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The essays in *Sites of Ethnicity: Europe and the Americas* are structured around an ethnographic trope: the site. In fact, the volume's comparative methodology and multidisciplinary corpus are in keeping with the tenets of modern ethnography, a connection acknowledged by the editors in their introduction. The need to compare sites to adequately pursue the study of culture is one of the premises of modern ethnography, which has shifted away from reductive notions of culture as "dwelling" towards a more capacious definition of culture as "multi-locale." In the essay "Travelling Cultures," James Clifford explains that multi-locale ethnography has replaced the village as a cultural whole by more complex sites "to do justice to transnational political, economic, and cultural forces that traverse and constitute local or regional worlds" (1992: 102). Thus, Clifford insists, the anthropologist seeking to study Haitian culture needs to do fieldwork in "at least *two* places," the Caribbean and Brooklyn (109). Interdisciplinarity is another defining feature of modern ethnography. The contributors to Clifford and Marcus' volume *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) blur the boundary separating literature and science, or narrative and the objective description of culture. Mary Louis Pratt, for instance, traces the origins of ethnographic writing to sixteenth-century European travel accounts, which combined ethnographic description with personal narration (33) and asserts that contemporary ethnography can be read as narrative. Michael Fischer perceives transcultural autobiographic writing as emblematic of the kind of cultural critique that modern ethnography should perform, seeing "ethnographic projects in the provocative literature of modern ethnicity" (233). As I will point out, *Sites of Ethnicity* is a challenging ethnographic project.

Each essay in this collection excavates sites of ethnicity on both sides of the Atlantic, in an attempt to shed new light on the perennial issues raised by transcultural manifestations: identity, ethnicity, culture, space, memory, travel. The collection consists of six sections, each of which is devoted to one of these topics. The vision of the postcolonial is expanded by the volume's taking together of locations and artefacts which are not usually compared or may seem unrelated. In addition to this comparative focus, contributors cover a multidisciplinary corpus which spans postcolonial representations in all their guises: fiction, life writing, travel writing, film, photography, and archaeology. While some essays focus on a single discipline, others range between fields: from fiction to non-fiction, autobiography to photography, fiction to film. The collection features an inaugural essay by Werner Sollors, who highlights the potential of exploring the links between Europe and the Americas and the "opportunities" offered by "a sites-of-ethnicity-approach" (10). He takes up the challenge himself by analysing a number of American texts which feature a European, Italian setting. Sollors asserts that writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Dean Howells or Lydia Maria Child sometimes resorted to European settings in order to deal with ethnic issues more freely. He seems overwhelmed by the endless lines of research opened to him by such an approach.

The essays in the first section of the book, “Travelling Sites,” draw our attention to the way displacements, both wilful and coerced, have determined cultural exchanges between continents and cultures, and shaped diasporic identities in an increasingly mobile world. Drawing on the vocabulary of transnationalism—diaspora, migration, exile—these essays recall Clifford’s notion of culture as travel. Dorothea Löbbermann’s piece “‘Making Strange’ in Tourism: Harlem through European Eyes in the 1920s and 1930s,” juxtaposes the tourist’s and the migrant’s experience of ethnicity, drawing on Keith Hollinshead’s and Dean MacCannell’s influential theories of tourism as “the industry of difference par excellence” (69). Löbbermann compares the representation of the Black Mecca of the roaring 1920s in Harlem Renaissance literature—Rudolph Fischer’s story “The City of Refuge” depicting the experiences of a Southern immigrant—with the travel reports of German writers of the same period. She concludes that while the former provide an in-depth picture of this site of ethnicity, the latter portray Harlem as the exotic repository of a pristine black heritage, subject to preposterous European going-slumming attitudes. Such a stable picture of 1920s Harlem obscures the multiplicity of black subject positions—black locals, Southern immigrants, Afro-Caribbeans—comprising New York black ghettos in the early twentieth century (Watkins-Owens 1996; López 2002).

The section “Desiring Space” features specialised readings of transcultural fiction. The essay “Situated Identity: Chitra Divakaruni’s *The Wine of Desire* and Meera Syal’s *Life Isn’t all Ha Ha Hee Hee*,” resonates with Clifford’s predicament that “diaspora visions . . . are always entangled in powerful global histories” (1994: 302). Gita Rajan explores the complexity of the South Asian diaspora through an analysis of fiction produced in its American and British branches. The characters in Divakaruni’s and Syal’s novels experience conflicting desires of belonging, which are to some extent determined by the differing conditions of their metropolitan hostlands. San Francisco is the setting of a dystopic novel of migration which Rajan reads as a response to curbs on Asian migration in the US. London, in contrast, proves a more welcoming metropolis where immigrant success is possible, although Syal does not overlook Britain’s difficulties in coming to terms with multiculturalism. Rajan succeeds in pointing out “the political ambivalence,” “the utopic/dystopic tension” (Clifford 302) inherent in diaspora discourses.

The comparative focus of this volume reaches its peak in A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff’s essay “Images of Europe in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes* and James Welch’s *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*.” Included in the “Imagining Identity” section, this essay draws attention to the way some recent Native American fiction problematises the *identity* and range of Native American literature. Brown Ruoff highlights Silko’s attempt at universalising the Native American experience by drawing parallelisms between Native American and European pre-Christian beliefs and ordeals in *Gardens in the Dunes*. In the hands of Silko the ethnographer, England becomes a “contact zone” (186) of cultures which fought for supremacy in the course of history. Even though it may appear that Silko intends to reverse the role of the European ethnographer subjecting Europe to the indigenous gaze, she does not *other* Europe but builds bridges between continents. The European setting of Welch’s novel, France, is rendered in a less positive light, but his Native American protagonist is able to make a home in this apparently alien environment.

The essays in the “Performing Identity” section resonate with Paul Gilroy’s thesis in *The Black Atlantic*. Gilroy regards black culture as an Atlantic phenomenon transcending national frontiers. Far from being stable and authentic, black cultural manifestations are

inherently hybrid. Responding to the debate over hip-hop culture—associated with the Black American urban ghetto—Gilroy claims that there is nothing essentially African-American to this sound system for it bears the influence of Jamaican music, which took root in South Bronx in the 1970s (33). Horst Tonn's essay on German hip-hop does not mention Gilroy, but makes a similar claim. He approaches hip-hop as a transnational phenomenon with a firm stronghold in Germany's youth culture. Tonn argues that the success of hip-hop in Germany is not spurious, but attests to the malleability of this cultural expression, which has adjusted itself to its new German setting. While some strands of German hip-hop maintain an anti-racist focus and target a German ethnic audience, overall this sound system has been recontextualised in its transatlantic journey.

The brief section "Eating Culture" is most timely, given the increasing presence of food as a narrative thread in transcultural texts. Glenn Deer's and Seiwoong Oh's essays—"Eating the Eurasian Text: Food, Sex and the Audience in Fred Wah's *Diamond Grill*, Sigrid Nunez's *A Feather on the Breath of God* and Juzo Itami's *Tampopo*" and "The Kitchen as an Ethnic Space in Timothy Mo's *Sour Sweet* and Gish Jen's *Typical American*" respectively—touch upon the main issues raised by the relation of food and culture. Transcultural texts deploy ethnic food to dramatise cultural negotiations, as a way for individuals to maintain or sever cultural ties. Besides, the consumption of ethnic food allows majority groups to engage in "uncomplicated forms of cultural fusion" (Deer 288); in contrast, ethnic restaurants are the enterprises most readily available to minorities, who sell "food pornography" (qtd. Oh 307) or an exaggerated marketable version of their ethnicity. Deer and Oh spotlight the ethnic restaurant as a site of ethnicity where Eurasian subjects based in North America and Europe perform their complex identities. Actually, Deer denounces the tendency for discussions of multicultural experiences to focus on black-white interactions to the detriment of other mixtures, namely the Eurasian. Deer's essay is remarkably interdisciplinary, shuttling from memoir and fiction to film.

In the concluding section "Constructing Memory," Rosalia Baena and Angela M. Leonard link memory and visual representation. Rosalia Baena discusses photographic discourse in a variety of ethnic autobiographies from both sides of the Atlantic—Wayson Choy, Scott Momaday, Penelope Lively and M. M. Kaye. When incorporated into the autobiographic narrative, photographs lose their transparency and, Baena argues, become "part of a complex system of cultural signification" (362). Thus, Momaday's picture of his three-year-old self dressed as a cowboy provides an ironic commentary on his belonging in mainstream American society. M. M. Kaye's preference for stereotypical pictures of India is in keeping with the orientalist attitude she displays in her memoir, which leaves British presence in India unquestioned. *Sites of Ethnicity: Europe and the Americas* comes full circle with Angela M. Leonard's essay "Remembering at African Atlantic Slave Gravesites." Leonard's sites are the least metaphorical of all the sites explored in this volume. Her essay is a report of the multi-locale fieldwork she carried out in several slave gravesites located in Britain and the US, two countries involved in the infamous Atlantic slave trade. Leonard uncovers the complexity and multiplicity of her sites of ethnicity, which amalgamate *national* and *ethnic* history. The graveyard at Wye Plantation includes all the people who worked there regardless of race and rank, both slaves and white overseers. This site thus "activates" a collective memory, "a time in the past that joined these races together" (379). In her attempt to reconstruct black memory and histories of displacement and adaptation in different parts of the Western world, Leonard bears out

James Clifford's predicament that culture is not confined to an original place—here the ancestral homeland of Africa—but has to be retrieved in those sites where it has travelled.

As mentioned above, the most outstanding strength of *Sites of Ethnicity: Europe and the Americas* is its comparative and multidisciplinary scope, which makes it an innovative and original contribution to postcolonial studies. The volume clears paths of research through a field that, because of its extraordinary appeal and accelerated growth in the last few decades, needs fresh impetus. In contrast to this strength, some contributors could have made more of the comparative focus identified in their titles by exploiting it more fully and carrying it to its logical conclusions. Stefano Luconi's and Pirjo Ahokas' essays are two cases in point. The title of Luconi's essay, "From the Village to the United States: Nationalism and Ethnic Identity among Italian Americans," suggests a comparison between an Italian and an Italian American setting. Yet what follows is a description of the development of Italian American identity in the course of time, its shift from village-based affiliations to more patriotic ones in the interwar years. Besides, this essay is one of the least interdisciplinary in the volume. The author's claim that the piece is "a case study of the reshaping of ethnic identities" (15) suggests a cultural approach to ethnicity. Yet what follows is a historiographic narrative of the Italian diaspora in the US, abounding in figures and historical detail. The author could have made recourse to the cultural production of the Italian American diaspora to illustrate the reshaping of its identity more effectively. Pirjo Ahokas' essay "Transcending Binary Divisions: Constructing a Postmodern Female Urban Identity in Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*" features an innovative combination of Native American and Black British fiction. The argument would be more forceful, however, if the author examined the contrasts between Erdrich's and Smith's novels instead of simply dwelling on their similarities. Structurally, section divisions in the volume are rather arbitrary, for they are made to map a complex interdisciplinary field which escapes discrete classifications. Consequently, sections are not so distinctive as their titles suggest and many articles with overlapping concerns have been allocated to different sections. The fact that these divisions are confined to the index suggests that the editors have intended them as a device to make this comprehensive volume more reader-friendly. Regarding bibliography, these essays bring together the latest publications in the multidisciplinary field of ethnic studies and may well help readers update their own and their institutions' libraries.

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