A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OF VISITS HOME DRAWN FROM THE IMMIGRANT ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OF VISITS HOME DRAWN FROM THE IMMIGRANT ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

by

Jane Catherine Dunsiger, B.A. (Hons.)

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ABSTRACT

The scope for immigrant ethnic studies in Canadian folklore is vast, offering many possibilities to the researcher interested in specific ethnic or cultural groups. To date, however, there has been little work in comparative studies which seek to go beyond the bounds of one group. Differing emphases on aspects of culture such as language, religion, dress and material culture are not easily resolved.

Using an established folkore form, the personal experience narrative, this study seeks to set up a basis for comparison by examining the personal experience narratives of eight informants drawn from the immigrant ethnic complex in St. John's, Newfoundland. It contrasts and compares their comments on the experience of visiting home as a means of exploring one facet of the immigrant experience.

It suggests that the experience of returning home can cause considerable problems for the visitor because it sets two different value systems in apposition. Changed cultural perceptions for both visitor and host have to be accommodated. It is argued that the visit home presents some features of a rite of passage, but that if seen in terms of the individual's overall experience, the visit is a re-affirmation of his original decision to leave. It forms part of the larger rite of passage involved in settling in the New World.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This thesis considers the narratives of eight informants in the city of St. John's, Newfoundland. These eight people are linked by one outstanding common factor apart from that of living in the same city in Canada. None of them was born in Canada and as such they form part of the huge group of immigrants which peoples this country.[1] They are all immigrants and come from many varying backgrounds, different religious and language groups and are all at different stages in their careers and family lives.

The impulse to consider some aspects of the immigrant condition in a city which is traditionally regarded as an homogeneous Anglo-Irish community derives from my own situation as an immigrant.[2] It is natural to be concerned with other people's reactions to change in surroundings and environment when these problems and concerns are part and parcel of one's own existence. The urge to compare one's own reactions in the face of a particular set of circumstances with those of someone similarly placed is very strong. The feeling that it may be possible to learn from other people's experiences with respect to solving given problems is a primary motivation for this enquiry. Allied to this is a curiosity about the way in which different individuals adapt and modify their behaviour to meet new circumstances. The intent in this study is to isolate a facet of the immigrant experience, to discover what common areas there are, if any, and to discern what insights this may offer into the social fabric.

The need to adapt to a fresh set of circumstances - to assume what one of my informants has called "the protective coloration" of the new place has been widely documented in the anthropological and sociological literature.[2] In personal terms I was probably first made aware of the requirement to alter my behaviour in some way when I went on holiday exchanges in France and Germany as a teenager. The enormous effort required to communicate in a foreign langu-

age was a first introduction to the need to adjust to new surroundings. A similar re-ordering of my experiences and attitudes was necessary at a later stage when I worked au pair in Spain. Again I became acutely aware of the need to follow local habits and customs. As a student in France, I needed to re-order my behaviour to conform with the model required for the staff of a French Lycée. As a young mother in Italy I had to synthesize my views on bringing up young babies with those of the doctor and the local community. Later on, a further re-arrangement of my thought patterns and actions or re-ordering of the individual cognitive map - to use the ethnoscientists' term - was needed when I moved from the warmth and sunshine of the Italian Riviera to the inhospitality of a Newfoundland Spring.[3]

The transition in 1974 from the warm and hospitable atmosphere of a small town on the Mediterranean to the ruggedness of Newfoundland was not easily achieved. The contrast in the two environments seemed well summarised in the vegetation - the tumbling cascades of geraniums set against the grey flintiness of an unmade garden. April fog shrouding seemingly endless spruce trees was a far cry from early morning mists in Tuscan valleys. The sheer inhospitality of the landscape seemed overwhelming.

The sense of isolation in a demanding environment began to ease as I met others who had felt a similar estrangement. Initially those I met were almost exclusively members of the university community. This was natural as my husband's colleagues made every effort to make us feel a little less odd. I exchanged impressions of Newfoundland with those who had also "come from away" - a vernacular term for a "newcomer" that I quickly learned. It was reassuring to discover that I could share a joke about Idi Amin with an Egyptian and could chat about shopping in Rome with an elegant Indian woman. It fostered a sense of belonging, if only to a group which tended to see it-

self as merely grafted onto the indigenous community.

Clearly, to be "from away" conferred no great status. To judge from the local press, the CFA - to use the contracted form of the expression - were regarded with some ambivalence by the local community. Wick Collins, a columnist with the local newspaper, wrote in the following terms:

> It is now easy to be a come-from-away in the Newfoundland of today. The new Newfoundlander is more resented and more criticised than ever before in our long history of welcoming strangers to our shore.
>
> This gives many of the established and recently arrived newcomers the uncomfortable feeling that they are not wanted and makes them wonder if in their lifetime they will be accepted as Newfoundlanders, with some right to have a say in what is going on.[4]

His comments were appreciated by one disillusioned CFA who signed himself "Had Enough" and announced his imminent departure from Newfoundland. He was at a loss to understand "the repeated, carping attacks on foreigners" and questioned local prejudice.

> .... Why the natives so resent us I cannot understand.[5]

He reminded readers of the paper that there were places where fruit and vegetables cost less and the weather was more hospitable and concluded by thanking Collins for his comments. Other letters indicated that some sections of the community felt there were disproportionate numbers of UK trained teachers in the educational system, possibly preventing Newfoundland graduates from finding employment.

Other times a member of the CFA group itself would occasionally use the term as a social shorthand to define anyone who was not a "Newf.". On the more positive side, the CFA group seemed to have initiated some interesting ventures which catered to their needs and were of benefit to the community in general. Among these were a health food shop which had become the focus

of an alternative culture, a sophisticated kitchen shop and restaurant and a wool shop which also sold the more tasteful of local handicrafts. The CFA presence was also obvious among local craftspeople, encompassing potters, weavers, woodworkers, screen printers and artists. On the musical scene, a number of young musicians had formed a group known as the "CFA String Band." Their choice of name reflected their place in the local scene, alongside indigenous groups such as "Figgy Duff" whose names echoed their local origins.[6] Later, as the issue of CFA's declined in sensitivity, the group changed its name to "The Southside Ramblers" reflecting a degree of integration into the community - the Southside being a recognised area of the city by the harbour. The CFA label persisted however and the group bowed to pressure from its listening public and reverted to its original name.

The CFA community, in turn, was also the butt of local humour. Its attitudes and stances to life in Newfoundland were often satirised in humorous sketches by a local group, CODCO.[8] CODCO's comments were not limited to the immigrant community alone as Upper Canadian "refugees" in Newfoundland were equally suitable targets for satire, alongside local Newfoundland types. For several years, CFA's and native Newfoundlanders alike enjoyed laughing at the characters and situation created on-stage by CODCO.

Though I was ready to laugh at CODCO my own sense of alienation persisted for some time, masked by a growing round of activities and domestic pressures and I continued to be intrigued by the process of adaptation. I was saddened by the speed at which my children forgot their second language, Italian, though amused by their steady preference for spaghetti over and above hamburgers and hot dogs. Similarly, their adaptation to elements of "North American" culture, as distinct from Newfoundland, was swift and they quickly came to enjoy TV shows such as "Sesame Street" and "Mr. Dress Up". Later, at school,

they readily learnt Hallowe'en songs and tape-recorded these for their grandparents in England. As a family we enthusiastically caught and ate caplin, though we later came to the local view that these small fish aren't really so good to eat, given the availability of cod, salmon and lobster. No pioneers, given our comfortable house in surburbia, we quickly learnt the real meaning of "hard labour" as we struggled to turn our building "lot" into a garden. Accustomed to the profusion of colourful shrubs and vegetation of the Riviera, I found the steady greyness of local stones and rocks rather depressing, echoing the grey mist snagged, it seemed, on the tree tops. It became imperative to see bright colour and I planted a patch of red petunias under a window to relieve the unremitting grey. Soon we were no longer newcomers and we, in our turn helped others to adjust to new surroundings.

My interest in the processes of adaptation persisted and extended beyond observations of my immediate family. I was amused and intrigued by turns as I saw parallel incidents and changes taking place in other families. Differences in perception between parents and children often became apparent in conversation, such as the incident our Egyptian friend recounted. In the course of conversation with his son about life in Egypt, his son asked him whether he used to go to work on a camel when he lived in Egypt. His father is a sophisticated and urbane Alexandrian who laughed heartily and then corrected his son's impression of his life-style in Egypt. On another occasion, the brother of this same small boy angrily rejected the traditional bread his mother had painstakingly cooked to go with a meal of Arabic dishes and demanded steak or hamburgers in preference. Later on my elegant Indian friend described with a mild degree of irritation, how her son seemed to make deliberate attempts to forget his local language, Telegu. It was particularly frustrating as she and her husband had spent large sums arranging for their son to spend a

period of some months with his relatives in Southern India to give him a sense of his background. As I became more integrated into this new network, I became more aware of subtler changes, influences and interactions at work within the community.

The CFA group, I discovered, extended and overlapped outside of the rather tight little circle I had come to know within the univeristy. The Indian community was particularly interesting in this respect. They had organized themselves into a cultural association with the aims of "fostering friendship between the people of Indian origin and those of other countries".[7] In addition to members of university faculty this group also drew on the local medical profession and other Asians within the community. Sections of the group maintained and supported the small Hindu Temple which had been established in a converted suburban house in Mount Pearl. Invited to one of the functions sponsored by the Friends of India Association, I pondered for a long time about the little Indian girl who solemnly tap-danced to Cat Steven's "Saturday Night" in the middle of a programme of more traditional items of Indian culture. Was she being indulged by her parents, as some members of the organising committee hinted, or was she merely expressing similar sentiments as the would-be hamburger eater from Alexandria?

In 1978 I began Graduate Studies in Folklore. I had some reservations; fair exposure to Cecil Sharp's work as it is manifested in the English school system had inclined me to believe that I was not a future folk-song-scholar, nor did I play the fiddle which, at that stage, seemed to be a pre-requisite for folklore studies. I began to realise that the group with which I identified most strongly was the immigrant community. I was a landed immigrant and a parent: these two factors seemed of primary importance and I gave a lot of thought to the question of how one gave a sense of identity to children, gave

them a feeling for their heritage, without prejudicing their start in fresh circumstances. It was a topic I discussed with my friends on many occasions and was, in some respects, partly a re-expression of a parents' desire to offer his child the best of what is available. This seemed unlikely ground for a topic in folklore, yet it was one that continued to fascinate me.

It received considerable impetus when I interviewed an informant from Tanzania, Chandra. To provide the necessary background for a folktale project, based on the story-telling tradition at the Hindu temple in Mount Pearl, I listened to Chandra's account of her upbringing in Zanzibar and Tanzania. Myriad different influences had combined to make this woman very keen to establish a particular identity for herself and more especially for her teenage daughters. Ethnically, she was of Indian descent as her parents had had to leave the Punjab at the time of the division of India in 1947. She grew up in East Africa as part of the middle group of Indian administrators between the English "bosses" and the African labourers. She described her childhood with considerable humour and in some detail, explaining how confused she had become when she had left the relatively liberal community in Zanzibar for Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. In Zanzibar the Portuguese-influenced Goans had created a less orthodox group than the community she found in Dar-es-Salaam. Her sense of where she fitted in that particular society became even more confused when she attended a convent school and was exposed to Christianity. At home, her father instructed her in Hindu ritual and regaled her with stories and accounts of India. Later, when she went to medical school in Dublin, Eire, she discovered that inspite of her convent schooling she was not eligible to enter a Roman Catholic hostel in Dublin, instead she was subjected to "Protestant missionary zeal", as she described it, at the YWCA.

Chandra cannot identify totally with Africa, though her husband thinks of

himself as an African in spite of his Bengali background. When Chandra eventually went to India on a visit she was severely disillusioned when she found that her father's descriptions did not tally with the poverty, graft and corruption she experienced. Her response to this confused picture had been to promote the teaching of Hinduism in her immediate circle and to base her life on this particular system. In her education of her daughters she stressed the importance of formal religious observance and offered, in essence, a very traditional pattern of behaviour. She felt very strongly that children must be presented with a very positive idea with which they should identify. She could not imagine not wearing a sari publicly, though she occasionally wore trousers in the privacy of her own home. She admitted she would have difficulty in coming to terms with a non-Indian son-in-law inspite of mixed marriages within her own family circle and her daughters spoke of asking their swami, or spiritual teacher, to help them in the choice of a husband. Though this informant may have come to terms with very radical change in her physical environment she had found the need to draw on her deep traditional background and culture to provide a focus for her identity.

Her insistence on a well-defined cultural base for the upbringing of children was obviously a direct result of her own background. She rejected the view offered to me by another Indian parent that a child receives its basic instruction in the home but must ultimately find its own way in different circumstances in a new environment. This comment had been made by a highly-educated, well-travelled member of the Engineering Faculty who had opted to follow Hindu dietary laws after a lapse of some years. His view, Chandra felt, was characteristic of those immigrants who, as she put it, "still had one foot in India." As they still had family in India and returned periodically for extended visits their sense of identity was quite well established

and they could afford to suggest that their children must develop their own attitudes to a new society. They were sufficiently confident of themselves to allow this point of view. In her case, she could not look back to a long established family group and identify that as her origin and as a consequence she had looked to other aspects of her tradition as a basis for her identity.

My friendship with this particular informant deepened and we often discussed the problems of relating to our particular society as she tried to stimulate other members of the Indian community into a greater awareness of the work of the little Temple.

I had felt a degree of diffidence in approaching members of the Indian community for a number of reasons. Even though my initial introduction had been through a mutual friend in this instance, I was very conscious that the collector can easily become patronising and I was conterned that I might invade people's privacy. I was aware of the difficulties involved when a collector asks informants to talk about themselves as there can be numerous inhibiting factors in interviewing and a collector can quickly offend or upset. Matters of religion and politics are sensitive areas in ordinary conversations and they become doubly so in an interview. It needs a warm and sympathetic atmosphere to generate the sense of rapport between collector and informant which leads to the most meaningful details being offered. Chandra's husband had warned me at the outset that I could not learn about Hinduism merely by attending their Temple for a period of some six to eight weeks and I had needed to explain that this was not my intention.[8] It was heartening therefore to be greeted with such cooperation and enthusiasm. As a result I did not feel that I had made an "excursion into exotica" nor that I had strayed from what might have been considered a more normal field of enquiry - namely my own ethnic group or the wider Newfoundland scene which presents so many

areas of research for folklore scholars.

In fact I felt sufficiently encouraged to consider more work along these lines and decided to contact members of the Italian community in St. John's. I was prompted to do this because I wanted to compare the findings of a folklore scholar who had carried out a project in Italy and the United States with my own observations in St. John's.[9] Having lived in Italy for some four and one half years I felt that I was sufficiently conversant with attitudes and behaviour patterns to be able to carry out some interesting interviews. Undoubtedly, the fact that I approached my informants in their native language gave me an advantage as far as an introduction to the community was concerned and the majority of the interviews were in Italian. I discovered that the opportunity of speaking Italian was a real pleasure for some informants, though not all, and that certain strong patterns, such as the emphasis placed on the importance of the family group, still persisted outside of Italy. Regional cuisine and traditional approaches to house-building were other areas of activity. Some of my informants continued to use regional dialects in the home in preference to Italian.

In connection with another project I also interviewed a small group of Latvians in St. John's. I met a Latvian woman and was curious to find out what part her cultural background played in her life. At a social gathering at a friend's house I had commented on her unusual name and she explained that she had been born in Latvia and had later moved to Australia with her parents and sister. She grew up in a Latvian community, joined an all-Latvian Girl Guide troupe and taught in a Latvian school. Her parents still sang in an all-Latvian choir in Adelaide. She contrasted what she had assimilated of Latvian traditions with her sister whom, she felt, spoke the language less well than she did and had a lot of difficulty in writing. My original informant, Helga, introduced me

to another older member of the tiny community who was delighted to recall memories of Latvia and to show me the many artifacts in her home which she had collected over the years. This informant, Karin was of particular interest because she articulated the problems involved in bringing up quite a large family so that each member had some sense of his or her cultural heritage. She contrasted the energy she had put into teaching her older children to speak Latvian with the later realisation that she was creating an effective barrier to real communication with her youngest child by insisting that the language be used in the house. This was only one of the problems. A further interview with a male member of the group raised some of the same questions: in his case the need to establish himself professionally in North America had precluded a lot of involvement with his original group, though he still made an effort to attend Latvian music festivals which have become a focus for the Latvian community in exile.

The interviews with the Latvian group made an interesting contrast with the two preceding sets. The first very striking difference in the three groups was the way in which the Latvians had come to Canada. As political refugees, for the most part, they had a very different perspective on the land of their birth in comparison with the Indian and Italian groups I had talked to. It was virtually impossible for them to return home to visit their relatives and to maintain dynamic links with their homeland. In contrast, some of the Italians I spoke to owned homes in Italy and returned regularly to visit their families and relatives. Though it was more expensive for the Indian community to return to the sub-continent or to East Africa - I had had dealings with both groups - they too made every effort to maintain strong ties with their original communities. Having carried out these very limited surveys, the question now arose as to what conclusions might be drawn.

I had not intended a formal comparison initially - this had grown out of my projects - and as a result it proved extremely difficult to set up a basis for comparison between the three groups. Any attempt at drawing a conclusion or hasarding a generalisation based on these studies quickly fell to the ground. The differences in language retention alone within one family quickly established that one could not make any broad statement for one family, let alone for a group. To consider any kind of tentative remarks for the three groups was out of the question. Again similar problems arose with respect to family groupings, to religious observances and to concern with material culture. The broad analyses suggested by some scholars did not seem fine enough to encompass these relatively small groups in St. John's.[10] No one of these small groups was large enough to sustain an independent existence; they were all required to interact in the larger host community in some way and to integrate their behaviour patterns with those of the majority. However this did not deter me from wanting to attempt some form of comparative study, simply because it had not been done before. The majority of studies I had read usually focused on one particular ethnic group.[11] I felt there had to be some common thread which allowed a basis for a cross-cultural comparison to be established. Indeed the focus of scholarly research in ethnic studies, rather than folklore, appeared to be shifting away from studies based on one group, towards more interactive studies. In a discussion of university opinion on Canadian ethnic studies Evelyn Kallen noted "widely supported ... was the view that the VPVL Program should have a comprehensive inter-ethnic (rather than intra-ethnic) focus."[12]

It became clear that any comparative study undertaken had to be based on individuals. There were great difficulties in trying to draw any conclusions based on small groups: differing emphases on language, family structure, mat-

erial culture and religion made this approach unworkable. In addition, current thinking in folklore studies rejected a study of immigrant and ethnic folklore based on large groups and stressed the value of studies based on individuals. Stern phrased it this way:

> Recent folklorists ... have re-examined the notion that ethnicity can be defined on the basis of "objective" traits derived from the analyst's examination of a "culture's" behavioral configuration and have adopted a "subjective" approach that characterizes ethnicity on the basis of the evaluation of ethnic individuals.[13]

Other scholars had also argued for shifting the emphasis from the group to the individual, to consider his or her particular involvement in his own cultural background.[14] The level of involvement varied for each person and drew or could draw on widely differing facets of the same heritage. Because ethnic individuals interpreted their backgrounds in different ways the ethnic group should more properly be termed an "ethnic complex." Nor was this grouping of people to be equated with a folk group; the two were not synonymous. It was the degree of overlap and interplay in the interpretation of their respective backgrounds that lent a sense of group organization to these individuals which, in turn, gave rise to the "ethnic complex."

Similarly, Gizelis in his work on the Greek community pinpointed the necessity of distinguishing what he termed the <u>folk community:</u> "... a small number of persons who exercise a face-to-face communication," within the larger whole or <u>folk area</u>, in an attempt at achieving some understanding of the problems and inter-relationships.[15] Though his study had been carried out in the United States his remarks seemed relevant for the area I wanted to consider. Thus:

> .... the study of an ethnic group in America through its various small folk communities has several qualifications. The only way to investigate an urban ethnic community which is dispersed throughout a big city is through these small groups. Furthermore, by employing the technique of study of the small community within the large community, one can give care and thought to problems that occupy individuals and groups as well as ponder over the problems of similarities and differences in various relative groups.[16]

Further, he also stressed the importance of folklore incorporated in daily life and speech.

> .... folklore which is incorporated in everyday speech is more powerful and more effective than folklore performed at a level of abstraction.[17]

In particular:

> .... the researcher should focus on a speech-action to ferret out the particular topic that his subject selects to introduce or discuss.[18]

When these remarks were considered in relation to the social scene I knew in St. John's, it was clear that a project based on an oral account of some facet of ethnic immigrant life at the individual level was not without precedent. The overall folk area was identified and did identify itself in the expression "come from away" and within it there were many small folk communities. A common experience for many of the individuals within these communities was that of a visit home. The circumstances under which an individual might undertake such a visit varied considerably, but access or its denial to the land of their birth was obviously an important factor for many people. I had first encountered this in my initial interview with Chandra of the East African Indian community, the Italians I had met clearly drew on their family connections back home and for the dispossessed Latvians the inability to return home easily had posed particular problems.

The fact that the Latvians could not return home easily had severely limited the degree of interaction they might have had with the home community. Their response to their traditional patterns and culture might be seen as relatively static, or "frozen", as was suggested to me by one folklore scholar.[19] They had tended to cling to particular folklore forms which in many senses were "survivals" from the tradition they had known in Latvia. Set against this example the Indian community seemed highly organized in its approaches to its traditions. The cultural association and the concern with the religious education of its young people were evidence of a high level of awareness of its background. In turn this feeling gave a sense of dynamism to its endeavours. The Italian group presented a less ordered image. Numerically, they were a much smaller group than the Indian community, largely involved in aspects of the building trade. They moved easily backwards and forwards between their original homes and their homes in Newfoundland. One informant made his own liqueur and several their own wine; almost all of them ordered culinary supplies from Toronto. Several of them were married to Newfoundlanders and appeared to maintain a relaxed stance in relation to their culture and traditions.

In the course of these various interviews whether in connection with the Indian, Italian or Latvian groups, I found I was often given a wealth of personal detail. Time and again an informant had set his or her remarks against the background of his own life, indeed, for many of them, it was impossible to separate their views and ideas on a given topic without reference at some stage to their family backgrounds, or to their early life or to their lives prior to coming to Canada. Many of my informants relished the opportunity of talking about home and quickly overcame their shyness at being recorded. As a topic, "home" was a natural stimulus provoking recollections of childhood,

upbringing, customs, beliefs and practices, thus providing the necessary contextual detail for all the small projects I carried out. Personal details were inextricably mixed with memories of a more general kind and these provided many interesting insights. I listened hard, trying to discover what it meant to be a Latvian, clinging to aspects of a culture, officially non-existent; I indulged my own nostalgia for Italy as I recorded conversations with immigrants and admired kitchens, laundry rooms and bathrooms carefully tiled in imitation of those back home; I thought carefully about religion and festivity as another East African informant described his music-making at the Hindu Temple and in local multicultural programmes.[19] As I recorded each informant I realised that these accounts received their sharp focus from the wealth of personal details explicit and implicit within them.

I had first become aware of this while talking to Chandra in connection with the Chinmaya Mission in Mount Pearl. She had found it impossible to explain her support and involvement in the Temple without providing a vivid picture of her upbringing in East Africa. To have any understanding of her motivations in supporting the Temple it was necessary to have some feeling for her sense of isolation as a Hindu and an Indian in a series of different environments and cultures, in Africa, Ireland and North America. The Temple helped to re-affirm her identity and to maintain her sense of herself; as a symbol it embodied her sense of belonging to a given group, both religious and cultural and provided an essential link between a former identity and a modified one in a new environment.

Similarly, in asking Helga to speak about being a Latvian, admittedly a more direct invitation for an autobiographical account, it was impossible for her to speak in general terms alone. Her remarks were couched in terms of her own experiences - in a displaced persons' camp, in a Latvian community in

exile in Australia and latterly in a small, fragmented group in St. John's. Her perception of her "Latvianess" was the reference point against which she measured her sister's involvement in the same cultural scene and those of fellow Latvians in St. John's. The cultural symbols for her were Latvian artifacts - woven articles and jewellery. This was also true for Karin who still treasured her Latvian possessions - a handcarved wooden lunch box, many pieces of amber jewellery, woven mats and one, last, traditional blouse. These were her cultural symbols, re-affirming her Latvian identity and helping to span the distance between her origins and her present identity, as an attractive, middle-aged housewife in St. John's. Indeed, she described instances of non-Latvians wearing traditionally styled jewellery and how this had prompted Latvian exiles to introduce and identify themselves. The jewellery was a shared symbol and denoted membership in a particular group; it helped, in an innocuous way to confirm and re-establish an identity which, though now qualified and fragmented for the sake of a new situation, still existed. Again, it was no accident nor mere love of music, though these elements are undoubtedly present, that a Latvian-born pianist drew members of this tiny group to his concert in St. John's; nor that he gracefully acknowledged their presence and support by dedicating an encore to them, a piece entitled Daina - the Latvian word for folk-song.[20] For that evening he encapsulated the group's identity as Latvians. Temporarily, other facets of their identity were set to one side and for the space of one recital they need respond only as Latvians - there was no requirement to temper an original culture base to the needs of a new environment.

I found similar responses among the Italians I interviewed. In this instance I wanted to assess the retention of Italian ways and customs in a new environment, and again I was offered much autobiographical information. How

else was a prospering entrepreneur to explain his success, based on sheer hard work and an eye for an opportunity, without reference at some stage to his upbringing in a large, extended rural family, in which each member was expected to make his contribution? Shared symbols for him lay within the family group and again it was no coincidence that two brothers also lived nearby and shared his business interests. If this same informant was proud to announce that he was the head of his family and a committed church-goer, it was because he still drew on particular aspects of his original culture base. For him these particular values, attitudes and habits had a strength and were worth maintaining in a new situation. Above and beyond the framework they offered for ordering his personal life, they were also ways of maintaining his original identity - an identity now polyfaceted because of his increased experience and exposure to different circumstances.

A further example is again drawn from the East African Indian community.[21] Ravi gave his comments on his involvement in the local musical scene, both as an organiser and participant in cultural festivities in St. John's. Without reference to his childhood in Nairobi and an explanation of Hindu religious festivals during this time, he could not give a full account of the nature of his activities in St. John's. There was no other way to explain a newly-acquired talent for playing the sitar except by reference to this original culture base. Conversely, his musicianship allowed him to express a facet of his identity, now tempered by the demands of life in Newfoundland and North America. His identity had not been diluted by the experience of immigration, rather attenuated and extended to meet the requirements of a new society. The original base was still there, as a source of renewal, if needed, but further details and facets had added new dimensions.[22]

For some individuals a sense of identity is associated with a given geographical location. This place is viewed as "home" because that individual identifies most clearly with that set of attitudes, values and customs. This is the culture base with which he feels most in tune and it becomes the reference point against which he sets all other experiences. It is his standard and against this he measures aspects of other cultures. These can vary from the way one pronounces "tomato" through the way one makes and serves Yorkshire pudding to the way one treats one's wife and raises one's children.

However, the need to identify one's cultural standard or base-line with a specific geographical location is not universal. It is quite possible, for example, to have an identity as a Jew but this identity is not completely dependent on perceiving Israel as "home". This is not to suggest that Israel is not seen as central to the Jewish identity for many individuals, rather to propose that a Jewish identity exists, for some, over and above the political state.[23] Another example, which offered a slightly different twist to this idea is that of Chandra's husband. Ethnically a Bengali, he regarded himself as an African, because of his upbringing in Tanzania. He was also a Brahmin, a member of the highest caste in India; even though this system is officially disregarded, his wife is still conscious of his status, She was conscious of her less important status in the system as were other members of his social group. In his actions he had identified himself as a Hindu and a member of the Indian community, but viewed his political identity as something other and had been heard to say with considerable strength:

I am an African.

"Home" whether seen as a physical location which can be pinpointed on a

map or a set of common cultural attitudes and customs implies a group of shared symbols. Recognition of these symbols implies membership within a given group and an understanding of particular viewpoints. Inevitably, in a changing world there are faults in communication when the coding system breaks down - thus a non-Latvian wearing Latvian jewellery is using an inappropriate form of coding, causing a native Latvian to receive the wrong message. But it is the recognition of different symbols and the way they operate at different levels which give important clues to differences in the social fabric.

In a new or strange situation a familiar symbol is sufficient to prompt a given response in an individual. The symbol itself can take many forms: it may be as obvious as a flag or an anthem, or as subtle as the use of particular vocabulary. However, its importance lies in the stimulus it provides to an individual to set aside his present identity for a moment and to re-assume an identity or persona associated with another environment or previous phrase in his existence. Such a stimulus evokes a past occurrence, often of a shared experience, and prompts a particular response. The importance of symbols as an expression of a shared culture base is best illustrated by the following examples, drawn from my observations among friends and colleagues in St. John's.

Sharon is an ex-patriate Londoner, outgoing and energetic and seemingly well-adjusted to life in Canada. Neither she nor her husband have any strong desire to return to Britain though they enjoy visits to their respective families in the London area. She described an incident in Vancouver when she overheard another Londoner's conversation. A distinctive London accent prompted her to ask: "Where did you live in Hackney?" It was not sufficient merely to recognise a fellow English speaker as a Londoner, her curiosity was

stirred and she felt she must pinpoint the speaker's exact origin. It was important to make contact because the distinctive London accent was an emotive symbol, evoking a particular district with its own special environment and peculiarities. Further it was a signal of group identity which Sharon recognised and with which she identified. In making contact with the speaker she re-inforced her sense of belonging to that group. Shared language, in this case a shared accent associated with a particular area in a large city, is the common element, becoming the symbol of group consciousness and solidarity. As a cultural phenomenon this has already been documented by socio-linguistic scholars.[24]

In another instance a Czech immigrant was moved to the point of tears at a dinnner party when she was asked to sing a Czech song which meant a lot to her. The request, temporarily interrupting the dinner, surprised her, but she and her husband overcame their shyness and surprise at being asked to sing in the middle of a meal and, after a short discussion in Czech, diffidently started to sing. They gained some confidence as they sang and the wife quickly flicked away two tears as they finished singing; they had just sung the Czech national anthem, and the dinner party continued as conversation resumed. This couple are happy to be in Canada and proud to be citizens for a return to Czechoslovakia would mean arrest for both of them. Yet the strength of the anthem as a symbol of group solidarity is sufficient to move one of them to tears. Arguably they could have chosen to sing a well-known folk-song but their choice is a clear expression of their group identity, if not the ultimate, and gives an indication of the strength of these cultural symbols and the depth to which an individual may be influenced by them.

Again, as in previous fieldwork projects, the cultural symbols in these two examples, had a direct link with a place these individuals had called "Home"

at some stage in their lives. Again, it was abundantly clear that the "home" experience, whether seen as creative and supportive, as for some Italian informants, or as an exercise in cultural salvage, as in the Latvian example, was central to an understanding of these informants and their attitudes to their lives in Canada. "Home" meant a grouping of cultural symbols shared by others and recognised by members outside of the group and, as such, I was intrigued by the way in which these symbols could be manipulated by different individuals to suit the needs of changing situations. The immigrant experience called for radical re-arrangement of these symbols and presented unlimited possibilities for study, nor were the examples hard to find. They occurred, it seemed, almost on a daily basis among the community I knew in St. John's.

A study based on the complex relationship between an immigrant and his "home" or cultural origins presented many possibilities and I felt there were many opportunities within the community I already knew. As an immigrant I had an awareness of my own cultural symbols and was conscious of a degree of adaptation. Adaptation was also the essential theme of many of the first-person narratives I had read dealing with other ethnic groups in Canada. In this context my attention was caught by four narratives in French which documented the experiences of immigrants from Latin America and the Azores.[25]

Choosing to see their life histories in terms of a folktale, the author argued that these accounts each followed a similar pattern, that of the young man leaving home to seek his fortune in a new land. In his travels he encounters some difficulties, but is usually helped by others. Ultimately, he finds happiness but not necessarily the riches he hoped for. This study stressed the relationship each of these men had with his "home" or country of origin. For one at least, the decision to leave was hard and represented a considerable emotional wrench. This was understandable, as was the author's

proposition that the departing immigrant viewed the new world or worlds he was to conquer as special, to the point of being "sacred" in contrast to the "profane" known world he was leaving behind. What seemed less clear was whether this attitude changed in the course of time, as the author argued, and the original homeland came, eventually, to be regarded as "sacred" and the existing domestic scene, having lost its one special aura, became regarded in its turn as "profane."

How did an immigrant view his home after a number of years away? My own feelings with respect to my homeland and all it stood for were complex, complicated by a considerable nostalgia for the years I had spent in Italy. Yet "home" remained a basis for my points of reference in many areas and on many issues. The four accounts I read prompted a fresh line of thought: if others had focussed on the trials, tribulations and successes of arriving and settling, perhaps it was time to consider the reverse movement - the impact of a visit "home." Was it really a pilgrimage or was it a re-affirmation of the original decision to leave?[26] Were accounts of visits home really "not very intriguing" as some collectors saw them, mere catalogues of complaints, unfortunate accidents and unfavourable comparisons with life in Canada? I inclined to the opposite view: that these accounts might prove very intriguing and offer considerable insight into the immigrant experience. This was the line of enquiry I wanted to pursue, and on this basis, I began to consider possible informants.

NOTES

1. Government figures for 1971 put the total population of Canada at 21,568,000. Of these 18,273,000 were born in Canada and 3,295,000 were born elsewhere. On these figures 15% of the population in Canada was foreign born in 1971. Figures are not available for 1981 but unofficially immigration officials put the percentage of those born abroad at approximately 18%.

2. See C.P. Moyles, Complaints is many and various but the odd Divil likes it (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975), for an interesting collection of 19th century views of Newfoundland with informative sections on St. John's. These descriptions of the living conditions in isolated communities presented a vivid contrast to contemporary conditions. They also served to put my own impressions very much in perspective, giving me a better understanding of local events and attitudes and my reactions to them.

See also Paul O'Neill, The Oldest City. The story of St. John's, Newfoundland (Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1972).

> ... A census of St. John's taken in the summer of 1815 shows that there were 10,018 people living in the community. That summer no less than 11,000 Irishmen came to St. John's, but in the fall many of them went to Prince Edward Island or the United States. p. 54.

For an introduction to the literature directly pertaining to anthropological and ethnic folklore studies in connection with Newfoundland see the following: Richard S. Tallman, "Folklore Research in Atlantic Canada: An Overview," Acadiensis: Journal of the Atlantic Region, 8(1979)118-130.

T.F. Nemec, (ed.) Index to the Archive of Undergraduate Research on Newfoundland Society and Culture. Institute for Social and Economic Research. (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979).

R.B. Klymasz, (ed.) A Guide to Materials Relating to the Study of Ethnic Folklore in Newfoundland. (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Folklore, 1979).

John Szwed on the impact of change in the environment for a Newfoundland community, Private Cultures and Public Imagery: Interpersonal Relations in a Newfoundland Peasant Society. (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1966).

3. See Hugh Brody on contrasts in environment in his study of the impact of Southern White culture on the Inuit in the Eastern Arctic.

> The comment and response of anyone who had distanced himself from his home and backgfound is formed by his view of the contrasts: the things he notices as striking or significant are such simply because they are different from or even opposed to what he had, in the past, taken for granted. p. 82.

Hugh Brody, The People's Land (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975).

4. "The New Newfoundlanders," Evening Telegram (St. John's, Nfld.), 22nd June, 1974, p.17.

5. "One 'foreigner' who's going," Evening Telegram (St. John's, Nfld.), 28th June, 1974, p.6.

6. Another group The Wonderful Grand Band was to make a similar allusion to its origins in its word play on local language usage: "wonderful grand." "Wonderful" is here used as an intensifier, stressing the importance of the happening rather than attributing any magical quality to the object so described. Dr. Harold Paddock of the Department of Linguistics, Memorial University of Newfoundland confirms this particular use of "wonderful."

7. Quotation from the official programme of the Cultural Evening organized by the Friends of India Association on March 4th, 1979.

8. My intention had been to observe the story-telling sequences which took place each Sunday at the Temple.

9. Carla Bianco, The Two Rosetos. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974).

10. Carole Henderson Carpenter presented a broad and perceptive outline of the immigrant ethnic group in Canadian society in her work Many Voices: A Study of Folklore Activities in Canada and their Role in Canadian Culture. Mercury Series, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies Paper No. 26 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1979), but I did not feel that one could necessarily apply conclusions based on larger centres to St. John's. In particular, see pp.324-367.
See also, Stephen Stern, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," Western Folklore, 36(1977), 7-32. A valuable paper summarising much of the existing work in ethnic folklore, its challenges and problems.

11. In this connection see the Mercury Series published by the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, Ottawa, for papers dealing with different Canadian ethnic groups. In particular see, Linda Degh, People in the Tobacco Belt: Four Lives, on Hungarians, Bruce S. Giuliano, Sacro o Profano? A consideration of Four Italian-Canadian Religious Festivals and G. James Patterson, The Greeks of Vancouver: A Study in the Preservation of Ethnicity.

12. The VPVL Program is a "federally funded program designed to encourage scholarly research and university teaching in the area of ethnic studies in Canada." Evelyn Kallen, "Academics, Politics and Ethnics: University Opinion on Canadian Ethnic Studies," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 13 (1981), 112-123.

13. Stern, 7-32.

14. K.A. Thigpen, "Folklore and the Ethnicity Factor in the Lives of Romanian-Americans," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1973, p.4.

15. Gregory Gizelis, Narrative Rhetorical Devices of Persuasion: Folklore Communication in a Greek-American Community (Athens: National Centre of Social Research, 1974).

16. Ibid., p. 72

17. Ibid., p. 75.

18. Ibid., p. 76

19. R.B. Klymasz. In addition to helpful comments and suggestions from the above, I also found the following a useful paper: "From Immigrant to Ethnic Folklore: A Canadian View of Process and Transition," Journal of the Folklore Institute, 10(1973), 131-139.

20. Arthur Ozolins, Piano recital at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Little Theatre, 20th October 1981.

21. This informant, also Indian, had been brought up in Kenya. I was intrigued to discover what role music and festivity played in helping him to adapt to new surroundings. My contact with him was a direct result of previous work within the Asian community and appeared in the following format: "'I find I have I have music in me'" One man's Approach to Festivity, Canadian Folk Music Journal, 8(1980), 23-30.

22. Klymasz has pointed to the need for considering additions to ethnic folklore, above and beyond those features of ethnic lore which are regarded as "traditional." The additions to recognised "traditional" lore may be seen as the results of an extended identity base. See R.B. Klymasz, "From Immigrant to Ethnic Folklore."

23. In an encounter with native-born Israelis - Sabra, studying medicine in Siena, Italy, a Montrealer, born and brought up in the North American Jewish tradition discovered that he had no identity as a Jew for these students. Though he was bar mitzvah, spoke Hebrew and had attended Parochial School, they argued that he lived outside of Israel and as such was not Jewish. For them to be a "Jew" was co-terminous with residence in Israel.

24. Peter Trudgill, Sociolinguistics: An Introduction (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 139-141.

25. Pierre Crepeau, Voyage aux Pays des Merveilles: Quatre Autobiographies d'Immigrants. Mercury Series, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies Paper No. 25 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1978).

26. See Thigpen, p. 173 for Romanian-American motivations in returning home for a visit.

CHAPTER 2: Collecting the Narratives

The personal experience narrative was the appropriate form in which to collect the kind of data I was seeking. Long established as a valuable research tool in sociological and anthropological studies, in folklore studies in Canada, it was also the chosen method of approach in studying:

> la nature et les fonctions des traditions populaires dans une société pluraliste, industrialisée et à profondeur historique réduite dont beaucoup de membres ont été, directement ou indirectement, touchés par l'expérience de l'émigration.

giving rise to a series of profiles documenting aspects of culture and traditions among different ethnic groups in Canada.[1] In terms of Newfoundland studies the personal experience narrative was also the basis of accounts documenting many aspects of change on the island.[2]

Elsewhere more than one folklore scholar had pointed to the wealth of narratives to be collected. The American scholar, Richard Dorson, noted the

> ... thousands of sagas created from life experiences that deserve, indeed cry for, recording.[3]

Others reiterated the value of the first-hand account.

> ... the immigrant life history is an important product of folklore creation that belongs in the category of folk prose genres, and that ... it contains essential historical and sociocultural data, invaluable for the knowledge of modern history.[4]

Potentially we were all possible informants for "... au fond de chacun sommeille un autobiographe."[5]

On the other hand the question of the traditionality of such narratives posed problems for some scholars. William Clements warned

> the collector of personal narratives runs the risk that his questions generate stories which have never been performed previously and never will be performed again; the stories may lack any life in tradition.[6]

Yet as a means of probing one aspect of the immigrant experience, I felt I could ask no better question than "Can you tell me about going home?" Indeed, the concern that the stories never have been performed previously and never would be performed again, was very relevant. Its pertinence for this study lay in the nature of the narratives I was seeking. The opportunity to give a detailed account of a visit home occurs very rarely in usual discourse, and though friends and acquaintances may be aware of one's visit home they are unlikely to invite an individual to give an extended version of his experiences during the visit. More likely the returning vacationer will be asked the ritual, formulaic question, "How was your trip?" which expects the answer "Just fine, thanks." The conversation may continue with another question, "Glad to be back?" which requires an affirmative answer either real or implied. Alternatively the individual may himself offer the rider "but I'm glad to be back." The polite exchange having taken place, and the returning speaker's visit ritualised as part of immediate history, the way is clear for both speakers to resume the relationship they maintained prior to departure. There are indeed exceptions to this form of exchange but overall the questions are asked as a polite acknowledgement of one speaker's absence. Life has its own rhythms and pace and the concerns of the moment are sufficiently pressing that an outsider's interest in a visit to a place about which he knows little or nothing is short-lived. If the returning speaker does elaborate, he exercises an editorial sense and successively expunges those incidents which are greeted with polite silence, only recounting those which may match what he

feels the listener wants to hear. In this way he selects given incidents and his account may thus become a "performance" - tuned to his perception of his audience and dependent on audience reaction for its form in the choice and presentation of material. As Robinson has noted

> ".... narrative competence is more than a mastery of linguistic form, it is skill at matching one's personal concern with the situation at hand"

and those who fail to do this generate embarassment, antagonism and boredom.[7] A narrative can include humorous incidents if they match the local sense of humour, comments on weather, cost of living and general efficiency of the bureaucratic system may be included provided the speaker implies that he prefers those of his present home. Dègh has mentioned that stories of visits home among Hungarian immigrants in Western Canada fall into the following categories:

> ..... humorous, sentimental, adventurous and horrible "narrow escape" kind of stories .... People like to compare their own comfort with the backward living conditions of the Old Country. (We heard much of toilets without paper and sinks without plumbing.)[8]

In contrast to Dègh's approach, however, in which she had collected narratives which appeared to have assumed their ultimate form, I wanted to gather a group of accounts which gave fresh impressions of the visit home. I was not concerned to establish whether these accounts had passed into the teller's repertoire of tales or into his tradition, nor to decide whether the narrative had achieved its final form. At this juncture it was sufficient to collect the narratives and examine them as they stood.

In previous folklore projects, I had often found my initial stimulus in a chance conversation with an individual: why was one man particularly con-

cerned with music making within his own circle? What did it feel like to have grown up many thousands of miles away from one's birthplace but to have retained a strong sense of that culture? What aspects of an indigenous pattern had been altered and adapted for life in Newfoundland? These questions always came to mind and from these would develop a small project. Initial interviews with one individual had usually led to further contacts and so the original idea would expand and become more complex. Frequently I had not been completely sure of my research aims, contenting myself with some thought to the patterns which emerged as the interview sequence progressed. In most instances it had usually proved more informative to allow my informants to speak on whatever topic that came to them and as time went by I gave less information as to my eventual aims. For example, I would say "Tell me what it means to be Latvian" allowing my informants full rein to express their feelings and views. Very often their comments would be set against a quickly sketched account of their life-history. Though I never specifically asked for life histories, the chronology offered by one's autobiography became the structure on which an informant would build his impressions of a new life and a different environment. Specific events occurring in an individual's life coloured his or her progress in some way and became a necessary part of the narrative account. I found this approach very rewarding, for the most part, though occasionally, there were pauses caused by shyness on the part of the informant a moment's reflection as he or she made a point. At times I ventured some comment or asked a question to clarify a point but my approach remained essentially unstructured. I wanted the narrators to speak for themselves and to tell their own stories without undue prompting from me.

In undertaking a much larger project I felt I had to give more thought to my informants. Though an unstructured approach to the narrative accounts was

still the right way to proceed, it was no longer sufficient to let a project evolve from chance encounters with an initial informant. Nor could I assume that such an interview would necessarily lead me to my next informant. Certainly I hoped that a possible direction would emerge but a completely random approach did not seem appropriate. Though I was not intending to confine myself to one nationality or to one ethnic group and wanted to break out of this pattern to establish a cross-cultural study, I had to ensure a balance in my informants. This was important for a number of reasons. For example, I wanted equal numbers of male and female informants. I also wanted to achieve a wide spread in terms of cultural backgrounds, without weighing my interviews too much in favour of one ethnic group, nor drawing too many informants from one hemisphere of the globe. I also wanted to approach several people I had known for at least three years, who seemed ideal informants. These considerations had to be weighed to achieve a workable cross-section, but the challenge of finding areas of common experience among an outwardly disparate group was strong and one that I wanted to explore.[9]

Ultimately, I came to see my informants as a series of matched pairs. The eight informants split into two groups: four men and four women. These groups then split up as follows:

Female informants:

Two Asians: one Bangla Deshi and one Parsee from Bombay, India

Two Europeans: one Czech and one Frenchwoman

Male informants:

Two Mediterranean informants: one Egyptian and one Italian

Two Britons: one Welshman and one Englishman

I also decided against re-interviewing any informant I had approached in connection with previous projects. I was concerned that they had already

spared me their time and might find further requests for interviews an invasion of privacy and an abuse of their patience. A new project with a new slant required a fresh set of informants.

Particular individuals immediately sprang to mind as potential informants. Often these were colleagues or wives of colleagues where a cordial relationship had deepened into friendship. In consequence I had known some of these people over a long period of time and had a good sense of rapport with them. The initial stage of presenting my credentials as a folklore student was over and done with and there was little or no need to spend a lot of time explaining myself or my project. Problems associated with accommodation in the field, or re-introducing myself to a community I had left, such as those described by other researchers, did not arise. I was also able to arrange my schedule to suit that of my would-be informants, usually opting to interview male informants at their place of work and female informants, with one exception, in their own homes. This in itself was a contrast to previous fieldwork when a request to interview an individual had frequently become the basis for a pleasant social event. On those occasions however I had often been accompanied by my husband and my informants had usually included their own spouse and family in the group. As I talked about my work to friends and other interested people I found that other would-be informants quickly presented themselves. I received at least one message that particular individuals would be glad to help me and wanted to tell their story of going home. My description of the project prompted one man to exclaim, "Oh, I remember my first visit home" and I quickly became aware of a potentially large group of people eager to give me their experiences and recollections.

Initially I interviewed three of the four female informants. These included an Indian friend of many years, a Czech refugee and a woman from Bangla

Desh. Following these interviews in the fall of 1979, my work was interrupted and I had time to consider who my next informants should be. I transcribed the accounts and decided not to seek any more informants with an Asian background. Instead, early in 1980 I interviewed an expatriate Welshman and a Frenchwomen. An Egyptian professor was my next informant with an Italian graduate student at Memorial University and an Englishman completing my sampling. These, I felt, represented quite a wide cross-section in terms of their respective backgrounds as well as in terms of their age spread which ranged from the early twenties to the late forties. Basic biographical details and their accounts presented many contrasts but some striking similarities emerged as their narratives show and which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

I began by interviewing Kristina, a Czech refugee. This interview took place in her own home in July 1979. We had first met through our children who were in the same class at school and had become friends. When collecting my children from school I had often chatted to her and our relationship deepened. I was intrigued by her accounts of life in Czechoslovakia and the circumstances in which she had left following the Russian invasion in 1968. She described her initial delight at life in Sweden and then a growing sense of disillusion prior to her move to Canada in 1971. I listened to her reminiscences of Prague and to her memories of childhood. Though she had no real desire to return to Czechoslovakia, periodically, in a nostalgic mood, she would recall particularly warm memories of springtime, country women bringing geese to the city at Christmastime and the beauty of the mountains. She became a Canadian citizen and I remember asking her about her feelings having taken the oath. She told me she felt she had little to regret in real terms, and that her future and that of her children lay in Canada.

After hearing me describe what I hoped to do, Kristina offered to be interviewed. She had just been back to Sweden and I agreed to interview her. Even though she had not returned to her original home and was unable to do so, I was interested to hear what she might have to say and to compare this with accounts from other informants. Further I did not want to reject any potential information particularly when so freely offered.

Kristina's account stands out because it lacks the personal details associated with reunion with family. The wealth of short anecdotes which are prompted by recollections of one's family are not present and clearly this account lacks a dimension relative to the others in this study. I have chosen to include it however because I wanted to present my field work as it was carried out; Kristina's experience is a real part of the immigrant experience in Canada and I feel her comments make a valuable contrast to those of other informants in this study.

Following this I talked to an Indian friend I had known since my arrival in St. John's in 1974. This woman had intrigued me from the outset. Born in Bombay, some forty years ago, into a Parsee family, Rita seemed the complete Anglophile. Rita had left India with her husband-to-be as a student and together they had started courses of graduate study in Britain. Initially Rita had lived with her married brother and his family in London but she quickly found that the ways of a traditionally run Parsee household were no longer acceptable to her and she and her future husband had subsequently married in Birmingham. After completing her Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, U.K., Rita and her husband came to Newfoundland, where they joined the faculty at Memorial University. Rita always wore Western dress, cut her hair short and delighted in all things English, ascribing this in part to her father's admiration of Winston Churchill and her own early exposure to the English language. Her desire to identify with English

society was strong and had remained so in the years I had known her. She still visited England frequently and had furnished her home with expensive pieces bought in England and other European countries. There was a minimum of Indian artifacts in her own home, and as a guest in my house she was quick to notice English china and cutlery and to comment on it. When in London, she usually went to Liberty's, the well-known London department store, and almost always bought toys for friends' children from Galt's, an educational toy company. In many respects Rita projected a strong image of identifying with England and appeared to have rejected any overt reference to her own cultural beginnings. An Indian, she did not own a sari and avoided colours which her husband regarded as too "Indian". The brilliant colours of some pure silks were not acceptable and she grumbled if relatives sent fabric to her. As a result, she frequently wore navy blue. Her husband joked about the sixteen suitcases of saris he had given away to Oxfam on their arrival in England, but the intent of his action was clear. Though he may well have exaggerated as to the quantity for the sake of his story, he obviously regarded his wife's saris as a symbol of the past. By giving them away and subsequently discouraging his wife from wearing it, the bonds of association with India and things Indian were broken. Neither was to feel hampered by remnants of a past tradition in their new environment, and Rita and her husband gave every appearance of having totally adopted Western ways. Integration into Western society was complete. Personally, I found it hard to accept that an individual could cut herself off so utterly from her roots, but I was prepared to concede that perhaps the demands of Indian family life had been a strain and that a new environment had needed a considerable degree of accommodation.

I noticed a change in Rita's attitudes when her father became seriously

ill following a stroke. She returned to India to spend some time with her family, but her father did not recover and subsequently died. His death plunged Rita into a profound depression, which became a turning point for her, causing her to re-appraise her situation, professionally and socially. The period of re-appraisal and introspection lasted for some time and Rita now seems to have mellowed in her perceptions of her original homeland. She has recently completed a biography of her father which has been a source of comfort to her mother in bereavement. The account has also become a focus for the younger members of the family and Rita described, in a recent conversation (August 1981), how her mother had voiced her own recollections as the written account was read out to her grandchildren. Rita's perception of her background has changed and will continue to change, no doubt, and for this reason I asked her to give me her account of going home.

I did not know my next informant, Aviva, from Bangla Desh as intimately as the preceding two. As an established member of the university community I had tried to help her when she arrived in St. John's in 1976 but our homes were not adjacent and the demands of our respective families had kept us both fully occupied. The Bangla Deshi group in St. John's was very limited at that time - perhaps two or three other families - and historic antagonisms between India and Pakistan precluded much real contact with the members of the Indian community. The family was also Muslim and followed Muslim practice, but a shared faith did not necessarily bring an easy access to a religious community, again because of varying regional practices and observances. Aviva seemed rather lonely and somewhat isolated - an isolation compounded by the birth of her third child shortly after her arrival in St. John's. The demands of caring for a young baby made her very housebound and limited her social contacts. I learnt however that she had taken the youngest child home for a visit and

was intrigued to hear what comments she might have to make following the trip. She responded eagerly to my request for an interview, though the presence of the recording equipment inhibited her at times.

Aviva has spent many years in Canada but her command of English is still hesitant at times, and of all the individuals I interviewed she alone showed much diffidence in voicing her thoughts and recollections for the tape recorder. Prior to our recording session in her home she insisted on offering me cakes and tea though she herself abstained because the interview took place during daylight hours and she was observing the feast of Ramadan. During the course of the interview she paused periodically, partly from shyness but also to find the right expression in English. Her account is also broken by a nervous laugh indicating her embarrassment. As the interview progressed Aviva relaxed and became more animated, illustrating her remarks with references to objects and models around her home. Aviva had had some training as a social worker in Bangla Desh and she used these models to illustrate some of the problems of women in a rural community particularly with reference to harvesting rice. Her professional interest made her forget the presence of the recording equipment and allowed her to express her view of social conditions in Bangla Desh. Of all my informants Aviva is the only one who stated openly that she had enjoyed the opportunity of talking about her home, concluding her account with ".... anyway it's nice to talk something about (laughs) my own country."[10]

She is also the only informant to admit to homesickness and to a willingness to return.

At this stage in my work I gave some thought to other informants I might suitably interview. An interview I had planned with an Egyptian friend had

had to be postponed but I still hoped to talk to him and to get him to record his feelings on returning home after an absence of eleven years. At the back of my mind also was another friend's comment that I have already mentioned: "Oh, I remember my first visit home." Here it seemed to me, was a story-teller with a tale to tell and I regretted that there had been insufficient time on that day to pursue the matter. However, I fully intended to make the time for him and to add his thoughts and impressions to those I had already collected.

In the meantime, at the end of January 1980, I approached an established folklorist who had offered help and encouragement in past coursework. This time, however, I wanted his help as an informant. I had to justify my request for an interview. In my own mind this was not difficult to do: I perceived Lloyd as projecting a strong Welsh image, but I was aware that I needed to approach the topic of his "Welshness" with a degree of sensitivity.

I was conscious that though I shared many cultural traits with this informant because of my own upbringing in the United Kingdom I also belonged to the English majority group, which many Welsh people regarded with suspicion if not outright hostility. In these circumstances it was not as easy to maintain the dispassionate stance I had adopted in other interviews. Though there is close economic interdependence between the four countries of the United Kingdom, national pride remains strong, confused by the stereotypes each nationality has imposed on the other three. In my experience in Canada it was apparent that many Canadians had little or no conception of the differences in speech, manners and customs among the English, Irish and Scots and Welsh, unless their own background included members of these groups or extended periods of time spent in the United Kingdom. Welsh national pride was and is strong, nurtured by considerable efforts educationally to maintain

the language. In this respect there are considerable parallels with Quebec separatism and the French language in Canada. Further the sense of national pride is not necessarily diminished when an informant emigrates: if anything, it assumes subtler manifestations.

Similarly, a sense of regional pride did not disappear when an individual moved to a new environment. Given the opportunity, friends and informants alike were quick to stress their regional loyalties and attachments, often implying an imagined superiority in the contrasts they drew. One Indian friend had excused her inability to cook a particular dish on the grounds that she associated it with North Indian cuisine, whereas her own home was in Bangalore, South India. I had also come across strong regional pride among the Northern Italian group in St. John's. They had been quick to point out how offensive they found the "Godfather" films with their insistence on particular stereotypes they associated strictly with the mezzogiorno - the South of Italy. As Northern Italians reference to the Mafia, Cosa Nostra and certain customs and lifestyles were repugnant. The films might fit their stereotypes of some Southern Italian types but as Northerners they rejected being classed in the same way themselves and were quick to disassociate themselves. Similarly, they were quick to tell jokes where the butt of the joke was someone from the South.

A willing acceptance of traditional stereotypes with regard to whichever group is concerned is a form of social "shorthand"; it is a fast form of conveying information. Like shorthand, it is also often inaccurate. Groups whether national, ethnic or regional have a body of stereotypes associated with them which are used by the community at large to assist in categorising given individuals. An acceptance of stereotypes allows members of the community to organise their perception of large segments of their world. Thus

a mainland Canadian stereotype of Newfoundlanders is that of the "dumb Newf" - by definition a Newfoundlander is slow and unintelligent. That this is uncomplimentary and also untrue is irrelevant as I witnessed an incident in which a Montrealer said: "But these kids are smart I thought all Newfs were dumb!"

An uncomplimentary "label" of this type can be turned to good account however and effectively neutralised when it becomes the basis for some form of humour. This may well be a satirical comment on the characteristic in question: in the Newfoundland context, this gives rise to jokes, stories and satirical sketches in which the "dumb Newf" is shown to be smarter than his mainland compatriot.

Traditional stereotypes for the English are that of the condescending Anglo-Saxon, inclined to refer disparagingly to the "mad Celtic fringe" surrounding his island. In contrast to his own imagined steadiness and rational behaviour, the Celt, whether Irish, Scots or Welsh, is seen as poetic, irrational and less than English. Englishmen may refer to "England", implying the whole of the British Isles. This is a common linguistic error which antagonises and alienates those who are proud to be other than "English." As a child Scots friends taught me that "Scotch" is a drink only and that the correct forms for people living North of the Border are "Scots" or "Scottish." However local stereotypes persist and if an Englishman views the Scots as tightfisted and pennypinching, the Welsh are seen as quick-tongued and argumentative, while the Irish are either delightfully feckless or merely good for manual labour.[11] None of these stereotypes is new, nor is this list exhaustive; they are merely fine examples of what William Hugh Jansen has called the esoteric-exoteric factor at work, whereby

> ..... the esoteric applies to what one group thinks of it-

> self and what it supposes others to think of it. The exoteric is what one group thinks of another and what it thinks that other group thinks it thinks.[12]

Thus in asking to interview an individual on the basis of his "Welshness" I was aware that I could easily offend nationalistic sensibilities or merely reinforce my own national stereotype - of being condescending, and patronising "interesting" groups in my own cultural backyard. Nonetheless, I felt I must include some examples from my own experience to maintain a wide spread of informants, some of whom at least drew on a similar background to my own. I was pleased therefore when Lloyd agreed to be interviewed. The interview took place in Lloyd's office on January 30th 1980 and proved to be of considerable help in my project. Lloyd spoke openly of his Welshness during his descriptions of his visits back home to Wales. In the years since 1964, when he had first come to Newfoundland, he explained how he had quite consciously adopted particular traits he regarded as Welsh to re-inforce this identity. He felt that certain behaviour patterns, such as his membership in the Welsh Nationalist Party were associated with specific phases in his life and might be seen as

> .... a sort of ersatz... sublimation of something ... of some intellectual activity but I was certainly conscious of being Welsh.[13]

He described with glee how he had managed to enrol a non-Welsh person in Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party and

> "... even succeeded in getting a man in the History Department whose name was Jones on the strength of his name because he wasn't Welsh at all to pay five shillings and become a one year member of Plaid Cymru."[14]

Lloyd characterised his "Welshness" at the time of his membership in Plaid Cymru as "in this kind of music-hall professional sense". He defined this as follows:

> ..... apparently this is a very widespread phenomenon amongst Welshmen, they go away from Wales, never being really particularly aware that they are Welsh except at the time of rugby internationals but when they get to foreign shores they become professional Welshmen. It's supposed to be a cliché of their behaviour they do all the things they think people expect Welshmen to do. They sing songs and play rugby and drink lots of beer.[15]

Lloyd conceded that his sense of nationality had grown following his departure from Wales.

> ..., in the period that I had left Wales I had grown stronger in my feelings of Welshness if you like although what reality they had I don't know.[16]

Lloyd was the first of two informants to voice any comments about his feelings on nationality and his remarks were to provide a useful basis for comparison with those of other informant's in this study. Though others implied or hinted at their attitudes to nationality in their remarks, Lloyd alone clearly enunciated his thoughts.

Following my interview with Lloyd I recorded my last female informant, Anne-Marie from the South of France. This interview took place in February 1980 in Ann-Marie's office at Memorial Univeristy. I had asked if I might interview her and she had suggested her office as a suitably convenient place. In fact, this interview was interrupted on two occasions which broke the train of her thought and emphasized her sense of self-consciousness at being recorded. Although I had known her professionally for several years I did not know her well and undoubtedly this inhibited her in her recollections of the sabbatical year she had spent in France. Nonetheless though her account proved to be the shortest interview I recorded, many of her comments were very pertinent. She succinctly isolated many of the same points and attitudes I was to uncover in the longer narratives of other informants.

Following the interview with Ann-Marie which seemed, at that stage, to have been rather unsuccessful, I asked my Egyptian friend, Kareem, if we might, at last, set a time for him to record his thoughts on his visit to Egypt. He seemed to have made a good recovery from the accident which had prevented him from setting put his recollections previously. Accordingly we arranged an interview for the end of February, 1980. A more complete account of this interview is given in Chapter 4. Kareem proved to be the story-teller I remembered from past encounters and he offered me a sensitive and evocative account of his visit. Subsequently I decided that his narrative should be studied in some depth and this anlalysis appears in Chapter 5.

In March 1980 I asked an Italian graduate student at Memorial if he would record his impressions of visits home. Riccardo's parents still lived in Naples and I knew he had been back several times during the years he had spent in Newfoundland. He had first come to St. John's in 1977 to study at the university and was presently working on his doctoral thesis. He was also getting married in August 1980 and hoped to bring his wife back to St. John's from Naples where she was completing her medical studies. When his own studies were complete he hoped to settle permanently in Canada.

Although I had only known him over a period of some months, Riccardo had helped me considerably with preparation of Italian language tapes in connection with a course I was teaching. In this time we often chatted about aspects of life in Italy, contrasting it with life in St. John's. I felt Riccardo would make a good informant for a number of reasons. He was considerably younger than anyone I had interviewed to date and was, at that stage, without the responsibilities of a wife, children and property. As a young unmarried man he increased the age and interest range of my study. He also represented another nationality group from the Mediterranean and in this regard I thought his narrative could well offer an interesting contrast to that of Kareem from

Egypt. He enjoyed talking and clearly had a thoughtful side to his personality, which in turn suggested he had a sensitivity to the immigrant experience. Ultimately he recorded his thoughts and impressions on going home in his office on March 5th, 1980.

Finally, in May 1980, I interviewed my fourth male informant, Philip, an Englishman. This interview also took place in his office at Memorial University.

I had known Philip since 1975 when he arrived in St. John's. Subsequently, his wife and family joined him and I came to know most of the family quite well. It had been Philip who had exclaimed, "Oh, I remember my first visit home", and I had made a mental note that I must interview him at some stage. I knew him to be a witty public speaker, an amusing raconteur at the dinner table and a thoughtful listener. These were sufficient reasons, I felt, to interview him and he readily agreed. In fact, as an informant, he could hardly have been disregarded, for he obviously had a tale to tell, as his remark showed and would have relished telling it there and then had there been time. We had been sitting chatting round the kitchen table after lunch when this comment had been made, following my description of the study I hoped to carry out. In such a situation this was the natural context in which a narrative would be told. I therefore found it encouraging that this type of narrative did or could occur naturally and that it did not always have to be "elicited" or engineered in what Goldstein has termed an "artificial" context.[17]

Philip offered a long, impressionistic account of his various trips to the United Kingdom over the thirty years since his initial departure as a graduate student to Kansas. He amplified his account with considerable biographical detail to explain his various opinions and points of view. For

several reasons, his comments contrasted considerably with those of Lloyd.

Philip has an easy self-assurance which immediately sets at ease those in his company. This talent is partly a function of his personality but stems to some degree from a background of education and financial stability. A warm and caring parent he talked of his own parents with considerable affection, qualifying them as very supportive when he decided to settle in Canada after a return to England. His university years were sufficiently enjoyable for him to be attending Oxford and Cambridge reunion dinners in Montreal several years after graduation. Professionally, Philip's job involved him in getting people together, of encouraging them to co-operate with one another, of disseminating information and of communicating. He was active in professional societies related to his job and used his personality to draw diverse groups together. In all his activities Philip had the complete support of his wife. An American, she had met the demands of each situation presented to her by her husband, adjusting and re-adjusting to the different environments - England, Kansas, Montreal, London again, and St. John's. Each stage in her husband's career had required a re-orientation and this was implicit in Philip's account.

In contrast, Lloyd saw his home community as restrictive and almost prison-like, "a very, very, small, narrow kind of place."[18]

Family relationships, particularly with his father, were strained and there was a sense of tension in Lloyd's narrative, a need to escape local pressures whether parental, economic or cultural. Professionally, he too was a communicator in as much as he taught and studied the communicative process at work in folklore, yet the major emphasis was on his immediate research in folklore. Both men obviously regarded their work in St. John's with

a high degree of satisfaction, both having successfully adapted to a new environment with its particular challenges. Yet in the light of the many contrasts in early experiences, the points of similarity which also emerged were striking. These will be discussed at a later stage.

Philip's interview was the last of formal recording sessions, yet in many senses this was not the end of the interview process. Because I knew so many, if not all, my informants well, I continued to meet them, chat to them, exchange ideas with them, laugh and joke with them, listen to worries in some cases and share my concerns with them. These myriad interactions amplified the perceptions I already had and often extended the remarks recorded on tape, allowing me to follow up some of the queries and questions I had on reading the transcripts. Though I may have "elicited" the original tape-recordings, the interviews were an outgrowth of existing relationships, nor did these relationships end once the tape-recorder was switched off. In several instances I have incorporated ideas or comments which have been made to me in the course of conversations following this series of interviews. Since recording them, two informants have left St. John's, one has married, and one has re-married. In some cases the balance of our relationship has shifted as our different interests and committments have influenced us but I have remained in contact with all of them.

After my initial question "Can you tell me about going home?" the informants were given free rein to recount their narratives. When clarification was needed I tried to keep my questions as brief as possible to avoid distorting the narrative or distracting the teller from his tale. I did, however, ask each informant how his or her family or group viewed him but I asked no further questions. Some informants would have been happy to respond to more questions, usually at a moment when they felt they had to come

to the end of their account. At this juncture the interview ended as I did not want to structure the narratives unduly. Most informants limited their remarks to some twenty to thirty minutes of recording time, beyond this length of time they began to tire and to seek some form of direction for the way in which their comments should proceed. In several instances the informant continued to think about the experience of returning home after the tape recorder had been switched off and to voice his or her reflections. In these cases, the supplementary comments were added to the interview.

In transcribing the interviews I was guided by the patterns of the informants' account and tried to reproduce the style of their remarks. Information extraneous to the transcription, such as laughter or interruptions is mentioned in brackets. In instances where pronounciation was unclear this is also noted. Kareem's narrative fell naturally into a series of linked episodes and these have been expressed in terms of paragraphs to assist in eventual analysis. In punctuating his account I followed his speech rythyms as nearly as possible, adding commas and periods to avoid confusion. Pauses in his narrative are indicated by two spaced periods, a dash indicates a change of thought in mid-sentence.

I found the immediacy of the narratives compelling and later, in quoting from the various accounts, I became so absorbed that my own comments were couched in the present tense and had to be corrected. The terms "emigrant" and "immigrant" also presented some problems: in the Canadian context the informant is referred to as an "immigrant" and in the Old World context as an "emigrant."

Copies of the field recordings and transcriptions have been deposited with Memorial Univeristy of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive under the accession number 82-101.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF INFORMANTS ON INTERVIEW

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	SEX	AGE	DATE OF EMIGRATION	ARRIVAL IN CANADA	EDUCATION	FAMILY SITUATION	OCCUPATION	CITIZENSHIP	LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	HOUSING
Czechoslovakia	F	35+	1968	1971	B.Sc. Student	Married, 2 Children	Student	Canadian	Czech	Home Owner
India	F	35+	1963	1979	Ph.D. Ed.Psyc.	Married	Univ. Lect.	Canadian	Gujarati/ English	Home Owner
Bangla Desh	F	30+	1964	1964	B.Sc. Soc.Work	Married, 3 Children	Housewife	Canadian	Bengali/ English	Home Owner
Wales	M	40+	1961	1964	Ph.D. Folklore	Separated 3 Children	Univ. Lect.	Canadian	English	Home Owner
France	F	35+	1964	1964	B.A. French	Separated 3 Children	Univ. Lect.	Canadian	English/ French	Home Owner
Egypt	M	35+	1968	1968	Ph.D. Engineering	Married, 3 Children	Univ. Lect.	Canadian	English/ Arabic/ Portuguese	Home Owner
Italy	M	25+	1977	1977	M.Sc. Maths	Single	Graduate Student	Italian	Italian	Tenant
England	M	45+	1950	1954	M.A.	Married, 3 Children	Administrator	Canadian	English	Home Owner

NOTES

1. .... the nature and function of folk tradition in an often historically shallow, pluralistic, and industrialized society, most members of which have been, either personally or indirectly, touched by the experience of immigration.

(Crépeau and Einarsson 1976;1) cited in Crépeau, vii. See also Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Personal Document in Anthropological Science," "The Use of Personal Documents in Anthropology and Sociology, eds. Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn and Robert Angell, Social Science Research Council (New York: Social Science Research Council, Bulletin No. 53, 1954). See also Jan Vansina, trans. H.M. Wright Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1965).

2. Victor Butler, ed. W. Wareham, The Little Nord Easter Reminiscences of a Placentia Bayman, MUNFLA Publications, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1975). See also, Lawrence George Small, "Patterns in Personal Experience Narratives: Storytelling at Cold Harbour -- A Newfoundland Fishing Community," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1971).

3. Richard Dorson, "Is There a Folk in the City?" Journal of American Folklore, 83 (1970), 1985-216.

4. Linda Dégh, People in the Tobacco Belt: Four Lives. Mercury Series, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Paper No. 13 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1978) x.

5. Crépeau, viii.

6. William Clements, "Personal Narrative, the Inteview Context, and the Question of Tradition," Western Folklore, 39(1980), 106-113.

7. See John A. Robinson, "Personal Narratives Reconsidered," Journal of American Folklore 94(1981), p.83.

8. Linda Dégh, "Folklore of the Bekevar Community," in Bekevar: Working Papers on a Canadian Prairie Community, Mercury Series, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies Paper No. 31 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1979), p. 52.

9. For folklore as a function of shared identity see Richard Bauman, "Differential Identity and the Social Base of Folklore" in Towards New Perspectives in Folklore, eds. Americo Paredes and Richard Bauman (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1972) 31-41.

10. MUNFLA, Tape 82-101 (tape no. 3). Copies of the taped interview have been deposited with Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive, under accession number 82-101. As the tapes have not yet been assigned shelf numbers they are referred to by their chronological number (1-8). The question of whether an informant derives anything from being interviewed, whether there is any kind of mutual exchange, concerns me. I find it reassuring that other field workers express similar views on this facet of research in folklore. Hilda Chaulk Murray raises this point in her book More Than 50%, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Folklore and Language Publications Monograph Series No. 2., (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1978) xiv. "Sometimes I felt guilty about taking so much and seemingly giving nothing in return. But looking back on those summer visits I realise my informants too enjoyed those chats." This view certainly echoes the view of my informant, Aviva, who clearly relished the opportunity of talking about her home.

11. This is well-exemplified in the following joke, recounted by my father, who is himself the son of a Dubliner. "How do you confuse an Irishman?" "Put three shovels against a wall and tell him to take his pick." Similar ethnic slurs and ethnic stereotyping also form the basis of the song "The English are Best" written and composed by the English comic song masters, Michael Flanders and Donald Swann.

12. William Hugh Jansen, "The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore," in The Study of Folklore, (ed.) Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965) pp. 43-51.

13. In later conversation, my informant, considerably amused by my choice of "Lloyd" as a pseudonym, reiterated that he had no objection to being identified and that his own comments on ethnic stereotyping appeared in the following format: Gerald Thomas, "For a Canadian Folklore Ethnic," Folklore, Bulletin of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, 3:1 (1979), 5-9.

14. Tape No. 4.

15. Ibid..

16. Ibid..

17. Kenneth S. Goldstein, A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore. (Folklore Associates, Inc., Hatboro, Penn.: Herbert Jenkins, London 1964).

18. Tape No. 4.

CHAPTER 3: Approaches to Studying the Personal Experience Narrative

The major problem facing any researcher collecting narratives is that of analysing the data he or she obtains. Given that each informant interprets the invitation to recall particular experiences in a slightly different way according to their personality and willingness to record personal reminiscences, the transcribed scripts present a formidable challenge if the wealth of material and detail is to be reduced to a workable body of data. Accounts of visits home proved no exception; allowing one's informants free rein to express themselves in whatever terms they felt appropriate meant that the narratives assumed very different forms in terms of length as well as in terms of perspective. Though the volume of transcribed accounts was not overwhelming, because the study had been limited to eight selected informants, the question remained of how the narratives should be assessed and analysed. Some means of ordering them and their contents had to be found, and in this regard I found it helpful to consider previous work on narrative by others in the field. This will be discussed presently.

Initially, I felt it was appropriate to select one narrative alone and to consider this in some detail.[1] This procedure established a basis for comparison with other narratives and offered a means of organising the material and presenting the salient features. I considered each of the narratives in turn, rejecting several for different reasons - one because it lacked the impressions relating to renewed contact with family because of political circumstances, another because I felt the informant had been handicapped by having to express herself in English, although it was a most interesting account and yet another because I felt the informant had been inhibited by the recording equipment and interruptions. I was tempted to consider Rita's narrative at length but rejected this because of an extended comment on her relationship with a close personal friend which I felt overbalanced

the account. Finally, I chose Kareem's account. His narrative was reasonably concise yet evocative, nor did he digress significantly from the points he was trying to make. More importantly, I found his narrative resumed most, if not all, the significant features occurring in the other seven and on this basis I decided to study it in some detail.

Given that I intended to concentrate on this particular account, I considered all theoretical proposals and suggestions for narrative analysis from this perspective. This account was foremost in my mind as I read other approaches to narrative analysis.

Kareem's narrative seemed to fall naturally into a series of linked episodes, each one leading to the next as he recalled his visit. He gave his account fairly continuously, pausing from time to time to clarify his thoughts or to re-phrase an expression, but the overall flow of his account was fluent. As he gave his account, he often began an anecdote with a phrase of introduction, such as, for example, "... now this is another thing which might interest you..." In this way he would introduce a fresh topic or related incident, as further recollections came to him, melding each incident into the whole. As the narrative divided itself into a series of incidents, it was natural to show these divisions in successive paragraphs, lending a preliminary organisation to the material.

Organisation of the material in this way helped to facilitate the overall analysis of the account, though there are inherent difficulties in attempting to apply too rigid a scheme. The uses and abuses of structural analysis in folklore research have been discussed elsewhere, the important point being that structural analysis is not an end in itself.[2] Nevertheless, it remains a useful tool in organising volume of material. In the given con-

text a limited structural approach is helpful because a standard can be established against which other narratives may be compared. If a structure can be identified and isolated, particular sequences can then be anticipated in further narratives. Specific ideas may be associated with given sequences, again suggesting a possible means of approach to other accounts. Without suggesting that one can necessarily isolate narrative "units" which may be transposed from narrative to narrative, close textual analysis may uncover similar ideas and attitudes. An informant's choice of topics may be significant, occurring at particular phases of the account. These may then be anticipated when considering other narratives and points of similarity and contrast can be seen more easily. Similar themes can be traced, which may in turn form a basis of cross-cultural comparison.

Similarly the informant's attitudes to his experiences must be isolated if they are to be compared with those of others. His evaluation of his experiences - whether consciously articulated or merely implied - is the key to his state of mind and must be taken into account if a true picture is to be built up. Close textual analysis is again implicit in this approach, requiring the commentator to search the transcript for shades of meaning, to understand nuances of expression and style and to take into account known cultural biases - all in addition to overt statements of feeling on the part of the informant.

Close textual study is the means of uncovering the structure of a narrative, allowing the essential pattern to be set out which may then, in turn, be applied to other narratives. This is the central argument of Labov and Waletzky's useful paper "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience".[3] The authors reject a purely thematic approach, as characterised in the work of Propp, and set out a detailed linguistic scheme for narrative analysis, from which they ultimately derive a structural form which they

find to be common to the narratives they consider in their paper. Simple narrative, they argue, comprises the following sections: an orientation section following the initial stimulus to narrate. This is followed by a complication section which may be interrupted by an evaluation sequence prior to a resolution sequence which draws the narrative together and finally a coda which "returns to the situation (point in time) at which the narrative was first elicited."[4] The evaluation section may suspend the action before the narrative moves into the resolution phase. Labov and Waletzky isolate two definitive functions for narrative; the referential and the evaluative. The referential function derives from considering narrative as a recapitulation of experience to match the temporal sequence of that experience. The evaluative function distinguishes a personal narrative because

> "a narrative serves an additional function of personal interest determined by a stimulus in the social context in which the narrative occurs."[5]

The evaluation of a narrative reveals the attitude of the narrator and emphasizes its relative importance. Evaluation is the distinguishing characteristic of the personal narrative in contrast to narrations of vicarious experience which lack this quality. The authors term such narratives "empty or pointless". Evaluations, which take various linguistic forms, are embedded in the narrative and vary in the directness of their expression. The value of Labov and Waletzky's analysis lies in the methodological framework it offers for the evaluation of personal narrative. Isolation of the various stages through which a narrative passes as it develops is useful in establishing the state of mind of the informant who is recounting personal experiences. Pinpointing evaluative statements also indicates the way in which the informant views his experiences and the way in which he wants to present them to his audience. Clearly Kareem had some pre-conceived notion

of the kind of experiences which might interest me as the researcher when he made a statement such as "now this is another thing which might interest you" even though he had received no indication as to what the eventual aims of the study might be. Given that he was also aware of my own situation as student, immigrant, housewife and mother he may also have chosen to offer those details which he considered had particular pertinence, rather than, for example, giving me a resumé of the technical papers he also heard at the conference he attended in the course of his visit.

Sandra Stahl takes a less rigidly analytical stance in her work on the personal experience narrative. Though she acknowledges the contribution made by Labov and Waletzky and accepts their analysis in overall terms she sees their approach as requiring "the abstraction of what appears to be overt, conscious evaluations on the part of the performer."[6]

Her view is that

> .... personal narratives contain traditional attitudes, cultural 'evaluations' if you will, that are not necessarily consciously employed but do in their covert stance make the stories significant, give them meaning.[7]

Traditional attitudes do not necessarily find expression in formal genres but are expressed in ".... less consciously directed verbal exchange."[8] The importance of the less consciously directed verbal exchange is brought out in Stahl's summary of the study of the personal experience narrative. She points out that other scholars have also recognised the less formal exchange as a rich source of insight into the social fabric of particular groups. Richard M. Dorson has commented on the importance of "folk-talk" as a means of uncovering group attitudes, ideas, hates and prejudices - shared group attitudes which he calls "persuasions."[9] He too, suggests that abstract

ideas or attitudes can be unearthed by analysing the verbal exchanges in which they occur.

That there is an area of a group's attitude and beliefs which is not necessarily immediately expressed is a topic broached by other scholars. Clyde Kluckhohn refers to the "covert culture" or "conscious assumptions" which derive from "that sector of the culture of which the members of the society are unaware or minimally aware."[10]

Similarly, Friedman makes reference to

> ....covert systems of assumptions, values, beliefs, personal wishes, socialized and social wishes internalised which reveal themselves only in the images and metaphors in which they get expressed, in syntactical relationships, in the articulation of incidents, in the fleshing out of archetypal personae and situations.[11]

Stahl quantifies it as "the unverbalized segment of a group's world view."[12] Further, because the personal experience narrative represents an incident or actualized behaviour pattern, it will be the most likely vehicle for expressing traditional attitudes. Stahl argues that the personal narrative is the primary traditional narrative genre for expressing traditional attitude, in apposition to memorate and legend which frame supernatural belief. The personal experience narrative codifies a specific unit of world view because it reports actual behaviour.

Dundes is also concerned to define the components of world view. A group's "unconscious culture" is made up of "folk ideas" but his intent is to reach beyond semantics. He states:

> The particular term is really not the point. What is important is the task of identifying the various underlying assumptions held by members of a given culture. All cultures have underlying assumptions and it is these assumptions or folk ideas which are the building blocks of world view.[13]

He argues that folk ideas can be found in the whole spectrum of folkloric be-

haviour, and that the folklorist must extrapolate these ideas from the folklore as a whole. Only when this is done may a pattern be perceived. The individual is not necessarily aware of these ideas, nor necessarily able to articulate them; folk ideas are "basic unquestioned premises concerning the nature of man, of society, and of the world" but though they may be central to an individual's thinking they may not be obvious to him.[14] Once these ideas are isolated and understood, the way may be clear for a greater degree of communication between various groups and sub-cultures and the stature of folklore as an "applied" social science correspondingly enhanced.

The suggestion that the personal narrative contains a traditional pattern or patterns which is there to be discovered is again discussed by Lovelace.[15] He argues that the personal experience narrative is the commonest form of narration in which we are all involved, that there are traditional patterns within it, that it is performed at varying levels of artistry and that a study of such narrations may be one way of gaining a better understanding of social communication in general. Such a study may reveal a

> ... "patterning of reminiscences which may be studied for their artistic quality and for their information about the communicative style of the informant's cultural group."[16]

In a perceptive literary allusion Lovelace suggests that the same sensitivity be brought to bear in listening to oral autobiography as that needed in reading a novel by an author such as Flaubert

> ".... who shows, rather than tells us, what his characters feel and believe."[17]

This view parallels Sandra Stahl's comment that

> ..."the identification of attitudes in personal narratives is best regarded as an exercise in literary criticism similar to the identification of themes in literary works."[18]

Lovelace argues that the life-history is the product of the interaction be-

the informant and the interviewer because the informant inevitably adopts a particular role in response to his perception of the situation. The interview should be seen as "....the informant's argument in his own behalf" and on this basis any system of analysis must take this factor into account.[19] The method of analysis must be sensitive to the persuasive element in the narrative, the attempt at winning the audience to the informant's point of view. This approach derives from a performance-centred view of folklore, that a performer manipulates his repertoire to match his perception of the audience and in direct relation to their response to him.[20] Lovelace argues that the life-history is composed of a series of narratives drawn from the informant's repertoire of personal experience narratives. These are presented to his audience in the manner in which he chooses to see and portray his life and because of this the individual life-history must be set against the background of the individual's personality and society.

> .... His principle of selection, his sense of what is appropriate to the situation, are significant from the point of view of personality and also as being expressive of the values and attitudes of his society. Because the life history is a rhetorically constructed prose narrative .... it inevitably reflects the topics of conversation and the modes of narration which the informant, on the basis of his personality and cultural background, feels to be appropriate and normal.[21]

Expanding on the work of Gizelis, from whom he derives the idea of topic speech those ideas or topics to which an informant or group of informants habitually return in the course of their conversation, Lovelace argues that a careful analysis of an informant's vocabulary and preferred topics will say much about that individual's standpoint.[22] Particular topics may stimulate certain narratives; particular vocabulary, specific ideas. In this connection an idea of particular relevance in analysing the life-history and personal

experience narrative, Lovelace maintains, is that of the "associational cluster" or "associational equation", that is to say, the correspondence the speaker may make between one thing and other ideas he associates with it. In this context Lovelace draws on his own fieldwork, citing as an example, the use of the word "clever" in the vocabulary of a folk healer and the connotations this word has for him when applied to his skill in healing. As an instance of the perceptive and sensitive approach to narrative analysis, which Lovelace argues for at the outset, this "associational cluster" is a well-chosen example.

The notion of the associational cluster is taken up again in Pierre Crépeau's work on the life history of four immigrants in Montreal.[23] In his words "le plan des associations" is an important factor in narrative analysis and must not be disregarded. He defines it as follows

> .... le plan des associations est constitué, par le fait que, en dehors du discours, les mots offrant quelque chose de commun s'associent dans la mémoire, et il se forme des groupes au sein desquels règnent des rapports très divers; ... leur siège est dans la mémoire et ils forment ce 'trésor intérieur' qui ... constituent l'idiolecte.[24]

Crépeau qualifies this approach to the analysis of personal narrative as paradigmatic, acknowledging the influence of Propp and Saussure on his work. Further, personal narrative may not be considered from this standpoint alone; he argues that a linear or syntagmatic analysis of personal narrative must also pertain and that narrative must be considered in terms of these two phenomena for the full meaning to appear.

> Tout discours ne fait donc de sens que dans cette double articulation. L'autobiographie, comme tout discours narratif d'ailleurs, n'échappe pas à cette loi générale du langage.[25]

Following this schema he then analyses four life histories. The accounts are presented verbatim and are followed by a brief analysis. Crépeau regards this study as a limited structural analysis of the accounts, noting that recurring

themes and motifs within the narratives are yet to be pinpointed and discussed. Nor is the mechanism revealed whereby the associational equation links with the strictly temporal or syntagmatic approach. The interaction of the two - the function of the symbolic or paradigmatic within the strictly temporal sequence, is not discussed. Crépeau's conclusion, on the basis of his analysis, is that the life history of these informants may be likened to the folktale of the poor young man who leaves his home and family in the hope of making his fortune in a far off land. His journey is not without obstacles which he must overcome, helped by others along the way. Ultimately, the young man finds happiness, but not necessarily the riches he hoped for. Crépeau sees a cultural journey for the immigrant parallel to the physical one he undertakes on leaving his homeland. Initially the new world is regarded as "sacred" and the known domestic world as "profane"; as the process of acculturation takes place there is a shift in attitude and the immigrant comes to see the new homeland as "profane" and his original native land assumes a "sacred" aura, to the extent that a visit home may be seen as a pilgrimage.

Viewed as a journey, the account of an immigrant's life comprises his departure, his adventures and his arrival; in his adventures he often receives help from some source. Seen as a rite of passage, Crépeau argues, the account details a segregation phase, a liminal phase during which the immigrant undergoes a series of tests, in which he may or may not be helped and lastly a ritual of incorporation.

Crépeau emphasizes that his analysis of the autobiographies is based on the linear sequence or syntagmatic level of the accounts alone. Analysis on the paradigmatic level is not included. Because of this he suggests that the structure he sees underlying the accounts is not necessarily in its defin-

itive form. An analysis at the paradigmatic level - that is, of the associational details, could influence the overall structural form. He would, for example, like to pursue the associational details connected with shoes, to establish their symbolic significance in the narrative. It is assumed that he did not do so for reasons of space or speed as the Mercury Series is committed to the rapid dissemination of information. However, it is to be hoped that having proposed an analysis based on a two-fold approach, he will expand his study at a later stage to consider the associational details in these accounts.

Crépeau's study is valuable for the approach it offers, as a model for comparison and for its relevance to the Canadian experience; an English language version of the analysis would make the author's remarks more widely available.

John A. Robinson's recent paper is a useful extension of the theoretical base for the analysis of personal narratives.[26] Expanding considerably on Laboy and Waletzky's original work, Robinson maintains that the personal experience narrative is not limited to incidents which are unusual, unexpected or unique; he would dispute that events must be "remarkable" to succeed as personal narratives. In his view routine activities may also form the basis of narratives and have particular functions to fill. Contextual background is of paramount importance in considering such narratives, particularly the role of the audience. He puts it this way:

> .... the common theme of the discussion ... is that personal narratives are situated communications: they occur in distinguishable contexts of interaction and can be used for a wide range of pragmatic functions.[27]

Robinson's concern in this paper is to suggest a system for classifying conversational modes, embodying many of the major points already set out by

others on this topic. His approach is that of the socio-linguistic scholar intent on establishing an overall scheme for the proper siting of all narratives within the stream of conversational exchange: to this end it is important to distinguish a series of categories into which narratives may be placed.[28]

His scheme is as follows: there are two major conversational modes, that of the participant where the conversation is slanted towards problem-solving and that of the spectator which implies conversation of a strictly sociable type. Particular narrative modes are associated with each conversational mode. Two categories of narrative are associated with the participant problem-solving mode: the adjudicatory and the heuristic. More simply phrased, these are narratives in which the narrator seeks the cooperation of his listener either to offer an opinion on the narrative (adjudication) or to discover the meaning of the incident recounted (heuristic). Similarly, the spectator or social mode of conversation invokes narratives dealing with exploits and amusements as well as those seeking some explanation of the events recounted (also heuristic). Robinson distinguishes between the two sets of heuristic narratives. Those associated with the participant conversational mode (level I) deal with circumscribed events; those associated with the spectator conversational mode include larger segments of the narrator's experiences. Robinson suggests a further pairing but offers no examples to illustrate those narratives he sees as diametrically opposed to what he calls the Spectator - Exploit set.

Robinson's paper is valuable for the extension it offers to the theory of narrative analysis and for the comprehensive nature of the scheme it proposes, taking account of the many factors which prompt narrative. Its application in the immediate study is to site Kareem's narrative relative

to other forms of narrative present in every-day speech. Given that Kareem was asked to give his account without significant interruption or input from his audience, the speech act may be said to take place in the spectator mode; more precisely because

> ... the spectator mode embraces all the forms of reflection upon knowledge and experience which are undertaken for their own rewards rather than to achieve some definite practical outcome in the world

and

> ... Language is a vehicle for reflection and the qualitative features of talk in spectator contexts exemplify speculation, appreciation and entertainment

the narrative falls into the exploits and amusements category.[29] The heuristic quality is not present because Kareem is not seeking to discover an answer or an evaluation. The intent of the exchange between narrator and audience was social, even though Kareem chose to give his account in his professional surroundings. The narrative reflected his private or domestic persona and was a product of a rapport established as a result of our friendship. In this situation, the physical setting of the interview became incidental.

From the fore-going remarks it is clear that a close textual analysis is the most rewarding approach in analysing personal experience narratives. Given the wealth of detail, allusion and innuendo inherent in day-to-day speech, - a wealth which is recognised by many of the scholars cited above, it follows that a sensitive and careful study of the transcribed script offers the most effective insight into the underlying meaning and significance of the account. This not only allows the informant's overt statements to be seen for their true value, it also allows more subtle attitudes and half thoughts to be unearthed and thrown into relief. That there is an underlying significance to the account - that there is an insight into a private world to be discovered - is evident in the concurrence of opinion among the authors cited. Having established that a sub-stratum exists, Labov and Waletzky's scheme is a useful

point of departure from which it is possible to pursue other lines of enquiry. Given this basic structure as a starting point, analysis of narrative may then proceed along the lines identified by other scholars. Thus the important details revealed in a string of associated experiences may be set against a synchronic account of events, equally relevant for the full understanding of the narrative. That each narrative is to be considered in terms of these two interwoven processes, as Crépeau argues, can only lend a greater subtlty to any analysis undertaken. An awareness that each individual narrator is gently trying to win the sympathy of his audience and is manipulating his store of recollections to this end is an added dimension which must also be brought to bear on the narrative. Similarly, a sensitivity to the informant's use of language and the way in which he understands and manipulates his particular vocabulary, as Lovelace points out, can also add considerably to our understanding of the account. Then there remains what is left unsaid, that which is alluded to or mentioned only in passing, or the moment at which an informant says, "well I don't have to go through my own justification, eh?" implying an area of thought which must remain private. All these add minute shadings to the word picture presented. If a sensitive and meaningful analysis is to be completed, each approach listed above is valid, ranging from the strictly structural to the most intuitive. Crépeau has summarised it as follows:

> Dans la perspective folklorique qui est la nôtre on s'attachera surtout à dégager la structure de ces documents, à identifier leurs contenus et à définir leurs contextes et leurs fonctions.[30]

Within the folkloric perspective the structure of the accounts must be made clear, their content made plain and their context and function defined. This then is the basis on which Kareem's narrative must be analysed.

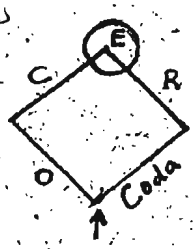
NOTES

1. Small used this approach to good effect in "Patterns in Personal Experience Narratives."

2. See Alan Dundes, "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales," "Journal of American Folklore" 75 (1962), 96-105. See also Alan Dundes, "Structural Typology in North American Indian Folktales" in Analytic Essays in Folklore by Alan Dundes (The Hague: Mouton, 1975) pp. 73-79.

3. William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience," in Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts. ed. June Helm (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press for the American Ethnological Society, 1969) pp. 12-44.

4. Ibid. p. 41.



5. Ibid. p. 13.

6. Sandra K.D. Stahl, "The Personal Narrative as Folklore," Journal of the Folklore Institute, 14(1977), 20.

7. Ibid. p. 20.

8. Ibid. p. 21.

9. See Richard M. Dorson, "A Theory for American Folklore Reviewed," in American Folklore and the Historian, by Richard M. Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 58-59.

10. See also Clyde Kluckhohn, "Covert Culture and Administrative Problems," American Anthropologist, n.s. 45 (1943), 213-227.

11. See also, Albert B. Friedman, "The Usable Myth: The Legends of Modern Mythmakers," in American Folk Legend: A Symposium, ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), pp. 37-46.

12. Stahl, p. 21.

13. See Alan Dundes, "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview," in Towards New Perspectives in Folklore, (eds.) Americo Paredes and Richard Bauman (Austin and London: Univ. of Texas Press for the American Folklore Society, 1972) pp. 93-103.

14. Ibid., p. 101.

15. Martin Lovelace, "The Life History as an Oral Narrative Genre," in Papers from the Fourth Annual Congress 1977, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 40 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1977) 212-223.

16. Ibid., p. 215.

17. Ibid., p. 213.

18. Stahl, p. 24.

19. Lovelace, p. 215.

20. In this connection see the following:

Roger D. Abrahams, "Introductory Remarks to a Rhetorical Theory of Folklore," Journal of American Folklore, 81(1968), 143-158. Roger D. Abrahams, "A Performance-Centred Approach to Gossip," Man, 5(1971), 290-301. Robert Georges, "Toward an Understanding of Storytelling Events," Journal of American Folklore, 82(1969), 313-328. Richard Bauman, "Verbal Art as Performance," American Anthropologist, 77 (1975), 290-311. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (eds.) Folklore: Performance and Communication (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).

21. Lovelace, p. 220.

22. Gizelis, p. 80.

23. Pierre Crépeau, Voyage aux Pays des Merveilles.

24. .... the associational patterns develop from the common affinities words offer outside of the verbal context, joining together in the memory to form groups with widely differing connotations;

.... their source is in the memory where they become this 'inner treasure' .... known as the idiolect.

Crépeau, ix.

25. Ibid., ix. .... thus all speech makes sense only in terms of this double articulation. The autobiography, moreover, like any other narrative account is no exception to this general rule of language.

26. John A. Robinson, "Personal Narratives Reconsidered,"

27. Ibid., p. 58.

28. Ibid., p. 83. This is summarised as follows:

A Classification of Conversation Modes and Corresponding Modes of Narration

Conversation Modes	Narrative Modes
Participant: Problem Solving	Adjudication
	Heuristic I
Spectator: Sociable	Exploits and Amusements
	Heuristic II

29. Ibid., p. 80

30. Crépeau, xix.

CHAPTER 4: Kareem's Narrative

Of the eight people I encouraged to tell their stories I selected that of one of the male informants, Kareem. I chose to consider his account of a visit home because it encompassed most if not all the characteristics of the other seven narratives in this study. Many of the feelings and experiences recounted by Kareem were echoed in other interviews as I hope to show by commenting on his narrative in some detail. The following biographical sketch provides the background against which his narrative must be seen.

Kareem was born and brought up in Egypt; he married a fellow engineering student and continued living in Egypt until shortly after the birth of his first son. He left for Canada in 1968 following the 1967 war with Israel and settled in Edmonton, Alberta. At the time of the interview in 1980 he was in his middle to late thirties. Physically, he was short and well-built, his dark hair rather grizzled. Periodically he sported a moustache and beard. Among his friends and associates he was known for his devotion to his family and for his capacity for hard work.

Kareem represented an ideal informant for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that I had known him for six years. He and his family had been among the first people I had met when I came to Newfoundland in 1974. He invited us to his home as he wanted to help speed the settling-in process for a new colleague and a fellow electrical engineer. It was a characteristically warm gesture of friendship. He himself had only just arrived in Newfoundland, having returned to Canada from Brazil in January 1974. He and his wife had completed separate courses of graduate studies in Edmonton and had felt the need of a change of scene. He therefore accepted a job in Brazil and left Canada with his wife and two children, a second son having been born in 1971.

Our experiences had several points in common in addition to that of a

shared profession. An important common factor was our children - all very young and adapting to a new environment. Similarly, as adults, we too were adapting to change in surroundings vastly different to Brazil and Italy. Dramatic change in climate, vegetation and life-style were among the most obvious. Equally both families had bought new homes with attendant responsibilities. Even popular music over the radio presented marked contrasts to Italian light music and Brazilian sambas.

Kareem enjoyed conversation and story-telling and a further area of interest and exchange was the dialogue which was to continue over the years between Arab (Kareem) and Jew (my husband). Theoretical enemies, these two developed an easy relationship, based on a common discipline and became friends. From initial jokes and quips about "all Semites together" a warm sense of friendship grew. From some of Kareem's later comments it became clear that he regarded the relationship as one of virtual brotherhood. Though our children never became close friends, they shared some early schooling and sometimes celebrated birthdays together. Similarly, illness in either family prompted offers of help. The birth of Kareem's daughter in 1975 was another event of shared concern and delight. Finally, following his first visit home in August 1979, Kareem and his wife were involved in a serious car crash in which they were both badly injured and unable to walk. Kareem's concern for my husband who was also seriously ill at this time, underlined his strong fraternal feeling. He had already agreed to be interviewed at the time of his accident and in conversation during his convalescence, he repeatedly marvelled that he had survived. His accident also prompted him to reflect on his family commitments and on his early life in Egypt.

During the course of our friendship Kareem and his wife often invited us to small supper parties of friends and colleagues. His wife was a talented cook and willingly cooked traditional dishes for such occasions, though her

efforts were not necessarily appreciated by her children. Kareem was an affable and easygoing host who enjoyed telling jokes and stories; he was also a good listener and would cap a funny story or joke with one of his own. He laughed easily, particularly at his own discomfiture, but was equally ready to talk about more serious topics. Among these as it waxed and waned on the world scene was the strained state of Arab-Israeli relations. The Egyptian war effort which had seemed to him to be distorting the whole pattern of life in the country at the time of the 1967 war, had been a major incentive to emigrate. Thus any scaling down of the conflict between Israel and Egypt was greeted with great interest. The distortion caused by the conflict created a particular socio-economic setting which Kareem had found intolerable; he recalled warning his future father-in-law that he intended to go to America once he was married. Similarly an awareness of the economic scene was also a stimulus to leaving Brazil. He recognised a similar situation in Brazil, noting escalating inflation a major problem and was prompted to return to Canada.

Another topic of conversation was religion. As a Muslim Kareem would willingly explain his beliefs, pointing out where his views differed from those of a Muslim colleague from another country. Kareem did not practice his religion in St. John's as "there is no Mosque" nor did he instruct his children in any obvious fashion. In fact, he chuckled when he described his children's attendance at a local Christian Sunday School. However, he had a considerable reverence for certain aspects of his religion. On one occasion in conversation he brought out a copy of the Koran but was clearly uncomfortable in handling the volume. He commented that he really should have washed his hands prior to picking up the book. Though prepared to talk about the Koran and to discuss the various forms of Islam he was unwilling to see

his copy passed from hand to hand and soon removed it. Kareem may also have felt embarrassed about the alcohol he had served to his guests as his own consumption was relatively light, and he rarely drank more than two beers in an evening. He would allude to the feast of Ramadan but again his observance, if any, was discreet. His wife was openly critical of the practice of fasting all day and massive excess, as she saw it, after sundown. Kareem and his wife had Egyptian friends but did not appear to cultivate a wide circle of Egyptians for the sake of maintaining either language, customs or religious observances.[1]

Kareem was eager to become a Canadian citizen and recalled the ceremony with pride. This was consistent with his desire to fit into his chosen society. For example, he relished American-style football on television and also followed Canadian hockey results with some interest. The right to carry a Canadian passport was precious for him and imbued him with confidence. To hold an Egyptian passport in North America had merely meant severe inconvenience as he indicated in describing a trip he had made from Brazil through the United States to Canada for a job interview. He felt he was exposed to delays and prejudice because of his passport which clearly identified him as an alien.

Occasionally Kareem and his wife spoke Arabic but again he made no concerted effort to teach his children though his eldest son knew a few expressions in Arabic. His English was fluent and idiomatic and he was quick to adopt North American colloquialisms. His love of conversation and gregarious nature, combined to place him at the centre of social groups and to win him friends. For these reasons I felt no hesitation in asking him to record his impressions of his visit home.

The following narrative was recorded on a cold morning in February 1980. After an initial false start with the tape-recorder Kareem gave his account

We had not met for some time following his accident and at the time of this interview he was still unable to use his right hand completely. The interview took place in his office, his wife joining us for the latter part, though she offered no comments on his remarks.

J. My question to you is, What are your impressions of going home? I know that you left in 1967, 68, alright, and that you went to Egypt for the first time last year in August 1979, was it? and really, what it felt like to go back home after that extended period away.

K. Well, ah, basically I was apprehensive for a couple of years, maybe for seven years at least, you know, apprehensive about the time of going back, apprehensive about whether I recognise the places I used to know or how would I be able to communicate with the people having observed that the various expressions that people used through the letters I received from my family have changed. The words I know but the connotations or the context within which they use these words were different and so I was apprehensive or I felt that no matter whatm I'll obviously be a stranger there and my concern was really that after spending that time and money, I suppose, because it's not a small family to take down to Cairo - about $1,000 a shot, er, whether I'll feel a sort of unpleasant experience and then say "Well, maybe I shouldn't have done it maybe earlier and I should repeat it." So I had these natural concerns and I felt probably I should do it and see what happens. The first thing that I was apprehensive about is just how I would go into the airport, landing in er er... Now my only experience of getting into Egypt from outside um was coming from Europe and it was under Nasser's regime, so it was a completely different attitude of people and at least officials, I should say, and I was coming on board a boat to Alexandria. This time I would be landing in Cairo International which handles hundreds of aircrafts and so on, so I was a bit apprehensive about that. I guess I got softened a bit by the way I have taken that trip. We spent a few days in England and then I went on to India and my experience in India prepared me probably and as well, you know, in Kuwait because these are completely different experiences and completely different societies. Er, I'm not trying to say whether they're good or bad, you know, because each society has got its merits and demerits but in any case there were probably more close to what I would have expected from Egypt, maybe the red tape, the extreme red tape in Kuwaiti airport and very cautious people softened me and made me realise "Oh my gosh," you know, when I landed in Cairo, really, that was nothing at all. It was just, you know, a breeze, you know, breezed through it.

Well I just, well the first impression that I got was that the low level of lighting, illumination I mean um at Cairo International, mind you that applies also to New Delhi and Kuwait so that might just be that we have too much illumination in North America and the major European airports, but that was one of the things that struck me. There was another thing that's really interesting um, yea, I, I had to wait for my luggage to show up on the, you know, on the baggage handling facilities for about an hour and there was a police officer standing there and I noticed in that dark lighting that all the bags were brown and blue, like mine. So I figure, my gosh, you know, how do you identify your baggage, eh? So I asked the officer, you know, how do you check, you know, people. He said .. no-one - he thought that I was crazy to ask that question. He said that no-one in his right mind would take another person's bag. Now of course after I mulled this over, I discovered much to my surprise, you know, if I have taken someone else's bag and it contained some drugs or anything illegal, you know, I would be in trouble so people are very much aware of this more so than here. So that was one of the impressions that, you know, come to mind.

The people were, well, I noticed that also someone was trying to beat the system. They have these ... green channel and the red channel, you know, to clear the customs and someone was having about seven suitcases or something trying to push himself through on the green channel. Of course he was sent back, you know, to the end of the red line. Um the people struck me as very friendly this time. I think they are more relaxed than when I left, under Sadat, I think. The customs officer, you know, noticing that here I was, well I was haggard a bit and very tired physically and was carrying my passport in my hand and one suitcase in the other - well, he just cleared me right through. He said, "I'm sorry, sir", I could have passed for anything, I mean he didn't do that because I'm Egyptian or anything. Here I was carrying the Canadian passport, he didn't open the Canadian passport, you know. I handed him the form and he trusted me, so he just didn't check anything.

J. Which form?

K. Well, this immigration, you know, entry, entry visa. Well, the family were waiting for me at the door - mind you, they sent someone to clear me fast, you know, and he never managed to find me so that was another thing, you know, that ... It's quite a big crowd, you know, it was an Airbus, you know. A French Airbus, you know, three hundred people, you know. Facilities are not geared up for this size yet. In any case, here they were saying, "Why were you late?" and oh, I just figured out, you know, oh yea, well, it's my same old family again. Well, we were taken back to Heliopolis, you know, to my sister's-in-law. I didn't recognise any of the streets, you know, in the dark, but may be I was too tired and so on, eh. It was a feast so I tried to contact my father in Alexandria and er there was another experience,

you know, just trying to nurse or baby sit your telephone um because you just don't seem to get the dial tone. The whole telephone system is broken down there ah in any case the next morning.

The next morning - it was really the same morning because I had only an hour of sleep and then back up - everybody was excited about talking. Everybody was trying to feed me as much as they could. Now the food itself didn't feel alien to me ah but the quantities um were different and the expectation that you would eat more, you know. That was different, you know. I mean, you know, here you just have a plate, maybe you go for a second if you want that that's it, but there, you know, they expected me to have thirds and fourths and everybody ... Oh and that was another thing, I thought that my mother was throwing fish and meat at me - that's jumping a bit, you know. Later on I went to Alexandria.

It was another experience just, you know, getting into that old address of mine, looking at this mailbox at the door, the ... you know, here is that mailbox that I used to wait for letters, you know coming from North America. The promised land so to speak er and here I am coming back, you know. It was very emotional. Now ah, my father and mother didn't change a bit. I mean, well, maybe, my mother gained a bit of weight and, but that's the same mother that I have had for a long time. That's the same father, maybe he aged a bit, you know, he has ... he is down with more ailments than ... but that's to be expected. What really surprised me, you know, is change in the younger ones, the ones I have left when they were six years old, ten years. They're now grown ups, go to school, maybe are professionals. Now ah, it was a completely different ball game, um I ....

The only thing that I really could see on or watch or listen to or watch on TV or radio was political events and I think at that time Sadat was visiting Haifa er so that was the only thing that I could make sense of and um I always try to switch to the English-speaking channel um watching their situation comedies, you know, I just couldn't make any sense to it. The jokes were just to me were a completely different set of values, not to say that their set of values are extremely different but you see when you play with words, you know, when you play with... that applies to the English language, when you take um what you call, I don't want to take examples, but you know what I mean when you just play on the differences between words and so on. It's the same thing you know, with sit.com. in Egypt, but still, you know, you need a lot of training. I guess if I stayed there fore a couple of months I would get back my old self.

As a matter of fact by the end of two weeks, you know, I was able to ah hail a cab, you know and get going, you know ... Oh the frustration of getting a taxi, you know, in Alexandria, you know. It's a summer resort you know, and everyone was flocking in August there, hey? It's just a different situation altogether, so I re-learned, mind you I was apprehensive about driving. I had that particular feeling that oh, these are hot-blooded people, you know (J chuckles) yea, honest, I mean it's weird, you know. Oh well I guess you know it's only natural, you know, I now identify myself more with the Canadian way, cool way, you know of handling traffic, although this morning I've seen hot-blooded people but that's to be expected when they have got snarls and so on. But I didn't want to rent a car, I didn't want to drive there. I just said "Look, these are crazy people," but after two weeks surprisingly I thought, "My gosh, you know, maybe I should have you know", because these people drive reasonably, you know. So I just got brain washed, you know, in two weeks. So these are the sorts of apprehensions that one gets.

Of course there was one thing, you know, that came up and got me a bit sensitive and that's not my immediate family but some of my cousins and so on, you know, levelled some criticism because my kids don't understand Arabic. They felt, you know that we're lenient in doing this. I got upset about it because, well, I don't have to go through my own justifications, eh? But it was a difference of opinion and, you know, so this is one of the things, you know, that got me into a bit of misunderstanding with some of the family. My parents, you know as a matter of fact, my mother brushed up on her English, you know, and tried to communicate in a foreign language that she hasn't spoken for umpteen years, you know, Ah, my father didn't have much trouble because he's a person that likes to read and you know and communicate and so on and he just felt at ease with my kids and they felt at ease with him.

It was tremendous experience um meeting my brother-in-law on my own side now, my sisters' husbands, my sisters husbands was another experience in its own self um simply because I left - I was just a kid so to speak.

J. How old?

K. I was twenty six, you see, I'm the oldest son in the family and I'm supposed to be the one that's giving advice to the younger ones and here I was talking to these young boys, you know, just coaching them, you know, and telling them, now look, you know, I mean these are trivial problems, may be point out to them that, you know, we buy used furniture sometimes, live on it, live with it for five, six years, until things go around, you know, to the better, you know, maybe. You know, giving them these experiences, so that was another experience, you know, that would be unique to me, um going back there. Of course I learned afterwards, you know, that all of these advices they had gotten already from older people (K. laughs) so, so much for that.

But it was a unique experience and I spent one week with my parents, I ... towards I felt that, you know, maybe I should bring them over just to give them a taste of how we live, you know. They seemed not to ... well I guess, you know, you can't communicate a lot in letters, you know, about what's going on, so maybe I should bring them over, you know, and just let them see how we live. Of course I wouldn't dare bring them in the winter here now because they would tell me that I'm crazy to live in an ice box like this, but ahm that's a different matter.

Ah I went out with my father just walking around the streets and you know, the people in Egypt are very closely knit. People on that particular street in that neighbourhood, you know, know each other you know. Of course, they've been living there, you know what? We've been living there now as a family for over twenty five years and they know each other and here is that lost son if you will, O.K., coming back, so my dad was extremely pleased to have me, even though he has, you know, he's not feeling that well, you know, just on the pretext of us going down, you know, buying some fruits just took me and just, you know, we stopped at virtually every house, you know, that he has any friends or colleagues, you know, neighbourhood store, you know, and this sort of thing and "this is Kareem, my son, Dr. Kareem" of course and, you know "Professor in Canada" and this sort of thing, you know. I felt at that time, you know, that that was another experience feeling, the feeling that you're closely observed.

Now that feeling, you know, I mean, you know, people looking at you, just ... I don't know, it's a different feeling, you know, like some kind of a weird um new species of an animal that no-one has ever seen before, eh? Well, I thought that ... that particular, now O.K. again it's another unique thing about my experience: a lot of my colleagues have left Egypt. I mean a lot of my classmates have left Egypt, now where are they? Well, they are here in North America or in the Arab world or in Africa and I mentioned before that I went to Kuwait and I stayed there fore twenty four hours but I have met in addition to my sister and her husband, more than six of my past classmates. Now it was a pleasant experience in the beginning, O.K., but then I felt like I'm sitting in the middle of a circle and here are these six classmates of mine surrounding me. All the eyes are centred on me just trying to make out, you know, what changes did come to pass on Kareem (Arrival of K.'s wife, who sat in for the latter part of the interview). Yea, I felt also that what these people were trying to do maybe is to compare their lot. Now this is another thing which might interest you because here you have two groups of immigrants but they are away from home to Kuwait. It's a completely different society than their homeland eh? They feel ... I don't know, I don't want to pass any judgements on how they feel but basically what they are trying to do, I felt, was to compare their lot with mine and, ah well, that was obvious in their questions, but maybe it was curiosity. A lot of them would want to come to North America so again, you know, the questions themselves, well I answered, but then when you have too many questions about the same subject, you know, you get a bit tired, you know. So I was mightily pleased to have them go,

so to speak, you know, and just, you know, have a chat with my sister and my brother-in-law that's ... he's a colleague of mine ... um he has his own aspirations and I felt that maybe I should do more, you knowm to help them. Not financially, but just advice-wise. You see this is the funny thing, I mean um here you are wherever, you've got your responsibilities, you've just got to take care of a family essentially and cope with the daily chores and here is that added load of having to give advice. Now it's very difficult to give advice and coach in writing I mean, you have to have a special talent to do that and I'm sorry, I don't have it so, you know, it was a feeling of sorrow for myself hey? And that happened also with my parents you know. They just observed that my letters started with the normal opening greeting lines which last for six lines, then probably a sentence like, you know, "the cat is walking" some trivial matter like this, you know, and then the closing lines and so it's not much substance in there and it's the same old message, you know, saying basically "I'm still around."

Um there's another thing that ... it's unpleasant but I guess since it comes to mind then you want some honest interview, I wouldn't refrain from saying it. You see they ... O.K. to that unpleasant thing of course what my family did was not to send me any bad news essentially over these years and well, just learning you know, of the passing away of many people that ... of my age group was somehow a devastating blow or a series of ... O.K. especially if one know that, you know, my cousin that you always told the kids "oh, you know, you've got that cousin in the States, you know" but I haven't gotten around to contacting him, you know, over the past five or six years, has just passed away four years ago. And I'm probably closer to where he was, you know, er stuff like that, you know. There was another thing, you know, is that you notice that as an impression, you know, the people don't want to upset you by sending you unpleasant news. No I, I pointed out that maybe if you mention it, you know, when it happens, you know, its impact would be lower but then you see there are two different values attached to the same thing ah by the father and son, simply because one belongs to a different society ah at the present time

J. I've got one question and that is er how do other people view you? To a certain extent you've already mentioned that, but I'm wondering if there is anything else. How do other people see you, do you think?

K. Well, it depends on their relationship with me. To be honest it varies, I mean, you know, from person to person even I have two brothers-in-law or three or four, whatever, I'm not gonna count. But each one of them has a different view, I feel. Ah, I'll give you an example ...I, I think one of them feels that I'm passing a lot of opportunity by staying in North America because he feels that a man of my calibre and so on and so forth, you know, could be making, you know, four times as much or five times as much as I'm making here. Ah, so they view me as the kind of ideal-ist ahm that has set, that's a certain individual or group of individuals. Ahm, there's another type that view me as someone who really did it, you know.

"We gotta do precisely what he did" sort of ... Ah, ah our life as a family appeals to them, I mean, you know, what we have. Ahm my parents; well, feel that er I have probably decided to do what is good for me and my family. Psychologically that we're happy where we are and because we're happy, then that's O.K., you know. The parents feel it, you know, from society to society, you know, I mean. To me, you know, it's the same North American attitude, I felt. There's no difference eh? But they felt, well, O.K., so long as you're happy. "Let's just know that you're O.K." ahm and that's it. Oh, there is this sense of ah feeling, of expectation probably that you can find ... it depends again, you know, on the status of the people, of the person, of course if someone was er I didn't meet that because ... Well, what I was going to say is that you probably feel someone will want a favour from you but I had that apprehension but no-one asked me a favour. I felt really, you know, that I'm probably not the best off. (Hmm,JD) O.K. They have a better standard of living than I have ah, financially they're better off and ah, so, you know, once you've eliminated that, you see, then there is no sense of jealousy. The younger generation, you know, wanted to know how I did it, O.K., so they wanted to hear about "How did you go about it?," Would that be the answer you're looking for?

J. Is there anything more you feel you want to say about going home?

K. Well, I just say, you know, it has been a pleasant experience. I mean, as you know, as an evaluation of what ... of that experience. We would like to do it again except that it is too expensive. (Laughter).

The chronology of a narrative obviously influences the overall structure considerably, and in the life history a chronology of significant events will emerge even though an informant may not necessarily start with a statement about the date or place of birth (Lovelace, 1977). Similarly, in considering accounts of visits home a sequence of important events will emerge but the informant does not necessarily begin his account at the beginning of his journey. Most of the informants in this study did prefer to preface their remarks with some introductory remarks concerning their travel arrangements but in at least one instance the informant preferred to examine his/her motives in returning home prior to a chronological account of the visit. However for the majority it seemed natural to start the account at the beginning of the visit and to detail significant events before ending with a statement that indicated the informant had returned home and had resumed his usual life style.

Given that the account of a visit home is only a fraction of a complete life history the chronology is necessarily of a smaller, more subtle nature. Kareem's narrative opened quite naturally with a description of his arrival in Cairo, continued with an account of his welcome at a relative's house in Heliopolis and moved ultimately to his parent's home in Alexandria. He made no specific reference to his return to Canada, merely implying it by the more numerous references to North America in the second half of the narrative.

Viewed as a series of linked narrative units, Kareem's narrative can be broken down as follows. Before launching into his account proper he gives background information as to his state of mind prior to returning home. He voices his fears, some of them longstanding, about recognising his former surroundings, being able to communicate with his family, of not being accepted and of finding the whole exercise so trying that he feels it to have been a waste of time and money. Having given this information, the audience is now orientated, to use Labov and Waletzky's terminology, and the narrator is then free to proceed with his account.

Kareem's description of his arrival is quite long and detailed relative to the rest of the account. He describes at some length his impressions of arriving in Cairo, pinpointing small incidents which indicate a high level of awareness of his surroundings. In spite of his fatigue after a long and crowded flight, Kareem notes the physical characteristics of the airport, the low level of lighting, the limited facilities to cope with baggage and customs clearance. He was also aware of his fellow travellers and of his own treatment by airport officials. Obviously he expected to be treated a great deal worse than he actually was, based on his previous experiences while living in Egypt and more recent ones in India and Kuwait. He offers evaluative statements on his initial impressions, prompted by an internal comparison with the society he remembered before emigrating.

> ... the people struck me as very friendly this time. I think they are more relaxed than when I left, under Sadat, I think.

> ... the customs officer ... just cleared me right through ... he didn't do that because I'm Egyptian or anything.

Kareem's pride in his Canadian passport is also apparent at this juncture. His reunion with his family is in a style he recognises easily "... why were you late?" and this remark serves to re-assure him that he has not returned to a total alien group "... it's my same old family again." There is a sense of immediacy in his account of his reunion with family members - the excitement, the conversation and the food as a mark of hospitality.

> ... everybody was excited about talking. Everybody was trying to feed me as much as they could.
> ... the food itself didn't feel alien ... but the quantities ... were different and the expectation that you would eat more.

When he recounts his visit to Alexandria to see his parents a note of nostalgia creeps into his account with his reference to his old address and the mailbox. In fact, this recollection of the past precedes his reaction to reunion with his parents.

> It was another experience just ... getting into that old address of mine, looking at this mailbox at the door ... here is that mailbox that I used to wait for letters ... coming from North America.

North America is characterised as the "promised land", not a particularly new image to describe North America, but a telling one re-inforcing the argument that an intending immigrant views the new society as "sacred" and the known domestic world as "profane".[2] His reaction to his parents is typically one of gentle caring.

> ... my father and mother didn't change a bit ... maybe, my mother gained a bit of weight ... that's the same mother that I have had for a long time. That's the same father, maybe he aged a bit ... he is down with more ailments.

Kareem expressed surprise that younger members of the family were now grown up and working - again, a reaction most adults have experienced at some stage or another. His recollections to this point have largely followed the chronology of his visit. From this stage in the narrative until his concluding

remarks he is prompted by his reflections as the various associations occur in his mind.

Though Kareem may have experienced little difficulty in re-establishing bonds with his immediate family, his initial concern that he would be a stranger is justified with respect to the media. He commented at the outset that he had noticed how language had changed, how

> the various expressions that people used through the letters that I received from my family have changed.

He found it almost impossible to bridge the gap between his perception of the world around him and that of light entertainment. Access to this part of his former culture was virtually denied him with the exception of the strictly factual. Thus, though he was able to follow political events on radio or TV, he found other aspects of popular culture hard to understand.

> ... their situation comedies ... I just couldn't make any sense to it. The jokes were just to me a completely different set of values.

His capacity to relate - his communicative competence in Hymes' terms - had been reduced to the point where he found it necessary to switch to English-speaking channels on radio and TV.[3]

K. concedes that he thinks he could have re-adapted and re-learned old skills but feels that with respect to certain areas like driving, "... I now identify myself more with the Canadian way." That he views the Canadian way as "cool" and considered Alexandrians "hot-blooded" is an interesting reflection on his view of his original homeland and his new country. To a degree this apposition of the words "cool" with its connotation of sophisticated and urbane and "hot-blooded" suggesting an element of the unpredictable and impetuous can appear to have a parallel with the apposition of "sacred" versus "profane" already noted. As long as the immigrant views his new homeland as something new and slightly strange he will continue to regard it as "sacred" and the old known world from which he came as "profane." As the process of acculturation continues

and the immigrant feels more settled his attitude changes. The emphasis shifts from the emphasis on the new world as the "sacred" world to considering the original homeland as "sacred" and the known new situation as "profane." This feeling can persist to the extent that a visit home can assume the aura of a pilgrimage.[4] Kareem regards his life-style in Canada with a degree of satisfaction as he feels he and his family are happy. To this extent his adopted homeland remains "sacred" for his narrative suggests a greater identification with Canada at this stage, rather than Egypt. A sense of apprehension is his major emotion in relation to returning home rather than a feeling of devout expectancy characteristic of a pilgrimage. It is suggested that Crepeau's remarks may stand for a returning visitor prior to initiating a trip home but that the idealised perception of "home" fades once the journey begins. Distance may well lend enchantment but reality intrudes and the mystical aura is dispersed.

Kareem and his wife took all three children to Egypt; the second son and the little girl had never been to Egypt and it is doubtful if the eldest boy had any recollection of his birthplace. For Kareem's parents this would have been the first time they had seen the two younger children so the encounter between the two generations must have been one of the extreme interest. As mentioned, Kareem does not make any particular effort to teach his children Arabic for reasons he was not prepared to reveal in the interview. It is interesting and natural therefore, that both grandparents had made extra efforts to be able to communicate with their grandchildren. This presented a greater problem for the children's grandmother who is over sixty and had not spoken English for many years. Kareem commented that it was not such a big problem for his father because he is naturally inclined to read. Communication between grandfather and children was not a problem

> "... he just felt at ease with my kids and they felt at ease with him."

It was not such an easy proposition for the grandmother, who "tried to communicate .... poorly."

However, Kareem admitted that he resented criticism from some members of his family circle that his children did not speak Arabic.

> ... there was one thing that came up and got me a bit sensitive ... some cousins levelled some criticism because my kids don't understand Arabic ...

He regarded his exchanges with his family as a difference of opinion and he obviously felt slightly nettled on this score. Failure to instruct his children in Arabic was obviously a barrier to communication but it is also a departure from a code of behaviour. The children's lack of communicative competence is a direct reflection on the father as an imperfect bearer of tradition. In failing to pass on the language with all the cultural overtones and allusions language implies, Kareem has not only set his children outside the cultural group, he has also demonstrated a lack of competence as a tradition bearer. His cousins' criticism and their view that he had been "lenient" in not teaching his children Arabic strongly imply that he should have felt himself under an obligation to transmit the language. Kareem felt at odds with his relations and unable to counter their remarks adequately.

> ... I got upset about it because, well, I don't have to go through my own justifications, eh? But it was a difference of opinion and ... so this is one of the things ... that got me into a bit of misunderstanding with some of the family.

As a major area of tradition and culture, the language and its transmission to the next generation is a symbol of the gap which separates Kareem from his family.

Kareem's remarks also offered insights into other aspects of his cultural role. Among these was that of advice giving. As the eldest son he was expected to give advice to the younger members of the family and he raised this topic on two occasions in the interview. Initially he dismissed this facet of his role but his real feelings emerged later on. He regards advice -

giving as onerous and tiring for, as he comments, "... here is that added load of having to give advice."

He felt he lacked the necessary talent for advising effectively, and that he was incapable of doing this by correspondence. When required to give advice in person he found either that the issues raised were trivial, in this view, or later, that advice had already been sought and given by another member of the family.

Kareem does not offer any thoughts on this relationship with his mother in his narrative and voices no opinions on her reaction to re-union with her son. He did feel, however, that perhaps he should try to give his parents a better understanding of his life-style by encouraging them to come to Newfoundland for a holiday, but this it not a topic he pursues in depth. His comment about paying for them to visit Canada as an aid to understanding is more significant for the distance he perceives between his view of the world and that of his parents. He obviously feels guilty about being unable to communicate a clear picture of his environment and society in his letters; there is a considerable gap which he feels responsible for bridging. Kareem returns to the problem of the inadequacy of his letters later in the interview, commenting that his parents had noticed the lack of significant news, noting however, that he observed traditional forms of opening and greeting. He sees this as a failing in himself but cannot immediately envisage any way to put this right. The gap in life-style and world-view is so great that the only possible solution would be to expose his parents directly to his way of life. As a result he can only reassure them that he is still alive and well.

The gap in communication finds another expression in Kareem's realis-

ation that his parents have withheld unpleasant news from him in their letters. Over the intervening years he has not been informed of the deaths of some of his contemporaries as well as that of a cousin in the United States. The justification, naturally enough, is that his family did not want to upset him by sending him unpleasant news. Kareem feels a certain sense of guilt that he has never made an effort to visit the cousin in the United States, which may help to compound his grief, but his most telling comment with respect to his parents not informing him of the death is the following

> ... I pointed out that maybe if you mention it ... when it happens ... its impact would be lower but then you see there are two different values attached to the same thing ... by the father and son, simply because one belongs to a different society ... at the present time.

Again, it is the contrast in the different perception of events which has caused a break in communication and helped to create the gap between father and son. The two individuals speak from different cultures and it is the confrontation of cultures, which causes the difficulty.[5]

Though Kareem makes no reference to his mother's feelings, he recalls his father's pride in re-introducing him to the neighbours. Kareem sees the local community as very close-knit and the return of "that lost son", as he describes himself, as something of an event. It is an indication of his father's pride in him that despite his ill-health, the father makes a point of presenting his son to all his friends and colleagues in the neighbourhood. The mode of presentation is also very important; it is not sufficient to introduce his son as "Kareem", he must be introduced as

> "... my son, Dr. Kareem ... Professor in Canada,"

to express the extent of his son's sucess.

Kareem accepts his father's attentions easily but he is not so relaxed about those of his peer group. Almost undoubtedly he was very closely ob-

served in his immediate neighbourhood, human beings ever curious, but the scrutiny of his old classmates and colleagues in Kuwait is not so easily handled. A pleasant social gathering deteriorates into a close examination of him as "... a weird ... new species of an animal no-one has ever seen before." The sensation of being the focus of attention is not completely pleasurable as "... all the eyes are centred on me just trying to make out ... what changes did come to pass on Kareem," and he admits he was relieved when they left. He felt he had again been subject to a form of test, only this time it was his capacity as a provider (or hunter) which was at stake. In their attitudes to him, he sees his former classmates as assessing him in terms of their own achievement "... what these people were trying to do maybe is to compare their lot" and it is a topic to which he returns when prompted at the end of the interview

> ...one of them feels that I'm passing a lot of opportunity by staying in North America because he feels that a man of my calibre ... could be making ... four times as much or five times as much as I'm making here.

As a consequence Kareem is regarded as an idealist, to be admired for the ethos he has created for himself and his family, and conceivably to be emulated but not necessarily because he has found abundant milk and honey in the promised land.

Though Kareem is aware that his way of life in Canada may be admired by some of his peers, he is also conscious of a gap in their attitudes and his own. A similar distance separates him from his own age group and younger relatives as that separating him from his parents. This gap in world-view is echoed in financial status and is a potential source of embarrassment to him. He is aware that if he is perceived as a man of substance and influence, able to help his relatives and friends materially, he

may well be approached for some kind of assistance. Non-compliance with such a request would be a breach of societal norms and Kareem voices his concern on this account. It is a relief to him that no special request or favour is asked of him.

> ... you probably feel someone will want a favour from you but I had that apprehension but no-one asked me a favour.

He clearly implies that he would have been embarrassed to refuse such a request, either because it is counter to the principles he judges to be part of his new identity or because his financial position is not one that allows him to help because "... I felt really ... that I'm not the best off." He rationalises his position vis a vis his contempories by implying that he does not evaluate his life in Canada strictly in material terms.

> ... O.K. they have a better standard of living than I have ...financially they're better off and ... once you've eliminated that, you see, then there is no sense of jealousy.

His life-style depends on more than material well-being and K. is able to resolve his relationship with his contempories with this remark.

Kareem's attitude with respect to his parents is slightly different. He commented previously in the narrative that he feels that they have little conception of the kind of life he leads, but take great pride in his professional status. If he has any regrets at living at such a distance from his parents he justifies his life in Canada with the following comment:

> ... my parents ... feel that ... I have probably decided to do what is good for me and my family. Pyschologically that we're happy where we are and because we're happy then that's O.K.

Parents, he feels, do not differ much from society to society and as long as their off-spring are happy all parents are prepared to accept that their children and grandchildren live far away. This stance allows him to rationalise living in Canada where the opportunities for interaction between various members of the family are very limited. The problem of his continued absence from the family group is resolved this way, allowing him to feel a sense of equilibrium in his relationships with those at home.

With these comments Kareem is drawing his narrative to a close. Having offered a series of anecdotes about his experiences and his reactions, his comments on his relationship with his parents and friends are a statement of his position. This is his "party line" which allows him to return to Canada and resume his usual activities reassured in the knowledge that his chosen way is right for him. This series of remarks may also be seen as a resolution of the problem of how he should view his former group. In this sense Labov and Waletzky's overall scheme may be applied. Kareem ends the narrative by acknowledging that, contrary to his initial expectations, the experience has been a pleasant one he would be prepared to repeat in spite of the expense. These comments return the narrative to the point in time at which he began his account and the interview ends in laughter. Viewed in terms of Labov and Waletzky's terminology the concluding remarks may be termed the coda - the functional device returning the verbal perspective to the present moment.

Kareem's attitudes alter in the course of the narrative and the progression may be traced as follows. Apprehension in anticipation of being re-united with his family characterises the early part or orientation section of the account. The narrative continues with the re-union with his parents and other relatives. This extension and amplification of his account is typified

by joy on his arrival and the excitement of re-union, shifting to nostalgia as he wanders round his old neighbourhood. His affection for his parents contrasts with the irritation he experiences with relatives openly critical of his education of his children. He expresses a degree of impatience with his peers who no longer accept him as an equal, rather a social specimen to be examined and evaluated. These remarks form the main body of the account interspersed with evaluative comments as they occur to him. The account ends with a justification in defence of his new life in Canada. His final mood one of satisfaction at having completed his visit home. The effort has been worthwhile, the money well-spent and the whole trip a success.

Kareem's use of English offers considerable insight into his degree of adaptation to his new environment. His English is fluent and idiomatic as he teaches in English and also speaks it at home. His wife indicated that initially they also spoke Arabic at home and were truly bi-lingual but latterly they both use English as the primary language with some expressions in Arabic and occasional words in Portugeuse, a legacy of their time spent in Brazil.

As a measure of acculturation, language is recognised as a sensitive barometer of change. It is accepted that changes can and do occur in all aspects of language but that vocabulary is particularly susceptible. As Keith H. Basso points out changes in vocabulary may be due to developments within the culture or to the efforts of intercultural contact.[6] In Kareem's case his vocabulary clearly reflects his experiences in a North American environment. Professional and social contacts have combined to influence his use of English and his speech flow contains many local colloquialisms. As an indicator of his assimilation into Canadian society, these expressions reveal the extent to which he has absorbed local terms and speech mannerisms.

They may be listed as follows:

Kareem uses the expression "you know" to cover moments of hesitation to maintain the conversational flow; this is immediately obvious and obtrusive on occasion. Other expressions included "my gosh" indicating surprise and a bowdlerism for "my God", "breezed through" intimating something was easily done, similarly "a breeze" to indicate something is easy, "a shot" as in $1,000 a shot" for $1,000 each", "to beat the system", I just figured out" as a synonym for "I just worked out", "sit.com." the contraction for "Situation comedy" with reference to television programmes, "hey?" with an upward inflection at the end of the sentence to seek assent from the listener - this last a Newfoundland variation of the Canadian mainland "eh" performing the same function, "I guess" for "I judge" or "I imagine," "snarls" with reference to traffic denoting traffic jams and congestion, "gotten" and "gotta" North American forms of the verb "to get" and "advice-wise" for "with respect to advice." Kareem uses all these expressions without hesitation and in the proper context indicating that he is happy to use them, they are not affectations for the sake of the interview and form part of his usual vocabulary. They lend an idiomatic quality to his narrative and give an indication of the degree to which he feels at home in his new environment. This vocabulary supports Kareem's overt statement already cited:

> ... I now identify myself more with the Canadian way, cool way.

The use of the adjective "cool" for "sophisticated" or "urbane" reinforces this statement.

Three further phrases with a distinct biblical ring, standing in direct contrast to the North American expressions listed above are: "the promised land", "that lost son" and "what changes did come to pass." Kareem, though Muslim, is also conversant with Christian practice and dogma and, at first, I felt he

might have used these expressions for my benefit. However, in further conversation, he indicated that this phraseology also occurs in Muslim religious writings, that "the promised land" refers to any place where one is happy and that "the lost son" is an allusion to Joseph's sojourn in Egypt. He had little comment on "what did come to pass" acknowledging merely that it could have been an error of style.

The first two examples are of significance for the insight they offer into Kareem's perception of his emigration and his relationship with his family. Mention has already been made of the phrase "the promised land" to designate North America - his intended place of immigration. In using this epxression, qualified by "so to speak" Kareem is consciously employing a dramatic religious vocabulary to render his idea more acutely. "The promised land" traditionally is never reached without difficulty and the efforts involved in getting there require patience and steadfastness. Kareem is using an image known to his listener to convey the strength of his feeling prior to emigrating and the patience it required to achieve his goal. He is drawing on a common stock of symbols to express a whole range of ideas, and as a result the analogy is particularly apt.[7] Similarly, Kareem uses the expression "here is that lost son" adding "if you will" to qualify it in describing himself as he walks round his old neighbourhood with his father. The image of the "lost son" again consciously employed encapsulates many ideas and is another strong evocative allusion. It encompasses the idea of joy in re-union particularly stressing that it is with a male child and also the notion of forgiveness by analogy with "the prodigal son" particularly in view of the meal of welcome prepared for Kareem on his return. The "lost son" also conveys a feeling of hopelessness for those left behind, that there is no possibility of return and that the individual is beyond reach both physically

and spiritually. In Kareem's case he must also seem beyond reach culturally given the radical change in environment between Egypt and Newfoundland as well as beyond physical and spiritual contact. His use of this expression shows his view of himself in this situation as well as his perception of his father's feelings. It is a telling comment and a further example of esoteric-exoteric factor in action.[8]

The final example of quasi biblical language which may be seen as no more than a stylistic error occurs when Kareem describes encounter with his contemporaries and former class-mates in Kuwait. The experience was not completely pleasurable and Kareem had the distinct impression he was no longer being considered as a long-lost friend but had become the object of an inquiry to establish in what ways he had changed since leaving Egypt.

> ... all the eyes are centred on me just trying to make out ... what changes did come to pass on Kareem.

The phrase "did come to pass" has a biblical ring to it, suggesting major occurrences. Kareem does not qualify this comment as in the previous examples but it is noteworthy that he documents the whole experience. He was very aware of an evaluation taking place, felt physically surrounded and more than a little relieved when the incident was over.

In terms of the overall narrative Kareem clearly identified at this stage a process or series of processes which he had suggested throughout the account but not openly articulated until this point. At this juncture he clearly suggested that he was undergoing a form of test. He was conscious of undergoing an evaluation to establish whether he would still be considered a member of his former group. This concern with whether he could rightfully claim membership in his group and whether he would be accepted is a theme running through the narrative. Re-acceptance by his peers and family is de-

pendent on his conforming to a required image they have of him and in order to prove his right to claim membership of the group he must first pass a series of tests. Some of these tests are self-imposed and different sections of his original community impose other tests depending on the particular quality or skill they wish to test. The competence of the individual to meet the demands made of him is under question and he must prove his ability for full re-acceptance. The tests may be enumerated as follows.

The returning individual must prove his competence by responding in a recognisable manner to his immediate group; by his ability to maintain meaningful exchanges with his group - his communicative competence; by proving he can perpetuate his group - his or her fecundity; by demonstrating his capacity as a tradition bearer; by showing he is capable of assuming or re-assuming traditional roles; by proving his capacity to provide for his subgroup - his "hunting" capability. All the tests listed, with the exception of that of that relating to perpetuating the group, were applied to Kareem at some stage. In his case he had returned home with his children - indeed his eldest son was already born prior to leaving Egypt - and there was therefore no onus on him to demonstrate any capacity to perpetuate his group. This is, however, a test of some significance which emerges strongly in another narrative to be discussed.

To a greater or lesser degree all these points were raised by other informants irrespective of sex. In some instances the informant was not necessarily aware of an evaluation taking place as Kareem but an examination of their accounts reveals that this happened at an informal level. Not all the informants gave as full accounts as Kareem and as a result potentially interesting details were not included. The informants concerned may not have felt

particular incidents worthy of recall nor felt subjected to any particular evaluation by their group. Other informants indicated that their visit home had involved a degree of strain or pressure deriving either from contact with their families or friends or from the environment. It is therefore instructive to consider these comments in relation to the concerns detailed by Kareem. A comparison of the major points raised in his narrative with the experiences of other informants will determine which tests or proofs were applicable for other individuals in this study.

NOTES

1. In contrast a group of East African Indians also Muslims, who are followers of the Aga Khan, meet regularly in St. John's for prayers and religious observances. The group is tiny but the sense of commitment to the group is strong.

2. Crépeau, p. 163: "... tant que la société d'acceuil est considérée par l'immigrant comme lui étant étrangère, elle conserve à ses yeux un caractère sacré ..."

3. Dell Hymes, "On Communicative Competence," Sociolinguistics, (eds.), J.B. Pride and Janet Holmes (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1972) 269-293.

4. Crépeau, p. 163.

> ... lorsque le processus de l'acculturation est fermement engagé, il se produit un pivotement tel que c'est le pays d'origine qui devient sacré alors que le pays d'acceuil devient profane. Au point qu'un retour au village natal est souvent conçu comme une sorte de pélerinage au pays des ancêtres ...

5. Dundes, "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview," p. 103.

6. Keith H. Basso, "Semantic Aspects of Linguistic Acculturation," Culture and Cognition: Rules, Maps and Plans (ed.) James P. Spradley, (San Francisco, Scranton, London and Toronto: Chandler Publishing Co., 1972) p. 344.

7. See Raymond Firth, Symbols: Public and Private, (London: Allan & Unwin, 1973), p. 81.

8. Jansen, p. 46. In this connection I am intrigued by a comment made to me by an English immigrant in St. John's. Such is her parents' concept of Newfoundland that they refer to her "self-imposed exile" in St. John's which is an interesting parallel with the images of "promised land" and "lost son" mentioned above.

CHAPTER 5: The other narratives contrasted and compared with Kareem's.

This chapter contrasts and compares the other narratives in this study, relating to them to the account given by Kareem. His narrative provides the basis for comparisons to be drawn with other accounts, allowing divergences of opinion to be noted and analogous situations and emotions to be emphasized. Similarities in attitudes or responses on topics not raised by Kareem are also discussed, because they highlight the degree of common experience within the context of a visit "home."

In collecting the accounts of peoples' visits I merely asked the individual to tell me about going home, occasionally indicating I was aware that this individual had just returned from a visit to his homeland. I deliberately gave as few details as possible concerning my research goals and strategies so as to encourage my informants to give unprejudiced accounts, uncoloured by any preparatory remarks on my part. Some informants would have preferred to have spoken to specific points and looked for me for questions to stimulate them into further recollections and anecdotes; others presented what they assumed I wanted to hear, the kind of impressions they felt I was looking for. One informant took the invitation to talk about her visit home as a welcome opportunity to talk about some of the many social problems facing her Third World country, amplifying her comments with precise descriptions of agricultural methods, using models and pieces of equipment to make her points. As a consequence of this approach the accounts vary considerably in their content. Some refer to one specific visit, others refer to a series of visits spread over a period of time - in one instance over some thirty years; one narrative contrasts the informant's feelings with respect to two visits close together but made in widely differing circumstances, for a holiday and for a funeral of a close family member.

The longer interviews tended to offer more detail but the most loquacious informants did not necessarily contribute the most pertinent narratives for this study. Various factors influenced the length and form of the narratives. One informant included a lengthy account of her relationship with a close friend, with whom she had just spent several weeks before each returned to their respective homes in India and Newfoundland. The extended period together, serving to emphasize the gap in the life-styles, had strained the relationship somewhat and my informant obviously felt a degree of remorse for what might have been seen as off-hand treatment. She spent some time trying to explain her feelings and her frustration at being unable to pursue her work during the visit. Another informant supplied considerable biographical detail as a background for his narrative and approached the topic of "going home" in more general terms. Memories of his first visit were very sharp, but subsequent visits seemed not to have affected him so greatly and his recollections were consequently less acute.[1] Two informants at least, made unfavourable references to changed social and economic situations in the places they visited, choosing to site their narratives against this backdrop. As a result the focus of some narratives tended to drift at times from the immediate perspective of the informant's reactions.

In contrast, Kareem's account, though not the longest, seemed well-rounded and concise. In his description of his visit, the focus of the narrative did not shift. He remained the central figure throughout, receiving his reflected image from the reactions of his family and friends. His remarks therefore, form a useful base against which to set the comments made by other informants on a similar topic, though some do not mention all the points raised by him.

The decision to return home for a while is not taken lightly. Travel is both expensive and tiring and long journeys must be properly planned. Apart from the expense of the journey and the preparations to be made prior to departure, the prospect of returning home generates a degree of nervous tension in the traveller for not unnaturally, he anticipates his arrival home. His anticipation, whether from happiness or anxiety, heightens his sense of perception and he is often acutely aware of his surroundings and environment, recalling his impressions in detail and with great clarity. Kareem's was no exception and his initial statement expressed his state of mind

> ... basically I was apprehensive for a couple of years, maybe for seven years at least ... [2]

He was apprehensive as to whether he would recognise the places he knew and whether he would be able to communicate with his family. Only a successful reunion with his family could alleviate the sense of anxiety generated by his return home. The sense of stress in anticipation of events to come was different for different individuals and varied according to circumstance: the visit home might be to assist in a family ritual or rite of passage such as a wedding (three examples in these narratives) or a funeral (one example); the visit home might be at a time of self-doubt when the individual concerned felt unsure of his direction in life and needed time to reflect (two examples); the strain of the journey itself, because of its length, was sometimes a cause of anxiety. Kareem's apprehension on returning home was echoed by different expressions of tension in other informants.

Lloyd returned to Wales after an absence of some years but without a great sense of joy

> I'd really be going home to the family as a courtesy as much as anything else because they expected me if I'd come all the way across the Atlantic they expected me to come and spend at least some time ... with them.[3]

A sense of frustration was characteristic of his visits home, he felt, mainly because of a poor relationship with his father, until the terms of his father's will force him to reconsider his relationship with his family and his original background.

Riccardo from Italy also had mixed emotions: satisfaction at completing his Master's degree but a degree of apprehension at having to serve in the army for a year and concern for his father's health:

> ... there was a strange mixture ... of satisfaction because I had finished my programme successfully and dissatisfaction because of what I was going to do there.[4]

Ultimately he discovered that he had worried unnecessarily and that the problems he envisaged had been resolved.

> ... basically all the problems I figured I would have to face once I was home were actually already solved, in the sense that my father was already out of the hospital...[5]

On another visit he recalled planning how to surprise his family and girlfriend by his arrival but the underlying motive for his visit was one of problem-solving.

> ... I didn't think too much about the problems I was hoping to solve when I went home but just you know how to surprise them with my arrival ...[6]

Philip distinctly recalled returning home to England in 1954 at a turning point in his life, unsure whether his future was to be in North America or Britain. The visit home was intended to distill his thoughts and offer a pointer for fresh directions.

> ... I decided at that point to go back on a visit to England and I had not been back in the four intervening years and I thought at that point I could clear my mind and perhaps have a look for jobs.[7]

He also retained a vivid impression of his arrival in London - climatic conditions echoing his feeling of uncertainty, his perceptions of the English

scene thrown into sharp relief by the confortable environment he had left behind.

> ... It was the month of April, I remember rather distinctly because when I landed it was a really foul English April. It was raining, it was cold and I had come straight from Texas, the Gulf of Mexico which by that time of year was already quite hot ... I had American clothes that were thin, lightweight and I was cold, chilled to the bone for the entire month I was in England ...[8]

In contrast the return to Bangla Desh for a niece's wedding was one of great joy for Aviva. She described in some detail how her excitement mounted as she prepared to go back after an absence of five years.

> ... every year I was looking forward ... to going home ... visiting ... my ... specially my father and my relatives and before going home I was so impressed I couldn't sleep the whole night so I told now one of my friends "What happened to me? I can't sleep?" "So girl you need to go home" and believe me or not after coming home I was sleeping like a donkey.[9]

She described preparations for returning home, including shopping for gifts for each member of her family.

> ... This time it takes about how long? about three or four months to pack up my suitcase and then (laughs) ... maybe my uncle, he has eight children, maybe some of them are married and they have some children. So I have to take a gift to everyone, you know. This is our way.[10]

Her journey took her thirty-six hours, the last stage involving a further two hundred miles by government bus to her home North of Dacca. Her energies flagged during her long journey with a small child but her delight at arriving was unqualified and expressed in lyrical terms. Like Philip, she seemed to have a heightened sense of awareness to her surroundings, an increased senstivity to everything around her.

> ... I was so glad I forget about everything. This boy was bothering me like hell so I thought "I'll never go home before ten years". I promised myself. ... whatever I looked at it looks like it's mine, even the

> flies ... and the mosquito. I couldn't kill them for two, three days ... it looked nonsense but I thought "Oh, it's mine, whatever, even the poor people, the rich people, the land and ... whatever I looked at it looks like it's mine.[11]

Her description of her homecoming is discussed at a later stage.

Aviva's reaction to returning home presented a marked contrast to that given by another female informant. Rita returned to Bombay, also for a wedding, after an absence of seven years. She was self-conscious about the length of her absence and felt obligated to explain herself. Initially, it appeared, she had justified not returning home for a visit on the basis that as a student in England she could not afford the expense of the journey however the underlying reasons was one of considerable poignancy. Her reluctance to return for a visit derived from her inability to have children and was the cause of her anxiety and tension.

> ... another reason I didn't want to back while I was in England was that I didn't have my own children always people wanting to have grandchildren you know, that was a big point.[12]

The strain of having to face her husband's parents without a grandchild was so great that she and her husband were forced to interrupt their journey in Rome and she felt that she could not travel on to Bombay. Adverse criticism from her brother on her inability to bear children had contributed to her anxiety and she recalled

> ... I just wanted to turn back and not go back at all.[13]

Ultimately her husband persuaded to continue with the trip, and the visit home was the first of a series over the succeeding years. The problem of the non-existent grandchildren was not easily resolved and remained an important issue. This very first visit home was a milestone for Rita in her relationship with her family, but the strain such that she limited the stay to ten days only. Subsequent visits proved happier but her interaction with

her family and their expectations continued to dog her.

Kristina is a Czech refugee and as such cannot return to the land of her birth. She volunteered her account of her return to Sweden where she had attempted to create a "second home" for her family for a period of about three and a half years and as such her narrative presented an interesting contrast to other accounts. Her motivation in returning to Sweden after an eight-year period in Newfoundland was one of curiosity

> ... what impressions would Sweden do on me or with different eyes ... older, perhaps more mature perhaps thinking the reasons why I could not find a home in Sweden were kind of petty ... I simply wanted to have a new picture about Sweden.[14]

Finally Ann-Marie from France identified some of the problems facing the returning immigrant even though she herself did not have to cope with them. Her return on sabbatical after fifteen years in Newfoundland was well-organised and she had no worries with regard to finances and shelter. She had remained in close contact with her family and had made several trips to France prior to her extended visit ... Her stay was intended to be a long one and her family had made every effort to ensure that problems associated with shelter and transportation were circumvented. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that this informant immediately listed the potential problems facing a returning immigrant.

> I went home on sabbatical which means I didn't have to go there and look for a job. I went there with enough money to live comfortably. I had a house waiting for me so it was quite nice to get there. ... I had a car which meant that I was able to see places I have never seen before.[15]

Those who return for a short period of time are not under the same pressure to be independent of their families and friends.

On arrival the returning expatriate is faced with the first of a series of subtle and informal tests. These tests are designed to ascertain whether

the returning group member can still function in a manner which is consistent with the way in which the group normally orders its behaviour.[16] The tests are a means of checking that its patterns and traditions have been and will continue to be respected. Behaviour patterns which do not respect those already established by the group are suspect and constitute a possible threat to the good order of the society. Deviant behaviour must be curtailed in some way to allow the individual to be re-absorbed into the group.[17]

Initially, the visitor must be seen to belong to the group which he or she left; he must be recognised by those at home. Such recognition entails matching his or her image with the perception his family and friends have of him. Recognition also implies appropriate behaviour, language, dress and life-style, each of these varying in importance depending on the context and culture. The returning group member must be recognised by his family for them to accept him and to re-incorporate him into the group. In return the need to re-adjust must be met by the individual or he remains excluded, his behaviour is regarded as deviant and he poses a threat to the community. Whether he or she can recognise his family and can empathise with them is another hurdle to be surmounted. Kareem's family greeted him as they have done so in the past - with an affectionate reproach

"... why were you late? "

and this in itself was sufficient to re-assure him that he was returning to the group he once knew. Returning to the family however brings particular requirements and demands for, as Ann-Marie pointed out,

> ... going home. Well going home was just being back with the family. I had to get acquainted with the ... with some of them again ... it's back being with the parents again and of course you are always a little girl whether you are thirty or twenty or whatever.[18]

Returning home means resuming a particular role and stature in the family and this is not necessarily easily accepted by the returning group member, unwilling perhaps to have particular stereotypes reimposed on him or her.

For Aviva, however, her delight in being re-united with her family was so great that, conscious of her limited time at home in Bangla Desh, she willingly re-adapted to the local pattern and was happy to resume traditional dress and modes of behaviour.

Her description of her reactions was lyrical, expressing the intense pleasure and sense of exhilaration she felt at being with her family and participating in their activities.

> I saw my parents. I start like crying and every day I was counting my days. "Oh, I have to leave, my days are coming," you know, so whenever in the night especially I used to wake up, everybody sleep, I was looking at the sky, looking at the houses, looking at the grass, you know, touching everything and this kind of feeling I got. I was eating whatever it is, I was getting a very special kind of taste out of it, you know, everything, even the meat.[19]

Her sense of empathy with her family and its life-style was very strong, allowing her to slip easily and happily into a role and behaviour pattern she knew well. Conversely, the large extended family to which she belonged recognised her and quickly claimed her as one of its own. Later, happy to see that she willingly accepted their customs and ways, they were curious and concerned about Western practices and asked many questions.

Aviva's immediate identification with the local scene is a marked contrast to Rita's sense of alienation from an environment she once knew well.[20] Difficulties with relatives were compounded by her antipathy to her physical surroundings, and she felt she was regarded as a misfit by her family. Her inability to relate to the environment underscored her lack of harmony with her family group.

> ...it's really coping with people to people that I find is very difficult and then, I mean, when you think of general things in India, I just sort of start of grumbling from the minute I land (Laughter)....

J. Really?

Rita ... till I come out again, I mean, heat, you know, I can't stand ...

J. You can't stand the heat anymore?

Rita That's right or I get the rash or the crowds or the pollution. You know, I think they accept that "Oh, she'll come and moan and groan" (laughter).[21]

Aviva's willingness to re-adapt to local customs is clearly seen in her reaction to following local dress codes. An easy acceptance of local practice allows her to adjust quickly to her former environment and is an overt statement to her family that she accepts their ways once again. She phrased it as follows:

> ... I just throw all my clothes, the suitpant or suit I used to wear. I just go open all my saris and give me 'whatever you want, you go ahead and whatever you like, you eat and just tell me what you want.'[22]

The importance of dress as a cultural symbol is variable. In Aviva's community respect for dress codes is important and failure to comply with local practice would have been a flagrant rejection of her tradition. Non-compliance would have caused considerable adverse comment within her family and would have constituted a breach of faith. At a later stage she explained that the extended family group to which she belongs is very tightly knit and could not really believe that one of its members could set aside its ways so completely that she no longer wore a sari as a matter of course. In fact, Aviva admitted that she was too shy to wear her trousers and shorts among her family and only put on a bathing costume one afternoon as a joke to make everyone laugh. Muslim observance required her to be modest and swim only

in the presence of women at their segregated pool

> ... so I thought today later give surprise to everyone. All were sitting, suddenly I wore my bathing suit and I come. Everyone was closing their eyes (laughs), mostly old men but there are children and boys about ten, twelve years. All these old men were so ashamed to see me. These were some jokes.[23]

Ann-Marie also pinpointed dress as an area of behaviour where the need to conform is strong. She was well aware that she set herself clearly outside the group by her refusal to follow local pattern in a small village in the South of France, and described her experience in the following terms:

> ... I think I gave them a little bit of entertainment. Also I used to wear these jeans all the time where most women would go at eight o'clock in the morning to get their bread, they had their full clothes on like nice French clothes even in a small village. Their hair done, make-up on and so on while I would go with my jeans and old sweater and sneakers on, so that ... I did not adapt to that side of French living (laughs) because I just didn't feel like putting on make-up to go and buy my bread in the morning before breakfast.[24]

However, Ann-Marie knew that she was regarded as a foreigner and that her local nickname was l'américaine, the American, which amused her.[25]

Although she did not mention it specifically in her interview, Rita from Bombay also saw clothing as a clear cultural symbol. Reference has already been made to her feelings on wearing a sari, partly to comply with her husband's wishes, but also because her own views on this point were very strong. On another occasion we had been looking at photographs of a family celebration in which Rita appeared wearing a Western-style evening dress with a low-cut neck-line. She explained how she had been criticised by members of her family for wearing such a dress in preference to a sari and how her father had come publicly to her defence by saying how nice he thought she looked. The memory of the incident, prompted by the photograph, was obviously very clear in her mind, and was an indication of the strength

of her feelings. Outside of her home country she had disassociated herself from her tradition and she re-affirmed this stance even more strongly by rejecting traditional dress in its natural environment.[26]

Dress is a powerful and emotive cultural symbol. It is a clear "badge of belonging" as these examples show, forming a social watershed which operates even within the context of a short visit home when the returning member of that society might conceivably be allowed some license. The requirement to conform is strong and failure to do so is a clear disregard of cultural norms. This was not a point raised by any of the male informants, but it does not preclude their being under similar pressures. Aviva recognised the pressure and was happy to bow to it, Ann-Marie preferred not to accept the pressure and for Rita it was a matter of principle positively to reject it. As an emotive symbol, dress works not only as a means of the group recognising the returning member, but also as a "marker" for the person who returns. Furthermore it becomes a standard by which that person judges his environment.

Dress also becomes a reflection of the society at large allowing the visitor to re-identify with an environment he or she was part of and which he or she knew well. Kristina's comments on Sweden illustrate this point.

> ... what was absolutely striking to me coming back and comparing my memories from my first impression of Gothenburg that the beautiful Swedish girls are missing somewhere. They are not there any longer and one should really ask why because my husband "show me a beautiful girl" and he wasn't able to for about two hours before he find one looking very actively. That couldn't happen in '68 when we came and I think it's the grooming, it's the general shabbiness ... of clothes and er the reasons are many probably. It can be fashion at that moment and also lovely clothes cost money and after paying all the taxes a Swede doesn't have any left to spend lavishly on clothes and cosmetics.[27]

Kristina could not matchher memories with the reality and her sense of identi-

fication with the place she once knew was weakened. As a result her sense of belonging was considerably impaired. Philip expressed a similar feeling in his description of London in 1954. Drabness of clothing reflected a general sense of dullness in the overall environment.

> ... but the other thing I remember very clearly was people's attitude, people's um general, people were very despondent and I mentioned the drabness and this was reflected too in people's outlooks and I remember thinking how dowdy all the women looked ... everyone had on sort of dreary clothes and there was no colour and there was no paint anywhere, all the sort of peeling paint of the forties was still there and all the soot.[28]

The ability to relate to the "home" environment is crucial, particularly if the returning member is to re-integrate himself into the local scene, for it is the willingness of that person to accept things as he finds them on which hinges his or her capacity to re-adapt. Failure to find significant points of reference in the local scene increases any incipient sense of alienation within the individual, as Rita's comments show.

There is then a two way recognition process at work. In the first instance, the returning group member must present himself in such a way that he or she is recognised by the group at "home". His or her persona must be acceptable to thoseat home. He or she however must be able to identify with the environment he has left, to find some points of reference with allow him to make contact with the local scene. Failure to do so causes a sense of alienation which may compound as the visit lengthens.

One way in which those at "home" express initial acceptance of their group member is with a welcoming meal. Shared food is a symbol of belonging and a gesture of love and frienship on the part of those at home. Two informants made specific reference to this, details of their arrival having made a lasting impression. The feast of welcome is a rite of re-incorporation, setting the scene for the gradual re-integration of the outsider in

to the group.[24] It is the resumption of the informant's membership in the group. Kareem described it in this way:

> ... The next morning - it was really the same morning because I had only an hour of sleep and then back up - everybody was excited about talking. Everybody was trying to feed me as much as they could. Now the food itself didn't feel alien to me ... but the quantities ... were different and the expectation that you would eat more, you know. That was different. I mean, ... here you just have a plate, maybe you go for a second if you want and that's it, but there, ... they expected me to have thirds and fourths and everybody ... Oh and that was another thing, I thought my mother was throwing fish and meat at me ...30

Similarly, Aviva recounted the celebration arranged for her arrival.

> ... When I come back there was a ceremony for that, my father called all his relatives and people. It looks like something. Whole night we didn't sleep, ... we had a big gang and we were just singing, talking, laughing, sometimes crying, whole night we didn't sleep, we didn't go bed. So all my relatives were there having a good time, having some peanuts ... telling jokes.31

The meal of welcome is a symbolic gesture for it reunites the visitor and his family group. It is a sign of mutual recognition, for the individual expresses his acceptance of the welcoming festivities by his participation in the event. The host group indicates the importance of the event in their attitude to the food and its presentation. Kareem's comments on the quantity of food he was expected to consume emphasize the importance attached to it, underlining his status as the centre of attention. The emotional quality of such events is apparent in Aviva's vivid comments. The feast of welcome extends above and beyond eating and drinking together for it also includes singing and joke-telling, re-iterating the celebratory nature of the gathering. As a ritual gesture, the meal of welcome is the first step in assimilating the visitor into the group.

A most important facet of the recognition process is language for it represents a central cultural symbol in group membership. The importance and style of language use in the social context have been noted by Hymes who

quarrels with schemes of linguistic analysis which divorce the speech act from its context.[32] Hymes rejects analyses which fail to take account of "the full range of abilities possessed by a user of language", arguing that social factors are central to an understanding of the communicative event for they provide the necessary contextual background.[33]

A situation in which an emigrant returns "home" and renews his contacts with family and friends is clearly one which requires considerable background information. Without it, any analysis of the communicative event falls short and lacks a dimension. Within the speech act, the immediate language skill is of primary importance in re-establishing contact but beyond this language also implies a shared culture base, frequently defining the limits of the group. Local dialects and accents are an extension of this definition, a further "badge of belonging" and the returning group member has to prove his capacity to speak his language or dialect as a further rite of incorporation into the group. If he falters, his lapse will be noticed and recorded as an indication of how far away he has moved from his original society.

Maintaining competence in the communicative code whether this is language, dialect or accent is important for the informant because it strengthens his or her perception of himself as a member of that group. It helps him to maintain his sense of reality within that particular society. Though he has left that society and may have spent some considerable period of time away, part of his identity derives from this original group and he looks to it for some affirmation that he belongs. He may not wish to re-identify totally with it, indeed may find this repugnant but some acknowledgment of his former association is needed. Not to be recognised is devastating, for it cancels part of the individual's identity.

One informant, Lloyd, phrased it this way.

> ... there were some boys approximately my age who had always lived a few doors away from me and they were sitting down drinking their pints and nobody recognised me at all ... the horrible thing about going back after a long time ... is that I would recognise everybody that I had known up until the time I left, everybody, put names to them, everything and not a soul knew who I was. Not a single solitary person, ... even people I had been quite close to ...[34]

The lack of recognition on the part of people he expected to know him was a shock

> ... it was an utterly disconcerting experience to go back to your own home which you thought of as your own, where, in my case, I had spent the best part of twenty three years and to be totally unknown. To walk past people and to them you are a complete and utter stranger. They'd look straight through you ...[35]

However, if this informant was not immediately recognised physically, he commented that most people responded to his voice. Once he spoke, he was no longer a stranger and was treated as a member of the group

> ... as soon as they listened to me speak ... they would recognise me and be very surprised and usually fairly pleased.[36]

He described how he had used this to play jokes on people, capitalising on the fact that he was not recognised physically until he introduced himself. He imitated his peers who commented on the fact that he had not lost his local accent inspite of having been away for some fifteen or sixteen years. Typical comments were

> ... "And you havn't lost your accent, have you?" to which he responded
>
> ... "No boy, haven't lost my accent, never lost it at all, see"

mimicking local intonation and speech rythms.

Lloyd's professional interests as a teacher and student of language may have coloured his approach for he conceded that, to a degree, he had adapted his speech style to suit the situation because he was aware or had become aware that this was the key to acceptance in the group. He qualified his

comments as follows:

> Now I don't speak like that anymore, in fact I never spoke like that er my family was er a little less rough around the edges than some of them that I grew up with, but this is one of the things that people seem to remark that they obviously feel that if you go away they expect you to come back changed, very sophisticated or whatever ... I don't know what they expected of me because I never asked them but one of the things obviously was that they expected my accent probably to have become Americanised.[37]

Maintenance of the language skill is one of the tests which the group applies to the returning individual. Initially, language competence helps in recognising the returning individual but the test continues, a constant reevaluation to prove re-incorporation into the group. The test is maintained because the informant has to show he can sustain meaningful exchanges with the group.

Philip commented on the subtleties of British and North American usage of English.

> ... I have never acquired ... changed my way of speech and so on dramatically and so ... presumably people didn't notice that I might have come, been anywhere else ...
>
> You know, you have to learn to press a whole new set of buttons to get things to happen and the other thing just while I think in that same context is the matter of language ... you don't quite realise unless you go back to live in England after many years in Canada or the States is the very, very large number of words and expressions that are subtly different ... I remember after something like three years there I thought I'd got all these things sorted out and I wanted to buy some wood for a carpentry project and I said to someone could they direct me to a lumber yard and they looked totally blank and then it turned out that it was a timber merchant, you know. And er so there's always one more that ... beyond all the ones that you thought you'd remembered and learnt.[38]

In recounting this incident Philip underlined the importance of communicative competence, that the problem of meaningful exchange can still arise even after an extended period spent in the "home" community. The ability

to make oneself understood, signifying a degree of reintegration into the society, continues to be of importance. Failure to use the appropriate language forms identifies the speaker as "foreign" and thus outside the group.

Kareem's comments on situation comedies on Egyptian television re-emphasise this point. His inability to empathise with the characters and incidents portrayed on the screen underscores how far he has moved culturally from his original group, to the point where he cannot make contact with the situation presented.

> The only thing that I really could see on or watch or listen to or watch on TV or radio was political events and I think at that time Sadat was visiting Haifa er so that was the only thing that I could make sense of and um I always try to switch to the English speaking channel um watching their situation comedies, you know, I just couldn't make any sense to it. The jokes were just to me were a completely different set of values, not to say that their set of values are extremely different but you see when you play with words, you know, when you play with ... you know what I mean when you just play on the differences between words and so on. It's the same thing, you know, you need a lot of training. I guess if I stayed there for a couple of months I would get back my old self.[39]

In saying this Kareem is expressing his alienation from the local scene, but emphasizing his confidence in his capacity to re-adapt eventually. Absence from the local scene has impaired his ability to relate to contemporary humour and he is only able to relate to events which required a less detailed knowledge of the immediate domestic situation. Because he no longer shares the same cultural scene situation comedies, heavily dependent on local allusions and innuendo, are without relevance for him.[40] Political events, though undoubtedly coloured by national political considerations are more accessible, because they form part of the wider world cultural scene in which he shares. Though he has the ability to maintain conversat-

ional exchanges with his relatives and friends, his capacity to relate to a wider circle has been impaired. His knowledge of the cultural scene is not sufficiently comprehensive and he is unable to behave in an appropriate manner.[41]

Maintaining language skill is an important part of the immigrant's re-incorporation into the group. As an outsider he is in a marginal position vis à vis the group and because of this his behaviour may be interpreted as a threat to the social order maintained by the group. His activities must be accommodated and absorbed so that "deviant" behaviour is effectively neutralised. Language skill is of paramount importance because it identifies the outsider as a member of the group. It is a primary cultural symbol, easily recognised by peers. Further, from the outsider's point of view, language re-inforces his sense of belonging to that group. Communicative competence bolsters his identity in the group - his "reality" in the group is maintained by this shared cultural symbol. "Reality-maintenance," to use Berger and Luckmann's term, is strengthened and sustained by conversational exchange, for an individual must receive confirmation that he is who he thinks he is from those around him.[42] His "significant others" reinforce his sense of himself in their reactions to him. Berger and Luckmann phrase this as follows:

> To retain confidence that he is indeed who he thinks he is, the individual requires not only the implicit confirmation of this identity that even casual everyday contacts will supply, but the explicit and emotionally charged confirmation that his significant others bestow on him.[43]

Language not only serves as the communicative code between group members, it also codifies experience, imposing an order. Shared language then becomes a means of sharing the same experience, of perceiving the situation from the same standpoint, for

> "the fundamental reality-maintaining fact is the continuing use of the same language to objectify unfolding biographical experience."44

Maintenance of reality is shared by all those who share the same language group, extending to regional and class dialects as well as national groups who define themselves in terms of language. More importantly, for this study, there is a corresponding return to reality for that individual but has left the group but subsequently returns to

> "the few individuals who understand his group allusions, to the section to which his accent belongs, or to the large collectivity that has identified itself with a particular linguistic tradition."45

In Kareem's case, lack of conversational contact has removed him from the codifying process of experience in his home environment, limiting his capacity to relate to new experiences in that context and, as a result, he finds certain TV programmes without point for him. Lloyd maintained his reality for his peer group by consciously emphasizing that factor which made him a member of the group. Philip's reality was flawed momentarily because his coding was incorrect and he was not understood. His choice of vocabulary was inappropriate for the context, marring his identity as a member of the group.

Though an individual's identity is maintained and re-inforced by language, there may be aspects of that identity which he does not find pleasurable. Resumption of particular attitudes and life-styles may run counter to the image the immigrant has formed of himself while he has been away, and pressure to aquiesce to the demands of his original society may set up internal tensions. Lloyd found lack of recognition very disturbing and sought to bridge the gap between himself and his peers, but a complete resumption of the life-style attached to this particular identity was not acceptable.

In this context his comments are again illuminating.

In his account he described some of his activities, mentioning how his perspective changed according to the circumstances of his visit. Introducing his children to some of the pleasures of his own childhood was a positive experience

> ... spending a great deal of time on the beach where I found a lot of childhood activities like making sandcastles and dams and fooling around in the water and this sort of thing exploring places or showing to my children some of the things I had done as a child there [46]

as was walking around the area he had known as a young man.

> I used to walk up and down various parts of Porthcawl um which had been places I'd always walked up and down you know, either with girl friends or by myself and this was very much going back to youthful experiences associated for the most part with pleasure.[47]

Similarly, he described leisure time spent with his father.

> ... So that was Christmas where I spent a lot of time drinking with my father and either his friends or my friends doing as I recognised the sort of things that I would have been doing had I lived there, that is to say having my club, ... playing snooker, drinking beer on regular nights and following a kind of lifestyle in fact that as a teenager I swore I would never follow because I hated how I perceived life to be in Britian in the late 50's and early 60's.[48]

Activities which he perceived as a young man would have bored and frustrated him on a regular basis became pleasurable on a limited time scale. However his perception altered following a change in the circumstances of his visit. His father died quite suddenly and Lloyd had to return to Wales to bury his father and to consider the implications of his father's death. He returned to the same clubs

> and it was odd going back and as it were plunging myself straight back into exactly the same atmosphere except with this very significant difference.[49]

His father had indicated that he wanted the family home to stay in family which meant that if Lloyd were to respect his father's wishes he would have to live in that house. Lloyd was forced to consider seriously the possibility of returning on a permanent basis. Within quite a short space of time he had spent considerable periods in the place he had grown up and was made to think about the implications of returning home. His conclusion was that "it would be like going into prison in a sense" because his overall life-style had changed so completely. A return to Wales would have meant

> numerous frustrations which one has not become accustomed to, one has lost the habit of here, like travelling and what I perceive as pettiness ... in Britain. The small scale of things, I've got used to living on a large scale, living with a good salary and being able to indulge myself in some of the pleasures of life. Whereas talking to people and living and seeing the way they live ... I couldn't take that any more. Having to go to a supermarket with your own shopping bags for example, having to walk to all sorts of places where you normally drive ... a lack of facilities.[50]

Philip echoed a similar frustration in his reaction to the daily detail of life "back home."

> ... if I ever got the house er if I'd come into the sitting room in my parents house and I'd get a fire going or something my father would come and say "God what a fug in here" and fling the window open (laughter). I remember my rage ... but I think it's these little sort of differences that when you've been away for some period of time in another country you see things from a slightly different angle and its that sort of thing that you er you have problems with I think when you come back on a visit or you come back and then after a while it all kind of you know ... you get back into the swing of it.[51]

He characterised this period as "traumatic" a time of intense introspection causing him

> to work my way through all the emotions and rationalisations and thought of someone who has come back home after a four year stretch pretty clear in his mind that he was going to come back and settle and get a job and re-join ... the main stream in the ordinary way ...[52]

"Re-joining the mainstream" though presents problems, even if the individual involved actively seeks to merge into the community he once knew well. If there is no such intent then a degree of accommodation has to be achieved between the home scene and any new attitudes and customs the returning visitor may have adopted while he or she has been away. Achieving a workable synthesis of old ways and new ones raises conflicts. The same events viewed from different angles evoke different responses in behaviour which can cause clashes, as the following examples show.

The confrontation with life-styles and patterns in the "home" community was difficult for Rita. She described two incidents in which her natural inclinations ran very strongly counter to local, expected behaviour. Resumption of local practice was repugnant to her, particularly when it concerned the well-being of her father who was seriously ill. She recounted the incident as follows:

> ...when my father was terribly sick you know and people were coming in, neighbours dropping in all hours, right from eight o'clock in the morning, till late at night .. There was no rest and he wanted rest, you know. He wanted quiet and peace so I put up a notice on the door outside. I told you about that I think.
>
> No.
>
> Um. No visitors because he is very poorly, but any kind of news about him I will send a message to the Fire Temple and please enquire there. (laughter): The local Fire Temple because he was the central figure of all this little community where the priest came from the Fire Temple in the middle of the afternoon, after lunch kind of, and he was just resting, you know, and I just sort of nearly had to throw the priest out after three minutes and my mother thought at least I should have given him fifteen minutes, you see. By then it would really have disrupted my father.[53]

Rita was quick to recognise the difficulty in this situation.

> My concern was just to look after father, so you see, my concept was just his well-being and their concept was to please all the well-wishers.[54]

Rita described a further clash with her mother, again deriving from differing concepts of appropriate behaviour.

> One smallest thing I can tell you first time I went back there were all these different kinds of soap I had taken you see to give to my mother. I know she loves Pears soap- that transparent thing, you know, and my cousin, Camay and then I had some extra ones - perfumed ones, you know - so I said, "Well, O.K. Yardley and this and that," so I said, "Well, I'll give it to this and then I forgot or I didn't want to really give it to one of my neighbours. That neighbour was a very close friend to my mother so my mother got so upset with me, you see. So I said "Well, why should I, you know, I mean, I don't have to do these things."[55]

Her mother obviously expected Rita to aquiesce to her wishes and to follow the local custom of giving gifts to family and friends. Rita's comments indicate her irritation at being expected to comply simply as a matter of course. Kareem pointed out in connection with receiving bad news from his family, two different values are attached to the same event, each perception of the event reflecting two different culture groups, thereby causing the break in communication. In Rita's case the conflict in folk ideas as a result of the contrast in cultures had caused the clash between mother and daughter.[56]

Contrast in cultures did not present acute problems for Anne-Marie. Clearly the cultural gap between a small village in the South of France and Newfoundland is not as wide as that between Bombay and Newfoundland, but the confrontation of the two cultures, did cause her some conflict in ideas.

Initially, Anne-Marie implied that she had felt no great hardship in adapting to local behaviour patterns, stating that she had "no great problem at all adapting back into French life."

> I enjoyed the food tremendously which (laughs) says something about me er the food, the good weather, the er cultural environment, going to a town and you have bookstores after bookstores, that was something I realise I'd missed. I went back to a fairly primitive way of life, where I had to light my stove every morning, woodstove, coal when I could afford it (chuckles) including the smoke in the house and all the mess it makes in the house. I went back to that very very easily no problem, no hot running water that I adapted fairly easily also. I was surprised myself after living in this very comfortable environment here, where you have everything in the houses. No phone of course ...[57]

However she did mention one or two details which indicated that the experience of being back in France had not been altogether positive, notably the school system where she found her three children were taught very much as she had been as a small girl. Although she adapted well she expressed a mild degree of irritation over the French break for lunch.

> ... that's one thing I found very annoying is that everything stops at twelve o'clock between twelve and two because French people go home and have a meal. That thing it took me a long, long time to adapt to, all the stores close, all the banks close, everything is closed when French people eat.[59]

Similarly, as mentioned previously, she did not feel inclined to follow local patterns with regard to dress, and laughed at the idea of changing out of jeans and a sweather first thing in the morning to go out to buy bread. Local women might feel constrained to wear makeup and to dress formally but Anne-Marie did not feel bound by the same conventions.

Ann-Marie recognised that she was regarded as an outsider. She described herself as oddity, nick-named l'américaine, and needing to explain that she was not, in fact, an American, but lived in Newfoundland in Canada. In these circumstances she found that simply cashing a cheque excited curiosity.

> ... they had to look at and turn it round. They've obviously never seen dollars around but I was in a very small village where there is a small bank which is a rural bank. It's mostly for farmers.[59]

The sensation that one is moving away from known patterns of behaviour to a point where expected local responses begin to become irksome is illustrated in Riccardo's account of his three visits to Italy. He had not been asked to pinpoint any differences in his attitudes in the course of his visits but volunteered the following comments on his change of perspective. Of his first visit, after an absence of almost one year, he commented

> ... I don't remember of any particular feeling of diversity or something like. Of course I could feel some differences after having experienced a different culture and a different environment but I couldn't feel any difference between Italy before I left and Italy when I returned.[60]

His second visit was very short, of two weeks duration only, and he noted a change in his impressions.

> I don't know whether it was my feeling or not but I found Italy much more a rushy place. Everybody was rushing back and forth and I couldn't get anybody that I wanted to get and I had to rush with them in order to be able to do anything and that time I had the first time the feeling I was losing some of my characteristic of Italian in the sense that again while before I was used to this way of life, of rushing and living in between a million persons and not knowing anybody and when you walk in the streets you just go in a slalom between the people, just it looks like they are all posts.[61]

At this stage he merely commented that he noticed a change in his perceptions, however by his third visit at Christmas in 1979, he said

> ... Again I had the same feeling of er becoming ... being in the process of becoming different, of losing my er character, my Italian character because again I felt this disorganisation, this rush in everybody, this worry of spending every last second rushing back and forth doing business and you know, doing whatever you had to do and at that time I really felt uncomfortable with that.[62]

Riccardo also expressed his fears about what he saw as a worsening situation in Italy, politically and socially he felt that the country was deteriorating. He felt that he was seeing a "new mentality" which he didn't

like very much and which disappointed him. He commented, however, that this feeling of disappointment in a society and way of life which he had once shared, was masked by preparations for his wedding.

> ... the idea of getting married, you know, sort of overcame the disappointment of seeing something so different.[63]

At this juncture he was facing the realisation that he was no longer able to identify completely with attitudes and life-styles he once accepted. He also mentioned a lack of excitement in the thought of going "home" and assessed his visit as follows.

> ... Staying there was quite pleasant from the point of view, disappointing from another point of view so quite a mixture of feelings but it was not exciting as such as going home.[64]

Given that he is still young and has yet to establish a permanent home for his wife and himself, one may conclude that Riccardo's ideas and attitudes are still changing and that the gap in world-view will continue to increase.

Of all the informants in this study, Aviva gave the clearest indication that she was content to accept her former role and to re-adopt local customs. Her comments with regard to dress, to food and to her family show that she felt no undue strain during her visit home. Where other informants expressed a sense of frustration or impatience with local ways or felt themselves at odds with the climate of opinion or ideas, Aviva displayed an affectionate tolerance for situations which might otherwise have been regarded as unacceptable. In the face of hardship among her relatives her response was to try and help them.

> ... some of them are very poor, so we try to help them, whatever way we can. Some of them may be very rich, some money for the business, somebody needs for their house, somebody needs that or that, so I ask them what your priority was, way you can help me, so they come and say, "well, this is the way you can help me." We try to help in that way (pause) and their life is different you know.[65]

Aviva's tolerance of particular conditions are partly temperamental but undoubtedly she had also been conditioned by her culture. However she was conscious of a cultural gap between her family in Bangla Desh and her life in Canada. Pausing before making the comment "... their life is different you know" indicated an awareness of this difference.

Aviva's sensitivity to local patterns is a function of her upbringing. As part of an extended family she regards her cousins, aunts and uncles as members of her immediate family and her motivation to see them is strong.

> I respect my uncle as my own father, my auntie as my own mother because they used to take care of me when I was young ... Thus it's not that only I want to go home for my father or own sisters. It's a group whom I like and who did lot of things for me when I was young so I am very grateful to them.[66]

The entire family lives in the same house, eating the same food and working in the same business. Family relationships are close with strong ties beween its members. Marriages are arranged by the parents of the young people involved and Aviva explained that she too had followed local custom in this respect. She spent some time outlining how such marriages take place, indicating clearly that she saw considerable difficulties in reconciling the system in which she had grown up and mores in North America.

Her comments on marriage were prompted by her relatives' questions about life in Canada. Specifically, she had been asked about the marriage system and divorce, local perception being "they divorce their husbands so easily." More particularly, her relatives were concerned about Aviva's daughter, the eldest of her three children, who had remained in Canada. This girl was regarded as of marriageable age in Bangla Desh, though at that stage, she was finishing high school in St. John's prior to entering university. Aviva did not find it easy to discuss the question of finding a husband for her daughter, but the following extract from her account gives some idea of

the difficulty in bridging the gap in world-view between a Bangla Deshi grandfather and a Canadian grand-daughter.

> ... my father is very worried about my daughter. "you shouldn't keep your daughter, you know .... you should understand this, your daughter is growing, where you find out a man to ... (laughs)" \It's very difficult, and my daughter says "How come you did not know my father, you just marry?"[67]

The inference was clear; Aviva's father feels she should be seeking a suitable husband for her daughter. The grand daughter, whose formative cultural experience is that of life in Canada, could not understand how her mother had agreed to marry a man she hardly knew.

Aviva gave no indications as to what she thought about arranged marriages nor what she wanted for her daughter in the future, presumably delaying any firm conclusions until a later stage. She did, however, express sorrow for an aunt, widowed at an early age and constrained to lead a very quiet existence.

> ... when someone becomes a widow you know, you have to follow certain rules and regulations. ... And my aunt is not ... She would be about forty to forty-three now, and then my uncle died and she is now wearing most of the time white clothes. So many restrictions for her, so it is very difficult, sorry for her.[68]

Again, Aviva was conscious of a conflict in points of view and, in this case, might even have been voicing a mild criticism of the system.

Certainly when she spoke of the problems of birth control and family planning among a rural population, her professional concern as a social worker became apparent. She contended that modern methods of birth-control were incompatible with the hard life led by many women in small agricultural communities, because many of them were in poor health. She commented, however, that people in the cities saw things a little differently.

> They want to be Westernised, they want to marry according to their own choice and they don't like this joint family system. It is more or less they want to live with their own single family. I mean the wife most of them not having more than two children but parents different.[69]

Though she was obviously delighted to return to a familiar scene and to re-assume her position in it, Aviva's comments pinpoint some of the areas of conflict. Never directly critical of her relatives or their way of life, she showed, nonetheless, a warm sensitivity to their problems and a willingness to understand. Consequently, she found little or nothing to frustrate or irritate her and was able to maintain a strong sense of identity with that group. Resumption of this life-style, however did not block her perception and, as her comments have shown, she remained aware of the problem of differing world-views.

The returning visitor continues to be the object of further tests, designed to prove his right to belong to the original community. An evaluation takes place to determine whether he still belongs in the group. The tests are not formally couched in the sense of an examination, but each individual is judged on his performance to prove his claim to membership in the group. Two important means of testing, namely language competence and the ability to interact with others in the community, have already been discussed above.

A further assessment of the informant concerns the perpetuation of the group. "Cultural heirs" must be provided to maintain the continued existence of that particular group in times to come, whether this be a family, a religious or a special ethnic group. Thus, the returning immigrant is doubly welcome if he or she also brings the next generation to meet their grandparents and other relatives. If the "cultural succession" is assured, re-entry into the group, albeit for a short while, is more easily achieved.

In most instances in this study, the "succession" was not in doubt. Six of the eight informants had children and in all cases the children had visited their parents' point of origin. Kareem's eldest son, for example, was born in Egypt, prior to the family leaving for Canada. Two further children were born in Canada, re-inforcing his claim to membership. Of the two informants without children one in particular offered a striking insight into the importance of the "cultural heir."

Rita, from Bombay, had had to come to terms with the sad realisation that she and her husband would most probably never have children. It was not a topic I ever discussed at length with her but over the years I knew her, I sensed a profound sadness that she had no children. Socially, she passed this off with a joke, but in more serious moods she would admit that she felt a great sense of disappointment. As a result she took a great interest in other people's children, never forgetting birthdays and making special efforts to involve herself in their activites. She took particular interest in a colleague's small daughter, frequently looking after the child and buying her clothes and toys. She also encouraged the other two children in the family to spend periods of time with her and her husband. Whenever she came to my home she invariably arrived with a small package for the children and any book she bought as a gift was carefully chosen to reflect the interests of the child concerned.

Her lack of children was a serious concern to her and was one reason for delaying her first visit home after an absence of several years.

> ... another reason I didn't want to go back while I was in England was that I didn't have my own children, always people wanting to have grandchildren, you know, that was a big point.70

She described the implications of her childlessness and the reactions of her immediate family.

> ... I left India in '63, so '71 is a very long gap since I went back but I had got married in '64, by '65, '67 if I didn't have children I didn't want to face my in-laws. I mean I had sort of broached the subject with my mother only, in letters, and I said "well, we would have liked children but we don't have them" or something like that but she never commented anything in her letters but I didn't want to face my in-laws and even so much so that my brother was sort of opposed to it that "Well, I was the one that didn't want children and well, how can my husband tolerate me"[71]

When Rita eventually met her parents-in-law, she found a degree of understanding of the problem but not total sympathy.

> ... of course then when I faced them and I got it over with my mother-in-law was very sympathetic but still she would make jokes about it and this sort of thing you see (laughs) whereas my sister-in-law was nasty about it, kind of.[72]

Friends and neighbours presented an even less sympathetic attitude and were less prepared to understand the situation.

> ... So when I got over ... even to the extent that my neighbours and friends were more curious than my own family because I think the parents and the close relatives understood the whole but the neighbours and friends even suggested that we have a wedding ceremony done by (laughs) the priest...[73]

The suggestion that Rita and her husband go through a wedding ceremony, conducted by the Parsee priest, was a desire to see her conform to local custom for she and her husband had been married in a civil ceremony, by the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths in Birmingham, U.K. Clearly this was not regarded as sufficient by those at home and Rita indicated that the suggestion had been made that "things would change" if she were to be married according to local rites.

> ... By the priest because in my case we had the registrar's ceremony in England.

J. Right.

and just the licence.

This would be a Parsee priest?

> Parsee priest and things would change, you see, and of course if I did, since, I mean, I was there in '71 "why don't I have this done?," just in case I had children then they would be properly, sort of ... they wouldn't be illegitimate children according to the Parsee law then. I don't know whether they would be or wouldn't be ... (laughter) so according to some of them we are still not quite legally married (laughs).[74]

Rita's relationship with her family has mellowed since the first difficult visit. She has returned to India periodically since then and she takes a warm interest in her nephews' development. Her lack of children remains a matter of some sadness for her as she still refers to the gap in her life, realising that the opportunity for adopting a child is also slipping away. Her comments on childlessness are telling within the context of this study for they show the degree of pressure exerted by her family group and the strain this has imposed on Rita's relationships with members of the group. The importance of the next generation, born within the socially accepted framework, is of great importance for maintaining cultural continuity. Those who do not conform, clash with more traditionally - minded members and are pressured to fall into line. Though never directly stated, it is implied that Rita's childlessness is a result of her failure to comply with accepted marriage practices, and that compliance with local custom will solve her problems.

However the problem of the "cultural succession" does not end with the birth of an "heir." The heir must also be able to function appropriately within the society and at this stage the returning immigrant must also prove his competence as a tradition bearer. A direct statement on this test is found in Kareem's narrative. The issue at stake is his children's

inability to speak Arabic. Kareem and his wife made no substantial efforts to teach their children Arabic and he was criticised by members of his family for this. He commented as follows:

> ... Of course, there was one thing, you know, that came up and got me a bit sensitive and that's not my immediate family but some of my cousins and so on, you know, levelled some criticism because my kids don't understand Arabic. They felt, you know, that we're lenient in doing this. I got upset about it because well, I don't have to go through my own justifications, eh? But it was a difference of opinion and, you know, so this is one of the things, you know, that got me into a bit of misunderstanding with some of the family.75

The interference of his cousin's remarks was that Kareem was not being true to his cultural heritage in neglecting to pass on the language. As a bearer of tradition Kareem had defaulted for he failed to transmit a significant aspect of his culture, and as a consequence deprived his children of an essential aspect of the larger group identity. Given the importance of language as a major cultural symbol, his failure to convey this to his children was regarded as a breach of faith by his relatives. As his remarks imply (See Chapter IV) his cousins thought he should have felt obligated to teach his children Arabic and having failed to do so, he is the object of censure. Again, language, embodying as it does major cultural overtones and attitudes, is a strong factor in ensuring acceptance by the group at home. In this instance, the test extends to the informant's children. Their inability to use the language proves their father to be an imperfect tradition-bearer and because of this he is open to criticism.

Kristina recalled similar criticism on her visit to Sweden. She was accompanied by her daughter, Mariana, at that time about eight years old. Mother and daughter not only visited Swedish friends and aquaintances but also renewed their links with members of the Czech community in Gothenburg.

Kristina had mentioned that Czech political refugees did not automatically achieve full Swedish citizenship and were subject to travel restrictions, although they received many other benefits. In Kristina's view Czech professionals did not necessarily achieve their full potential in their careers because they were not full Swedish citizens. On the other hand, their children tended to be more kindly viewed if they did well at university, learnt to speak English and married into the Swedish community at large. These factors created what she termed a "ghetto" complex and she quoted Czech who said to her "' we do live here in well-to-do ghettoes'". She amplified her remarks as follows

> ... I forgot to say about these ghettoes it came to the point that these people, the Czech people, the Czechs meet only Czechs and then the Hungarian refugees do meet only Hungarians and occasionally they probably do meet some Swedes. I am sure of it, but there is not this great feeling of belonging or having fun or spend a weekend with these people or something like that but why they call it "ghetto" because it came to the point that people actually do decide who will belong to the ghetto, who will be out because they perhaps do misbehave or someone has some relationship with someone else who is not really a desirable person to be in this kind of society, their artifical society they created and er so many people came to the point they don't want to be in the ghettoes so they are quite lonely.[76]

In this situation it is understandable that language remains an important cultural symbol. Kristina described, in another conversation outside of the interview context, how another exiled Czech had tried to make her daughter, Mariana, speak Czech. The child had been unwilling to speak Czech to order and had remained silent. In Canada, in her home environment she normally spoke Czech with her grandmother and to her pets, but had felt understandably shy about speaking Czech outside of these circumstances. Kristina, however, was censured for not making more strenuous efforts to teach her daughter and to promote the language. Kristina also mentioned

that she had been described as "unpatriotic" by a fellow Czech because she was unable or unwilling to share pleasant reminiscences of Prague.

In a situation where they are regarded as less than first-class citizens, it is not surprising that a group of aging political refugees clings to its language as a major means of expressing its identity and re-affirming its culture. In the light of the criticism levelled at Kareem by his relatives, it is apparent that Kristina is also regarded as not keeping faith with her tradition. Even though her daughter speaks Czech, she did not demonstrate this capability in the appropriate circumstances and as a result Kristina is deemed an imperfect bearer of tradition.

Ann-Marie's children all speak French and the question of her capacity as a bearer of tradition is not raised. It is posited that Riccardo will also face a similar dilemma as and when any future child of his returns to its grandparents in Naples. Similarly, though Aviva and her husband have made occasional attempts to teach their daughter Bengali, the girl herself, admits she knows a few phrases only. Conversations with other individuals outside of this study indicate that they too have been criticised for not transmitting a language to the next generation. Again it is regarded as a betrayal of heritage, a breaking of the faith and an indication that that person has not met his obligations as a bearer of tradition.

The expatriate is thus tested in two ways in connection with his language competence. Not only must he be sufficiently conversant with contemporary usage to enable him to participate in the social scene around him, he must also take steps to perpetuate the cultural storehouse. He must ensure that his children learn the language to enable them to interact with the family or culture group their parents left behind. If the children are unable to express themselves appropriately, it is assumed that the parents

have not made sufficient effort to pass on this aspect of their culture. As a consequence, the parents are seen as negligent, possibly "unpatriotic" and open to criticism.

Kareem mentioned a further point on which he felt he had been evaluated by his peer group. This was his ability to provide for his family, his capacity as a breadwinner or "hunter". He described the experience in the following terms.

> ... All the eyes are centered on me just trying to make out what changes did come to pass on Kareem. ..., I felt also that what these people were trying to do, maybe is to compare their lot ... here you have two groups of immigrants but they are away from home to Kuwait. It's a completely different society than their homeland eh? ... I don't want to pass judgements on how they feel but basically what they are trying to do, I felt was to compare their lot with mine ... and that was obvious in their questions, but maybe it was curiosity. A lot of them would want to come to North America, well I answered, but then when you have too many questions about the same subject ... you get a bit tired ... [77]

Later he amplified these comments with the following remark.

> ... I think one of them feels that I'm passing a lot of opportunity by staying in North America because he feels that a man of my calibre and so on and so forth ... could be making ... four times as much or five times as much as I'm making here. [78]

Kareem had found the experience rather un-nerving, it was unsettling to be assessed by his peers in this way and he adopted a defensive attitude in the face of what seemed like criticism. He had made his reply in response to my question "How do other people see you, do you think?" From his comments it appeared that his family and peer group were trying to assess his level of financial success, to decide for themselves whether his North American existence measured up to their perceptions and compared favourably with their lives in Egypt or Kuwait. His parents were less probing, happy to know that their son and his family were content and enjoying their chosen life-style in Canada. Kareem felt that, in some respects, his peer group did not view him as particularly successful. Conceivably he did not

measure up to their expectations of a "North American." Failure to conform to the preconceived image implied that he had not met their standards. In this connection there was an interesting contrast in attitude between Kareem's father and Kareem's peer group. His contemporaries assessed his professional achievements in terms of his salary, his father delighted in his son's status as a university professor, introducing him to friends, colleagues and tradespeople alike as

"... my son, Dr. Kareem ... professor in Canada."

In this respect, the father's attitude is paralleled by that of other family or group of members in this study. "North America" and "North American" is still synonymous with success, wealth and general wellbeing. Anyone who leaves his native land for the New World is almost automatically assumed to be prosperous and happy, for as Lloyd phrased it,

> "... the States or Canada to a lot of them is some kind of Eldorado."[79]

The individual who returns from "Eldorado" is assumed to have changed, to have become very sophisticated, possibly ready to despise what he left behind, for Lloyd qualified his remarks as follows

> ... the implication was that most went away and they changed as if they weren't proud of where they'd come from and I hadn't ...[80]

In response to the same question "how do people see you?" he replied

> as a local boy who's gone away and made good er a university professor even in Britain has prestige, even if he doesn't have very much money. In Britain that kind of function is considered to be pretty good, I think, er being away in Canada which to them is very vague, I think.[81]

Ann-Marie also commented on the concept of Canada as an imperfect one in the minds of those left at home, as she had needed to explain where she lived and worked.

> ... everybody knew I'd been living in Canada and for the French, Canada is simply America, so I did tell them a bit in detail where I lived.[82]

She, too, commented on her mother's pride in her achievements.

> ... I was the Canadian and my mother, of course, didn't help much - she's very proud and she talks a lot and everybody knows in the village. She always talked about the daughter from Canada, so I had to live that one down. ...[83]

Rita responded in a similar manner to the question "how do they view you at home?" saying

> ... I think they view me as a very successful person and sort of done a lot of things I wanted to do in life. They think I was very ambitious so I have fulfilled my ambitions er I don't think they realise I'm becoming less ambitious ...[84]

She continued

> They really understand and try and cope with my real feelings and so on but at the same time er they feel that I have changed drastically and whatever they do to try and please me, it doesn't affect me you know, which is a shame ...[85]

Kristina was also viewed as successful, partly on account of her husband's status, but also because of her own academic achievements

> ... our Swedish friends gave us the red carpet treatment.
>
> ... the red carpet treatment was because he (her husband) became a professor and for a Swedish mind a professor is someone next to God ...[85]

and

> My Czech friends thought that I matured tremendously, because in a way they were very envious that I can do what they can't do, that I can develop as a person, studying even at my age and with my family responsibilities ...[87]

Riccardo qualified his reply to my question on the grounds that it depended on which member of his family group was concerned, but his comments echoed those of others in this study.

> ... they are very proud of the fact that I'm out of Italy and am doing quite well and am giving a good example of an Italian person and so on ...[88]

This pride is tempered though with emotional considerations for

> they are quite dissatisfied with the fact that I'm out of Italy and not with them and am not sharing their life ...[89]

Pressed a little further on this point of family attitudes to him he added

> ... sometimes I feel like they consider me as someone outside their environment.[90]

for he had noticed that he received special treatment, similar to that accorded his uncle who was greeted as a specially important guest.

> ... now they consider me more ... like a relative but like a special relative.[91]

He also commented that his relatives seemed more interested in his activities and academic performance than in him as an individual.

> ... my relatives tend to ask me questions about how are things here, looks like from a politeness point of view just because they have to ask, just in order to be polite.[92]

Special status accorded the returning immigrant was also mentioned by Philip who referred to the special arrangements made to see all family members.

> when one had made a state visit then there was much effort made to have a family get together and so on, whereas when you were living there you just sort of tended to let it slide ... in the way these things happen.[93]

Paralleling the experiences of other informants in this study, Philip noted that his relatives also had very little concept of his life in Canada and ultimately, a very limited interest. In common with Kareem, he expressed a similar sense of being unable to share his experiences with his family at home and felt other emigrants must share this sense of estrangement.

> ... I am sure this is a thread that must run through most emigrant's recollections and impressions and that is that

> their family and friends however fond each are of the other really have no concept at all of the place that you've gone to ... nor do they have the slightest interest in it ... I found on the whole that people were remarkably uninterested in one's fascinating experiences ... and that they were very ready to trot out all their misconceptions and ideas of what it was like and then rush on to the things that were of importance to them ...[94]

Philip felt this lack of interest contributed to the gap he perceived between himself and his relatives.

> ... but they didn't really want to know what ... how you found it to live in such a place and therefore, I think this is one of those barriers that is er always there to the person who chooses, for one reason or another, to leave their home country and then when you come back they are um ... is that feeling that you can't really share these experiences because their are so very few people who are able to have the imagination ... to take any sort of real interest in what you've been doing.[95]

Though Kareem was the only informant to make any overt reference to his financial success being evaluated by his relatives and peers, it is apparent that other informants were also judged on their degree of achievement. In some cases, their success was perceived as yet another element emphasizing the gap between the informant and his relatives and friends. Increased status and responsibility might case a reflected glow on the community but they also constituted further obstacles to be surmounted if that person was to be integrated into the group. Career advancement in the new environment re-emphasizes the emigrant's original departure, for it underscores the decision to leave and indicates the extent to which he has been able to identify with his new environment. He has felt sufficiently at one with the new situation to be able to make some advancement in terms of that society and its system, imploying a move away from the "home" society. Cultural continuity is broken by the emigrant's original decision to leave and the gap persists if not widens as he becomes more integrated

into a new cultural scene. The extent of the gap becomes apparent once the two cultural scenes are brought into direct confrontation in a situation such as a visit home, when the differences in world view are exposed.

Bridging the cultural gap presents difficulties for the visitor in his "home" environment, often causing him to wonder how he can give some sense of his life away to those he left behind. Further, it causes him to consider his own situation. Though he may have worked through various stages of assimilation in his new environment, may have passed through what Crepeau has called "les rites d'adoption", such as taking out citizenship and possibly buying a house, his sense of identity is not necessarily totally that of his new homeland. Philip volunteered the following reflection.[96]

> ... the fact that you're not one-hundred percent totally at home is the wrong word, ... you've cut yourself off from being a one-hundred percent native who's never strayed from .. where he was born and brought up er so far as where you were in England you are seen to have abandoned that and gone away even if you've come back and in Canada you never will be wholely Canadian but, to me, that doesn't matter.[97]

His comments imply that he has achieved an inner balance between the environment of his upbringing and his allegiance to his new situation. Rita expressed parallel feelings when she said

> ... It's very difficult, you know; unless you are a very young child and you uproot yourself and then settle in the new country even after being a teenager if you uproot yourself, you still feel the roots are there and you don't ... your sense of belonging doesn't come elsewhere very easily. ... It takes years and years and years ... and for that matter I don't just want to go back to India I want to go back to England also very often, right?[98]

Though her remarks do not imply the same sense of synthesis in defining her identity as Philip's, she indicated that her sense of herself derived from other cultural scenes in addition to India and Canada. Her identity is

thus a compound of various cultural experiences.

Neither informant derives his identity from the Canadian experience alone, recognising that they have assumed what Philip called "protective coloration" and that there remains at least some aspect of their identity which devolves from a different cultural scene. As a result, neither feels totally at one with his new environment, expressing this in different ways according to their personalities. Philip sees himself as leading a "mid-Atlantic" life; Rita views events more problematically, characterising her situation as follows.

> ... this sense of belonging and building up friends or friends trying to understand you as what you are really, is the biggest thing that one has to face up to when you leave your own place of birth and work elsewhere or live elsewhere. [99]

Most informants were impelled to make some assessment of their visit, usually concluding their accounts with some definitive statement. Rita's comments and those of Philip are assessments of their personal situations, their immediate feelings and reactions uppermost. For other informants the focus shifted, often to a definition of what they considered "home". Ann-Marie concluded that she was not very sentimental and that "home is where I live" because

> I'm not very sentimental, except for people, of course, but places ... any place is good for me if I enjoy what I am doing. [100]

> In contrast, the account of her visit prompted Aviva to say, "There is nothing in this world like home, you know, whatever. I don't know whether others feel this way or not but I am very much homesick.

giving some indication of her sense of estrangement from life in North America, inspite of her years in Canada.[101] Kristina's visit had a cathartic effect, satisfying her curiosity about Sweden after an absence of eight years and causing her to say:

> "I don't think I want to go there again, not even out of curiosity, really."[102]

Lloyd had no particular concluding remarks to add to his account merely characterising the experience of visits home, for the most part, as "boring" and "frustrating." Kareem assessed his visit to Egypt as a "pleasant experience."

> "We would like to do it again except that it is too expensive."[103]

Riccardo's perspective is very much slanted towards his new environment with little sense of regret or homesickness for Naples. Identifying with St. John's is not difficult because it represents

> ... the first and only place where I have lived by myself being completely independent and ... having an activity and earning money on my own.[104]

Because of this, and because he accepts and feels accepted in his new environment he has little sense of alienation or regret for past experiences.

It remains to assess the signficance of a visit home, and to set this event in the context of the informant's experience as a whole. Viewed against the events of a life span, the visit home may shrink to a fragment of colourful detail, a condensed recollection of personal anecdotes; viewed more immediately the visit home may be seen as an intense and emotional experience evoking memories of the past as these are juxtaposed with present reality. From the accounts cited above it is apparent that the visit home, particularly the first one, is a cultural threshold which is crossed with trepidation by some and with joy by others. The journey from one cultural scene to another from the New World to the original environment, confronts two different sets of values which have to be reconciled. The pattern underlying the process of reconciliation or accommodation will be discussed in Chapter 6.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of the "rite of first entrance" see Arnold Van Gennep, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffe The Rites of Passage (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 175.
2. Tape no. 6.
3. Tape no. 4.
4. Tape no. 7.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Tape no. 8.
8. Ibid.
9. Tape no. 3.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Tape no. 2.
13. Ibid.
14. Tape no. 1.
15. Tape no. 5.
16. "A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role they accept for any of themselves." Ward Goodenough, "Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics," Language in Culture and Society, ed. Dell Hymes (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) pp. 36-39.

17. See Van Gennep, p. 39, for a discussion of rites removing temporary individuality.

18. Tape no. 5.

19. Tape no. 3.

20. See Crépeau, p. 160, for a discussion of a sense of alienation on arrival.

21. Tape no. 2.

22. Tape no. 3. See also, Ghazala Shaheen and Cecilia A. Gonzales, "Clothing Practices of Pakistani Women Residing in Canada," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 13:3(Fall 1981), 120-126.

23. Tape no. 3.

24. Tape no. 5.

25. See also Thigpen, p. 168, in this connection.

26. Pauline Greenhill's work has established the place of photographs in folklore research. See: So We Can Remember: Showing Family Photographs. Mercury Series, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies Paper no. 36 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1981); and "Record, Communication, Entertainment: A Functional Study of Two Family Photograph Collections" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, 1981).

27. Tape no. 1.

28. Tape no. 8.

29. See Van Gennep, pp. 33-37.

30. Tape no. 6.

31. Tape no. 3.

32. See Dell Hymes, "The Contribution of Folklore to Sociolinguistic Research," In Toward New Perspectives in Folklore, eds. Americo Parades and Richard Bauman (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1972) 42-50.

33. Ibid., p. 47.

34. Tape no. 4.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Tape no. 8.

39. Tape no. 6.

40. For a fuller definition of cultural scenes, their structure and approach to cultural anthropology, see J.P. Spradley and D.W. McCurdy, The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1972) 23-37.

41. Goodenough, pp. 36-39.

42. See Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p. 166.

43. Ibid., p. 170.

44. Ibid., p. 173.

45. Ibid., p. 173.

46. Tape no. 4.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Tape no. 8.

52. Ibid.

53. Tape no. 2.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Dundes, "Folk Ideas as Units of Worldview," p. 103

57. Tape no. 5.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Tape no. 7.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Tape no. 3.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Tape no. 2.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Tape no. 6.

76. Tape no. 1.

77. Tape no. 6.

78. Ibid.

79. Tape no. 4.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. Tape no. 5.

83. Ibid.

84. Tape no. 2.

85. Ibid.

86. Tape no. 1.

87. Ibid.

88. Tape no. 7.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. Tape no. 8.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. Crépeau, p. 163.

97. Tape no. 8. See also Crépeau, p. 156 for differing responses to becoming Canadian.

98. Tape no. 2.

99. Ibid.

100. Tape no. 5.

101. Tape no. 3.

102. Tape no. 1.

103. Tape no. 6.

104. Tape no. 7.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

Whether "boring" and "frustrating" or a return to the "home, sweet home" of the poet, the experience of visiting home is an emotional watershed, frequently provoking the returning expatriate into a thoughtful re-evaluation of his relationship with his family, his peer group and its culture.[1] The visit throws two sets of cultural values into direct contrast - those of the original "home" environment and those of the New World which the emigrant may have acquired during his absence. These new elements in his experience serve to expand the basis of his identity but may, at the same time, set him at a distance from his original cultural group. The distance or cultural gap may be interpreted as a threat by those at home and prompt adverse comment. The emigrant himself may also be aware of the difference in worldview and attempt to bridge the gap by modifying his behaviour in some way. In some instances, though conscious of inappropriate behaviour, the visiting group member may have strongly-held motives for not complying with local custom and persisting in behaviour patterns which he knows run counter to local norms. Defiance of accepted patterns provokes further criticism which the individual has to bear.

Reconciling two different worldviews can raise considerable problems, particularly if the gap in cultural stance is very wide, and can cause a sense of frustration. As a result, it is not always possible to achieve a workable compromise and the experience of returning "home" is not always regarded in a positive light. Clearly, the greater the cultural distance between the expatriate and his "home" environment, the greater the problems in reconciling the two points of view.

The movement away from the emigrant's original identity base forms part of the process of acculturation and varies for each individual according to his temperament, motives in emigrating initially and his degree

of compatibility with his new environment.[2] The "voyage culturel" as Crépeau calls it, away from the known domestic scene towards a new and different cultural environment, is part of the experience of settling in a new country. Crépeau sees the cultural journey as running parallel to the physical journey from the old world. He recognises, however, that the cultural journey may never end for some individuals because they regard the process of acculturation as continuous. Clearly, the limits of the physical journey can be readily defined.

In applying a structuralist approach to the narratives he considers, Crépeau argues that the same basic structure underlies both the physical details of emigrating and the autobiographical accounts given by the individuals concerned. The physical experience falls into three phases which he designates departure, journey and arrival. Similarly, the cultural experience also follows a tripartite structure which he derives from the work of Van Gennep. Crépeau argues that the cultural experience of immigration, as it appears in the narrative accounts, mimics the three phases of a rite of passage, that is segregation, liminality and aggregation. After the initial segregation from the world he once knew, the immigrant moves into the second or liminal phase in which he is required to undergo a series of tests or rituals which will eventually lead to his incorporation in the group. As the process of acculturation continues the newcomer moves through the liminal phase to the third and final stage of aggregation in which he becomes a full member of the group. As Crépeau points out some individuals do not initiate the second phase of progressive acculturation, others view the process as without end, while certain individuals see themselves as completely assimilated in the new society. Though the mechanical process of immigration may have been completed, the emotional response to the same process can vary

considerably, ranging across a wide spectrum.

The metaphor of the rite of passage, marking the transition from one stage of life to another, also has considerable relevance in the present study. The visit home may also be seen in terms of a tripartite structure with the three successive phases of segregation, liminality and aggregation. The tension of the journey home may be seen as a period of segregation, the proofs of competency characterise the liminal period and aggregation implies complete acceptance and sense of identity with the environment surrounding the individual in question.

However, the visitor's response to his "home" environment may not be sufficiently positive for him to feel a complete sense of identification with his surroundings and for the third stage of the process to ensue. His family or peer group may find that there are considerable gaps in world view which preclude that person being totally accepted in the group. For example, Rita's family in Bombay were pleased to see her, but clearly indicated to her that she had changed while she had been away. Such changes hinder the process of re-adaptation and re-absorption by the group, because they are indicative of the cultural distance the individual has travelled. Similarly, though Kareem felt he could re-adapt to the rhythms of life in Alexandria, his lack of the necessary parochial gossip and inside information to follow particular TV programmes, plus his reticence in teaching his children Arabic are two different indicators of divergences in outlook. The first is a local cultural development of which he cannot be aware because he is no longer part of that cultural scene, the second is a personal decision, engendered by the new cultural scene in which he is bringing up his children. Both factors are hindrances to his re-integration in that society. Even an informant such as Philip who returned to his "home" and re-settled there

for several years, making conscious efforts to re-adapt, commented first, on the enormous effort this required and again, on the seemingly inevitable flaw in his identity caused by some detail he had overlooked or forgotten. Though the willingness to re-adapt might not be lacking, as compared with other informants who find a return to a previous cultural scene limiting or restrictive, Philip's instinctive responses reveal the extent to which he has been affected by exposure to other cultural scenes.

These factors prejudice the extent to which an individual is re-assimilated. Thus, though the liminal phase with its proofs of competence and demonstrations of acceptability may have been completed, the third phase of aggregation is either not initiated, as in Kristina's case, or is marred because the individual is unable to identify completely with that social sense. The degree of response again varies over a wide spectrum, paralleling the response to the experience of immigration noted by Crépeau.~ In this study, Aviva's willingness to re-adapt and easy re-acceptance of the "home" scene set her at the far end of the scale, closest to complete re-integration. Her homesickness and sense of nostalgia for Bangla Desh suggest that she would willingly accede to her family's urging that she return and settle and that she would not experience any undue feeling of alienation.

In contrast to Aviva's narrative with its strong sense of identification, Kristina's outright rejection of the Swedish society in which she tried to create a "second" home, sets her narrative at the opposite end of the spectrum. Her concluding remarks that she had little or no desire to return to Sweden at any later stage, indicate the extent to which she has moved away from that cultural scene. Tenuous links with that society endured but were not strong enough to exert any strong cultural pull. Given that her narrative lacks the details prompted by reunion with relatives, it is perhaps not

unexpected that Kristina finds no particular poignancy in re-visiting "home".

Other informants may be ranged at various points across the spectrum according to their expressions of alienation or sense of identification. If Kristina's account represents one end of the scale, Rita's comments would be ranged next to hers, followed by those of Lloyd. Rita is undoubtedly more relaxed in dealing with her family, following the first traumatic visit home, but it seems unlikely she will ever feel completely at one with her "home" environment again. Professional and temperamental pressures have combined to enlarge the cultural divide already in existence between the family group in Bombay and her life in North America. Similarly, Lloyd pinpoints his professional commitments as a major factor re-emphasizing the gap between his present life-style and that of his family and peer group in Wales. Given his perception of his "home" town as a narrow and limited environment and his view of North America as somewhere he is able to live on a much larger scale, he is also unlikely to experience anything other than a very limited sense of re-identification with his original environment.

Clustered at the mid-point are the accounts of Ann-Marie, Philip and Kareem. Philip's account is noteworthy because it documents a sense of ease in both environments, with no marked sense of stress in either situation. Ann-Marie's remarks also suggest an equilibrium in her attitudes to home and her present environment. Kareem's remarks do not reveal the same sense of ease in both environments as found in Philip's but an overall contentment characterises the narrative. He has been able to recognise differences in world view in his attitudes and those of her parents without these causing too much friction.

Riccardo's account falls between the mid-point of the spectrum and Aviva's, closest to the point of complete re-assimilation. His experiences

are still at the developmental stage and there is every possibility that he will re-evaluate his thoughts and perspective with the passage of time. In the course of three visits home over a three year period he is already aware of subtle changes in his reactions and those of his family. Given his sensitivity to change on this time scale, he will likely be aware of further accommodations as he moves further towards the middle of the spectrum.

It is not suggested that hard and fast rules may be drawn from these accounts. The experience of visiting home is obviously coloured by a number of factors among which the temperament of the informant and his relationship with his family and peers is of primary importance. Career aspirations and achievements are also factors to be considered and, to a lesser degree perhaps, the circumstances under which the visit takes place.

The first visit home very often has particular significance as noted, leaving sharp and lasting impressions in the mind of the informant. Subsequent visits are repetitions of an experience and have consequently less significance, as Van Gennep has pointed out.[3] Neither Rita nor Philip pinpointed specific details associated with second or third visits home. Lloyd also spoke in general terms concerning his visits home. Further, it is suggested that the sharp focus associated with the accounts given by Kareem, Riccardo and Aviva would blur should they have the opportunity to re-visit their original environments in years to come.

All the accounts in this study suggest that the narrator felt himself or herself to be under some form of assessment or evaluation. This was more marked in some cases, such as Rita or Kareem, in comparison to Philip or Aviva. The sense of being evaluated or tested and possibly exposed to criticism for falling short of a culturally expected norm strengthens the

argument that the visit home mimics the phases of a rite of passage.

The proofs of competence in communication, in re-assumption of local life-style, as a progenitor and tradition-bearer are informal tests designed to measure the individual's eligibility to re-join the group. As such they form part of the second or liminal phase.

However, the third stage of ritual - that of incorporation, cannot be inferred from these accounts. Of the eight informants only one, Aviva, projected a strong sense of re-identification with the "home" community, sufficient to suggest assimilation. The remaining seven informants all suggest that the claims of their new life-styles and expanded identity bases in North America were strong enough to preclude re-assimilation. Philip's experience epitomises the viewpoint which transcends an identity based on the local scene alone. Lacking strong evidence of the third stage of incorporation, the analogy, with a rite of passage appears inapplicable. If however, the visit home is set in its overall context of the informant's total experience the metaphor still holds. In as much as the informant returns to his new surroundings in North America, the visit "home" must be seen as part of the wider experience of emigration and re-settling. In this context, the visit to the Old Country is a transitional phase, marking the passage from one phase of experience to the next.[4]

Though it may present some features suggesting parallels with a rite of passage, the third stage of incorporation is lacking because the visit home is itself part of a larger movement, namely the incorporation of the immigrant into the New World. The visit "home" underscores his or her original decision to leave. Thus disenchantment with the "home" scene, bruised feelings because of criticism and frustration with cultural attitudes all serve to re-emphasize the decision. Each narrative reveals at least one

detail which becomes a symbol of the informant's rejection of the "old" world: for Kristina it is reduced service in Swedish hotels, for Rita it is the invasion of privacy in never being allowed to be alone, for Lloyd it is having to take his own shopping bag to a supermarket, for Philip it is the slow pace of business transactions, for Riccardo it is the bustle of crowded streets. These details are symbolic because they have lodged in the consciousness of the informant, later to become part of his narrative about returning home. They stand in the same relationship to the narratives as the toilets without paper and the sinks without plumbing referred to by Linda Dègh in the Bekevar narratives. As cultural asides they offer insight into the informant's reactions, serving to illustrate his or her rejection of that cultural scene and re-affirming the decision to emigrate.

Viewed in terms of the scheme set out by Labov and Waletzky, the narratives all allude to expressions of tension in the orientation section. As he sites the narrative in its proper referential perspective, each informant refers to heightened emotions prior to arriving home. These remarks are expanded as the narrative moves into the complication section with greater explanation of events and happenings. These details are frequently interspersed with evaluative statements which indicate the state of mind of the informant. Resolution sections are not quite so clearly defined in each narrative: in some instances the informant clearly felt he or she had come to the end of the account and said as much. In this connection Rita's and Kristina's narrative immediately come to mind. Other narratives, such as those of Lloyd, Philip and Riccardo are more open-ended as all three had additions to make to their remarks after the formal end of the interview. Such additions are not easily classified as the coda, in Labov and Waletzky's terminology, for they offer extensions to the body of the main account as well as evaluative comment on the preceding remarks.

If the narratives are classified according to the format proposed by Robinson, the accounts fall into the narrative mode, under the exploits and amusements category. However, though useful tools in approaches to narrative and its classification, these schemes fail to take account of the essentially human quality associated with the personal experience narrative. Failure to "step 'behind'" the narrative as Stahl phrases it, to consider the background and context of the account, inevitably implies a neglect of the social detail inherent in the informants' remarks. The text is indeed the thing in relating the narrative to the immigrant experience.[5]

A fascination with the processes of immigration and acculturation was the stimulus for this study. The stated intent was to isolate some segment of the immigrant experience in an attempt at understanding this from the inside. The topic of a visit home was chosen because it offered the appropriate, evocative stimulus to elicit meaningful and colourful narrative. Based on the details found to be common to the eight narratives in this sampling, it is argued that the visit home is not only a test of the informant's capacity to re-adapt to his original environment, but also a re-affirmation of the original decision to leave. The individual may have to offer proofs of competence to his relatives and peer group, but he is also reproving to himself that his "voyage aux pays des merveilles" was indeed well-founded.

NOTES

1. Aviva alluded to the aphorism "home, sweet home" as she concluded her interview, tape 3.

2. Crepeau, p. 160-1. Philip also referred to the various conditions which may influence the rate of acculturation in individual cases, tape 8. He expressed it as follows:

> Basically I think this feeling that if you choose to go, then you come back er with possibly fewer mixed feelings than if you'd shaken the dust off your feet but maybe you do take extra effort to try and retain identity with the place you left whereas people who have shaken the dust have to do a better job in some respects of taking on the protective coloration of where they settle and they more rapidly pick up the local accent and the local customs and work very hard at being seen to be whatever the new place is.

3. Van Gennep, p. 177-178.

4. Van Gennep, p. 178, pp. 184-185.

5. D.K. Wilgus, "'The Text is the Thing'," Presidential Address delivered at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, Austin, Texas, 18 November, 1972, and later published in the Journal of American Folklore, 86(173), 241-252.

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