

REFLECTING CULTURAL PRACTICE

The Challenge of Field Work (2)

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Of Correspondents and Collages

„Horizons“, „collages“, „culture on the make“ – these are some of the metaphors which Ina-Maria Greverus (e.g. 1990; 1996) has recently been using, not least in the pages of the *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures*, to suggest the space in which a contemporary anthropology can operate; and there is also an obvious affinity between them and the sort of anthropological perspective evolving for some time in my own work: process-oriented, concerned with the organization of diversity, often critical of disciplinary conventions in deciding on units of study. And then Greverus has also shown some impatience with tendencies among anthropologists and ethnologists to withdraw from „the field“, and become armchair theorists and critics again. My sense is that she is temperamentally much too involved with the world around her, much too curious about human lives and about places nearby and further away, to find sedentary contemplation personally satisfying in the longer term. For such reasons, I hope she will approve as I offer some preliminary reflections on an ongoing ethnographic effort, rather recently begun after some years during which I was more deskbound.

I was provoked into an engagement with globalization, some twenty years ago, as I realized for one thing that my new acquaintances in the Nigerian town where I was doing research had their own imaginative horizons far beyond town limits. Their ideas about „overseas“ may not have been very precise, but were certainly part of their working world view, and definitely entered into their dealings with me. One or two of them had indeed been to Europe, others had known „expatriates“ before, and schooling, consumer goods, advertising and the media all contributed to an assemblage of ideas about a world outside Nigeria which they could dwell on and argue over among themselves. The imagined worlds of their forefathers and foremothers

were probably inhabited by ancestral spirits and other beings, either rooted locally or dwelling in more fictitious habitats; their own had more to do with distant but somehow real places on the map.

As I became increasingly preoccupied with the project of an anthropology dealing with the interconnections of the global ecumene rather than with the delimited pieces of a global mosaic, it was indeed a concern growing out of field work. Yet while I would draw on my Nigerian work and some range of other personal experiences from here and there in the world, I was for some time mostly engaged in a conceptual, theoretical, and somewhat programmatic line of work.¹ But then the time seemed to be right to get involved more directly with ethnography again. And so I began developing an interest in the foreign correspondents of the news media.

It was, I came to realize, not an entirely new interest on my part. Once I had begun to think of this as a possible research area, I noticed how many correspondents' autobiographies, biographies or reports had in fact accumulated on my shelves over the years. And I am somewhat addicted to news, in the papers, on the radio, and on TV. But there were, it seemed, also good scholarly reasons for focusing on the news correspondents. While globalization may mean that the world is turning, as Roland Robertson (1992, 6) puts it, into „a single place“, most people still do not have personal experiences of very much of it. They depend, rather, like my Nigerian townspeople, on the images provided by various agencies of information brokerage, and the news media have a central place here. The reporting of foreign correspondents for newspapers and newsmagazines, news agencies, radio and television makes up a major part of that flow of information from and about other parts of the world which, in countries such as ours, is a part of the rhythm of most people's daily routine experience. Foreign correspondents are thus among the significant makers of world culture. It is also true that present-day globalization is in large part literally a „globalization at work“: it is through their occupational life that many of the people most directly involved in it form their transnational connections. For that reason, several of my Stockholm colleagues and students have likewise pursued the possibility of transnational occupational ethnography (cf. Garsten 1994; Dahlén 1997; Wulff

¹ Much of this is reflected e.g. in Hanmerz (1992, 1995, 1996; 1997).

forthcoming). Moreover, this allows some experimentation with the format of field work, as units become defined in translocal rather than local terms.

And then there is another angle, pertinent as anthropology reflects on itself. Foreign correspondents are a sort of anthropologists, or anthropologists are a sort of foreign correspondents, to the extent that they engage in reporting from one part of the world to another. How do the ways media correspondents practice their craft in foreign lands compare with the field work of anthropologists? And what do they report, how do they mediate to their audiences the foreignness of foreign news? Although I would not make a systematic comparison the main objective of my study, the parallels and the contrasts can provide some food for thought, as I hope the following notes may suggest.²

Dateline Bethlehem

Here, then, is a story from the field. The American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem is a well-known hangout of foreign correspondents covering Israel and the Palestinian territories.³ It is a beautiful old building from Ottoman times; the name refers to an old mission settlement. Opposite the reception desk a placard lists some of the people who have stayed there over the years: Lawrence of Arabia, Winston Churchill, Selma Lagerlöf, Graham Greene, Norman Vincent Peale, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Peter Jennings ...

I am in the lobby to meet Ethan Bronner, Middle East correspondent of the *Boston Globe*, and Bassam, who is the key figure in the story Bronner is about to do.⁴ Bassam runs a small Palestinian human rights organization, and we are on our way to a village outside Bethlehem to investigate the recent death of an old villager who was held in a Palestinian Authority prison for ten months before he died the previous week. It turns out that George, the Arab doorman at the hotel, who has been there for a quarter-century and knows everybody, is a relative of the dead man. He says there is a story that the deceased had

² I have dwelt somewhat on the varieties of such mediations elsewhere (Hanmerz 1993; forthcoming a).

³ Mostly, it is used by traveling correspondents for brief stays; the correspondents who are Jerusalem-based use its facilities occasionally or even rarely.

⁴ Bronner has since then returned to the United States, where he now writes for the *New York Times*.

collaborated with the Israelis and had something to do with the death of a young PLO sympathizer in the early 1980s, and that his imprisonment had had something to do with that.

Bassam gets into his car, Bronner and I follow in another, and we drive a short distance to meet with a crew from a British television channel. It turns out to consist of six people who get into their own van, and we are off again. After passing through Bethlehem's main street, a rather drab business thoroughfare, we arrive at a small settlement in the bare brownish hillscape, at the outskirts of a larger village. We park on the roadside, cross over to a house with a wide front verandah, and enter the large room immediately inside. This was the dead man's home, and evidently he was a prominent inhabitant of the village. A modern kitchen area is in one corner, there are two large couches, a great many white plastic chairs, some in stacks, as well as stacks of multicoloured stools – apparently the place frequently accommodates many visitors. By now there are some twenty-five people present – the TV crew, Bassam, Bronner and myself, and about fifteen local people, of both sexes, apparently mostly relatives of the dead man. The TV crew sets up its equipment facing one of the couches, while Bronner, I, and a son of the deceased sit down on the opposite side. The son, in his thirties, has returned from Canada a few days earlier after learning of his father's death. He speaks fluent English and gives Bronner his view of what has happened; sitting next to them, I hear everything.

Apparently the dead man had cooperated with the Israelis during the occupation, and he had indeed been accused of killing a PLO sympathizer. The home we were in was still in occupied territory, but after the peace process had begun, Bethlehem itself had come under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and when the man had once driven his car into Bethlehem, he had been halted and told to go to the Palestinian police headquarters. He had been held there. After his family found out where he was, his wife was allowed to visit him but not to ask questions. Time passed – ten months. Then he was transferred to a hospital where he died. It was claimed that he had committed suicide, strangling himself with a pair of bluejeans. He never wore bluejeans, his family pointed out, so where would they have come from? Then the diagnosis was a heart attack; but an autopsy had been ordered. Before his death, the man had told his wife that he had been beaten.

The British female TV reporter comes over to ask us to be completely silent, as her sound recording is about to begin. Before this, her crew has been filming Bassam talking to the dead man's other relatives, mostly the widow, but without sound. Now the English-speaking son from Canada gets into the picture, and repeats the story he just gave Bronner, while Bronner goes into another room to interview Bassam. The reporter then tells the son to ask his mother for her account, as this is sound recorded, some kind of translation will presumably be arranged later.

Then the reporting event is over. We have been on site for a little over an hour. As we get into our cars and drive off, I comment that I have been observing Bronner reporting on Bassam interviewing the bereaved family; a little like a hall of mirrors, with the TV people thrown in for good measure. Bronner laughs and says that he was not really too pleased with the presence of the TV crew. It was not so much a question of finding himself sharing a story with someone else, but he had expected he would be reporting on the civil rights activist's first encounter with the family, and this event had clearly been staged for the benefit of the British team – possibly because Bassam would soon be off on a fundraising tour to Britain, and thought the TV publicity would be a good thing. Apart from that, as a print correspondent, Bronner thought the presence of TV people is always a bit of a nuisance. A writer can move about in a setting reasonably discreetly, but a half dozen people with a large amount of technical equipment will necessarily attract the attention of bystanders, and often try to impose their conditions on other newsmen.

A project collage

Such on-site observation, then, is one kind of material for my project; but a consideration which attracted me to the project in the first place is that it can involve a variety of materials, which allows a fair flexibility in its operation. I can observe, as in this instance, the correspondents engaging in their own field encounters; I can interview them, on and off site; again, there is a reasonably large autobiographical and biographical literature, as well as book-length treatments where correspondents sum up their knowledge and experience from particular postings; and then of course there is, every day, the ongoing flow of

news in the press, on radio and on TV. For one thing, this means that the field can be with me in some way even in periods when I cannot venture very far from my desk in Stockholm.

This is also what has lately become known in anthropology – not least through the efforts of George Marcus (e.g. 1989; 1995) – as multi-site field work.⁵ So far, I have been meeting with correspondents in New York, Los Angeles, Jerusalem, and Stockholm, and I would expect that apart from more planned field periods on sites where some number of correspondents are at work, I will be able to add some more interviews in places where I may find myself mostly for other reasons.

The image of the collage, then, seems quite appropriate in describing this project. It involves rather different kinds of materials, from varied sources, combined into a single entity in a way which will probably depend a great deal on my own personal interests, experiences and circumstances. I would not say that the selection is arbitrary. It will be guided by certain particular research foci. I am more interested, for example, in the work of correspondents reporting over greater cultural distances, as it were: from Asia, Africa or the Middle East to Europe or North America, rather than from Washington, DC, to Stockholm, or from Brussels to Frankfurt. Consequently, many of the people I have talked to in New York and Los Angeles are ex-Asia or ex-Africa correspondents, reminiscing about their work on exotic beats. Here, obviously, I am influenced by parallels between foreign news reporting and anthropology. Again probably in a way characteristic of anthropology, I am concerned with ranges of variations rather than with standards and averages. I want to meet with correspondents reporting to different countries, through different media. Yet as there is hardly any way of being exhaustive, precisely who and what will be included will be partly a matter of deliberate selection, and partly one of chance. As in field work generally, there is room for serendipity.

Is this style of work something which rather idiosyncratically appeals to me, or is it an example of a wider tendency in anthropology? I believe the latter. The world now has a great many people who move about, who are in touch with others over great distances, and who engage with a variety of media. „Participant observation“, narrowly conceived, in a single locale, may

⁵ I comment on related methodological matters within the context of transnational research elsewhere (Hannerz, forthcoming b).

not do justice to many current ways of being and thinking. Moving on personally from an ethnography of one California nuclear weapons laboratory to a study of the entire American „nuclear weapons community“, and looking intermittently at the counterpart Russian community as well, Hugh Gusterson (1997, 116) argues that ethnography should more often become a matter of „polymorphous engagement“ – interacting with informants across a number of dispersed sites; doing field work by telephone and e-mail; collecting data eclectically in many different ways from a disparate array of sources; reading newspapers and official documents; attending carefully to popular culture.

James Clifford (1997, 62–63), scrutinizing the „spatial practices“ of anthropology, takes a similar view. He draws on the example of Susan Harding’s research on Christian fundamentalism, using TV programs, sermons, novels, media of all kinds, and including as well a period of living with an evangelical Christian family. Yet Clifford also senses a certain ambivalence in anthropology in the face of such developments. Can the discipline stand for the kind of blurring of its boundaries with for example cultural studies, media studies, or literary studies which a deemphasis on long-term immersion in the face-to-face involvements of a single locality would involve? He finds that there are strategic sites and moments, in the processes of professional socialization – when graduate student field projects are approved, when research grants or job offers are made – where traditional spatial practices are likely to be non-negotiably reasserted.

I share the ambivalence insofar as I believe that a complete withdrawal of anthropology from what has customarily been meant by „participant observation“ would be extremely unfortunate. A great deal of human life does, after all, still go on local arenas and in personal relationships, and I believe some experience in studying these goes into the making of well-rounded anthropologists. Knowing only about them, at the same time, seems like an increasingly constrained and risky intellectual niche. Perhaps the occasion of honouring a senior and still very active colleague, however, is also an appropriate time to point to another angle of the acceptance of polymorphous engagements, of methodological collage. Recently, as anthropology has turned more reflexive, we have been debating the part of gender in field work, and the differences between „insiders“ and „outsiders“, between field work at home and abroad. But there is also a question of age, and of the relation between field study and the passage of organizational, domestic and intellectual careers. Field work of

anthropology's established type has tended to be a young scholar's pursuit. Rather a large number of anthropologists indeed do their first and last field study to qualify for the doctorate, and if they publish at all afterwards, it may be on the basis of a long engagement with old field notes. Others experiment, sometimes a bit half-heartedly, with other kinds of study. This is hardly just a matter of laziness, or concern with physical comfort. But it may help to be in a somewhat liminal phase of your life, with few absolute conflicting commitments or obligations, if you are to go off for a year or so to a distant place and do full-time ethnography. I expect that the more polymorphous style will often appeal to those whose life situation necessitates more part-time research, and the chance to turn more intense engagements off and on at varied intervals over time. It may be that we need not only see the limitations and disadvantages in this kind of ethnographic work (although we should not disregard them either). The graying ethnographers may find some use for accumulated experiences and contacts, and profit from sometimes being in less of a hurry to get to the goal. A more explicit acknowledgement of a wider range of ethnographic practices, and their intermeshing with the trajectory of scholarly and private lives, may in the end enrich the discipline.

Conversations with correspondents

I usually enjoy my conversations with foreign correspondents. Mostly they are about my age or younger; normally I have some recollection of the news events they reminisce about in discussing their reporting careers, and at one time or other I have passed through some of the places where they have previously been stationed.⁶ This undoubtedly is helpful in establishing rapport, and so is occasionally the fact that I happen to know someone from their dispersed collegial networks, past or present, and may even be able to offer a bit of news about someone not seen for a long time.

⁶ Some correspondents are certainly older, but there would now seem to be some tendency for people in this line of work to start looking for jobs at home when they get older. One of my first conversations in this project was with David Remnick, who had been a *Washington Post* correspondent in Moscow during the *perestroika* years. After he had begun thinking about returning to the United States, he looked around him at a news conference, and realized that "the Kremlin was covered by a bunch of 29-year olds."

It is perhaps in the nature of their business to be more or less sociable, and now and then one of them makes the point that as they are forever dependent on people being willing to talk to them, they should certainly be ready to reciprocate when someone seeks them out.

They are also often concerned with facts, and with formulations. In other field research, in order not to disturb the flow of conversations, I have been inclined not to take notes during the interviews themselves, but to hurry immediately afterwards to some nearby place where I could reconstruct on paper the key elements of what had been said, and then move on to write the elaborated field notes as soon as possible. I started out like this again in my first pilot interviews with foreign correspondents as well, but after one or two of them asked, perhaps with some puzzlement, how I handled my note taking, I began to raise the topic at the start of the conversations. Taking my pocket notebook out, I point to the difference between them and those other anthropological informants who would be less accustomed to talking to someone who would continuously scribble. And that observation, too, might help to suggest to them a relationship between ethnography and correspondent work. There have also been those moments when correspondents come up with some formulation which I suspect that as professional wordsmiths, they feel particularly pleased with -- and where they seem to steal a glance to check that I did not miss it.

I have been told in a New York café about the assault on the senses involved in arriving at a gruesome mass murder scene in India; and in the cafeteria atop the *Los Angeles Times* building, of the conditions of a Nairobi beat which also included covering wars in Somalia and Rwanda. Such accounts can give a vivid idea of correspondent personal experiences and allow for reflections on the craft, and beliefs and values that may go with it. Yet eloquent as they may be, I would want to contrast them with some of the conversations I had in Jerusalem.

One afternoon there I was talking to a senior correspondent of a major American newspaper. That evening, Benyamin Netanyahu and Yassir Arafat would meet at the Israel-Gaza border. It was some time after the Hebron agreement in early 1997, a time of no real crisis, but certainly still one of a number of unsettled issues. So how would my interlocutor handle this event? Would he travel to the border point, a couple of hours away, himself, to get the story?

No, he said, he had a stringer working for him in Tel Aviv, closer to Gaza, and he had asked him to go. The stringer would call him at the end of the meeting – which would probably be a bit delayed, these things were seldom on time – and then the senior correspondent could call Netanyahu's press spokesman, who had a mobile telephone in his car going back. This would allow him to check details and ask for comments. And then he would sit down, as his deadline rapidly approached, to do his piece for the next day's paper.

What I could more readily do in Jerusalem, this is to say, was to get a reasonably precise, concrete picture of the minutiae of ongoing newswork – by being on the scene as with Ethan Bronner pursuing the human rights story, or by talking to correspondents about particular considerations entering into their own dealing with events which were fresh in their minds. The routines and the mundane contextual factors of daily reporting were more easily brought out on the spot, in a reporting landscape of which I could at least catch some glimpses myself. In that way, there is some difference between interviews on the scene and those conducted elsewhere, with a retrospective view of past experiences.

Moreover, in Jerusalem, I could talk to a range of correspondents about their different ways of dealing with the local scene, and their own understandings of these differences. The day after that Arafat-Netanyahu meeting, I was speaking to a correspondent working for another American daily. He had had a look at his colleague's story on the Internet, did not seem quite sure whether the writer had actually been present at the Gaza border point or not, but concluded that „he must have been up to 2 am working on that.“ This correspondent's own paper hardly expected him to cover such an event, and if it did print anything about the meeting at all, it would use materials from one of the agencies, such as the Associated Press. He would deal with major stories, and apart from that devote himself to more to feature stories and to interpretive, background writing.

The cultures of particular media organizations, as well as national traditions, would seem to have something to do with how such matters are handled. A paper with few foreign correspondents of its own might feel that it has to rely heavily on agency materials in its international coverage anyway, so it would rather have these few do more original, distinctive work. Another, with many correspondents, would yet take note of the fact that many of its readers had no particular interest in international news; they did not ask for blow-by-blow accounts of gradually unfolding events but could be attracted to unusual

stories well told. In the opinion of one American in Jerusalem, his British colleagues whom he knew and sometimes read were generally kept more busy doing the standard stories that their papers could perhaps just as well have taken from one of the agencies. And then, of course, it could be that stringers, more loosely attached to their media organizations, would sometimes be more anxious to show themselves useful.

Clearly correspondents are inclined to value personal, on-the-spot involvement in events – in „being there when history is made“, as someone said to me. (Or „when culture is made“, we may indeed also sometimes say.) Besides, they are not likely to forget that such presence, not least when some danger is also involved, is a part of the heroic image of their occupation. One construction of a story sent to the home office, a Jerusalem correspondent quipped, would be „I was there ...blah, blah ...fear and loathing ...blah, blah (please add agency materials)“. Those reporting to the world from Jerusalem, too, also tended to cover an unusually compact news field. Even those of them who were in principle „Middle East correspondents“ found that a very large proportion of the events they dealt with occurred in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, somewhere or other not so many hours away. Nonetheless, their style of work also turned out to be in large part one of „polymorphous engagement“, to use again that new label for a kind of combinatory ethnography. In a context of great information density, the problem often was not really that of getting the news, but drawing on many sources, and organizing what one found rapidly and skilfully. One might listen to Israeli radio, with news bulletins every half hour; keep an eye on what comes out from the major news agencies, with their unrivalled staff resources; get the bulletins of the Government Press Office on a rented beeper; call people in one's own network of sources; read books, magazines, and documents; if something big is on, check if CNN, BBC, Sky TV or Israeli TV is offering live coverage.

When Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in Tel Aviv, Anton LaGuardia, Jerusalem correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph*, saw the question of going out or staying in as a dilemma. How much would be gained by being on the spot, and how much would be lost in travel time, and by not being fully engaged with the information flow which through many channels might reach his office?

The assassination, of course, was not the kind of event where one could plan a coverage beforehand, but once it had occurred, LaGuardia's calculus

suggested that it probably was not a good idea to hit the road. In a day or so, somebody could fly out from the London office to assist him in reporting on the aftermath of the assassination, but the first critical day or so he would have to handle alone. So he was in his office continuously from 7 am to midnight, writing seven stories which eventually took up almost three pages in the following day's paper, following local newscasts but writing a lot from the top of his head, using his stored-up knowledge.

The day before we talked about the Rabin assassination, on the other hand, LaGuardia had indeed been out there in the midst of things. In the evening, as a part of the peace process, and after days when the correspondents had waited and waited, Israel had finally released a number of Palestinian women prisoners, described by some as terrorists and by others as resistance fighters. Before that, he had gone to Ramallah to interview the family of one of the women, a student who had led an armed Palestinian cell, and then to see the widow of one of the West Bank Jewish settlers whom the members of that cell had killed. And immediately after he had talked to me, LaGuardia would return to Ramallah, to see if he could talk with the young woman, after she had had a night's rest.

Parachutists, expatriates and locals

LaGuardia had been in Jerusalem for some six years when I met him; Ethan Bronner, whom I accompanied to the West Bank village, had been reporting from the area for the *Boston Globe* for about five years. Both saw the end of their stays approaching.

Among foreign correspondents, how long one should stay in a place, and the advantages and disadvantages of extended and short stays, are matters of continuing argument. The extreme variety, which is perhaps what many people think of as the typical practice of foreign correspondence, is that of "firemen", or "parachutists", turning up on the scene of breaking news at a moment's notice, staying there as long as the story lasts (which possibly, by a circular definition, is determined by their presence), and then departing just as quickly. The heroic image of the occupation is perhaps in no small part based on such staccato reporting, and one senior journalist -- himself a Pulitzer prize

winner -- suggested to me that foreign correspondents "do their best work out of hotel rooms". Yet the short stay, often combined with a lack of much opportunity for advance preparation with regard to local circumstances, may still strike us as almost the opposite of the anthropological field work ideal.

Much correspondent work, however, is not -- or only intermittently -- of this kind. The question becomes, rather, one of how long someone ought to be responsible for the continuous coverage of some territory. A few years? A decade? Much of a lifetime? Correspondents have their views here, but so also do the organizations they work for. It would seem to be mostly the larger and more affluent, and particularly the American, media organizations that are decidedly in favor of a relatively rapid rotation, with postings of 3-5 years. Some shift people around a little more slowly, but still expect them to move. Jörg Bremer of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, for example, expects to be in Jerusalem for a decade, in line with his paper's pattern of slower rotation.

The assumption beyond a preference for quicker rotation is that journalists who remain too long in a place risk going stale. They start taking things in their surroundings for granted, instead of seeing stories in them; they lose their sense of what needs to be explained to their readers "at home"; they find no great pleasure in doing a story the second or third or umpteenth time, even when they have readers who did not see, or cannot be expected to remember, those earlier versions. The ideal correspondent, according to this view, has a fresh eye for the peculiarities of a beat. Yet there is certainly also an awareness that some local knowledge and experience is a good thing. A correspondent for another major U.S. daily, who allowed me to look over the stories she had done since she arrived about three years before -- after previous assignments in Central America and Germany -- suggested that I might compare her earlier and later writings. She thought I would notice a richer texture as she developed a wider range of sources, and had more knowledge of her own to draw on.

There is another, related consideration: the point is frequently made that foreign correspondents must not forget the perspective of their audiences. Most of them, after all, are expected to report to readers, listeners or viewers in one particular city, country or region. They should not, then, risk drifting away from a sense of what these particular audiences want, or need, to hear. This is one reason why having a correspondent of one's own may be understood as at least a valuable complement to the more anonymous, impersonal reporting of the major international news agencies. No doubt, in feature stories especially,

correspondents may be able to draw on more idiosyncratic interests and experiences as well, but they keep an eye on whatever may have a greater than usual resonance at home. If one writes for *Berlingske Tidende* in Copenhagen, one may do a piece on Danish NGOs in Gaza; if one writes for the *Algemeen Dagblad* in Rotterdam, one may keep in mind that both Israel and the Netherlands have major agribusiness interests.

And Jörg Bremer, again, may need to find out something about Israeli soccer for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* before a German national team arrives for a game, although as an intellectual with a strongly Protestant family background, he takes a greater personal interest in writing about the teaching about the Holocaust in Israeli schools; there are the „shades of the past“ to engage with.

Perhaps, it would not be impossible for correspondents with a more attenuated connection to audiences and their home contexts to do some of these stories, but the idea is that for the selection of topics, as well as in various more subtle ways of reaching audience minds and hearts, it helps not to be to remote. Consequently, it would not be a good thing either just moving from one foreign posting to another, as some correspondents indeed do. In between, it is held, one should spend time at home, to catch up again with that particular „native’s point of view“.

On the other hand, there are certainly also those correspondents who remain in a territory for long periods, perhaps much of a life time. Often these are stringers, rather than regular employees of the media organization. They may be in locations which are relatively less important in the global news flow, or they report to organizations which are less able to afford sending out any considerable number of employees of their own, with the full perquisites of expatriate foreign correspondents. With increasing cost consciousness, media organizations seem recently to have become more inclined toward using stringers, and in Jerusalem even quite major national newspapers of smaller European countries have correspondents of this sort. Here, however, there are particular reasons why many foreign correspondents are not in professional careers of international rotation. They are Jews from somewhere in the diaspora who have decided to make *aliya*, to „ascend“ to the home country of their people. Some of them have become Israeli citizens, others not; but mostly they intend to stay. Yet they retain connections to the countries they have left by working, through one arrangement or other, for their media organizations. And

no doubt their intimate knowledge of these countries serve them well in reporting to them.

As they compare themselves to the expatriates, and to the parachutists, the correspondents who have thus settled in Israel and become more or less locals tend to emphasize their quality and quantity of knowledge. For one thing, they draw attention to their embeddedness in Israeli society. They are more likely to live in ordinary Israeli neighborhoods, their children go to Israeli schools; some of them have done Israeli military service, a major means of exposure to all strata of the society. When something happens and a story begins to take shape, they remember personally what are the precedents, and know whom to call for comments. And they may also point out, in most cases but not quite all, that they speak Hebrew fluently, which many of the expatriates do not. This, naturally, allows them to listen in on the flow of comment and debate which is part of Israeli everyday life. In such ways, many of them would suggest, they can do a much more nuanced, well-informed job than especially the parachutists. A bit provocatively, one veteran immigrant reporter said that the bar at the American Colony Hotel was where visiting journalists would sit and swap speculations about Israeli affairs on the basis of shared ignorance.

No doubt a number of specific questions could be raised about the particular circumstances of parachutists, expatriates and locals reporting to the world from Jerusalem and its environs. There is, most obviously, the continuous conflict between Israelis and Palestinians – granted that the immigrants can be particularly attuned to the social, cultural and political currents of Israeli society, what are the implications of this fact for their reporting on Palestinian news and views? There is absolutely no simple answer here. It is rather an issue which correspondents of different kinds keep discussing among themselves.

Yet I believe we can recognize some parallels with our current debates in anthropology, as we speak about a repatriation of anthropology, and debate those differences between „insider“ and „outsider“ perspectives which I referred to above. No doubt comparisons can only be rough. Journalists and anthropologists gather their materials differently and shape them into different kinds of reports, they relate differently to space (in terms of what size fields they take responsibility for) and time (with regard to what they think of as deadlines), and in some number of other ways. Even so, we can perhaps discern that the expatriate correspondent, shifting between foreign beats, with

periods „at home“ in between, is more like the classical travelling anthropologist. Those correspondents who, in Jerusalem, have become more or less assimilated as members of the national society may seem to be those whose practice corresponds to „anthropology at home“ – if it were not for the fact, looking more closely, that migration and border crossing have had a part in their lives as well, as they have come to Jerusalem from different places, in Europe or the Americas. In that way, they may after all be more like what in American anthropology have recently been described as „halfies“, insiders and outsiders simultaneously (see e.g. Narayan 1993). As intellectual hybrids and mediators, they suggest to us that in this world, „at home“ and „abroad“ may not be dichotomous categories, but rather ambiguous positions on a continuum. When anthropological research projects become more often multilocal, it may even be that some of our field practices will remind us more of the „parachutist“ – coming in for a short stay, working intensely, moving out. Indeed, I sense the possibility of some resemblance here to aspects of my own current project.

And then there is the parallel also in that debates over what is the better way of practicing the craft are probably forever inconclusive. There are likely to be advantages and disadvantages in all perspectives. With regard to each, we must cultivate both a sense of limits and the art of the possible. Moreover, whether we report from home or abroad, within Academia or the news business, will after all in some considerable part depend not just on our epistemological arguments, but on economic and political constraints in our respective organizational environments.

Opposition and collaboration

There is, however, yet one more facet to these issues. We may find, in journalism as well as in anthropology, a tendency to view the relationship between these varied practices in oppositional terms. You do one or the other; or you do one, and I do the other. In anthropology, as expatriate anthropologists more and more often confront local colleagues doing their „anthropology at home“ in the same territory, we see conflicts breaking out: over field etiquette, ethnographic property rights, ethnographic authority.

At the same time, we know that there are collaborative relationships as well, in both anthropology and foreign correspondence. Often they entail relationships of subordination, with the expatriate on top. In the writings of foreign correspondents, you seldom find any mention of the „fixers“ – the local day laborers of the global news industry, who speak the language, make contacts, and know conditions on the ground. Anthropologists rather seldom say very much about their local field assistants either (cf. Sanjek 1993). There are also, however, the more equal relationships. In larger news bureaux in Jerusalem, with more than one journalist involved, there are sometimes combinations of expatriates and locals, and one can discern some logic in the division of labor by which perspectives are applied to stories.

Anthropologists could probably do more of this as well. And looking through the newspaper cuttings which keep piling up as I continue with my project, I come across a set of stories which I find intriguing not least in relation to the place of multilocal, transnational work in the future of anthropology. In early 1995, when I spent a period in New York and was a very conscientious reader of the *New York Times*, a set of stories appeared relating to the recent arrest of a man known as Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, accused of having masterminded the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York two years earlier. It turned out that Yousef had been caught in a rooming house in Islamabad, Pakistan, but that American investigators had picked up his trail in Manila, in the Philippines, some time before. On February 12, the Southeast Asia correspondent Philip Shenon (1995) could thus report that Yousef had fled from his Manila apartment after an explosion had occurred in his kitchen, probably as he had been preparing a bomb. The investigators then found evidence, not least on his laptop computer, that he had been preparing to assassinate the Pope who was due for a visit in the Philippines, and also to bomb American passenger airliners. On the same page, there was a report from the South Asia correspondent, John F. Burns, dated in Islamabad, that Yousef had apparently been located there after a tip from a South African Muslim student at the Islamic University of Islamabad. The next two days, Burns expanded on the theme of Yousef's arrest, as described by Islamabad neighbours, and also had more to say about the rather enigmatic South African, who had apparently been taken into protective custody, to appear later as a prosecution witness (Burns 1995 a; b; c). And on February 15, Bill Keller (1995), the *New York Times* correspondent in Johannesburg, could report that

the South African informer's family and Muslim friends in Cape Town were upset to learn that he had betrayed a fellow believer to the Americans.

Clearly, few papers in the world have the network of foreign correspondents of the *New York Times*. Yet it seems to me that again, this kind of transnational news work can give us something to think about in organizing our own approaches to the field. Global and transnational processes and structures may sometimes be of a kind where, in the classical anthropological lone wolf fashion, a single scholar, intellectually and physically mobile, may try to grasp „the whole“ herself/himself. Yet it may be that one real challenge of field work in the global ecumene will be that of finding the intellectual, organizational and technological tools for making our collages as collaborations.

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