget that is 170 percent larger than the government of Nepal. So who runs the country, the NGOs or the government? The government has a health department but if they want to open rural clinic, they need the help of the NGOs. Some people call that neo-colonialism. The NGO says, well, we need to do AIDS prevention and malaria prevention in Nepal and everywhere else. The government may say: "well nutrition is a bigger problem in

rural Nepal than AIDS, why are we spending this money on AIDS? We could have spent it on health care and on young children". The NGO says: "sorry but we have all this money to fight AIDS." So, they negotiate saying: "Can we have an AIDS prevention program that targets the health of woman so we can do both at once?" We call that neo-colonialism, and I have no problem with that. The NGO is not claiming to be the government of Nepal. But the more they deny it, the closer they reach a point where it is a legal fiction. The problem is that when we call it neo-colonialism, there may be elements that we'll never see because we're only looking at the colonial aspect of the situation. Neo-colonialism is a useful category, especially to describe China and the West. How many times have the westerners pushed around people in China and virtually acted like they were the bosses. So, it's a very useful category, but it's not really a whole political system, it's the description of a type of relationship.

Historical Anthropology

AQ: Can I ask what do you think of the future of anthropology as a whole? Clifford Geertz said anthropology wouldn't exist in 50 years, and according to Sahlins, anthropology is "in its twilight as a viable discipline". What do you both think of the argument of this kind?

MK: I'll start and you can again follow. If you think of anthropology in old-fashioned way as a study in space of different groups, then you might say it has less of a future. But if you think of anthropology together with history as the study of the dynamism, then of course it's going to be a different picture. There will be so many innovations, complications and combinations that will come up that no one could possibly share in all of them, so of course we will need translation and understanding of multiplicity. I think anthropology has a grand future in that way. Both of us want to use is as excitement at something they think about, and to study from the outside or study from inside any particular structure or system.

JK: I completely agree with that. The thing that will never stop is ethnography. You could say: well they'll call themselves as department of ethnography rather than department of anthropology. Anthropology involves the study of humanity and involves not only cultural anthropology but also physical anthropology and linguistic anthropology and even archaeology. You could say: well, the biological sciences are going in a different direction, and yes there are fewer people starting graduate work in that subfield. Archaeologists may or may not want to develop there own separate department, but we'll know that the discipline of anthropology is losing ground as a whole when people stop applying to study it. The surest sign of the health of a discipline is the quality of the people who apply for the PhD degree, because they are not just coming for money, but they are taking their whole future, saying: this is really what I want to do! The quality of our applicants now is outstanding, and is unprecedentedly global. We have many good domestic candidates, but we also have more and more students from all over the world who want to become anthropologist. So, I'm not worried at all about the future of the discipline in that sense. Even if it dried up, it would not be the end of ethnography; it would be that history departments would now sponsor ethnography, or sociology departments or comparative culture departments do it.

I'll give you another image of what's happening to the disciplines in the United States that came from a historian friend of mine who served on the board of a foundation who was giving out

fellowships to professors for research. He reviewed social sciences studies applications from his region of research, which was South Asia. And he was deeply amused, saying: "John, the patterns couldn't be clearer. We're receiving applications from sociologists, from political scientists, from historians and from anthropologists." There are two patterns emerging. First, the anthropologists are proposing topics that the guys on the board are saying, "well that's really a history topic" or, "that's really a social science topic," but then we get the proposals from everyone else showing they want to do ethnography: the political scientists and historians are saying that there is information we are missing so we need to get closer to human experience to create models. So, the boundaries are loosening between the disciplines methodologically. So we have anthropologists who talk about the state that the political scientist would have said: "No, that is our topic". And when we talk about history, historians would have said: "That's our field of research." So the fields blur. It's a division of labour of the social sciences. Ethnographic work should get into the community to find out from everyone's point of view what's happening. We still need them to generalize from it. I don't think it's going anywhere. It will still be around in one form or the other.

AQ: I have a question about your colleague Prof. Duara. Do you share ideas with him, or do you work separately and hold different opinions in terms of history and anthropology?

JK: Mostly we share opinions definitely. In fact he and I had been colleagues at the University of Chicago for years, but never really knew each other until we met at a conference in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. I read a paper critiquing Ben Anderson's theories, and he read a paper about soft and hard boundaries and how to think about *Rescuing History from the Nations*. We both looked at each other and said: "Well that's a very interesting argument you have there, it seems closely resemble my own." We've been friends ever since. He's done brilliant work.

MK: He has a wonderful volume called *Decolonization: Then and Now*. It's a collection of essays, and we have an essay in it.

JK: In short, I think we mostly agree with Prasenjit Duara's opinions in many ways. There are other elements of his work where we don't really have an opinion because everything we know comes from reading his studies. I don't claim that I agree with him because I don't know enough about it to have a strong opinion, but I admire it. He has done some very interesting work in thinking about these issues.