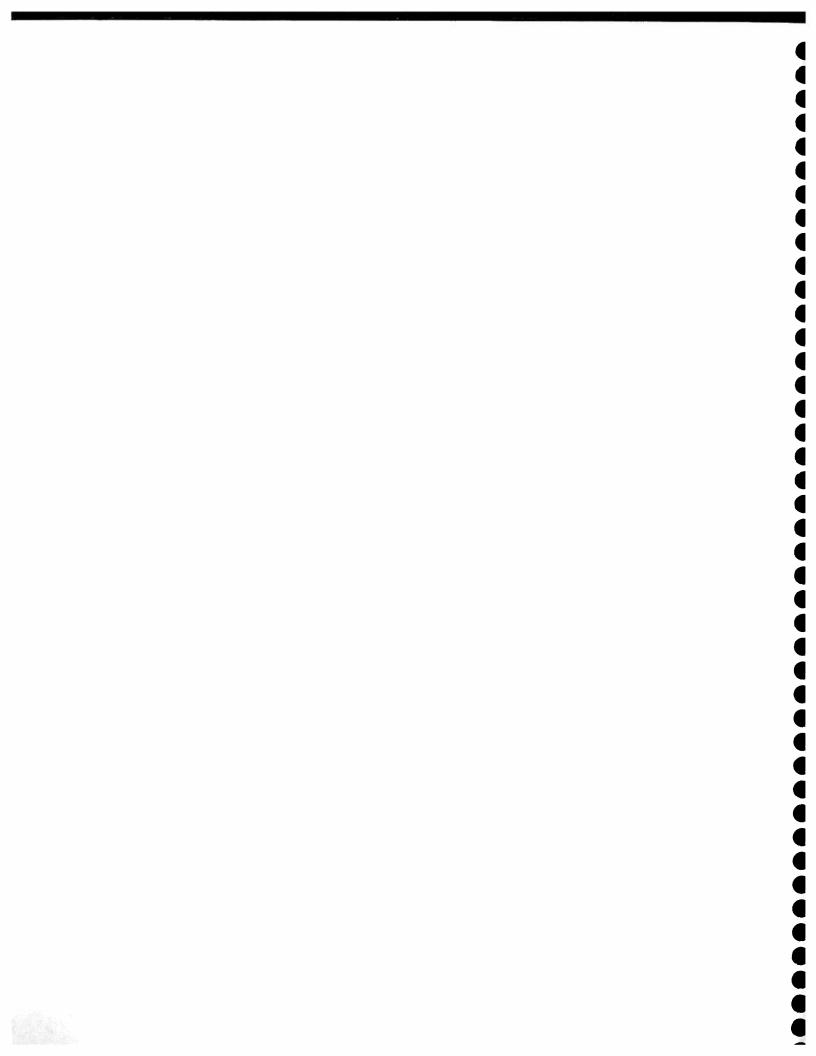
# **A Prescription For Travel**

by

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A thesis presented for the B.A. degree with Honors in The Department of English University of Michigan Spring 2003



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A Prescription for Tavel Caleb Zigas March 2003



## A Dedication:

To all of the people and places that have let me into their lives. Thank you. To the people and places who have pushed me to newness. Thank you. And to the people and places I have yet to meet Thank you.

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### **Abstract**

Travel writing combines elements of ethnography and literature which bring a writer's particular global view to a mass audience. In writing travel authors excercise a considerable amount of privilege that allows them both to travel in the first place and moreover to travel for pleasure. This paper looks at the ways three particular postcolonial authors, V.S. Naipaul, Paul Theroux and Pico Iyer write travel and in the process the ways in which these three authors rationalize their respective privilege. Furthermore, this paper attempts to analyze these rationalizations with the expected goal of crafting a manner in which future writers might find new ways to consider writing travel in respect to current trends of globalization and with a crisis of inequality looking over their shoulders. The paper will begin with an introduction of the key concepts here: travel writing as genre, globalization as process, and authors as bearers of privilege as well as mediators between various localities. The second large part of the paper focuses on three authors individually, specifically one book for each author, and the way in which these writings reflect a general trend in travel writing that barely acknowledges privilege, particularly on the part of the author, in order to avoid the complicated nature of global inequality. Finally, the paper attempts to provide a frame with which to view an alternative travel narrative, one that combines a concern with postcolonial relationships and an attention to the details and affects of globalization. Despite the offered prescription of the title, there can be no one way to write a travel narrative, but instead an offering of a conceptual outline that suggests a revised model for the writing and presentation of travel.



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#### An Introduction

Every native of every place is a potential tourist, and every tourist is a native of somewhere. Every native everywhere lives a life of overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom and desperation and depression, and every deed, good and bad, is an attempt to forget this. Every native would like to find a way out, every native would like a rest, every native would like a tour. But some natives -- most natives in the world -- cannot go anywhere. They are too poor. They are too poor to go anywhere. They are too poor to escape the reality of their lives; and they are too poor to live properly in the place where they live, which is the very place you, the tourist, want to go -- so when the natives see you, the tourist, they envy you, they envy your ability to leave your own banality and boredom, they envy your ability to turn their own banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself.

-- Jamaica Kincaid's "A Small Place"

Sit down. Take a break, relax, leave, get away from it all. You deserve it, don't you? See the world. Travel while you still can. And we leave. No, not all of us, we should not be (is not) universal, it is discriminating. It will be self-selective, you, and only you will know if you are a part of this we. I am. I am a part of the we that travels because we can, because we desire, because we want. We, this group, travel and for years we have done so for pleasure. To learn about the world, ourselves, to see the world, ourselves. And to tell others. As much as we like to travel we like to show and to tell others what we have seen. The writing of travel, the trip, the reading of travel the journey, we arrive and depart, we come and go, learn and return, all seated. Sit down.

In the year 2000 alone, citizens of the United States spent over 64 billion dollars on international tourism (WTO 2002). Slightly over 60 million Americans spent their money overseas, the majority of them tourists (US Department of Commerce 2002). Travel, movement, calls to something intrinsic in the human condition—like our need to know, to learn, travel provides a geographic plane that we can theoretically conquer in a

quest for knowledge and newness. We travel because we can, but also because we want to, because we desire it.

Travel is not new. Our very location, spread, as we are, around the world derives from a history of motion and relocation. But the nature of travel remains forever changing; Odysseus travels in order to return home after war, Marco Polo to map the kingdom, Captain Cook to circumnavigate the globe, or Ta'Unga to spread the word of God. Contemporary<sup>i</sup> society again reinvents the world as it sits amidst a new concept of travel. In today's post-"Grand Tour" as high school kids 'do Europe' before college, and new frontiers beckon where money might buy a trip to the moon. This world allows for airplanes and airports to now stand as central metaphors for the human condition in the writing of novelists and theorists alike. A world where frequent flier miles, and frequent flier mile credit cards, bring people across oceans in hours and people, many of us<sup>ii</sup> at least, take this for granted.

Travel occurs for a variety of reasons; be it migration, business, or permanent relocation, but tourism remains, amidst all of this traveling, a privilege. Whereas migration, more than rarely, signals a move out of necessity, or for a job, tourism exists solely for the purpose of pleasure. One 'escapes for the week', 'runs away to Paris', or 'just takes off' because one can. Increasingly, however, tourism and its signifigance find themselves contested. The current period of globalization, a concept I will define with more complexity later, brings nations, nation/states, and individuals closer to each other on a daily basis than they ever have been before. Tourism exists as one contact site between nation, between cultures, and between individuals. Travel writing, and we will define the genre when we come to it, serves, quite often, as a mediating factor between

the static native and dynamic traveler. The proliferation of the genre and other travel guides goes a long way in highlighting the manner in which these works often become a form of written tourism, or a couch-potato tourism of vicarious travel.

So it lies between individuals to write these experiences, as both the traveler will write back to his home and the local to his community. Often these writings construct particular meanings around interactions that may turn your every-day-novelist-on-vacation into a cultural explorer with notebook in hand. In these cases, when people intentionally write travel, their writing brings a tourist's perspective, or gaze, on a local site into public view<sup>iii</sup>. But particularly for our post-modern project we cannot forget the positioning in this relationship of the writer—the travel writer both writes the local that he meets and writes into that local the home he comes from. Now, more than ever, travel writers come from everywhere: be it India, the Caribbean, Asia or the United States.

Tourism appears truly transnational, an important aspect in that it complicates the antiquated notion of tourism as a privilege solely of the West<sup>iv</sup>. This is not to say that tourism is no longer a privilege<sup>v</sup> but instead to point out that the privilege has expanded to those elites the world over.

And with this privileged elite we find our main concern. This paper focuses on the ways in which people write travel. But more importantly, within that question, I am interested in how an elite core of postcolonial writers rationalize the privileges they hold and how they write that rationalization into their own travel narratives. In other words, for a writer concerned with globalization and culture, what methods exist to write a travel narrative that accounts for, or at least attempts to explain, the inherent privilege already proscribed within the project itself?

Closer inspection of this "elite core of postcolonial writers" will, undoubtedly, complicate matters substantially, but perhaps not irreparably. Postcolonialism itself remains a highly contested term<sup>vi</sup>, and one that retains innumerable contradictions. The postcolonial, for our purposes, references all of those people implicated in the social period that begins after the proclaimed end of colonial rules the world over-in other words, most everyone. Because colonialism and its official rule remains such a nebulous conceptual ground I will attempt to apply very little fixity for a term like postcolonialism, and instead leave it open for a reader's interpretation. In this regard the postcolonial may mimic what some theorists call the postmodernvii but refocus the weight of the meaning of the term behind the social and human implications of colonial rule and global power inequalities that a universalizing (and stage-based, time-reliant) postmodern may overlook. In emphasizing the colonial, a theoretical contemporary consciousness might develop that accounts for privilege as derived from something greater that a postmodern meritocracy and instead consider the effects of a legacy of global, social inequity. Using this definition, a postcolonial writer can hail from anywhere, be it India, Africa or the United States, so long as they situate themselves as authors (or we, as readers, situate them) within this particular frame of consciousness.

With this in mind let us embark here on our grand tour, a look at the ways in which travel has been written, is written now, and perhaps should be written. The tour will begin with a look at the ways in which globalization and travel writing play off of each other, both feeding a desire for the other. Globalization as a term, a concept, and a process implies a world of conergies and travel writing is that tale that tells those stories. An understanding of globalization, coupled with a historicized look at travel writing as

genre, aims to situate both the genre and reader in a particular process of understanding. Essentially, this stop in the past will afford a perspective on the present; what is it about travel, and travel writing, that holds so much power?

The second point of departure will find a focus on the works of three significant authors in the world of contemporary travel writing: V.S. Naipaul, Paul Theroux, and Pico Iyer. Each of these authors approaches his world of travel in a distinct, and effective, manner, but for the purposes of this paper I will look at the ways in which these authors rationalize their privileged positions, and what conclusions they, as authors, and we as readers, might draw from their writings.

Embedded within much of these sections, the traveler will find rest stops, digressions perhaps, or places where, directly or not, I will imply and explain a particular manner of conceptualizing travel. These will come along with the introduction of certain terms like cosmopolitanism, or concepts like commodification that may help to explain or highlight the weight I intend to lay on travel writing. The rest stops aim to provide a conceptual guideline (tour guide?) along which to situate the arguments at hand.

Finally, this paper attempts to provide a "prescription" for travel writing. This is not to say that travel writing as it is in the pages of authors like Naipaul, Theroux or Iyer appears sick, not by any means. Instead, that in order to write the present in consideration of the past we look at these authors as teachers, but with a critical eye. Significantly, any prescription will look for a way in which future travel writers might use their considerable privilege in order to write back a concise, postcolonial narrative. In the writing back they will appeal to a home that accounts for the inequalities in this world,

and helps not only the author but also the audience make sense of the imposing contradictions.

Jamaica Kincaid's statement which begins this paper notes that everyone wants to travel but that only some people can afford it. This paper intends to look at just that paradox, and the ways and means by which we can change this inequality. We are all fortunate to have the time and ability to even consider these ideas, and given that time it is only fair to look towards solutions as well. While I aim to prescribe a means with which to address this dilemma through travel writing, there should be no confusion that this symbolizes a solution to the problem by any means. Global inequality will, most likely, still exist after the writing of this paper, and, almost surely, continue even if every writer were to consciously attack the problem in writing. Travel writing should not stand as the giant to be tackled, but rather a symptom of a larger battle, one that simple words cannot win. Certain aspects of travel may, indeed, be a privilege, and one worth concerning ourselves with, but that by no means should limit the scope of our dissatisfaction. We might consider the world inequalities and power relationships our baggage, something we bring along for the ride with us, was there when we left, will be with us the whole time, and waiting for us to unpack when we get back home. And with that in mind, we pack our bags, sit down, and begin the tour.

## II. Globalization and Travel Writing

Globalization has become, for many, an ordinary part of the every-day lexicon, yet to pin down one meaning for the word appears nearly impossible. There is an important distinction to be made, then, by what is meant when I say globalization. Most importantly, travel and tourism do not necessarily cause, create, or even imply globalization. For instance, as a tourist I could, theoretically without globalization, easily hop on a plane and go to Costa Rica, get off the plane, go to a Costa Rican hotel, go to the beach, eat, and then return home without having done anything more than traveled and visited. However, this simplification almost never occurs because of what we will call globalization, and as a result contemporary tourism becomes inextricably linked with globalization. But what is globalization?

The most important thing to keep in mind in this conversation remains the fact that globalization is a *process* and not an entity in and of itself. In defining globalization as a process I intend to disallow any conceptual framework that grants the term supernatural powers of homogenization, or even any inevitability. Instead, I refer to globalization as a process with ebbs and flows (history for example) with the intent of analyzing the ways in which we interpret this particular chain of events. This task becomes easier when we look at globalization in two respects: cultural and economic. While this division may seem to leave much of the debate out (some may ask, where are the politics, the environment, history?) to others this dichotomy will begin with too much overlap. In other words, somewhere at the nexus of culture and economy thrives a generalized definition of a postmodern reality that comprises itself of all the parts of our

society. I will let it suffice to look from these two angles at this particular point of weighted convergence.

And it is just this convergence, or, rather, the concept of convergence, that will serve as our basis for understanding globalization. This should not confuse the idea with homogenization, as will become clear further on, but instead convergence will refer to the increasing inter-connectedness of formerly (and to some extent still) autonomous units. This discourse will focus on nations, though it should be clear that this happens not without some reservation. As Benedict Anderson points out, the nation exists as largely imagined, and in his deconstruction of the point there lies a valuable insight into the global-political realm, but I am not yet convinced that we have moved beyond this particularly imagined space (Anderson 1991)<sup>viii</sup>. For this reason, any definition of globalization must speak in terms of that which pre-exists, or the nation, despite any apprehension one might have over the term. And so the definition begins.

The supply-side of this equation (that of globalization's definition) lands us in the field of international economics, or, rather, the debate surrounding the global flows between nations of supply and demand. Capitalism has long been cited as one of, if not the, driving force behind the process of globalization. Marx's equation of capitalism even addresses this fact directly in the formulation of capital's insatiable need for expansion. In fact, statistical economic data points towards the same direction. That is to say, with trade as a motivating factor for travel (supply side trade, as well as labor-force migration) we can trace shipping routes or the Silk Road and find economic globalization as historical fact.

Over the last two centuries, the speed and inter-connectedness of globalization has done nothing if not substantially increased. While many theorists seem quick to posit our current global-economic situation as something new, or unique to the available technology, evidence indicates otherwise (O'Rourke and Williamson 2001). Dani Rodrik, writing for the Institute for International Economics plainly states, "this is not the first time we have experienced a truly global market. By many measures, the world economy was possibly even more integrated at the height of the gold standard in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century than it is now" (Rodrik 1997; 7). Transportation technology at the time, the railroad, and advances in shipping parallel what we see today in internet technology, making discussions on today's unique international trade not only redundant but also blind to the history of the situation.

If economic globalization is not new, then what do we do gain from a more historical perspective? If we begin before the Grand Tour, a picture may develop of globalization's impact on the consciousness of travel that occurs at the moment of the Grand Tour's initiation into popular culture. In other words, the consciousness behind travel shifts to allow for tourism to exist as leisure and this shift might find some explanation in the history of economic globalization in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson point out,

two important features of the late twentieth-century international economy characterized the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century as well. First, the earlier period was one of rapid globalization: capital and labor flowed across national frontiers in unprecedented quantities, and commodity trade boomed in response to sharply declining transport costs. Second, the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw an impressive convergence in living standards, at least within most of what we would now call the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)" (O'Rourke and Williamson, 5).

The writers here point to the blurring of national boundaries (which we see repeating in the present with programs like NAFTA), though it should be noted that this will not necessarily diminish the boundaries of imagined national identity (19<sup>th</sup> Century residents of France were no more likely to think of themselves as British despite their intense trade with England then today's American might think of himself as Canadian). Economic globalization then remains rooted in the commodity trades and transportation, the exchanges between people, historically, as in O'Rourke and Williamson's Atlantic economy, but also in the contemporary world. Yet the authors point to one more important dimension of the situation—that of living standards.

Though they measure economic globalization using the OECD as the foundational statistic for convergence, the two authors later expand their thoughts to global inequalities. Their "critical bottom line" for measuring the effects and influences of economic globalization attaches itself to the gap between the standards of living across the world (O'Rourke and Williamson 2001; 22). In other words, theorists look to global convergences to mark globalization, but particularly to those with the humanitarian intent of measuring the standard of living. For the travel writer it is often this difference—that in standard of living—that provides the framework for understanding a location. We place a heavy emphasis on knowing difference in order to understand travel.

Convergences then, of trade, and of standard of living, prove the basis for economic globalization. Importantly, these convergences do not necessarily signal a homogenization, a Coca-colonization or McDondald's Empire in contemporary terms, but rather they indicate a much simpler, albeit reified, global economy. In a historical, economic sense, convergence refers to the patterns of trade which emerge similarly

between nations in this global economy. It is for this reason that O'Rourke and Williamson appear so concerned with international human rights. Globalization's processes in the 19th<sup>th</sup> Century brought along serious economic pressures that were applied, almost liberally, the world over. But this is not to say that any one nation, or region, fell, helplessly, to the onslaught of the process, and that is just what we should gain from the historicism of the fact. Nations involved in international and economic trade hold within themselves the political power to address their relationship with globalization. A travel writer must still request, in one manner or another, permission to enter a country.

Economic globalization, then, is *not* irreversible or even inevitable, although at times it may seem overwhelming. World War I signaled a reversal of what O'Rourke and Williamson deem the Atlantic economy, which shifted, again, the nature and pace of inter-connectedness. Rodrik states that, "at any rate, the lesson from history seems to be that continued globalization cannot be taken for granted" (Rodrik 1997; 9). Historically, nations that could not cope with the rules and regulations of the Atlantic economy adapted their own national and international policies to regulate the flows of goods and ideas into something manageable.

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And in this way (economically-speaking) newness enters the world. But what of the demand, the desire for newness? Newness, in cultural terms, owns a certain significance as it implies change, or rebirth—a concept that fundamentally clashes with any idea of culture that we might hold that would idolize concepts like "tradition". Globalization, theoretically, threatens "tradition", or "ritual", the long-standing roots of a very basic understanding of culture itself. For this reason, when Homi K. Bhabba speaks

of "How newness enters the world", the conversation revolves around cultural hybridity—the manner in which hybridization results in cultural newness which may at once be rooted in tradition and also constantly redefines itself (Bhabba 1994)<sup>ix</sup>. So shall I focus this section on the manner in which cultural globalization implies a hybridity that does not implicitly disallow the past, cultural groupings or identity. This may be a deconstruction of culture, but I would hope not to the point where we can no longer make an attempt to locate the concept<sup>x</sup>.

As I look at globalization, the cultural aspect confuses the simplicity with which I addressed economic globalization. While complications exist, the historicizing of cultural globalization begs attention. "The world," says Arjun Appadurai, "has been a conergies of large-scale interactions for many centuries. Yet today's world involves interactions of a new order and intensity" (Appadurai 1996; 27). And John Tomlinson elaborates that a, "basic understanding of globalization as an empirical condition of the modern world [is needed]: what I shall call *complex connectivity*. By this I mean that globalization refers to the rapidly developing and ever-condensing network of interconnections and interdependedness that characterizes modern social life" (Tomlinson 1999; 2). Obviously, both authors locate cultural globalization within a certain modernity<sup>xi</sup>, and this will be the conceptual landscape from which we look at the cultural globe. In this regard, the most fascinating analysis, and the most useful tool for our purposes, derives from Arjun Appadurai's essay on "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy."

Appadurai begins his essay with an appeal to the power of the imagination. He locates the engine of cultural globalization in the power of imagination as social order (Appadurai 1996; 31). This formulation implies a burgeoning consciousness of global

cultures and people, complete with a reconceptualization of the self. To strengthen this point Appadurai develops an idea of globalization as measured across theoretical 'scapes'. These 'scapes' chart the global variations and conjoinments, as well as the all-important disjunctures that will inevitably occur "among five dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed (a) *ethnoscapes*, (b) *mediascapes*, (c) *technoscapes*, (d) *financescapes*, and (e) *ideoscapes*" (Appadurai 1996; 33).

As Appadurai explains, the "new global cultural economy" relies on the ways in which global flows travel across these scapes (Appadurai 1996; 33). These scapes provide a framework for understanding the nature of transnational flows in goods, peoples and information. In other words, if we look at globalization as a series of convergences, then these scapes provide the sites for convergence, an area where globalization constantly defines itself. Within these contested sites, "global flows occur, they occur in and through the growing disjunctures among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes" (Appadurai 1996; 37). But as Appadurai explains, this process is more complicated: "First, people, machinery, money, images and ideas now follow increasingly nonisomorphic paths, of course, at all periods in human history, there have been some disjuncture in the flows of these things, but the sheer speed, scale, and volume of each of these flows are now so great that the disjunctures have become central to the politics of global culture" (Appadurai 1996; 37). In other words, the point where global cultures clash will become the defining aspects of and motivation for further globalization.

This disjuncture contrasts, but does not oppose, the earlier thinking on hybridity.

Where hybridity implies a miscegenation, disjunction celebrates seeming incompatibility,

but this understanding is incomplete. Hybridity and disjunction combine to form an essential paradox of cultural globalization; that is, as newness enters the world and finds acceptance it at once universalizes the consciousness of individuals as it concurrently draws on cultural relativisms for inevitable comparisons. What better example than a young, Muslim woman in secular Turkey who stands, cell phone to her ear, in burkha and head wrap with four-inch stiletto heels and an 'N Sync backpack waiting to board the bus? The hybridization of culture brings change to the world that necessitates disjunction. In turn, these disjunctures become the contested sites of change which will adapt and transform our notions of tradition's role in culture. The woman is no less Islamic for her cell phone or heels, and no less Turkish for the backpack, rather she defines the identities through disjunctures brought on by hybridization. In Arjun Appadurai's words,

The globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization, but globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization (armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles) that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise, and fundamentalism in which the state plays an increasingly delicate role: too much openness to global flows, and the nation-state is threatened by revolt, as in the China syndrome, too little, and the state exits the international stage, as Burma, Albania, and North Korea in various ways have done. In general, the state has become an arbitrageur of this repatriation of difference (in the form of goods, signs, slogans, and styles). But this repatriation or export of the designs and commodities of difference continuously exacerbates the internal politics of majoritarianism and homogenization, which is most frequently played out in debates over heritage. (Appadurai 1996; 42)

Where the future of economic globalization remains policy-based, cultural globalization, and its evolution, lies in the hands of individuals, imagination and collective conscience. People desire travel in what becomes a search for newness, and for change, a change that comes in the form of globalization. This is why so many people

have traveled, as history shows, it is why so many people travel now, and it is why people will continue to travel and search. It is why the young child in Bolivia gives you his email even though he will never write back. Why even the organizations that seemingly oppose the implications of newness will use the tools of the trade (airplanes and internet to name two obvious ones) to create their own global communities. So, where economic globalization may remain reversible, the consciousness underpinning the cultural aspect of the situation seems a harder gear to change.

My perception, and thus my voice here, lines up more squarely with the cultural, demand-based, side of this equation. I am interested in the appeal of this newness, the paradoxes of hybridity and disjunction. My position, then, is of one looking at the convergence of culture and economy in globalization with a focus on the possible economic and political policy implications on our cultural consciousness. Tourism, as a primary mediator between the two lines provides the site of contestation, and travel writing that narrative which will tell the tale. Tourism involves, dramatically, both supply and demand, economy and culture, tourist and local in a way which begs the paradoxical contrasts of hybridity and disjuncture, and as the postmodern (or contemporary if the term seems to distract too much) writers will read us the story of the present, as it is up to us to write the future.

# III. A Brief History of Travel Writing

From Marco Polo to Bruce Chatwin, travelers' tales about distant places and exotic cultures have proven to be remarkably popular reading. The persistence of this kind of writing is undoubtedly related to human curiosity and to a travel writer's desire to mediate between things foreign and things familiar, to help us understand the world which is other to us.

■ Casey Blanton 1997

A traveler is to be revered as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from—toward; it is the history of every one of us.

■ Henry David Thoreau 1906

Before we meet the individual authors, a brief assessment of the relevance of a critique of travel writing in discussions of globalization will serve us well. In other words, to move forward through an understanding of our position within the process of globalization. The history of travel appears infinite, and that of travel writing immense. Barbara Korte, for example, in beginning her book on *English Travel Writing From Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* cites Percy G. Adams ten years ago as saying, "the literature of travel is gigantic; it has a thousand forms and faces" (Korte 2000; 1). This sounds undeniable, and certainly such a catalog here would serve little for the purposes I have set out. Yet the history of travel writing, a contextualization of our present situation, be it however brief (and as a result necessarily lacking in some spaces) remains indispensable.

More detailed historiographies abound. Mary Louis Pratt's significant *Imperial Eyes* traces the genre and, "how has travel and exploration writing *produced* 'the rest of the world' for European readerships," (Pratt 1992, 5), while Casey Blanton's first chapter in *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* gives an incredible historical overview of the genre, including a chronography. The beautiful book *A History of Travel* by Winfried Löschburg provides a similar history, albeit with more pictures. And while these authors, and others like them, may dispute specific dates and turning points, there remain certain consistencies that can be gleaned from their exhaustive research. I have no intention here of reviewing the literature of Herodotus, though it seems clear that his work could easily be defined as travel writing, and which many critics indicate led to later writings like

those of Marco Polo. Periods of travel writing followed be it the stories of pilgrimages, exiles and conquistadores, or the 'corporate enterprises' of the Elizabethan age (Schweizer 2001; 3). Other explorers, like Captain Cook and Bougainville, or Pratt's protagonist (antagonist?) Alexander von Humboldt, wrote natural histories and 'anthropologies' of the places they 'discovered'. At the same time, natives wrote, in Pratt's words, 'autoethnographies', using the language of the foreigners to relate their own experiences, as in the works of Ta'unga or any one of many slave narratives.

All of this leads up to what I will point to as the first 'modern' shift in travel writing—the literature relating to the Grand Tour. Whereas, "a major fascination of early travel literature, especially that concerning voyages to the west, lay in its new scope for the imagination," the Grand Tour would reposition the travel narrative (Dodd 1982; 2). Earlier travel literature, Jenny Mezciems explains, "was the appeal not of fiction, but of new facts; of facts, moreover, which promised up an opening and a reordering of the new world. New regions could be exploited most easily (but not only) in the mind, in a variety of ways and with interests that ranged from the religious and moral to the scientific and also to the simply greedy" (Dodd 1982; 2). The Grand Tour would change all of this. James Duncan and Derek Gregory carefully follow travel writing into the modern era as follows:

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Travel and travel writing entered into the Euro-American project of modernity in at least three ways. Travel and travel writing meshed with secularization: sacralized frames of reference yield to a much more complex taxonomy of cultural difference and natural histories...Travel became more than a necessary evil, a burden to be borne by, for example, pilgrims, merchants, and explorers, but rather came to be constructed as an end in itself, as a form of pleasure...Travel was no longer an exclusively aristocratic preserve. To be sure, it continued to be privileged in all sorts of ways, but in the course of the nineteenth century it was increasingly construed as a quintessentially bourgeois experience that had its origins in the conjunction of romanticism and industrialism. (Duncan and Gregory 1999; 5-6)

Such was the Grand Tour, the European project of tourism, of travel for pleasure's sake. Chloe Chard, in her aptly titled *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour* locates the Grand Tour as the genesis of the tourist. In doing so, she points to the period between the seventeenth century and 1830 as the definitive era for the Grand Tour, a time in which more and more people became accustomed to travel (and then return to home)

for pleasure, accompanied, often times, by the guilt of such luxury and privilege (Chard 1999). The effect on writing would be enormous. Chard writes,

Towards the end of this period, approaches to travel—not only to this topography [that of the Grand Tour], but also to others—split into two opposing attitudes, both of which still play a crucial part in determining the ways in which encounters with the foreign can be described or imagined today. One of these approaches, which is first discernible in the travel writing at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, is the view that travel is a form of personal adventure, holding out the promise of a discovery or realization of the self through the exploration of the other: according to this view—which, for convenience, may be termed as the *Romantic* approach—travel entails crossing symbolic as well as geographic boundaries and these transgressions of limits invite various forms of danger and destabilization.

The second approach appears at about the same time, and presents itself in more or less explicit opposition to the Romantic view of travel. This is the approach of the tourist, who recognizes that travel might constitute a form of personal adventure, and might entail danger and destabilization, but, as a result of this recognition, attempts to keep the more dangerous and destabilizing aspects of the encounter with the foreign at bay," (Chard 2000; 11)

The next shift would come 100 years later as writers in 1930s Britain and the Unites States would redefine the genre. In *Radicals on the Road*, Bernard Schweitzer points to the particular political agendas of the 1930s as the incentive with which travel writers like Graham Green, D.H. Lawrence and Evelyn Waugh approached their topics. These writers, he argues, dealt explicitly and implicitly with issues of class, race, and gender in ways that other travel writers had previously ignored (Schweizer 2001). He further argues that these writers were motivated by a consciousness, an awareness of inequality, that initially inspired them, but that by the end of the 1930s had dissolved into a fear of 'global crisis' (Schweizer 2001). Martin Stannard, in talking about authors like Lawrence and Greene elaborates, "in the early years of the twentieth century a new breed of literary travelers emerged, eager for experience of other cultures to place in a wider context what they saw as the ferocious egotism, and chauvinism, of their forebears" (Dodd 1982; 105).

Using Chloe Chard's model for post Grand Tour travel writing, 1930s travel literature provides a parallel departure point, or split. Those conscious writers of the 1930s travel and write the political complications of travel and the limits and transgressions of privilege involved. There are those who will read the writing as an invitation to explore these themes similarly, and also those who may choose to read these

narratives as a sort of tourism in and of itself, and the message to be taken away one of keeping these complications at bay. Evelyn Waugh herself goes so far as to say, "my traveling days are over, and I do not expect to see many travel books in the future. there is no room for tourists in a world of 'displaced persons.' Never again, I suppose, shall we land on foreign soil with a letter of credit and a passport (itself the first faint shadow of the great cloud that envelops us) and feel the world wide open before us" (Waugh 1946; 10).

For Waugh, the Romantic voyage to the unknown ends with the popular permeation of travel, the passport which makes the unknown knowable, and travel possible. Yet Romanticism does not die such an easy death, or even fade as much as Waugh's cloud anticipates. Duncan and Gregory report that, 'the closing decades of the twentieth century have witnessed a double explosion of interest in travel writing" (Duncan and Gregory 1999; 1). Perhaps unwittingly, the authors see a synthesis in Chard's model that occurs in contemporary travel writing. "At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," the authors report, "we are still in the age of 'industrialized' romanticism. By this we mean that although the bureaucratization of travel has increased since the turn of the century, the romantic frame through which places are viewed remains the same" (Duncan and Gregory 1999; 9-10). Indeed, although Waugh's passports are everywhere. to many the world looks as wide open to them as it did to her. "Although postcolonial theorists write of traveling cultures (Clifford 1992; 1997) and traveling theory (Behdad 1994; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Kaplan 1996; Robertson et al 1994; Rojek and Urry 1997), travel is still popularly understood as the immersion in picturesque, distinct, colorful cultures" (Duncan and Gregory 1999; 9-10).

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Mary Louise Pratt's wonderful book provides similar evidence for this idea, further strengthening the ties of romanticism and contemporary travel writing when she points out the similarities in concept, if not of actual description, in the works of 18<sup>th</sup> Century author Alexander von Humboldt and the quite contemporary Paul Theroux (Pratt 1992). In fact, her, "book aims to be both a study in genre and a critique of ideology" (Pratt 1992; 4). To compare the consistent strings of ideology within the genre appears not as difficult as one might think. In their book *Tourists With Typewriters*, Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan certainly agree. "Travel writing," they argue, "frequently

provides an effective alibi for the perpetuation or reinstallment of ethnocentrically superior attitudes to 'other' cultures, people and places" (Holland Huggan 1998; VII). The authors, in a particularly self-reflective turn, however, complicate this notion in indicating, "the defamiliarizing capacities of travel writing, and by its attempts, keeping pace with change, to adjust its sights to a new perception—both of 'other' cultures and places and of the writer's and reader's perceiving cultures" (Huggan and Holland 1998; VII). With these words the authors establish travel writing as almost entirely ethnographic, the record of an interaction between the self and the other.

Casey Blanton's definition of travel writing, in fact, goes so far as to say that, "travel books are vehicles whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other, and that typically they dramatized an engagement between self and world," (Blanton 1997, xi). It is this move, according to Blanton, which distinguishes our contemporary travel writing from that which came before. "Genuine 'travel literature'," he argues, "as opposed to what as been called 'pretravel' depends on a certain self-consciousness on the part of the narrator that was not seized upon until after the Renaissance and, in fact, not highly developed until the concern with 'sensibility' in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century" (Blanton 1997; 4). Similarly, Paul Fussel quotes travel writer Norman Douglas as saying that,

the reader of a good travel book is entitled not only to an exterior voyage, to descriptions of scenery and so forth, but to an interior, a sentimental or temperamental voyage which takes place side by side with that outer one,... the ideal book of this kind offers us, indeed, a triple opportunity of exploration—abroad, into the author's brain, and into our own. The writer should therefore possess a brain worth exploring; some philosophy of life...and the courage to proclaim it and put it to the test. (Fussel 1987)

This concern, the dialect with self and other, reflects contemporary trends in ethnography, including, but not limited to the role of the anthropologist (in this case the writer), and certainly the reader, which may reveal why James Clifford seems to appear in so many of these sources. Clifford's work on travel reveals an incredibly complex relationship to travel, and the telling of travel, one that roots itself both in the history of this genre but also in the history of globalization. "I hang onto 'travel'," he informs the reader, "as a term of cultural comparison, precisely because of its historical taintedness, its association with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents, and the like" (Clifford 1992).

Our contemporary travel writers have, then, in front of them quite a difficult terrain. As globalization brings people closer and closer together at a more rapid pace, travel narratives often appear as that tentative big toe in the ocean—a test into the welcoming waters of a world we do not already know. As literature, the books are post-Grand Tour safety nets, and as ethnographies they are historically tainted explorations of the self, the other and the planet. Each travel writer will decide to what extent he<sup>xii</sup> will address these concerns, and, furthermore, he must decide how much of this responsibility to internalize. In a further complication, the contemporary travel writer who writes with even the slightest notion about the forces of economic globalization must consider his own position within an economic system where travel for pleasure's sake necessarily implies, at the very least, a level of economic privilege. The three authors that follow seem emblematic of the various relationships one might choose from—and the difficulties implicit in the positioning of each one.

## IV. VS Naipaul

He came in the afternoon, complete with liveried chauffeur and administration car--signs of the \$600 that's his for another month or so.

His clothes looked informal and comfortable. A soft, open-necked shirt, a pair of khaki slacks, newish brown sandals. No socks. Tie was short, and his softish voice spoke in bursts, somewhat like a Bren Gun in No Man's Land. His thick black hair hung almost down to his ear... later in the evening he seemed to have recovered the poise to reach his English accent. He seemed to have lost the venom...

■ Fitzroy Fraser on Naipaul in Jamaica while he is writing *The Middle Passage* 

Bernard Levin: You were born in Trinidad? V.S. Naipaul: I was born there, yes. I thought it was a great mistake. (Levin 1983)

Long before Sir V.S. received the Nobel Prize for Literature from the same people he claimed were, "pissing on literature" (Theroux 2000; 99) a son of a Hindu indentured laborer and his wife gave birth to their second child, a boy who would change the nature of travel writing. Born, as he was, in the West Indies, V.S. Naipaul spent his childhood in the sizeable community of Indian immigrants spread throughout the Caribbean. Amidst the national and international turmoil of the 1930s and 1940s, Naipaul formed his identity around the inability to properly place himself, both exile and immigrant, within a particular community, and it might then come as no surprise that in his eighteenth year, without much hesitation, he left. For Britain.

Despite the depression he suffered while in England, Naipaul's education, a degree in English at Oxford, served him well as he won a major prize, the Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for his first published book, *The Mystic Masseur*, at the young age of 25. Even more impressive perhaps is the young man, at age 28, with three books under his belt, whose birth-country, in 1960, invites him home for nothing but to write of his experiences, to travel, to watch, to see, and to tell. Commissioned by the Premier of

Trinidad, Eric Williams at the time, V.S. Naipaul returned to the West Indies for seven months to write. And in so doing he expanded his canon outside the realm of his critically acclaimed fiction and into the long-established genre of travel writing. Naipaul's *Middle Passage* marks the entrance of the Nobel Prize winner into the world as he leaves once again, this time from England, to travel back in space and time as he prepares to write about the present and the future.

The opportunity of the trip, in and of itself, spells the relative privilege of Naipaul's position. Salman Rushdie, commenting on Naipaul's position in another of his travel books, *Among the Believers*, provides the following analysis:

In Among the Believers, VS Naipaul's book about his travels in the Muslim world, a young man who has been driving the author around Pakistan admits that he doesn't have a passport and, keen to go abroad and see the world, expresses a yearning for one. Naipaul reflects, more than a little caustically, that it's a shame that the only freedom in which this young fellow appears to be interested in is the freedom to leave the country. When I first read this passage, years ago, I had a strong urge to defend that young man against the celebrated writer's contempt. In the first place, the desire to get out of Pakistan, even temporarily, is one with which many people will sympathize. In the second and more important place, the thing that the young man wants - freedom of movement across frontiers - is, after all, a thing that Naipaul himself takes for granted, the very thing, in fact, that enables him to write the book in which the criticism is made. (Rushdie 2002)

The same analysis easily applies itself to *The Middle Passage* as the author, travel writer, and self-exiled returns home with a wealth previously unimagined. Fitzroy Fraser, writing as journalist, reported on Naipaul's trip to Jamaica that, "he couldn't remain here for long without getting stung by the money bug. He couldn't be poor here and feel comfortable. Poverty, it seemed, was something like a crime" (Fitzroy 1960).

Nor does Naipaul himself attempt to dispel the impression of privilege in his own writing. His *Middle Passage* begins, "there was such a crowd of immigrant-type West Indians on the boat-train platform at Waterloo that I was glad I was travelling first class to the West Indies" (Naipaul 1962;1). From the very outset of the trip, Naipaul, both

subtly and conspicuously, announces himself and his position to the reader. Almost the entire mood of the book traces back to these opening remarks. In this one phrase Naipaul separates himself from the "immigrant-types", announces his privilege and "first-class" status, infers his country of origin as Britain, and names his destination, "the West Indies" as foreign. In effect, Naipaul distances himself from where he came as he prioritizes his point of departure over the destination, and announces his near-disgust for the circumstances of the trip in one, concise sentence.

In this manner, as in many others, Naipaul stands as something of a revolutionary-he could, perhaps, born in the West Indies, of Indian parents, living in England writing on the West Indies, be considered the postcolonial world's first truly 'cosmopolitan' travel writer<sup>xiii</sup>. Despite any hesitation Naipaul may have about his role as a 'postcolonial voice', xiv *The Middle Passage* undoubtedly, and vividly, addresses, the colonial project, and its past, present, and potential through the eyes of a man much affected by its circumstances (should a reminder be necessary: Naipaul, born in the Commonwealth, educated in the metropole, writing back to the larger world embodies much of what postcolonial theory deems emblematic of the theoretical structure of postcolonialism).

"My books have been called travel writing," Naipaul stated in 1995, "what I do is quite different" (Rashid 1995). Instead, he continues,

I travel on a theme. I travel not to write about myself but to look at the world. I travel to make an enquiry. I am not a journalist. I am taking all the gifts of sympathy, observation and curiosity I have developed as a writer. I should also add to that list the gift of narrative. The books I write now, these enquiries are really constructed narratives.

The narrative for *The Middle Passage* undeniably and despite the author's apparent aversion to the concept, concretely centers around colonialism. Naipaul, in the original version, even subtitled the book, *Impressions of Five Societies*; *British, French and* 

Dutch in the West Indies and South America appeal to the very real and logistical affects of colonialism on the countries he chooses to visit. Naipaul's gaze as traveler rests on the ways in which colonialism functions in the societies he visits, whether that be the effect of Dutch rule in Surinam, or the political revolutions against former colonial rules in other countries. His analysis extends to often-cynical considerations of the people of these countries, and their relative status or characteristics that he deems a result of colonial rule. For instance, on his perception of the causes of a 'slow' pace of life in Guiana:

One Guianese official I spoke to blamed malaria. But malaria isn't all. There is history as well. Slavery lasted for three hundred years and was of exceptional brutality: in this matter of slavery the Dutch record is far blacker than the French. The African, as a result, is passionate for independence, and for him independence is not so much an assertion of pride as a desire to be left alone, not to be involved. (Naipaul 118: 1962)

Throughout his journeys, Naipaul similarly analyzes the character of the locals within a 'narrative' of colonialism, one that often overlaps with postcolonialism if only because of the official nature, in such locations, of the end of colonial rule. In this way, the geography of Surinam, imposed by the colonials, dictates and influences the residents of the colonial cities. In this manner, the colonized of British and Dutch colonial societies will respond differently, as their character as defined by Naipaul dictates, to the colonial project. "The paradox is that Dutch idealism is leading to rejection, while out of British cynicism has grown a reasonably easy relationship between colonials and metropolitans" (Naipaul, 174; 1962). Even the style of political revolution becomes dictated by the methods of colonial empowerment.

Implicit within this narrative of colonialism comes a tour through several countries that leaves indelible marks, for any who take the time to read the Nobel writer's

words, on how he image of these countries and region. But Naipaul's reaction and writing remain far more complicated than might be assumed from a cynical man writing on the ills of colonialism. On his first-class voyage he remarks, "I turned to see a tourist," immediately marking himself outside of tourism, thus firmly located within some other discourse (whether that be academic, or resident or a similar variant remains unclear), as more immigrants arrive on the ship, "'the holiday is over,' he said. 'The wild cows have come on board" (Naipaul 1962; 18). At times it appears as if Naipaul might not disagree with this notion (one need only recall his relief at finding himself in the first-class cabin), yet he dissents, "And what was he, this tourist? A petty offical perhaps, an elementary school teacher. The wild cows are coming on board. No attitude in the West Indies is new. Two hundred years before, when he would have been a slave, the tourist would have said the same" (Naipaul 1962; 18). Where one expects the man to belittle those insecurities which he finds around him, Naipaul creates a complex picture of several societies that have been inextricably linked to power, oppression, and the casualities of race and exist, in his eyes, in something of a transitional period. For all of his grumblings and his hestancies, Naipaul's picture of the West Indies remains one tied, as he must have intended, to the people he meets on his trip, to their reactions to colonialism, and to his impressions of these people.

Naipaul's impressions cannot be easily summarized, though there are certain consistencies in his approach to each of the countries he visits. Naipaul tracks the coming of his interpretation of 'modernity' through the manner in which these countries have reacted to colonialism. "There are the usual picturesque native characters and native customs, the vision of that of the tourist," he says in appealing to the reader to understand

the difference between the perceived and the real in Trinidad, "in art, as in almost anything else, Trinidad has in one step moved from primitivism to modernism" (58; 1962). In Trinidad, this analysis begins with the the consumption of Nescafe as opposed to local Trinidadian coffee, the, "illusion of the 'Western'" (Naipaul 1962; 100) in British Guiana as well as its politicos, the Jagans. In Surinam, he finds the nationalism based, as it is on the complicated interactions between money, politics and race, "unsettling", as he fears the American purchase of Martinique frightening. Fittingly he ends in Jamaica, sandwiched uncomfortably between the world of the local, shanties of Kingston, and the complicated paradise of the tourist—the Westons' mythical hotel. In all of these places Naipaul paints vivid pitures of societies undergoing rapid and complex changes, most of which he locates in the effects of the colonial project. The metanarrative reduces social change to a system of causalities derived from structures of power that are already in place, and Naipaul, as observor, maps its realities and disconents.

What Naipaul finds, of course, must also find an audience. As a writer, Naipaul knowingly commodifies that which he sees for sale to the general public. In his first work of non-fiction travel writing, Naipaul kept a journal for himself (Walcott 1965), recording those circumstances which he found spectacular, but, driven as he was by the Premier of Trinidad, one can reasonably assume that Naipaul's intended listener was not the lonely pages of his own journal. Instead, Naipaul writes to an audience, though who that audience is, exactly, remains eluisve—though crucial for understanding his canon of travel writing.

"I think I've got a kind of audience right now," Naipaul told Bharati Mukherjee and Robert Boyers in 1981, but he continues to say that despite his current audience

(mostly other writers) he considers himself writing in a void, "an exotic to people who read [his] work, and also to people who don't read it, but know what [he does]" (Mukherjee and Boyers; 1981). Naipaul's location within the literary world is certainly complicated: as an Indian born in the West Indies he becomes linked with "Third World" literature constantly\*, but is he Indian author or Caribbean? As a privileged, Oxfordeducated elite, does he write for the places he came from—the lower classes in Trinidad—or the brahmins in India, or perhaps from where he went, the other elites in England? Naipaul writes his travel narrative from a first-class cabin, he finds his respite from the world in the first-class bar on the ship through *The Middle Passage*, firmly locating Naipaul to only one of his "places" unnecessarily reduces the elocutor to prototype. He is, undeniably, first-class, and stemming from this position his travel writing reveals the gaze of a first-class traveller in the Third World writing to an audience that, most likely, would occupy that same first-class position were they to travel the same route he has.

Naipaul does not write to those immigrants who travel with him from Waterloo to Trinidad. This is primarily because his journey is one based in choice, not in the inspired relocation (be it for money or family) of the immigrants in the lower decks. Naipaul makes *The Middle Passage* available for a privileged, middle-class audience while he keeps some of his own distance from that audience in never firmly aligning himself with that privileged elite. In other words, Naipaul, the consumate cosmopolitan, travels to tell the world of his in-betweenness. The audience reading his books (for the most part)

<sup>\*</sup> though it should be said that this label, in and of itself, remains horribly flawed, it most certainly has some appeal in classifying authors. For a better and more interesting

might see in his work a virtual tourism, a way in which one can approach a culture one knows relatively little about, and understand, without falling to the preys of the tourist industry. When Naipaul writes, "every poor country accepts tourism as an unavoidable degradation," (Naipaul 1962; 199) he alerts readers that, while they are not locals, they might still avoid being tourists. Yet he continues, "the elite of the islands, whose pleasures, revealingly, are tourist's pleasures," (Naipaul 1962; 199) and what are Naipaul's pleasures if not that of a tourist?

What makes Naipaul's travel writing so intensely complicated lies in the author's very refusal to address his own privilege upon return. "No writer can be blamed for reflecting his society. If the West Indian writer is to be blamed, it is because, by accepting and promoting the unimpressive race-and-colour values of his group he has not only failed to diagnose the sickness of his society but has aggravated it" (Naipaul 1962; 66). Yet in avoiding his own relation to the world, Naipaul distracts from the very project he embarks upon. In order to analyze colonialism, one would think that the author would look not only at those who have remained, as Naipaul sees it, "accepting and promoting the unimpressive" legacy of power but also at those who have chosen to expand the postcolonial possibilities. Instead, "nothing pleases Trinidadians so much as to see their culture being applauded by white American tourists in night-clubs" (Naipaul 1962; 67). The question remains where to find Naipaul, in that night club applauding, journal in hand, or perhaps on a book tour, commenting on colonialism, and finding praise from the largely white elite he now writes to in England?

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analysis of the idea of "Third World Literature" see the ongoing debate between Frederic Jameson and Aijaz Ahmad.

Despite any critical presupposition on my own part, Naipaul's writing reads as surprisingly complex in his portrayal of the Caribbean. He has been labelled both racist and prophet, and both strains find support in *The Middle Passage*. But what makes the read even more complex is that the void in *The Middle Passage*, his own placement, is at odds with the construct that review or interpretation of colonialism can be complete without some consideration of the self, and Naipaul does very little reflection in his travel work. It seems as if Naipaul, despite seeing all that is around him, is almost never there. The irony in such a void speaks even louder when Naipaul writes that race, "has confirmed the colonial in his role as imitator, the traveller who never arrives" (Naipaul 1962; 161).

It appears as if Naipaul the man never quite arrives in his own travel writing. His air of separation and difference lend themselves brilliantly to a characterization of a static society uninterpreted by outside intervention, but cannot speak to the intricacies of the transnationalism and cosmopolitanism that Naipaul himself embodies. As much as I might have feared Naipaul's writing, the appeals to primitivism, the sentencing of Africans to 'the bush', and so on, I find myself compelled in his brutal and unsparing analysis of people. Whatever it may be, to him, it is the truth. What remains hidden, however, might be that which he most directly wants to address, himself. As an exile, or immigrant, or cosmopolitan, or any such configuration of the postmodern nomad, Naipaul seems unable to find a home, and on his very 'return' his choice to write about colonialism still speaks to his particular condition, whether he does the same or not.

Towards the end of his tour, in Jamaica, the traveller writes:

I had been travelling for nearly seven months. I was getting tired...There was nothing new to record. Every day I saw the same things—unemployment, ugliness, overpopulation, race—and every day

I heard the same circular arguments. The young intellectuals, whose gifts had been developed to enrich a developing, stable society, talked and talked and became frenzied in their frusturation. (Naipaul, 1962; 234)

But Naipaul himself seems not so different. A young intellectual, despite his assured prose he is only 28, himself, Naipaul sees the ills of the country and region where he was raised, and simply, concretely, erases himself out of the present. Naipaul locates himself in Trinidad's past; he even refers, at one brief point in the narrative, to a return home but in the present he is not part of the equation. Naipaul draws on a quote of Trollope's to end his book, but alters it so that, if one could, one would fain forget the West Indies altogether (Naipaul 1962; 242). "The process of forgetting," he continues, has begun. And the West Indies, preoccupied with its internal squabbles hardly knows it" (Naipaul1962; 242). Certainly, no writer can be blamed for reflecting his society, and Naipaul, in removing his own privilege from his travel writing, seems to do just that in his own analysis. The process of forgetting, ("I couldn't be a tourist in the West Indies, not after the journey I had made" (Naipaul 1962; 240) has already begun.

## V. Paul Theroux

"There really is an enormous difference between travel in its classic sense and tourism," he says.

"Tourism, sightseeing, is expected to be fun. You do it in large groups, it's very companionable, it's comfortable, and it's very pleasant. Travel has to do with discovery, difficulty, and inconvenience. It doesn't always pay off. There's a strong element of risk in travel. Time is usually not a constraint for the traveler, but every tourist is under a time constraint. The traveler doesn't really know where he or she is going, but has a sense of discovery. Tourists know exactly what they want to see and they arrive with a lot of preconceived notions. There's a kind of enlightenment in classic travel which has nothing to do with materialism or consumerism. By its very nature, travel is cheaper."

Paul Theroux in Interview with Alden Mudge 2002

"If you're a misanthrope you stay at home. There are certain writers who really don't like other people. I'm not like that I don't think."

■ Paul Theroux in Interview with Mick Brown

In order to understand Paul Theroux, one might begin reviewing his works as he writes his travel—from the beginning. In *The Old Patagonia Express*, Theroux begins his narrative from the initial subway train he takes leaving his house as his starting point for a train trip through the Americas. In this analysis of his travel writing, then, I choose to do the same thing, and begin with Theroux himself. Born the third of seven children to a leather salesman cum shoe salesman in Medford, Massachussets, Theroux saw his eventual flight as nearly predestined. "I wanted to get away," he says, "and travel was linked in my mind with telling the story about it. I was kind of raised with the suggestion that I had a duty to do; that life was real, life was earnest. And I hated that, actually. I needed to be liberated, to be told that I could live the life I wanted to live; that I didn't need a job; to learn; to be shouted at; that I could be myself; that I could be happy" (Brown 2002).

And so he leaves. For more than thirty years now, Paul Theroux has written travel, in various forms, be it the semi-biographical novel, the entirely fictional novel, or the mostly non-fiction travel narrative. In all of his works, Theroux uses travel metaphorically, physically, and powerfully to speak his mind on whatever issue he sees fit. Theroux leaves from Medford, and travels the world, from his beginnings in the Peace

Corps in Africa to recent trips to China, India, and other corners of the globe. He travels, and in travelling, he escapes. A large part of what Theroux acts out when he leaves and then writes of that leaving, is a departure from his family life in Medford, Massachusetts, a life of sedentary Americanism, one that leaves him desirous of something more, something different.

Theroux's most recent compilation of his travel writing, *Fresh Air Fiend*, will serve here as a means of understanding exactly how the writer fulfills his desire and why travel provides this fulfillment. More importantly, *Fresh Air Fiend* returns Theroux's search to thousands of readers in their own homes, who read Theroux for many of the same reasons that he writes. In a telling essay in *Fresh Air Fiend*, "Objects of Desire", Theroux writes of a friend's mother in tank top and bra, the first woman who sent sensuality coursing through him, and how this experience, to him, translates into a need for the new—a desire to travel. "That experience of the strange, the unusual, the forbidden," he writes, "had been inspired by other sensual episodes at home" (Theroux 2000; 37). Theroux, coming from a home that inspired a desire for travel, travels, and writes back to home, looking for that 'forbidden' he learned at home, and those who read him look to find the same thing.

In an essay on travel, "Modernity and Ambivalence", Zygmunt Bauman writes, quoting Jacques Derrida, that, "desire carries in itself the destiny of its non-satisfaction. Difference produces what it forbids, making possible the very thing that makes it impossible" (Bauman YEAR; 145). So much of Paul Theroux's travel writing depends on his self-analysis as stranger, as different, and so much of what he writes to is that otherness, that which becomes possible (the Other) at the same moment that Theroux's

Otherness becomes impossible. "For long periods of my life, living in places where I did not belong, I have been a perfect stranger," Theroux's "Introduction: Being a Stranger" begins, "I have asked myself whether my sense of otherness was the human condition. It certainly was my condition. As with most people, my outer life did not in the least resemble my inner life, but exotic places and circumstances influenced this difference" (Theroux 2000; 1). Theroux associates himself, from his first step out of Medford, from the first words in his book, with being an outsider, "I was an outsider before I was a traveler; I was a traveler before I was a writer; I think one led to the other" (Theroux 2000; 1).

The separation that Theroux begins with allows him to travel, not, as he disdains quite often, as a tourist, but as a stranger. Bauman's essay, not coincidentally, addresses this very issue of strangeness when travelling. Bauman suggests that the 'stranger', in this modern world, stands apart from both friend and enemy, alone. The stranger, then, reconfigures what it means to travel, as he has neither permanence, nor imminent departure. As a result, the stranger questions the tourist's pleasure, as Bauman writes: "a dose of puzzlement is pleasurable, as it resolves in the comfort of reassurance. This, as any tourist knows, is a major part of the attraction held by foreign trips, the more exotic the better" (Bauman YEAR, 148). While I would not discard the notion that Theroux embraces the exotic, what Bauman offers provides an interesting way of analyzing Theroux the stranger. Because Theroux, when he travels, is neither friend nor enemy, tourist nor local, he holds a position where he searches for exoticism, the Other, but then, in an attempt to perhaps rationalize it, he makes that Other his normal, while it remains incredibly different. Theroux's pleasure, unlike that of the traditional tourist, lies in

normalizing the exotic in order to present the exoticism back to a home that will then find both the exotic, and Theroux for his comfortability with it, fascinating.

Theroux himself admits, "I like the idea of being an anonymous traveler," (Brown 2002) though this anonymity must be short lived after he writes these travels and publishes them. The best way, then, to conceptualize Theroux's position, halfway between tourist and local, between friend and enemy, may be around what Ulf Hannerz calls the 'cosmopolitan'. Hannerz, in his essay "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture", proposes a conception of cosmopolitanism that directly relates to tourism. "Tourist," unlike cosmopolitans, he offers, "are not participants; tourism is largely a spectator sport. Even if they want to become involved and in that sense have a cosmopolitan orientation, tourists are assumed to be incompetent" (Hannerz YEAR; 241).

Theroux, as cosmopolitan, spectates, but also involves himself. In *Fresh Air Fiend* he meets cabbies, befriends the locals, and speaks (interacts) with the country he visits. In an essay fittingly titled, "Travel Writing: The Point of It" he opines that, "a travel writer must report faithfully on what he or she encounters in a country, and *Riding the Iron Rooster* [his controversial book about China] is full of the voices and complaints of Chinese students," (Theroux 2000; 52). The point of the travel book, for Theroux, becomes a forum for cross-cultural analysis, a contemporary history, a truth-telling, but one based on actual presence, not on presentation, or spectatorship as banal tourism might allow. "I saw that the travel book performs a unique function. A book has the capacity to express a country's heart, as long as it stays away from vacations, holidays, sightseeing, and the half-truths in official handouts; as long as it concentrates on people

in their landscape, the dissonance as well as the melodies, the contradictions, and the vivid trivia—the fungi on the wet boots" (Theroux 2000, 53)<sup>†</sup>.

Hannerz, in his essay, suggests that these cosmopolitans, going so far as to name Theroux (along with Anne Tyler), are in the act of writing "home plus" (Hannerz YEAR; 241). Theroux writes his version of China's present with a view towards the future, and he writes it back home. He, "think[s] that any travel book about China written in the mid-1980s ought to have prepared *us* for those events, maybe even prefigured them" (Theroux 2000; 50 italics mine). In stressing the prophetic power of travel writing, but directed towards us, Theroux distances himself from his subject (them, China), and places himself as mediator between two worlds, the us and them. This positioning, the home plus, allows Theroux to travel to China as a cosmopolitan and to hear the voices of the students, but then return or write home as local, as part of the us. "Cosmopolitanism," Hannerz warns, "often has a narcissistic streak; the self is constructed in the space where cultures mirror one another" (Hannerz 2000; 240).

Of course, Theroux might disagree with this home-plus analysis:

You have to realize that you are just a traveler; you are not at home. You need the people you meet. You need their protection. You need that good will. You can't be presumptuous. You see all sorts of people traveling. There are some amazingly arrogant people who think that because they are American, for example, they can collect hospitality just because they come from a wonderful country that has been very generous. They are sometimes surprised that people don't give them the respect they think they deserve. (Mudge 2000)

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup> Theroux quotes from Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*: "A writer for instance talks about India which I have seen, and gushes about dancing girls, tiger hunts, fakirs, betel nuts, serpents: the Glamour of the Mysterious East. But what does it amount to? Nothing. Instead of visualing India, I merely get a bad toothache from all these Eastern delights. Now, there's the other way, as for instance, the fellow who writes 'Before turning in I put out my wet boots to dry and in the morning I found that a thick blue forest had grown on them ("Fungi, Madam," he explained)...' and at once India becomes alive to me. The rest is shop." (Theroux 2000, 50).

And though this may be true, though Theroux may distance himself from those 'arrogant' Americans, he can not distance himself enough. On one of his trips to Africa, for example,

The king's councilors were eager for [him] to see the royal personage, who wore a British admiral's uniform on ceremonial occasions, a relic of an earlier Litnuga's visit to Britain. The chiefs found [him] sympathetic and friendly; they wondered aloud whether, after my audience, [he] might pass [his] findings on to the president of the United States. [He] said that [he] would do what he could. They needed help, they said. (Theroux 2000; 135)

Even when he does fulfill his own objectives, and rely on the 'protection' and the people he meets, Theroux can not distance himself from his own home, his own Americaness.

The exchange in Africa, however, reveals something else very important with Theroux. "They needed help," they said to Theroux, and he had already said he would do what he could. Theroux finds, "the profoundest satisfaction in travel [as] a sense of discovery, the private thrill of seeing something new of seeing it in a new way" (Theroux 2000; 121). Yet, in *Fresh Air Fiend*, many of his essays find him in countries, meeting people, meeting cultures, Theroux the traveler, the self-proclaimed prophetic writer, not that other Theroux, dedicated to the wilderness. The author himself explains, "when I was younger, I liked traveling in cities, being among mobs of people, seeking out churches and museums. I think it gave me a sense of self-importance... I have come to value emptier spaces, to seek out the natural world and the ultimate of what travel has to offer—wilderness... so much in travel is self-delusional" (Theroux 2000; 121).

Granted, much of Theroux's writing is self-indulgently centered on kayaking in open space, but more of *Fresh Air Fiend* centers on the nature of travel, that which is often derived from the people Theroux meets. When he meets the Africans in the earlier passage, they ask him to speak on their behalf for a very particular reason, one which

Theroux seems to acknowledge, but never quite addresses—his own privilege. As a white, male travel writer from the United States, Theroux's position in the global scheme of things needs no proclamation. Theroux's own experiences, in particular his two years with the Peace Corps in Africa, place upon him (or at least Peace Corps officials might hope it would place upon him) something of an awareness of the inequalities in living conditions, technology and opportunity around the world, and while he seems capable of spotting the privilege of other travelers, rarely does this light cast itself upon him.

In his essay "Down the Yangtze", Theroux travels on a veritable cruise ship full of Americans along the Chinese river. He paints something of an unfavorable picture of the travelers, wealthy Americans most of them<sup>xv</sup>, though he manages to remove himself from his own generalizations. And their privilege showed in their travel: "No hardships for us, and it seemed at times, though we were traveling through the very heart of the country, that China was elsewhere" (Theroux 2000; 160). A conversation between one of the passengers and a Chinese man seems revealing:

Mr. Tao asked, "Is rent very high in America?"

"I've never paid rent," the American lady said.

This surprised Mr. Tao. He said, "What about food? You must spend ten or twenty dollars a week on food."

"Twenty dollars is nothing," the lady said.

In China it was almost a month's salary.

"Do you have a bicycle?" the Chinese man asked.

"Yes, I do, but I only use it for fun."

"A bicycle for fun!" he said. "What about a car, do you have one?"

"Yes."

"What kind is it?"

This was a difficult question. The lady could not answer. She said,

"Actually, I have four cars."

Comrade Tao seemed to swallow something very large, and he blinked and squinted at the lady, who had become self-conscious and was saying, "There's a Chevy convertible, but I can't really use in bad weather. I usually take one of the smaller ones—they're easier to part, and you save gas. And the others..."

Comrade Tao stared. (Theroux 2000: 177-178)

Theroux, watching, reports this conversation, and later, "the lady had seen her mistake and tactfully changed the subject to azaleas," (Theroux 2000; 178), but not before the difference, the otherness, and the inequality had surfaced. Yet Theroux seems unwilling to address the inequalities and privilege in his very presence, in his reportage. "Anyone can do it, travel," he once said in an interview, "but you have to resign yourself to the fact that you're not going to be networking" (Weich 2002). While this may very well be true, one hardly thinks that networking was on the mind of Comrade Tao, or any of the other Chinese men Theroux meets. In fact, "Comrade Ma told me that he had a bicycle, a TV, and a radio. I said that he had everything, apparently." But, "no," said Ma, "I want to go to Hong Kong. They all agreed; they all wanted to go to Hong Kong. But they had never been outside Shanghai. They lived with their parents, and would go on living with them until they were married" (Theroux 2000, 187). The somewhat constricting nature of Communist China, of course, has some impact on this decision, but much the same could be said of many Third World residents who do not choose their 'sedentary' lives, but rather have no means with which to travel, let alone four cars.

As Theroux sees it, travel is a choice, and one that he gives up much to achieve. Once this choice has been made, Theroux travels in order to find himself. He asks, "Who are the great travelers? They are all sorts, of course...Their passion is visiting the unknown. Travel, which is nearly always regarded as an attempt to escape from the ego, is in my opinion the opposite; nothing induces concentration or stimulates memory like an alien landscape or a foreign culture" (Theroux 2000;120). But Theroux, in home-plus, cosmopolitan mode, finds himself in Others, and then defines himself in that distance. "It

is simply not possible," he argues, "(as romantics think) to lose yourself in an exotic place" (Theroux 2000; 30).

Fittingly, then, Theroux's last non-fiction travel essay in Fresh Air Fiend begins with the title, "Unspeakable Rituals and Outlandish Beliefs," and comprises an entire section of rituals and customs deemed exotic by our cosmopolitan author. Again, Theroux attempts to normalize his relationship with these customs first by stating his familiarity and experience with them, and then later when he says, "rather than being exceptional, and thus misleading, I think of such supposed oddness as the most telling, arising out of the heart of the culture. What ought to interest us is the enduring nature of the customs and beliefs—that they have not changed at all, nor are likely to change as long as the people remain isolated and wholly to themselves" (Theroux 2000; 444). In fact, what Theroux then writes, from body sculpting of the Mongoni to the mice in the mouths of the Plashwits are sensational, and they are striking. But more than anything he attempts to tell them in such matter-of-fact plainness, that one seems shocked all the more for their exoticism. Admittedly, there may be few other ways to tell of such experiences, but Theroux's treatment of the exotic remains tied to his own home, his own travels, and his own presumed comfortability.

Theroux chooses not to speak of his own privilege because such an undercurrent would reveal, in his own writing, that separation that he fears in travel. Somehow, in privilege, there lies the same element of distance that one finds in guided tours, in sightseeing, and air conditioned, first class trains. Often, Theroux has been correct in his predictions, as he points out in regards to China, but perhaps just as often Theroux seems to see everyone and everything around him as a 'them' he has invaded for an

indeterminate time, and in this manner he remains Bauman's 'stranger'. The stranger travels, and tells of the travels to a home that reads those travels with a mixture of wonderment and familiarity, halfway between, "wow, how could he do that?" and "I should go there too". In doing so, Theroux avoids his own privilege, choosing, instead to write an idealized world where choice remains free and liberal, and travel remains a choice.

"Who are the great travelers? They are curious, contented, self-sufficient people who are not afraid of the past. They are not hiding in travel; they are seeking," he says (Theroux 2000, 30). Theroux travels, certainly not to hide, nor, as he points out with his Nabokov reference, to show, but rather, I would suggest, to tell. Theroux looks for himself, and for many of his readers, perhaps, he looks for them too. "Looking for idealized versions of home—indeed, looking for the perfect memory" (Theroux 2000; 30).

## VI. Pico Iyer

<u>Colonization in Reverse</u> -Louise Bennett (Jamaica)

Wat a joyful news, miss Mattie. I feel like me heart gwine burs Jamaica people colonizin Englan in Reverse By de hundred, by de tousan From country and from town, By de ship-load, by de plane load Jamica is Englan boun. Dem a pour out a Jamaica, Everybody future plan Is fe get a big-time job An settle in de mother lan. What an islan! What a people! Man an woman, old an young

Jus a pack dem bag an baggage An turn history upside dung! Some people doan like travel, But fe show dem loyalty Dem all a open up cheapfare-To-England agency. An week by week dem shippin off Dem countryman like fire, Fe immigrate an populate De seat a de Empire. Oonoo see how life is funny, Oonoo see da turnabout? jamaica live fe box bread Out a English people mout'. For wen dem ketch a Englan, An start play dem different role, Some will settle down to

work An some will settle fe de dole. Jane says de dole is not too had Because dey payin she Two pounds a week fe seek a job dat suit her dignity. me say Jane will never fine work At de rate how she dah look. For all day she stay popn Aunt Fan couch An read love-story book. Wat a devilment a Englan! Dem face war an brave de worse. But me wonderin how dem gwine stan Colonizin in reverse.

It was only recently, in fact, that I realized that I am an example, perhaps, of an entirely new breed of people, a transcontinental, tribe of wanderer that is multiplying as fast as international telephone lines and frequent-flier programs. We are the transit loungers, forever heading to the departure gate. We buy our interests duty-free, we eat our food on plastic plates, we watch the world through borrowed headphones. We pass through countries as through revolving doors, resident aliens of the world, impermanent residents of nowhere. Nothing is strange to us, and nowhere is foreign.

We are visitors even in our own home.

Pico Iyer in "Confessions of a Perpetual Foreigner"

Home, often being where the heart is, remains difficult both theoretically and practically to locate. Home, for Pico Iyer, the near-poster-child for today's cosmopolitanism, might be even harder to locate. Born to Indian parents, and raised between the United States and England and now living in Japan, Iyer's home proves elusive. He seems more comfortable in the waiting areas of airports, in the transit lounges of his own words—in perpetual motion. A former *Time* columnist and sometime

contributor, Pico Iyer left the magazine for the designed purpose of writing travel. His first book, *Video Nights in Kathmandu: and Other Reports from the Not-So-Far East* chronicles that journey and the mission he left with—"to see how America was reconstituted abroad, to measure the country by the shadow it casts" (Iyer 1988; 11).

The shadow that America casts, it turns out (perhaps unsurprisingly), looms quite large. And in his extensive travels in the not-so-far East, Iyer manages to detail the ways in which that shadow plays with the very realities of the localities in which he finds himself. Somewhat implicitly, in the fear of an American shadow lies the fear of homogenization, the Americanization of the world, the cultural hegemony that so many people fear in globalization. Iyer positions himself to question the motivating forces behind both this fear and the reality of the situation. "Travel," he says, "is how we put a face and voice to the Other and step a little beyond our second-hand images of the alien. It is, in fact, how we learn about the world and come to terms (and sometimes peace) with it" (Iyer 2002).

Iyer's journey begins in a manifestation of his California home—the Hollywood movie, *Rambo*. The movie becomes a frame, a way in which Iyer can track not only Rambo's trek across the globe, but also America's. He quotes from the movie which begins, "What you choose to call hell...he calls home" (Iyer 1988; 9). This line acts as catalyst for the author's own ponderings and wanderings:

However inadvertently, that sentence suggested many of the other ideas that first sent me East: that home has nothing to do with hearth, and everything to do with a state of mind; that one man's home may be his compatriot's exile; that home is, finally, not the physical place, but the role and the self we choose to occupy.

I went to Asia, then, not only to see Asia, but also to see America, from a different vantage point and with new eyes. I left one kind of home to find another: to discover what resided in me and where I resided most fully, and so to better appreciate—in both senses of the word—the home I had left. (Iyer 1988; 9)

When Iyer leaves, spurred on by the theatrics of Sylvester Stallone and everything he stands for, he brings with him that which he left—a displacement, a sense of belonging through not belonging, of looking for something which he can not see. With this in mind, the author's home, we can better understand the places he visits, and the way in which his writing then becomes his home and the means through which the reader begins to occupy a similar space.

Iyer begins his trip, "in Bali, the Elysian isle famous for its other-wordly exoticism" (Iyer 1988; 30). As one of the oldest tourist destinations in the world, famed from the time of the great explorations through the Grand Tour to the present for its beautiful women, ethereal beaches, and soothing way of life, Bali seems the perfect place for Iyer to land. "Tourism," he says, "hung around Bali like chains around a mermaid" (Iyer 1988; 31). The fact that Iyer should mention tourism so early in his book immediately distances him from authors like Naipaul and Theroux, to whom tourism often seemed a nuisance that must be tolerated, if not altogether eradicated. For Iyer, interested in the cultural implications of globalization, tourism must stand as one of the most powerful progenitors of cultural exchange. His elegant metaphor of chains unlocks an early understanding of his travels. Yet, Iyer often reads not quite as wholly different from Theroux and Naipaul as some might like to think. He writes,

Bali had also become the world's most popular stage for a subtler battle, and a less ethereal dance—between the colonizing impulse of the West and the resistant cultural heritage of the East. Like Prospero's isle, Bali was a kind of paradise crowded with wood nymphs and cavehidden spirits. Like Prospero's isle, it was governed by a race of noblemen, artisans and priests that had been chased into exile across the seas. And like Prospero's isle, it was not being threatened by a new mob of aliens, who found themselves charmed by its virgin goddesses, made sleep-heavy by its unearthly music. (Iyer 19881; 31)

This image, that of Prospero's island so often debated in postcolonial circles<sup>xvi</sup>, will apply throughout the book not only to Bali but to the state of tourism and the exotic the world over. In this way, Iyer begins his book with a huge risk, one that should be apparent in the beautiful, albeit weighted, descriptions of the locals. His words: "resistant cultural heritage", "paradise", "virgin goddesses" and "unearthly music" teeter on the edge of an exoticism that would place Iyer in the footsteps of those travelers who came before him, smitten with difference, and consumed by the 'noble savage'. In the same way Naipaul admonishes the natives of his own country, or the manner in which Theroux seems to primitivize others, Iyer eulogizes what seems to be a forgotten past in the present.

In reality, his analysis (and along with it his voice) remains far more complex.

Later in the same chapter he goes on to acknowledge, "indeed, according to many Bali watchers, the tourist trade had actually quickened and revived Balinese culture," a concession that seems to imply a possible positive effect of tourism on local culture\*.

"For fun-loving tourists, of course, the boom was a boon. And for the locals, the development may well have been even more of a blessing" (Iyer 1988, 53). This becomes the tone that much of his book takes on—a sort of dialectic between the negative cultural effects of tourism and the positive economic and developmental impacts of such trade.

<sup>\*</sup> There seems a need here to speak a little bit about culture, and I am not sure if I did this earlier. At this point I think it needs to be made clear something that should have been apparent from the last lengthy quote of Iyer's, and that is as follows: As Iyer's mission is to track the shadow that America casts, he will necessarily be looking at the ways in which local cultures stand up to the powerful forces of 'American' culture. Nicholas Dirks' work here, on creating culture, would be an obvious reference for the inherent dangers, theoretically if not practically, in this approach.

Tourism, of course, as with cultural hegemony and Iyer's travels, often appears as a one-way street. Iyer's book fills itself with such moments; moments when the author, at the end of his journey, realizes the privilege he has in being able to leave, and the relative permanence of the locals. In Burma he reflects, "besides, it was always easy to romanticize what one left behind: childhood, or the past, or a country that seemed compounded of both" (Iyer 1988; 218). The hints of paternalism here (referring to Burma as childish, caught in the past) may ring true for many foreigners who see themselves as travelling (Theroux comes to mind) with the idea of returning to something they can no longer find in their own home. Iyer counters this, however, when he continues, "that, perhaps, was the ultimate Western luxury" (Iyer 1988; 218). In the same breath Iyer then recounts a General rebuking him on his perception of "cultural innocence and integrity", quickly followed by a short story of a man he had met in Burma (a closed society) who, after dropping the author off at the airport, quietly hands him a smudged envelope for his uncle in England who, with some luck, might, "free him from the slow and terrible death of his motherland" (Iyer 1988; 219).

This image of the local almost stuck in his locality while Iyer leaves weightlessly recurs dramatically throughout the book. When Iyer returns (in one way) home, as he puts it, to India, the local desire to leave looms large. "The lust for foreign goods," he tells, "'crazy for phoren' as the local phrase had it—was therefore intense. 'You can say that above wine, women and song,' a Bombay critic had told me, 'the great dream of the Indian intellectual is to go abroad' "(Iyer 1988; 273). Iyer meets, in India, a young man named Arvind whose, "great dream, he said, was to be hired by a VCR importer...who paid men to go to Singapore and Bangkok to bring back video machines," (Iyer 1988;

277). Arvind invites himself to a sort of conversation with Iyer, one that seems to epitomize many of the interactions that occur between tourist and local:

It was one of those strange exchanges, peculiar to the Third World, during which I sensed that it was not just my company that appealed to my newfound friend. For it seemed to me that each of us was symbolic to the other, both to be cherished and to be put to use (a double irony here, since I, completely Indian, served Arvind as an image of the West). And all evening long, an unspoken request seemed to hover in the air. The happiest aspect of traveling in the developing world is that it allows cross-cultural exchanges in which each party can give something to the other. Yet the fact that both parties have something to gain from giving is surely the saddest thing about trading in the developing world. (Iyer 1988; 276)

The double irony here speaks to the manner in which symbols affect so many globalized interactions. Iyer, the Indian-American, finds himself in India as symbol for the "West", for America, whereas often times, back in the West, he most surely is considered Indian—an Other. In this way global culture manipulates local identities and reshapes them on a global platform. Arvind, a young boy who wants to travel, would, by many, be considered almost-Western, yet in this situation he finds himself archeptyped as the Third World.

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There is an unease with which Iyer addresses these sorts of interactions, one that he only begins to imply in the last example the developing world. In his travels he meets many people who want to leave, and in every case there lies the moral decision of the ethnographer, the critical distance that seems at times necessary, and at other times excruciating.

As tourists, moreover, we are bombarded with importunities from a variety of loacls—girls who live off their bodies and touts who live off their wits, merchants who use friendship to lure us into their stores and 'students' who attach themselves to us in order to improve their English—that we begin to regard as ourselves as beleaguered innocents and those we meet as shameless predators.

To do so, however, is to ignore the great asymmetry that governs every meeting between tourist and local; that we are there by choice and they largely by circumstance; that we are traveling in the spirit of pleasure, adventure and romance, while they are mired in the

more urgent business of trying to survive; and that we, often courted by the government, enjoy a kind of unofficial diplomatic immunity, which gives us all the perks of authority and none of the perils of responsibility, while they must stake their hopes on every potential transaction. (Iyer 1988; 15)

But layered within this unease there exists a tension—Iyer's destinations, as stated, tend to track the affects of Americanization, and, unlike Theroux, he finds himself, more often than not, in cities. In understanding metropolis after metropolis, Iyer seems drawn to the bright lights, and paved streets, often times missing the back alleys that may more accurately speak to the inequalities wrought by global trade. In the paragraph above Iyer mentions the girls who live off their bodies, and it is one of these women that reveals one of the more complex aspects of Iyer's journey.

In his travels in Thailand Iyer meets Ead, a "small and serious Thai girl [he] had met in the flashy neon strip of Soi Cowboy, who did not seem to have the heart for her ambiguous profession" (Iyer 1988; 370). Ead strikes Iyer for her tenderness, her humanity, and one day he returns to Thailand to try and find her. He wanders off the main streets into a back-alley, guided only by a small, smudged piece of paper with nothing more then a direction on it. There he finds "flimsy walls", "half-naked women" and "sewage" but, unfortunately, no Ead. Though there is no explicit mention in his own description, this is one moment in the book\* where Iyer seems to allow the intense interpersonal relationships he forms and the reality of poverty interact and become real.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>#</sup> There is one other moment that I can think of when Iyer allows himself to be emotionally affected by poverty. On page 162 he says, "Until I came to Manila, I had not known that I was capable of social outrage. But then, one evening, one of my hotel security guards invited me home. We drove down Roxas Boulevard, the grand corniche that sweeps along Manila Bay and boasts the Hyatt, the Holiday Inn and many of the city's starriest discos; as we passed, I noticed people living on the center divider of the road, huddling against the rain and the wind in shacks no larger than a bathtub." Unlike

The result is striking. Iyer paints such a vivid picture of so many of the places he visits because he can, so adroitly, distinguish between the personal and the public, and in doing so he paints brilliant pictures of a resilient humanity. He becomes lost when he cannot find Ead, introspective in a way that hardly surfaces elsewhere. It is as if in concentrating so much attention elsewhere on the personal relationships he forms, he allows himself to rationalize the poverty around him to a point where he does not need to synthesize the two concepts. Ead brings them all together, and that intersection holds the weight of so many tensions.

Personal ties like Ead are what hold Iyer's work together, and also what give it the sort of relevance that often seems missing in Naipaul and Theroux. This may be a particularly postcolonial view, one which concentrates more on the interpersonal relationships necessitated by globalization, rather than the larger, systematic forces (Naipaul's colonialisms, perhaps Theroux's communisms at times). In his essay *The Necessity of Travel* Iyer writes, "most people in the developing world...do not have the opportunity or resources to come and see us. It is therefore up to us—at least those of us with time and money—to go and see them" (Iyer 2002).

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The implication here, of course, is that travel, and our willingness to abide by it as a sort of cultural obligation, holds within it the power to refigure global understandings. It is in Thailand, in fact, observing women like Ead, when his, "tidy paradigm of West exploiting East began to crumble" (Iyer 1988; 301). Iyer's paradigm, like many other "Westerners" restricts one's view of globalization by focusing on the hegemonic cultural forces at work, without much regard to individual agency. For instance:

I had thought when I first visited the Orient, that I would find myself witnessing the West in conquest of the East, armies of its invaders bearing their cultural artifacts across the barren plains of Asia. Yet the discovery I made most consistently throughout my travels was that every one of my discoveries had to be rejected or, at best, refined. And as I got ready to leave the East, I began to suspect that none of the countries I had seen, except perhaps the long-colonized Philppines, would ever, or could ever, be fully transformed by the West. (Iyer 1988; 357)

The end result then recalls the earlier discussion of hybridity and disjuncture as Iyer finds himself expecting neither but finding both. Despite the optimism, however, of a statement like this one, it seems as if Iyer's travels, while certainly valorizing the interpersonal relationships of globalization, see nothing in terms of change on a larger more systematic level.

The cultural impact of the United States is but one facet of the global forces of change, and the Bali of yesterday is certainly not the Bali of today or tomorrow. The fact that Iyer begins with Bali and that it should play so prominently in today's discussion of globalization and terrorism seems salient. As a contested site for culture and for global politics, Bali, and tourist destinations like it the world over, become the grounds on which this more systematic battle between mythical East and West (or, in our contemporary terms, the Global North and the Global South) is fought. Iyer's essay on *The Necessity of Travel* makes the case that in the face of terrorism, "travel has never been so urgent, even necessary, as it is today" (Iyer 2002). But this statement seems to jar with an earlier claim of his that refers to cosmopolitans (those who can travel, people like himself) as, "seasoned experts at dispassion, [who] are less good at involvement or suspension of disbelief; at, in fact, the abolition of distance" (Iyer 2000—Confessions...).

opposed to the personal aspect the she so well exemplifies.

Iyer's writing begs the question of whether or not it is enough to know Ead, and to report favorably on the possibility of global interaction, or whether we could perhaps gain something more if we expand to the more frightening realms of poverty outside of the personal. It seems to be one thing to know someone, to see them struggle every day, and to know that despite their struggle we can still relate, and another to see a nation, a world, struggling, and to figure out where in that world we belong, and how we can relate what we have, what Pico Iyer has, to that world. That, it seems, is the great luxury, the great privilege of the travel writer. Not only that they can leave but also that they can limit their interactions to the personal and, thusly, their concerns.

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## VII. A Prescription

The tour ends. There was arrival—the beginning, the introduction—and now the faithful reader will expect departure. These are the paradigms, these are the ways we read and understand travel. We read through a lens of departure and arrival, and as we began sitting down, so shall we end, seated, returning to home, ready for life as we know/knew it to resume. We have traveled with some of the greatest travelers of our generation, men (all men significantly) who have made it their lives to travel, and to tell us about it. We end with some of the same questions that we began with: how do Iyer, Theroux, and Naipaul rationalize their various privileges, their abilities to travel when those around them cannot? How can other writers who will come after them proactively approach a newer way of writing, one that might begin to answer the questions I have asked here?

There was (there is, and there will be) VS Naipaul. The nomad, self-exiled, self-proclaimed "Enigma of Arrival" undeniably revolutionized travel writing. As a writer who seems uncomfortable locating a home for himself, he travels the world exploring those places that he has left only to leave them again. A gifted writer, Naipaul crafts a story with the cutting language and insight that creates a distance between himself and his subject that allows him to have left a seemingly static land which he, at one point, was very much a part of.

In Naipaul's travels people become objects, and cultures subjects to be studied.

Because Naipaul rarely addresses his shared background in a work like *The Middle Passage*, he manages to avoid talking about his privilege—his relative change in status as traveler versus resident. This is a particular aspect of one postcolonialism that allows a postcolonial writer to reconfigure home in terms of where he goes, thus leaving his

personal history as little more than a path to the present. There is, in Naipaul, the consummate arrival scene, and very little regards as to what came before, what brought him to leave, or arrive, in the first place. Naipaul's privilege lies in his ability to choose a new home, consciously forgetting the old, and in the process of forgetting his own past he makes sense of the inequalities that exist in his present.

His disciple, on the other hand, the bearer in this story of the legacy of dominance, the white male representative of this group, somewhat predictably distances himself from privilege, particularly those aspects most closely related to his own dominant hetero-white-male status. Instead, Theroux becomes the wandering Self. He becomes the stranger searching for himself in the Other. He is a man on a post-Enlightment journey, a man on a self-absorbed mission that precludes questions of equality, preferring, instead, notions of identity.

His traveling interactions create a space where the dominant stranger feels outside of the locality he inhabits. With this distance the writer distinguishes himself from many of the realities that he may encounter on the trip. When Paul Theroux meets those Chinese men who want to leave the country he meets them with the cool eye of an observer who understands the politics and history of a country intimately. Yet his status as *stranger* allows him to downplay whatever familiarity he has and thus rely on the cool distance of impartiality. In this way, Theroux aims to tell the future, to predict the path of a country through the people he meets. The stranger does not come to stay—he cannot, but neither does he leave after only a few minutes.

Theroux can rationalize his privilege—his white-male status, his imminent return to a home, his ability to travel freely, his consumption in the face of lack—by

normalizing, to some extent, his Others, in a move that partially integrates him subtly into certain localities. Once accepted as impermanent resident (though not-quite-tourist either) Theroux removes himself again to a point of observer-esque in-betweenness, which, with a nod to cultural relativism, allows him to comment haphazardly on cultural norms and national prophecies as he sees fit. The stranger sees, participates, and even sits at the dinner table. But he brings home the dirty linens and airs them without the dirty conscience of someone whose family actually owns the cloth in question.

Pico Iyer, whose family linen closet holds so many different histories, wanders the globe in a fervor of cosmopolitan optimism. Iyer, cosmopolitan extraordinaire, remains caught somewhere between mysticism and missionaries, between Bollywood and Hollywood, and he writes a not-so-far East that embraces Coke and capitalism as much as it respects Buddhas and Bali beaches. Iyer's world, inhabited by the transit loungers, calls to those of us desperate for a non-hegemonic, global, multi-culturalism. Yet his cosmopolitanism, and his fervor for it, too readily embraces transparent displays of transculturation. He too hastily welcomes an inauthentic multi-culturalism that requires far more attention to the disjunctures, to the bumps in the road and the uneven transfers, than he accords it.

In all fairness, Iyer stalks both the high (hotels, tourist strips, business-sectors) and low (back streets, bars that sell bodies, karaoke bars) ends of globalization in a search for America's shadow. But too often he focuses on the parts of these shadows that seem to fit in a happy melting pot of globalization. That the East would affect the West in return should come as no surprise, but what should concern us is the manner in which this exchange not only occurs but also allows for opportunity on both sides of the exchange. It

will be in the darker parts of America's shadows where the disjunctures of the global system become clearer, shedding light on a world that cannot be divided into highs and lows.

Points of disjuncture between high and low, between perceptions of East and West, and moments like Ead's where she works in one place, in one world, in one ideology, and lives in another, reveal the complexities of a multi-culturalism, cosmopolitanism, or globalization that is comfortable and exciting on a surface level but troubled with so much inequality if one is to but scratch the surface. Iyer's travel equalizes. It screams optimism. He envisions a happy life at home (though not one without painful memories) for Ead. In doing so Iyer manages to rationalize his own travel (and that of others) as a necessity in and of itself, the travelers themselves thus becoming harbingers of the new, global multi-culturalism. Can't afford the transit lounge? We'll bring the duty-free shop to you, Iyer says. And in doing so, he notes, we might even find some things that you made to sell there too, and, don't worry, the profits will be split with you. In doing so Iyer's privilege (his ability to travel, his wealth, his leisure) becomes a responsibility to a global population in need of cultural interaction, the responsibility making sense of the privilege and vice-versa.

Yet none of these authors is wrong. Many of us, if not all, are faced with daily decisions regarding our own privileges, in whatever shapes (gender, race, class, sexuality, etc.) or sizes (privilege is relative, we find it from within families to a global scale) we find them. These decisions reflect the ways in which we have a responsibility to those around us (from our families to our worlds), and only the most saintly can relinquish their respective privilege willingly for a Utopian vision of assumed equality. Instead, these

authors, as so many of us do, use devices in order to explain their own identities, and their relationship to a world around them that is often defined or understood through relative levels of have and have-not.

With the increasing force of globalization, travel writing holds an important place in the dissemination of cultural information to a mass audience. Unlike (even the best and most loosely written) anthropological fieldwork or any number of global case studies, travel writing holds within it the ability to connect the economic capabilities of the global citizenry to travel with the social desire for newness and cultural encounter. Travel writing is a business—a global business if ever there was one. And, significantly, many writers are simply doing a job. But it would be too simple to say that Theroux, Naipaul and Iyer travel only because they are paid to do so. These writers are paid because there is an audience. The writers have something the readers want—vicarious experience, an insight into the new or 'exotic', or the filtered opinion of an 'expert'. The writers travel because they get paid to; but they also travel because they can, and because they want to.

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The writers' own desire forces them to become implicitly involved in the ongoing discussion and understanding of the process of globalization, albeit in different ways. As Naipaul bemoans the underdevlopment of his former homes so Theroux reaches for the places he sees as pure of modernity. And all the while we find Iyer with magnifying glass to the ground, watching Rambo in towns whose electricity remains a recent addition to the nightlife. Travel writing as a vehicle for the mass consumption of a global ideology becomes a terrain well-suited for a precise and conscious attempt to address the ways in which our role in globalization might attempt to shape a future that resolves the inequalities in this world of haves and have-nots. In other words, if we believe Iyer that

travel is necessary, or if we, too, desire travel and newness, how might we go about writing about it in a way that questions the inequality implicit in our very ability to act out such desires? These three authors are examples of what was and what has been. I am ready here to propose a way in which we might build on that which has come before in order to look to a way in which we might attempt to write what will be.

And it will be with this very concept of what was that we shall begin. Travel writing, from Naipaul to any you might name before him, directly relies on those travelers who have come before. Rare is the traveler, particularly now, who finds an untapped location, a newness about which one can write. This is not to say that there are no longer new encounters, only to say that in the language of travel original destinations are few and far between. One need look back no further than Evelyn Waugh's quote that heralds the end of travel and discovery. But travel writers shy away from the past, they hide the books they have read before. On many levels this is a common-sense business move—would you market a book that appears to have already been written? The obvious answer is no, though the practical answer appears in the affirmative as we consistently purchase and propagate the genre.

In erasing the past, particularly those travel writers that came before them, authors attempt to create a novelty in their writing, a sense of discovery or unprecedented arrival. One of the first steps a travel writer must then take in order to accurately assess his or her perceptions of the present and the future lies in the acknowledgment of those works. No writer, for example, who has read E.M. Forster's *Passage to India* could write a travel narrative to India without considering the effects of such a work (note here, importantly, that those works that came before must not be limited to travel narratives). When Pico

Iyer arrives in a location like Bali, he recognizes the history of the location, the ways in which the beaches have been immortalized by those writers who came before him. In doing so he also acknowledges a certain expectation that he holds upon arrival. Arrival, in this sense, provides a false newness which should be guarded with the awareness of a history that will inform the present. The hope implicit within such an appreciation or awareness of the past lies in the deconstruction of myths specific to particular times and places that will inevitably change. If one expects to find mysticism in Bali, then, most likely, one will find it. If the author realizes that the mysticism he seeks stems from the books that came before, a clearer analysis of the social processes that form cultural representations and inform the writing of new global paradigms will develop rapidly.

Secondly, writers must recognize their role as travelers in the complex and unavoidable processes of capitalism. The travel writers and their books both become commodities, and as these writers move about so do they bring with them the powers implied by consumption. Capitalism and consumption play such a large part in our global conception of inequality that the author must take note of the impact of his consumer decisions, and the manner in which he is received according to that which he brings with him—money. Should Naipaul return to the West Indies and not acknowledge his changed status (especially in terms of accumulated wealth and purchasing power) he would ignore a fundamental change in his position, and thus effectively lie to the reader. This will, inevitably, be a complex relationship, particularly for a postcolonial writer.

Jamaica Kincaid, who begins this paper, exemplifies these difficulties as she criticizes the tourist industry that brings its purchasing power to bear on the people and country of Antigua. Yet Kincaid has already left the country, and in many respects

Antigua remains highly dependent on the money generated by tourism on the island. How then to negotiate this terrain? The author must question the way in which he travels (and writes that travel) as the product of a capitalism that literally propels his journey (in advances and payments for the actual writing) and also constricts his interaction with a locality that will often read the author's wealth as immediately Other. Theroux's stranger, for example, on skin-color and nationality alone, becomes associated with wealth and accumulation of money in a way that should force us to question what other decisions are made, what other interactions are altered, due to a similar process. The concerned writer must consistently address these issues of commodity and consumption while enacting these very things. It would be simplistic to think a writer could step outside of these systems, though this is exactly how many narratives read, without any conception of cost or consumption.

In a major way, these writers are paid to navigate the middle ground between academic and every-day traveler, and this role, this positioning, allows the writer a liberal space in which to proclaim lofty statements about culture and the world as well as room to digress into personal opinion without the watchguard of the academy over his shoulder. The conscience travel writer must willingly toe this line, and in doing so carefully acknowledge those moments when they choose to speak in these voices, and separate the two voices accordingly. Travel writers are part ethnographer and part fiction writer. They are part naive student of the world and part professor of globalization.

Because they have been given the opportunity to travel, see, and report they become both teacher and student in the same breath. From within this framework the reader must be

able to see those moments of indecision, the weight of not-knowing and knowing that burdens these writers' shoulders.

For all the accuracy with which a writer like Theroux may see the future of China in the voices of the men he meets, his prophecy is not a given. Theroux acts, in this situation, as an interlocutor more versed in Chinese culture and history than his reader may be, though this does not guarantee his particular interpretation of events any preternatural power of prophecy. But because these writers become invested with ethnographic imagery, and the attempt to convey a culture and world-system through their individual experiences, the reader will often trust the reader and swallow the sword (the pen?). The conscious writer has an obligation to realize, acknowledge and cope with this relationship in a way that distinguishes his voice from one of a worldly sage and instead places at the forefront of any narrative, the pressures of learning and teaching, hearing and telling.

This is not to say that a writer cannot impart what he sees as his wisdom, or the gains of year of travel in an analysis of the past, present or future. For some writers this didacticism may be unavoidable. Instead, such authors, and others who can resist a similar urge, must acknowledge the line that they walk between writer and ethnographer, between participant and observer, between truth and consequence. Naipaul, a product of colonial rule, writes eloquently and insightfully on the effects of colonialism and the postcolonial reality. Yet at times he reflects his own personal decisions and opinions in a way that implies that these messages are also part and parcel of the postcolonial process. The conscious travel writer attempts to avoid these certainties and instead replace them with questions that complicate any notion of a fixed and absolute description of a people

or a place. The ethnographer of the travel narrative may arrive, understand and observe, but it then becomes the writer's job to give those individual experiences a life that implies alternatives.

And the balance beam continues. As ethnographer/writer amidst the processes of globalization, with an interested readership, the travel writer presents the public with a unique vision of the world. In doing so he must tread a fine line, wary of both sides of the divide, conscious of the deep discords and disjunctures that will inevitably occur in his writing. In this manner the travel writer must pick and choose pieces of both a wary exoticism that celebrates difference in all of its given forms or an otherness that defines the Self for its very separation of concepts and an optimistic global culture that celebrates the universals, the heralded oneness of humanity.

Neither of these perspectives, of course, answers anything concretely, or even speaks accurately to the dimensions of our world. Yet even within our three writers we have increasingly disparate views of the world. These range from Naipaul's homogenizing efforts at cultural classification (people are lazy due to colonialism?) to Iyer's unabashed celebration of the global soul. The conscious travel writer must be aware of the dangers of exoticism. In this awareness he must know the ways in which we too often search for newness, and in doing so define ourselves through that which we perceive as different. Theroux is who he is because he is not the people he sees. We travel, or so we say, to learn new things, and in looking for new things we consciouly seek difference that may or may not truly exist. Are Naipaul's objects that much lazier, or does he simply expect them to be lazy, different, because they are not him?

And yet neither must the conscious traveler find himself hopelessly embracing utopian and universal visions of humanity. Woe is the writer who only believes in one race... the human race. We are a world of difference and similarity, a heterogeneous glob of masses and individuals, inexplicable, and brilliant. For this we create forms, meanings, and ideas that cannot contain simple linear thoughts. To attempt to encapsulate all of this as one force, as a race, or as an all-embracing multi-culturalism is also to ignore the powerful forces we exert upon each other in daily struggles for imaginary concepts like power, success, wealth and life. The travel writer must then see these universals warily, as elements of himself that he sees in others, and that we can celebrate, but without the excited shout of a man who has blindly accepted himself in others without understanding, first, that he may never know himself. Pico Iyer ends up shocked, wet, and disappointed when he goes looking for Ead. She is not the same as he is. He cannot understand—it is presumptuous and false to think we ever could.

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If we refer back to the cultural dimensions of globalization I discusses earlier, this may be clearer. Arjun Appadurai, on the cultural side of things, indicates and highlights the points of disjuncture as those defining moments of globalization. We, too, as readers and writers of globalization, must look to the points of disjuncture in our travels as the very moment when privilege becomes defined. It will be these narratives of disjuncture that provide the most telling tale of a world without one, large, unified voice. At these points of disjuncture we will find everything from hybridity to hatred and any effort to accurately retell this journey must attempt to tell as many of these voices as possible.

And more than anything the conscious travel writer must decide. It may remain impossible to write a travel narrative that accounts for privilege and the ways in which

we rationalize it because the very ability to write depends on a degree of privilege itself. There will be questions of form; we are in desperate need of a travel narrative that speaks to new concepts of time, to the postmodern, to the postcolonial, to the disparate voices of heterogeneous homes and to legions of exiles. There will be questions of terminology; arrival and departure should be banned. They cannot exist. The arrival scene, then, the mark of any travel narrative, must also disappear as arrival implies an absence of that which came before, and that is, as we know, a lie. There will be a language; does the writer speak it? does he write it? does the reader have an obligation to try and understand the language of the country he reads about? will he want to? And there will be questions that cannot be answered, and those with which there are no words to ask.

The travel narrative is doomed to be attempted again. We sit here, waiting, expecting, desiring, wanting. Or perhaps you have gotten up. Perhaps I will get up. And I will travel. Yes, I will travel. And when I do so, I will tell you about it, because it will change the way I think, it will change everything that has been said here, and I will want it to change you too. I will want you to understand. No, you can't. I will want you to want to understand so that you, too, will get up. So that you, too, will want me to understand, so that I, too, after having rested will want to get up and go and begin this all over again. And we will continue, and we will write because we can no longer accept that this is a privilege, because we can no longer be comfortable with something we were given and cannot justify. And we will try to write it away. And we will fail. And we will try it again despite that feeling of failure that will weigh on us, despite the eyes we feel watching us, despite the words we write of others who want to join us but simply can't. We will try because we feel powerless, powerless to change something we can only begin to

understand. And we will write it, with all the more passion, in the hopes that though I can't understand, perhaps, when you get up, you will get it. You will understand.

## **ENDNOTES**

Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Provincializing Europe* makes an important point about the term contemporary: "'contemporary' refers to all that belongs to a culture at a particular point on the (secular) calendar that the author and the intended reader of this statement inhabit. In that sense, everybody is part of the 'contemporary'" (Chakrabarty 2000; 87). Chakrabarty then goes on to explain that the contemporary in its inclusion of masses of people also serves as an exclusionary model for others, necessarily implying a certain moment for a certain people. I have chosen to use contemporary here and in other places as a substitute for modernity in order to avoid all that the term modernity implies. There may be other choices, though it should be clear the contemporary, much like the we in question, will be a word the reader may choose to agree or disagree with, to accept or decline.

ii The us here, and other places in this paper, may be questionable. I think, however, that it is important, from the beginning, to stress the intention and purpose in this inclusiveness. This is no stylistic choice, but rather a request that any and all readers consider themselves a part of this situation. I realize that there may be readers who find themselves outside of the we that I might posit, and I hope that will not affect their perception of this work. Instead, the we and us are invoked in order to call attention to the parallel privileges of those reading this paper, and those of whom I am writing about. The traveler's gaze is only one part of a larger system of "multiple gazes" that work in conjunction to accurately portray the dynamics of cultural interaction involved in the retelling of the situation. This idea comes from the work of Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins in their book *Reading National Geographic* that looks, specifically, at the photojournalism (photo-tourism) of National Geographic Magazine. I have chosen to apply their conversation about the multiple gazes, (they have several, but those of import seem to be that of the viewer, that of the local, and that of the West—home) in order to parallel the ways in which travel writers create similar relationships. Every travel writer essentially draws, or paints, a photographic image in words in an effort at truth and accuracy. The travel writer's gaze then includes a host of possible angles from which that literary picture can be interpreted. Lutz and Collins provide a far more complete definition of the "gaze" than I will here, and it is worth looking at, at the very least, to gain an understanding of the theory surrounding the creation of the "gaze", and its finer

points.

For the course of this paper there will be several terms with which I am less than comfortable. At the top of that list is our notion of, "The West". Naoki Sakai, as quoted in Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, explains, "The West is a name for a subject which gathers itself in discourse but it is also an object constituted discursively; it is, evidently, a name that always associates itself with those regions, communities and people that appear politically or economically superior to other regions, communities and people. Basically, it is just like the name 'Japan'...it claims that it is capable of sustaining, if not actually transcending, and impulse to transcend all the particularizations" (Chakrabarty, 5). Because my paper deals with the perceptions that many people hold, terms like The West and the Third World-First World dichotomy will find a place in my writing, but not without hesitation. These terms should be understood

as referring to the perceptions of the world's groupings, and not to an ordained hierarchy of West to East or First to Third Worlds.

<sup>v</sup> I use the word privilege with a little liberty in this paper, and not much definition. I would hope that privilege, as used, can be understood to refer to the manner in which some have and some have not. I understand this is somewhat vague and unhelpful, though I consider it somewhat implicit. A better understanding might be reached by considering privilege as the ability to make a choice. In terms of travel those who are privileged can *choose* to travel, those others cannot. Ultimately, privilege will be relative. and one of the most succinct ways I have seen it portrayed is by [got to find the name of this author and work in her essay on White Privilege. In this essay she makes a list of those things which she, normally, would never have to think about, and considers that a privilege of being white. For example, a white person never has to think about whether the taxi did not pick him up simply because he was white. An African-American person may never have to worry that they will be considered an 'alien' in America. A straight person never has to worry that they will be denied visiting rights for their loved one in a hospital, and so forth. Privilege becomes not having to think about what one has. vi To delve into the various understandings of postcolonialism requires a book in and of itself, a task that Leela Ghandi has accomplished quite masterfully. Her book, Postcolonial Theory, provides an incredible and multi-faceted look at the critical debate surrounding postcolonial theory. Her primary starting point, that, "postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past," only begins a book in which she surveys a wide variety of opinions and interpretations of the postcolonial (Ghandi, 4). There are any number of ways of interpreting postcolonialism, as Cooper and Stoler point out in their deconstruction of the very term itself into 'post', 'colonial', and 'ism' (Cooper and Stoler, 1997). I have chosen one method of addressing the postcolonial, which is, by no means, complete.

vii Defintions of postmodernity abound, not least among them that of David Harvey and Lyotard. In most cases, however, postmodernity seems to closely linked with notions of space and time that seem uncomfortable here, as indicated in other words, most often in the work of the Subaltern Studies writers.

Penedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* has provided the basis for much of the contemporary debate on the national imagination, and, as a result, on the ways in which nations become part of a larger imagination of globalization. One need look no further than the Israel/Palestine debate, or Eastern Europe to view the continuing presence of the imagined nation's power or look towards the burgeoning power of something like Al Qaeda, to understand the failure of nationalism to explain contemporary communities. These contradictions keep me from embracing, totally, the nation as a contemporary imaginary force over something larger within globalization or from totally abandoning the concept. Obviously, then, the notion of nation will be loaded with both historical and future meanings, meanings that this paper is not designed to address.

ix In Bhabba's words, "cultural globality is figured in the *in-between* spaces of double-frames: its historical originality marked by a cognitive obscurity, its decentered 'subject'

signified in the nervous temporality of the transitional, or the emergent provisionality of the present" (Bhabba, 216).

There is a certain irony in speaking about Bhabba, and an attempt to 'locate culture'. Obviously, his collection of essays, "The Location of Culture", offers one attempt at placing culture somewhere in our consciousness. My intent is nowhere near as ambitious, although for anyone with the time, I would recommend looking at Bhabba's book. Instead, my interest lies in acknowledging the difficulty of even talking about culture and globalization together without first threatening the very existence of theoretical culture.

On this point a quick note: It should be noted that a theorist like Tomlinson's association of globalization with modernity appears a little elitist. This formulation seems to posit globalization, and its particular benefits and discontents, along a certain continuum of 'progress', one that may not accurately reflect a

nation's advances. In other words, a debate of globalization that places the modern as essential to understanding globalization runs the risk of hierarchizing globalisms on an international level. Particularly in cultural terms it seems as if globalization should refer not to the available technologies but rather to a prevailing consciousness.

xii I have, somewhat intentionally, chosen all-male travel writers for the following analysis. Travel writing has diversified as of late, though I have chosen to concentrate on straight, male narratives in order to more concretely focus on the ways in which privilege works on so many levels (gender and sexuality being incredibly complicated for global narratives). This should not imply a preference for the straight, male narrative, though it should remind the reader that even today travel is dominated by just such a dominant voice.

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Despite any reservations he may have with such categorization, Naipaul even says, "It is in this way...that the Trinidadian is a cosmopolitan. He is adaptable; he is cynical; having no rigid social conventions of his own, he is amused by the conventions of others" (Naipaul 74; 1962). Naipaul was, despite any aversion to the label, quite Trinidadian. xiv In an interview with Bharati Mukherjee and Robert Boyers in 1981, Naipaul, after being asked about his role as voice for the 'postcolonial consciousness', becomes instantly quarrelsome. In other words he seems obviously uncomfortable with that conversation for what appears to be a variety of reasons. Naipaul: "I don't use the word 'imperialist' or 'colonialist', for example...they are words that are used only by chaps in the universities who made a specialty of putting things in political grooves" (Mukherjee and Boyers, 1981).

xv "It was a good companionable crowd, and though it seems a contradiction to say so, these millionaires represented a cross section of American society. Some had inherited their money, some had got it from divorce settlements, or had married into it, or had made it from nothing...Some struck me as rather stupid... some were very smart...all of them had traveled before." (Theroux 2000: 159)

Shakespeare's *Tempest* has been manipulated every which way by writers from Aimee Ceisaire to Salman Rushdie. There are those who would allegorize with Prospero as colonizer and Caliban colonized, and others who choose to see Ariel as the mouth-piece of the oppressed. At its most dramatic the debate centers around Caliban's gratefulness towards Prospero for his learned ability to speak the language, if only for the power it gives him to curse his master. I have no intention of making a statement here as to the

applicability of the story to modern tourism, only that such comparisons already exist, and Iyer's statement finds itself, wittingly or not, in the middle of such debates.

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