

JAMES CLIFFORD ARTICLE  
"TRAVELLING CULTURES"  
FROM:

# Cultural Studies

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## Traveling Cultures

JAMES CLIFFORD

To begin with, a quotation from C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary* (1984): "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. Conrad, (1957) in the first pages of *Victory*: "The age in which we are encamped like bewildered travelers in a garish, unrestful hotel." In *Tristes Tropiques*, Lévi-Strauss (1977a) evokes an out-of-scale concrete cube siting in the midst of the new Brazilian city of Goiania in 1937. It's his symbol of civilization's barbarity, "a place of transit, not of residence." The hotel as station, airport terminal, hospital, and so on: somewhere you pass through, where the encounters are fleeting, arbitrary.

Its most recent avatar: the hotel as chronotope of the modern in the new Los Angeles "downtown," Portman's Bonaventure Hotel evoked by Fredric Jameson (1984) in an influential essay, "Postmodernism: or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." The Bonaventure's glass cliffs refuse to interact, merely reflecting back the surroundings; there's no opening, no apparent main entrance; inside a confusing maze of levels frustrates all continuity—the narrative stroll of any modernist *flâneur*.

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 inescapable privilege and wealth, uncomfortable encounters with people who make the bed and serve food in the hotel . . . reflections on concrete conditions for human connections and alliance cross-cutting class, race, gender, and national locations.

Begin again with a London boarding house. The setting for Naipaul's *Mimic Men* (1976), a different place of inauthenticity, exile, transience, rootlessness.

Or again the Parisian hotels, homes away from home for the Surrealists, launching points for strange and wonderful urban voyages: *Nadia*, *Paysan de Paris*—places of collection, juxtaposition, passionate encounter—"l'Hôtel des Grands Hommes."

Begin with the hotel stationery and restaurant menus lining (along with star charts) Joseph Cornell's magical boxes. Untitled: Hôtel du Midi, Hôtel du Sud, Hôtel de l'Etoile, English Hotel, Grand Hôtel de l'Univers. Enclosed beauty of chance encounters—a feather, some ball bearings, Lauren Bacall. Hotel/*autel*, reminiscent of, but *not the same as*—no equal sign—marvelous-real altars improvised from collected objects in Latin American popular healing cults, or the home "altars" constructed by contemporary Chicano artists. A local global fault line opening in Cornell's Queens basement, filled with souvenirs of Paris, the place he never visited. Paris, the Universe, Queens N.Y., basement of an ordinary house, 3708 Utopia Parkway.

This, as we often say, is "work in progress," work entering a very large domain of comparative cultural studies: the diverse, interconnected histories of travel and displacement in the late twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> This entry is marked, empowered, and constrained, by previous work—my own, among others—which needs to be displaced. And so I'll be working, today, out of my historical research on ethnographic practice in its twentieth-century exoticist, anthropological forms. I find the work I'm going towards does not so much build on my previous work as locate and displace it.

Perhaps I could start with a travel conjuncture that has, to my thinking at least, come to occupy a paradigmatic place. Call it the "Squanto effect." Squanto was, of course, 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, 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* (1988). And it's reminiscent for me of my own historical research into specifically anthropological encounters, 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. Insider-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 soon, they are specific mixtures of the two roles.

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 certain set of somewhat oversimplified practices is not primarily to say that they have been wrong, untruthful, 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 in the first half of my talk today is simply 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.<sup>2</sup>

Let's focus for a moment on two photographs near the beginning of Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), arguably one of a few crucial texts that established the modern disciplinary norm of a certain kind of participant observation. This fieldwork, you'll recall, rejected a certain style of research: living among fellow whites, calling up "informants" to talk culture in an encampment or on a verandah, sallying forth to "do the village." The fieldwork Malinowski dramatized required one to live full time in the

village, learn the language, and be a seriously involved participant observer. The photographs at the beginning of *Argonauts*, Plates I and II, feature "the Ethnographer's tent" among Trobriand dwellings. One shows a small beach settlement, setting for the seafaring Kula activities the book chronicles. The other shows the chief's personal hut in Omarakana village, with the researcher's tent pitched nearby. In the text, Malinowski defends this style of dwelling/research as a (relatively) unobtrusive way of sharing the life of those under study. "In fact, as they knew I would thrust my nose into everything, even where a well-mannered native would not dream of intruding, they finished by regarding me as part and parcel of their life, a necessary evil or nuisance, mitigated by donations of tobacco." He also claimed a kind of panopticism. There was no need to search out the important events in Trobriand life, rituals, rifts, cures, spells, deaths, etc. "They took place under my very eyes, at my own doorstep, so to speak" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 8). (And in this regard, it would be interesting to discuss the image/technology of the research tent: its mobility, thin flaps, providing an "inside" where notebooks, special foods, a typewriter, could be kept, a base of operations minimally separated from "the action.")<sup>3</sup>

Nowadays when we see these pictures of tents in villages we may find ourselves asking different questions: Who, exactly, is being observed? Who is localized when the ethnographer's tent is permitted in the center of a village? Cultural observers, anthropologists, are often themselves in the fishbowl, under surveillance (for example, by the omnipresent kids who won't leave them alone). Who is being observed when that tent is pitched in the middle of the village? What are the political locations involved? It matters that Malinowski's tent is next to a chief's house. Which chief? What are the relations of power? What reverse appropriations may be going on? All of these are "postcolonial" questions that, we may assume, were not evoked by the photo in 1921. Then, the image represented a powerful localizing strategy: centering "the culture" around a particular locus, "the village," and a certain spatial practice of dwelling/research which itself, as I'll argue in a moment, depended on a complementary localization—that of "the field."

"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. You'll remember in the great world's 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.<sup>4</sup>

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, I might add, 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, simple, and so forth. But despite the move out of literal villages, the notion of fieldwork as a special kind of localized *dwelling* remains.

Of course, one can only be a participant-observer some *where*. 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 this specific set of disciplinary practices (spatial and temporal constraints) has tended to become confused with "the culture."

How are complex, interactive, cultural conjunctures temporally and spatially bounded? In Boas's generation, the field was talked about with some seriousness as a "laboratory," a place of controlled observation and experiment. This sounds crudely positivistic now. And contradictory: the field has also—since Boas's 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 *expérience* 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 to 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. Since the 1920s, a certain kind of research experience, participant observation, has been normatively 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, a place of dwelling. This dwelling includes work and growth, the development of both personal and "cultural" competence. Ethnographers, typically, are travelers who like to stay and dig in (for a time), who like to make a second home/workplace. Unlike other travelers who prefer to pass through a series of locations, most anthropologists are homebodies abroad. The field as spatial practice is thus a specific style, quality, and duration of dwelling.<sup>5</sup>

The field is also a set of discursive practices. Dwelling implies a kind of 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: *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, the specific kind 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 Bakhtin for whom a language is a diverging, contesting, dialoguing set of discourses that no "native"—let alone visitor—can ever learn. An ethnographer thus works in or learns some part of "the language." And this does not even broach the question of multilingual/intercultural situations.<sup>6</sup>

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 anthropology'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, etc. 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

too sharply separated from that of travel ("getting there"). 2) The capital city, the national context is erased. This is what Georges Condominas has called the "préterrain," 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 travel is easier to even the most remote sites and now that all sorts of places in the "first world" can be fields (churches, labs, offices, schools, and so forth), the coming and going 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 elided is the wider global world of intercultural import-export in which the ethnographic encounter is always already enmeshed. I've said things are changing. I'll mention some recent ethnographic work in a moment. And in various critiques of anthropology—responding 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." For example, in my own work, among others, there has been an attempt to question the oral-to-literate narrative, hidden in the very word "informant" (Clifford, 1986). The native speaks, the anthropologist writes. "Writing" or "inscribing" functions controlled by indigenous collaborators are elided. My own attempt to multiply the hands and discourses involved in "writing culture" is 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-changed, unequal situations.

If thinking of the so-called informant as writer/inscriber shakes things up a bit, so does thinking of her or him as *traveler*. In several recent articles, Arjun Appadurai (1988) has challenged anthropological strategies for localizing non-Western people as "natives." He writes of their "confinement," even "imprisonment," through a process of representational essentializing, what he calls a "metonymic freezing," 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 unsullied by contact with a larger world have probably never existed" (Appadurai, 1988, p. 39).<sup>7</sup>

In much traditional ethnography, I've been arguing, the ethnographer has localized what is actually a regional/national/global nexus, relegating to the margins a "culture's" external relations and displacements. This is now increasingly questioned. The title of Greg Dening's superb ethnographic history of the Marquesas is indicative: *Islands and Beaches* (1980). Beaches, sites of travel interaction, are half the story. Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People Without History* (1982), 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 notions of 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, p. 387). Or, in another current anthropological vein, consider an opening sentence from James Boon's intricate work of ethnological "crisscrossing," *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" (Boon, 1990,

p. 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, then 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 "native" 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 not recommending that we make the margin a new center (e.g. "we" are all travelers) but rather that specific dynamics of dwelling/traveling be comparatively analyzed.

In tipping the balance toward traveling as I am doing here, the "chronotope" of culture (a setting or scene organizing time and space in representable whole form) comes to resemble as much a site of travel encounters as of residence, less a tent in a village or a controlled laboratory or a site of initiation and inhabitation, and more like a hotel lobby, 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, etc—is questioned. Constructed and disputed *historicities*, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view.<sup>8</sup>

To press the point: why not focus on any culture's farthest range of travel while *also* looking at its centers, its villages, its intensive field sites? How do groups negotiate themselves in external relationship, and how is a culture also a site of travel for others? How are spaces traversed from outside? How is one group's core another's periphery? Looked at this way, there would be no question of relegating to the margins a long list: missionaries, converts, literate or educated informants, mixed bloods, translators, government officers, police, merchants, explorers, prospectors, tourists, travelers, ethnographers, pilgrims, servants, entertainers, migrant laborers, recent immigrants, etc. New representational strategies are needed, and are, under pressure, emerging. I just want to 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 "indigenous" culture-makers is a story I learned about quite recently through Bob Brosman, a musician and non-academic historian of music, who for some years now has been bringing traditional Hawaiian music into the Continental United States. Brosman became very involved with the Moe (pronounced "Moay") family, a veteran performing group, playing Hawaiian guitar, singing, and dancing. Their work represents the most authentic version of early-century Hawaiian slide guitar and singing styles. But to approach "traditional" 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 East and 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 films, 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 Hawaiianness in constant interaction with different cultures, musics, and dance tradi-

tions—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 Moes’ experience is strangely resonant. (By the way, I also learned from Brosman’s research that the National Steel Guitar, an instrument immensely popular across the U.S. in the twenties and thirties, often called the “Hawaiian Guitar,” was actually invented by a Czech immigrant living in California.)

Several more examples, glimpses only, of an emergent culture-as-travel-relations ethnography. *Joe Leahy’s Neighbors*, a recent film by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson is a good example. (You may know its predecessor, *First Contact*, 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 relation with the 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, while on other occasions he distributes gifts, acting as a “big man” within a traditional economy. Joe Leahy seems to move in and out of a recognizably Melanesian culture. This sort of focus simply could not have been entertained by Malinowski. Not only is the “native” here 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, but seldom in ethnographies. And yet, he is not simply an eccentric or acculturated individual. In Connolly and Anderson’s film, it remains uncertain whether Joe Leahy 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.

While I’m still discussing films, I might just mention Jean Rouch as a precursor. I’m sure many of you know his film *Jaguar*, a marvelous (real) travel story set in West Africa of 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, bride-wealth. In a kind of “ethnographic vérité” 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, dialogic 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: Michael Taussig’s (1987) very complex localization in his recent book *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*. His “field” includes: the Purumayo region of Columbia and Amazonia, the contiguous Andean Highlands, migrant Indian shamans, traveling mestizos in search of healing, a meandering anthropologist, the violent inroads 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, curing, commerce, and mutual ideological appropriation. As George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) have stressed, innovative forms of multi-locale ethnography may be necessary to do justice to transnational political, economic, and cultural forces that traverse and constitute local or regional worlds (pp. 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’s multiply centered work of

ethnographic cultural critique, *Debating Muslims* (1990), 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.

Culture *as* travel. Many more examples could be cited, opening up an intricate comparative field. So far, I have been talking about the ways people leave home and return, enacting differently centered worlds, interconnected cosmopolitanisms. I should add: cultures as sites traversed—by tourists, by oil pipelines, by Western commodities, by radio and television signals. I think of Hugh Brody's (1982) ethnography, *Maps and Dreams*, which focuses on conflicting spatial practices—ways of occupying, moving through, using, mapping—by Athapascan hunters and the oil companies driving pipelines across their lands. But here, as I'll develop in a moment, a certain normative concept and history of travel begins to weigh heavily. (Can I, without serious hesitations, assimilate Athapascan hunting to travel? Even to dwelling-in-traveling? With what violence and loss of specificity?)

Christina Turner, who teaches anthropology at UCSD, pressed me on this point recently. Squanto as emerging norm? Ethnographic informants as travelers? But informants are not all travelers, and they're not "natives" either. People may choose to limit their mobility, and people may be 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." It begs too many questions and overly restricts the important issue of how subjects are culturally "located." Stress rather, different modalities of inside-outside connection, that the travel, or displacement, can involve forces that pass powerfully *through*—television, radio, tourists, commodities, armies.<sup>9</sup>

Turner's point leads me to my last ethnographic example, Smadar Lavie's *The Poetics of Military Occupation* (1990). 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) coming in. In Lavie's ethnography you hear the crackle of that radio.

"Shgetef, could you pour some tea?" the Galid 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 Galid 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 *Sina*, for "Chinese" is *Sini*—and we laugh heartily. But Shgetef, perhaps betraying his deep fool's wisdom, stares at us with eyes wide open.

The Galid continues, "The Greeks were here and left behind the Monastery [Santa Katarina], the Turks were here and left behind the Castle [in Nuweb'at Tarabin], 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 Mzeina are nothing but pawns in the hands of them all. We are like pebbles and the droppings 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!" (*Di Illi Tuktubna*—one of my two Mzeini nicknames). (Lavic, 1990, p. 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. I'm sure it will be clear to all of you that the field of "ethnographic" practice is much wider and more diverse. The recent return of anthropology to the metropolises, the increasing practice of what's called in the trade "studying up" (studying elite institutions), these and other developments have forged and re-forged many connections—with sociological ethnography, with socio-cultural history, with communications, and with cultural criticism. Anthropologists are in a much better position, now, to contribute to a genuinely comparative, and non-teleological, 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 neo-colonial situations, on migration, immigration, and diaspora, on different paths through "modernity." 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.<sup>10</sup>

In the time remaining, I'd like to start in again with that odd invocation of hotels. It was written in the course of returning to some work I'd done on Paris and Surrealism during the 1920s and 30s. I'd been struck by how many of the Surrealists lived in hotels, or hotel-like transient digs, and were moving in and out of Paris. And 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 19th 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" (1981), which was reprinted in my book the *Predicament of Culture* (1988), I came, with some embarrassment, on a footnote that ended with a throwaway: "and Alejo Carpentier, who was a collaborator on the *Journal Documents*." The loose thread suddenly seemed crucial. I wanted to 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 travel encounters—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* have been proposed by Edouard Glissant, in *Le Discours Antillais* (1981) and developed productively in a theory of "post-colonial habitus" by Vivek Dhareshwar (1989a, b). 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 American, to name "Lo real maravilloso," Surrealism with a difference. Surrealism traveled, and was changed in travel. Paris included also the detour and return of Leopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Ousmane Socé, 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 traveling,

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 negritude writers.

In my invocation of different hotels the relevant sites of cultural encounter and imagination began to slip away from 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 Goiania's ugly structure, Naimpaul's London boarding house); travel positively conceived as exploration, research, escape, transforming encounter (Breton'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 epitome or place of survey is questionable. The comparative scope I'm struggling toward here 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 Thick Skirt*, or *Victorian Lady Travellers* (Russell, 1986; Middleton, 1982). "Lady" travelers (bourgeois, white) are unusual, marked as special in the dominant discourses and practices. While recent research is showing that there were more of them than formerly recognized, women travelers were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences.<sup>11</sup> 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 *flâneur*. 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 and forthcoming), Caren Kaplan (1986 and forthcoming), and Mary Louise Pratt (forthcoming, esp. chapters 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). While 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—certainly in the West and, in 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 recent sources: *Ulysses' Sail* (1988), by Mary Helms, a broadly comparative study of the cultural uses of geographical distance and the power/knowledge gained in travel (a study focused on male experiences); and *Muslim Travelers* (1990), 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 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, it's tied into a highway network—a relay or node rather than a site of encounter between coherent cultural subjects. Meaghan Morris (1988a) has used the motel chronotope effectively to organize her essay, "At Henry Parkes Motel," recently published in *Cultural Studies*. I can't do justice to its suggestive discussions of nationality, gender, spaces, and possible narratives. I merely cite it as a displacement of the hotel chronotope of travel, for, as Morris says, "Motels, unlike hotels, demolish sense regimes of place, locale, and history. They memorialize only movement, speed, and perpetual circulation" (1988a, p. 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 socio-cultural "location." What about all the travel that largely avoids the hotel, or motel, circuits? The travel encounters of someone moving from rural Guatemala or Mexico across the United States border are of a quite different order. A West African can get to a Paris *banlieu* 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.

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 society 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 non-white 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 picture 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) (Counter, 1988). And this is still to say nothing of the Eskimo travelers who made the trip possible!<sup>12</sup> A host of servants, helpers, companions, guides, bearers, etc. have been discursively 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 individualistic, bourgeois voyager. The independence was, in varying degrees, a myth. As Europeans

moved through unfamiliar places their relative comfort and safety were insured by a well-developed infrastructure of guides, assistants, suppliers, translators, carriers, etc. (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 to do so it would have to thoroughly criticize 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 Rarotongan missionary Ta'unga 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, some of this diverse travel experience may be accessible through letters, diaries, oral history, music and performance traditions. A fine example of reconstructing a working-class traveling culture is provided by Marcus Rediker (1987) 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 now 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.<sup>13</sup>

To call the mobile, maritime workers described by Rediker and Linebaugh "travelers" ascribes to their experience a certain autonomy and cosmopolitanness. 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 non-white, 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 recent 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 neo-colonial 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.

I want to argue, nonetheless, that while there is no ground of equivalence between the two "travelers," there is at least a basis for comparison and (problematic) translation. 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 ethno-centric. For example, a

modern African traveling culture is detailed in Justin-Daniel Gandoulou's *Entre Paris et Bacongo* (1984), a fascinating study of Congolese "Aventuriers," migrant workers in Paris. Their specific culture (focused on the goal of being "well dressed") is compared with the European tradition of the dandy as well as with that of the "Rastas," different 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 different circumstances are crucial determinations of the travel at issue—movements in specific colonial, neo-colonial, 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 trans-Atlantic enslavement, to mention only a particularly violent example, an experience including deportation, uprooting, marronnage, transplantation, 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" (Mercer, 1988). As Stuart Hall has argued in a provocative series of recent articles, diasporic conjunctures invite a reconception—both theoretical and political—of familiar notions of ethnicity and identity (Hall 1987b, 1988a, 1990b). Unresolved historical dialogues between continuity and disruption, essence and positionality, homogeneity and differences (cross-cutting "us" and "them") characterize diasporic articulations. 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 *discrepant cosmopolitanisms*. In this emphasis we avoid, at least, the excessive localism of particularist cultural relativism, as well as the overly global vision of a capitalist 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. The point of my exercise today, I'd like to stress again, is not simply to invert the strategies of cultural localization, the making of "natives" 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 deterritorialized. This is not nomadology. Rather, I'm trying to sketch a comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling and traveling: traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling.

I'll end with a series of exhortations.

We need to think comparatively about the distinct routes/roots of tribes, barrios, favellas, immigrant neighborhoods—embattled histories with crucial community "insides" and regulated traveling "outsides." 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. Jamaica Kincaid's trenchant portrayal of tourism and economic dependency in Antigua, *A Small Place* (1988), criticizes a local neo-colonial history in ways that resonate globally. (An Antiguan critique written from Vermont!) How are national, ethnic, community "insides" and "outsides" maintained, policed, subverted, crossed—by distinct historical subjects, for their own ends, with different degrees of power and freedom? (Riding, at times, on the same planes . . .)

We need to conjure with new localizations like "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: Americo Paredes, Renato Rosaldo, Teresa McKenna, José David Saldívar, Gloria Anzaldúa, Guillermo Gomez-Peña, and the Border Arts Project of San Diego/Tijuana. The border experience is made to produce powerful political visions: the subversion of all binarisms, the projection of a "multicultural public sphere (versus hegemonic pluralism)" (Flores and Yudice, 1990). How translatable is this place-metaphor of crossing? How are historical borderlands (sites of regulated and subversive travel, natural and social landscapes) like and unlike diasporas?

We need to conjure with "cultures," such as Haiti, that can now be ethnographically studied both in the Caribbean and in Brooklyn. The need to think of at least *two* places, when thinking of "Haiti!"<sup>14</sup> Or some of you may know an exuberant short story by Luis Rafael Sánchez (1984), "The Airbus" (beautifully translated by Diana Vélez). Something like Puerto Rican "culture" erupts in a riot of laughter and overflowing conversation during a routine night flight, San Juan—New York. Everyone more or less permanently in transit . . . Not so much "where are you from?" but "where are you between?" (The intercultural identity question.) Puerto Ricans who can't bear to think of staying in New York. Who treasure their return ticket. Puerto Ricans stifled "down there," newly alive "up here." "Puerto Ricans who are permanently installed in the wanderground between here and there and who must therefore informalize 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 p. 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. Aiwa 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 (1991) new 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 Matthaei 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. (It's prominent in the Cambodian, Dominican, and Asian-American studies just cited.) A comprehensive theory of migration and capitalist labor regimes is proposed by Robin Cohen's *The New Helots: Migrants in the International Division of Labor* (1987), a work that leaves room for political/cultural resistance within a strongly deterministic global account.

In a regionally centered analysis, "The Emerging West Atlantic System" (1987), 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 United States military, economic, and political intervention 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 nation 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." (p. 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" (p. 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 Puertorriquenos in New York City (Benmayor, et al., 1987). And, of course, we cannot ignore the full range of expressive culture, particularly music—a rich history of traveling culture-makers and transnational influences (e.g. Gilroy, 1987, and this volume).

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 onto "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 postcolonial/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: traveler/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 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, peasant, mode of production, man, woman, modernity, ethnography—get us some distance *and* fall apart. Traduttore, traduttore. 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.

## NOTES

1. I would like specially to acknowledge the stimulation I have received from the work of four people: Daniel Defert, Mary Louise Pratt, Lee Drummond, and Caren Kaplan. Their form-

ative influence is not adequately reflected in the paper's citations, which record a variety of other specific debts. I'm grateful, also, to participants in the Fall 1990 Luce Faculty Seminar at Yale University where I was able to develop these preliminary ideas in an atmosphere of friendly rigor. I shall always associate that productive atmosphere with my host at the Whitney Humanities Center, Peter Brooks.

2. "Spatial practice" is derived from Michel De Certeau (1984a). My overriding emphasis will, to some degree, obscure the fact that these are always spatio-temporal localizations. In the words of Adrienne Rich (1986), "A Place on the map is also a place in history." The temporal dimensions elided in this paper have been fully explored by Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other* (1983). Also Clifford, (1986).

3. For a glimpse of the tent flap as threshold for certain practices of writing, see Clifford (1990a, p. 67).

4. Of course, the relevant populations did not always come clustered in stable villages. See Clifford (1988, pp 230-33) for Margaret Mead's difficulties "locating" the Mountain Arapesh in highland New Guinea.

5. Of course fieldworkers also pass through. Their departure is a crucial moment, articulating separate "places" of empirical research and theoretical elaboration, fieldnotes and writing up (Clifford, 1990a, pp. 63-66). Ethnographies have classically given some prominence to arrivals, little to departures. But seeing fieldwork as a form of travel, a multi-locale spatial practice, brings the end (and loose ends) of "dwelling" into the picture.

6. In this regard, before moving on, I might just mention Homi Bhabha's recent reminders about the discrepant temporalities and histories that do not add up to a homogeneous language/time/culture, or nation (Bhabha, 1990). We need a critical genealogy of the connection between holistic concepts of culture, language, and nation. See Wolf (1982, p. 387) and Handler (1987) for some strands implicating anthropology.

7. For archaeological evidence in support of this conclusion see Irving Rouse (1986), *Migrations in Prehistory*.

8. In this connection, I cannot resist mentioning what may be a sign of the changing interpretive times. "Ancient Tribes That Didn't Vanish, They Just Moved" proclaims the headline of a recent article (Barringer, 1990). Archaeologists of the U.S. Southwest believe they have solved a long-standing mystery: what happened to the Anasazi? Cliff dwellers, builders of impressive permanent settlements and road networks, the Anasazi simply "vanished" when at certain moments (1150 AD at Chaco Canyon; 1300 AD at Mesa Verde, . . . their sites were abandoned. Given strong evolutionist assumptions about the development of agriculture and cities, the end of these and other developed settlements could only be interpreted as a terminus, a cultural "disappearance" or "death." Thus no continuous connection could be established between the Anasazi (a kind of catch-all name, actually Navajo in origin, for "the old ones") and contemporary cultures with deep historical roots in the region: Hopi, Zuni, Acoma. But in the new interpretive approach, cliff dwellers turn into cliff travelers. "Accumulated evidence" now suggests that the Anasazi moved around in the region, building and leaving settlements of varying complexity right up until European settlers began to invade and contain them in drastic ways. Their recent names are: Hopi, Zuni, Acoma. No mysterious absence or death separates the vanished old ones from the current populations, only a complex history of dwelling and traveling. While I am certainly not an expert, I cannot help wondering whether the new conclusion is adequately accounted for by what authorities call an "accumulation of new evidence." Assumptions about spatial continuity and cultural localization are currently being challenged in a wide variety of fields. The global developments that underlie my remarks today may have something to do with this mood.

9. I am grateful to Christina Turner for her very helpful comment. This is its gist, at least as I understood it.

10. The rather limited role that academic anthropology/ethnography has played, so far, in cultural studies (particularly in Britain) is a subject that deserves a discussion of its own. Specific disciplinary and imperial histories would need to be explored. My impression, for what it's worth, is that current possibilities of interaction are greater in the Americas—although cultural studies is still felt as a threat in many anthropology departments, and an (inexpungable?) taint of colonialism makes anthropology untouchable in some progressive and "third world" milieus.

11. How rare the experience of Alice Fletcher, sent as special government agent in 1889 to survey and allot the lands of the Nez Perce Indians. Fletcher was leader of her expedition, with real power over white men and Indians. Her considerable personal authority was recognized by the nickname, "Queen Victoria." For a generous and lucidly ironic account of women on the frontier doing "men's work" in their own way see the recently published letters by Fletcher's companion E. Jane Gay, *With the Nez Perce* (1981).

12. Lisa Bloom (1990) has written insightfully on Peary, Henson, Eskimos, and the various efforts by *National Geographic* to retell a deeply contested story of discovery.

13. See his contribution to this volume. I am grateful to Paul Gilroy for bringing the work of Rediker and Linebaugh to my attention during several very stimulating conversations on commuter trains.

14. See the recent experiment in feminist ethnographic writing by Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (1991). Also, the bifocal study of Grasmuck and Pessar (1991).

### DISCUSSION: JAMES CLIFFORD

**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 have made it more and more difficult to do fieldwork in the way Malinowski, Mead, and Co. 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 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 anthropologists, certainly by Malinowski's time, came into their "field sites" *after* some version of this violent history. To be sure, a few daring researchers worked in unpacified 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, unpolitical 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" con-

taining 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 pedagogical grammar of the language, or help with local history projects, or support the repatriation of ancestral objects from metropolitan museums, etc. 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 exoticist 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-1950 "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") predicament.

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 *traduttore* in the traduttore, 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 "darkest 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 rearticulating 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 to move 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 proletariat and the lower middle classes in what is called the "third world," who are the recipients of kind of Urbana, Illinois or Harvard T-shirts which you see on the streets of Bombay, or of 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 not to do 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 non-movement 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, etc., 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 notes 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 cosmopolitanness, 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 optique, 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, over 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 Tarzan T-shirt I also saw, or the Lebanese militiamen wearing Rambo I recently heard about? 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, mystic writing pad, so close to the body

*STUART HALL:* One of the things that I appreciated in your paper was that you took the traveling 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' Hawaiianness maintained for fifty-six years on the road? (And how was it reconstituted as "authenticity" 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, Aborigines, etc. But African-American and 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.

*KEYA GANGULY:* I'd like to preface by saying I find your idea of bifocality very interesting and 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, e.g., Haitians in Haiti and Haitians in Brooklyn, New York, don't you make the kind of reifying 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 Dhareshwar call) "immigrITUDE." And having said that, I will admit to a specific localizing 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 exoticize 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 voluntaristic, but historically constrained—is *neither* a binary one (in assimilationist scenarios, a before/after), *nor* is it 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, 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.