"Growing Up Elsewhere" began when Deborah Wyrick asked me about the memoir I was writing. I had been working on *Gods of Noonday: A White Girl's Nigerian Life* for two or three years and, frankly, I supposed that postcolonialists might be scandalized by my project. I was born in Nigeria, the daughter of U.S. American Southern Baptist missionaries. Written in the context of a health crisis (diabetes and kidney failure), the memoir claims my right to yearn for a home that was never entirely mine but which I long for nevertheless. Thus the writing is not simply a critique of my parents' participation in colonialism. I grew up in Yoruba land and Urhobo land and these are the places of my heart. I was a girl there regardless of the fact that I was white and privileged and relatively sheltered. Some realities, like sickness and relocation and war, pierce even the soundest human shelter.

In any case, when Deb approached me about co-editing an issue of *Jouvert*, I was pleased and unsure. Am I really working in postcolonialism or yearning for colonialism? I have imagined that some readers might see my project as a sort of recolonization, a re-taking of Africa as the landscape for white adventure, another *Out of Africa*. Appropriation is a word that comes to mind.

But growing up is not an adventure and I was not out of Africa. I was in Nigeria. Once I decided to write the memoir I understood that I could not apologize. I could only tell the story as close to the bone as I could get. The more I have studied my childhood in the context of Nigerian culture and history, the more I have seen how Nigerian I am. How Nigerian and how U.S. American. How both. How else could it have been?

Unlike Elaine, I grew up in one place, more or less, never questioning my organic relationship to home. Like many contributors to this issue, my encounters with living elsewhere came later, when I was a young adult. But perhaps my interest in 'growing up elsewhere' stems more from my professional than from my personal life (if indeed these 'lives' can be differentiated).

I wrote my dissertation about Jonathan Swift, an angry double exile whose displaced childhood troubled him so much that he fabricated more acceptable myths of origins to foist upon his friends. The horrible irony of Swift's life was his banishment to 'home' (being assigned to St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin after years of residing in England and denying his Irish birthplace); this inverted exile led him to assume the guise of Irish patriot even as he railed against living in 'the land of bogs and fens.' My second book concerned Frantz Fanon, in some senses a paradigm of the postcolonial diasporic subject. His writings trace a movement from the personal to the political (both terms always-already encompassing their complement), a movement routed through and rooted in transmigrations from his Martinican home to the elsewheres of France and North Africa. Studying Swift and Fanon's life and works -- works that address the experience of dislocation as well as the power/knowledge regimes within which dislocation occurs -- made me realize how one's concept of 'home' can shape creative and theoretical work as well as individual identity.

Finally, editing *Jouvert* has increased my curiosity about how people throughout the world have 'travelled' to the destination of postcolonial studies. I hope that gathering together many of these stories and commentaries in one special issue will increase understanding of the lived commonalities that have shaped our field, and of the diversities that enrich it.

What does it mean to belong to a place? What does it mean to be longing for a place? The various cultural and spatial displacements represented by our contributors offer different answers to these interlocked questions. There is no consensus, but we can draw tentative conclusions. First, longing for home, for belonging, is not abstract; it manifests itself physically as well as emotionally, and the images through which we reconstitute home are material, sensuous, and geographically specific... plants and seasons, food and clothing, buildings and natural topography. Second, writing about 'growing up elsewhere' involves excavating the *Unheimliche*, the unhomely, the uncanny. We may be 'wandering people' not contained by *Heim*, we may ourselves be "marks of the shifting boundary that alienates the..."
To be longing for home is risky business. In "Reflections on Exile," Edward Said explains the double consciousness that expatriation can bestow. "This plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions. . . . That the new and the old environments are vivid, actually occurring together contrapuntally" (172). This statement suggests a reason for the hybrid forms many of our contributors have used. Places and life-times are cut and rearranged in a-chronological montages shot through with History and histories (e.g. Simoes da Silva, Orr, Dabydeen, Mendible, Dutt); poems, journal entries, and extra-texts are woven into memoirs and reflections (e.g. Jefferess, Benavides, Ledgister). These 'mixed media' works, many of which employ a variety of languages, plus the variety of single modes that contributors have chosen (e.g. poetry proper [Bharadwaj, Wyckr], the epistle [Buma], socio-legal analysis [Shiu], semi-autobiographical fantasy [Raymundo], 'straight' memoir [Worth, Eidse], literary and literary-biographical criticism [Japtok, Gifford, Baneth]), perform as well as describe the multiplicities fretting the transnational imaginary.

The phrase "transnational imaginary" comes from Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, for whom it signifies the global/local synergy that enlists the local in service to the global yet anticipates a disoriented space of cultural production (1-8). We use it here somewhat differently, to suggest a sort of collective unconscious shared by dis- and re-located people - specifically, in our case, by people who have 'grown up' to be postcolonial scholars. The transnational imaginary also alludes to the Lacanian Imaginary; "Growing Up Elsewhere" implies that 'lack' includes the (m)otherland: the odors and textures and tastes that sustained us, once upon a time.

Referring to the Imaginary conjures childhood itself. This brings us to a fourth tentative conclusion -- many memoirs, poems, and essays in "Growing Up Elsewhere" highlight childhood as a sort of 'zero degree' displacement. Therefore, we do not romanticize the figure of the intellectual self-exile (often a writer him- or herself, and one whose work thematizes exile). Aijiz Ahmad has warned against this tendency (158) in postcolonial studies; such celebration may be a current in how major 20th-century 'exile' writers (from Joyce to Rushdie) have been considered, but neither the self-examinations undertaken by many of our contributors nor the scholarly analyses written by other contributors demonstrate such a tendency. Childhood experiences are not self-willed, and the impact of childhood or young-adult experiences is not necessarily benign or empowering. As Myriam Chancy has written, in response to concepts such as Said's 'contrapuntality': "If we deromanticize the condition of exile from this idea of spiritualized aloneness, we might be able to acknowledge that within this sea of exiles there are those who do not achieve the harmony inherent in the contrapuntal, but whose lives are a constant balancing act between more than two conflicting cultural codes" (4).

Chancy, a Haitian immigrant to North America, gives voice to the experience of the poor, the economically dispossessed, the young. Many of our essays amplify her de-romanticizing approach. Some feature what might be called non-complicit exile, as in the experience of children (Ledgister, Simoes da Silva, Mendible, Shiu, Orr, Worth). Others explore semi-complicit exile, in its familiar form (in the postcolonial field, anyway) of seeking a metropolitan education (Dabydeen, Buma, Dutt, Bharadwaj, Benavides) or in more mundane forms like taking a job in another country (Jefferess), travelling back home, or close to back home Raymundo, Eidse), and moving transnationally through marriage (Wyckr). The studies of the Anglo-Indian authors Rudyard Kipling and Lawrence Durrell (Baneth, Gifford) also focus on childhoods, as does the analysis of novels by Merle Hodge and Simi Bedford (Japtok).

A fifth conclusion, perhaps consequent on the fourth, is that we are not too concerned with distinctions between exile and diaspora, refugees and immigrants. Chancy has argued that such distinctions not only can be spurious but also can serve dominant nations' hegemonic purposes by falsely separating political asylum-seekers from those who leave home for economic reasons (2). From a different angle of interest, Nico Israel questions assigning 'exile' and 'diaspora' to the realm of binary opposition and uses etymology to destabilize these categories. 'Exile' is understood as political banishment, yet its Latin roots imply a 'leaping out,' a self-willed movement into a new realm, a potentially positive, enriching experience (see Mendible, Dabydeen, Jefferess) despite its costs. Similarly, the word 'diaspora' collapses meanings of loss (as in being scattered -- see Orr) and hope (as in being re-sown -- see Eidse). Further, 'diaspora' is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Za'awah, properly denoting not so much a "removal" as a "fleeing in terror" (see Raymundo, Dutt) as from a Deuteronomical curse (Israel 1, 2) -- or at least a difficult growing up into new forms of self-awareness (Buma, Bharadwaj). Perhaps these collapsed meanings account in part for contributors' lack of anguish over current positionality or over fears that postcolonial studies provide an 'alibi' for economically driven self-exiles (for instance, see Spivak 1-4, 209).

To be longing for home is risky business. We are tempted to indulge in nostalgia, to make too-easy equations between the personal and the political, to elevate lived experience to absolute authority, to explode the very possibility of theory into micro-local fragments. To dream of home wounds as well as heals. Traum. Trauma. And yet, to dream of home can cycle back and heal the wounds it opens. A dream displaced, even a nightmare of displacement, may be preferable to unexamined sleep.
14. This has been a very sad autumn. On a personal level, co-editor Elaine Orr lost her beloved father, Lloyd Neil, who died on November 8, 2001. On a national level, thousands of people were murdered on September 11, 2001, including many hundreds from 'foreign' countries. United States citizens experienced our own versions of having grown up elsewhere, in a homeland no longer quite recognizable, one haunted by its own powerful illusions of innocence and security, one now affiliated through fright and grief to regions of the world we had previously ignored or disdained. And on an international level, people continue to die . . . from poverty and disease, from natural and man-made disasters.

15. Thus the essays and memoirs collected in this issue have a new resonance. The variously expressed longings for home speak beyond personal experience or individual artistic representation or originating occasion; now, at the end of the year 2001, they can be read as a composite lamentation voicing the bittersweet solace of shared sorrow.

16. Almost two decades ago, one of the contributors to "Growing Up Elsewhere" wrote a poem that, to us, remarkably anticipated the thoughts and emotions generated by September 11. With F. S. J. Ledgister's kind permission, we republish it here.

The Cities Have Fallen

how is the gold become dim

-- Lamentations 4:6

we have come to the end of a dream
no more pianos at seven in the evening
no more tea on cool verandahs
no more cocktails ----- no more brie
we have come to the end of a dream
too many stones in the field to plough
too many masters ----- too little pay
we have come to the end of a dream

there is no more music but music of hate
no room for vision but vision of storms
we have come to the end of a dream

17. But endings demand beginnings. Some contributors to and readers of "Growing Up Elsewhere" cannot return to their homelands, and more find the homes of their youth changed profoundly -- made unhomely by conflict or 'modernization' or human departures. Yet we still write, and our children will write after we have finished. Many of this issue's writers mention their own children as well as their own childhoods, an indication not only that life continues but also that home may not ever be lost completely. Instead, home can be retrieved from memories, our own and others' . . . translated into the texts we write and analyze . . . and thus transmitted to the future. A collective family album, "Growing Up Elsewhere" is crowded with parents and children and friends, as well as with representations of alienation and doubt. The 'elsewheres' in this issue inscribe not only who we were, or thought we were, but who we will be through what it is possible to imagine.

Works Cited


