SITE-SPECIFIC MOBILITIES

Catherine Nash

> ... what then are the binding elements and distinguishing characteristics
> that will help us shape a new more enlightened model of community in
> the twenty first century?
> Let's begin the discussion.

These are the last words by Guillermo Gómez-Peña in his border crossing
collection of writings which chronicle and reflect on five years of his work
as an interdisciplinary and collaborative performance artist. The borders
he crosses are, certainly, physical - enforced by emigration legislation and
policed by border patrols and security staff. As a Mexican in the process of
Chicanisation, over twenty years he has moved back and forth between the
US and Mexico, not to find himself in the heroic mobile mode of self-
discovery, but to trace movements of those like him who have migrated
North and also face repeated harassment and endless confrontations, to
revisit marginal communities shaped by exile, and to return for renewal to
his, as he writes, now mythical home. Since his early work with the Border
Arts Workshop (1984-1990) he has defined himself as a 'migrant
provocateur, and intercultural pirate, a "border brujo", a conceptual coyote
(smuggler)' (p9). He writes about himself not to romanticise these travels
or his marginal position; he uses the autobiographical mode only when it
engages with larger social and cultural issues.

The volatile borders he crosses are also cultural and artistic, however
he challenges conventional distinctions between artistic practice, theory
and activism, and performs his work about the distorted and dangerous
image of Mexican immigrants and Mexico in the American imagination,
in Aberystwyth, Montana, Helsinki, and Chiapas, both beyond and within
the conventional spaces of contemporary art. This book traces a complex
geography of travel and site-specific performances, and narrates
intercultural encounters marked by asymmetries of power and reciprocal
desires and fears. It includes excerpts from diaries and performance scripts,
poems, texts broadcast on National Public Radio, essays on culture, politics,
identity and performance, conversations with other cultural critics and
practitioners, and stills from performance pieces.

John Urry's book is also about mobility and citizenship. *Sociology Beyond Societies* is a manifesto for a revised sociology that takes the transnational and subnational mobility of people, things, information and images, rather than bounded societies and the nation-state, as the core focus of the discipline. Attending to the overlooked mobility of people and things and to the intensified corporeal, virtual and imaginative travels of globalisation that erode the autonomy and boundedness of the nation-state, means, he argues, forging a new 'sociology of fluids' for these new 'post-societal' times. In the introduction and chapters that follow he outlines new rules of sociological method centred on appropriate metaphors of mobility: the range, diverse effects and uneven networks or 'scapes' of mobilities and flows; the sensuous constitution of mobile hybrids of things and people; the temporal and geographical shaping of nationhood, gender, class, ethnicity, community, dwelling, and citizenship; the increasing interdependence of 'domestic' and 'foreign' issues and the role of the states as regulators or 'game keepers' of flows; and the chaotic, unpredictable and non-linear global consequences of local events. The focus on mobility that he argues for pays attention to all the senses, to time and to the hybrid human and non-human character of 'society' and 'nature'.

This is a useful and comprehensive review and synthesis of recent work in social theory and cultural studies. Familiar figures, recast as mobile hybrids, populate the chapters - the walker, the car driver, the map maker, the photographer, the landscape viewer, the television watcher. Urry also draws on science studies, especially chaos and complexity theories, and actor-network theory, and his discussions of time and nature are thought-provoking. He replaces the common distinction in the social sciences between 'natural time' and the abstract, universal, commodified, modern 'clock time', with two new metaphors: the 'instantaneous' time of a highly globalised and mediatised world, and its counterpoint, 'glacial time'- a time more in tune with the slower rhythms and longer durations of 'nature's speed', through which people (especially women apparently) 'resist the clock and the nanosecond' and globalised placelessness.

It is sometimes hard to tell whether Urry is being descriptive or prescriptive; this appeal to a 'nature' that is somehow autonomous and resistant seems to contradict his characterisation of nature as a hybrid of human and non-human activities. I am also not sure that Urry's efforts to bring together ideas of citizenship and nature following a non-deterministic model of the relationships between a benevolent nature and its environmental objects, is useful or entirely convincing. Less contentious is his argument that the sovereign nation state and exclusive versions of national heritage have been undermined by globalisation, by the creation of a global public sphere in which the actions of the state are put on show, by sub-national and transnational 'sociations' and complex post-colonial cultural interconnections. The focus of sociology for the twenty-first century should be both mobility and the notion of 'global citizenship', shaped

through the transnational nature of social duties, rights and risks. Despite the 'paradoxical entanglements' and contradictory politics of consumerism and citizenship that Urry discusses, for him 'global citizenship' is sociology's new energising social movement. Sociology, he argues, is a discipline uniquely placed to explore the micro-geographies and global scale of mobility in all its forms. By comparison, Gómez-Peña's engagement with issues of globalisation and new forms of citizenship and mobility is wildly interdisciplinary, more focused, less systematic, more creative and less all-encompassing.

Gómez-Peña's work is concerned with economic and cultural globalisation, the Western millennial culture of fear, puritanism, self-obsession and despair, the resurgence of virulent neo-nationalisms and spiritual fundamentalisms, and the militarisation of the US/Mexican border. His strategies in response are to use language subversively and to embody in performance the figures which haunt the dominant culture's imagination of Mexico, Mexican immigrants and Chicano communities. In his written and performed texts he deploys the creative and transgressive linguistic possibilities of names, and variously subverted and hybridised languages - 'Spanish, English, Spanglish, Gringoñol, Franglais, Robo-esperanto and fake Nahuatl' (p21) - and shifting performance voices and textual forms. His main performance aliases, in chronological order, are Mister Misterio, El Existentialist Mojado, Border Brujo, El Warrior for Gringostroika, El Untranslatable Vato, El Mariachi Liberachi, El Aztec High Tech, El Quebradito, El Naftazteca, El Mad Mex, El Mexterminator, Information Superhighway Bandito, El Web-back. In performances which freely mix religious and political symbolism, popular culture and markers of mythical Mexicanness, he and his performance partner, Roberto Sifuentes, embody the figures of mythical and demonised Mexicanness, playing on the double stereotype of Mexicans as infectious, violent, hypersexual, and crazed, or natural, innocent, spiritual, ritualistic - the gang member or shaman. Putting themselves on display as the embodiment of these projections of fear and fascination, they hijack the colonial ethnographic form of the 'living diorama' of ethnic difference and undertake an anti-colonial reverse anthropology, exploring and putting on display the dominant culture's imagination of a monstrous, phantasmic, and (non-existent) Mexican, Chicano identity. I have never seen one of their performances but from the extracts, accounts and images in this book I imagine them to be at once disturbing, funny, raw, playful, visceral, baroque, complex and ambiguous, both alienating and compelling. (Urry's discussion of the over-emphasis on vision in modernity seems dated in comparison to these riotous multi-media and multi-sensory events.) I know I miss or only partly understand many of the references and allusions, but that, I think, is part of the point. They seem to stage resistant but not essentialised difference as well as a subverted authenticity.

Often working with teams of artists, as well as several key collaborators,

Gómez-Peña's performances include site-specific public interventions in response to the enactment of discriminatory legislation and the intensification of anti-immigration anxieties and longer term projects. A week after Easter Sunday in April 1994, he and Roberto Sifuentes performed 'The Cruci-Fiction Project' at Rodeo Beach in San Francisco, a symbolic protest against the xenophobic anti-immigration policies of the then Governor of California. Dressed in the guise of 'contemporary public enemies of California', they hung for three hours as the sun set behind them, roped to their crosses until rescued. In 1998, in response to Proposition 227 which legislated against bilingual education in California, they staged a series of 'activist tableaux vivants' in protest on Ellis Island. As CyberVato and El Mad Mex, a Mexican 'alien' and a first generation Chicano, they disrupted the nostalgic commemoration of white migration and the selective discourse of welcoming inclusiveness at a time when immigration from Latin America to the United States was being pathologised as a threat to the nation. Other projects are less spectacular but no less effective. Gómez-Peña's 'Self-Deportation Project', recorded in 1995 and eventually broadcast on National Pubic Radio, invited listeners to imagine the logical consequences of California's anti-immigration policies - a collapsing economy and society paralysed by the absence of the disappeared Latino labour force; self-deported with their savings they leave taxis, shops, fruit fields, restaurants unstaffed and cities bankrupt. Other performance projects are more sustained, mutating as they travel and develop. With Sifuentes, he has explored the possibilities of infiltrating cyberspace to politicise its supposed neutrality and egalitarian potential. They invite net-users to express how they feel Mexicans, Chicanos, and Native Americans of the 1990s should look and behave, developing the strategy they had used in the earlier 'Temple of Confession' piece, in which the audience were invited to express their fears and desires to staged 'saints' during performances. In the 'Mexterminator' performances which resulted, he and Sifuentes incarnate the anxious, erotic and futuristic nightmares and fantasies of race confessed on-line. For Gómez-Peña, the audience experiences 'a stylised anthropomorphisation of its own post-colonial demons and racist hallucinations, a kind of cross-cultural poltergeist' (p50).

But *Dangerous Border Crossers* does not just chronicle this extraordinary, inventive, edgy and challenging work; it raises a series of complex and important questions about the relationship between cultural critics and cultural practitioners, about the intercultural encounters of tourism, and about the potential emergence of a consumerist and subaltern grassroots transnationalism. Gómez-Peña explores the possibilities of new contingent communities in the face of the collapse of old certainties and fraught internal divisions; new languages and metaphors of culture and identity when the current ones are so fraught and contentious; and strategies for creative resistance when ethnic difference and marginality are so thoroughly commodified. The book doesn't fully provide an answer - a simple, easy

and neat answer would be against the spirit of his radical, shifting and mobile politics - but it is a provocative and inspiring invitation to discussion. The implications of John Urry's closing reflections on the paradoxical necessity of global homogenisation, consumerism and cosmopolitanism for the 'peculiar character of contemporary citizenship'(p187) are also provocative. Both authors are clearly exploring the nature of contemporary social relations and the possibilities for new mobile forms of collective identity, from different (inter)disciplinary, cultural and geographical locations and with different strategies of engagement.

Despite their shared interests in mobilities and new forms of (radical) transnational citizenship, these are very different sorts of books, only awkwardly reviewed together here, and their juxtaposition is perhaps unfair. They offer different ways of dealing with mobility. Yet reading them together, Urry's manifesto seems more static, too comprehensive and too encompassing in comparison. It is more temperate, more analytical, more systematic but also more totalising. This is a wider problem of those who want mobility as an analytical framework to do too much. Everything, even staying completely still, becomes explicable in terms of mobility - the shaping of the nation state and its erosion, the resistance to as well as the celebration of global capital. Mystical phenomenologies of corporeal movement or objects often end up stating the obvious.

Mounting a manifesto, perhaps inevitably, means exaggerating its necessity, downplaying the already familiar aspects of the programme and its limits. When the mobilities are specified and their complex transcultural encounters and flows are critically and creatively performed, as they are in Gómez-Peña's work, it is possible to begin to respond effectively to Urry's call to explore the complex interconnections and the social consequences of diverse mobilities of people, images, objects and information. While Urry's vision is synthetic and encompassing, as Gómez-Peña shows, critical engagement with the intercultural encounters and border crossings of an unevenly globalised world can be simultaneously more wild and more located.

DOUBLE DISPLACEMENT

Alison Blunt

Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, empire, and the locations of identity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1999, 249 pp; £12.50 paperback. Edward W. Said, *Out of Place: a memoir*, Granta, London 1999, 295 pp; £8.99 paperback.

The phrase 'out of place' suggests exclusion and exile, dislocation and dispossession, all of which reflect the intensely political nature of place, and the complex intersections of both place and politics with identity. Edward Said has written that 'just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography'.[1] Both of these books are about the politics of displacement and the struggle over geography, taking place on personal, national and imperial terrains. Edward Said's compelling memoir revisits the period from his birth in 1935 to the completion of his doctorate in 1962 in candid, moving and often painful detail. Writing about his life in Jerusalem, Cairo, Lebanon and the United States, Said explains that, 'Along with language, it is geography - especially in the displaced form of departures, arrivals, farewells, exile, nostalgia, homesickness, belonging, and travel itself - that is at the core of my memories of those early years' (pxvi). Similar themes of memory, displacement, and 'spaces of instability' run throughout Ian Baucom's study of Englishness and its imperial locations. His book focuses on six spaces: Gothic architecture, the Victoria Terminus in Bombay, the Anglo-Indian Mutiny pilgrimage, the cricket field, the country house, and 'the zone of urban riot' - each of which, he says, has housed both 'the disciplinary projects of imperialism *and* the imperial destabilizations and re-formations of English identity' (p4). Baucom concentrates on particular sites of memory - *lieux de memoire* he calls them, after Pierre Nora[2] - that were centrally important in staging an idea of Englishness over imperial space. Particular sites of memory punctuate Said's narrative too, most notably the British and American schools he attended in Jerusalem, Cairo and the Eastern United States, which helped to shape his identity through the experiences of exclusion, alienation and dislocation. To be 'out of place', for both Said and Baucom, is to experience the multiple and interwoven estrangements of place and identity.

A memoir is not just about remembering, but also writing. For Said, both activities provided vital succour at a time of serious illness: 'My memory

1. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1993, p7; for further reflections on the geography of Said's work and politics see D. Gregory, 'Imaginative Geographies', *Progress in Human Geography* 19 (1995), pp447-485.

2. See Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history: *les lieux de memoire*', Marc Roudebush (trans), *Representations* 26 (1989), pp7-25.

proved crucial to my being able to function at all during periods of debilitating sickness, treatment, and anxiety,' while his daily writing gave him 'a structure and a discipline at once pleasurable and demanding' (pxiii). Both personally and politically Said's memoir seeks to record 'an essentially lost or forgotten world' and 'to bridge the sheer distance in time and place between my life today and my life then' (ppxiii-xvi). Politics in Said's memoir are present, but always implicit; the world of experience recorded here is in large part a pre-political one. In the early stages of his writing Said declared, 'I don't want it to be a book that reads back into those years a political awareness or political program that I have now ... I want to try and do the Cairo-Jerusalem-Beirut axis, which is the one I grew up in, in a pre-political way in which all the political realities of the present nevertheless are somehow there in a figured or implicit form, held in suspension'.[3] Said writes about the repression of the idea of Palestine (and of politics more broadly) by his Palestinian parents, and about their disapproval of his own politicisation twenty years later in the United States. He traces his early awareness of Palestine as 'history and cause', and of the pain and poverty suffered by displaced Palestinians, to the tireless work of his aunt Nabiha with refugees in Cairo after 1948. But, as he writes, '[w]hatever political ideas she may have had were hardly ever uttered in my presence: they did not seem necessary at the time. What was of central importance was the raw, almost brutal core of Palestinian suffering, which she made it her business to address every morning, noon, and night' (p121). In the face of desperate human need, and the humanity of those working to relieve it, political realities were 'held in suspension': ever-present, not necessarily articulated, and providing a context for a memory that future consciousness could both draw on and exceed.

3. Michael Sprinker (ed), *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford 1992, p227.

Like his other writings, Said's *Out of Place* is a work of imaginative geography that vividly depicts the particularity of place in relation to other places; traces enigmatic origins, painful departures and difficult journeys; and reveals the inescapable, often fraught interplay between a sense of place and a sense of self, most acutely experienced as exile, dispossession and homesickness. For Said, childhood memories of Jerusalem are inseparably bound up with the lives and activities of a wide extended family, suggesting a collective and expansive sense of belonging and identification both with each other and with a place called home. In contrast, life in Cairo was much more restrictive and reliant on the immediate family, bound together in exile and identified as foreign. From 1943, Said's family spent every summer in the Lebanese mountain village of Dhour el Shweir, where his father felt at home, but which an increasingly solitary Said found dull and monotonous. These very distinct places - Jerusalem, Cairo, and Dhour el Shweir - were nevertheless bound together by their separateness from the United States, the fourth geographical axis of Said's memoir. His father was born in Jerusalem, but became an American citizen after serving in World War I and living in the United States for a decade. Said and his four

sisters were American citizens from birth, and, although he knew little about his father's past, an American influence infused their present, above all through his father's 'practice of self-making with a purpose, which he exploited in what he did and what he made others around him, chiefly me, do' (p10). As American citizens, Said, his sisters and his father could, unlike his mother, cross borders with relative ease, 'protected from the politics of Palestine by our talismanic U.S. passports' (p117). The United States - seen by Said as an overwhelmingly homogeneous world, far removed from the cosmopolitanism of Cairo - proved to be the destination of the most painful ruptures in Said's early life, first at summer camp in Maine, sent away from his parents for the first time, then at boarding school, and finally at Harvard and Princeton. Though he has lived in the United States ever since those formative years, Said continues to feel more displaced than 'at home' there, but has come to regard displacement in positive and productive terms: 'Now it does not seem important or even desirable to be "right" and in place (right at home, for instance). Better to wander out of place, not to own a house, and not ever to feel too much at home anywhere, especially in a city like New York, where I shall be until I die' (p294).

Throughout the book, Said reflects on his identity not only as fractured, multiple and conflicting, but as fundamentally split between an 'internal' and an 'external' sense of self. 'I have retained this unsettling sense of many identities - mostly in conflict with each other - all of my life,' he writes, 'together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all-Egyptian, and so on' (p5). In the face of strict regimes of mental and physical self-improvement imposed by his parents, Said writes of his increasing detachment from the figure of 'Edward' - 'a creation of my parents whose daily travails a quite different but quite dormant inner self was able to observe, though most of the time was powerless to help' (p19). His divided identity became more marked in the disciplinary confines of school and during his early years in the United States. While at summer camp in Maine, 'I resolved to live as if I were a simple, transparent soul and not to speak about my family or origins except as required, and then very sparingly. To become, in other words, like the others, as anonymous as possible. The split between "Edward" [...], my public, outer self, and the loose, irresponsible fantasy-ridden churning metamorphoses of my private, inner life was very marked. Later the eruptions from my inner self grew not only more frequent but also less possible to control' (p137).

In *Out of Place* Said explores the relational imaginings of both place and identity. He reflects on intimacy, most notably with his mother and in his love for two other women. Living and travelling between the two worlds of graduate school in the United States and summers spent in Dhour, Said's relationships with an unnamed American woman and with Eva Emad from a conservative Arab family appear to embody his dual existence, his constant

displacement, and his unrealisable desire to belong. Said also traces the contours of his identity in relation to disciplinary power, exercised at home and in the British and American schools he attended in Jerusalem and Cairo. At the Gezira Preparatory School in Cairo, his fellow pupils were 'Greenvilles, and Coopers, and Pilleys: starchy little English boys and girls with enviably authentic names, blue eyes, and bright, definitive accents' (p39), with whom he associated an idea of 'home' from which he remained excluded and alienated. Even as British imperial power in Egypt was declining, schools such as Victoria College - known as the Eton of the Middle East - continued to enshrine an imperial ideology through its organisation, discipline and brutality. An unbridgeable gulf existed between English teachers and Arab pupils that was codified and buttressed by rules, language, and the curriculum. And yet, the tyrannical exercise of power and repression produced sites of resistance, solidarity, and liberation. As the school rules banned languages other than English, 'Arabic became our haven, a criminalized discourse where we took refuge from the world of masters and complicit prefects and anglicized older boys who lorded it over us as enforcers of the hierarchy and its rules' (p184).

Schools are also a salient feature in the imperial landscapes discussed by Ian Baucom. The complementary strengths of both books are most apparent in their discussions of English public schools as key locations of imperial power and authority and their dislocations over space. While Baucom's cultural history of memory concentrates on schools as institutions - the local, national and imperial inflections of institutional identity - Said's memoir reflects on childhood experiences of school and the moulding of individual and collective identities within its disciplinary limits. Read alongside Edward Said's vivid memories of schooldays spent in the Middle East and the United States, Baucom's accounts of schools such as Kim's St Xavier's in Lucknow, India, and Thomas Arnold's Rugby in England, reveal the complex intersections of imperialism, class and masculinity in the broader fashioning, disciplining, and embodiment of identity over space and time. Like the six main spaces of his analysis, the location of such schools both 'here' and 'there' represents, displaced locales of Englishness that foster distinctively imperial memories and identities. The distinction between Englishness and Britishness is central to Baucom's argument. '"British" space', he writes, 'was ... read as homogeneous, interchangeable, everywhere alike, while "English" space remained unique, local, differentiated: a formula which permitted the empire to be that which was simultaneously *within* the boundaries of Britishness and *outside* the territory of Englishness' (p10). While Gothic architecture and cricket, for example, were transported over British imperial space, they remained distinctively English in their dislocation. As he persuasively shows, the metaphorical idea that English history 'took place' overseas became literal in material places and practices. Travelling 'from John Ruskin to Salman Rushdie and back to Ruskin again', Baucom explores the instabilities of English imperial

locales: 'as England dispersed its Gothic cathedrals, cricket fields, imperial maps, costumed bodies, and country houses across the surface of the globe, it found that these spaces, and the narratives of identity they physically embodied, were altered by the colonial subjects who came into contact with them' (p220). As he concludes, the topographies of Englishness 'are always sprawling, mutating, solidifying, and collapsing once again' (p221).

Just as Edward Said seeks to bridge the distance between his past and present, Ian Baucom explores the present resonance of an imperial past. Unlike many other studies of imperial cultures and the spatiality of imperial rule, Baucom introduces his discussion in relation to contemporary concerns of immigration and citizenship. He characterises the profound change signalled by the 1981 British Nationality Act as a shift from 'place' to 'race', according to which nationality comes to signify a racialised notion of collective identity based on genealogical rather than territorial affiliation. By relating locale, nation, and empire; by complicating an assumed distance between 'here' and 'there'; and by showing that local histories and geographies are never delimited and isolated from other times and places, Baucom's book addresses the politics of place and identity in imperial and post-imperial contexts. Bound by more than a common title, each *Out of Place* thus considers the multiple and interwoven estrangements of place and identity by addressing similar themes of displacement and instability and by exploring the intensely political production of place, and the complex intersections of both place and politics with identity. For Baucom and Said, the phrase 'out of place' is intimately tied to the spatial politics of memory, whereby places are imagined in relation to other places, imaginative geographies of place and identity assume material forms and consequences, and experiences of belonging and displacement resonate on personal, national and imperial scales.

WANDERLUST OR 'PATHOLOGICAL TOURISM'?

Waltraud Ernst

Ian Hacking, *Mad Travellers: Reflections on the Reality of Transient Mental Illnesses*, Free Association Books, London 1999, 239pp; £15.95 cloth.

As indicated by his subtitle, Ian Hacking's main concern is to explore the circumstances surrounding the appearance of particular behaviour patterns that are perceived for a time as discrete mental illnesses. Current examples are Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder. Hacking has chosen a phenomenon that received medical attention and captured the public imagination in late nineteenth-century France: *fugue*, the obsessive compulsion to travel. The doctor of one Albert Dadas, who is at the centre of Hacking's analysis, described some of his patient's symptoms in 1886: 'he could not prevent himself from departing on a trip when the need took him; he deserted family, work, and daily life to walk as fast as he could, straight ahead, sometimes doing 70 kilometers a day on foot, until in the end he would be arrested for vagrancy and thrown in prison' (p7).

Although Hacking invites the reader to look at the competing medical explanations and treatment methods advocated, his main objective is to use the case of *fugue* to explore the wider social, political and cultural context that made this particular diagnosis possible. In his words, he is interested in the 'ecological niches' where transient illnesses find a home at a given place and time. As in Hacking's previous book *Rewriting the Soul*, on multiple personality disorder, the questions of whether *fugue* was 'real' in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France, and what its current diagnostic equivalent would be, are taken to be beside the point. The primary issue is to explore what in French turn-of-the-century culture made *fugue* a possible way of being mad.

We consequently learn about the symptoms and contemporary treatments of *fugue* within the social and cultural context of *fin de siècle* France, especially Bordeaux. Travel and tourism had become popular pursuits of wealthy and middle-class people alike, with writers such as Jules Verne, Flaubert and Baudelaire capturing the minds of many with tales of travel as rebellion, poetry, and self-discovery. At the same time a craze for cycling, gymnastics and walking focused attention on people's increased mobility, enabling a new type of mental disorder and behaviour to locate itself. Although travel as 'virtuous tourism' and poetic self-discovery had its flip (or darker) side, in the form of 'vicious vagrancy', these were

sufficiently evocative and prominent in the public imagination to play joint host to *fugue* as a kind of 'pathological tourism'. In fact, Hacking argues that 'one of the features of a new mental illness is that it embeds itself in a two-headed way in a culture. The simplest way is that there are two versions "of the same thing", one held to be virtuous and one held to be vicious, between which the illness insinuates itself' (p48).

Hacking also focuses on the heated medical discussions about *fugue* as either a hysterical or an epileptic condition, and on the cultural factors that inform preference for one or the other explanation. The ensuing polarisation among the professionals, he argues, helped *fugue* to establish itself squarely within diverse yet well established medical taxonomies. *Fugue* was suffered mainly by middle-class men, and those afflicted shared a sense of powerlessness in the face of their daily lives and experiences, finding temporary release in a mental illness which seemed to free them from the problems of their daily struggles, and which was medicalised in a culture preoccupied with both tourism and vagrancy.

Brief chapters on the tropes of 'The Wandering Jew' and *'Wandertrieb'* supplement and further open up the cultural scope of Hacking's analysis by contrasting the Jewish and German experiences with the uniquely French way of labelling a particular kind of travel behaviour as madness.

The most engaging part of the book is the last section, made up of six documents. Here we encounter the voices of Albert Dadas himself and Philippe Tissie, the doctor who observed and treated him by means of hypnotic suggestion. Dadas's account of his journeys and adventures that led him as far abroad as Moscow and Constantinople is fascinating for the modern reader. Dadas is often unaware of how he arrived at such far-flung places, yet will recollect perfectly some touristic detail, such as an architectural feature or the appearance of a landscape. He repeatedly gets picked up by police, being suspected of vagrancy (or even nihilism), as he frequently fails to give a sensible account of his journey. Yet he always manages to procure further travel money or train tickets from wealthy compatriots travelling or residing abroad, or from the French embassies in the countries he ends up in.

That today's reader finds the travel log and the doctor's descriptions enthralling confirms Hacking's argument that diseases must be symptomatically related to wider cultural preoccupations. At least since the *Odyssey*, travel has conjured up a wide range of associations in the Western imagination and cultural tradition, so that Dadas's accounts cannot but resonate with modern readers. Yet the personal stories also bring home the considerable pain suffered by people subject to *fugue*, and confront and challenge the reader's own personal projections and cultural associations - as when Dadas refers to his headaches, the feelings of unsettledness and unease, and an acute urge to masturbate prior to the onset of a bout of travelling. His doctor comments sympathetically on the misery his flights from work and family life cause to those close to him. It is

at this point that Hacking's warning neither to romanticise madness nor to lose track of the person subject to mental disorder is especially poignant. Just as *fugue* could find a cultural niche in *fin de siècle* France, so in the present-day Western world the preoccupation with travel, tourism and adventure, on one hand, and discomfort about and hostility to migrants, refugees and aliens on the other, finds an obvious resonance in the psychological experiences and behaviours of people of a previous century.

Although Hacking argues that the category of *fugue* has outlived its usefulness and should not have a place either in today's psychiatric manuals or in public perceptions of mental suffering, the fact that 'dissociative fugue' is still considered a valid diagnostic category, as well as the appeal of Dadas's case to modern readers, testify to the persistent attraction of travel, and to the continued fearful suspicion of certain kinds of travellers.

THE MODERN WAY OF SEEING

Peter Buse

Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1999, 352 pp, £18.50 cloth.

At the very end of a career filled with perceptive and brilliant commentary on photography - in fact, at the end of his last book *Camera Lucida* - Roland Barthes, somewhat surprisingly, perhaps disingenuously, claims that when faced with a photograph, he 'can say nothing' about it. 'I exhaust myself realizing that *this-has-been*', he writes in apparent capitulation to the muteness and stupidity of photographs.[1] Although practitioners of the burgeoning 'photography theory' of the 1980s either frowned upon or ignored *Camera Lucida* in favour of Barthes's earlier semiotic analyses of photography, the direction of their work in many ways confirmed his thesis that to speak directly of photographs themselves is exceedingly difficult. Instead, some of the most impressive texts to emerge - Abigail Solomon-Godeau's *Photography at the Dock* and John Tagg's *The Burden of Representation*, for instance - concentrated their energies on everything that has surrounded photography at different moments in its history: the institutions which support it (artistic, art-historical, medical, legal, scientific) and the practices which animate it (amateur, professional, commercial, documentary, pornography, surveillance). Nancy Armstrong's rich and ambitious *Fiction in the Age of Photography* is the latest of such attempts to reconstruct the complex cultural contexts (and intertexts) inhabited by photography. In it she traces the centrality of this new technical form to the development, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, of what she calls a culture of 'visuality', a culture which pervades fiction and non-fiction alike. The book reproduces ample examples of Victorian and modernist photographs, but in line with Barthes's statement of 'exhaustion', it is rather more rewarding in its elucidation of contexts and the reading of traditional texts than in the reading of photographs themselves.

Armstrong argues not only that photography and literary realism came about at the same time, but that they had a near-symbiotic relationship, each authorising the other's way of picturing the world. Crucially for Armstrong, the reciprocal relation between photography and realism is not simply based on a shared transparency with regard to the referent; this is an assumption sometimes made about both photography and literary realism which she discounts from the outset: 'I will insist that the kind of visual description we associate with literary realism refers not to things, but

1. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Richard Howard (trans), Flamingo, London 1984, p107.

2. Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Message' [1961], *Image Music Text*, Stephen Heath (trans), Fontana, London 1977, pp15-31, 19.

3. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, Geoff Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (trans), Polity, Cambridge 1991, p134.

to visual representations of things, representations that fiction helped to establish as identical to real things and people' (p3). In what has become a fairly familiar claim, then, Armstrong sees the real as a representation referring to other representations rather than a state of unmediated access to the material world. Oddly, she never uses the handy term 'illusionism', although she does invoke Roland Barthes's 'effects of the real' to support her position. And even though *Camera Lucida* is one of the main theoretical references in the footnotes, Armstrong's take on photography is much closer to an earlier Barthes essay, 'The Photographic Message', where he debunks the notion that a photograph gives unmediated access to the object: every photograph, he argues, 'is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms ... this same photograph is not only perceived, received, it is *read*'.[2]

For Armstrong, the 'ideological norms' according to which Victorian photography was worked on, chosen, composed, and constructed were primarily English, middle-class and white. Accordingly, the photographs voraciously consumed by this sector of society were marked by class interests. Photography and literary realism colluded to establish a 'visual order' whereby the various 'others' of the English middle class could be rendered into quickly recognisable classifications. What were taken for realistic, unmediated representations of the urban poor, the labouring classes, members of the Celtic fringe and colonial subjects in fact contributed to the establishment of a set of differences based around vision - differences which were instrumental in forming the subjectivity of the middle-class viewer of photographs or reader of novels. Jean-François Lyotard once wrote that 'Photography ... is as much a hysteria of the gaze as a means of control', and although Armstrong always emphasises the instability of the categories formed in an elastic visual order, she does tend to lean toward the thesis of photography as a means of control.[3]

In a series of often ingenious juxtapositions, Armstrong reads *Bleak House* alongside *cartes de visite* photos of both the industrial city (shaped by the picturesque tradition inherited from the eighteenth century) and of the middle classes themselves; *Wuthering Heights* alongside photographs which fetishised and in many ways retroactively invented a rustic rural workforce; and *Alice in Wonderland* in tandem with photos of criminals and colonial Africans. The cooperation of fiction and photography led to nothing less than a 'comprehensive system - organized, most obviously, by differences of race and gender - that naturalized a way of seeing specific to the modern middle classes' (p129). The argument of *Fiction in the Age of Photography* hinges on the assertion that this new 'way of seeing' was brought about by 'the onset of mass visuality' (p155). 'Visuality' is the key term and must be distinguished from visibility: it is 'a theory and practice of imaging that visualized what could not have been seen without the help of certain technological advances' (p76). The onset of visuality can be traced in fiction,

which, Armstrong contends, undergoes a pictorial turn around 1850, a turn she dramatises through a careful comparison of the pre-photographic *Oliver Twist* and the post-photographic *Bleak House*.

The real insight of Armstrong's book is its highly convincing account of the visual turn taken by the novel from the 1850s onwards - but the quarry of her argument only becomes clear in her last chapter on literary modernism. If Victorian realist fiction embraced mass visuality and assimilated its impact to generate a new pictorial style of writing, modernism went in the other direction and rejected mass visuality. In doing so, modernism had to caricature realism 'as an obsolete literary genre that ... continued to display an arrogant desire to know and even possess chunks of the world by looking no further than its surface' (p245). Armstrong shows how the most famous anti-realist manifesto of the time, Virginia Woolf's essay 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', loads the dice against nineteenth-century fiction and reduces its complexities by choosing Arnold Bennett as its sole representative. By thus characterising its visually-oriented literary predecessor, modernism could claim access to the 'fundamentally invisible' internal world of characters (p268), a realm untouched and untouchable by both literary realism and photography. Modernism is responsible for an 'iconophobia' which many of us still subscribe to today, a distrust of images as an unnecessary intervention between viewer and the world of objects.

Iconophobia, Armstrong's introduction tells us, is suffered by Karl Marx, the Frankfurt School, and post-structuralists alike. It is somewhat perplexing to find Jean Baudrillard labelled an iconophobe, since his *The Evil Demon of Images* is a critique of the age-old Western distrust of images; but we can probably accept that the whole Marxist tradition (with the noteworthy exception of Walter Benjamin) 'considers mass-reproduced images deleterious because they keep us from seeing an object in its original wholeness and specificity' (p1). Armstrong wants to overcome this tendency, but it would appear that old habits die hard, because when she comes to read many Victorian photographs, she resorts to precisely this model. Consider the following statements. Of Paul Martin's photographs she says: 'he extracted labour, in the figure of the worker himself, from the situation in which that labour has been performed' (p101). Elsewhere she writes: 'Regional photography did to working people what [William Henry Fox] Talbot's did to fragile objects: it stripped them of local meaning and utilitarian value' (p188). Finally, of a photograph of an Irish girl, she says, 'that image completely detached itself from the history of the woman in the photograph' (p191). 'Extracted', 'stripped', 'detached': Armstrong seems to be saying that these are all 'bad images', to use her term, because they have the capacity to remove an object from its original context, and therefore prevent us from seeing it in its original material specificity. Which just goes to show how difficult it is to avoid looking beyond the bounds of the mute photograph to complain about what it *fails* to say.

If there were any complaint to be made about a book of such sweep and scope, it would be that it does not situate itself enough within debates about photography, on one hand, and realism on the other. Since the early 1980s, photography has been debated energetically by many sophisticated theorists. Many, if not all of them, appear in the footnotes of this book, but it might have been useful if Armstrong had spelt out in the body of her text her position in relation to contemporary debates about photography theory and the history of photography. Her main reference point for literary realism is Georg Lukács, who is certainly not the only theorist on this topic. To say of realist methods that 'we regard them as the most self-evident of literary techniques' (p1), seems to disregard any number of writers on the subject who have thought realism anything but self-evident. Brecht's diagnosis of realism as 'illusionism' is a useful antidote to Lukács; Raymond Williams has made all manner of contributions to the field; the *Screen* collective took up the issue with great gusto in the 1970s; and Erich Auerbach, like Armstrong, concludes his massive study *Mimesis* with an analysis of Virginia Woolf (although he locates Woolf very much within the realist tradition). Mentioning these debates would not alter significantly the substance or importance of Armstrong's thesis, but it would help to locate it more firmly within a continuing conversation.

Booknotes

Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (eds), *City A-Z*, Routledge, London and New York 2000; 319pp; £19.99 paperback.

What is it about cities that allows us to speak and write so confidently about the City in general, about city-ness? What is it about Beijing, Beirut and Birmingham that seems to invite comparison in a way that would be impossible for such a globally diverse set of rural landscapes? Perhaps the clues are to be found in this book. Eschewing the more usual kind of dictionaries of terms and concepts (D for Decentralisation, R for Rent Gap, U for Uneven Development, etc.) Pile and Thrift opt for a more Benjaminian project (a 'ghostly presence throughout the book'). Here, D is for Dance Halls, Dancing, Detectives, Dogs, Dreams, Driving and Dust; R is for Restaurants, Roads, and Roundabouts; and U is for Underground, and Underneath the Arches.

The entries range across a variety of cities (Boston, Cali, London, Rio, Stockholm, and so on, as well as the now ubiquitous Los Angeles) to provide topographies of urban landscapes (and urban dreamscapes) seen as ciphers of desire and fear (an urban tropography). The register of these little 'essays' is as varied as the places and practices discussed, and the editors have gathered together a range of geographers, urbanists, sociologists and cultural historians, as well as the occasional novelist, for a volume that has resulted in a loosening of the usual academic conventions. It is telling, for instance, that under the entry for 'gentrification' (an entry that would clearly belong in a dictionary of urban terms and concepts) Dolores Hayden has written a poem. Given this loosening of conventions it would be a pity if this book remained imprisoned in the 'disciplinary' shelves of bookshops. How much better to see it stacked with that strange mix of titles to be found in the newsagents of railway stations and airports.

These brief sketches suggest the revival of an intellectual journalism made famous by the likes of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin. At its best *City A-Z* reinvigorates intellectual journalism, suggesting the productivity that might be found in the short essay. Simmel had a phrase for this kind of writing: *Momentbilder Sub Specie Aeternitatis*. *City A-Z* could similarly be seen as a collection of 'snapshots' of urban life viewed from the perspective of eternity.

Ben Highmore

Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London 2000, 301pp; £22.50 cloth.

Warped Space is a book divided into two distinct parts. Whether these parts meet at a fracture or a 'fold' might hold the key to the relative success or failure of this book. The first half traces a number of disquieting spaces: from the imagined abyss that was said to have haunted Blaise Pascal, to the estranged spaces which figure in the thought of writers such as Bataille, Benjamin and Kracauer. A crucial chapter in this half of the book investigates the 'psychopathologies of urban space' which emerge as named conditions of a metropolitan anxiety (or dis-ease) in the nineteenth century. The question for nineteenth-century psychologists was whether the aetiology of this newly 'discovered' *malaria urbana* (specifically agoraphobia) was to be found in the biological subject or in the new spatiality of urban modernity. Here Vidler is at his archival best tracing the various case studies and diagnoses of spatial fear in the work of psychologists (Westphal, Legrand, Charcot, Tourette, *et al.*) while also detailing the way phobic space is used in arguments about modernist space in the writings of architects and cultural historians (Sitte, Worringer, and Warburg).

The second half shifts gear in terms of both register and content. In a series of short review-like essays, Vidler gives synoptic accounts of various contemporary artists and architects who produce a sense of both physical and psychological 'warped space'. Rachel Whiteread's *House*, Mike Kelley's models for his *The Educational Complex*, Martha Rosler's photographs of freeways and airports in *Rights of Passage* and *In the Place of the Public*, are combined with studies of the architectural practices of Coop Himmelblau, Eric Owen Moss, Morphosis, Greg Lynn, and Daniel Libeskind. Here connections are provided mostly by the science fiction world of William Gibson, where physical space is the screen of a 'television tuned to a dead channel' and where the 'consensual hallucination' of the matrix provides a new spatial actuality that is essentially placeless. While he qualifies his estimation of Gibson's work by suggesting that today his formulations seem 'so comforting and almost archaic', nonetheless for Vidler Gibson offers the impetus to the imagination necessary to think new digital space.

The form of this book does not, on the face of it, seem to evidence characteristics of 'warped space'; rather it relies on an older spatial arrangement: collage. The chapters that make up *Warped Space* appear as so many shattered fragments, where anything like a connecting thread has to be uncovered and rescued by the reader rather than foregrounded and argued for by the author.

Ben Highmore

Geoffrey Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida*, Routledge, London & New York 2000; 235pp, £14.99 paperback.

Following *Jacques Derrida* and *Legislations*, this new collection of essays by Geoffrey Bennington confirms his reputation as the most reliable and rigorous of commentators on Derrida writing in English. Divided into three sections, entitled 'Pedagogics', 'Allographics', and 'Philopolemics', *Interrupting Derrida* moves fluidly between short explicatory pieces and more adventurous explorations of some central motifs in Derrida's recent work. Indeed it is this latter aspect which provides Bennington's book with its most valuable contribution to Derrida scholarship. While a plethora of (often wildly inaccurate) studies of the early work remain available, the later Derrida's consideration of 'themes' such as democracy, friendship, justice and the promise have still not received the full critical attention they deserve.

In *Jacques Derrida*, Bennington describes his subject as at once the most humble and the most arrogant of thinkers in his approach to the western tradition. As for the master so for the disciple: Bennington appears genuinely humble in his self-imposed restriction to the exigency of his master's voice, but perhaps somewhat arrogant in his attempts to respond - as he himself puts it, 'not always very reverentially or even very politely' - to the 'misreadings' of others. This tone of exasperated irritation with the misapprehensions of alternative commentaries will be familiar to readers of Bennington's previous work. His aggressive, entertaining demolitions in earlier pieces of the likes of Christopher Norris and Terry Eagleton were not, I imagine, to everyone's tastes. Perhaps it is a sign of improvement in recent accounts of Derrida, therefore, that this new book can in its 'philopolemics' exhibit a far gentler, more conciliatory approach to those with whom Bennington takes issue.

Ultimately what counts here is the sheer excellence of the readings. This is especially true of the book's central section, 'Allographics', which, as its title suggests, is intended to juxtapose (or contaminate) Derrida's work with other writings. Kant's insistent presence, in particular, provides the basis for a series of discussions of time and politics which are as illuminating and sophisticated as any work on Derrida being carried out today. Equally, the readings of *The Politics of Friendship* and *Specters of Marx*, beyond the lucidity and accuracy of their commentary, offer a valuable contribution to the ongoing debates around the concept of community opened up by the writings of Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot and others. In an increasingly crowded field of secondary material, Bennington's nuanced approach to these political dimensions of Derrida's thought should continue to afford him a place at the very top of the pile.

David Cunningham