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Voyages has been in print for six years. This forum seems a wonderful opportunity to speak beyond the book itself, to themes that promise to be of interest to the field more generally. I will take this opportunity to point out and speak to the themes raised by the critiques, and to open a larger dialogue. Once in a while, where I can't help myself, I may defend my book or decisions against criticism but for the most part I hope to avoid so defensive a posture. It is actually quite a gift to be able to talk with other scholars about my work, and I appreciate the time and thought that went into the reviewers' work. I will speak to three main themes in my response: (1) intimacy in ethnography and ethnographic writing, (2) reflexivity, and (3) the place of theory in ethnography. Along the way, I hope to address many of the reviewers' comments.

On Intimacy

Let's begin with issues related to "intimacy" in ethnography, by which I mean the textual representations of highly personal conversations and encounters, often involving people the reader has come to know, that serve as examples

of more-abstract themes. All the reviewers note this characteristic of *Voyages*; probably the reason this book was chosen for this forum has to do with the style and narratives that make it accessible for readers and emotionally engaging (and thus widely used in classes). I have greater intent, though, in my use of intimacy than a good read.

I consciously made the decision to center the book around pivotal personal encounters and, as Ernie Olson points out, key cultural contexts—the airport, the backyard, the bus stop, the kitchen, the post office—where poignant and repeated cultural interactions occur. It was important to reinforce intimacy by rendering the narratives in forms that were close to my lived experience of them. In other words, if I overheard dialogue, then I wrote in an “observer anthropologist” voice, preserving what dialogue I could remember in my text, while if a Tongan woman related her autobiographical migration experiences, I tried to keep those narratives in her exact words.

There are certain sacrifices in the approach. Steve Francis found the book disjointed in places and sometimes confusing, because I used contrasting styles and voices consistent with the context but not with one another. Some critics, often outside anthropology, believe that, because the experiences related are so personal, you are truly and only describing the experiences of one person or one family. Technically, they’re right—but they fail to understand that these personal narratives and key encounters have been selected by the author based on several years of fieldwork experience. They are not “weak” samples with low n 's; they are instances of repeated cultural encounters, and why Heather Young Leslie can say that she feels, sitting in Nuku‘alofa, that she is “surrounded by potential characters” in my book. It is why Francis sees in *Voyages* his own diverse and complex data about migration, and why so many Tongans, who write to me, recognize themselves and their families in my book—despite that it is not their family members described.

Focusing on intimacy also allows one to investigate the dynamics of experience, dynamics that instantiate larger cultural and global processes. I do a great deal of computer modeling, and even teach a graduate course in how to model social phenomena on a computer and play out their dynamics over time. One of the things I realize about this seemingly mathematical and positivist endeavor is that models often hinge on fine-grained and intimate details about human beings.

Let me offer an example. I once modeled Roy Rappaport's *Pigs for the Ancestors* (New Haven, 1984), an ethnography about the dynamic connections among pigs, yams, humans, warfare, and ceremonies that reflects on the theoretical relationship of ecology and ritual. A basic cycle Rappaport describes is that the pig population, while needed for food and social reciprocity, eventually grows out of control, overrunning yam gardens. When this happens, a cer-

emonial feast occurs where all adult pigs are slaughtered and allies are fed, returning the ecology to equilibrium until the pig population again grows out of control, reanimating the process.

I tried to see if I could model the ethnography and reproduce the same eight- to twenty-year cycle of feasting and ceremonies observed in the culture, based on information about the numbers of yams, pigs, and people and the dynamics that went on among them. I found I could do this, but only with very detailed and accurate information about the threshold anger levels of women. It turns out that pigs overran yam gardens planted by *women*, and this resulted in the women's having to do more and more planting for family consumption. As the pig population grew the women got more and more upset, eventually pressuring their husbands into calling for the start of the ceremonial pig feast. The whole model hinged on knowing when women got upset—how much more work they had to do before they said “enough is enough.” This is where the backyard or the kitchen stories of women really matter to the big theories (in this case, models) we wish to formulate.

The same lesson applies to most social phenomena we investigate. Consider remittances, a concern in *Voyages* and an issue for many scholars of the contemporary Pacific. Will remittances continue and is the MIRAB economy sustainable? Economists count remittance dollars and survey remitters or recipients about the size and frequency of their gifts. We learn from such studies that Tongans do not send fewer remittances the longer they are overseas, as one might suspect. But why not? And on what conditions do continuing remittances depend?

To me, the answers to these questions, and indeed the future of MIRAB economies, seem located in the content of Tongans' personal experiences, private choices, and interpersonal relationships. Some of the best economic science, then, can be accomplished by listening carefully to the conversations and considerations that people have about visiting home, sending money to relatives, selling or giving tapa cloth to overseas relatives, and so forth. The hostile joke, the rationalization, the characteristic family dispute, the new change in wealth items at the wedding—all are clues about the unfolding of the future. It is hard for observers without intimate contacts to see these harbingers, and that is why anthropologists doing long-term fieldwork are in a special position—if, that is, we properly appreciate our privileged access to the intimate moments of life. Intimacy, I believe, is good science.

Reflexivity

It was not natural for me, being a fairly private person, to introduce an entire chapter (6, “An Anthropologist Over Time”) about my own experience or to pepper the text with clearly marked self-reflections. My reflexive inclusions pre-

sented difficulty for two reviewers, examples perhaps of the uneasiness in our field with many so-called postmodern conventions. About my reflexive material and style, Francis writes: "While these are important questions, the intimate nature of these discussions sometimes sits uneasily next to the more traditional ethnographic material." He recommends a "more conservative approach to structure" in response to the contrasting styles, topics, and voices in the book.

Olson comments about my self-reflection: "The reader can indeed be thankful that the book is less about the concerns of the anthropologist and more about the Tongan voyage." I read these comments with an unstated subtext (that I will overstate slightly for dramatic emphasis): Outright support for reflexivity implicates one as card-carrying postmodernist and/or reflexive writing is a personal indulgence, a sort of narcissistic exercise through which some authors drag their colleagues.

Is it possible to consider reflexivity as something other than a personal indulgence or a theoretical badge?

I live in a global system where anthropologists occupy particular nodes, typically in the middle class of industrial nations. I am an individual but also a role and a symbol, of sorts, and my interactions are an example of the types of interactions that symbols like me have. Certainly there are individual differences, among anthropologists and among informants, but, as cultural anthropologists know well, many of our personal interactions become stylized and familiar precisely because they are endemic to the social structures in which we are immersed.

It matters what happens between Tongans and myself, precisely because those interactions are part of the social and economic complexities that I am trying to figure out. It matters, because as Young Leslie notes, "her voice is included in the text, justifiably so, because she is part of the relationships about which she is writing." (Note, too, the gendered nature of the reviewer response to reflexivity.) As such, my reactions and relationships become a new set of data that I can learn from and analyze. This to me is a major purpose of reflexive thinking.

With this reflexivity, I can better see the limitations of my own work. When Olson complains that the reader learns comparatively little about Tongan men (compared to women), I consider my own persona and positioning in the village. I realize his assessment is accurate because I simply did not have the same access to men's activities and men's thoughts that I did with women's. As a woman (and a single woman when I first went to Tonga), my interactions with village men were necessarily constrained and circumscribed by propriety. Fraternalizing with men in the bush was not an option and, even though I attended many kava circles, I did so as the woman who made the kava. As such I heard much more sexual banter than talk of migration. I take to heart, though, Olson's call for more on community life, an arena I might have done more with.

Reflexivity is useful, not only in understanding the ground from which we see others, but also in exploring the nature of our own practice: fieldwork. I was surprised that, except for a brief mention by Francis, there was no comment offered about any of the material in chapters 11 and 12, where I attempted to use my fieldwork experience, in a reflexive way again, to comment on issues in contemporary anthropology, such as cultural relativism.

In this light, it was very interesting to me how Olson dealt with my treatment of my own Jewishness among Tongans: "it seems," he writes, "that we know more about Small's religious identity, and her personal journey toward ethnographic openness about this, than about current Tongan religious values and beliefs." Olson would have preferred that I speak more about Tongan Christianity, its history and place in village life, rather than shifting my gaze away from the "subject" of study (Tongan culture).

The question really is: What is the subject? For me, the issue of being Jewish in Tonga, and then of attempting to deal with Tongan prejudices in the United States, had little to do with religion per se. It was about cultural relativism and the way that my direct experiences with being Jewish in my fieldwork had caused me, like others recently, to question this hallowed anthropological precept. I realized it was no accident that the issue of cultural relativism would begin shifting within the field of anthropology at the very same historical point as transnational processes, like migration, are in full force. The two, I realized, were connected, and I used myself and my experience as an "informant" to explore the connection.

My discovery was, as I wrote, that "we are all on the same journey." I did not mean that we all experience the same events because we inhabit very different places in the global system. Rather, the shifting sands beneath us, that for a Tongan resulted in leaving Tonga and for an anthropologist resulted in confusion about cultural relativism, are all part of the same global dynamics. Reflexive attention to our fieldwork is one way that we can explore the globalization process and its effect on the profession of anthropology.

Theory

It is very fair to say of my book, as Young Leslie did, that it is underreferenced in regard to general anthropological theory. Part of the reason for this is my own discomfort with anthropological theory. The theoretical material that guided my initial fieldwork proposals and grants ultimately had little to do with what I wrote about; my experiences in Tonga, in fact, confirmed the irrelevance of many of the questions I was asking. The data and insights that I did glean and eventually wrote about do not unequivocally support or refute a theoretical position.

It is not yet clear to me that I should spend my time in print showing how my work articulates, and how it does not, with the grand theory of the day. In *Voyages*, I think I illuminated some important dynamics about the transnational process, trying to state and illustrate them both clearly and richly. What do my data mean for world-systems theory, or economic convergence theory, or questions of individual agency versus structure? Frankly, I'm not sure yet, and I'm reluctant to jump to theory at this point. Young Leslie's invitation to look at some of the recent dynamics—unclaimed children in Nuku'alofa and largely abandoned villages in Ha'apai—intrigues me at the same time as it reminds me to withhold any theoretical conclusions. Things keep moving.

I am, in truth, tired of reading the products of our field's various theoretical bandwagons, where I typically find a proliferation of jargon and a monumental conformity of themes. It is too easy to be drawn into the fray. I think this is why the only criticism that irked me was Francis's long and pointed discussion of my supposed commitments to dependency and world-systems theories (he fairly adds that I never actually stated my commitment to these theories). Repeating arguments in the literature that critique world-systems approaches, Francis goes on to suggest that, like other world systems-based analyses, "her analysis is predicated on theories that leave little room for Tongan agency" and that, predictably, I ignore many aspects of the local because of my theoretical focus on the global. Given my lack of theoretical referencing, the highly local approach I took to transnationalism, and my consistent focus on representing the personal forces behind migration, these claims seem far afield. I can only think that this is another example of how theoretical camps can draw us into canned debates.

I was talking recently with a talented Tongan-American graduate student, 'Anapesi Ka'ili, about *Voyages* and we talked at some length about the lack of direct theoretical focus in the book, a critique raised in an Asian-Pacific Islander conference she attended. She shared with me how she responded to attendees. *Voyages* is the only scholarly work, she told me, that she's ever seen a nonscholar, who is Tongan, read. "When I go home to Utah, and the women are all in the kitchen cooking for some family event, we talk about that book. We see ourselves in it." I may well change my tune about theoretical engagement, because I do wrestle with my reluctance, but in the meantime, her comments help.

Some Additional Notes

Sometimes, a reviewer will make you consider your own work in a different light. This was the case twice as I read the reviews of *Voyages*, and these are worth mentioning. Olson's almost literary analysis pointed out to me the

intersection of the many vignettes in *Voyages* concerning travel and communication. Although I consciously employed the theme of voyaging in the title, chapter titles, and book cover, I did not wittingly weave a web of related incidents.

I had not seen how, for instance, the two bus stories I related (one in Tonga, one in the United States) stood in juxtaposition to one another, showing difference in island versus migrant communities, or how many scenes I included that involved bus stops, airports, telephones, letters, and other travel and long-distance communication venues. It gave me a view of a network of related images and events that I had not (consciously) inserted.

As I was writing *Voyages*, the U.S. ideology surrounding immigration—as refuge for the oppressed, as a beacon of equality, etc.—loomed large. It seemed a peculiarly American ideology and I believed the experiences of Tongans spoke directly to many of its faulty precepts. So I directed the book to Americans (including Tongan-Americans).

Young Leslie's critique alerted me to how that came across to non-American readers, and I marked my own parochialism with her words: "This kind of myopia should not exist in anthropology, . . . the book's reader could just as easily be Canadian, Australian, Norwegian, or Japanese, just as interested in the global phenomenon of migration, perhaps especially, of Tongans." Young Leslie is right, especially when the very topic I am discussing is transnationalism, and so my apologies to any alienated readers.

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