EDITORIAL

Some time ago, my son (age 5), in a fit of anger at me and what he evidently felt to be an unfair exercise of parental authority, announced his intention to run away from home. What silenced me, however, was not the intended terror of his threat, but the unexpected twist he gave what would otherwise have been a familiar enactment of parent/child role-play. For he did not say that he was leaving. He said: 'I am going to another country.'

What struck me, as I pondered his phrasing, was the substitution of a notion of absence (running *away* from home) with a notion of plurilocality. Wherever he ran away to, his words suggested, he would always be somewhere; not here perhaps, but there. Leaving home, in this light, presented itself as an act of displacement in which the imagined trajectory was less that of a removal, forced or voluntary, from a familiar site to a foreign place, than a move from one home to another (potential, at least) home. Home, for my son, was a moveable concept.

In this respect, my son's concept of home is informed by what we often take to be a quintessentially postmodernist sensibility, one in which, as James Clifford puts it, 'a truly global space of cultural connections and dissolutions' has become not only imaginable (this *imagined* possibility, one might say, is what characterized 'modernism'), but *lived* 'postmodernist' reality.[1]

Semantically, 'home' has always occupied a particularly indeterminate space: it can mean, almost simultaneously, both the place I have left and the place I am going to, the place I have lost and the new place I have taken up, even if only temporarily. 'Home' can refer to the place you grew up (the place you perhaps threatened to run away from when you were five), the mythic homeland of your parents and ancestors that you yourself may never have actually seen, or the hostel where you are spending the night in transit. In other words, 'home' may refer to a deeply familiar or a foreign place, or it may be no more than a passing point of reference. This indeterminate referential quality of the term has two quite different, even (at first glance) contradictory, consequences. On the one hand, it *demythifies* 'home' as provisional and relative; its meaning discursively produced by a particular speaker in a particular context for particular ends. From this perspective the American anthropologist, Renato Rosaldo, has called for a 'pragmatics of "home"' as a critical de-essentializing gesture. On the other hand, its very indeterminacy has lent itself to the continual *mythification* of 'home' as an almost universal site of utopian (be) longing.[2]

In this sense, the (post)modernist relativizing of 'home' as a provisional, inherently unstable space, where 'local authenticities meet and merge in transient ... settings,'[3] is not new, but inheres in the instability of 'home' as a referent. What is new, or perhaps merely a more consciously perceived fact, is the degree to which this instability is manifesting itself on a staggering – some believe, unprecedented

1. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1988, p4.

2. It is in this latter sense that Ernst Bloch ends his magnum opus, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung [The Principle of Hope]*, with a vision of *'Heimat'* (the word on which his text ends) as the never-yet attained, utopian endpoint of alienation and the beginning of what Bloch maintains will be our real 'history'.

3. Clifford, *op.cit.*, p4.

– scale both globally and locally. On all levels and in all places, it seems, 'home' in the traditional sense (whether taken to mean 'family', or 'community', or 'homeland'/'nation') is either disintegrating or being radically redefined. In some cases, it is under construction, in others under siege, but hardly anywhere is it stable and untouched by the seismic changes that local and global social economies are undergoing or have recently undergone.

Of course the effects of these changes are felt quite differently by different groups of people. The sense of placelessness (at times disturbing, at times exhilarating) that 'we' (postmodern intellectuals on the transnational circuit of information exchange) currently experience, Doreen Massey suggests, is to a significant extent 'the point of view of a (relative) elite ... a predominantly white/first world take on things' (Massey). Jet-setters and those they jet over, who are forced to stay put, are both displaced, one might say, but their displacements have significantly different consequences. In this light, the view of the so-called unprecedented nature of the 'immense spatial upheaval' (Massey) of the past decades, an upheaval the shock of which continues to be registered in our critical analyses and theories, must also be historically checked. For, as Massey has pointed out, for many people over time – for working-class people and peasants forced to migrate to where there was work, and for colonized peoples who found themselves displaced, culturally, economically and politically, within or on their own land – the fragmentation and disruption of 'home' is neither new nor, in terms of scale, unprecedented.

4. Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', *Marxism Today*, June 1991, pp24-9.

5. Roger Rouse, 'Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism', *Diaspora*, vol. 1, no. 1, Spring 1991, p8.

In a previous essay, 'A Global Sense of Place',[4] Massey mapped out some of the changes that mark our present time, notably the 'new and violent phase of "time-space compression"' that forces us to rethink substantially our notions of 'global' and 'local', and, in the process, the meaning of 'home'. What has been destroyed by these changes, she argues, is not, as some lament, 'home' itself, but rather the aura of its uniqueness, the notion that its special meaning derives from the fact that it is 'singular and bounded'. Instead of lamenting the loss of *this* concept of home (which has largely been a tenuous, if not mythic, concept anyway), she suggests, we might reconceptualize home in relational terms as the place(s) we inhabit with others in the shifting geography of social relations. The anthropologist, Roger Rouse, makes a similar argument: positing that with the shift to transnational capitalism 'we have all moved irrevocably to a new kind of social space' – the 'social space of postmodernism'[5] – he suggests that the old paradigms within which we used to situate ourselves (via such concepts as 'mother tongues', 'fatherlands', 'cultural identity', or 'home') are becoming inoperative. Yet this does not mean that we have simply lost what formerly held us in place, that we are homeless migrants in what Fredric Jameson has referred to as 'postmodern hyperspace'. Rather, Rouse argues, the terms that define who, what and where we are must be recast in light of the new social and psychological spaces we create for ourselves. If we look for 'the raw materials for a new cartography ... in the details of people's daily lives',[6] Rouse suggests, we will find the emergence of new forms

accompanying the disintegration and destruction of old ones. To the Mexican migrants, in whose creative forms of resistance and transformation Rouse finds a model of such remapping, 'home' is no longer just the rural Mexican township that they leave to find work across the border in Silicon Valley, it has become the place of community that they create in the multiple and constantly changing links between there and here. 'Home', for these migrants, has become a moveable concept, plurilocal – 'a single community spread across a variety of sites'.[7]

It is in this space of a shifting social and psychological geography – a space that is most often negatively defined in terms of that to which it is supposedly 'post' – that the contributions to this volume are situated. It is a space that is both concrete and mythic. For what 'home' means to us is shaped at once by the material circumstances of our experience and by the various narratives that attempt to define and interpret that experience for us. The tension, pain, confusion and strength produced by the struggle to live with (or against) the lack of congruity between myth and experience is probed by a number of the contributions to this volume: Tzvetan Todorov's reflections on exile and his first return visit to his homeland, Bulgaria; Mark Wallinger's images of homeless men and women in poses that mirror/mimic commissioned portraits of landed gentry; Aine O'Brien's photo-essay on constructions of 'home' in the context of colonized – and resisting – Ireland; Jamie Daniel's analysis of T.W. Adorno's struggle for integrity in his refusal to be reconciled with the home that he was never fully able to leave. Finally, the poems (by Ariel Dorfman, Helen Fehervary, and Irena Klepfisz) give the contending meanings of 'home' a particularly resonant expression. What emerges from the volume as a whole is a sense of home as always existing in the virtual space between loss and recuperation. Home, then, we might say, is the imaginary point where here and there – where we are and where we come from – are momentarily grounded.

Of course, this division between 'here' and 'there' is a conceptual abstraction. For, in fact, in our daily lives – from the language we speak and the foods we eat to the way we move our bodies and the rituals we maintain – we (and increasingly more of us in today's world) live in what, in the most literal sense, might be described as conditions of hybridity.[8] For us – all those who, in one way or another, have been displaced from some originary place where we once, perhaps, 'belonged' – 'home' is, in every sense of the phrase, neither here nor there. Rather, itself a hybrid, it is *both* here *and* there – an amalgam, a pastiche, a performance. Indeed, if the nation, as Benedict Anderson has proposed, is an imagined community, then home, by analogy, might be thought of as an enacted space within which we try on and play out roles and relationships of both belonging and foreignness.

In this respect, the analogy between nation in Anderson's sense and home, in the sense in which it is displayed in this volume, works on a number of levels. Both, to begin with, are fictional constructs, mythic narratives, stories the telling of which has the power to create the 'we' who are engaged in telling them. This power to construct not only an identity for ourselves as members of a community

6. *Ibid.*, p9.

7. *Ibid.*, p14.

8. *Funk & Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary*, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York 1968, p656, defines a 'hybrid' as, among other things, 'Anything of mixed origin or of incongruous or different elements'. Homi Bhabha has developed the concept of 'hybridity' as a central term in relation to which the deployment of and resistance to power in the colonial and post-colonial context maybe understood: 'Hybridity ... is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal ... It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.' See Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817', in H.L. Gates, Jr. (ed.), *'Race' Writing and Difference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1986, p173.

('nation', say, or 'family'), but also the discursive right to a space (a country, a neighbourhood, a place to live) that is due us, is – we then claim, in the name of that we-ness we have just constructed – at the heart of what Anderson describes as the 'profound emotional legitimacy' of such concepts as 'nation' or 'home'.[9] In this light, the quasi-synonymity and ideological slippage between these two concepts is not at all surprising.

The state, as nation, is naturalized in domestic, familial terms ('homeland', we say, or 'fatherland') while familial relationships are hierarchized along lines of authority patterned by the state, where designated leaders rule over subalterns. Home, nation and family thus operate within the same mythic metaphorical field. This relationship between 'the public world of politics and ... the private sphere of home' (Schwarz) is touched on, in one way or another, by almost all of the contributions to this volume. Mary Ellen Hombs provides abundant evidence for the fact that homelessness, in the most literal sense of not having a place to live, is not just 'something that happens', but part of an acknowledged and, in a sense, deliberate national agenda. Doreen Massey demonstrates how the material geography of the places we call home – the places we inhabit and traverse daily because we live, shop, send our children to school, and go to work there – evidence the postcolonial, postmodern realities about which we elsewhere theorize. Bill Schwarz uses the case study of Paul Scott, author of *The Raj Quartet* and, earlier, a junior officer in the British Indian Imperial Army, to drive home, as it were, the relationship between over there and back here – 'colonial India' and 'the domestic imperatives of suburban London' (Schwarz). Empires (with their wars, their usurpation of other peoples' resources, cultures and lives) are created and sustained in the name of domestic needs (the 'need' for commodities, security, change, entertainment and a better life, overall). What Schwarz reminds us of is that this is only one side of the equation: the other is the much less visible and seldom acknowledged way in which the domestic scene (the affective and familial relationships lived out within the private sphere of home) is called upon to help create and sustain the Empire that has been erected in its name. As we experience again and again (in the Falklands, Grenada or the Gulf War, merely to name several recent incidents), this imbrication of home and Empire, and the justificatory reasoning behind it, are alive and well. And as the case of Paul Scott demonstrates, the violence of the one, in all its racialized, ethnicized and genderized particulars, is not only sustained by, but displaced onto, the other in a relentless dynamic of mutual destruction.

For this reason, 'home' – both as locus of regressive nostalgia and as rallying ground for reactionary nationalisms – is often, particularly among left-progressive circles, either dismissed as an embarrassing backwater of unemancipated feelings or actively attacked as a breeding ground of repressive and oppressive politics.[10] These oppositions are ones that in this volume I have deliberately striven to avoid. As Celia Applegate demonstrates in her essay on Weimar Germany, 'home' can be invoked to mobilize emancipatory and reactionary forces alike. Thus, in the

9. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn, Verso, London 1991, p4.

10. This dismissive, if not condemnatory, attitude toward 'home' is not infrequently accompanied by a similar attitude toward anything identified as 'personal' writing. Like an attachment to home, writing personally (in contrast to writing 'theoretically' is regarded as politically embarrassing, if not retrograde.

11. As Fredric Jameson points out in his analysis of the relationship between 'Modernism and Imperialism', the coherence and homogeneity of 'home' was forever ruptured by the colonial system: 'Colonialism means that a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere ... outside of the daily life and existential experience of the home country, in

brief period of the Weimar Republic, the idea of *Heimat*, 'drafted into the service of republicanism as well as nationalism' (Applegate), was made to serve both proto-democratic and proto-fascist movements. Marianna Torgovnick also, albeit from an entirely different perspective, challenges too facile an ideologizing of 'home'. Torgovnick counters the undifferentiated attack on home, in the domestic sense, as the site of women's oppression, by reminding us (and herself) that it is not only women and children who experience pain and danger in the home, but *all* who live there, men included.

What, then, to do with 'home'? Some, like Jeffrey Peck, conclude that in certain contexts at certain times (in his case, the time and place in question are Germany today), the concept of home comes so laden with exclusionary, territorializing, and xenophobic resonances that it is perhaps best set aside for a more useful term. Others, like Torgovnick, conclude that 'home' is something we can never give up because it is one of the few remaining utopian ideals – the expression of our need to believe in a place of shelter where we 'belong' and are safe. Between the twin poles of the deconstructive impulses of our theoretical and critical interventions and the recuperative gestures of our affective needs, most of us, I dare say, are likely to find ourselves somewhere on the continuum.

In the eighteenth century, homesickness was considered a disease that medical doctors could diagnose and cure. Yet, given the fact that it struck, in particular, those who had left home to make their fortune in the colonies, it was a disease linked from the very beginning to the particular pathology of violence and loss that marked the colonialist venture. It is thus fitting, in a kind of historical irony, that the longing for home as cure for the malaise of displacement is so often felt these days by those displaced, affectively if not physically, by their own nations' globalizing reaches.[11] What is more, this historical link between 'home' and 'sickness', nostalgia and loss,[12] suggests that home, in a sense, has always been '*unheimlich*': not just the utopian place of safety and shelter for which we supposedly yearn, but also the place of dark secrets, of fear and danger, that we can sometimes only inhabit furtively.[13] Perhaps, in this light, the best we can do about home at this point in time is to bring it, in all its complexity, out into the open. Perhaps then we can probe the depths of our ambivalence about what it stands for and resist the preformed ideological stand that causes us publicly to reject it as *unheimlich* (monstrous, spooky), while secretly (*heimlich*) nursing our longing to return. One of the most painful lessons that feminists have learned from the struggle for reproductive rights is that we cannot cede the language of emotion (longing, pain and fear) to those on the political Right while we try to make do with an abstract language of civil rights. The discussion of home, particularly now as national and ethnic struggles are refashioning 'home' into a powerful ideological tool, will not, I hope, be thus falsely polarized. Towards that end, I hope that this volume is able not only to raise, but complicate, the issue of home. For that, I believe, is ultimately the only ground on which a useful discussion can take place.

<div align="right">Angelika Bammer (Atlanta, June 1992)</div>

colonies over the water whose own life experience and life world ... remain unknown and unimaginable for the subjects of the imperial power ... Such spatial disjunction has as its immediate consequence the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole ... daily life and existential experience in the metropolis ... no longer has its meaning, its deeper reason for being, within itself'. Fredric Jameson, 'Modernism and Imperialism', in T. Eagleton, F. Jameson and E. Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1990, pp50-I.

12. These links have perhaps nowhere been more clearly articulated than in Renato Rosaldo's chapter on 'Imperialist Nostalgia' in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Beacon Press, Boston 1989.

13. '*Heimlich*', which, as Freud points out in his famous essay on '*Das Unheimliche*', is etymologically linked to 'home', also means (and, in fact, this is its most commonly used meaning), 'secretive, furtive'.