Traveling Cultures


To begin, a quotation from C. L. R. James in Beyond a Boundary: "Time would pass, old empires would fall and new ones take their place. The relations of classes had to change before I discovered that it's not quality of goods and utility that matter, but movement, not where you are or what you have, but where you come from, where you are going and the rate at which you are getting there."

Or begin again with hotels. Joseph Conrad, in the first pages of Victory: "The age in which we are encamped like bewildered travelers in a garish, unrestful hotel." In Tropiques, Lévi-Strauss evokes an out-of-scale concrete cube sitting in the midst of the new Brazilian city of Goiania in 1937. It's his symbol of civilizatory barbarism, "a place of transit, not of residence." The hotel as station, airport terminal, hospital: a place you pass through, where the encounters are fleeting, arbitrary.

A more recent avatar: the hotel as figure of the postmodern in the new Los Angeles "downtown"—John Portman's Bonaventure Hotel, evoked by Fredric Jameson in an influential essay, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." The Bonaventure's glass cliffs refuse to interact, reflecting back their surroundings; there's no opening, no main entrance. Inside, a confusing maze of levels frustrates continuity; hinders the narrative stroll of a modernist flaneur.
Or begin with June Jordan's "Report from the Bahamas"—her stay in something called the Sheraton British Colonial Hotel. A black woman from the United States on vacation... confronting her privilege and wealth, uncomfortable encounters with people who make the beds and serve food in the hotel... reflections on conditions for human connection, alliances cutting across class, race, gender, and national locations. Begin again with a London boardinghouse. The setting for V. S. Naipaul's Mr. Me—another different place of inauthenticity, exile, transience, rootlessness. Or the Parisian hotels, homes away from home for the Surrealists, launching points for strange and wonderful urban voyages: Nadia, Payson de Paris. Places of collection, juxtaposition, passionate encounter—"Hotel des Grands Hommes." Begin again with the hotel stationary and restaurant menus lying (with star charts) Joseph Cornell's magical boxes. Untitled: Hotel du Midi, Hôtel du Sud, Hôtel de l'Etoupe, English Hotel, Grand Hôtel de l'Univers. Enclosed beauty of chance encounters—a feather, ball bearings, Lauren Bacall. Hotelstral, reminiscent of, but not the same as marvelous-real altars improvised from collected objects in Latin American popular religions, or the home "altars," ofrendas constructed by contemporary Chicano artists. A local/global fault line opening in Cornells' basement, filled with souvenirs of Paris, the place he never visited. Paris, the Universe, basement of an ordinary house in Queens, New York, 3708 Utopia Parkway.

This, as we often say, is "work in progress," work entering a very large domain of comparative cultural studies: diverse, interconnected histories of travel and displacement in the late twentieth century. This entry is marked, empowered and constrained, by previous work—my own, among others. And so I'll be working, today, out of my historical research on ethnographic practice in its twentieth-century contexts, anthropological forms. But the work I'm going toward does not so much build on my previous work as locate and displace it. Perhaps I could start with a travel conjecture that has, to my thinking at least, come to occupy a paradigmatic place. Call it the "Squanto effect." Squanto was the Indian who greeted the pilgrims in 1620 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, who helped them through a hard winter, and who spoke good English. To imagine the full effect of this meeting, you have to remember what the "New World" was like in 1620: you could smell the pines fifty miles out to sea. Think of coming into a new place like that and having the uncanny experience of running into a Patuxet just back from Europe.

A disconcertingly hybrid "native" met at the ends of the earth—strangely familiar, and different precisely in that unprocessed familiarity. The trope is increasingly common in travel writing: it virtually organizes "postmodern" reports like Pico Iyer's Video Night in Kathmandu. And it reminds me of my own historical research into specifically anthropological encounters, in which I'm always running up against a problematic figure, the "informant." A great many of these interlocutors, complex individuals routinely made to speak for "cultural" knowledge, turn out to have their own "ethnographic" proclivities and interesting histories of travel. Insiders, outsiders, good translators and explicators, they've been around. The people studied by anthropologists have seldom been homebodies. Some of them, at least, have been travelers: workers, pilgrims, explorers, religious converts, or other traditional "long-distance specialists" (Helms, 1988). In the history of twentieth-century anthropology, "informants" first appear as natives; they emerge as travelers. In fact, as I will suggest, they are specific mixtures of the two.

Twentieth-century ethnography—an evolving practice of modern travel—has become increasingly wary of certain localizing strategies in the construction and representation of "cultures." I'm going to dwell on some of these localizing moves in the first part of my talk. But I should say right away that I'll be speaking here of an ideal type of mid-twentieth-century disciplinary anthropology. There have been exceptions, and these normative strategies have always been contested. My goal in criticizing a set of somewhat oversimplified practices is not primarily to say that they have been wrong, unethical, or politically incorrect. Every focus excludes; there is no politically innocent methodology for intercultural interpretation. Some strategy of localization is inevitable if significantly different ways of life are to be represented. But "local" in whose terms? How is significant difference politically articulated, and challenged? Who determines where (and when) a community draws its lines, names its insiders and outsiders? These are far-reaching issues. My aim, initially, is to open up the question of how cultural analysis constitutes its objects—societies, traditions, communities, identities—in spatial terms and through specific spatial practices of research.
Villages, inhabited by natives, are bounded sites particularly suitable for intensive visiting by anthropologists. They have long served as habitable, mappable centers for the community and, by extension, the culture. After Malinowski, fieldwork among natives tended to be construed as a practice of co-residence rather than of travel, or even of visiting. And what more natural place to live with people than in their village? (The village localization was, I might add, a portable one: in the great worlds fairs—St. Louis, Paris, Chicago, San Francisco—native populations were exhibited as native villages, with live inhabitants.) The village was a manageable unit. It offered a way to centralize a research practice, and at the same time it served as synecdoche, as point of focus, or part, through which one could represent the cultural whole.

Simple village/culture synecdoches have largely gone out of style in current anthropology. Anthropologists, as Geertz has written, don’t study villages, they study in villages. And increasingly, they don’t study in villages either, but rather in hospitals, labs, urban neighborhoods, tourist hotels, the Getty Center. This trend challenges a modernist/urban configuration of the “primitive” object of study as romantic, pure, threatened, archaic, and simple. But despite the move out of literal villages, the notion of fieldwork as a special kind of localized dwelling remains.

Of course, one is always a participant-observer somewhere. How is this place of work bounded in space and time? The question brings into view a more persistent localization: “the field.” I’m concerned with how these specific disciplinary practices (spatial and temporal constraints) have tended to become confused with “the culture.” How are complex, interactive, cultural conjunctures temporally and spatially bounded? In Boas’ generation, the field was talked about with some seriousness as a “laboratory,” a place of controlled observation and experiment. This sounds cruelly postivist now. And contradictory: the field has also—since Boas’ time—been seen as a “rite of passage,” a place of personal/professional initiation, learning, growth, ordeal, and the like. One is struck by the powerfully ambiguous ways in which the field experience/experiment has been prefigured. (The French experience would serve us better here.) And, one wonders, what specific kinds of travel and dwelling (where? how long?) and interaction (with whom? in what languages?) have made a certain range of experiences count as fieldwork? The disciplinary criteria have changed since Malinowski’s time, and are changing.

It may help if we view “the field” as both a methodological ideal and a concrete place of professional activity. The anthropologist’s field is defined...
as a site of displaced dwelling and productive work, a practice of participant-observation which, since the 1920s, has been conceived as a sort of mini-immigration. The fieldworker is "adopted," "learns" the culture and the language. The field is a home away from home, an experience of dwelling which includes work and growth, the development of both personal and "cultural" competence (see Chapter 3). Ethnographers, typically, are travelers who like to stay and dig in (for a time). Unlike other travelers who prefer to pass through a series of locations, anthropologists tend to be homebodies abroad. The field as spatial practice is thus a specific style, quality, and duration of dwelling.*

The field is also a set of discursive practices. Dwelling implies real communicative competence: one no longer relies on translators, but speaks and listens for oneself. After Malinowski's generation, the discipline prescribed "learning the language" or at least "working in the local language." This opens a rather large can of worms. Can one speak of the language, singular, as if there were only one? What does it mean to learn or use a language? How well can one learn a language in a few years? What about "stranger talk," specific kinds of discourse used with outsiders? What about many anthropologists' continuing reliance on translators and explicators for complex events, idioms, and texts? The subject deserves a full study which I am not yet able to offer. It's worth pointing out, however, the fallacy "culture (singular) equals language (singular)." This equation, implicit in nationalist culture ideas, has been thoroughly unraveled by Bhabha, for whom a language is a diverging, contesting, dialoguing set of discourses that no "native"—let alone visitor—can ever control. An ethnographer thus works in or learns some part of "the language." And this does not even broach the question of multilingual, intercultural situations.1

I've been arguing that ethnography (in the normative practices of twentieth-century anthropology) has privileged relations of dwelling over relations of travel. I don't think I need to linger on the advantages, in focused "depth" of understanding, that can accrue to these fieldwork practices. Intensive participant-observation is probably anthropologist's most enduring contribution to humanistic study, and it is, I think, adequately appreciated, even by those like me who find it deeply problematic while urging its reform and dissemination. Let me continue, then, to worry about the dangers of construing ethnography as fieldwork.

Localizations of the anthropologist's objects of study in terms of a "field"

tend to marginalize or erase several blurred boundary areas, historical realities that slip out of the ethnographic frame. Here is a partial list. (1) The means of transport is largely erased—the boat, the land rover, the mission airplane. These technologies suggest systematic prior and ongoing contacts and commerce with exterior places and forces which are not part of the field/object. The discourse of ethnography ("being there") is separated from that of travel ("getting there"). (2) The capital city, the national context, is erased. This is what Georges Condомнain has called the perekrai, all those places you have to go through and be in relation with just to get to your village or to that place of work you will call your field. (3) Also erased: the university home of the researcher. Especially now that one can travel more easily to even the most remote sites and now that all sorts of places in the "First World" can be fields (churches, labs, offices, schools, shopping malls), movement in and out of the field by both natives and anthropologists may be very frequent. (4) The sites and relations of translation are minimized. When the field is a dwelling, a home away from home where one speaks the language and has a kind of vernacular competence, the cosmopolitan intermediaries—and complex, often political, negotiations involved—tend to disappear. We are left with participant-observation, a kind of hermeneutic freedom to circle inside and outside social situations.

Generally speaking, what's hidden is the wider global world of intercultural import-export in which the ethnographic encounter is always already enmeshed. But, as we shall see, things are changing. Moreover, in various critiques of anthropology—which are responses in part to anticolonial upheavals—we see the emergence of the informant as a complex, historical subject, neither a cultural type nor a unique individual. My own work, to take only one among many examples, has questioned the oral-to-literate narrative hidden in the very word "informant" (Clifford, 1986). The native speaks; the anthropologist writes. The writing/inscribing practices of indigenious collaborators are erased. My own attempt to multiply the hands and discourses involved in "writing culture" aims not to assert a naive democracy of plural authorship, but to loosen at least somewhat the monological control of the executive writer/anthropologist and to open for discussion ethnography's hierarchy and negotiation of discourses in power charged, unequal situations.

If thinking of the so-called informant as writer/inscriber shaves things up a bit, so does thinking of her or him as traveler. Ajjun Appadurai
(1988a, 1988b) challenges anthropological strategies for localizing non-Western people as "natives." He writes of their "confinement," even "imprisonment," through a process of representational essentializing that he calls "metonymic freezing," a process in which one part or aspect of peoples' lives come to epitomize them as a whole, constituting their theoretical niche in an anthropological taxonomy. India equals hierarchy. Melanesia equals exchange, and so forth. "Natives, people confined to and by the places to which they belong, groups unfulfilled by contact with a larger world, have probably never existed" (Appadurai, 1988a: 38).

In much traditional ethnography, the ethnographer has localized what is actually a regional/national/global nexus, relegating to the margins the external relations and displacements of a "culture." This practice is now increasingly questioned. The title of Greg Decinle's superb ethnographic history of the Marquesas is indicative: 

**Island and Beaches.** Beaches, sites of travel interaction, are half the story. Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History,* though it may tip the local/global cultural dialectic a little too strongly toward "external" (global) determinations, is a dramatic and influential step away from an ethnocentric focus on separate, integral cultures. "Rather than thinking of social alignments as self-determining," Wolf writes, "we need—from the start of our inquiries—to visualize them in their multiple external connections" (1982: 387). Or, in another current anthropological vein, consider a sentence from the opening of James Boon's intricate work of ethnological "crossing," *Affinities and Extremes:*

"What has come to be called Balinese culture is a multiply authored invention, a historical formation, an enactment, a political construct, a shifting paradox, an ongoing translation, an emblem, a trademark, a nonconsensual negotiation of contrastive identity, and more" (1990: ix).

Anthropological "culture" is not what it used to be. And once the representational challenge is seen to be the portrayal and understanding of local/global historical encounters, co-productions, dominations, and resistances, one needs to focus on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as on rooted, native ones. In my current problematic, the goal is not to replace the cultural figure "nativ"e with the intercultural figure "traveler." Rather, the task is to focus on concrete mediations of the two, in specific cases of historical tension and relationship. In varying degrees, both are constitutive of what will count as cultural experience. I am recommending not that we make the margin a new center ("we are all travelers") but that specific dynamics of dwelling/traveling be understood comparatively.

In tipping the balance toward traveling, as I am doing here, the "chrono-trene" of culture (a setting or scene organizing time and space in representative whole form) comes to resemble as much a site of travel encoun-

ters as of residence; it is less like a tent in a village or a controlled laboratory or a site of initiation and inhabitation, and more like a hotel lobby; urban cafe, ship, or bus. If we rethink culture and its science, anthropology in terms of travel, then the organic, naturalizing bias of the term "culture"—seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, and so on—is questioned. Constructed and disputed historicities, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view.

To press the point: Why not focus on any culture's fattest range of travel while also looking at its centers, its villages, its intensive fieldsites? How do groups negotiate themselves in external relationships, and how is a culture also a site of travel for others? How are spaces traversed from outside? To what extent is one group's core another's periphery? If we looked at the matter in this way, there would be no question of relegating to the margins a long list of actors: missionaries, converts, literate or educated informants, people of mixed blood, translators, government officials, police, merchants, explorers, prospectors, tourists, travelers, ethnographers, pilgrims, servants, entertainers, migrant laborers, recent immi-


grants. New representational strategies are needed, and are, under pressure, emerging. Let me evoke quickly several examples—notes for ways of looking at culture (along with tradition and identity) in terms of travel relations.

Ex-centric natives. The most extreme case I know of traveling "indige-
nous" culture-makers is a story I learned about through Bob Bosman, a musician and nonacademic historian of music, who for some years has been bringing traditional Hawaiian music into the continental United States. Bosman became very involved with the Moes (pronounced "Moey") family, a group of veteran performers who play Hawaiian guitar, sing, and dance. Their work represents the most authentic version of early twenti-
eth-century Hawaiian slide guitar and vocal styles. But to approach "trad-
tional" Hawaiian music through the Moes brings some unexpected results, because their experience has been one of almost uninterrupted travel. For various reasons, the Moes spent something like fifty-six years on the road, almost never going back to Hawaii. They played Hawaiian music in "exoticist" shows all over the Far East, South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, eastern and western Europe, and the United States.
And they performed, too, the gamut of hotel-circuit pop music. Now in their eighties, the Moes have recently returned to Hawaii, where, encouraged by revivalists like Brosman, they are making “authentic” music from the teens and twenties.

Bob Brosman is working on a film about the Moes which promises to be quite remarkable, in part because Tal Moe made his own home movies everywhere he went. Thus, the film can present a traveling Hawaiian view of the world, while posing the question of how the Moe family maintained a sense of identity in Calcutta, Istanbul, Alexandria, Bucharest, Berlin, Paris, Hong Kong. How did they compartmentalize their Hawaiianess in constant interaction with different cultures, musics, and dance traditions—influences they worked into their act, as needed? How, for fifty-six years in transient, hybrid environments, did they preserve and invent a sense of Hawaiian “home”? And how, currently, is their music being recycled in the continuing invention of Hawaiian authenticity? This story of dwelling-in-travel is an extreme case, no doubt. But the Moe experience is strangely resonant. (By the way, I also learned from Brosman’s research that the National Steel Guitar, an instrument popular across the United States in the twenties and thirties and often called the “Hawaiian Guitar,” was actually invented by a Czech immigrant living in California.)

Several more glimpses of an emerging culture-as-travel-relations ethnography. Joe Leahy’s Neighbors, a film by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, is a good example. (Its better-known predecessor, First Contact, is set in early twentieth-century New Guinea.) Joe Leahy, a mixed-blood colonial product, is a successful entrepreneur—kids in Australian schools, satellite dish behind his house in the New Guinea highlands. Connolly and Anderson include Leahy’s own travels to Port Moresby and to Australia, while focusing on his ambiguous relations with the highland locals, his relatives. The entrepreneur seems to be exploiting his “neighbors,” who resent his wealth. Sometimes he appears as an uncontrolled individualist impervious to their demands; on other occasions he distributes gifts, acting as a “big man” within a traditional economy. Joe Leathy seems to move in and out of a recognizably Melanesian culture. This sort of focus simply could not have been entertained by Malinowski. Here, not only is the “native” a traveler in the world system, but the focus is on an atypical character, a person out of place but not entirely—a person in history. Joe Leahy is the sort of figure who turns up in travel books, though not in traditional ethnographies. Yet he is not simply an eccentric or acculturated individual.

Watching Connolly and Anderson’s film, we remain uncertain whether Joe Leathy is a Melanesian capitalist or a capitalist Melanesian—a new kind of big man, still bound in complex ways to his jealous, more traditional neighbors. He is and is not of the local culture.

In the domain of ethnographic films, I might mention Jean Rouch as a precursor. His film Jaguar, for example, is a marvelous (real) travel story set in West Africa in the early 1950s. Rouch follows three young men as they walk from Mali to the cities of what was then called Gold Coast—in search of adventure, fun, prestige, bridewealth. In a kind of ethnographic vertigo, the three act themselves for the camera; and their recorded commentary/travel story/myth of the journey ends up as the film’s soundtrack. Much could be said about Jaguar’s peculiarly seductive, and problematic, dialogical realism. Suffice it to say that the cultural “performance” of the film is an encounter among travelers, Rouch included. And the characters in this home movie “play” themselves, for the camera, as individuals and allegorical types. Other examples: the very complex localization of Michael Taussig’s book Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man. His “field” includes the Putumayo region of Columbia and Amazonia, the contiguous Andean Highlands, migrant Indian shamans, traveling matrizes in search of healing, a meandering anthropologist, the violent invroads of world commerce in the 1890s rubber boom and currently in the World Bank’s development policies. Taussig’s sprawling ethnography (of almost Melvillean ambitions) portrays a region in historical relations of travel— involving conquest, curting, commerce, and mutual ideological appropriation. As George Marcus and Michael Fischer have stressed, innovative forms of multi-locale ethnography will be necessary to do justice to transnational political, economic, and cultural forces that traverse and constitute local or regional worlds (1986: 94–95). So too, specific histories of population movement, exile, and labor migration require new approaches to the representation of “diaspora cultures.” Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi multiply centered work of ethnographic cultural critique, Debating Muslims, is a powerful case in point. Subtitled “Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition,” the work (dis)locates Iranian Islamic culture in a history of national and transnational relations. One chapter is set in Houston, Texas. Traveling cultures. One could cite many more examples, opening up an intricate comparative field. So far, I have been talking about the ways people leave home and return, enacting differently centered worlds, inter-
connected cosmopolitanisms. To this I should add: sites traversed—by tourists, by oil pipelines, by Western commodities, by radio and television signals. For example, Hugh Brody’s ethnography Maps and Dreams focuses on conflicting spatial practices—ways of occupying, moving through, using, mapping—by Athapaskan hunters and the oil companies that are driving pipelines across their lands. But here a certain normative concept and history built into the word “travel” begins to weigh heavily. (Can I, without serious hesitations, translate Athapaskan hunting as travel? With what violence and what loss of specificity?)

The anthropologist Christina Turner has pressed me on this point. Squanto as emerging norm? Ethnographic informants as travelers? But informants are not all travelers, and they’re not natives either. Many people choose to limit their mobility, and even more are kept “in their place” by repressive forces. Turner did ethnographic work among female Japanese factory workers, women who have not “traveled,” by any standard definition. They do watch TV, they do have a local/global sense; they do contradict the anthropologist’s typifications; and they don’t simply enact a culture. But it’s a mistake, she told me, to insist on literal “travel.” This begs too many questions and overly restricts the important issue of how subjects are culturally “located.” It would be better to stress different modalities of inside/outside connection, recalling that the travel, or displacement, can involve forces that pass powerfully through—television, radio, tourists, commodities, armies.

Turner’s point leads me to my last ethnographic example, Smadar Lavie’s The Poetics of Military Occupation. Lavie’s ethnography of Bedouins is set in the southern Sinai, a land long traversed by all sorts of people, most recently by an Israeli occupation immediately followed by Egyptian occupation. The ethnography shows Bedouins in their tents telling stories, joking, making fun of tourists, complaining about military rule, praying, and doing all sorts of “traditional” things... but with the radio on, the BBC World Service (Arabic version). In Lavie’s ethnography, you hear the crackle of that radio.

“Shgetef, could you pour some tea?” the Gaild nonchalantly requests the local Fool. Shgetef enters the mag’ad and for the umpteenth time pours us yet more cups of hot sweet tea.

“So what did the news say?” the Gaild asks the man with his ear glued to the transistor radio, but doesn’t wait for an answer. “I’ll tell you,” he says with a half-bemused, half-serious expression. “No one will solve the problems between Russia and America. Only the Chinese will ever figure a way out. And when the day comes that they conquer the Sinai, that will be the end of that.”

It’s a good pun—the Arabic for “Sinai” is Sinai, for “Chinese” is Sini—and we laugh heartily. But Shgetef, perhaps betraying his deep tourist’s wisdom, stares at us with eyes wide open.

The Gaild continues. “The Greeks were here and left behind the Monastery [Santa Catazina], the Turks were here and left behind the Castle [el Nuweiba/Tairabin], and the British drew up maps, and the Egyptians brought the Russian army (and a few oil wells), and the Israelis brought the Americans who made the mountains into movies, and tourists from France and Japan, and scuba divers from Sweden and Australia, and, trust Allah to save you from the devil, we Mzeini are nothing but pawns in the hands of them all. We are like pebbles and the dropings of the shiza.”

Everyone but Shgetef again roars with laughter. The Coordinator points to me with his long index finger, saying in a commanding voice:

“Write it all down, The One Who writes Us!” (Qa illi Tuhotbana—one of my two Mzeini nicknames). (1990: 291)

Before moving to the second part of my talk, I should say that I have deliberately restricted this discussion to examples of exotic ethnography/anthropology. Of course, the field of “ethnographic” practice is much wider and more diverse. The recent return of anthropology to the metropoles, the increasing practice of what’s called in the trade “studying up” (studying elite institutions)—these and other developments have forged and reformed many connections: with sociological ethnography, with sociocultural history, with communications, and with cultural criticism. Anthropologists are in a much better position, now, to contribute to a genuinely comparative and nonontological cultural studies, a field no longer limited to “advanced,” “late capitalist” societies. Diverse ethnographic/historical approaches need to be able to work together on the complexities of cultural localization in post- or neocolonial situations, on migration, immigration, and diaspora, on different paths through “modernity” (see Chapter 3). These are some of the domains in which a reconstructed anthropological ethnography can participate, bringing to
bear its inherently bifocal approach, its intensive research practices, its distinctive and changing forms of travel and enunciation.9

Begin again with that odd invocation of hotels. I wrote it in the course of returning to an earlier essay on Surrealism and the Paris of the 1920s and 1930s. I was struck by how many of the Surrealists lived in hotels, or hotel-like transient digs, and were moving in and out of Paris. I was beginning to see that the movement was not necessarily centered in Paris, or even in Europe. (Paris may have been Walter Benjamin’s “capital of the nineteenth century”—but of the twentieth?) It all depended on how (and where) one saw the historical outcomes of the modernist moment.

Rereading that earlier essay, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," which was reprinted in my book the Predicament of Culture, I came, with some embarrassment, on a footnote that ended with a throwaway: “and Alex Carpentier, who was a collaborator on the journal Documents.” The loose thread suddenly seemed crucial. Could I revise my account of Paris, pulling out and reweaving that thread, and many others like it? I began to imagine rewriting Paris of the twenties and thirties as a travel encounter—including New World detours through the old—a place of departures, arrivals, transits (Clifford, 1990b). The great urban centers could be understood as specific, powerful sites of dwelling/traveling.

I found myself working with intersecting histories—discrepant detours and returns. The notions of détour and retour were proposed by Edouard Glissant in Le Discours Antillais, and developed productively in a theory of "postcolonial habitus" by Vivek Dhawan (1990a, 1990b). Paris as a site of cultural creation included the detour and return of people like Carpentier. He moved from Cuba to Paris and then back to the Caribbean and South America, to name Le réal maravilloso, tragi-cal realism, Surrealism with a difference. Surrealism traveled, and was translated in travel. Paris included also the detour and return of Leopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Ousmane Sembé, meeting at the Lycée Louis le Grand, returning to different places with the cultural politics of "Negritude." Paris was the Chilean Vicente Huidobro challenging modernist genealogies, proclaiming, "Contemporary poetry begins with me." In the thirties it was Luis Buñuel moving, somehow, between Montparnasse Surrealist meetings, civil war Spain, Mexico, and... Hollywood. Paris included the salon of the Martiniquan Paulette Nardal and her sisters. Nardal founded the

Revue du Monde Noir, a place of contact between the Harlem Renaissance and the Négritude writers.

In my invocation of different hotels, the relevant sites of cultural encounter and imagination began to slip away from metropolitan centers such as Paris. At the same time, levels of ambivalence appeared in the hotel chronotope. At first I saw my task as finding a frame for negative and positive visions of travel: travel, negatively viewed as transience, superficiality, tourism, exile, and rootlessness (Lévi-Strauss's invocation of Goethes ugly structure, Naipaul’s London boarding house); travel positively conceived as exploration, research, escape, transforming encounter (Bretón's Hôtel des Grands Hommes, June Jordan's tourist epiphany). The exercise also pointed toward the broader agenda I've been getting at here: to rethink cultures as sites of dwelling and travel, to take travel knowledges seriously. Thus, the ambivalent setting of the hotel suggested itself as a supplement to the field (the tent and the village). It framed, at least, encounters between people to some degree away from home.

But almost immediately the organizing image, the chronotope, began to break up. And I now find myself embarked on a research project where any condensed episteme or place of survey is questionable. The comparative scope I'm struggling toward is not a form of overview. Rather, I'm working with a notion of comparative knowledge produced through an itinerary, always marked by a "way in," a history of locations and a location of histories: "partial and composite traveling theories," to borrow a phrase from Mary John (1989, 1990). The metaphor of travel, for me, has been a serious dream of mapping without going "off earth."

As recycled in this talk, then, the hotel epitomizes a specific way into complex histories of traveling cultures (and cultures of travel) in the late twentieth century. As I've said, it has become seriously problematic, in several major ways involving class, gender, race, cultural/historical location and privilege. The hotel image suggests an older form of gentlemanly occidental travel, when home and abroad, city and country, East and West, metropole and antipodes, were more clearly fixed. Indeed, the marking of "travel" by gender, class, race, and culture is all too clear.

"Good travel" (heroic, educational, scientific, adventurous, ennobling) is something men (should) do. Women are impeded from serious travel. Some of them go to distant places, but largely as companions or as "exceptions"—figures like Mary Kingsley, Freya Stark, or Flora Tristan, women now rediscovered in volumes with titles like The Blessings of a Good
Travels

Thick Shirt, or Victorian Lady Travelers (Russell, 1986; Middleton, 1982). "Lady" travelers (bourgeois, white) are unusual, marked as special in the dominant discourses and practices. Although recent research is showing that they were more common than formerly recognized, women travelers were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences. One thinks of George Sand's famous account of dressing as a man in order to move freely in the city, to experience the gendered freedom of the Janeu. Or Lady Mary Montague's envy of the anonymous mobility of veiled women in Istanbul. And what forms of displacement, closely associated with women's lives, do not count as proper "travel"? Visiting? Pilgrimage? We need to know a great deal more about how women have traveled and currently travel, in different traditions and histories. This is a very large comparative topic, that's only beginning to be opened up: for example, in the work of Sara Mills (1990, 1991), Caren Kaplan (1986, 1986), and Mary Louise Pratt (1992, chs. 5 and 7). The discursive/imaginary topographies of Western travel are being revealed as systematically gendered: symbolic stagings of self and other that are powerfully institutionalized, from scientific research work (Haraway, 1989a) to transnational tourism (Enloe, 1990). Although there are certainly exceptions, particularly in the area of pilgrimage, a wide predominance of male experiences in the institutions and discourses of "travel" is clear—in the West and, to differing degrees, elsewhere.

But it is hard to generalize with much confidence, since the serious, cross-cultural study of travel is not well developed. What I'm proposing here are research questions, not conclusions. I might note, in passing, two good sources: Ulysses' Sull, by Mary Helms, a broadly comparative study of the cultural uses of geographic distance and the power/knowledge gained in travel (a study focused on male experiences); and Muslim Travelers, edited by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, an interdisciplinary collection designed to bring out the complexity and diversity of religious/economic spatial practices.

Another problem with the hotel image: its nostalgic inclination. For in those parts of contemporary society that we can legitimately call postmodern (I do not think, pace Jameson, that postmodernism is yet a cultural dominant, even in the "First World"), the motel would surely offer a better chronotope. The motel has no real lobby, and it's tied into a highway network—a relay or node rather than a site of encounter between coherent cultural subjects. Meaghan Morris has used the motel chronotope effec-

tively to organize her essay "At Henry Parkes Motel." I can do justice to its suggestive discussions of nationality, gender, spaces, and possible narratives. I cite it here as a displacement of the hotel chronotope of travel, for, as Morris says, "Motels, unlike hotels, demobilize sense regimes of place, locale, and history. They memorialize only movement, speed, and perpetual circulation" (1988a: 3).

Other major ways in which the hotel chronotope—and with it the whole travel metaphor—becomes problematic have to do with class, race, and sociocultural "location." What about all the travel that largely avoids the hotel, or motel, circuits? The travel encouters of someone moving from rural Guatemala or Mexico across the United States border are of a quite different order; and a West African can get to a Paris banlieue without ever staying in a hotel. What are the settings that could realistically configure the cultural relations of these "travelers"? As I abandon the bourgeois hotel setting for travel encounters, sites of intercultural knowledge, I struggle, never quite successfully, to free the related term "travel" from a history of European, literary, male, bourgeois, scientific, heroic, recreational meanings and practices (Wolff, 1993).

Victorian bourgeois travelers, men and women, were usually accompanied by servants, many of whom were people of color. These individuals have never achieved the status of "travelers." Their experiences, the cross-cultural links they made, their different access to the societies visited—such encounters seldom find serious representation in the literature of travel. Racism certainly has a great deal to do with this. For in the dominant discourses of travel, a nonwhite person cannot figure as a heroic explorer, aesthetic interpreter, or scientific authority. A good example is provided by the long struggle to bring Matthew Henson, the black American explorer who reached the North Pole with Robert Peary, equally into the story of this famous feat of discovery—as it was constructed by Peary, a host of historians, newspaper writers, statesmen, bureaucrats, and interested institutions such as National Geographic magazine (Couler, 1988). And this is still to say nothing of the Eskimo travelers who made the trip possible. A host of servants, helpers, companions, guides, and bearers have been excluded from the role of proper travelers because of their race and class, and because theirs seemed to be a dependent status in relation to the supposed independence of the individualist, bourgeois voyager. The independence was, in varying degrees, a myth. As Europeans moved through unfamiliar places, their relative comfort and safety were ensured.
by a well-developed infrastructure of guides, assistants, suppliers, translators, and carriers (Fabian, 1986).

Does the labor of these people count as "travel"? Clearly, a comparative cultural studies account would want to include them and their specific cosmopolitan viewpoints. But in order to do so, it would have to thoroughly transform travel as a discourse and genre. Obviously, many different kinds of people travel, acquiring complex knowledges, stories, political and intercultural understandings, without producing "travel writing." Some accounts of these experiences have found their way to publication in Western languages—for example, the nineteenth-century travel journals of the Ranotangan missionary Ta'onga, or the fourteenth-century records of Ibn Battouta (Crocombe and Crocombe, 1968; Ibn Battouta, 1972). But they are tips of lost icebergs.

Working in a historical vein, one might gain access to some of this diverse travel experience through letters, diaries, oral histories, music and performance traditions. Marcus Rediker provides a fine example of a reconstructed working-class traveling culture in his history of eighteenth-century Anglo-American merchant seamen (and pirates), Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea. A cosmopolitan, radical, political culture is revealed, fully justifying the several resonances of Rediker's final chapter title, "The Seaman as Worker of the World." Ongoing research by Rediker and Peter Linebaugh (1990) is bringing more sharply into view the role of African laborers and travelers in this North Atlantic maritime (often insurrectionary) capitalist world. The resonances with Paul Gilroy's current research on the black Atlantic diaspora are clear (Gilroy, 1993a). To call the mobile, maritime workers described by Rediker and Linebaugh "travelers" ascribes to their experience a certain autonomy and cosmopolitanism. It risks, however, downplaying the extent to which the mobility is coerced, organized within regimes of dependent, highly disciplined labor. In a contemporary register, to think of cosmopolitan workers, and especially migrant labor, in metaphors of "travel" raises a complex set of problems. The political disciplines and economic pressures that control migrant-labor regimes pull very strongly against any overly sanguine view of the mobility of poor, usually nonwhite, people who must leave home in order to survive. The traveler, by definition, is someone who has the security and privilege to move about in relatively unconstrained ways. This, at any rate, is the travel myth. In fact, as studies like those of Mary Louise Pratt are showing, most bourgeois, scientific, commercial, aesthetic, travelers moved within highly determined circuits. But even if these bourgeois travelers can be "located" on specific itineraries dictated by political, economic, and intercultural global relations (often colonial, postcolonial, or neocolonial in nature), such constraints do not offer any simple equivalence with other immigrant and migrant laborers. Alexander von Humboldt obviously did not arrive on the Orinoco coast for the same reasons as an Asian indentured laborer.

But although there is no ground of equivalence between the two "travelers," there is at least a basis for comparison and (problematic) translus. Von Humboldt became a canonical travel writer. The knowledge (predominantly scientific and aesthetic) produced in his American explorations has been enormously influential. The Asian laborer's view of the "New World," knowledge derived from displacement, was certainly quite different. I do not now, and may never, have access to it. But a comparative cultural studies would be very interested in such knowledge and in the ways it could potentially complement or critique von Humboldt's. Given the prestige of travel experiences as sources of power and knowledge in a wide range of societies, Western and non-Western (Helms, 1988), the project of comparing and translating different traveling cultures need not be class- or ethnocentric. Justin-Daniel Gandouliou details a modern African traveling culture in his Entre Paris et Kinshasa, a fascinating study of Congolese adventurers, migrant workers in Paris. He compares their specific culture (focused on the goal of being "well dressed") with the European tradition of the dandy, as well as with that of the "Rastas," a different group of black visitors to Paris.

The project of comparison would have to grapple with the evident fact that travelers move about under strong cultural, political, and economic compulsions and that certain travelers are materially privileged, others oppressed. These specific circumstances are crucial determinations of the travel at issue—movements in specific colonial, neocolonial, and postcolonial circuits, different diasporas, borderlands, exiles, detours, and returns. Travel, in this view, denotes a range of material, spatial practices that produce knowledges, stories, traditions, comportments, musics, books, diaries, and other cultural expressions. Even the harshest conditions of travel, the most exploitative regimes, do not entirely quell resistance or the emergence of diasporic and migrant cultures. The history of transatlantic enslavement, to mention only a particularly violent example, an experience including deportation, uprooting, marronnage, transplants-
tion, and revival, has resulted in a range of interconnected black cultures: African American, Afro-Caribbean, British, and South American.

We need a better comparative awareness of these and a growing number of other "diaspora cultures" (Merer, 1988). As Stuart Hall has argued in a provocative series of articles (1987b, 1989a, 1990b), diasporic conjunctions invite a reconsitution—both theoretical and political—of familiar notions of ethnicity and identity. Unresolved historical dialogues between community and disruption, essence and positionality, homogeneity and differences (cross-cutting "us" and "them") characterize diasporic articulations (see Chapter 10). Such cultures of displacement and transplantation are inseparable from specific, often violent, histories of economic, political, and cultural interaction—histories that generate what might be called "diverse cosmopolitanisms." In this emphasis we avoid, at least, the excessive localism of particularist cultural relativism, as well as the overly global vision of a capitalistic or technocratic monoculture. And in this perspective the notion that certain classes of people are cosmopolitan (travelers) while the rest are local ("natives") appears as the ideology of one (very powerful) traveling culture. My point, again, is not simply to invert the strategies of cultural localization, the making of "natives," which I criticized at the outset. I'm not saying there are no locales or homes, that everyone is—or should be—traveling, or cosmopolitan, or determinatized. This is not nomadology. Rather, what is at stake is a comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling and traveling: traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling.

I'll conclude with a series of exhortations.

We need to think comparatively about the distinct routes/roots of tribes, barrios, favelas, immigrant neighborhoods—embattled histories with crucial community "insides" and regulated traveling "outsidess." What does it take to define and defend a homeland? What are the political stakes in claiming (or sometimes being relegated to) a "home"? As I've said, we need to know about places traveled through, kept small, local, and powerless by forces of domination. A Small Place, Jamaica Kincaid's trenchant portrayal of tourism and economic dependency in Antigua, critiques a local neocolonial history in ways that resonate globally. (An Antiguan critique written from Vermont!) How are national, ethnic, community "insides" and "outsidess" sustained, policed, subverted, crossed—by distinct historical subjects—for their own ends, with different degrees of power and freedom?

We need to consider with new localizations, such as the "border." A specific place of hybridity and struggle, policing and transgression, the U.S./Mexico frontier has recently attained "theoretical" status, thanks to the work of Chicano writers, activists, and scholars: Américo Paredes, Renato Rosaldo, Teresa McKenna, José David Saldivar, Gloria Anzaldúa, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Emily Hicks, and the Border Arts Project of San Diego/Tijuana. The border experience is made to produce powerful political visions: a subversion of binarisms, the projection of a "multicultural public sphere (versus hegemonic pluralism)" (Flores and Yudice, 1990).

How translatable is this place/motif of crossing? How are historical borderlands (sites of regulated and subversive travel, natural and social landscapes) like and unlike diasporas?

We conjure now with "cultures," such as Haiti, that can be ethnographically studied both in the Caribbean and in Brooklyn. We need to consider circuits, not a single place. Some of you may know an exuberant short story by Luis Rafael Sánchez, "The Airbus" (beautifully translated by Diana Vega). Something like Puerto Rican "culture" erupts in a riot of laughter and overflowing conversation during a routine night flight from San Juan to New York. Everyone more or less permanently in transit... Not so much "Where are you from?" as "Where are you between?" Puerto Ricans who can't bear to think of staying in New York. Who treasure their return ticket. Puerto Ricans settled "down there," newly alive "up here." "Puerto Ricans who are permanently installed in the wanderground between here and there and who must therefore informize the trip, making it little more than a hop on a bus, though airborne, that floats over the creek to which the Atlantic Ocean has been reduced by the Puerto Ricans" (1984: 43).

In dealing with migration and immigration, serious attention to gender and race complicates a variety of classic approaches, particularly overly linear models of assimilation. Altha Ong, an anthropologist at Berkeley, is currently studying Cambodian immigrants in Northern California. Her research is attentive to different, and incomplete, ways of belonging in America, different ways Cambodian men and women negotiate identities in the new national culture. Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar's study of Dominican international migration, Between Two Islands, is concerned, among other things, with differences between male and female attitudes toward settlement, return, and workplace struggle. Julie Mattiacci and Teresa Amott (1990) have written perceptively on specific struggles and
barriers, relating to race, gender, and work, facing Asian and Asian American women in the United States.

I've already mentioned the crucial role of political-economic push and pull in such movements of populations. (Its prominence in the Cambodian, Dominican, and Asian American studies just cited.) A comprehensive theory of migration and capitalist labor regimes is proposed by Robin Cohen in *The New Helots: Migrants in the International Division of Labor*, a work that leaves room for political/cultural resistance within a strongly determinate global account. In a regionally centered analysis, "The Emerging West Atlantic System," Orlando Patterson tracks the development of a "postnational" environment centered on Miami Florida. "Three powerful currents," he writes, "are undermining the integrity of national boundaries." The first is a long history of military, economic, and political intervention by the United States beyond its frontiers. The second is the growing transnational character of capitalism, its need to organize markets at a regional level. "The third current undermining the national state is that of migration," "Having spent the last century and a half violating, militarily, economically, politically, and culturally, the national boundaries of the region, the center now finds itself incapable of defending the violation of its own national borders. The costs of doing so are administratively, politically, and, most important, economically too high. Trade, and the international division of labor, follows the flag. But they also set in motion winds that tear it down" (1987: 260). The cultural consequences of a "Latinization" of significant regions within the political-economic "center" are, according to Patterson, likely to be unprecedented. They will certainly differ from more classic immigrant patterns (European and Asian) which do not build upon "geographic proximity and co-historical intimacy" (259). We are seeing the emergence of new maps: borderland culture areas, populated by strong, diasporic ethnicities unevenly assimilated to dominant nation-states.

And if contemporary migrant populations are not to appear as mute, passive straws in the political-economic winds, we need to listen to a wide range of "travel stories" (not "travel literature" in the bourgeois sense). I'm thinking, among others, of the oral histories of immigrant women that have been gathered and analyzed at the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños in New York City (Bemmayer et al., 1987). And, of course, we cannot ignore the full range of expressive culture—rich history of traveling culture-makers and transnational influences (Gilroy, 1987, 1992, 1993a).

Enough. Too much. The notion of "travel," as I've been using it, cannot possibly cover all the different displacements and interactions I've just invoked. Yet it has brought me into these borderlands.

I hang on to "travel" as a term of cultural comparison precisely because of its historical taintedness, its associations with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents, and the like. I prefer it to more apparently neutral, and "theoretical," terms such as "displacement," which can make the drawing of equivalences across different historical experiences too easy. (The post-colonial/postmodern equation, for example.) And I prefer it to terms such as "nomadism," often generalized without apparent resistance from non-Western experiences. (Nomadology: a form of postmodern primitivism?) "Pilgrimage" seems to me a more interesting comparative term to work with. It includes a broad range of Western and non-Western experiences and is less class- and gender-biased than "travel." Moreover, it has a nice way of subverting the constitutive modern opposition between traveler and tourist. But its "sacred" meanings tend to predominate—even though people go on pilgrimages for secular as well as religious reasons. And in the end, for whatever reasons of cultural bias, I find it harder to make "pilgrimage" stretch to include "travel" than to do the reverse. (The same is true of other terms such as "migration"). There are, in any event, no neutral, uncontaminated terms or concepts. A comparative cultural studies needs to work, self-critically, with compromised, historically encumbered tools.

Today I've been working, overworking, "travel" as a translation term. By "translation term" I mean a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way. "Travel" has an inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness. It offers a good reminder that all translation terms used in global comparisons—terms like "culture," "art," "society," "peasants," "mode of production," "man," "woman," "modernity," "ethnography"—get us some distance and fall apart. *Traditio*, *traditio*. In the kind of translation that interests me most, you learn a lot about peoples, cultures, and histories different from your own, enough to begin to know what you're missing.
Travels

Discussion

Jenny Sharpe: I'm sympathetic to what you say about the field of anthropology being a fiction constituted only as exclusions of movements of both the anthropologist and of cultures. But I'm wondering if that notion of the field itself exists in anthropology any longer. I'm thinking of the fact that anthropologists can no longer go out to the field in the way that they used to because of political upheavals. I'm thinking also of the recent shifts in the notion of the field itself (to include, for example, the work of anthropologists in Philadelphia's inner-city ghettos, work which constructs those ghettos as transplanted migrant communities from "Third World" countries), so that we no longer have a field that looks like what Malinowski and the others you mentioned were talking about.

Clifford: These are very important political issues connected to current attempts to redefine anthropology's "fields." As you said, a whole series of political upheavals has made it more and more difficult to do fieldwork in the way Malinowski, Mead, and their generation did. And, as you know, it's not that things have suddenly gotten "political," whereas previously the research was somehow neutral. One of the advantages of looking at ethnography as a form of travel is that you can't avoid certain concerns that always come up in travel accounts, but seldom come up in social scientific ones. I mentioned some of them. But one I didn't go into is the issue of physical safety. Here the gender and race of the traveler in foreign lands matter a lot. Ethnographers "in the field" have, of course, taken risks. Some have died from disease and accidents. But few, to my knowledge, have actually been killed by their "hosts." Why, to take a rather stark case, was Evans-Pritchard not killed, or at least hurt, by the Nuer when he set up his tent in their village on the heels of a military expedition? (He makes it perfectly clear in his book, The Nuer, that they didn't want him there.) Underlying his safety, and that of a host of other anthropologists, missionaries, and travelers, was a prior history of violent conflict. All over the world "natives" learned the hard way, not to kill whites. The cost, often a punitive expedition against your people, was too high. Most anthropologies, certainly by Malinowski's time, came into their "fields" after some version of this violent history. To be sure, a few daring researchers worked in unclassified areas, becoming, as they did so, part of the contact and pacification process. But by the twentieth century there were relatively few of these. My point is simply that the safety of the field as a place of dwelling and work, a place for neutral, unpollitical social science, was itself a historical and political creation.

Your question presupposes this, because the recent lack of safety (at least of political safety) for fieldworkers in many places marks the collapse of a historical "world" containing inhabitable research "fields." I'd just want to add that the collapse is a very uneven one, with a lot of room for local variation and negotiation. There are still many places anthropologists can go with impunity. In other places they can do fieldwork, sometimes, with restrictions. In others, it's basically off limits. Since I'm not among those who think postcolonial ethnographers should simply stay home (wherever that is), I'm particularly interested in the situations where an ethnography of initiation is giving way to one of negotiation, where rapport is recast as alliance. Of course, this only makes explicitly political something that was going on already in the social relations of ethnographic "dwelling." (I touched on it in the questions about Malinowski's tent next to the chief's house, the matter of reverse appropriations.) But there is a new context, and the balance of power has shifted, in many places. Today, if ethnographers want to work among Native American communities, or in many regions of Latin America, the question "What's in it for us?" is right up front. The researcher may be required to hire, or train, local students. He or she may have to testify in a land-claims case, or work on a pedagogic grammar of the language, or help with local history projects, or support the repatriation of ancestral objects from metropolitan museums. Not all communities can make this kind of demand, of course. And there's a danger that an anthropology that wants to preserve its political neutrality (also its objectivity and authority) will simply turn away from such places and toward populations where fieldwork is less "compromised," where people can be construed in the old exotic ways.

The issue of reconstituting disciplinary practices around a new "primitive," no longer in the so-called Third World, is very suggestive. You mentioned the transplanted Third World immigrant communities in Philadelphia. I don't think there's any question of going back to, say, the pre-1930 "primitive." But aspects of that figure are being reinvented in new conditions. For example, I said that we need to be very wary of a "postmodern primitivism" which, in an affirmative mode, discovers non-Western travelers ("nomads") with hybrid, syncretic cultures, and in the process projects onto their different histories of culture contact, migration, and inequality a homogeneous (historically "avant-garde") experience.

I do think "postmodernism" can serve as a translation term, to help make visible and valid something strange (as modernism did for the early twentieth-century primitivists discovering African and Oceanian "art");
but I want to insist on the crucial traditio: the lack of an "equals" sign, the reality of what's missed and distorted in the very act of understanding, appreciating, describing. One keeps getting closer and farther away from the truth of different cultural/historical predicaments. This reflects a historical process by which the global is always localized, its range of equivalences cut down to size. It's a process that can be contained—temporarily, violently—but not stopped. New political subjects will, I assume, continue to emerge, demanding that their excluded history be recognized.

How the inescapably political dialectic of understanding and contestation is being played out in the Philadelphia neighborhoods you mentioned, I don't know. You suggested that the new immigrant Third World people there are being objectified. A taste of otherness, without having to travel very far? Anthropology might here be seen as rejoining one of its forgotten roots: the study of "primitive" communities in the urban centers of capitalism. I'm thinking of the nineteenth-century precursors Mayhew, Booth, and company doing research in "dirtiest England." The equivalence of savages "out there" and "in our midst" of travel out to the Empire and travel in to the city, was explicit in their work. You suggest we may be recapturing that equivalence in a new historical moment. I'd want to know exactly how the ethnographers in question are working in the immigrant neighborhoods, how their "fields" are politically negotiated.

Homi Bhabha: I really want you to talk about the place of a lack of movement and fixity in a politics of movement and a theory of travel. Refugees and exiles are of course a part of this economy of displacement and travel, but also, once they are in a particular place, then almost for their survival they need to fix upon certain symbols. The process of hybridization which goes on can often represent itself by a kind of impossibility of movement and by a kind of survival identified in the holding on to something which actually then doesn't allow that circulation and movement to take place. Another site for this, which actually is not dealt with enough, are the proletarians and the lower middle classes in what is called the Third World who are recipients of the Urbana, Illinois, or Harvard T-shirts which you see on the streets of Bombay, or other particular kinds of sunglasses, or particular kinds of television programs, or indeed particular kinds of music. There is another problem of travel and fixity when they then, in something like Fanon's sense, hold on to certain symbols of the elsewhere, of travel, and elaborate around it a text which has to do not with movement and displacement but with a kind of fetishization of other cultures, of the elsewhere, or of the image and figure of travel. And it's just that element of people caught in that margin of nonmovement within an economy of movement that I would like you to address.

Clifford: What you've said is very interesting, and I must confess I haven't got a lot to say about it at this stage. I suppose I've steered away from a focus on "exile" because of the privilege it enjoys in a certain modernist culture: Joyce, Beckett, Pound, Conrad, Auerbach, their special uprootedness, pain, authority. And for me, Conrad is the prime example of the sort of "fixing" you mention: his deliberate limitation of horizons, the labored fiction of his "Englishness," that persona of everyone's favorite old English author he produced in the "author's note" to his books (as Edward Said has shown), the fixation on certain symbols of Englishness because he needed to stay put, there was nowhere else for him. And paradoxically, as you know, Conrad's extraordinary experience of travel, of cosmopolitanism, finds expression only when it is limited, tied down to a language, a place, an audience—however violent and arbitrary the process. But perhaps this is the paradox you're getting at in foregrounding the exile's desire and need for fixity. Because in your question dwelling seems the artificial, achieved, hybrid "figure" against the "ground" of traveling, movement, and circulation. This reverses, it seems to me, the usual relation of stasis to movement, and it presupposes the problematic I was working my way into through a critique of exoticist anthropology and its culture ideas. A focus on comparative travel raises the question of dwelling, seen not as a ground or starting place but as an artificial, constrained practice of fixation. Is that what you're getting at?

In that respect, we could compare, for example, the experience/practice of "exile" with that of "diaspora," and with that of people fixing themselves in Bombay by means of University of Illinois T-shirts. But I'd want to ask: What dialectic or mediation (I don't know how to theorize the relation) of fixation and movement, of dwelling and traveling, of local and global, is articulated on those T-shirts? I recall, more than a decade ago, seeing UCLA T-shirts all over the Pacific. What did they mean? I don't know. Or the New Caledonian Kanak militant in a Tannar T-shirt whom I also saw, or the Lebanese militiaman I recently heard about who were wearing the name "Rambo." Is this a fetishization of other cultures, of the elsewhere, as you suggest, or is it a way of localizing global symbols, for the purposes of action? Again, I don't know. Both processes must somehow be at work. (And of course T-shirts are made in virtually every locale to advertise festivals, local bands, all manner of institutions and productions.) I'm eager for a comparative cultural studies account.
of the T-shirt, that blank sheet, mystical writing pad, so close to the body...

Stuart Hall: One of the things I appreciated in your paper was that you took the travel metaphor as far as it could go, and then showed us where it couldn't go. In that way, you separated yourself from the fashionable postmodernist notion of nomadology—the breakdown of everything into everything. But if you don't want it simply to be "everybody now goes everywhere," then you also have to conceptualize what "dwelling" means. Hence, the T-shirt is not a good example because the T-shirt is something which travels well. The question is: What stays the same even when you travel? And you gave us a wonderful illustration of that in the Hawaiian musicians who were never at home for most of their lives, who traveled round the world. But you said they carried something Hawaiian with them. What?

Clifford: I agree very strongly with what I hear you saying and with what I only half heard in Homi's question. Once traveling is foregrounded as a cultural practice, then dwelling, too, needs to be reconceived—no longer simply the ground from which traveling departs and to which it returns. I've not gone far enough yet in reconceptualizing the varieties, different histories, cultures, constraints, and practices of dwelling in the transnational contexts I've been sketching here. So far, I've been better on traveling-in-dwelling than on dwelling-in-travel. You ask: What stays the same even when you travel? A lot. But its significance may differ with each new conjuncture. How was the Moes' Hawaiinness maintained for fifty-six years on the road? (And how was it reconstructed as "authentic" on their return?) Are we to think of a kind of kernel or core of identity they carried everywhere with them? Or is it a question of something more polythetic: something more like a habitus, a set of practices and dispositions, parts of which could be remembered, articulated in specific contexts? I lean toward the latter view, but I have to say I don't really know enough about the Moes to be at all sure. I've just begun to learn about them.

Obviously the issue is a crucial one in discussing diaspora cultures. What is brought from a prior place? And how is it both maintained and transformed by the new environment? Memory becomes a crucial element in the maintenance of a sense of integrity—memory which is always constructive. But one would not want to go too far along the invention-of-tradition tack, certainly not in all cases. Oral tradition can be very precise, transmitting a relatively continuous, if rearticulated, cultural substance over many generations. This is particularly true when

there is a land base to organize recollection, as with Native American societies, Melanesians, or Aboriginals. But African American, Afro-Caribbean, and other diasporic experiences also show varying degrees of continuity of something like a collective memory (which is not, of course, individual memory writ large). But you, especially, could tell me a lot more about this! I just want to affirm what I take to be the general direction of your question and repeat that, in my terms, cultural dwelling cannot be considered except in specific historical relations with cultural traveling, and vice versa.

Keiya Garguly: I'd like to preface by saying I find your idea of bifocality very interesting. I think it sort of resembles, in some ways, I hope, Stuart Hall's notion of the contrastive double vision of a familiar stranger of sorts. When you extend the metaphor of bifocality to call for a comparative study of, for example, Haitians in Haiti and Haitians in Brooklyn, New York, don't you make the kind of referring move that Appadurai critiques, as the othering of others? By locating them as Haitians in a continuous space between Haiti and New York, Indian in India and Indian in New York, are you reinscribing an ideology of cultural difference? Being a child of Indian immigrants, I find it very difficult to identify myself with that sort of ideology of difference, especially since the identification may occur at another level. For instance, I choose to be identified with Philadelphians rather than with Indians from Bombay.

Clifford: A very far-reaching question. I can say a few things. First, the sort of comparative account I'm proposing would want to be sensitive to the differences between, say, Indians in New York and Haitians in New York, while claiming their comparability. The proximity, patterns of immigration and return, the sheer political-economic weight of the relationship between the two places may make it more useful to talk of a kind of intercultural axis in the Haitian case than in the Indian one. I'm not sure. But I do want to hesitate before generalizing what I first heard Vivek Dharmeshwar call "immigrante." And having said that, I will admit to a specific localization of "Haitian" difference when I speak of Haiti simultaneously in Brooklyn and the Caribbean. I would hope that this does not reinscribe an ideology of absolute cultural difference. I would also want to hold onto the notion that there are different cultures that are some where(s), not all over the map. It's a fine line to walk, as you suggest. Why Haiti/Brooklyn, and not Haiti/Paris, or other places Haitians travel and emigrate? Here I would return to the research of Orlando Patterson. Patterson sees the Caribbean as enmeshed in political-economic relations of "peripheral dualism," destructively tied to a United States "center."
This dualism would account for why the transnational relationship with the North overrides other possible historical connections—with France, for example. And it might justify localizing an intercultural “Haiti” along that axis. I would certainly not want to exotify Haitians in this cultural space by pinning their identity on some sort of essence (vodou, for example, important though it is).

But your question nicely opens up the whole question of identity as a politics rather than an inheritance—the tense interaction between these two sources. When you speak about possibly choosing to be identified with Philadelphians rather than with Bombay Indians, I hear you rejecting all-or-nothing ethnic agendas. And I certainly agree with this questioning of a kind of automatic, cultural or racial inscription as a diasporic ‘Indian.’ (Inscriptions made in hostile as well as friendly ways.) I would only add, as I’m sure you’d agree, that the “choice”—not voluntarist, but historically constrained—is neither a binary one (in assimilationist scenarios, a before/after) nor an open set of alternatives. Rather, cultural/political identity is a processual configuration of historically given elements—including race, culture, class, gender, and sexuality—different combinations of which may be featured in different conjunctures. These elements may, in some conjunctures, cross-cut and bring each other to crisis. What components of identity are “deep” and what “superficial”? What “central” and what “peripheral”? What elements are good for traveling and what for dwelling? What will be articulated within the “community”? What in coalition work? How do these elements interact historically, in tension and dialogue? Questions like these do not lend themselves to systematic or definitive answers; they are what cultural politics is all about.

Bernard Deacon was a brilliant young anthropologist who in 1926, after undergraduate studies at Cambridge, undertook difficult fieldwork on the island of Malekula in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). At the end of fourteen months, on the verge of departing for Australia, he was carried off by black water fever (a form of malignant malaria). Deacon was twenty-four years old when he died. He would certainly have made a mark, probably a profound one, on his discipline. As it stands, he is known for discovering a “six-class” marriage system on nearby Ambrym Island (a system of enduring fame in the arcane world of kinship studies) and for one book, Malekula: A Vanishing People in the New Hebrides (1934), heroically compiled from his fieldnotes by Camilla Wedgwood.

Everyone agreed that Bernard Deacon was special. He dazzled his teachers. But he was more than simply a fine student—winning first-class honors in natural sciences, medieval and modern languages, and anthropology. He possessed uncommon linguistic virtuosity joined to scientific rigor and a philosophical, poetic temperament. Malekula, as its editor well knew, was only a mock-up of the book Deacon might have written. We catch glimpses of that unwritten book in the “memoir” composed by his friend Margaret Gardiner, Footprints on Malekula (1984).

This affecting, small work contains not a word too many or too few. Margaret Gardiner selects passages from the letters Deacon wrote to her from the field. She surrounds them with an understated account of Cam-