

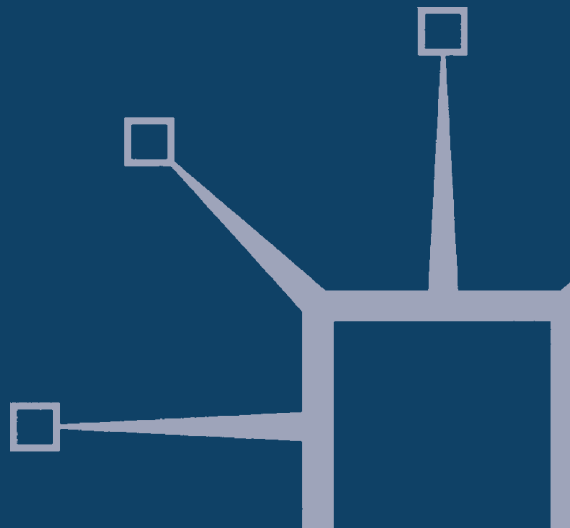
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Transnational Lives

Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–present

Edited by

Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela
Woollacott



Transnational Lives

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Transnational Lives

Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–present

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Parts of Martha Hodes's chapter were previously published, in a different context and a different form, in *The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race, and War in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006); in 'Four Episodes in Re-Creating a Life', *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 10 (June 2006): 277–290 and in 'The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race: A Transnational Family Story', *American Historical Review* 108 (February 2003): 84–118.

Desley Deacon
Penny Russell
Angela Woollacott
June 2009

Foreword

If history is a chronicle of individuals and their communities, transnational history is no less so. Like other approaches to the past, the study of transnational history must be solidly grounded on specific individuals, their ideas, activities, and the organizations they create. It is fitting, therefore, that the Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History series is now publishing *Transnational Lives*, a collection of biographies of people whose lives were significantly transnational.

As the various case studies in this volume show, there is a large variety of 'transnational lives.' Some spent years and decades in various countries, never settling down in one place, while others retained a strong sense of attachment to their homeland even as they lived and worked abroad. Some moved essentially within imperial territories, others were born and raised within an empire as dependent people but sought to achieve freedom by appealing to the world community, while still others sought to transcend national distinctions in pursuit of careers in music, fine arts, dancing, or acting. Some 'transnationals' retained their race and other prejudices, while others struggled for universal human rights. For certain individuals, as one of the contributors notes, 'moving beyond the nation also provided a space from which national identity could be articulated anew.'

Despite such a variety of perspectives, these biographies show that their lives cannot be understood merely in the traditional framework of national history, or of imperial history. While each person was unique, the lives of these men and women were interconnected in that they were part of the larger story of what the volume editors call 'global circulation.' In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even as national and imperial boundaries grew more and more rigidly drawn, millions of men, women, and children established connections across such boundaries. Modern history, as other volumes in our transnational history series show, cannot be fully understood without paying closer attention to non-national, cross-national, and even anti-national forces.

By the time the reader reaches the end of the book, it may become clear that not just the subjects of these studies but also all the contributors as well as all the readers are transnational beings. For transnationality does not necessarily depend on geography, on moving from one part of the world to another. It can also be a vicarious experience, that is to say, when one writes and reads about a transnational human being, one's own thinking may become transformed. One is led to think of other areas of the world, of other races and civilizations. Some may reject such temptation and find comfort in one's more parochial identity, be it race, religion, or nation. But

even these entities are transnational and malleable, as some essays note. There is no such thing as a pure, unadulterated race, religion, or nation, all of which are products of interconnections among people, goods, and ideas. Even if one may never leave home where one is born, 'home' is an elusive concept, as pointed out by a contributor to this volume. Moreover, 'where one is born' is frequently a product of transnational forces, ranging from the natural environment to food, technology, and diseases.

The lives discussed in these chapters are a reminder of the vast distances and spaces humans have traversed, both in reality and metaphorically, in the modern centuries. In studying the subject, we may find ourselves in 'geographical, conceptual, and theoretical borderlands,' to quote from one of the authors. That, too, is an essential aspect of the study of transnational history.

Akira Iriye
Rana Mitter

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Introduction

Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott

In the mid-eighteenth century, the son of an Odawa woman and a French man allied himself with Indians and the French in the North American Great Lakes area to combat British power. Later – according to the multiple legends of his life – he defended the British, combated rebellious American colonists, raised Indian warriors to fight against the expanding American republic and then settled in Wisconsin, where he and his family are known as the first permanent ‘European’ settlers in the state.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the allegiances of a white, working-class New England woman were severely tested when her brothers fought for the North in the American Civil War while her husband, another New Englander, joined the Confederate army. Worse family tensions followed when, in 1869, she married a second time, a sea captain and a man of colour, and moved with him to his home in the West Indies.

At around the same time a British subject, born in Penang, educated in Mauritius and fluent in English, French and Cantonese, established a flourishing mercantile business in gold-rich Australia. He came and went thereafter on numerous sea voyages without hindrance. By the time of his death in 1888, however, Australian states had introduced a succession of exclusionary acts and poll taxes, which served not only to limit immigration but to preclude the future possibility of Chinese cosmopolitanism in Australia.

In the 1920s and 1930s, an elite Englishwoman led a determinedly transnational life, refusing to be confined by either gender expectations or national boundaries. She travelled in the Arab states like a female Lawrence of Arabia, became a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, lectured at the Sorbonne, wrote fiction, autobiography and travelogues, and claimed Benito Mussolini and King Feisal of Syria among her acquaintance.

These are just a few of the extraordinary, fluid, disruptive and yet ordinary lives that are told in this book. Historically, the nationality of individuals has been determined by complex combinations of birthplace, language, residence, citizenship, ethnic identity, racial classification and allegiance. But

human lives elude official classifications. The transnationalism – the mobility, confusion and sheer messiness – of ordinary lives threatens the stability of national identity and unsettles the framework of national histories.

In response, states – and historians – apply their own strategies to repress or ignore these subversive, disruptive presences. A battery of laws regulates emigration and displacement; the qualifications of citizenship come under continual scrutiny; ethnic differences are overridden by re-education and transformations in appearance; inconveniently ‘other’ pasts are suppressed through marginalization, concealment and outright lies. Yet still, despite these imperatives towards seamless categorization, individuals have always looked beyond the imagined communities and patrolled borders that seek to define their experience, and have found energy, inspiration and attachment in a wider world.

Lives elude national boundaries; yet biography, the telling of life stories, has often been pressed into the service of nation, downplaying its fleeting acknowledgements of lives lived in motion. Dictionaries of national biography, in particular, reify and defend national boundaries by constructing individual significance and achievement within them. Overwhelmingly they have documented the lives of elite men who served their countries in war, politics, business, science or the arts. Although in recent years such projects have sought to rectify previous exclusions of race and sex with addenda and special volumes, it remains the case that many individuals whose lives slipped between national borders have been lost to view.

This book is different. Taking mobility, not nation, as its frame, it captures lives that escape the national biographer’s net: lives that crossed national, racial and cartographic boundaries, or that drew emotional energy, ideological conviction or practical understanding from eclectic, transnational experience. Spanning lived experience from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century, the book reminds us that mobility has been crucial to a modernizing world, accelerated by technologies of transport and communication and by modern notions of improving and changing the self. The structures of colonialism, slavery and indentured labour, globalizing economies, higher education, professional training, political upheaval, mixed marriages and cultural industries, including film and theatre, have all helped shape lives that transcend or subvert national frames. The patterns of careers, networks, enterprises, relationships, families and households that make up an individual life story have formed themselves across a global canvas. Tracing the unique contours of such a life compels us to see the world as at once profoundly connected and deeply divided.

Transnational Lives presents an astonishingly diverse collection of life stories, rich in historical detail and import, that together rethink the genre of biography. Some of our subjects strode the globe with authority, liberty and purpose, pursuing dreams or professional advantage; some were compelled to travel the world without volition, and could only dream of liberty in

another place. But all have proved at once resistant and elusive to the nation-bound narratives of conventional history. To give expression and meaning to mobile lives found in the interstices of the archive demands careful attention to language and narration, and to the politics of space and motion. The chapters in this book show the insight and analytic strength that this dual attention can produce.

Transnational histories

Interest in transnational studies is so widespread at this time that it is in danger of being dismissed as the latest scholarly ‘fad’. The profusion of terminology has prompted at least one observer to wonder whether transnational history is merely ‘the latest incarnation of an approach that has successively been characterized as comparative, international, world, and global history’.¹ Others are more convinced of its specific characteristics and strengths. Transnational history may have been sparked by comparative history and world history, but rather than comparison it emphasizes connections, and rather than the macro approaches of world history it attends to regional as well as global scales, and to cultural and social as well as political and economic ties.

Transnational history focuses not so much on *international* connections between states as on the connections and movements that have preceded, transcended or exceeded national boundaries. Christopher Bayly rightly points out that ‘the “nations” embedded in the term “transnational” were not originary elements to be “transcended” ... [r]ather, they were the products – and often rather late products’ of global historical processes.² Nations have been both products and constituents of modernity: their bases, constitutions and self-justifications are all historical artefacts. Relationships between nations and other polities, such as empires and colonies, have changed radically since 1700, the starting point for this volume. Some nations have conquered territories and created empires even as they brought themselves into being. Others have emerged from colonial origins, and through bitter independence struggles. If the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were ‘the age of empire’, the nature of imperialism itself has changed.

There is growing recognition that to capture these fluid and contingent histories requires a more flexible scholarship. In recent years, for example, American Studies scholars have documented the cultural dimensions of American imperialism and colonialism in various locations, both within and beyond the geographical bounds of North America. Moves to internationalize American history and challenge theories of American exceptionalism date back to the early 1990s, including David Thelen’s groundbreaking initiatives as editor of the *Journal of American History*.³ Not surprisingly, such an ambitious agenda takes time.

Global history is no freer than national history from limiting categorizations. As Isabel Hofmeyr notes, an influential paradigm in global history has been that of a complex, historicized and dominant North versus a simplified and subordinate South.⁴ Similarly, Radhika Mohanram has pointed to the ways in which even critical theories generated in the northern hemisphere rely on binary divisions of East and West, First and Third worlds, without fully understanding the differently racialized histories and politics of the southern hemisphere.⁵

Sven Beckert has offered the helpful notion of transnational history as a 'way of seeing' that is open and flexible. The field, he suggests, takes as its starting point 'the interconnectedness of human history as a whole, and while it acknowledges the extraordinary importance of states, empires, and the like, it pays attention to networks, processes, beliefs, and institutions that transcend these politically defined spaces'.⁶ Transnational history, reflecting the heterogeneity of subjects of scholarly work in recent years, ranges across cultural, political, economic, material, epidemiological, virtual and intellectual terrains. As Bayly notes, it 'gives a sense of movement and interpenetration'.⁷ And in Hofmeyr's words, its 'key claim ... is its central concern with movements, flows, and circulation'.⁸

The chapters in this book, severally and together, challenge the assumed centrality of imperial powers, displace the preoccupation with national identity and unsettle the hierarchies of scholarly thought. They draw attention to connections between the southern and northern hemispheres, to global circulation that crossed the equator as well as the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans. The book connects studies informed by the histories of white-settler colonies such as South Africa and Australia with others focused on slave and post-slavery societies including the United States, the West Indies and again South Africa. It traces stories from the United States to northern and western Africa, from Europe and the United States to the Antipodes, from Britain to India, and across the Anglophone world, for example, from Canada to Australia. If the genesis of transnational history has lain partly in critiques of nationalist histories, and partly in an insistence on recognizing the legacies of empires and colonialism, the emphasis in this book is on the possibilities of new 'ways of seeing'.

The intimacy of transnational lives

Lives elude national boundaries. So, too, does biography elude disciplinary boundaries. The chapters in this book owe, perhaps, their greatest debt to the intellectual trends of cultural history. But in drawing out the significance of their textual and other sources, the essayists borrow inspiration and methodology from a wide variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary influences. To different degrees, they owe theoretical debts to the intense scrutiny of subjectivity and self-representation that dominated theoretical

literature over a decade ago; to the continuing focus on gender and sexuality prompted by feminist theory; and to the attention to imperial frames and subaltern experience demanded by postcolonial studies. The focus on an individual life, indeed, shows clearly that it is impossible to segregate the public from the intimate, the economic from the cultural or the political from the personal. Such artificially imposed boundaries have never confined human desires or lives.

Transnational Lives insists on the centrality of cultural history and feminist analysis to any understanding of global circulation and interconnectedness. Our revelations of the personal and intimate dimensions of transnational history refute the claim that only more traditional forms of study, such as the economic and the political narrowly defined, can move the field. Recent debate within the field of transnational and global history reveals a gendered schism between the proponents of more traditional, masculinist approaches and a feminist approach that is consonant with cultural history and cultural studies. One protagonist who questions the value of cultural and postcolonial studies has suggested that 'it's time that practitioners of cultural studies start reading more military, economic and diplomatic history.'⁹ It is tempting to suggest the reverse: it is indeed impossible, as the life stories analyzed here repeatedly show, to separate the cultural from the diplomatic, economic and military.

These fine-grained analyses challenge those advocates of transnational and global histories who rigidly confine themselves to macro-level analysis of politics and economics. Chapters in this volume illuminate episodes of economic history ranging from the East India Company's seventeenth-century enterprise to the work of cosmopolitan engineers in colonial projects of mining, transport and infrastructure around the globe from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. They shed light on such episodes by seeing the larger significance in the individual stories they recount. Moreover, the authors propose radical interpretations of political boundaries, presenting complex questions of indigenous rights, gendered citizenship and national belonging. They suggest ways of seeing how boundaries defining citizenship and identity were drawn and redrawn across people's lives and territories, almost across their bodies. Borders have crossed lives as often as bodies have crossed borders.

Taken together, these chapters make clear the potential of individual life stories to radically explicate the worlds in which they were lived. They serve, perhaps, to allay the concerns expressed by the editors of a recent volume on transnational history, that this approach may become disconnected from the day-to-day struggles of ordinary people's lives, which are generally conducted within national arenas.¹⁰ The stories collected in this volume show, instead, that individual identity and attachment have long been shaped by the global reach of culture and thought, and by the diasporic movements of people. This has been as true for the disempowered as it

has for the elite. Growing numbers of people have connections that belie or straddle state boundaries, and can see transnational workings in their own lives – because of labour migration, global careers, mixed families and a myriad other reasons. Political movements themselves grow more and more transnational.

To capture this reality demands a central focus on private life, a recognition of the ways that transnational movement and connections have been driven by and reflected in personal experience. *Transnational Lives* is inspired by feminist theory in its determination to show the public dimensions of the supposedly ‘private’, and how the family, sexuality and intimacy have lain at the core of social structures. Emotional attachments can be at once the cause and the casualty of long journeys across the globe and lives lived ‘out of place’. Yet journeying leads in turn to new attachments that may become the basis for lives stretched across two, or more, locations.

The historical subjects documented here include a woman prompted by passion and a spirit of adventure who followed the men she loved from country to country; a wife who mounted an international campaign to rescue her missing husband; and an ambitious young Australian woman who pursued her dreams in Hollywood. Mobility might be driven by passion, anxiety or ambition: but many moves extended, rather than broke, existing family ties. In striking contrast were those who seized upon the potential for self-reinvention offered by international mobility, clouding their family origins in secrecy, fantasy and deception. Apart from deliberate imposture and pretence, some families have constructed their own histories in ways shaped by public attitudes and prejudice, not least the imperative to erase racial complexities. The intimate family practice of passing on details and stories has thus been moulded by the values and restrictions of the public domain.

Our focus on personal lives brings into sharp relief the intimate, human impact of wars, labour systems and forces such as colonialism. Feminist theory insists on analyzing power relations based on gender, sexuality and racial categories – along with those of class and legal status. The life stories contained in this volume allow us to see the social inequalities that lie at the root of some transnational journeys. At the same time, they show the cumulative impact of such journeys on the making of modernity.

Modernizing lives

The partial life stories gathered here illuminate particular historical moments and episodes. They illustrate the mobility of modernity, and grapple with the meanings of displacement, travel and individual quests. Most are not identifiably stories of migration; instead they catalogue lives shaped by chance, desire, adventure, opportunity, trauma, war, avarice, defiance and political ideals.

Recent work on modernity has been beholden to transnational history, with its documentation of increased mobility, commerce and exchange. Even with a growing awareness of global movement and interaction, understandings of modernity have often privileged metropolitan, industrial societies, and relied on stories of familiar actors and driving forces. As Beckert has observed, in fact modernity 'rests just as much on African slaves, Indian peasants, Chinese traders, and Arab mathematicians as on Lancashire mill workers, Scottish philosophers, German chemists, and American political theorists'.¹¹

Transnational Lives analyzes the stories of individual actors not usually seen as contributing to modernity, but who, we argue, must be viewed in such a frame. Our historical subjects include, for example, two nineteenth-century sea captains and traders, a mixed-race merchant based in the British West Indies and one of Chinese ethnicity who traded between Australia, India and China; Eurasians who left their Indian pasts behind to achieve fame in Britain and elsewhere in global entertainment industries; and a Latvian 'Displaced Person' in war-torn 1940s Europe who would become a physicist in America. These fragmentary life stories reveal aspects of modernity that span international trade; science, technology and the professions; politics on a variety of levels; and the inherently transnational film, theatre and music industries. They show mobility and self-transformation to have been integral to the modern in all of these spheres. The composite picture that emerges from these stories is of individual lives contributing to the shaping of modernity even as they were constrained and enabled by its possibilities.

Our volume thus contributes to that burgeoning field of scholarship which explores the intersections between globalization and modernity. David Lambert and Alan Lester, for example, emphasize the circulation and global evolution of ideas and practices in their study of individual lives and 'careering' across the nineteenth-century British Empire.¹² Rosamund Dalziell's study of 'selves crossing cultures' explores the globalized commodification of autobiographies in the modern world, which is itself partially driven by changing communications technology.¹³ And recent work on migration and assimilation points to the impact of migrant cultures on mainstream societies, migrants' juggling of multiple cultural practices and the migratory practices of sojourning and temporary migration.¹⁴ Evidence has also mounted of the size and significance of return migrations, and even re-returns, as part of the history of migration in the last century.¹⁵

All these works, in different ways, grapple with the conceptual challenges posed by the dramatic and accelerating increase in human mobility across the last few centuries. The evolving scholarly picture of migration underscores the pervasiveness of transnational lives – lives lived across geographical points and between cultures. The chapters in our book span several centuries, continents and empires. They assemble a remarkable variety of

occupations, migrations and self-representations. Here, cosmopolitanism itself is one theme, the arts are another, and a third is the transnational staging of political protests and movements. With its accounts of opportunism and flight, our volume gives a sense of the life choices that could lie beneath the surface of those global trends.

Migration is not the only kind of geographical mobility. Some of the subjects presented here took advantage of new technologies of movement to travel for pleasure, or out of romantic curiosity: a privilege most readily available to 'white' people of the middle and upper classes. It was they who first knew the thrills of the car and the aeroplane. Travel has traditionally been a male prerogative, shaped by the journeys of war, the masculine quest for adventure and rites of passage; yet we now have a burgeoning field of study on women's travels and their travel writings.¹⁶

The ways in which women have construed their own travel have been dependent on historically constituted relations of 'race'. Sidonie Smith notes that 'for women displaced from postcolonial Asia, Africa, and the island nations of the Caribbean, many of whom have written of their travels to and in Europe and North America, issues of gendered citizenship, diaspora, and the (de)colonization of subjectivity, rather than technologies of motion, assume primacy.'¹⁷ Smith's comment suggests the variety of meanings linked to travel, and the different desires that drive it. Journeys can be open-ended. Trips that may ostensibly be about tourism can also have other agendas. The stories within this book show the unpredictability as well as the uncontainability of human lives and movement.

Racial hierarchies have been central to modernity, even while ethnic and racial identities constantly evolve. National boundaries have both impeded and framed ethnic identities such as 'African-American', 'Black', 'Chinese' or 'British'. At times, people have moved countries in order to challenge, or to fight for, ethnic identities and political rights. The essays published here complement recent work that has focused on the 'contact zones' of colonialism, empires and cultural exchange. Like much of that work, our studies are concerned with the cultural impacts occasioned by the structures of trade, colonial rule, global capitalism and other historical forces. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton's anthology *Bodies in Contact: Encounters in World History* uses the heuristic device of the body to present a range of episodes of cross-cultural contact as a window into world history.¹⁸ This present collection is full of fresh stories that focus not so much on contact and exchange as mobility, individual transformation and the connectedness that constitutes global history.

* * *

All of the chapters in this book illuminate the relationship between the transnational and the intimate, but they suggest different ways of

understanding that relationship. While all contributors address several of the common issues discussed above, particular themes emerged that allowed us to group chapters together so that they speak to each other in fruitful ways. Our first section on *Writing Lives Transnationally* discusses challenges specific to writing biographies that cross national and other borders. The chapters in this section suggest varied solutions to the practical and epistemological problems of writing lives fractured by forced mobility or categorizations, or fragmented by subordinated status. The first two chapters focus on 'Issues and Methods'. Martha Hodes suggests that to write a transnational life involves reconstructing a series of connected local histories; Pamela Scully argues that we must abandon the search for the 'whole subject' and allow that fragments of identity are produced in specific times and places. The second pair by Michael A. McDonnell and Penny van Toorn explore the particular epistemological issues created when 'Boundaries Cross Bodies'. Dispelling the illusion that nations are stable while lives move, they argue that we must also consider the ways in which cartographic and political changes have created new nations and boundaries that have affected people's lives and subjectivities.

Our second section takes up the theme of *Opportunities*. To move across the globe offered individuals a chance to reinvent themselves: an opportunity that some took up with enthusiasm, employing 'Fantasies' – secrets, lies, erasures and impostures – to pursue social mobility and careers based on pretence and new identities, as Kirsten McKenzie, Adrian Carton and Angela Woollacott show. Another trio of essays by Carroll Pursell, Tiffany Shellam and Rajani Sudan presents stories of 'Livelihoods'. They show that journeys could facilitate careers in a remarkable variety of ways: through developing international professional experience, making Indigenous men locally famous for their work as cultural interlocutors or enabling a governor of a late-seventeenth century British trading post to make a personal fortune that would endow one of America's most hallowed universities. The final two chapters by Cecilia Morgan and Penny Von Eschen link fantasy and livelihood in a study of 'Performances' in the lives of two women, one who successfully exploited the multiple identities offered by the global entertainment industry while the other struggled to create a new hybrid identity.

While some seized on the opportunities of global mobility for personal advantage, others engaged in idealistic, if often doomed, *Quests*. Two chapters in this third section explore 'Subaltern Crossings' in search of liberty: Bruce Dorsey and Fiona Paisley tell strikingly different stories of expatriation in the pursuit of freedom from racial subordination. The middle-class women in the second pair of essays, 'Intimate Crossings', were stateless in a different way, as Penny Russell and Ros Pesman show. Deprived of citizenship, they yet possessed and exploited the privileges of class to construct new communities of belonging, understanding their connections to place through their connections to the men they loved.

Some of those who crossed the world in search of new lives and new identities left their homelands far behind them; others retained a profound attachment to their 'own place'. Our final section examines *Cosmopolitans* who – by force or choice – crossed so many boundaries that the world itself became their 'own place'. The chapters by Marilyn Lake and Desley Deacon in 'The World at Home' consider the meanings of cosmopolitanism through contrasting case studies of itinerant workers, one a merchant seaman and the other an aspiring actress. In our final trio of essays, 'At Home in the World', Sheila Fitzpatrick, Ian Britain and Hsu-Ming Teo take cosmopolitanism to its extreme, examining the meaning of the transnational life for three people who moved continually around the world, one involuntarily through the fortunes of war and two by choice – three people for whom, indeed, 'world' and 'home' converged.

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Perhaps there are as many ways to interpret a transnational life as there are ways to live one. The chapters in this book encompass a transnationalism of physical mobility, of imagination, of emotions, of identity, of politics and of allegiance. They show that lives were sometimes driven into a pattern of wandering; sometimes, conversely, coerced into classifications that had no grounding in experience. They show that some people could traverse the world and never discard their firm attachment to a national identity, while others could inhabit a cosmopolitan universe without even leaving home. They show that mobility could be a product of coercion or opportunism, of strategy or accident, of desire or fear. Above all they show that, when considered in relation to human lives, transnationalism is not a mere analytic category. It is unalterably an element of human experience.

Notes

1. AHR Editor (2006), 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', *The American Historical Review* Vol. 111, No. 5, p. 1441.
2. C. A. Bayly, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1449.
3. The initiatives are outlined in D. Thelen (1992), 'Of Audiences, Borderlands, and Comparisons: Toward the Internationalization of American History', *The Journal of American History* Vol. 79, No. 2, pp. 432–462.
4. I. Hofmeyr, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1450.
5. R. Mohanram (1999), *Black Body: Women, Colonialism, and Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp. 89–90.
6. S. Beckert, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1459.
7. Bayly, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1442.
8. Hofmeyr, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1444.
9. M. Connelly, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1453.
10. A. Curthoys and M. Lake (eds) (2005), *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective* (Canberra: ANU E-Press), pp. 13–15.

11. Beckert, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1460.
12. D. Lambert and A. Lester (eds) (2006), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Career in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 25.
13. R. Dalziell (ed.) (2002), *Selves Crossing Cultures: Autobiography and Globalisation* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing), Introduction.
14. R. Alba and V. Nee (2003), *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
15. A. J. Hammerton and A. Thomson (2005), *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
16. For example, S. L. Blake (1992), 'A Woman's Trek: What Difference Does Gender Make?', in N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel (eds), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); S. Morgan (1996), *Place Matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women's Travel Books about Southeast Asia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press); I. Grewal (1996), *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (Durham: Duke University Press); H.-M. Teo (2001), 'Wandering in the Wake of Empire: British Travel and Tourism in the Post-Imperial World', in S. Ward (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
17. S. Smith (2001), *Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. xv.
18. T. Ballantyne and A. Burton (eds) (2005), *Bodies in Contact: Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Part I

Writing Lives Transnationally

How do we begin to think of lives transnationally – and what challenges does the attempt pose to biographical or historical method, to research, interpretation and writing? In our opening section, ‘Issues and Methods’, Martha Hodes and Pamela Scully explore some of the issues inherent in writing about lives lived across boundaries. In her study of Eunice Connolly, Hodes reflects upon the interplay between local and global arenas; the balance between the historian’s expansive vision and the more confined day-to-day experiences of historical actors; and narrative strategies that take into account the problem of sources, the question of readership and the intertwining of story-telling and scholarly argument. Scully advocates a form of ‘heterographic writing’. She shows how in developing an alternative narrative of Sara Baartman – the woman historically constituted as the ‘Hottentot Venus’ – she gave up the search for the ‘whole subject’ and instead sought ways to acknowledge incompleteness, while tracing migration between and within peripheries and across borderlands both theoretical and geographical.

Crossing between cultures can require individuals to enter worlds with profoundly different understandings of self and subjectivity. But what happens when new national boundaries themselves cross cultures, imposing new identities that disrupt and re-frame the ties of community, kin and belonging? In ‘Boundaries Cross Bodies’, Michael A. McDonnell and Penny van Toorn show how ruthless acts of conquest or colonization can entrap individuals and communities into confused and multilayered identities. They speak eloquently of the dislocation and fragmentation that come when identities based on experience are ruptured by official categorizations. Yet both essays show that the resulting new identities are not simply imposed upon passive subjects, but are formed also through acts of resistance and negotiation. Penny van Toorn shows how in Australia new and old boundaries have co-existed, shifted and intersected, and examines the role of land policies, mapping, writing and print in the formation of new identities, including Aboriginal nationalism. Michael A. McDonnell’s attempt to follow

the elusive paper trail of Charles Langlade exposes the limitations of the ethnic, racial and linguistic categories through which historians understand the Great Lakes area of North America. Like van Toorn, he reminds us that the frames through which historians view the past can sometimes close off their understanding of the messy fluidity of lived history.

All four essays in this section show how practical methodological issues can raise epistemological questions, especially for the writing of transnational lives. They show, too, how the fragmentation and elusive mobility of the lives they examine were products of their subaltern status: so that the search for completeness will inevitably privilege the powerful. This theme recurs in later sections of this book (e.g. essays by Shellam, Von Eschen, Dorsey and Paisley). National boundaries are not the only epistemological categories to bedevil the historian's work.