DIANA SORENSEN, EDITOR

TERRITORIES *and* TRAJECTORIES

Cultures in Circulation

INTRODUCTION *by* HOMI K. BHABHA

TERRITORIES & TRAJECTORIES

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Cultures in Circulation

Edited by Diana Sorensen · Introduction by Homi Bhabha

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Introduction
On Disciplines and Destinations

HOMI K. BHABHA

A remark by Ernst Bloch apropos of *The Arcades Project*: "History displays its Scotland Yard badge?" It was in the context of a conversation in which I was describing how this work—comparable, in method, to the process of splitting the atom—liberates the enormous energies of history that are bound up in the "once upon a time" of classical historiography. The history that showed things "as they really were" was the strongest narcotic of the century. —WALTER BENJAMIN

I

Diana Sorensen invites her contributors to elaborate a mode of cultural criticism grounded in a "new geographical consciousness" composed of multicentered circuits, ex-centric itineraries, and contingent configurations of time, sign, and sensibility. A significant impediment to the pedagogy of mobility, Sorensen argues, is the large and leaden footprint of the nation-state as it leaves a lasting imprint on the organization of knowledge. There are sound historical and economic reasons that "nation-based" institutions exist—national universities, national museums, national archives—even as they frequently project a composite image of cultural heritage, territorial integrity, and civic identity. National institutions occupy what Benedict Anderson aptly called (after Walter Benjamin) a temporality peculiar to the nation-space: "homogenous empty time."[1] The effect of this national temporality on orders of knowledge is to create curricular pedagogies that are, for the most part, as Sorensen writes,

"taking distance from older notions of stability and containment derived from the nation-state" (13).

The nation-state's geographical imaginary is not inert, of course. National spaces have well-defined and copiously configured movements of social transformation and cultural mobility. The movement of people from the country to the city, for instance, traces the emergence of the commercial spirit, the establishment of urban growth, and the development of a civic consciousness. Coastal regions are restless thresholds of trade, cultural exchange, and the porosity of peoples and things. And inner cities are turbulent spaces of migration waves, with inflows of first-generation migrants and outflows of succeeding generations that reform the domestic demography. Geopolitical mobility is as much an incipient aspect of the restlessness internal to the nation-form as an indication of the circuitous and contingent networks of globalization.

In what sense, then, does a nation-centered discourse create an immobile curricular perspective? The nation's dominion over disciplinary domains is established by prioritizing linguistic authenticity, affirming cultural supremacy, and making claims to historical continuity and political progress. These shared discourses of national legitimation are articulated in affective structures of belonging that feel invariably "local" despite their hybrid, international, or intercultural genealogies. Stephen Greenblatt speaks saliently of this very experience in arguing that "one of the characteristic powers of culture is its ability to hide the mobility that is its enabling condition."[2] To imagine a pedagogy that departs from the normalization—one could even call it the *nationalization*—of knowledge, I want to return to the restless mobility of peoples *within* the nation to which I have just alluded. Although patriotic, nationalist discourse promotes an iconic ideal of "the people," *e pluribus unum*, conceived in a social space of consent and consensus, the territoriality of the nation as a place of belonging is an unsettled, anxious *habitus*. Migrants, the unemployed, the poor, and the homeless—among other marginalized communities—search restlessly for a "homeland" within the hegemony of the nation. Theirs is a mobility that moves from one rented home to another, from one job to another, from one part of the country to another, and from one border or frontier to another. The claims for a post-national—or transnational—geography of mobility must be seen in a complex and necessary relation to social mobilities internal to the structure of nation-states and geopolitical regions.

In making this argument I am reminded of Edward Said's essay "History, Literature, and Geography" (1995), which reaches out from the "multiply-centered" geographic consciousness of the late twentieth century to connect with Raymond Williams's reflections on the "difficult mobility" between the

country and the city. The world we live in, Said writes, is "a world . . . mixed up, varied, complicated by the new difficult mobility of migrations, the new independent states, the newly emergent and burgeoning cultures."[3] Said's account did not prepare me for Williams's explicit reference to internal mobility within the nation as a form of migrant consciousness. In his discussion of Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, Williams writes of the ambivalent relations between "the migrant and his former group . . . caught up in the general crisis of the relations between education and class, relations which in practice are between intelligence and fellow feeling." The homeland to which the internal migrant belongs is a border country of uneasy transitions and liminal self-identifications. Deeply embedded in Williams's rich dialectic of the country and the city is a conflict of values—proximate yet polarizing—that reveal migration to be a borderline condition for both culture and consciousness. "But the real Hardy country, we soon come to see," Williams writes, "is that border country so many of us have been living in: between custom and education, between work and ideas, between love of place and an experience of change."[4]

Williams's use of the metaphor of migration to articulate the tipping point of historical transition in Hardy's Wessex compels our attention today. We are pressured to learn to live—and to think—in terms of the border country of aporetic conflations in which the sovereignty of the nation may be diminished by the dominance of neoliberal encroachments of global markets and postnational governance, and yet the exigent pressures of everyday economic and ethical life are still firmly located in the search for security and community that is profoundly connected to the symbolic and material necessities of national belonging. When such an ambivalent and contradictory condition is mapped onto the extensive scales and rapid technological movements of global transnational geographies—both physical and virtual—it is only too easy to lose sight of the everyday violence and endurance experienced by those for whom finding a "homeland" is a restless struggle to occupy the sifting grounds of living on borderlines *within* the nation. To perceive this melancholic mobility of the un-homed with any clarity, one has to resort to a smaller scale of representation that magnifies the detail of displacement and dispossession. In *After the Last Sky*, Said adopts a scalar diminution that strangely enlarges the quotidian Palestinian quest for a harried homeland. He writes:

> Palestine is a *small place*. It is also incredibly crowded with the traces and claims of peoples. Its legacy is not just one of conquest and resettlement, but also of reexcavations and reinterpretations of history. . . . Cover a map of Palestine with the legends, insignia, icons, and routes of all the peoples

> who have lived there, and you will have no space left for terrain. . . . And the more recent the people, the more exclusive their claim, and the more vigorous the pushing out and suppressing of all others. In addition, each claim invents its deflections, shoving matches, and dislocations.[5]

The concept of the "border country" sets the tone for what it means to be restlessly unhomed *within* the nation or the region, and it is from this perspective of the anxiety of accommodation that I want to approach the curricular conditions of cultural mobility. The pedagogical return to a "home discipline" is, in the process, estranged and enhanced; and the grounds of curricular knowledge are extended in an interdisciplinary and extraterritorial direction. Jacqueline Bhabha's essay on the European Roma makes a moving case for acknowledging the conditions of "constitutive displacement" as the basis for the political and ethical "right to have rights." The long history of social mobility, and the inherited traditions of cultural translation, define the life world of Roma peoples, and it could be argued that their very existence instantiates, *avant la lettre*, the values of free movement, legal protection and equitable access to social welfare that provides the constitutional framework of the European Union. Yet the political and legal bias toward "demonstrable residential permanence" deprives the majority of the Roma population of the benefits of European citizenship (194). The Roma live in that border country where the customary and communitarian genealogies of "belonging"—constitutive displacement—are violated by the sedentary strictures of legal personhood that are discriminatory both in principle and in practice. In taking up the Roma case, Bhabha's essay interrogates the foundational assumptions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that ground legal identity in the permanence of place. Her intervention is an illustration of the important role of activism associated with the disciplinary domain of human rights studies—an activism that demonstrates the need to sustain the authority of the founding ideals of rights by subjecting them to the ongoing interpretational vigilance of critique and revision.

Many of the essays in this volume build their arguments around moving targets of ontological and geographical mobility—distance, diaspora, relationality, portability, itinerancy—that repeatedly configure the "homeland" as an enigma of arrival. Being-at-home is an anxious striving for accommodation unsettled by cycles of loss and disoriented by processes of social transition and cultural translation. These essays do not dismantle the hegemonic architectures of national authority or regional territoriality only to replace them with overarching constructs such as the transnational or the global. There is little doubt that these post-Westphalian concepts are riven by a critical consciousness composed of

spatial displacements, temporal disjunctions, and relational networks. However, global vocabularies of mobility and contingency frequently become victims of their own curricular success. As these keywords of global discourse develop a ubiquitous methodological currency *across* the disciplinary map, the articulation of disjunction and displacement established in any specific case oftentimes loses its critical edge, and "contingency" becomes canonized in the disciplinary interests of the legitimation of "global studies." This is not a matter of critical "bad faith" operating in the self-interest of turf wars. In establishing their presence in the enlarged mapping of institutional knowledge, emergent disciplines develop a mimetic medium of recognition that retroactively projects a mirror image of the discipline as a master trope. The effects of contingency—disruptive causalities, indeterminate meanings, disjunctive connections—lose their complexity when they are "scaled up" and assume the authoritative legitimation of a meta-critical discourse. The claims of critique are frequently normalized in the interests of maintaining disciplinary authority.

The hermeneutic of the "homeland" reveals the site of domestic affiliation to be a space of iterative and belated return, not a springboard of identitarian authenticity from which cultural narratives of selfhood and statehood must naturally begin as if emerging from a centered point of national origin. The "difficult mobilities" of social stratification and unequal opportunity, to say nothing of political oppression and structural discrimination, explode the myth of a singular and sovereign "origin" of the nation's people. The homeland, as I conceive of it, is a destination at which you arrive beset by the anxiety and anticipation of an extraneous geographic consciousness and a contingent sense of cultural history narrated through passages of life shaped by itinerancy and exile—conditions of being that are as vividly present within the internal life-worlds of nations and regions, as they are crucial forces in shaping inter-cultural global relations. An unsettled sense of a "homeland" is not a place of domestic habitation or habituality—no local comforts of home here; no "homeland security" even when you are at home. Anxiety and anticipation, as they dwell together in the homeland, resonate with the uncanny feeling that Heidegger associates with the ontology of *Dasein*:

> In anxiety one feels uncanny. . . . But here "uncanniness" also means "not-being-at-home" . . . [in] our clarification of the existential meaning of "Being-in" as distinguished from the categorical signification of "insideness." Being-in was defined as "residing alongside . . . ," "Being familiar with. . . ." This character of Being-in was brought to view more concretely through the everyday publicness of the "they," which brings tranquillised

> self-assurance—"Being-at-home" with all its obviousness—into the average everydayness of Dasein. On the other hand, as Dasein falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the "world." Everyday familiarity collapses. . . . Being-in enters into the existential "mode" of the "*not-at-home*." Nothing else is meant by our talk about "uncanniness."[6]

For our purposes, I am straying from the purely ontological implications of Heidegger's argument to suggest that practices of mobility must negotiate the anxiety of the uncanny—the ambivalence between "being-at-home" and "being-*not-at-home*"—in the everyday life of disciplines. Each of these essays has a home discipline that becomes, after its diverse accretions and divagations, a belated and translated destination: an uncanny homeland.

Let me illustrate my argument with a few random examples from the volume. Musicology is Kay Shelemay's home discipline, and her particular interest lies in exploring the diasporic "destination" of Ethio-jazz—a fusion of Ethiopian music, Latin jazz, and bebop. Loss, distance, longing, separation, and relocation come together in an affective constellation to provide an anxious medium—not merely a theme—that makes possible the iterative performance of "restorative nostalgia" (56). The anxiety of nostalgia lies in a diasporic syncopation between "being-at-home" and "not-at-home," and it is the mobile quest for a haunting homeland that gives diasporic fusion its uncanny curricular accommodation within the home discipline of musicology.

Karen Thornber writes from the complex curriculum of world literature, into which she introduces the field of the medical humanities. In exploring the "world" to which the Japanese novel belongs *as literature*, she initiates a philological inquiry into the affective vocabulary associated with *medical ethics*—vulnerability, caregiving, responsibility. The worldliness of world literature is explored in a comparison of word choices as they appear in eight translations of the novel *The Equations the Professor Loved*. Thornber turns to translation as a critical method and a thematic trope—a practice of cultural translation—as she engages with the distinctive foreign "homelands" of diverse language communities. The uncanniness of translation lies in a mobility that engages, in Benjamin's formulation, with the foreignness of languages: "This, to be sure, is to admit that all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages. An instant and final rather than a temporary and provisional solution of this foreignness remains out of the reach of mankind; at any rate, it eludes any direct attempt."[7]

Indeed, there can be no "direct attempt" to come to terms with "foreignness," for the destination of translation is neither the original language nor a

secondary one. The work of translation lies in articulating the itinerant transitions "through which the original can be raised there anew and at other points of time." The productive irony of translation resides in the process by which what is "raised anew" returns from its foreign wanderings to establish, on native terrain, the anxiety and the creativity of being at once "at home" and "not at home." Let me turn again to Benjamin's endlessly productive essay on translation: "Pannwitz writes: 'Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works. . . . The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.' "[8]

The detour through "the foreignness of languages" does not return us to the home discipline of world literature to celebrate its power of accommodation or its englobing disciplinary horizon. The uncanniness of translation, emerging as it does through the practice of turning German into Hindi, Greek, and English, starts with an essential resistance to the "preservation" of the priority and hegemony of the native language and its cultural sovereignty. Translation is an iterative process of revision that moves back and forth in geographic circulation and discursive mobility, each time motivated by what is "untranslatable"—from one language to another, from one culture toward others—and therefore *must* be the cause for starting again from another place, another time, another history. A destination comes from the realization of the foreignness that constitutes what is regarded as normative and native: being at home with what is un-homely.

This is the sense in which I earlier proposed that the homeland is a belated, even displaced, destination that relocates objects and revises ideas through an uncanny rendering (uncanniness in the Heideggerian sense) of what seems, at first sight, to be local and familiar. Alina Payne's view of the "portability of art" is a fine instance of the hybrid aesthetic of "ultimate destinations." Payne writes: "Most of these artworks found their ultimate destinations in Venice, Rome, Vienna, or Lvov. But along the way, in the passage from one settlement to another, from one culture to another, they left traces: muqarnas in Romanian churches . . . Mongol costumes in Poland . . . mosques transformed into Genovese churches in Crimea only to be returned to mosques in later years. . . . [A hybrid aesthetic] would also have to envisage material shifts or translations—the effects of textile patterns upon architecture; the dialogue between pottery techniques and *sgrafitto façades*" (104). Beginning *again* is another kind of foreign destination found uncannily in the very space of being-at-home.

II

Mobile inquiries do not simply pit themselves against larger settled geographies of nation, area, or region or set themselves up in opposition to them. Itineraries and networks are part of an ambulant mode of critical analysis that cuts across, or runs athwart, precincts of disciplinary priority and discursive permanence. Mobility changes the *scale* of inquiry and interpretation by introducing new speeds of digital communication and enlarged measures of global convergence.

Such shifts in scale are often represented as contrasts in size and condition pitted against each other: the macro and micro, the global and local, homogeneity and heterogeneity, linearity and discontinuity, immediacy and incrementality. These measures of space and time often follow a binary logic of comparison and connection that represents two sides of the same mimetic coin. Mobility, however, adopts a temporal scale of transmission—a time and travel line—where differences are envisaged not as polarities or binaries but as dynamic trajectories. The measure of "difference" lies in the value attributed to the very process of circulation—the *shift* in direction, the *angle* of displacement, the *intersection* of academic and cultural itineraries. The analytic protocol associated with circulation is the practice of *convergence* rather than the method of comparison and connection.

Circulation takes a measure of mobility—the movement of languages, ideas, meanings, cultural forms, social systems—as it converges in specific and singular spaces of representation negotiated through a *dialogue of difference*. Incommensurable customs, disjunctive symbolic structures, itineraries that are diverse and yet proximate, continuities that become contingent over time—these *disproportionate* convergences generate an energy of interdisciplinary circulation. Instead of the binary logic of comparison and connection, we now have a logic of convergence launched by a kinetic burst of energy that, metaphorically, has a certain ballistic tendency. I use the term "ballistic" for the limited purpose of designating a form of motion whose trajectory is shaped by contending and competing forces. In the words of the OED: "Of motion, a trajectory . . . involving gravity, inertia, and the resistance of a medium. . . . Also (in wider sense): designating motion or change, or its course, etc., initiated by a brief input of energy and continuing as a result of momentum."[9]

For a critical strategy attuned to convergences, the ongoing momentum of a trajectory is more significant than its terminus. Convergence is initiated by an input of kinetic energy—an initial burst of velocity—that extends its arc of movement and articulation as a result of the initial momentum. A ballistic process is not an endlessly fluid, indeterminate exercise; nor is its aim linear.

Progress is determined by conditions and resistances—such as gravity, inertia, and the "resistance of a medium." For the medium of portability—be it marble, script, figure, or code—is a site of virtual and conceptual resistance that preserves the historic memory and cultural provenance of aesthetic form (sculpture, literature, painting, or digital art) as it encounters the force field of intermediatic mobilities or the networks of intercultural geographies. I am reminded here of Bruno Latour's terms of art—shifts, folds, nested translations—in his description of the "*differential* of materials": "What counts each time is not the type of material but the difference in the relative resistance of what is bound together."[10]

Convergence, then, is not about a practice or project as an *end in itself*, even if that end is an entangled encounter of diverse thoughtways and institutional intersections. The aim of convergence as critique is to track the spatial and temporal territories that open up within, and through, the act of circulation. The iterative dynamics of circulation and convergence reveal lateral meanings and interstitial spaces produced *in transit*. And if transition is the temporal dimension of circulation-cum-convergence, then its formal mode of articulation is the act of *translation* in its encounters with foreignness.

The aim of convergence, then, is not to establish comparisons on the scale of similitude—be it identity or difference—but to measure the surface tension, spatial and temporal, to decipher new, revisionary forms of agency that emerge in the interaction of subjects and objects. Scale, now, is less a matter of comparative advantage or disadvantage than it is a complex process of *mediation*—the mediation of meaning, value, power, authority, performance, identification—as it comes to be negotiated in the freedom of linguistic (or symbolic) flux or deliberated in the necessity of historical and political contingency. Convergence emphasizes a "movement toward"; it is a dynamic and dialogic process toward the meeting of minds and interests, a meeting place in a diachronic time frame. Such an argument resonates with what the philosopher Bernard Williams ascribes to the contingent and convergent condition of "thick ethical concepts" as the mainstay of the humanities: "Thick ethical concepts [crucial to the humanities] are contingent phenomena, whose histories typically do nothing to vindicate them, whose contributions to our lives are continuously being modified by all sorts of shifting social forces, and whose very futures may be open to question."[11]

The complex question of the "value" of the humanities is as philosophically urgent as it is central to the professional evaluation of the discipline. Williams provides us with a sage and salient insight. The humanities are contingent not because they are accidental, unstable, or profligate in their plurality of meaning and reading. Their systemic and semiotic contingency is a sign of their

foundational concern with "process" and "duration"—as aesthetic, ethical, and social practices—in the lifeworld of their vocations.

The humanities have a rich pedagogical history rooted in philological traditions, archival canons, aesthetic movements, and ethical conceptions. However, it is contingency that keeps alive the work of literary and conceptual transformation, what Williams describes as the canon "continually being modified by all sorts of shifting social forces." It is contingency that makes the humanities translational, transactional, transitional, transcultural. And all of these practices contribute to the potentiality for curricular convergence. The shaping conditions of the sciences and social sciences, Williams argues, produce values that are frequently *vindicatory*—open to justification by proof in the name of progress. Vindication, in the sciences, is the establishment of proof (or "truth") through the proven methods of quantification, randomization trials, verification by the repetition of results; at other times, vindication is achieved through the evidence of statistical surveys, matrices, models. Representation and interpretation, two exemplary axes that produce "thick concepts"—aesthetic, ethical, cultural—in the curriculum of humanities on a global scale create values that are slow, iterative, accumulative, incremental.

In contrast to Williams's concept of the vindicatory, I would suggest that the humanities are driven in their quest for the truth by the search for veracity. Veracity is truth that is attributive and agential (not instrumental); the OED defines it as "a quality or character of truthfulness. . . . it is truthfulness *as manifested* in individuals."[12] Veracity is "truth" as a quality of attribution; a reflective judgment of value; a representational quality of *poiesis*—the making of metaphor, figure, form, meaning—achieved through creation and interpretation. Veracity bears the contingent thumbprints of the shaping hand of cultural choice and political interest; veracity is the insignia of mediation and intervention. The aim of veracity is tropological rather than taxonomic. It is less interested in classification and ordering than in exploring processes of translation through which disciplines, in diverse historical contexts and social conditions, acquire vocabularies of intelligibility and interpretation.

These thoughts on the scholarly labor of cultural translation and disciplinary convergence suggest, as Latour would have it, that it would be more accurate for us to speak of ourselves as *homo fabricatus* rather than as *homo faber*.[13] It may, however, be more provocative to suggest that it is only by grasping the endlessly complex cohabitation of the two—the contingent convergence of homo fabricatus and homo faber—that we can, in truth, exclaim, "Oh what a piece of work is Man."

III

Mobility, distance, and dissemination have always played a large part in evaluating the object of knowledge that lies close at hand, within the remit of our intellectual locality. Making knowledge contemporary requires a scholarly process of retrieval from a space of anteriority or externality—a foreignness, so to speak—that is a crucial part of the authorization of the scholarly imaginary. It is not so much that we have never been modern but that we are always trying to make ourselves contemporary with the lifeworlds of other peoples or other times, either by drawing invidious comparisons between *them and us* or forging coeval convergences among ourselves. The alterity of time, people, and things is part of the inner life of our disciplines, without which there would be no borders to traverse or boundaries to cross. Making present the enigmatic historical past; revealing the obscure archive; throwing light on a hidden meaning or the buried image; bringing to life dead languages and forgotten traditions; using digital media to make accessible what was once arcane, remote, or ephemeral—these are the tangents at which we encounter the foreignness of our own discourses in the process of translating the languages of others.

There is an inherent *elsewhere* that haunts the site of all disciplinary knowledge. As the alterity of difference and distance—meaning, time, place, or tradition—plays its role in the creation of hybrid disciplinary convergences, translation becomes the testing ground for the authorization of new knowledge. This is an issue as crucial to the institutional realm as it is critical to the community of interpretation. The circulation of knowledge and the mobility of disciplines represent something more significant than an emancipation from conceptual boundaries or institutional rigidity. Despite the productive agency of circulation, mobility has to face the problem of gravity and groundedness: *who* speaks, from *where* and under *what* conditions of authorization? These are questions of power—political, pedagogical, discursive—as well as trials of legitimation. To adapt Benjamin's insight on authority, power exists "not only in what it represents, but also in what it does."[14] And it is what the mobile "object" of knowledge *does*—and what is *done* to it—in the process of authoring convergent disciplines that gives authority to the diverse individual itineraries and global trajectories that traverse the pages of this book.

NOTES

Epigraph: Benjamin, "N/On the Theory of Knowledge, the Theory of Progress," 463.

1 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 260–61.

2 Greenblatt, *Cultural Mobility*, 252.

3 Said, "History, Literature, and Geography," 470.
4 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 196.
5 Said, *After the Last Sky*, 61–62.
6 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 233.
7 Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 78.
8 Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 82.
9 Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "ballistic, *adj.*," accessed November 16, 2016, http://www.oed.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/14960?redirectedFrom=ballistic.
10 Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, 228.
11 Williams, "Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline," 111.
12 Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "veracity, *n.*," accessed November 16, 2016, http://www.oed.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/Entry/222345?redirectedFrom=veracity.
13 Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, 230.
14 Benjamin, "Karl Kraus," 440.

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Editor's Introduction

Alternative Geographic Mappings for the Twenty-First Century

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The impetus behind the essays in this collection is the shift of the study of people and things away from notions of fixity and sedentarism in order to rediscover transnational space connections based on diffusion and mobility, heightening the academy's awareness of an institutional transformation that must unfold alongside scholarly practices.

Taking distance from older notions of stability and containment derived from the nation-state and the area studies model, this book explores and develops alternative ways of thinking about space and mobility and prompts us to rethink identity (whether individual or national) as the result of circulation and exchange and, therefore, as essentially relational. It is a shift with potential ethical consequences: if we become aware of the constitutive nature of interconnections (whether commercial, cultural, ethnic, or political), we may tend to be less essentialist in our notions of self and society and more aware of the ways in which we are the result of circuits of interaction. It may make us more hospitable to what may appear to be alien and altogether nimbler in our dealings with alterity. Just as important, it will give us the opportunity to discover productive lines of transmission that are no longer bound to fixed space categories.

As it is, our times have been witnessing realignments of spatial thinking in terms of scale, principles of organization, and stability. The conceptual models we are employing to map our global topographies have been expanding and contracting, as well as reorganizing along shifting, often incommensurate, logics. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari observed, we are "at the crossroads of all

kinds of formations" in which the ordering patterns produce shifting, fractal terrains.[1] The area studies paradigm established during the Cold War can no longer provide the central organizational structure that reflects our institutional cultural mappings, producing instead contradictory alignments.[2] A crisis of understanding has resulted from the inability of old categories of space to account for our diverse cartographies, as if our geographies had become jumbled up. Even the global–local dyad that helped to rearticulate our mappings a few decades ago is proving inadequate to deal with the multiple and dynamic understandings of transactions across space: cultural formations are shifting in ways that need less a bimodal understanding along the local versus global paradigm than the circulatory one, which provides an interface that is truly relational, connecting interlocked, even if potentially disparate, points in the globe. We could echo Arif Dirlik's observation that while modernist teleology gave the local a derogatory image that helped justify the forward movement of scientific rationality, later critics of modernity argued for a return to the local as a site of resistance, heterogeneity, and the repudiation of capitalist teleology. What remains is less the anchoring site of locality than the unprecedented mobility of exchanges—material and cultural. As it becomes increasingly difficult to discern the center of global capitalism, fragmentation sets in to call into question established structures of regional coherence.[3] What we have instead, as Homi Bhabha points out in his introduction to this volume, are multicentered circuits that transcend the local–global binary and call for a different kind of understanding in which dynamic trajectories help open up temporal and spatial territories, as well as interstitial spaces. In his introduction, Bhabha calls this a "ballistic" process, marked by a mobility that engenders convergences as well as disjunctures.

In literary and cultural studies, we observe the instability of regional coherence models as the world is remapped along differing principles of organization: a very capacious world literature initiative is becoming the prominent paradigm in a number of comparative literature departments; it goes hand in hand with the rising interest in translation studies and bilingual studies. This kind of model has produced significant tensions around the role of vernacular languages, the potentially flattening gaze of translation, and the totalizing force of Anglo-globalism. Other—quite different—ways of thinking about contemporary space tend to privilege regional cominglings that may be expansive or contractive in their gravitational force. Other initiatives further areas of study such as Mediterranean studies and the Global South—itself seen more as a condition than a place, and, in several ways, an heir to the now outmoded Third World as a designation for non-hegemonic areas. Orientations such as Global South are parceling up the larger field of postcolonial studies, representing a reordering

of the geographic to focus on the parts of the world marked by the highest degree of political, social, and economic upheaval. In a different alignment of forces, North and South are brought together in the hemispheric studies of the Americas, which are modifying the configuration of some history and literature departments. The globe is reshaped in yet other regimes of representation in transatlantic studies, whose gravitational pull is west-east and which are thriving in departments of history, history of science, English, comparative literature, and Spanish or Lusophone Studies, often ruled by the logic of colonial affiliations. A case in point is Hispanic transatlantic studies, originally supported by the Spanish government as it sought to renew old ties severed by independence movements in the nineteenth century and by the shift of power alignments that took place in the twentieth century.

Forces of contraction are also at work. Regional studies such as Catalan, Galician, Czech, Mapuche, and Aymara are taking root across the academic landscape. This is not new in itself, but it is significant as a response to the perceived risk of overgeneralization, homogenization, and the flattening of specificities. The power of local languages is emphasized in these groupings, and they are seen as the backbone of the scholar's understanding of the cultural world in question. In this mapping, the nation-state is eschewed in favor of the region, the city, or the village, reminding us, with K. Anthony Appiah, that "humans live best on a smaller scale."[4] In a loosely connected way, I have been struck by the rising interest among young linguists in dying languages, which implies studying groups of five or six speakers and their disappearing cultural universe in tightly circumscribed areas.

What is local and vernacular is in constant transformation as our epistemologies respond to the unstable politics of community of our time. Borders are confounded by diasporic peoples who actually inhabit or make present their vernacular cultures in the midst of a foreign state, so that, for example, within California we may have parts of Mexico or India. Cultural flows in these contexts are both homogenizing and heterogenizing: some groups may share in a global culture regardless of where they are; they may be alienated from their own hinterlands, or they may choose to turn back to what may once have been seen as residual, very local cultures that deliberately separate themselves from global culture. As Bhabha has pointed out, we need to turn to paradox to name the ever rearticulating formulations of our geographic imaginaries: we have coined such oxymoronic phrases as "global village," "globloc," "vernacular cosmopolitanisms," and "transcultural localisms."[5]

The different movements of expansion and contraction operate with logics of their own, so that the overall effect is similar to the movement of tectonic

plates. While this is known to be characteristic of the era of globalization,[6] several interlocking and even contradictory views may be at work in these liminal moments, made all the more unstable by the current global financial scene. I would claim that rather than the oft-cited process of de-territorialization, what we are witnessing is intense re-territorializations, obtaining in spatial figurations and models that are often incommensurate. Confusing as it may appear, this is an opportunity to work out new frames of understanding; to rethink identities; to eschew conventional distinctions; and to produce new, relational articulations between area studies and global studies.

The divergent processes I have sketched unify or fragment the object of study and its explanatory force. Different logics of understanding are produced by some of the current geographic models, enabling multidirectional regional and global kinds of knowledge. A maritime emphasis privileges crossings and exchanges, movement and distances to be traversed, as well as migration and multi-local networks. The vast geopolitical reach of the oceans embraces imperial histories, the slave trade, scientific and biomedical exchanges, biogeography, and cultural geography, all in multiple directions of movement in space and historical periodicity. Prasenjit Duara's work makes us keenly aware of the ways in which global networks of exchange have spatialized and respatialized divisions in the Asian context, where imperial histories once led to regional formations connected with maritime trade. Rivers and seas constituted circulatory regions, as did the much earlier Silk Road. Yet Duara reminds us that even Asia as a cartographic image does not represent unity of any kind, having been named to designate territories to the east of the Greek ecumene.[7] If we consider transatlantic studies, we note that they are also predicated on the logic of colonial histories and their effects, whether English or Spanish, North or South. We read about the Red Atlantic of revolutions, the Black Atlantic of the slave trade, and the Green Atlantic of Irish migrants; Cis-Atlantic and Circum-Atlantic studies are introduced into the broader transatlantic realm. We see efforts to reinterpret empires such as Portugal's according to the extent to which the Atlantic may or may not fully represent Portuguese holdings beyond Africa and Brazil. On a different, North-South axis, hemispheric studies take stock of indigenous commonalities and differences, neglected cross-border exchanges, and the comparative structures that united and separated the Americas with the arrival of the Europeans. The hemispheric turn in American studies may be a step toward furthering inter-American scholarly relations, and so far it has operated by tackling such projects as comparing different appropriations of European culture or tracing the presence of Spanish-speaking groups along borders that separate the United States and Mexico today. The hemispheric turn is

receptive to notions of hybridity, creolization, and *mestizaje*, which are especially productive in the study of the heteroglossic Caribbean. In hemispheric studies, considerable tensions exist around the direction of the gaze in a historically fraught North-South relationship. These different ways to assemble geography and culture produce epistemological realignments that need to reach institutional structures of organization.

The oscillation between expansion and contraction mentioned earlier is subject to varying senses of distance and movement as constitutive of cultural production and understanding. The awareness of distance presents the need for cultural and linguistic specificity: what is understood as being far is perceived as different, linguistically and culturally. In its fullest expression, the focus on difference can provide specificity and contextual richness; it can also produce a certain exhaustion of difference whereby, as Dirlik has pointed out, our recognition of previously ignored aspects of cultural difference, while countervailing the pitfalls of essentialization, may have the undesirable effect of producing a conglomeration of differences that resist naming and the postulation of collective identity. In Dirlik's terms, "The dispersal of culture into many localized encounters renders it elusive both as a phenomenon and as a principle of mapping and historical explanation."[8] Even when one nation is studied as a discrete unit, the spatial logic of explanation and the function assigned to distance will produce different accounts of the object of study—that is to say, different geographic imaginaries. To help flesh out these concepts, a couple of illustrations may be helpful. One is offered by Dirlik in a study of Chinese culture that rethinks the intersection between space and historical explanation. For Dirlik, distance is not so much a measure between two or more bounded cultural worlds as a "potentiality, a space of indeterminacy inherent to all processes of mediation, and therefore inherent to the social process per se."[9] When distance is brought into play, new ways to conceive social and cultural space follow. In the example of China, it would call into question the traditional account of the formation of Chinese civilization as radiating from a Han monarchic center toward peripheries in which barbarism ruled under the aegis of fifty-six recognized ethnic nationalities. Dirlik sees in the current condition of migration and displacement ("living in a state of flux") an opportunity to relinquish static, traditional notions of cultural formation and replace them with paradigms that stress distance and mobility over "stable containers."[10] Such alternative spatialities would instantiate a more productive understanding of the role of boundaries in the formation of Chinese culture, which would become the product of "multiple contact zones of a people in constant motion." In this reversal, the Chinese would be global in reach "because they have been formed

from the outside. . . . The inside and the outside become inextricably entangled in one another."[11] It is important to note the emplacement of explanation and its bearing on the geographic imaginary it produces: an identity that emanates from a centrally located origin (the Han) is transformed when the border becomes the intellectual perch, the place from which the scholar looks.

In fact, the border is not only the focus of current border studies; it is also the nodal point that represents the convergence of geography and mobility. It is emblematic of new identity formations and, at the same time, of the current politics of national security, surveillance, and containment. Yet the border is not exclusively situated in the national periphery. Boundaries are dispersed in cosmopolitan cities, marking exchanges of technology, objects, and people. Their plurality contains the dilemma of contemporary citizenship and belonging, as is clearly argued by Jacqueline Bhabha's chapter in this volume. The subject position that stems from the boundary is the refugee or the immigrant, who represents the reality of internal exclusion.

Shifting from the center to the border produces an alternative geographic epistemology; so does an explanatory logic displaced from a territorial center to the sea. Consider the role of the heartland in an agrarian American tradition invented in the nineteenth century, when the notion of Manifest Destiny evoked a drive west and the move of European settlers toward the interior, with its rolling, grain-producing plains and imposing mountains. There is an emerging countervailing model that does not emanate from the heartland: it displaces its stable centrality and opts instead for maritime studies as fluid spaces of movement and multiple engagements that eschew closure and operate with different causal systems. Within the fluid parameters of the maritime imaginary we would have to make distinctions between the Atlantic and the Pacific, the North and the South. If the border or contact zone—be it China or the U.S.-Mexico border—de-essentializes the logic of explanation by taking stock of transborder forces while assailing notions of belonging, citizenship, and cultural homogeneity, the fluid notion of the seas eschews confinement and tracks multiple directions of contacts and crossings. In Lindsay Bremner's chapter in this volume, the sea engenders epistemological confusion that borders on unknowability.

In sum, important distinctions emanate from each epistemological location, whether it is the sea or the interior, the North or the South, the East or the West, the center or the border. The global system can be mapped from different locations, and it is being drawn and redrawn in structures of various kinds both within the academy and in the geopolitical order.[12] Echoing the many rewritings of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and his reference to the deterritorializing

effects of capitalism, we might advance the claim that our intellectual projects are hyperterritorial and in constant transformation.

The reorientation we are discussing is not the same as the discourse of globalization: the cognitive impulse that drives us has a strong sense of directionality, arguing for alternative vectors of movement that imply transit, transmission, and exchange, often detecting conversations that have gone unnoticed. It requires attentiveness to the singularity and uniqueness of each encounter and then, in a concomitant move, an attempt to draw appropriate generalizations. While the dominant forces of globalization today tend to deal with economic flows and communities wired together through financial networks, the flows we trace here have more to do with the effects of translation, travel, diaspora, transportation, pilgrimage, relationality, and, more generally, the ways in which space (maritime and land-based) inflects our ability to produce knowledge. The directionalities that interest us are not regulated by the conventionally established paths of hegemony, from North to the Global South, from West to East. Instead, they shift according to a reorientation of the gaze: at times from East to West and back, or from South to South; at times circulating along maritime pathways or settling in the borders to observe the displacement in more than one direction and, through it, to discern linkages, many of which may be unexpected. As each individuated network of mobility is studied, it contributes to the variegated vision of a relational conception of the world. In a book that anticipated what we are trying to accomplish in this one, Stephen Greenblatt eloquently advocates for what medieval theologians called *contingentia*, the sense that things are unpredictable and subject to chance. Greenblatt urges us to pursue the study of mobility by remaining attentive to the peculiar, particular, and local, to "the strategic acts of individual agents and by unexpected, unplanned, entirely contingent encounters between different cultures."[13]

There is a long history to the work we are doing—one that I will not revisit in detail. In the twentieth century, as the historian Lynn Hunt observes, globalization emerged triumphantly after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, when it seemed to be, as she put it, "the one sure thing."[14] In fact, some have argued that the fall of the Soviet Union was not unrelated to the inability of the state-run economy to adjust to the electronic global economy that gained ground in the 1980s. Before 1989, Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Andre Gunder Frank wrote important books derived from a transregional, world-based perspective.[15] Following in Braudel's perambulatory footsteps, Wallerstein did influential work on the "world system," whose beginnings he located in the sixteenth century and which he associated with a capitalist world economy. Other transnational thinkers, such as Frank, not only

located the origins much earlier (as early as 4000 BC) but advanced the concept of dependency theory to study the world from a different vantage point, perched on Asia and Latin America. Yet the articulating principle remained, at most, regional, and a global political consciousness remained elusive.[16] Indeed, scholarship has tended to reify contained units of analysis: here we are trying to produce entanglements that exceed those units through the power of transit across established notions of spatial coherence. It is a realignment derived from concrete trajectories exemplified in each chapter and with a variety of disciplinary angles.

The geographic consciousness of the past few decades strains and tugs at inherited notions of space conceived as absolute and fixed. While immovable, absolute space is the space of standardized measurement, cadastral mapping, Euclidian geometry, and Newtonian mechanics, relative space, as David Harvey points out, is associated with Einstein and non-Euclidean geometry; it is predicated on process, motion, relationality.[17] This leads to different mappings organized around spatial discontinuities and unexpected connections. In this collection, we will find geometries that illuminate different lines of influence and fluid, indeterminate engagements across space and time. To cite just one example, we can observe such mappings in Finbarr Barry Flood's chapter, which suggests a reconsideration of aniconism through the study of the neglected relationship between Islam and Protestantism in the sixteenth century. The nature of the relations depends on disparate footprints drawn by travelers from Brazil to China and monuments from ancient Pergamon to nineteenth-century Berlin or by the journeys of diasporic musicians. The trajectories themselves become productive lines of reflection. Human practice is followed across space-time, recognizing the effects of hegemony but without letting it dictate the conversation about the units of analysis or the agency of those engaged in transit. In its very heterogeneity, the space of representation and analysis calls for collaborative scholarship, since our institutions are still anchored in absolute space—the nation or, at best, the area studies unit. Laboratory-like workshops such as those engaged in the study of world or global literature and history are leading the way in the study of exchange and relationality. This volume itself emerged from an exploratory seminar made possible by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and it included an interdisciplinary array of scholars.

Revising sedentarism requires a different imaginary in terms of space and time—one that is infused with what Homi Bhabha calls "the scattering of the people."[18] Significantly, this phrase appears in the concluding essay of the influential collection he edited in 1990, which, together with Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*,[19] did much to advance the study of nations in those de-

cades. "DissemiNation" offers a salutary skepticism about national discourses, pointing to their sliding ambivalence, their internal contradictions, and their obsessive fixation on boundaries. That important essay and the volume in which it appeared made us deeply aware of the internal contradictions of the discourse of the nation: "Quite simply, the difference of space returns as the Sameness of time, turning Territory into Tradition, turning the People into One."[20] In the very ambivalence discerned by Bhabha lies the possibility of other narratives, some of which this volume seeks to open up as it explores alternatives to the nation and its boundedness through networks of dissemination that crisscross the globe in directions that have received insufficient notice.

In their diversity and range, the essays collected here question the assumption that the local is fixed, independent of displacement, migration, and exchange. Instead, we want to open up areas of knowledge through the paradigms of exchange, motion, and geographic porosity. Each of the chapters in this collection unveils connections that have remained hidden, whether in the field of musicology or literary and art history, the study of the seas and the environment, or the question of citizenship.

Furthering the productive power of the mobility paradigm is its constitutive interdisciplinarity: it allows cultural geographers, historians, art historians, anthropologists, architects, urban planners, literary scholars, cartographers, and students of religion and of sociology to work together. As objects, ideas, and people circulate, they transform and are transformed. It is not a question of studying influences—which used to flow along the channels established by hegemony, usually in a North-to-South direction—but of observing the profound effects of intercultural contact. Instead of focusing on the stasis of nations and civilizations, with their sense of boundedness, the group I have gathered in this volume thinks about networks of encounter and exchange, of geographies in motion. Transmission is enmeshed in multidirectional networks, in a fluid, Deleuzian mode. Conjuring new and shifting localizations, we trace footprints and boundaries, land and water as complex media not only of orientation but also of disorientation. Units of geographic coherence are rethought, and the located nature of our knowledge is brought to the forefront. A glance at the chapters that follow may throw light on the actual practice of our relational views.

The chapter on musicology is an ideal point of departure because, paradoxically, music, as Kay Shelemay notes, is "at home in circulation" (47). Indeed, airwaves live in movement. They are transformed when they are propelled by exile, but they also, in turn, transform the musical forms they encounter. Drawing on the case study of diasporic Ethiopian music, Shelemay shows how a new form, Ethio-jazz, was created in the United States in the 1960s as

a fusion of Ethiopian music, jazz, bebop, and Latin jazz. Emerging as the result of the accretions and transformations of exile, it also allows for the processing of nostalgia, for diasporic communities connect through songs that mediate loss, and new genres emerge as loss and distance are expressed. Mulatu Astatke's music exemplifies this process, reaching out to the longed-for home and even returning to Ethiopia to reconnect homeland and exile. Shelemay also studies a kind of song (*tizita*) that obtains in various renditions to express what might be called restorative nostalgia, which enables multiple performative iterations of the feeling of loss. The chapter shows how distance and separation can be at the root of aesthetic productivity and how the national is reconceptualized through itinerant performances.

Xiaofei Tian's chapter also turns to distance and mobility as the condition of possibility for knowledge and insight. Her chapter charts how venturing out into unknown territories can lead to discovery, as well as to a renewed understanding of the homeland. Departure and return are productive, as in a circle that gets closed when the homecoming takes place: within the circle drawn by travel and return lie both discovery of the unknown and rediscovery of the known. Studying the first Chinese text about travel in foreign lands, written by a Buddhist monk in the fifth century BC, Tian traces the construction of rhetorical tropes and conceptual categories that have guided Chinese travel writing. Through the study of a Buddhist pilgrim who ventured outside the empire before there were maps, Tian shows how movement itself allows for a change in vision and understanding while also creating links as the pilgrim strings together the places he visits. The Buddhist injunction to travel reminds us of the role played by pilgrims in cultural exchange; in the case of Faxian, we can see an inaugural venture into uncharted territory. An added significance of this injunction is its impact on women, who, thanks to it, were given the opportunity to travel independently. Movement itself changes what Tian calls "self-positioning," as well as the understanding of the related concepts of center and periphery. As we saw in the case of Ethiopia, movement also produces emotional states that intensify affect: the pain of separation and the longing for community play a productive role in this travel narrative.

Rosario Hubert's chapter also dwells on the insights generated by travel. The mappings she traces are not the usual ones that move from center to periphery, or vice versa. Instead, she studies Brazilians who are not entirely bound to the imperial categories of ethnographic exploration and cultural superiority. Here again, national identity is formulated and reformulated in relation to observations made while traveling. In the South-South encounters Hubert examines, the peripheral location seems to open up other ways of seeing, evaluating, and

judging. A memoir from 1888 by a member of the first Brazilian Diplomatic Mission to China, Henrique Carlos Ribeiro Lisboa, reads like a defense of the Chinese against European stereotypes: Lisboa argues for the need to observe details of physiognomy and type and to question arbitrary, received notions. Even if this vigilant stance may have been motivated by his desire to promote Chinese immigration to Brazil, Lisboa's four-hundred-page volume is a significant alternative to the prevalent discourse produced by the Age of Empire. Hubert also studies the great Gilberto Freyre's travel writings and finds in them yet another take on the question of cultural encounter: Freyre opts for a form of kinship based on the combination of a shared Lusophone genealogy (anchored in the area around Goa), material exchanges, and the affinities of the tropics. In Freyre, then, the impulse to detect common traits produces South-South affinities through a shared Luso-imperial genealogy. Brazil and India, far apart as they may be, are drawn closer together by the gaze of travelers from the periphery, where power relations obtain in other ways.

It is this very attention away from the centers of power and to what she calls "minor sites" that makes Shu-mei Shih's focus on world art also yield a "non-centrist" (that is to say, neither Eurocentric nor China-centric) perspective. Shih sets out to offer a relational study based on nodal points of artistic production. She opts for relation as the concept that points to "the state of world-wide entanglements of cultures and peoples," to a way of studying the world. In many ways, we could say that this very volume is part of *relational studies*: arts practices from different parts of the globe are brought into relational comparison by Shih, opening up connections that exist within trajectories inflected by power relations. Shih's relationality steers clear of geographic hegemonies: neither the West nor the East is privileged in her study of three female visual artists. The arc drawn in her chapter connects a Taiwanese, a Cambodian, and an Asian American whose work shares concerns for women's issues, the environment, and sociopolitical questions stemming from the historical legacies of twentieth-century conflicts. With a decentered perspective that is not ordered along a primary geographic axis, Shih maps fluid cartographies of relationality linked by an ethos of critique, care, and awareness. Wu Mali, Marine Ky, and Patty Chang are diasporic artists whose work addresses memory, trauma, sexual politics, and community work in a manner that is at once local and mobile, eschewing exclusively national definitions. Seeing the three of them relationally offers a sense of world arts practices linked by ethical impulses.

The ethical dimension is powerfully at work in the study of serious global problems as they are represented in the novel. Karen Thornber's essay generates multiple relationalities derived from archives that are opened up by her reading. Her

path to mobility draws a line that connects languages from different regions: as she engages in what she calls global world literature, Thornber studies *The Equations the Professor Loved*, a Japanese novel published in 2003 that deals with traumatic brain injury. Through the lens provided by illness, and thanks to her access to Asian and European archives, she explores diverse worldviews and mobilizes cultural contacts. New pathways are cleared by this scholar's immersion in vernacular languages: one can almost visualize the globe crisscrossed by the voices of diverse societies in a multilingual conversation. Thornber's contribution to the enterprise of world literature and the health humanities adds not only specific linguistic immersion but also an awareness of how the nuances of translation play a part in our understanding of texts that we do not read in the original. Tracing the effect of word choices in eight versions of *The Equations*, Thornber makes us aware of the subtleties produced by translation decisions around notions of responsibility, caregiving, agency, and vulnerability. She inflects world literature and the health humanities with the effects of linguistic particularity by considering what it means to read a Japanese novel in multiple languages, moving between linguistic regions to show meaning shifts as well as inter- and intra-regional interactions. Expanding the map allows her to connect the materials she unearths with problems the whole world needs to face, such as environmental degradation and disease. Thus, Thornber's enterprise moves around the globe to give the literary the ring of pragmatic urgency: the critic reads across cultural divides and linguistic registers to call attention to questions that require global attention.

Ethical urgency is at the core of Jacqueline Bhabha's chapter on a problematic consequence of mobility: the predicament of displaced peoples. Our era of globalization produces not only capital flows and cultural exchanges but also diasporic communities and refugees that are stripped of rights. Bhabha's chapter forces us to think about the legal importance of the stationary correlative of mobility: emplacement. Studying circulation and its consequences becomes particularly telling in the case of the history of discrimination of the Roma, a group whose lack of legal identity has meant not only discrimination but also deportation, removal, and lack of suitable housing, education, and health care. Bhabha calls attention to belonging as a key element of migratory communities, no matter how post-national our times may appear to be. Borders, then, remain real forces of exclusion, and diasporic communities need the protection of civil emplacement and the care of the state if they are to avoid falling prey to the deprivation attendant on the absence of residential status. Even as we strive to think in a post-Westphalian, global way, it is imperative to aver that only legal permanence guarantees legal personhood and that until borders disappear—

and with the notable exception of cosmopolitan elites—displacement and migration tend to cause hardship. Bhabha's work pays special attention to the plight of children in these circumstances, and it is sobering to read that one-third of the world's children lack birth registration. Such a compromised connection between an individual and citizenship (with its attendant rights) is one of the most negative aspects of the subject we are studying. Human movement and encounter produce cultural exchange and circulation of ideas, but we cannot turn a blind eye to the very real consequences of residential displacement and discrimination. Thriving in dynamic geographies is predicated on the root of belonging: at some point, the mobile subject needs to find legal emplacement under the protection of the state.

The two chapters devoted to the history of art and architecture open up new questions that have remained occluded by conceptions of immobility and rootedness dear to the discipline. Here we should do well to remember with Heidegger that things never reveal themselves in static isolation; they are always part of a complicated network of flexible relations to which they provide access through their own disclosure.[21] Alina Payne's contribution alerts us to the surprisingly restless life of architectural materials, objects, and even buildings themselves. Her chapter calls attention to displacement narratives that open up a different way to think about material culture, one that is enriched by following the lives of objects and buildings as their paths are traced. Portability, the concept she puts forward to articulate her approach, invites us to rethink the discipline. Understanding the effects of transportation and arrival transforms our understanding of the process of making itself, and it includes a broad range of connected agents, such as artists, craftsmen, middlemen, buyers and sellers, scholars and patrons, the public at large, and the agents of the state. As she puts it, the "vicissitudes of the road" would generate another way to study the vast context within which an art object or a building generates its force field. Payne's chapter stuns us with surprising instances of colossal feats of transportation. It starts with the obelisk of St. Peter's in Rome, with its 326 metric tons, transported from Egypt to Rome during Nero's time, and then makes us aware of the provenance of the materials with which several monuments have been built. The impact of such transplantations cannot be underestimated, as is proved by the fascinating effect of the arrival in Berlin of the Hellenistic Pergamon Altar in the 1870s. In addition to the daunting efforts of transportation, we need to trace the footprint of objects because the stories they tell bear on related cultural, economic, social, and political forces. Transit histories can have a transformative effect on the discipline of art history, freeing it from its nineteenth-century dependence on the nation as a foundational cult (à la Renan), which is the

principle at work in the spirit of *patrimoine* and in the enclosed space of the museum. Instead, Payne advocates for a mode of study that is not contained within static borders; rather, it seeks the mobility of territorial expanses and the flow of rivers as conduits of connections. Instead of national purity, we have territorial hybridity, derived from tracing paths such as *riverine ties*, which enrich the study of the seas and the hinterland with attention to rivers as conveyors of combination, assimilation, and transformation. The effect of this unveiling is to discover fluid and fluctuating networks of transmission that transform the history of art and architecture.

The impulse of unveiling is literally and symbolically central to the chapter by the other art historian we feature in this volume, Finbarr Barry Flood. Taking as his point of departure the whitewashing of 115 feet of gold-ground mosaic decorations of the Great Mosque of Damascus completed in 715, Flood traces the complex debates around the question of aniconism in the sixteenth century. The debates chart a vast discursive map crossing boundaries by which scholarship has tended to abide. Around the question of images, Flood builds a fascinating network of exchanges that reveal recognized or occluded commonalities between Islam and Protestantism on the issues of idolatry and images. As was the case with the pastoral scenes that were whitewashed from the Damascus mosque, we have disregarded propinquities that would remap cognitive frontiers. In Flood's symbolic removal of the plaster that has blinded us to these discursive shifts, we learn about the early polemical exchanges surrounding Protestantism and the extent to which Arabs, Jews, Turks, Protestants, and Native Americans were implicated in the heresy of iconoclasm. Heretics though they were considered to be, Turks and, in general, Islam were not entirely other. They were part of the intense Christian polemics of the time. Here is a geographic and symbolic imaginary to which we need to return. Flood takes it all one step further as he concludes his breathtaking itinerary, delineating the ethical implications of the rhetoric of whitewashing, which point to the moral resonances of rejecting worldly embellishments for the sake of moral purity and interior beauty.

Thinking differently about units of geographic coherence and the effects of mobility also means giving consideration to parts of the globe that have been less noticed by cultural and historical scholarship. In our mobile cartography, land, air, and water are seen as conductors of questions and knowledge. How does the world look from other locations, other points of entry? Oceans and rivers have not received their due in the nation-bound scholarly agenda until recently, when we have seen some very interesting work on rivers and on oceans.[22] Waterways help us move beyond national boundaries and area studies

contours. They touch on distant lands and make for multidirectional contacts. The study of oceans is offering very productive interregional models: the eastern coast of Africa, for example, is linked to many points in the western reaches of the Indian Ocean; the turn to the Pacific Rim in the study of the Americas is turning the gaze away from the dominant paradigm organized around Europe. These reorientations may have the power to shift the prevailing principles of spatial organization and retrieve all sorts of cross-fertilizing exchanges that we had tended to neglect.

Yet while oceans offer opportunities for different regional configurations, they can confront us with the limits of the knowable. As Lindsay Bremner's chapter attests, the deepest recesses of the ocean floors may well be impenetrable, as the case of the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 leads us to conclude. Bremner's fascinating retracing of the international search for the disappeared airplane makes us aware of the uncertainty that no amount of technological or scientific expertise managed to dispel. "Theory machines" deployed for the study of the oceans yielded inconclusive results: ACARS, pings and pinger locators, data visualization, satellite systems, and Inmarsat technologies were pressed into action, with inconclusive results. Narrating the complex history of the search, Bremner's chapter traces the arduous gathering of data and evidence, the positing and re-positing of hypotheses, the modeling of data, the interpretation of sightings. Examining a vast scopic system based on the most advanced technologies brings Bremner to the conclusion that, as she puts it, "making the ocean comprehensible" is a daunting enterprise that defies vast scientific and technological resources. At the heart of the problem is the very question of mobility: the ocean's fluid nature is made up of moving forces. No place is still in the ocean, and that means that dispersion rules. In other words, the material reality of water limits our cognitive efforts, regardless of our scientific prowess. Bremner's essay is about mobility as a regime of knowledge and about the impact of the emplacement of the research effort: locating a study in the ocean determines the limits of our understanding.

Diana Sorensen's chapter is built as a study that seeks to find a balance between the specificity of a given case and the general insights that can be derived from it. It deals with Bernard Berenson as a connoisseur who orchestrated the sale and transportation of a great number of early Italian Renaissance paintings from Italy and the United Kingdom to America between the end of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. In this case, the study of mobility converges with the study of material culture: the circulation of artworks engaged different regions and their historical complexities, and they

invoke questions of taste, value, esthetics, and society. Art objects as luxury goods have the capacity to convey complex social meanings: their value is rhetorical and social, as well as economic. Cultural and material factors enabled or hindered the circulation of artworks. At each step along the way, we find revealing intersections of regimes of explanation, ranging, for example, from the value of British land to the history of taste, from the symbolic value of the Medici in the late nineteenth century to the meaning of collecting and connoisseurship. Central to the enterprise is the impulse to trace routes of exchange that can be understood only in a dynamic, transnational order, in contexts of understanding that are anything but local.

Our goal in the pages that follow is to further a relational worldview in which there are multidirectional influences and sometimes unexpected engagements. The historical vision opened up by the study of minorities, the rearticulation of proximities and distances, we hope, will erode boundaries that have made us blind to the linkages that enable a new understanding of the difference inherent in identity. Eventually, this should reach the static institutional structures by which universities are hindered and help open up fluid trajectories that are better suited to the needs of our times.

NOTES

1 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 20.

2 This is stated in lapidary form in the introduction to Miyoshi and Harootunian, *Learning Places*, 8: "Paradoxically area studies has now become the main custodian of an isolating system of knowledge, which was originally ranked near the bottom of the academic hierarchy. By the same measure, it is committed to preserving the nation-state as the privileged unit of teaching and study. In this sense, it was the perfect microcosmic reflection of the liberal arts curriculum that since the nineteenth century has been focused on the nation-state as the organizing principle for teaching and research."

3 See Dirlik, "The Global in the Local."

4 Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, 246.

5 See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*; Bhabha, "Unsatisfied," 191–207.

6 This has been observed by numerous scholars. As Rosi Braidotti has noted, late postmodernity functions through the paradox of simultaneous globalization and fragmentation: see Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*; Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*.

7 See Duara, *The Crisis of Global Modernity*. For the Indian Ocean, see, among others, Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*.

8 Dirlik, "Timespace, Social Space, and the Question of Chinese Culture," 5.

9 Dirlik, "Timespace, Social Space, and the Question of Chinese Culture," 14.

10 Dirlik, "Timespace, Social Space, and the Question of Chinese Culture," 14.

11 Dirlik, "Timespace, Social Space, and the Question of Chinese Culture," 11.
12 An interesting geopolitical illustration would be the different configurations of groups that gather to discuss the world financial crisis that began in 2008. Aside from the Group of Eight, we have a new Group of Twenty that reflects divergent notions of emerging power, as well as an array of local trade organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Mercosur. A revealing new group of recent formation is BRIC, constituted by Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Its agenda included an attempt to go beyond the dollar as the international currency.
13 Greenblatt, *Cultural Mobility*, 17. This book gathers a number of scholars that offer "microhistories" (I would call them "case studies," following Giorgio Agamben) that account for particular instances of mobility. See also the final "Manifesto," on pages 250–53, which presents five lucid recommendations for those that set out to do this sort of work.
14 Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era*, 46.
15 Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme*; Braudel, *La dynamique du capitalisme*; Braudel, *L'identité de la France*; Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen a l'époque de Philippe II*; Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*; Frank, *Crisis in the World Economy*; Frank, *The European Challenge*; Frank, *Lumpenbourgeoisie, Lumpendevelopment*; Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I*; Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II*; Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System III*.
16 For a broad view of the relationship among the nation-state, colonialism, and globalization, see Miyoshi, "A Borderless World?"
17 See Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, 134.
18 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 291.
19 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
20 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 300.
21 Martin Heidegger, *What Is a Thing*? 81.
22 Berry, *A Path in the Mighty Waters*; Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*; Cusack, *Framing the Ocean, 1700 to the Present*; Hoag, *Developing the Rivers of East and West Africa*; Klein and Mackenthun, *Sea Changes*; Mann and Phaf-Rheinberger, *Beyond the Line*; Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*; Redford, *Maritime History and Identity*; Sheriff and Ho, *The Indian Ocean*; Sobecki, *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages*.

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