

54. Interestingly, top creative talent began migrating to Hollywood during a period of uncertainty surrounding the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule. Yet several years later many of these performers and directors returned to the territory, and even though some of them have maintained connections to Hollywood, Hong Kong once again has become the center of their professional activity. Regarding the migration of talent to Hollywood, see Steve Fore, "Home, Migration, Identity: Hong Kong Film Workers Join the Chinese Diaspora," in Kar Law, ed., *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows*, pp. 126–35.

55. Outside the United States, I focus on Hong Kong as one example that emerged out of a particular cultural milieu and a particular transnational pattern of circulations. Other media capitals will have other histories, often tied during their early phases to the politics, culture, and economy of a nation-state. But places like Cairo, Bombay, and Mexico City merit special attention because they point to the increasingly transnational logic of their media environments.

56. "Television without frontiers" refers to a series of policy initiatives in the European Union aimed at bringing into being a pan-European media market. Similarly, Armand Mattelart has advanced the idea of developing media products based on linguistic and cultural affinities that might tie together Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian media with counterparts in Latin America. See Armand Mattelart, Xavier Delcourt, and Michele Mattelart, *International Image Markets: In Search of an Alternative Perspective* (London: Comedia, 1984).


57. Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (1993): 22–29.

58. Straubhaar, "Distinguishing the Global," p. 291.

59. See Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini, "Chinese Transnationalism as an Alternative Modernity," in Ong and Nonini, eds., *Ungrounded Empires*, p. 9.

DAVID MORLEY

AT HOME WITH TELEVISION

 In recent years much has been made of the idea of postmodernity. Images abound of our deterritorialized culture of "homelessness": images of exile, diaspora, time-space compression, migrancy, and "nomadology." The concept of home often remains the uninterrogated alterego of all this hypermobility. Certainly, traditional ideas of home, homeland, and nation have been destabilized, both by new patterns of physical mobility and by new communication technologies that routinely transgress the symbolic boundaries around both the private household and the nation-state. The electronic landscapes in which we now dwell are haunted by all manner of cultural anxieties that arise from this destabilizing flux.

My argument here draws on insights from contemporary work in the field of cultural geography that insists on the necessity of rethinking our sense of place in the context of the transformations and destabilizations wrought both by the forces of economic globalization and by the global media industries. However, I am also concerned with articulating these issues of "virtual geography" relative to some older debates about the conceptualization of alterity and of the foreign (the unfamiliar, or *Fremde*, which is the negative of *Heimat*) by reference to its significance in the mediated rituals of exclusion by means of which the home and *Heimat* are purified.

In part, the question for me also concerns the need to articulate, more effectively than is often done, different levels of abstraction in these debates. In particular, I want to advocate what could perhaps be described as a grounded theory approach, which places particular emphasis on the integration of micro and macro levels of analysis. I attempt to offer an approach to the analysis of micro structures of the home, the family, and the domestic realm that can be effectively integrated with contemporary macro debates about the nation, community, and cultural identities. The key concepts deployed in this analysis are those of boundary maintenance and boundary transgression. My focus is thus on the mutually dependent processes of exclusion and identity construction at both micro and macro levels of analysis. In my attempt to develop this analysis I draw on work in media studies (including some of my own earlier research) on the role of various communications technologies in the maintenance and disruption of the symbolic boundaries of both home and *Heimat*. My ambition is to broaden the theoretical frame within which they have this far been set. My further aim, at least implicitly, is to advocate what might perhaps be described as a materialist television studies that does not abstract the text from its material conditions of consumption by audiences who live in, or move through, a world whose geography continues to have determining effects on their lives.

AT HOME IN POSTMODERNITY?

The modern home can itself be said to be a phantasmagoric place to the extent that electronic media of various kinds allow the radical intrusion of distant events into the space of domesticity: in Zygmunt Bauman's terms, this represents the deeply problematic "invasion" of the "realm of the far" (that which is strange and potentially troubling) into the "realm of the near" (the traditional arena of ontological security).¹

In the traditional vision of things, cultures were understood as being rooted in time and space, embodying genealogies of "blood, property, and frontiers." However, as Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson observe, the world "can no longer be easily divided up into units, territorial segments . . . each of which shares a distinctive, exclusive culture," so that there are no longer such "traditionally fixed, spatially and temporally bounded cultural worlds" from which to depart and return—precisely because the "migration of information, myths, languages and above all, persons . . . brings even the most isolated areas into a cosmopolitan global framework of interaction."²

In the founding statement of the journal *Public Culture*, Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge declared that their starting point in developing their mode of analysis was the recognition that "the world of the late twentieth century is increasingly a cosmopolitan world. More people are widely travelled, are catholic in their tastes, are more inclusive in the range of cuisines they consume, are attentive to global media-covered events and are influenced by universal trends in fashion."³ In a similar spirit, James Clifford writes of the "cosmopolitical contact zones" in which we live today, commonly being traversed by "new social movements and global corporations, tribal activists and cultural tourists, migrants workers' remittances and email."⁴ Bruce Robbins argues that "we are connected to all sorts of places, causally if not always consciously, including those that we have never travelled to, that we have perhaps only seen on television—including the place where the television itself was manufactured."⁵

This is the world of Ulf Hannerz's "global ecumene," where rather than seeing cultures as a global mosaic of separate entities rooted in space we see a complex system of long-distance cultural flows of images, goods, and people interweaving to form a kaleidoscope of unstable identities and transpositions.⁶ In Jacques Derrida's terminology the effect of the "techno-tele-media apparatus" is to destabilize what he calls the national ontology—that sense of the naturalness and givenness of territorialized "national belonging."⁷ In this context, as Sandra Wallman observes, "even homogenous populations now come up against otherness as soon as they have access to modern media of communication." Thus, she argues, alongside increasing rates of actual physical mobility, there is for many people an increasing awareness of the *possibility* of movement as "mass media images, no doubt reflecting the mixture of people in many cities, sharpen ordinary citizens' awareness of cultural forms which are not primarily theirs."⁸ As Doreen Massey puts it, the consequence is that "few people's . . . daily lives can be described as simply local. Even the most 'local' . . . people . . . have their lives touched by wider events [and] are linked into a broader geographical field. . . . Nobody in the First World these days lives their daily lives completely locally, entirely untouched by events elsewhere."⁹ In today's world the distribution of the familiar and the strange is a complex one, in which, in Clifford's words, "difference is encountered in the adjoining neighbourhood, [and] the familiar turns up at the end of the earth."¹⁰

In this connection Appadurai poses the question of what "locality" can mean, in a world where "spatial localisation, quotidian interaction

and social scale are not always isomorphic.”¹¹ In noting the influence of the electronic media in eroding the relationship between spatial and virtual neighborhoods, which are increasingly in disjuncture from each other, Appadurai argues that we should understand neighborhoods as the “actually existing social forms in which locality . . . is realised,” where this realization may equally well take spatial or virtual form. In the logic of these arguments, a virtual neighborhood can easily extend across transnational space.¹²

For Appadurai cultural spaces of connection such as this, in the form of diasporic public spheres, are increasingly part of many people’s everyday lives. The engines of these diasporic public spheres are both symbolic “mediascapes” and actual patterns, or “ethnoscapes,” of geographical mobility. The combined effect of these factors, he claims, is the incapacity of states to prevent their minority populations from linking themselves to wider constituencies of religious or ethnic affiliations,” with the result that the era is over when “we could assume that . . . public spheres were typically, exclusively or necessarily national.”¹³

If we take mobility to be a defining characteristic of the contemporary world, however, we must simultaneously pose the question of why (and with what degrees of freedom) particular people stay at home, and ask how, in a world of flux, forms of collective dwelling are sustained and reinvented.¹⁴ It would be pointless, as Clifford observes, to simply reverse the traditional anthropological figures of the sedentary native and that of the intercultural traveler, so as to turn the old margin into the conceptual pivot of a generalized nomadology that claims that “we” are all now equally travelers. Rather, he argues, we need to develop a more nuanced analysis of the specific tensions in particular historical situations between dwelling and traveling.¹⁵ What is required then is a “comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics and everyday practices of dwelling and travelling,” and Clifford suggests that “we need to think comparatively about the distinct routes/roots of tribes, barrios, favelas, immigrant neighbourhoods—embattled histories with crucial community ‘insiders’ and regulated travelling ‘outsiders.’ What does it take to define and defend a homeland? What are the political stakes in claiming (or sometimes being relegated to) a ‘home?’”¹⁶

The transformations in communications and transport networks characteristic of our time, involving various forms of mediation, displacement, and deterritorialization, are generally held to have transformed our sense of place, but their theorization often proceeds at a highly abstract level toward a generalized account of nomadology.¹⁷ Re-

cent critiques of the Euro-American-centered nature of most postmodern theory point to the dangers of such inappropriately universalized frameworks of analysis. My aim here is to open up the analysis of the varieties of rootedness, exile, diaspora, displacement, connectedness, and/or mobility experienced by members of different (class, gender, ethnic) groups in a range of socio-geographical positions.

It has been claimed that the paradigmatic modern experience is that of rapid mobility over long distances. However, against this paradigm John Tomlinson argues that the model of contemporary life as characterized centrally by voluntary forms of mobility is, in fact, strictly applicable only to a relatively small number of highly privileged people. Tomlinson rightly argues that it is “important not to exaggerate the way long-distance travel figures either in the lives of the majority of people in the world today or in the overall process of globalisation.” Indeed, as he insists, despite the increasing ubiquity of various forms of travel, “local life . . . is the vast order of human social existence. . . . Local life [still] occupies the majority of time and space,” and mobility “is ultimately subordinate to—indeed derivative of—the order of location in time and space which we grasp as ‘home.’”¹⁸ To this extent, the paradigm of mobile deterritorialization is only applicable to, according to Tomlinson, the “experiences of the affluent . . . information rich sectors of the most economically developed parts of the world” rather than being a truly global experience.¹⁹

Of course, many poor people are also highly mobile, but their enforced migrancy, whether for economic or political reasons, is quite another matter. This same point, concerning what Massey calls the “power geometry” of postmodern spatiality, is also well made both by Hannerz in his insistence on the need to distinguish “voluntary” from “involuntary cosmopolitans” and by Bauman in his distinction between those he calls the “tourists” and the “vagabonds” of the postmodern era.²⁰ The question is one of who has the access to which forms of mobility and “connectivity,” and, crucially, who has the power to choose whether, when, and where to move.

Despite all the talk of global flows, fluidity, hybridity, and mobility it is worth observing that, in the United Kingdom at least, there is evidence that points to continued geographical sedentarism on the part of the majority of the population. Thus Peter Dickens argues that despite widespread assumptions to the contrary, geographical mobility in the United Kingdom actually declined in the 1970s and 1980s as compared with the so-called stable times of the 1950s and 1960s.²¹ Similarly, Diane Warbur-

ton argues that the “mobility of people in the UK has been overplayed,” and she quotes MORI opinion poll research that suggests that “overall, there is a clear focus of attachment on the most local area.” She goes on to argue that notwithstanding considerations of global connexity, “most people have an environmental horizon which is very local—the end of the street or the top of the next hill.”²² While these gross statistics evidently conceal important variations (not least by class, ethnicity, and gender) the evidence indicates that sedentarism is far from finished. Thus, while one recent report noted that people in the United Kingdom now often live farther away from their relatives than they did in the past, it seems that the majority still live within one hour’s journey time of relatives, and that 72 percent of grandparents still see their grandchildren at least once a week, which indicates a fairly low radius of intergenerational mobility. At its simplest, as John Gray has noted, “over half of British adults live within five miles of where they were born.”²³ It would seem that for the majority of the U.K. population, at least, David Sibley is still right when he observes baldly that, globalization notwithstanding, “many people live in one place for a long time.”²⁴ As Ken Worpole put it in a study of urban life in the United Kingdom: “Still, for a significant proportion of any population, the town or city they are born in is the one that will shape their lives and become the stage-set of their hopes and aspirations.”²⁵

While many people remain local, however, and while many are kept in place by structures of oppression of various forms, the experience that is most truly global is perhaps that of locality being undercut by the penetration of global forces and networks. To this extent, almost everywhere in the world experience is increasingly disembedded from locality, and the ties of culture to place are progressively weakened by new patterns of connexity. It is, as Tomlinson argues, in the transformation of localities rather than in the increase of physical mobility (significant though that may be for some groups) that the process of globalization perhaps has its most important expression.²⁶ This is to suggest that although increased physical mobility is an important aspect of globalization for some categories of people, “for most people, most of the time the impact of globalisation is felt not in travel but in staying at home.” However, their experience of locality is transformed by the now banal and routinized process of “consumption of images of distant places,” which paradoxically become familiar in their generic forms (the streets of New York, the American West, etc.) even to those who have never visited them, as they are normalized in the mediated life world of the television viewer. This is to argue that, as Tomlinson further states, the “paradigmatic experience of global modernity for most people . . . is that of staying in one

place but experiencing the ‘dis-placement’ that global modernity brings to them.”²⁷

HOME, COMMUNITY, AND NATION

One key question in understanding the process of displacement is how the various media transgress the boundaries of the “sacred space” of both the home and the *Heimat*, and how that transgression is regulated by various “rituals of purification.” A further question concerns the way in which conflict is generated in the process of identity formation, by the attempt to expel alterity beyond the boundaries of the ethnically, culturally, or civilizationaly “purified” homogenous enclave—at whatever level of social or geographical scale. In these processes the crucial issue in defining who or what “belongs” is, of course, also that of defining who (or what) is to be excluded as “matter out of place,” and whether that “matter” is represented by “impure” or “foreign” material objects, persons, or cultural products. My own principal interest here lies in making links between patterns of residence or mobility and patterns of cultural consumption, as factors in the construction of identities. This is to argue, following Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman, for a perspective that can deal with two simultaneous modes of circulation: first the “one in which goods, such as TV broadcastings, records, videos, [and] magazines circulate among the audiences,” and second, “that of the built environment, in which the population circulates among the symbolic goods.”²⁸

In some cases, global media flows are consumed by audiences who are themselves highly mobile. Thus, developing his earlier argument, Appadurai writes of the need to pay attention to what he calls the mutual contextualizing of electronic mediation and mass migration in situations where moving images meet deterritorialized viewers. As he puts it, when “Turkish guest workers in Germany watch Turkish films in their German flats . . . and Pakistani cabdrivers in Chicago listen to cassettes of sermons recorded in the mosques of Iran,” this gives rise to “a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities” precisely because both messages and audiences are in simultaneous circulation.²⁹

This is, however, only one side of the story. If hypermobility is one of the tropes of postmodernity, then another of its key emblems is perhaps the gated community. We see a rather different picture if we consider Sibley’s work on the growing tendencies toward residential segregation throughout the affluent societies of the West, alongside Roger Silverstone’s comments on television itself as a suburbanizing medium (which through its repetitive patterns serves to consolidate the ontological se-

curity of those who choose to live behind the walls of these gated communities).³⁰ Here the “rituals of purification” and “geographies of exclusion” of which Sibley writes generate not new forms of instability or hybridity but rather new forms of consolidation of established patterns of social and cultural segregation.

Given my earlier involvement in studies of domestic media consumption, my interest here is in articulating the micro and macro dimensions of these questions. In the work I did with Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsch on the household uses of information and communication technology, part of our focus was on the symbolic meanings that household technologies had for their users, especially the symbolic meaning of the television as a material object, as well as a relay of messages.³¹

By the same token, as broadcasting connects the private home to the public world it also simultaneously transgresses the boundaries of the household and is thus often felt to stand in need of some form of regulation. All households regulate these matters in some way or another: in my earlier project with Silverstone and Hirsch our interest was in the variety of ways in which households of different types enacted their regulatory strategies. To give one small example of where these concerns led us, we were initially puzzled, in one household, by the particularly systematic way in which not only the television set but all the communications technologies and their wiring were carefully hidden away inside decorative cabinets and panels so as to be quite invisible. As we came later to understand, this was not simply an aesthetic choice: the husband in this family worked a complex shift system as a policeman and was often called out from home to work. These interruptions made it very difficult for the husband and wife to sustain what they felt was a satisfactory sense of family time with their children, and in this context it seemed that the very presence of communications technologies, which symbolized the further possible interruption of their domestic life, had to be hidden away.³²

If we shift from the micro to the macro, however, and from the home to the *Heimat*, we see that if the television set is often both physically and symbolically central to the domestic home, then it (or its predecessor, the radio) has often been equally central to the construction of the imagined community of the nation as a symbolic home for its citizens. In Britain Paddy Scannell, and in Sweden Orvar Löfgren, have both analyzed broadcasting’s ritual role in bringing together the dispersed households of the nation into symbolic union as a “national family.”³³

Löfgren’s central concern is with the question of how people have come to feel at home in the nation and with the educative role of broadcast media in the everyday process of what he calls the “cultural thicken-

ing” of the nation-state. Löfgren calls this the “micro-physics of learning to belong” to “the nation-as-home, through which the nation-state makes itself visible and tangible . . . in the lives of its citizens.” In this analysis these media are seen to supply “the fragments of cultural memory” that compose “the invisible information structure” which constitutes a person’s sense of their homeland as a virtual community.³⁴ Löfgren observes that in Sweden by the 1930s national radio had constructed a new *Gemeinschaft* of listeners tied together by the contents and myths of national radio broadcasting. This synchronized experience of radio came to provide a stable national frame of understanding for local events and topics in an educative process that turned the nation into something resembling a vast schoolroom. This broadcast national rhetoric took many forms—not in the least ritual ones, such as familiarizing people with the national anthem and inscribing it at key moments in their own domestic practices. Even the weather was nationalized, and its national limits were clearly demarcated so that “in the daily shipping forecast, the names of the coastal observation posts of Sweden were read like a magic chant, as outposts encircling the nation.”³⁵

In a similar vein, in his introduction to the catalog of Mark Power’s photographic project on the shipping forecast in the United Kingdom David Chandler notes that while the information on weather conditions at sea around the nation is plainly of practical use only to seafarers, the size of the listenership of the BBC radio’s shipping forecast (broadcast four times a day since 1926) and the affection in which the broadcast is held by many who never go to sea, indicates that “its mesmeric voice and timeless rhythms are buried deep in the public consciousness. . . . For those of us safely ashore, its messages from ‘out there’ [and] its warnings from a dangerous peripheral world of extremes and uncertainty are reassuring.”³⁶

Nikos Papastergiadis has argued that “the symbols and narratives of the nation can only resonate if they are admitted to the chamber of the home.”³⁷ Radio often achieves, as Chandler notes, exactly this kind of intimacy. His argument is that if the shipping forecast enhances our sense of comfort in being safe at home, this sense is also a matter of national belonging in the profoundest sense: “The shipping forecast is both national narrative and symbol; for seventy years it has given reports on an unstable, volatile ‘exterior’ against which the ideas of ‘home’ and ‘nation’ as places of safety, order and even divine protection are reinforced. In those brief moments, when its alien language of the sea interrupts the day, the forecast offers to complete the enveloping circle and rekindle a picture of Britain glowing with a sense of wholeness and unity.”³⁸

National broadcasting can thus create a sense of unity and of corre-

sponding boundaries around the nation. It can link the peripheral to the center; turn previously exclusive social events into mass experiences; and, above all, penetrate the domestic sphere by linking the national public into the private lives of its citizens through the creation of both sacred and quotidian moments of national communion. Not that this process is always smooth and without tension or resistance, however. Löfgren notes that, historically, what was at stake was both the nationalization of the domestic and the domestication of the national, so that “the radio turned the sitting room into a public room, the voices from the ether spoke from the capital and united us with our rulers, but also with all other radio listeners around the country.” Nonetheless, this socialization of the private sphere, in the service of the “civilisation of the peripheries” of the nation, could also give rise to resentment. Löfgren notes that one Swedish listener recalls, “When the radio was on, the room wasn’t really ours, the sonorous voices with their Stockholm (accents) . . . pushed our own thick (regional) voices into a corner where we commented in whispers on the cocksure statements from the radio.”³⁹ Similarly, in the United Kingdom only some categories of listeners feel that the shipping forecast symbolizes the boundaries of a nation with which they identify very much, not least because the radio station on which it is broadcast itself fails to achieve a popular appeal beyond the realms of the older, more middle-class sections of the British radio audience. If national broadcasting systems play a central role in the construction of the “national symbolic,”⁴⁰ the public spheres that they construct do not feel equally *Heimlich* (home-like) to all of the nation’s citizens.⁴¹ Historically, in the United Kingdom if the public sphere has felt like a *Heimlich* place for metropolitan middle-class white men, it has not seemed so to people who are outside those categories, whether by virtue of class, gender, race, or ethnicity.⁴²

Let me now return to the micro level and take another example from the Brunel research project of how households deal with the media’s capacities to transgress their boundaries. In another of the households we studied, the parents were particularly concerned by the prospect of deregulated television broadcasting bringing pornographic or violent programming within their children’s grasp (much as many parents are today concerned about what their children may find on the Internet). The father expressed his anxiety about their children’s viewing habits thus: “[They] have sets in their rooms and [we] can’t know what they are watching all the time”; his particular concern was that they might watch “foreign” programs of a sexual nature.⁴³

For this family, the fear was that the household’s microboundaries would be transgressed directly by unwanted “foreign” elements and by bringing “matter out of place” into the home, particularly into the private space of the children’s bedrooms. However, this concern can readily be seen to have parallels at other geographical scales. Thus in recent years many national governments have attempted to control the consumption of “foreign” media on their national territories by outlawing satellite dishes. Not long ago, in an uncannily exact mirror-image of the other’s policies, while the Iranian government was attempting to ban satellite dishes on the grounds that foreign programs were part of a Western cultural offensive against Islam, the mayor of Courcouronnes (a poor, mainly North African immigrant area south of Paris) also banned the dishes from the high-rise blocks in which many of his constituents live, at the instigation of the French National Front, in whose eyes the dishes represented the threat of a population that resides physically in France but inhabits (via satellite) a world of virtual Islam.

If in the United Kingdom the appearance of a satellite dish on the walls of a house was often taken to signify its inhabitants’ abandonment of the space of national public broadcasting and citizenship in favor of the pleasures of international consumerism, in France, as we have seen, these dishes have “become the symbol of . . . immigrants as an alien cultural presence, threatening the integrity of French national identity.”⁴⁴ In a pun on the term for a satellite dish, *antenne parabolique*, these dishes are now often referred to as *antenne paradiabolique*—signifiers of trouble, if not evil. In the words of a French Ministry of Social Affairs report: “There are risks of the people concerned [i.e., those with satellite receivers] being manipulated by foreign powers, all the more so in that the number of DBS dishes is constantly growing, particularly in the *banlieues*. . . . In addition, the various channels are broadcast in Arabic, which could undermine years of literacy classes and other efforts at Gallicising these people. Moreover, the religious content of certain programmes will probably increase the Islamisation of the *banlieues*.”⁴⁵ Increasingly it seems that the people of the *banlieues* are considered by mainstream French society as a threat, insofar as they are seen as living in “their own Muslim world . . . courtesy of local mosques and satellite television beamed in from North Africa and Saudi Arabia.”⁴⁶ These migrants’ inhabitation of a transnational or diasporic public sphere of the type that Appadurai describes is thus presented as in effect a form of cultural treason.⁴⁷

Just as in France, in Germany there has also been considerable anxiety in recent years about the perceived cultural withdrawal of immigrant

populations into satellite television, in this case into the separate audiovisual space offered by Turkish-language satellite television stations. This withdrawal has, in some cases, been taken to constitute an index of the essential foreignness of these immigrants and to constitute evidence of a culpable lack of willingness on their part to integrate into German culture and society. However, Kevin Robins, based on his research on the media and cultural practices of the Turkish diaspora population in Europe, argues that the question is not an either/or of whether immigrants have withdrawn into their own cultural space or are assimilated into the host culture. Rather, he claims, the question is one of how these migrants are not so much caught between two worlds as engaged in constructing various forms of hybrid identities that enable them to participate simultaneously in both.⁴⁸ From this perspective the question is how, for different members of different parts of these migrant communities, it is possible for them to engage in a new kind of “commuting migration” (between German and Turkish virtual and geographical spaces) that allows them to be both assimilated *and* withdrawn at different times in relation to different topics and issues.

Long ago, Raymond Williams spoke of the media as enabling forms of “mobile privatization” that supply an experience of “simultaneously staying at home and imaginatively . . . going places.”⁴⁹ However, Shaun Moores in his study of satellite broadcasting notes that “if broadcasting is able to ‘transport’ viewers and listeners to previously distant or unknown sites . . . then we need to specify the kind of ‘journeys’ that are made. Who chooses to go where, with whom, and why? . . . Who stays ‘at home’? . . . Who feels the need to escape its confines?”⁵⁰ Moores’s main concern is with why, particularly among working-class and ethnic minority communities in the United Kingdom, satellite television has come to symbolize a desirable form of freedom of viewing in contrast to staid, old broadcasting institutions such as the BBC.⁵¹ The issue is why, for some citizens of the nation, forms of broadcasting that transcend the boundaries of narrow British culture are felt to be both more desirable and more *Heimlich*. The question of what is foreign to whom is perhaps best posed empirically. Foreignness can sometimes be a matter of nationality but in other cases also a matter of class, of gender, of race, or of ethnicity.⁵² Certainly Marie Gillespie found that in Britain the migrant Asian community she studied had a particular interest in video, cable, and satellite media precisely to the extent that they felt ill served by the existing British national broadcasting media.⁵³ For exactly these reasons, rates of subscription to satellite and cable services in both the United Kingdom and in France are now at their highest among ethnic minority groups.⁵⁴

MATERIAL AND VIRTUAL GEOGRAPHIES

A whole series of critics have supplied us with images of our (supposedly) new disembodied status within the virtual geography of postmodernity. Mackenzie Wark (following Joshua Meyrowitz)⁵⁵ has alerted us to the transformations of time and space brought about by electronic technologies. In his version of this argument, Wark announces that nowadays in the emerging “virtual communities” unanchored in locality, which are made possible by the “ever more flexible matrix of media vectors crossing the globe, we no longer have roots, we have aeriels,” and “we no longer have origins, we have terminals” insofar as we live in a new virtual geography—the terrain of telesthesia (or perception at a distance) “created by the tv, the telephone, and the telecommunications networks crisscrossing the globe.”⁵⁶ However, while it must be acknowledged that satellite media technologies are producing new definitions of time, space, and community, it is not a question of physical geography somehow ceasing to matter but rather a question of how physical and symbolic networks become entwined and come to exercise mutual determinations on each other.

In his analysis of the dynamics of the “purification of space” Sibley is centrally concerned with what he calls the geography of exclusion as enacted through the policing of boundaries of various sorts.⁵⁷ This applies at both micro and macro levels: just as the home may be seen as profaned by the presence of matter out of place, the neighborhood may be seen as profaned by the presence of “strangers,” or the national culture seen as profaned by the presence of foreign cultural products. Sibley observes that if the home, the neighborhood, and the nation are all potential spaces of belonging, this is no simple matter of disconnected, parallel processes. His interest is in demonstrating how each of these spaces conditions the others—“how the locality and the nation invade the home . . . providing cues for behaviour in families, as they relate to their domestic environment.” As he puts it, “spaces are simultaneously tied together by media messages, by things like the local rules about the appropriate uses of suburban gardens, and by macro factors such as the immigration policies of the state.”⁵⁸

Thus, as in George Revill’s commentary on Carol Lake’s fictionalized portrait of her district of a British city in the mid-1980s, while media of various sorts transverse the urban community of which Lake writes, it is still a world of “backdoor gossip, chance encounters and casual meetings” where “national and international events are always articulated through local channels of communication, events half-heard on the radio or tele-

vision." In this world, events such as the nuclear fallout at Chernobyl or riots in another British city "become local as they are mixed into conversations bound into the day-to-day problems of the community."⁵⁹ To understand these processes we need to interconnect these different cultural events, occurring simultaneously at different geographical scales.

In this connection Sibley observes that "residential space in the modern city can be seen as one area where purification rituals are enacted and where group antagonisms are manifested in the erection of territorial boundaries which accentuate difference or Otherness."⁶⁰ This argument provides a close parallel to Mike Davis's analysis of the processes of social segregation involved in the retreat of the affluent into gated communities in parts of the United States and, increasingly, elsewhere, whereby those who can afford it retreat from what they perceive as the threat of alterity in the world of public space.⁶¹

Threatening encounters with those defined as alien—those responsible for "cultural miscegenation"—can, of course, take place not only in physical but also in virtual or symbolic space. Here we return to the role of the media. Insofar as the television set is usually placed totemically within the symbolic center of the (family) home, it can serve either to enhance or disturb viewers' symbolic sense of community. In some cases, television can serve to bring unwanted strangers into the home. Thus, in her analysis of viewers' letters written to the producers of the black sitcom *Julia*, produced in the 1970s by NBC in the United States, Aniko Bodroghkozy discovers a letter from a white viewer pleased with his continuing success in keeping black people out of the physical neighborhoods in which he lives, who is outraged at their symbolic invasion of his living room via their representation on television.⁶² In a parallel fashion, although the power relations in the two cases are different in crucial ways, Phillip Batty quotes from a member of the Ernabella aboriginal community in Australia who complained that the arrival of "unimpeded satellite television transmission in our communities will be like having hundreds of whitefellas visit, without permits, every day."⁶³

In a world where many people live in multiethnic cities, for some viewers unhappy with this hybridity, and with what Kobena Mercer has called the sheer difficulty of living with difference,⁶⁴ the television set can also sometimes offer majority viewers the solace of symbolic immersion in a lost world of settled homogeneity. Thus Bruce Gyngell, former head of TV-AM in Britain and now returned to work in television in his native Australia, has claimed that Australian soap operas such as *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*, which receive far higher ratings in Britain than in Australia, appeal to many within the British audience precisely because they

are, in effect, "racial programmes" depicting an all-white society for which some Britons still pine. Gyngell trenchantly claims that "*Neighbours* and *Home and Away* represent a society which existed in Britain . . . before people began arriving from the Caribbean and Africa. The Poms delve into it to get their quiet little racism fix."⁶⁵ The exclusion of ethnic minorities from these programs is a matter of resentment among black and Asian viewers. As one such viewer notes, "things like *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* . . . show absolutely no ethnic minorities in the cast at all."⁶⁶ Conversely, it has also been argued that the particular popularity of the British soap opera *Coronation Street* among British expatriates in Australasia and elsewhere is evidence of their nostalgia for a lost white past. Indeed, although other British soap operas such as the BBC's *Eastenders* have at times featured Asian and Afro-Caribbean characters, it was only in 1998, thirty-eight years into its run, that *Coronation Street* got its first Asian family when the "Desais" took over the street's corner shop. Even now on the whole, as Sallie Westwood and John Williams argue, the United Kingdom's television soap operas "are suffused with notions of Englishness and belonging which exclude . . . the Other British—the myriad and diverse peoples who are part of the nation."⁶⁷

The destabilizations of the postmodern period have certainly given rise to a variety of defensive and reactionary responses—witness the rise of various forms of born-again nationalism accompanied both by sentimentalized reconstructions of a variety of "authentic" localized "heritages" and by xenophobia directed at newcomers, foreigners, or outsiders. Certainly, in the face of these developments, it has come to seem to many critics that any search for a sense of place must of necessity be reactionary. However, Massey rejects the notion that a sense of place must necessarily be constructed out of "an introverted, inward-looking history, based on delving into the past for internalised origins." That way of thinking about space and identity is premised on the association of spatial penetration with impurity; against any such inward-looking definition of place and identity Massey argues for "a sense of place which is extroverted," where what gives a place its identity is not its separate or "pure" internalized history, constructed in antagonism to all that is outside (the threatening otherness of externality), but "an understanding of its 'character'" where it is the "particularity of its linkage to the 'outside' which is . . . part of what constitutes the place."⁶⁸

Today, the equation of the desire for "roots" or "belonging" with a politically regressive form of reactionary nostalgia is widespread. Against this, Wendy Wheeler argues that it is in fact politically crucial for us to come to terms with this desire, rather than simply to dismiss it. Thus, she

argues that we badly need to develop a better political response to the nostalgic desire for community by “articulating a politics capable of constituting a ‘we’ which is not essentialist, fixed, separatist, defensive or exclusive.”⁶⁹ This would be, in Massey’s terms, an “extroverted” politics of place.⁷⁰

In conclusion it is perhaps worth noting the findings of Nora Rathzel’s empirical study of attitudes to *Heimat* and *Ausländer* (foreigner) in Germany. Rathzel investigated the relationship between these two terms with reference to the question of whether people holding particular concepts of homeland were more inclined to perceive outsiders as threatening. Her empirical material, while based on a small sample, goes some way in demonstrating that people who hold a reified, harmonious image of *Heimat* as something necessarily stable and unchanging are, of course, particularly likely to be hostile to newcomers, who are then held to be the cause of all manner of disorienting forms of change. For these people, what makes these images of *Ausländer* threatening is precisely that they “make ‘our’ taken-for-granted identities visible and deprive them of their assumed naturalness,” so that “once ‘we’ start becoming aware of ‘them,’ ‘we’ cannot feel ‘at home’ any more.”⁷¹ It may be that, as Phil Cohen argues, “if immigrants put down roots, if ethnic minorities make a home from home, then they are perceived to threaten the privileged link between habit and habitat upon which the myth of indigenous origins rests.”⁷²

In this spirit Azouz Begag argues that an immigrant “is a person designated as such by someone living in a particular place who sees the presence of the other as a threat to his own sense of being within that territory.”⁷³ Thus, Marc Augé notes that “perhaps the reason why immigrants worry settled people so much is that they expose the relative nature of certainties inscribed in the soil.”⁷⁴ Elsewhere Augé remarks that now that the other “of postcards and tourist trips” is on the move and can no longer “be assigned to a specific place,” it seems that “in the eyes of those who cling to the ideal of having ‘their’ land and ‘their’ village” the example of successful immigration is perhaps more terrifying than that of illegal immigration, insofar as “what’s frightening in the immigrant is the fact that he is also an emigrant.”⁷⁵ In a similar vein, Iain Chambers, drawing on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, writes of the difficulty created by the question of the Other, the outsider who “comes from elsewhere and . . . inevitably bears the message of a movement that threatens to disrupt the stability of the domestic scene.”⁷⁶ In Levinas’s terms, this threat is represented by “the stranger who disturbs the [sense of] being at home with oneself.”⁷⁷

More recently, with the development of computing technologies and the Internet, debates that previously were conducted with reference to traditional broadcasting media have been transposed into cyberspace, even if much of this debate has displayed what Kevin Robins has characterized as a naive “politics of optimism.”⁷⁸ Against tendencies to take a utopian view of the possibilities of transcending social division in cyberspace, the Net can still reasonably be described as overwhelmingly, if with important exceptions, a “Whitezone,” a “Boyzone,” and a “YanquiNet.” There are some categories of people that are completely missing from cyberspace, and as such it displays little diversity: its citizens include few old people, few poor people, and few from poor countries (except a small minority of Third World elites). In this connection, what is true of geographical mobility in physical space is also true of the structure of access to cyberspace. We are not all nomadic fragmented subjectivities living in the same postmodern universe. For some categories of people (differentiated by gender, race, and ethnicity as much as by class), the new technologies of symbolic and physical communications (from airplanes to faxes) offer significant opportunities for interconnectedness. For these people there may well be a new sense of postmodern opportunities. At the same time, however, for other categories of people without access to such forms of communication and transport, horizons may simultaneously be narrowing. And for yet others, their journeys (and encounters with alterity) are not chosen but imposed on them by economic or political necessity.

It does seem that there can be, for us, “no place like *Heimat*.” Or at least that the traditional backward-looking concept of *Heimat* as a sacred and secure place (from which all threatening forms of Otherness have been excluded) can only be a recipe for disaster. The virtual geography in which we live is, of course, in many ways quite new: communications technologies have had a profound transformative effect in disarticulating communities from any necessary foundation in physical contiguity. However, as we travel the new electronic highways of cyberspace, we should beware the reduplication, if in new forms, of some of the very oldest and most regressive structures of purification and exclusion.

NOTES

Some sections of this essay previously appeared in my “Bounded Realms: Household, Family, Community, and Nation,” in *Home, Homeland, Exile*, ed. Hamid Naficy (London: Routledge, 1999); other sections appear in my *Home Territories: Media, Mobility, and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000).

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