

Xcp 2

cross cultural poetics



Juan Felipe Herrera/Zhang Er/Leonard Schwartz/Chung Na Yei
U Sam Oeur /Wai-lim Yip/Paul Naylor/Jeff Derksen/Fernand Roqueplan
Lise McCloud/Hilton Obenzinger/Diane Glancy/Victoria Lena Manyarrows
Thomas Biolsi/Susan M. Schultz/Yunte Huang/Kathleen Stewart/Elizabeth Burns

Reviews of Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century
The Spanish American Roots of William Carlos Williams/Modernity at Large:
Cultural Dimensions of Globalization/The Magic of the State/Panoramas
Cantos to Blood & Honey

Xcp

cross cultural poetics

Editor

Mark Nowak

Contributing Editors

Lila Abu-Lughod
Kamau Brathwaite
Maria Damon
Larry Evers
Diane Glancy
Kirin Narayan
Nathaniel Tarn
Shamoon Zamir

Managing Editor

Kim Koch

Editorial Assistants

Julie Liu
Rita Chakrabarti

College of St. Catherine-Minneapolis

Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics accepts submissions of poetry, essays, interviews, book reviews and black & white documentary photography. Translations are also welcome if accompanied by original language texts. All submissions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Although reasonable care is taken, *Xcp* assumes no responsibility for the loss of manuscripts.

Subscriptions to *Xcp*: \$25/4 issues (individuals), \$40/4 issues (institutions); foreign (including Canada) add \$5. **Make checks payable to "College of St. Catherine"** and send, along with name and address, to: Mark Nowak, ed., *Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics*, 601 25th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN, 55454.

Email: manowak@stkate.edu

Website Address: <http://www.stkate.edu/xcp/>

Copyright © 1998 *Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics*

ISSN: 1086-9611

Distributed by Bernard DeBoer (Nutley, NJ), Small Press Distribution (Berkeley, CA) and Don Olson Distribution (Minneapolis, MN).

Member *CLMP*.

Front Cover Artwork by Carolyn Eler
Cover Design by K. Darby Laing

Typeset in Futena & KlangMT.

Printing & Binding by McNaughton & Gunn: Saline, Michigan.

The viewpoints expressed in these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the College of St. Catherine, which assumes no legal responsibility for any actions taken as a result of the writing published in *Xcp*. All copyright © returns to authors upon publication.

This issue is made possible through funding from the College of St. Catherine and the generous support of our subscribers.

Contents

History/In/Heritance

- 7 *Juan Felipe Herrera*
 Cilantroman: A Performance Cocina
 Canto for Chan Ki'n Viejo...
- 26 *Zhang Er* (translated by the author and Leonard Schwartz)
 The Fifth Direction
- 28 *Chung Na Yei*
 Departure
- 30 *U Sam Oeur*
 Work at the Douglas Corporation...
 Neo-Pol Pot: 1979-91
- 38 *Wai-lim Yip*
 Condemned to Cultural Displacements: The Case of
 Modern China
- 51 *Paul Naylor*
 On Certainty (Part Three: Memphis, Capital of North
 Mississippi)
- 63 *Jeff Derksen*
 I Need to Know If This Is Normal
- 76 *Fernand Roqueplan*
 Flat, Silent Soda
 A Thousand Cranes
 Fifty-Six Churches
- 79 *Lise McCloud*
 Highway 75

- 80 *Hilton Obenzinger*
Writing (In) the Past
- 88 *Diane Glancy*
The Woman Who Was A Red Deer Dressed For
The Deer Dance
- 105 *Victoria Lena Manyarrows*
The Language of Endangerment

Reviews

- 109 *Thomas Biolsi*
Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century
- 113 *Susan M. Schultz*
The Spanish American Roots of William Carlos Williams
- 116 *Yunte Huang*
Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization
- 121 *Kathleen Stewart*
The Magic of the State
- 123 *Elizabeth Burns*
Panoramas *and* Cantos to Blood & Honey

History / In / Heritage



Cilantroman: A Performance Cocina

Juan Felipe Herrera

No te hagas boca chiquita.

Dedica: To Allen Ginsberg,
Border-Crosser de aquellas, gracias.

Note: This text has not been approved by
the Affirmative Action Allergy Board. (AAAB)

Setting: Night, mean streets. Open-air, make-shift cocina.

Sound Design: Sirens and symphonies. Beethoven & rancheras.
Ocean sounds, missiles, Hendrix guitar and troops marching.

Cilantroman:
Hawaiian shirt, boxers, hard hat, high red socks, Tony Lama Boots.
Any age, any size, any gender.

I am from the planet of Campesino

menudo &
South Texas wo-men-u--do.
Entiendes?

In a khaki swirl, I stroll
in a half-Cantinflas bop & the other half
María Felix or

should I say Lady Chingazzo?

I am: here, in full regalia,
wet, still marooned

between the Sea of Cortéz and a caldo de res
still, in a battle for Texas

& the unreturned taxes
of the Undocumented Masses.

Look at me: in full Cholo
intellectual pozole frickasí

in a Frito boat
I organize for the end of national
immigrant paranoia simón que sí

because I am brown
illegal brown on the outside, that is
and the inside, let us say

Volcano
let us say
 Tegucigalpa
let us say *Cuzcatlán*
let us say *Lola Beltrán*
let us say *Boriqua*
let us say *Taino*
let us say *tunas con espinas*
let us say *Tejano pero no gusano*
let us say *Nayarita ahorita*
can you say *Taino*
or does it come out

tie-dye-oh
to die

or not to die
like a Hollenbeck wino

let us say
 on the inside

I am green
 nopales contra Federales
 epazote y borlote

a green card for a heart

a red peso falling into black Gortari hole
an upside down pyramid filled
with rosas y pitayas

tankes militares &
Pemex en las playas.

Forgot to tell you about my bruja
her name is La Vitola, her name is
No te agüites pa' que resusites
Dále gas pero no de atrás

Rézale
a la Virgen de Guadalupe
from National City
al Santo Niño de Atocha,
or is it de Aquellas?

No se te olvide, lávate la brocha
no se te olvide lo que te dije, she says
no se te olvide un kilo de tortillas

dos de compasión
cinco de lucha

y un arroz feroz
de las Cuatro Milpas

Logan Heights,
east side, west side
the Other side--

next to los yonkes, nixtamal displacements
sombbrero & rebozo relocations & sweat lonches.

My head blows out
with Frida Kahlo gold monkey greñas, that is why
I am always

in a search for a vision,
instead of a television, a bruja
instead of a lawyer, a magic baraja
instead of Chip A'hoy cooki caja,

(I always forget the bottom)

first, you slice a piece of head tomate from Delano
slam it with a spread of chipotle suffering salsa, low wages
then

you wrap it with un suspiro, burnt on the side
forever in search of the cilantro, somewhere

aromatic
& above

desolation & emptiness
beyond Marlon Brando's last ride from the waterfront
or was it the Tijuana racetrack?

"It was was you Chuy, it was you --

*I cudda been
a Hispanik, you know, a three piece cashmere
from the Men's Warehouse,
calzones de Calvin Klein
a little tight in the ojete, slacks like mantequilla
see-through calcetas, rayadas & calcos, man
Nikes made in Korea.*

*I cudda learned Korean
(Nike in U.S. Industrial Relocation Centers in Korea means Kiss My Ass)*

*It was you chuy, it was you,
I could been a chingón
but what do I got, a one way ticket to Phoenix
or was it Pendejoville?"*

I was born on the twenty seventh day of La huelga
in the black, red and white huaraches of Cesar Chavez, on
Dolores Huerta Boulevard, you know

that street with a grape-shaped U-turn?
First, you go from Welfareville turn left
into No Se Habla Español But We'll Give
You Cedit, a mile down Food Stamp Alley
Make another left, pass

Aguacates & Chiles con Pan Savings
Pass T-bone Empanada Courts
Just watch out for Marshmallows-in-my-Carne Asada Lane
across the trakes

right by the Total Liberation Cafe
Consciencia and Spam Burritos While You Wait
and you're almost there. See

that little triala?
the hot sandia red one?
the one with with lime colored windows?
the one that says Taradeadas Forever?
the one where they braid tripitas
& they hang filete out to dry like calzones?

The one
with the zarape door open?

I think they're showing a film in there,
I can tell because people are carrying bags
of chicharrones, masa, atole and a load of
Twix chocolate bars.

The film is called "La Traigo Dormida"
It's about Rigoberta's Journey from Guatemala
to the Mission District in San Pancho.

It's a double feature -- there's an intermission
where Father Basura from Our Lady of American Citizenship
comes out with white powdered Donuts
& Hawaiian Punch.

You know Father Basura?
He looks like Anthony Quinn;
drives around in a hot pink Acura.
Got children everywhere
even in Pacoima & Carpinteria.

The other film is called
"Tu Vida Loca Y Mojada To Vida Continued"
with a set of "Chuy Toons" where

Goofy plays President Zedillo Panza de Leon
Donald Duck plays Clinton.
At the beginning Goofy buys back Arizona
and turns it into a giant Macy's Maquila Plant.
Then, the Hispanik Republiklans
turn it into the state Macizona.
But there's a problema: Donald Duck goes crazy
shopping for Twinkies with a salsa center &
buys out all the Guayaberas for the troops
in Fort Huachuka, for the troops in Guantanamo,
for the troops floating near Long Beach.
But at the end, Pluto, the perro del barrio, appears
played by Paul Rodriguez and he bites
Donald Ducks ass and pisses
in Goofy's Adidas.

I am the Cilantro Man
Born in the endless month of the Chicano Moratorium

Agosto pa' los mocosos.
Agosta pa' los miedosos.
Agosto pa' los celosos.

Month of Mace and Viejitos & Cholos
shouting: What Do You Want?

Justice!

What Do You Want?
Justice!

What Do You Want? Just *rice?*
A Churro from Westwood?

Things change.
Lana sube Lana Baja

Things Fall Apart:
Fui Al Mercado Compré Bellas
Vine a la Casa y Lloré con ellas.

Things empty themselves in order to fill:
El que mucho abarca poco aprieta.

Things come around:
Dime con quien andas y te dire quien eres.

Things cross-over before you know it:
*Agua pasa por mi casa
cáete de mi corazón.*

Things
become human
if you give them

a little cilantro.

C is for

*chocolate
cabrón
concha de nacar
calcos de los forties
campesino conk
casmpesina con corazón de camarada
cola larga de coca cola
colonialism in every seed of capilalist chile
creation is better than cremation
colawal in Tzotzil
chamula in Chiapas
Cantinflas my cooky carnal with a cool chongo
Cri-cri for you and me
crime in the eye of every co-oppressor
Cananea del norte
camote como caca
colombia del sur
cuando quantum quazar
c is for california on the verge of becoming California
c is for concepción immaculate condón condemnation
c is for corazón cochinito
corazon carnala chilango chilpanzingo
Chetumal chicha for the world calambre
contamination south of Calecia
contamination always contamination*

*when it comes to Pesticide On This Farm Worker Side
Chicana del año de la corrida lesbiana al Norte*

I is for

Into Vicente Fernandez

Into Selena in South Texas

Into Avena con Cherrios

Into Interesting Ingots de Iguana

Incandescent Inner-tripas after a filerazo

Identity Issues that is question falsa

Insurance for the Chevy Issues

Intelligence Issues on Gingrich Mountain

IQ

I Tú

Ay AY AY Ay AY

Izapa land of the Chiapanecs

Indio of course

India de Tenejapa de Tijuana de Iowa

I don't know

Isla de los sacrificios migratorios

International Xenophobia Islands

Interstitial Encabronada Anaconda

Inside Inglis Mental Igloos

I or You

I or Them

I or We

I or Nothotros

I or Me

I or miga

I me meo

I want to eat my Chilaquiles now

I for Hispanic Interview

I for Ojo

I for hay un joto in your foto

I for Enojo

I for E as in Manzanilla de tu tía

I for U as in Engrudo Pantalones

I for I as in Chile Huero Que te Quiero

I or Is

I for an I or is it

Ojo por Ojo

el que no esta seco esta en remojo

C if for cujo chicano fed on mole bones & corn flakes

I is for I am lost already

west of Gila bend, call it
a Lamborghinni de huevos con winnie.

Come & Meet me in
my Clavillazo carnation Ensenada Tux drapes
un payaso de Fowler in Free Movimiento rhyme
un pagliaci de SanFra in a Shakespearean Castro Cha-Cha Cha
un comedian del arte de Chicano parque
at the heart of this AlieNation
Thisnationinflation
bopping to an easy tumbao, a string bass
tololoche, saxofón, un bajo sexto y un acordeón.

Y AHORA SEÑORES Y SEÑORAS,
THE CILANTRO SAT ENTRANCE EXAM:

*In what year did Narcizo Martinez
teach Germans how to polka con ganas?*

*Did Lidia Mendoza find a gum wrapper
in San Antonio and write the first feminist tejana cancion?*

*Was Santiago Jimenez known
for the tololoche, the epazote or the Tres Rosas Conjunto Pomade?*

*How did Ricardo Flores Magon manage to
correctly spelled LIBERATION while in prison?*

*In what manner did Sor Juana Inez De La Cruz
cut the convent into the shape of a Woman's torch?*

*Write an essay on "Why Pedro Armendariz
died for your Macho Sins?"*

*What is the algebraic formula Santana uses
to light his guitar with Mole Tropical?*

*If Frida Kahlo dressed like Diego Rivera, Why
didn't Diego Rivera cross-dress for her?*

*Hold a note like Juan Gabriel, hold it as long as you can
and respond in 10 seconds with anyone's chile.*

I am the Cilantro Man
wherever I step I break out

with a corrido
unionize & sing de colores.
I choke presidential flies with molcajetes.

I have a memory the shape of Texas.
My imagination is full of cucarachas that refuse to sleep.

In my natural tongue the Alamo
is pronounced *Alamadre*.

My hands are sweet like pan dulce, like elotes
or is the elote somewhere else?

My Metal Flake Torquoise Impala
seeks its own information highway.

My literature comes with caldo con papas
y Huachinango a la Veracruzana.

My math is Mayan &
made for Jungles & upheavals.

I am chile engineer, Ph. D. in Demonstrations & Deportations
I graze the hot wire of maquila destructions.
My writing is soaked in Tequila & Cedrón
I have an habichuela on my forehead to blind
the corporate gangsters & remind you

we are sacred
sacred like tortillas after misa de gallo
sacred like abuelita
giving bendiciones en la mañana.

I carry a bowl of arroz con lechón in my Ninja back pack
a pupusa de chicharrón con loroco for a midnight snack.

Just in case forced assimilation into the assasi-nation
cuts my road,

just in case the killing city loses sabor

just in case you forgot: you need a Cilantro **Sí**

to spell América, sí señor
si señora.

Más dedicas: for Culture Clash, Los Delicados, Cucuy,
Everardo Pedraza & Amalia Alvarez.

*Canto for Chan Ki'n Viejo,
Last To'ó'hil of Najá, Selva Lacandona,
Chiapas, Mexico. December, 1997*

Juan Felipe Herrera

The cold wind comes... why?

--- Chan K'in Viejo of Najá

I would have wanted to sing you my little canto about love
for your forests, blackened, green-blue wires, arms in knots,
call them Mahogany, call them Caoba, the last five hundred
children of sorrow, triumphant, ninety meters high, villages.

In fact, I should have cradled the bluish machetes hanging
in the vines of papaya, in the net bags of the green worker bus,
two steps from PEMEX, your tunic in spotted grease, grandsons
Kayum Mario and José, in the last chasm, last one long howl.



I would have wanted to call Koh, your partner, since dawn,
spotted days of Chiclero rape and Xate palm leaf export fevers,
her red bean necklace: one bead for pneumonia, seven for
Hachakyüm, Creator of the Lacandon; for the dead, pure furies.

Where is the next generation? Will they die in the vestiges
of el desierto de Ocosingo? Call it with the purr of Selva Maya;
will they dissolve into another rubble face, a presidential
blast? The landless -- this fire dance, we hear it from Chenalhó.



I can see tiny Chan Kín Francisco drawing a starry circle
on La Ruta Maya, Indian depots, fincas of tears and migrations
to Palenque & Honduras; I can see him touch a pebble, call it
revolution, let us call it red smoke, the voice of the nameless.

All the buried grief sprouts up in the eyes of the palm house.
I ask myself: What is this picture I am holding in my hands?
I ask myself: Is it Chan Kín Viejo, keeper of the secrets, gone
now? Is it la selva, Chiapas, América in blood, standing, falling?

—for the survivors of Acteal, Chenalhó, Chiapas



The Fifth Direction

Zhang Er

(translated from the Mandarin by the author and Leonard Schwartz)

Perhaps salvation lies in folding a paper bird
even if to fret with paper never brings much content.
The east is wood, the woman declares.
Face of a Sun God, solemn but tender--
painted green, it could be you.

Leaves aloft among the clouds.
One shepherds oneself into being the sheep
that wears the wolf skin,
impersonates the voice of the wolf
still astutter with the voice of the sheep--

No longer the wolf
no longer the sheep
but a third set of sparkling eyes
and questionable aphorisms.
No use disputing the sun's gender.
Gender confusion: the centuries greatest invention.

The pebble you kicked and hurt yesterday
turns into a tittering mouth today--
do you want to go out some more and play?

Wave the magic wand, tell riddles
then wash your face and hands--
invasion, retreat, armed assault,
painful evolution.
Want to go out some more and play?
Anger does not count. Ask for instructions
in the game of wit,
better off dead than without it.

The East is wood, she declares.

Nor do tears count
since what withers cannot always sprout again
and plastic surgery cannot bring back new life.

A culture buried, rotting, forgotten,
 "resurrected"--
these are the four directions?
Greasy clots float on the banquet
 of history's after-dishes
while the poor continue to beg,
a twittering in their throats like that of birds.

Life inside a paper cage is a kind of life
best suited to dream
a sign printed on a venal coin
 is still a sign
Let us flip it once again
searching for one generation out of a thousand
The sun is shining on your head, she cries out
OK, fine
add a feather heavier than a cliff
make another speech about the art of flying.

The East is wood, the south is fire,
the west is metal; north means the water.

— after Lawson Fusao Inada

To get to Seoul, South Korea,
you need to leave America
on a day's journey across the sea.

Hopefully you'll have prepared
a couple of months ahead, if this is your first trip
to Seoul, South Korea.
You may even want to start to make
the 1,000 crane birds right now.
I have only made 751 crane birds
in my whole life time.
Many believe this is why I haven't
met my good fortune yet.

Please don't leave all your America,
bring some along, you'll almost be envied there.
Except maybe for your awkward nose.

You don't need to bring too many things
to Seoul, South Korea.
You might want a toothbrush, toothpaste,
soap and toilet paper
if you care about things like that.
Don't bother to bring too much money
or you might end up with too many
unnecessary things to bring back.
If you even decide to come back.

Oh please bring a fork if you don't use chopsticks.

The day you are about to leave drink a big glass of water.
Pack your things in the red and white cab.
Ask the driver to drive slowly so you can absorb
all of America here.

When you get to the airport

please walk straight to your terminal.
Don't stop at the gift shops or get a bite to eat,
you might end up missing your plane.

You do not want to retrace your steps back home
because you were careless about time.
Board your plane with grace.
You want to make sure
you don't trip over the last step.

You are in for an overnight flight
so enjoy the movie playing
and the peanuts they serve.

When you arrive in
Seoul, South Korea,
take a deep breath before leaving the plane.
You can even cry for the relief of finally getting there.

When you walk out of the plane
please do not turn around and get back in,
even if you feel overwhelmed at the presence
of so many people in one room.
You have made it this far,
farther than I have
many times on this journey.

To get to Seoul, South Korea,
follow these directions carefully.
For I have gotten lost several times
on my journey to Seoul, South Korea,
on a quiet night. I would always find
a different way home

adding a couple years to my life.

កិច្ចការនៅខេត្តស ផ្នែកចាក់ជ័រយូរិថេន
មីនីយ៉ាប៊ូលីស មីនីសូតា

រាល់ថ្ងៃចន្ទ ដល់ ថ្ងៃព្រហស្បតិ៍
កិច្ចការចាប់ផ្តើម
នៅម៉ោង ៦ ព្រឹក
ហើយ ផ្សេង ជាអ្នករៀបចំកម្មវិធី ។

អក្សរផ្តល់នៅកញ្ចក់កុំព្យូទ័រ ៖
ESCORT LX URETHANE PROGRAM
HIT THE START BUTTON TO
BEGIN THE POURING PART.

"ជាវេនឯងហើយ សាម!" ផ្សេងស្រែកឡើង ។
ខ្ញុំលើកបន្ទះក្តារ ១មី x ១មី ប្តូរជ្រុងពីរទេ៖
ដាក់លើ តុ កង់
បិទបញ្ជាឈ្មោះលើបន្ទះក្តារ

កម្រង់បញ្ជាឈ្មោះ
ទៅទី៣ អក្សរ និង លេខ ៖
A22 to A4
M22 to M4

ប្រធានរោងចក្រ និង អ្នកចាត់ការ
ដើរមកសួរគមន៍ខ្ញុំរាល់ព្រឹក៖
"អរុណសួស្តី សាម
សប្បាយ សប្បាយ!"

"អរុណសួស្តី សប្បាយ សប្បាយ!"
ខ្ញុំឆ្លើយដោយមិនចាប់ដាក់កិច្ចការ
ខ្ញុំប្រញាប់ប្រញាល់ក្រោមម្តុលបង្ហូរជ័រ
ចុចគន្ធីសឡយូរិថេនហូរលើបញ្ជាឈ្មោះ ។

*Work at the Douglas Corporation,
Urethane Department
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

U Sam Oeur

for Ryan Skanse

At 6 a.m.
Monday through Thursday,
the work begins: Jeff adjusts
the urethane program.

It appears on the computer screen:
ESCORT LX URETHANE PROGRAM
HIT THE START BUTTON TO
BEGIN THE POURING PARTS

"It's all yours, Sam!" Jeff shouts.
I lift the chase from the cart,
put it on the conveyor,
lay out the nameplates on the chase,

align the nameplates
to the alphabets and numbers:
A22 to A4
M22 to M4

Each morning the managers
and the President come to welcome us:
"Good morning, Sam!
Arun suor sdei, sabbay , sabbay!"

"Arun suor sdei, sabbay, sabbay!"
I respond without shifting my attention from my work.
I push the chase under the pouring parts,
hit the button to pour urethane on the nameplates.

កិច្ចការដដែលៗប្រព្រឹត្តទៅពេញមួយថ្ងៃ
លើកលែងតែពេលសំរាក១៥នាទីនាម៉ោង៩:៤៥
អាហារត្រង់ពីម៉ោង ១២:៣០ ដល់ ម៉ោង ១ រៀង
ហើយសំរាក ១៥នាទីទៀតនៅម៉ោង ៣ រសៀល ។

ជូន ប្រធានផ្នែកខ្ញុំ

ស្រែកម្តង ម្តាល៖

" ត្រូវមែនទេ សាម? "

" ត្រូវមែន! " ខ្ញុំឆ្លើយអត់ទាំងកិតផង ។

ផ្សំហូបពងសម្លេងពីអ្វីមិនដឹង---

" វាធ្វើឲ្យអញក្តៅដល់ហើយ! "

" យី--អ--អា," ជូន លាន់មាត់ ។ គ្រានេះខ្ញុំធ្វើការ
ហើយធ្វើការផ្គុំផ្គង់ឲ្យទំនិញឆ្ងាញ់ចក្ក។

ខ្ញុំនឹងបង្វែរកម្លាំងខ្ញុំ

ខាងសេរីភាព និង ប្រជាធិបតេយ្យ

ឲ្យប្រែក្លាយជាផលិតកម្ម សង្ឃឹមថាផ្ដោតិបាល

ប្រើប្រាស់លុយពន្ធខ្ញុំសំរាប់ទប់ទល់នឹងអ្នកជិះជាន់ ។

ហើយសម្លេងបករបស់ប្រធានាធិបតី ឃ្លិនកុន

សូត្រកំណាព្យ វិលត៍ ហ្វិតម៉ិន៖ "ហូរទៅ ទន្លេ!

ហូរនឹងទឹកជិនន់ និង ស្រែក

ជាមួយទឹកនាចទៅ! " ខ្លួនខ្ញុំក្នុងអារម្មណ៍ខ្ញុំ ។

តែប្រហែលជាខ្ញុំបញ្ឆោតខ្លួនខ្ញុំទេដឹង

តើខ្ញុំតាំងខ្លួនជាកសិករ កម្មកររោងចក្រសូរៀត

កាលឆ្នាំ ១៩៥០ ឬ? តើខ្ញុំដឹងថា

អ្នកណាទៅជាអ្នកជិះជាន់ពិតនោះ?

The same routine continues all day,
except for a 15-minute break at quarter to 10 a.m.,
lunch from 12:30 to 1 p.m. and
another 15-minute break at 3 p.m.

John, my supervisor,
shouts from time to time:
"Isn't that right, Sam?"
"That's right!" I respond without thinking.

Jeff gibes away about something--
"It's really pissing me off!"
"Y-e-a-h..." John mumbles. Meanwhile I work
and work to make products delicious to the eye.

I will transmute my energy
for freedom and democracy
into production, hoping they'll use
my taxes to stem the oppressors.

And the echo of President Clinton
quoting Walt Whitman: "Flow on, river!
Flow with the flood-tide, and ebb
with the ebb-tide!" rumbles in my mind.

But maybe I am just fooling myself.
Do I sound like a peasant Soviet factory worker,
back in the 1950's? Do I have any idea
who the oppressors are, in actuality?

(translated from Khmer by Ken McCullough)

ប៉ុល ពត ថ្មី

១៩៧៩-៩១

ផុតពីក្រញាំខ្លា

រើបនឹងក្រពើ។

ផុតពីរបបប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍

ប៉ះអនុក្ករភាពនិយមពិទិសបូព៌ា។

ទឹកហូតបាក់ទៅក្នុងអាកាស

ហើយក្លាយជាភ្លៀង

ធ្លាក់ស្រោចលើដែនគោកឆ្នុក

រាប់ភ្លេច។

ទ្រូលខ្លះក្លាយជាស្រែស្រែ

ស្តៅលាស់ ផ្កា ផ្លែ សិបដងទៅហើយ

តែកុមារនៅស្បែកដណ្តប់ផ្លឹងទៀត

- នៅតែបេះស្លឹកឈើព្រៃ

- នៅតែដកមើមស្មៅ

ស៊ីសំរែក្រពះដដែល។

ខ្លះរកតែបាយកកមួយគ្រាប់ជាប់ឆ្នាំងក៏គ្មានផង។

ជរាស្រែកថ្ងៃ យំសោកដោយបាក់

ចៅ កូន ឯ "ក៥" ។

អ្នកឈឺស្រែកទ្រូញ បែរ ដុកទ័រ

ស៊ីគុយទាវ សើចក្តាកក្តាយ។

លំបាកវេទនាជូនទៅប្រជាជន

កសិផលជូនរដ្ឋាភិបាលក្លែងក្លាយ

ជ័យជំនះជូនឧត្តមសេនិយសម្រាប់ជាកំណត់

ហើយអំណាចជូនទៅអាយ៉ងហានូយ។

NEO-POL POT: 1979-91

U Sam Oeur

Free from tigers,
but facing crocodiles;
free from genocidal regimes,
I have to endure the usurpers from the east.

Water has evaporated into the sky,
turned into rains countless times
showering the whole land of *Kok Thlok*.
The mounds have become flattened into paddy fields.
Neem trees have bloomed, have borne fruit for more than ten years
yet emaciated children still fetch
 -- edible wild leaves
 grass roots
appeasing their hunger.

Some don't even have *bi-kok*.
The old sob, grieve from losing
their grandsons, children at KO-5.
The sick groan, while doctors
loungue nearby laughing at them.

Hardships to the peasants,
crops to the fake government;
to the generals,
victories based on killing those of their own race,
and power to the Hanoi puppets.

ខ្មែរបាន : មច្ចុ ការឈឺចាប់ វេទនា
ភោគសម្បត្តិជូនអ្នករត់គយ
(លោកជំទាវជំអាចម៍គោ) ឡើងមាស
ដោយភ្នែកលើខ្នងអ្នកស្មោះត្រង់។
កំសាន្តកាយសប្បាយហ៊ុហាបានទៅអ្នកបោកប្រាស។

បារមីទាំងឡាយត្រូវភាន់កាំង
ដោយបណ្ឌិតចិទមាត់
ខ្លាចការផ្ទាល់តប។
មន្ត្រីស្មោះត្រង់ដកខ្លួនថយសំដីស្ងៀម។

ខ្មែររងគ្រោះទៅជាប្រមឹក,
ដឹកទឹកភ្នោតជូនស្រីរងរាល់រដូវ
បំបាត់ទុក្ខព្រួយនិងការតូចចិត្ត
តែធាតុរសាប់រសល់នៅតែមានដដែល។

ឱ នគរគោកឆ្នកអើយ
មាតុភូមិជាទីស្នេហារបស់ខ្ញុំ
តើត្រូវអស់ទឹកភ្នោតជូនប៉ុន្មានរដូវទៀត
អស់ស្រា ស ប៉ុន្មានលីត្រទៀត
ទើបយើងបានលើកកែវផល់គ្នា
ដើម្បី " សេរីភាព និង ប្រជាធិបតេយ្យ ? ”

To the Khmers: death, lamentations and suffering.
Wealth to the smugglers,
wives of bigshots who ride to riches
on the backs of right-minded Cambodians;
a life of leisure to prevaricators.

Local deities are bemused
by wise men who keep silent
from fear of reprisals.
Faithful ministers "retire" from public service.

Kampalm and rice wine inebriate
Khmer victims from season to season,
drowning sorrows and resentments,
yet restlessness still prevails.

O, *Nokor Kok Thlok*,
my beloved!
How many more liters
until we propose the toast
for freedom and democracy!

(translated from Khmer by Ken McCullough)

*Condemned to Cultural Displacements: The Case of Modern China*¹

Wai-lim Yip

I. Cultural morphology under antagonistic symbiosis

Modern Chinese culture and literature in the wake of the Opium War (1839-42) and the attendant colonizing activities of the Western powers is a complex of antagonistic symbioses emerging from the inevitable ongoing conflicts between native sensibility and alien ideologies. From its beginning, modern Chinese culture has intertwined, multifaceted dialectical metamorphoses from various aggressions of the West. The process is highly treacherous and ambivalent: there is often an unreflective simultaneous love and hate of both native and alien systems, allowing both positive and negative energies from both cultures to engage in an indiscriminate competition. Caught in the middle of this battle, one poet, Wen Yiduo, has a nightmarish image of China:

O savage demon, you have exorcised me
You have exorcised me! You, variegated long rainbow
Five thousand years of memories, You, don't move
.....
You are so savage, so beautiful!²

Like the many hissing-snakes on Medusa's head, the crushed pieces of Chinese culture have come to haunt the people in a complex of frightful and petrifying charms—what I have called “the tangled knot of sorrow”.³

This battle of heterogenous cultural elements, brought about, first, by the colonizing attempts of the Western powers and Japan, and recently, by their geopolitical influences camouflaged under the pretext of “cooperative” globalization, is, at root, injurious to some significant aspects of the native culture. I would like to disclose the complex fabric of this battle, noting the three phases of colonization.

In the first phase, the colonizers create myths to veil their aggressions as justified acts that enlighten the colonized and eventually lead them to better, happier, lives. Columbus portrays the native Indians as cannibalistic and his own aggressions as civilizing acts. In the modern period, a different mode is used. The First World's discourses on modernity often focus on the euphoria that science and technology, industrialization and urbanization seem to promise and eschew all forms of

desperations resulting from these same developments.

In China, the decisions by intellectuals to change course and to appropriate scientific and technological knowledge (mostly military technology in the beginning) from the West, was stimulated by the 1894-5 Naval War with Japan. The once inviolable Grand Middle Kingdom was brutally defeated and humiliated by a small and once vassal-like Japan that nevertheless possessed newly modernized armed forces with a strong economic and industrial infrastructure adapted from the West. (The Treaty signed at Shimonoseki (1895) forced China to cede both Southern Manchuria and Taiwan to Japan.) Since then, intellectuals from Kang Youwei on began to worship Western ideas, and became intoxicated in the euphoria of a modern project.⁴ Indeed, most of them, particularly sometime before and during the May 4th Movement (1919), felt that Chinese culture was at the time so impotent either to resist the aggressors or to reinvigorate itself to embark on a new creative trajectory that it seemed totally inevitable to launch an all-out iconoclastic attack on native systems, to debunk the repressive, despotic, Chinese institutions for the colonizers' "strengthening" and "liberating" programs under the slogan of Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy.

In the second phase of colonization: assimilation or internalization of the colonizers' mental horizon causes the colonized engrossing hesitations and deep anxieties. During the May 4th Era, Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy indeed created favorable turns for Chinese culture: skepticism, critical spirit, and openness, allowing young intellectuals to challenge and question the dominatory power structures in traditional China, including deconstructing the interpretive strategies that once helped to consolidate traditional power hierarchies. (See, for example, the publication of the Series called *Rethinking Ancient Chinese History [Gushibian]* edited by Gu Jiegang), but the same reflective spirit is rarely applied to the intruding ideologies. In fact, the intoxication in Western knowledge and its structures of consciousness often prevailed over the attempt to question the nature and quality of cultural allogamy. This internalization has so incapacitated them that they often failed to detect that in the deeper reaches of these intruding ideologies was another form of domination equally repressive, injurious in its sharp deviation from the Chinese emphasis on the self-so-ness of Nature and human nature. In this process of appropriation and internalization, the two cultures enter into an intriguing process of confrontation, negotiation and modification. On the one hand, this symbiosis deeply disturbs the indigenous sensibility, and its sense of order and value; on the other, it triggers a series of tensional dialogues with interpenetrating elements from both native and alien cultures in a "savagely beautiful" cross-fertilization.

When the Western gunboats ushered in rapid destruction and unprecedented humiliations to the once inviolable Middle Kingdom, forcing her to open all the economically and strategically vital coastal ports to the West as concessions, and to sign off territorial and jurisdictional rights to various Western Powers, the

Chinese lost their national confidence and the loss still seems to many to be irrecoverable. Chinese culture has been driven into an exilic condition. Though China has never been totally colonized by foreign powers, and although the four elements (as suggested by Albert Memmi)⁵ that make up the stamp of an authentic cultural identity, (historical consciousness, sense of community, religious or cultural awareness, and language) have not been wiped out as they had been in some of the African tribal societies, the colonizing activities of the West, and later of Japan have clearly left indelible scars on modern Chinese culture. The centralization of alien cultures and the marginalization of indigenous traditions under the often divisive and subversive military and economic acts of the West resulted in what Renato Constantino⁶ called "cultural inauthenticity" and acculturation. The centralization comes in many forms of unconscious assimilation or internalization of things foreign. In music, Beethoven, Mozart, etc. are preferred to classical Chinese music. Film was dominated for an extended period by Hollywood, and if it is overstated to say that American TV and MTV have turned the Chinese filmic visual space into a "cultural garbage dump" with its technically sophisticated but all homogenizing, tawdry programs, we cannot deny the fact that their aggressive acts have greatly altered the Chinese cultural ecology. For a long time, the reading of Chinese novels, and that of Chinese poetry to a slightly lesser degree, have been dictated by many of the hermeneutical habits of the West. Cultural theories, including the tropics of philosophy employed in the writing of histories, and most theories in social sciences are conditioned by models developed from the positivistic philosophy of Western natural sciences. Western-styled clothing has become more the norm than anomaly. Modes of production and distribution, such as economics theories taught in universities and practiced in the ministry of economics and finance, class stratifications, such as school and university systems, and socio-psychological ambiances are basically Western as well in their orientation.

The result is the desensitization of indigenous traditions and the relegation of things Chinese, creating an invisible block to the intellectuals, and incapacitating them to rethink diacritically what exactly happens in a crosscultural confrontation. For example, few have been able to tell what has been rejected in the iconoclastic movements, and what has remained untouched, and how this untouched part of the Chinese tradition can help to mediate and negotiate with those non-dominating elements from the West to effect a synthesis that would consolidate and enrich both traditions but *not overwhelmingly change* the native intellectual horizon. The education of present-day intellectuals, with the exception of a small segment of scholars in literature, history and philosophy departments and a handful of creative writers, contains only a very small dose of traditional Chinese culture and what little they receive often comes in stock types and frames. There are few or no "sparks" to spur them into radical self-reflection against a larger repertoire of significant classical Chinese texts.

Let us dwell a bit here on the implications of the word "condemned" in the

title of this essay. The “modern project” in China is not a natural, gradual development from internal changes in economic, political and societal conditions. Modernity in the West is often explained as a reaction to the positivistic reduction of the lifeworld (caused by radical industrialization and urbanization leading to repressive monopolized capitalism), but the same cannot be said of the “modern project” in China. The emergence of modernity, from the very beginning, is implicated in and inseparable from, the imperialist acts of the West. China was *forced* to modernize, and the expressive dynamics in modern Chinese literature and the concomitant interpretive parameters must necessarily be different from those in modern Western literature. Among all Western discourses on modernity and modernism, there was little discussion of their connectedness to imperialism until the very recent efforts of Fredric Jameson and Edward Said.⁷ Since Western modernism was connected with expansionism and imperialism, what literature reflects is that writers tend to withdraw themselves into some form of conscious or unconscious “forgetting”, such as an aestheticism that excludes politics and history as the underpinnings of its discourse. To use Said’s words, *aesthetic* becomes *anaesthetic*.⁸ This “forgetting” includes critical discourses that marginalize literary phenomena of the “other” or appropriate them in such a way as to diffuse their uniqueness into Western hegemonic cultural modes and communities. Modern Chinese writings are products of the oppressed, and the colonized, responses to the double domination of indigenous despots and alien aggressors. As such, the multiple language strategies, including their *appropriation* of Western aesthetic strategies, must be seen as a function of their anxiety and of their attempt to come to grips with the crumbling chaos in their search for a *raison d’être*. One thing is clear from this fabric: the intensities, anxieties, solitudes, hesitations, doubts, nostalgia, expectancy, exile and dreams of the Chinese writers rarely come from an insulated private space; they are at once intensely inward (personal) and outward (historical), because they cannot help but be dialectical transfigurations from tensions and agonies of visible and invisible acculturation and colonization. Like the works of most Third World writers, they cannot help but be explicitly or implicitly *critical* and *interventionist*, even if they sometimes come to us in the form of a seeming surface of aestheticism. These works are rife with a consciousness weighted with *angst* and distress. In order to resist the colonization of humanity in general and the displacements and alienation of their indigenous culture in particular, modern Chinese writers rarely stay on the personal level. Even if they are writing about themselves, their works almost never become solipsistic, because their feelings are inevitably intertwined with the socio-psychological condition of the whole nation. There is no forgetting. Witness this poem by Mu Dan (1940):

Cut off from the womb, all warmth lost,
I am a torn part yearning for rescue,
Always a single self locked in wilderness.

From still dreams I left the group,

And pained in time's flow, clutching at nothing.
Continuous memories cannot bring back my self.

The metamorphosed image is deeper desperation,
Always a single self locked in wilderness,
Hating mother for parcelling out a separate dream.

In the unique cultural site such as modern China, the personal is also the national. What we have here is both the disintegration of self and that of Chinese culture, at once the love-hate complex of the poet and that of the nation.

II. Diasporic Cultural Space and Imagination

After the all-out highly emotional iconoclastic attacks on traditional systems and vast indiscriminate transplantation of Western ideologies in the May 4th Era, the intellectuals find themselves in a situation in which the rise of Mr. Science (together with its not-yet-understood reifying, commodifying and dehumanizing culture industry that often produces what Marcuse called "one-dimensional man") has significantly eclipsed indigenous counter-discourses, those in the high arts that once cultivated and maintained the deeper sense of (w)holistic sentient beings, and in the Daoist power-deframing, perceptual-expressive strategies and their concomitant suggestions of noninterference and nonintrusiveness.⁹ In a situation like this, Chinese intellectuals and writers find themselves drifting in a diasporic space, a cultural vacuum, embarking on an odyssey for new knowledge, and getting lost in some abyss. This is comparable to the situation when people are driven, by natural catastrophes, wars or other disasters, into an existential crisis: when they find themselves exiled from a center of coherence, wandering between a disintegrated past and an uncertain future. Solitary, anxious, nostalgic, and overwhelmed by a sense of futility and desperation, they turn inward to seek a new *raison d'être*, a new coherence through creativity. They do not know how to make the fragments into a meaningful whole or how to plug them into a cultural framework and, as a result, they feel frustrated, and enmeshed in agonies. Like Qu Yuan, the poet of "Encountering Sorrow" of the 3rd-century BC, they are distressed by the distortion of the true measure by "cunning artificers", feeling "alone at a loss in this generation". Like him, they "would rather die and meet dissolution" than ape the uncritical behaviors of other pursuers, resisting change even if their bodies "were dismembered". Their heart is "irresolute and wavering", sensitive of being "hurried by days and months". They are thrust into a diasporic space where they have to "look for sages of old for inward guidance", or "look into the past and forward to later ages", going "up and down, seeking for their heart's desire", from which they hope to retrieve some form of "unsullied" beauty. This agonized quest has thus become both structure and content of much of modern Chinese poetry.

Modern China seems forever caught between uncertainties. The old culture and society and aesthetics are now denounced, discarded. But is it so easy to swing a wisdom-sword to cut the nets of affection for two thousand years of brilliant, and, as it has been labeled, "exquisite" culture? And yet, modern Chinese historical developments are constantly urging them to identify with the new culture. But where is the new center of cultural coherence; the truly cohesive form (hermeneutical and explanatory framework) for the beaten and beat China? What kind of cohesive form can they borrow from the West (if indeed there were such a thing!) to regenerate a vigorous China? These are still unanswered questions in the midst of a still uncured love-hate complex. Instead of submitting themselves willingly to this nascent new culture, they are being hurled into a mass of uncertainties. *To be or not to be, that is the question*. This is why Lu Xun prefaced his *Hesitation* with this quotation from Qu Yuan: "Long, long had been my road and far, far will be the journey; I would go up and down to seek my heart's desire",¹⁰ an epigram symptomatic of the psychological complex of modern Chinese writers. Most writers find themselves hesitating between two cultures, with tensions, with trepidation, with bad dreams between places, between landscapes, between anxieties, always *between*, always *dis/placed*.

Historical fabric of displacements:

Ever since the Opium War and the subsequent Westernization movements, pilgrimages have been made to the West for some "elevated scriptures" that might save China. The high monk Xuan-zhuang (Tripitaka) (596-664) went on a difficult, painful journey to India for Buddhist Scriptures, but he did not have to agonize over the culture of Tang Dynasty. But the modern pilgrim simply cannot extricate himself from the throes and pangs of this crisis of cultural displacement--a motif that appears repeatedly in modern Chinese literature. In the May 4th Era, we can cite, for example, Yu Dafu's "Sinking" (novella), Wen Yiduo's "I am a banished prisoner" (and many similar poems), Wang Duqing's "I came out from the Cafe", Wang Xindi's "Azalea and Bird", "A Poet in Paris"; in Taiwan, Bai Xianyong's "Death in New York" (story), Yu Guangzhong's "Upon the many-humped Sea", my own "Fugue", "Crossing" and the "Legend of a Pine and a Bird", and countless other examples. Strictly speaking, almost all writings in modern China contain the tincture of this displacement complex.

The *angst* caused by the centralization of alien cultures and the marginalization and desensitization of indigenous culture is already explained above. Here is an example from a recent young poet: "Mr. Democracy/ Mr. Science/ Marx/ Engels/ In order to save China, we began since childhood to learn/ to pronounce these teeth-grinding, tongue-twisting names/ and these names finally betrayed us/ separated us...." (Yang Ze).

The new cities, in the wake of the "euphoria" of modernity have turned Nature into "a huge hospital", and spring has become "A Logic Patient's Spring" (Chen Jingrong). "In striding fashion are those aliens,/Brown hair, green eyes...We followed them and/ Turned with them on a gray sand road, and/ Learned to be "gentlemen" under their/ Conductor's rod..." (Hang Yuehe). This is the alienation and exile of the natural self, the slow disappearance of the communion between humans and Nature. This process has become worse with recent drastic, speedy, and unmediated attempts to catch up with the "lost time" in modernization, as demonstrated in many of the writings on the city by recent poets on both sides of China.

The Nationalists' "White Terror" campaign in 1927 drove more than eighty percent of the writers to flee to Mao's Yenan, where, to their dismay, they met even more brutal persecutions forcing most of them either to drift in a vacuum of cultural signs or to remain permanently silent.

Japan's relentless invasion of China brought horrific bloodbaths: "How the commons were shocked and tried! People scattered, separated, lost."¹¹ Nightmare piled upon nightmare: "The people with the hardest lives,/ The oldest people of the world," after having lost their last mouthful of grains, all crowd "toward/ A polluted alley of hopelessness:/ Hunger-stricken land/ stretches toward the darkened sky/ His two begging arms/ trembling." (Ai Qing). This is one of the most painful aspects of modern China's exodus.

After Japan surrendered, China barely began reconstruction before she was almost immediately driven into violent internecine war between the Nationalists and the Communists, causing a huge divide that separated parents and children, husbands and wives, lovers and friends for over 40 years. The experience of those forced to flee from China Mainland to Taiwan was utterly traumatic. The "crossing" created in the writers an imminent restlessness and despondency. Separated, perhaps permanently, from the central seat of Chinese culture and floundering between the fears of a possible total breakdown of Chinese culture and a threateningly nebulous future, they experienced a crushing sense of futility and disintegration.¹²

The impact on the younger generation of writers (such as those who came to Taiwan with their parents when they were mere children and those who were born in Taiwan after relocation) was equally detrimental. They were almost totally severed from the umbilical cord of the new critical spirit of the May 4th, because, under the pretext of trying to block the so-called infiltration of leftist thinking, the Nationalist government stopped the flow of books and journals from mainland China, and, in the case of school textbooks, pasteurized the contents to ensure the scheme of ideological strictures. As a result, for these younger writers, the image of, and feeling for, China can only be sustained by a legend constructed out of the broken memories of their parents; to them, China remains merely a map. These multiple

displacements have now led to a serious lack of effective historical consciousness. For example, since the long overdue thaw came in 1987, when pre-1949 books, and works by current mainland Chinese writers were allowed (but by no means systematically) into Taiwan, the responses have been anachronistically off-balance and off-mark. These works have been judged by readers in Taiwan not within their proper historical contexts, but according to hermeneutical habits developed locally within a specific historical condition. The blockage of books from China by the Nationalist government before the thaw remains an important cultural rupture for these writers.

Distortion of a different sort broke out in Mainland China. Mao Zedong's literary program, such as that spelled out in his famous 1942 Yanan Talks and his two earlier essays, "The May 4th Movement" (1939), and "The Culture of New Democracy" (1940), streamlined the writing of modern Chinese literary histories. Besides stipulating that all writers should abandon all residual individualism and subjectivity of the urban petit-bourgeoisie and write from the standpoint of workers, peasants and party cadres, he further insisted that the May 4th Movement was a "proletarian-led, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture of the broad masses." These dictates predisposed the narratives of almost all the literary historians after him. Official literary histories found no room for such urban intellectuals as Hu Shi and his friends, the entire Crescent Society and many theorists who contributed significantly to the fermentation of the New Culture Movement. Nor was there any mention of the poets of 30's and 40's concerned with the making of artistic language. The campaign against individualism and subjectivity was intended as a campaign against the May 4th legacy of critical spirit represented by writers like Wang Shiwei, Ding Ling, Ai Qing, and later Hu Feng who used this legacy to challenge Mao's literary/ political maneuvers in Yanan. Indeed, Mao's brand of Socialist Realism, which he adapted from Qu Qiubai's earlier version from its Soviet origins, requests that writers look toward the mythic golden future of the Great Socialist State and represent reality *not as it is, but as it ought to be*. As a result, he excluded the possibility of disclosing the darker sides of life under Communist rule and predisposed the writers to blacken the enemies (the Nationalists, the Imperialists, the Capitalists and the Japanese invaders) through stereotypes rather than exploring the complexity therein. In order to consolidate his dictatorship and ensure that there would be no challenge to his Grand Narrative, he launched numerous rectification campaigns against writers until all free creative spirit was uprooted. This is one of the most injurious forms of alienation done to Chinese cultural growth. At the height of these campaigns, the "forbidden zones" included classical Chinese culture and literature (the so-called residual feudalism); the critical legacy of the May 4th Movement; all the works that attempt to mould a new culture with a new artistic language; almost all the works from the West; and, of course, all the works produced in Taiwan. Indeed, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, aspiring writers had almost nothing to read except Mao's own writings, the classic works of Marx, and a few party-

ordained novels. Underlying the strategy is the wholesale denial of the natural human self that forces life and thought into accord with party-ordained codes. We now can understand it is this forty-year process of cultural displacement and alienation in multiple levels that caused the agonizing depression of the post-Mao era Mist poets,¹³ and the acute yearning of the novelists for libertarian ideas of the May 4th Era.¹⁴

Here, I must point to the possibility of losing classical Chinese culture to the youth born under the Red Flag: the abbreviated form of Chinese characters (a practice adopted in PRC which puts their practical use over their function as a culture-carrier) will close the door of classical Chinese texts to general readers in the next twenty years; these texts will be *for specialists only*. If there is no readjustment in the near future, this would become the most serious dislocation and loss of classical Chinese culture.

The historical complexity of Taiwan's own unique cultural exile and displacement deserves treatment of a separate paper. Some aspects need to be highlighted here. First, during the fifty years of Japanese colonization since 1895, while there were important attempts by Taiwanese-Chinese *wenyan* (classical Chinese) poets to preserve the legacy of the Mainland, there was also a high degree of internalization of the colonizer's culture in spite of the fact that there were some writers who, longing for their "original homeland", returned to China (such as Zhong Lihe) and those who continued to resist their colonizer by keeping in touch with the critical spirit of the May 4th Era (such as Yang Kui). On the whole, they were what Wu Zhuoliu called "the orphans of Asia", with extremely complex and ambivalent feelings toward China.

Upon the surrender of the Japanese, when Taiwan at long last was restored to China, the excitement of the Taiwanese-Chinese was exceedingly high, only to be crushed by the barbaric, untutored Nationalist soldiers. Pillages during the takeover not only brutalized the natives, but also led to the Feb. 28, 1947 Massacre, which persists as another kind of love-hate complex that continues even to this day.

The identity crisis of the Taiwanese-Chinese is difficult for outsiders to grasp. As the native poet Xiang Yang wrote:

The tragic sense of the Taiwanese derived not only from political oppression, but also from deeper, more rooted factors formed as early as when the Han Chinese crossed the dark waters to Taiwan...After the coastal Han Chinese migrated in great numbers to Taiwan, they oppressed and cheated the natives...However, these Han Chinese, seen from another angle, can hardly be called aggressors or invaders. Most of them came to Taiwan because they could not make their ends meet or because of war in China or because they had to evade the unrea-

sonably heavy taxes of the imperial governments. These early settlers that begot today's Taiwanese people, even in the days after the Qing Dynasty annexed Taiwan, had always been seen as exiles, and thus their tragic sense came from the sorrow of being abandoned...The Taiwanese people, without any choice, fell into the long, long rules, one after the other, of the Dutch, the Spaniards, Zheng Chengkong of the Ming Dynasty, the Imperial Qing Dynasty, the Japanese and the Nationalists. During these rules by "outsiders", the Taiwanese suffered the sorrow of being oppressed, the sorrow of no identifiable nation, the sorrow of serious frustration over helplessness in their resistance to colonization and aggressions...a "twisted and bent" sorrow from the loss of historical memories.¹⁵

After the Nationalists were driven by Mao's forces to Taiwan, they had some reprieve from the Communist unrest, and Chinese culture was given a chance to revive, however imperfect it was. The partial success of the Nationalist government to reposition Chinese culture in Taiwan owes much to the Taiwanese-Chinese feeling toward Chinese culture cultivated by earlier patriots' resistance movements against the Japanese, and to a sense of belonging preserved in the *wenyan* poems of older Taiwanese-Chinese. Here, I must point out three developments that have diminished cultural and literary knowledge.

First, when Taiwan was appropriated into the Cold War (although the Nationalist government labeled itself as "Free China" to counter the "authoritarian Communist China") the leaders became so paranoid of the Communists that they lost sight of reality. They became suspicious of everybody as potential spies and began a long period of oppression to eliminate "dissidents".

Second, the disinformation strategy (mentioned earlier) of blocking the flow of books from China and pasteurizing textbooks, resulted from this paranoia. The havoc done to the native-born young Taiwanese-Chinese is immeasurable. Without books produced since the May 4th Era, they have no real sense of cultural continuity of the changing modern China. This is the biggest failure of the Nationalist education programs during the 1950's and 1960's. How to reawaken in them this sense of cultural continuity and relevance to the fate of China is perhaps the most critical job for these leaders today.

Third, the Nationalist leaders have made no effort to reflect on the complex and problematic question of synthesizing Chinese and Western structures of consciousness. Having kept in the dark both the May 4th critical and questioning spirit and the power-deframing potential of indigenous Nature-oriented philosophies, they mapped and framed traditional Chinese culture and literature for teachers and students in conservative forms as a foil to ensure political stability.

While I have written extensively on this predicament in my essay "Colonialism, Culture Industry and the Technology of Desire",¹⁶ I offer here instead the

composite view of John Tomlinson,¹⁷ and my own work. Briefly, the modernisation theory propagated by the First World often eschews the ambiguous (i.e., at once liberating and repressive) character of modernity and highlights its capacity to deliver human happiness and fulfillment. This theory which the First World attempts to sell to the Third World as development theory, sees traditional, pre-capitalist, and pre-modern societies as consisting all manner of social and material ills and unfreedoms which greatly limit the possibilities for self-developments. "People were held in thrall to a variety of superstitions or dogmatic religious beliefs; civil and political rights were few and authoritarian rule is the norm." Modernity, according to this theory, in particular, "the scientific rationality and the liberal-democratic political projects associated with 'enlightenment'" will deliver emancipation from many of these forms of domination. With a bourgeois economic theory characterized by highly stratified administrative and management structures, coupled with industrialization and urbanization, progress and affluence will be achieved. But this theory chooses to gloss over the warnings of Baudelaire, Marx, Weber, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and many others: that modernisation also comes with regimentation of the lifeworld, an "iron cage" of instrumental reason leading to a reductive humanity -- "one dimensional man", alienated, reified, commodified, and "colonized" -- in other words, another form of domination. The theory inflates the promised euphoria in an effort to facilitate the First World's project to globalize their economic deployment.

Now, it is this theory brimming with euphoric promise that the Taiwan leaders and elites (and later those in Mainland China) have internalized, seeing modernisation as an inevitable course all Third World developing countries are "condemned" to pursue without any active, critical reflection to question any of these consequences. In recent years, the situation has worsened: They look only toward affluence and do not know, or choose not to know, that Chinese culture has been either altered or marginalized to the degree of slowly becoming a near-empty shell; they proudly compare themselves with the indices of Western life styles and material conditions. Intoxicated by the myth of progress rife with consumerist desire and fetishization, they have brought about a form of homogenized culture to the exclusion of high culture and art. Contrary to the Chinese emphasis of "humans modeled after Nature", they repeated the Western mistake of utilitarianism and consequent destruction of environment, creating "economic humans" that are often crude and brute and all imaginable forms of pollution. Even worse, the elite leaders in Taiwan apply the same strategies of aggression upon less developed countries and areas, including Mainland China. Have the Chinese elites ever reflected upon these catastrophic changes? Should they allow their culture and literature to become low-brow, tawdry, and desensitized?

To call modernisation another form of colonization is perhaps overstated, but it is true that many of the symptoms in visible colonized situations appear in Third World countries where native perception of reality and sensibility have been all too suddenly radicalized. In the words of K. Jaspers,¹⁸

The age of technology makes questionable what we live by; it uproots us, and it does so all around the globe. And to the great Asian cultures it does so more violently, since they lack the transitional period in which the West was producing the technological world, a world that now, finished and overpowering, engulfs people whom their past culture has neither prepared for nor disposed toward it.

In the later, high-tech stage, this radicalization is even more devastating.

Many are the strategies the colonizer uses to achieve control over the colonized: suppression of national self-consciousness, enforcement of an economic and cultural dependency on a distant metropolis, the creation of a psychological and cultural ambience whereby the historical consciousness, sense of community and cultural identity of the colonized can be desensitized such as tailoring traditional and new cultural activities through reification and commodification to fit in with consumers' needs-- a culture industry whose infrastructure includes the elevation of commercialism to such a high degree that any residual self-conscious interventionist impulse would be wiped out and that all high literary and art forms would be replaced by some form of "soft" consumerist literature, soft-porn sensationalism, surface-scratching lyricism or outright tabloidism.

We can now see that in both Taiwan and Mainland China, without using a single bullet, the hegemonic economic powers (the West and Japan), offer a palatable rhetoric of so-called transnational cooperations, and achieve similar goals described above. The key to this bloodless conquest is the full internalization of the Western modernisation and development theory by the elite leaders of developing countries and their wilful disregard of the devastating effects.

True independence must, then, be both economic and cultural. The third phase of colonization (or post-colonization) is characterized by final freedom from the new ills created by the above-described dependency complex. This freedom can only be achieved by the intermediary elite classes embarking on a process of self-reflection and question those internalized alien structures of consciousness. This process acknowledges the real problems in imported systems of ideas and actions as well as the largely-ignored strengths in their indigenous culture. In the making of a new Chinese culture in which the complete sense of a lifeworld must be preserved, they must neither accept the dominator's present systems, nor to return to traditional modes uncritically, but rather explore the battles and negotiations of heterogeneous elements from two competing cultures at once destructive and creative in the hopes of catching a "spark" of the possibility of self-liberation and transcendence from internalized modes in the midst of restless dialogues between two systems.

Notes

¹ For more textual discussions of various narratives and aesthetic strategies emerging from this displacement fabric, see my "Cultural Displacements and Aesthetic Agenda in Modern Chinese Poetry" in the *Epoch Poetry Quarterly*, 100, September, 1994.

² "An Idea"

³ *Thirty Years of Poetry* (Taipei: Dongda, 1987): 565

⁴ See Kang's memorials to Emperor Guangxu, but also the Utopian vision in his *Datongshu* (On Universal Community).

⁵ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

⁶ *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-consciousness* (London: Merlin Press, 1978): 165.

⁷ Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism" in *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, eds. Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Edward Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: A. Knopf, 1993), "A Note on Modernism."

⁸ "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (Winter, 1989): 211.

⁹ For a detailed discussion of this power-deframing horizon in Chinese poetry and art derived from Taoism, see my *Diffusion of Distances: Dialogues between Chinese and Western Poetics* (University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁰ See Yip's essay on the art of language in Lu Xun's *Wild Grass* in *Dangdai* (Contemporary) 68, 69 (Dec., 1991, Jan., 1992).

¹¹ These are Qu Yuan's words in his "Lament for Ying."

¹² See Yip, "On Lo Fu," *Chung-wai Literature*, XVI. 8 & 9 (Taipei, 1989): 4-9, 92-132.

¹³ See Yip, "Crisis Poetry: An Introduction to Yang Lian, Jiang He and Mist Poetry," *Renditions*, 233 (Spring, 1985): 120-30.

¹⁴ As in Dai Houying's *The Death of the Poet*.

¹⁵ "It is truly sorrowful to be a Taiwanese-Chinese," *China Times*, Literary Supplement (Jan., 1992).

¹⁶ in my *Reading the modern and the postmodern* (Taipei: Dongdai, 1992).

¹⁷ *Cultural Imperialism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991): 142-42.

¹⁸ *The Future of Mankind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963): 72.

On Certainty (Part Three: Memphis, Capital of North Mississippi)

Paul Naylor

—for Nathaniel Mackey

350. But here I have already sketched a background, a surrounding, for this remark, that is to say given it a context.

--Ludwig Wittgenstein

Mr. Crump don't 'low no easy riders here
Mr. Crump don't 'low it, ain't goin' have it here
We don't care what Mr. Crump don't 'low
We gonna barrel house anyhow

-- W.C. Handy

193. Begins here, someone said, in the lobby of the Peabody Hotel.

194. Ducks drawn through the Delta, through Tunica, Clarksdale, Cleveland, Greenwood and Greenville, through the alluvial slough of sound (cast off skin or mired in mud means much the other does not). Objectively certain we are of the long still hot weary dead, he said. Air like weight. Dim in heat. Blinds closed forty odd summers. Smell more dense than thought. Dark always cooler and yellow light moves along the sash.

195. Sat bolt upright and stared across the horizon. Nothing not seen before. Flatness always its own effect. Twenty-seven miles I've heard is all we can see along the surface of the earth.

196. From Memphis to Vicksburg a lush hell of tupelo, ash and black gum, slash pine and poplar roots under soil so rich the world thus far exploited and explained. The truth inquires about modes of production, distribution and the ethics thereof ignored by most.

197. Which knows only of itself, its mode of production, and its qualitative drift

down river (thickets and thorns become evidence of more than marks on a page which is certainly true).

198. No I'm not from around here. For or against involves overcoming ignorance or was it tradition to resist.

199. Jackson and Shelby built Memphis on a bluff. Bullied the Chickasaws to sell at four cents per acre. Accept the proposition or its abrupt manacled among them. Then sold for fifty. It must be misleading not abstract.

200. And out of soundless nothing comes cotton for less than expected. Though more on the margins drift without that quality of a dream. So what is tallying in this case.

201. Suppose someone were to say cotton high as memory. Whose evidence stands to reason or sense falls short as we do.

202. And to drag house and formal gardens out of soundless nothing certain. Who would have gone to Memphis for livestock or slaves.

203. Passage crossed out in MS. (Editors) Smell of spring memory of magnolia. How honeysuckle got mixed up in twilight her door shut tight. Clamor of crickets in the trees.

204. When wealth and prosperity culminate in the alluvial plain of the Mississippi. So the ads said in 1850. Giving ground for profit however justified manacles reason. A way of acting not seeing who as necessary to life not labor.

205. Forced to work another's obsession. Wildeyed site. Written by himself.

206. My age, as little as horses know of theirs. My words, Master Mother Father. I know nothing without words withheld. My mother colored and quite dark. My master my father. Common custom. Who know their age from which I ran. Couldn't for example learn history.

207. And every skull once contained.

208. Conversation between restricted to this language. Yet what eludes the master's eye. And blues his ear. Not contained within the skull of every economy.

209. From three hundred bales in 1825 to four hundred thousand in 1860. And Forrest sold over a thousand most years. Carpenters for twenty five hundred, blacksmiths and painters for fifteen, field hands seven hundred and fifty, boys seven, girls

six (Memphis Daily Eagle).

210. Slave trader, confederate hero, railroad builder, supreme grand wizard. Nathan Bedford Forrest. Pigeons still shit on his statue downtown.

211. Giving a way of seeing form.

212. It took ninety minutes for Memphis to fall in 1862. Five thousand on the bluff watched two confederate ships hit head on while the union monarch slipped by. And cotton went from thirteen cents a pound to over a dollar during three years of federal occupation. Somewhere we must be finished with justification. This is how we calculate.

213. Trading between enemy lines. A homogeneous mass of consumers seduced he said to new forms of gratification and therefore consuming others. At Fort Pillow for instance.

214. Who also said slavery cannot be abolished without the steam engine the mule and the spinning jenny. The matter of class as always precedes. But why one would feel like saying.

215. Wanting the single term to account after all the problem lies in its expression. What stake does agreement with reality have in this game.

216. The proposition it is writing.

217. Or riding through Memphis at night an empire invisible to only a few facts of geography and history that no more disappear than it shall be the duty of the grand wizard to communicate from time to time that over forty thousand in Tennessee and a half a million throughout the South.

218. Who can believe for one moment they disbanded when disfranchisement became fact five years after the war.

219. There cannot be any doubt about it. That's it.

220. What counts as reasonable in this sentence. Along with questions about what it refers to in the previous.

221. Can I be in doubt.

222. Cannot possibly doubt that I was never in the nineteenth century. Would I if it were true.

223. For mightn't I and absolutely crazy. No analogy holds.

224. About the Delta as a symbol of the old South though little of its land was cleared until twenty years after the war. Then forced open to impenetrable growth of capital doubling the cultivated in ten years. Raised the levees and ran track from New Orleans to Memphis.

225. To hold fast is not one but many in a nest of.

226. Things I think are certain but forgotten at all.

227. Or suspended between plantation and frontier.

228. Justice for who wants to say true things are before us a surface shifting and foundationless.

229. Circumstance of plantation life. Nothing personal. An arrangement of labor.

230. Who can believe for one moment I know these things for certain. And what such a person would still allow to be counted. At once visionary and alert ruthless and reposed whose impervious surface of forgotten hasn't begun.

231. As impressive statistical evidence of aggregate economic expansion of the gap between a measurable increase in tension and record rates of lynching.

232. One hundred and sixty one in 1892. A more efficient system needs less than labor in their eyes. Simply judging and therefore acting. Often with the law's assistance for those a prosperous and politically insulated crop.

233. Brought to you by Vardamanism. Had to have a license to kill anything in Mississippi except we was always in season. Trial by torchlight reconstructed what or emancipated who. Pulled pieces of flesh from bodies with corkscrews while one thousand watched (Vicksburg Evening Post).

234. Three that year were Ida's friends in Memphis. Moss, McDowell, and Stewart made more than the white grocer next door. Police fired first and the three fired back. Jailed then taken to Cubbins Brick Yard and shot. Not for the normal charge of rape but for being better capitalists she wrote in Free Speech. After which her office was destroyed by a mob and the Memphis Daily Appeal called for the black wretch who had written that foul lie to be tied naked to a stake and burned on Main Street.

235. (Leave this blank in the memory of who.)

236. Heard the call from Senegal, Ghana, and Dahomey in the fields of Sunflower, Bolivar, and Coahoma. The response unwritten but sung after the drum was banned for too much talk. Might it not be a mystical thought contradicts the historical transcription of life and language lost.

237. Or a bent note revolt mired in lament. The flattened fifth not the fixed pitch of ritual submission to harmonic rule. Who sat down beside Handy at Tutwiler station in 1903 and slid his knife across strings. Goin' where the Southern cross the Dog. And on up to Memphis driven by Jim Crow and Judge Lynch. Doubled its population in ten years Handy had his band on Beale Street singing we don't care what Mr. Crump don't 'low we gonna barrel house anyhow. Only the accustomed context makes sound certain of itself.

238. Goin' upcountry leaving the fields behind. Let Mr. Charlie pick for himself. Floods, weevils, and wartime work fueled the great migration filled steel mills and packing houses in Saint Louis, Chicago, and Detroit. Laid much of the track that took them north. Passed through Memphis on the Illinois Central Line.

239. But back home it began to take shape at Dockery's plantation. Some six hundred sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and wage laborers worked his land and built the Pea Vine Line to get his cotton to market. Rumor says Henry Sloan showed it to Charley Patton showed it to Tommy Johnson, Willie Brown, and Son House showed it to Robert Johnson who showed them all. I think I heard the Pea Vine when she blowed just like my rider gettin' on board. Started there outside Drew, Mississippi with Patton playing that tune. I believe every human being gives credence to contradictory evidence.

240. Such as who met Legba not Lucifer at the crossroads. Tommy told it first then Robert. Get there a little before midnight and wait till the big black man comes and tunes your piece. Is belief based on experience or proof.

241. Is it certain belief is even necessary. And what would confirm this hypothesis.

242. Must we say I believe it happens as history happens.

243. The 1927 flood for instance. When the levee broke a seven foot wall of water roared through Greenville and on to Leland, Indianola, and Greenwood creating a lake thirty miles wide and a hundred miles long. Back water done rose at Sumner drove poor Charley down the line. Heard it in High Water Everywhere. No surer than his assertion.

244. Who is speaking with this mouth.

245. Or blowin' jug on Beale. Slade, Ramey, Weldon, and Polk put it on record that same year. Sonny Brimmer Blues and three others cut downtown. But mostly played at the Peabody and Chickasaw Country Club for dinner and drinks. There is no subjective assurance that a grin is evidence of anything. Some started out doing blackface for medicine shows like Cannon's Jug Stompers followed Slade's to the studio where what little money there was.

246. When Furry heard that tune. Follow me baby and I'll turn your money green. A foundation for all my beliefs. Which is why he swept streets for forty years in Memphis and made the low strings sing his name.

247. His first was a cigar box with a two-by-four nailed on as a neck and screen wire for strings until Handy gave him the real thing. Played at Pee Wee's, Big Grundy's, and B.B. Anderson's on Beale people holler mercy don't know what mercy mean. No doubt he had two hands but just one leg. Why can't I imagine it all as it was when he sang John Henry in twenty-nine.

248. Just as the economy's convulsions arrived at rock bottom and cotton dropped from seventeen to four cents a pound by 1932.

249. Whose false picture of doubt corresponds with debt like that.

250. Son of a Mississippi slaveholder, married wealth and first gained favor by cleaning up Beale for business as usual. From then on Boss Crump rode this town like a roan. Evidence is everywhere.

251. What does this mean: a political machine believes in what confuses me unconditionally.

252. For instance he bought the black vote by paying their poll tax and fought back the Klan in twenty-four and twenty-eight.

253. But appointing a Klan leader chief of police shows a well-founded belief in what.

254. Is cunning as any reasonable person knows.

255. And turned a blind eye to the Negro removal campaigns in the thirties. Some paid twenty-five for maiming and a hundred for killing black porters stokers flaggers break and switch operators on the Illinois Central Line. Though he built Handy Park on Beale this game would never be theirs.

256. On the other hand which does change in time.

257. After FDR's election black leaders like Church and Lee no longer had the power of political appointments were all his now. So he brought in Boyle and shut down Beale for good. We are not going to tolerate a bunch of niggers spreading racial hatred and running things their way. Tell them Mr. Crump said so. Which removed all doubt.

258. I do not know how that sentence is to be used without quotation marks do not unconditionally apply to his proposition no more near the surface of the truth.

259. Than the new deal in Memphis and Mississippi discovered during the flood how federal aid could reinforce not undermine an enduring state of labor.

260. And hatred used in normal linguistic exchange of custom and control or supremacy speaks without thought of retreat.

261. I cannot imagine a man made in his present image without insight all too many hoped was wrong or reasonable.

262. Or a man raised in Robinsonville on the Abbay and Leatherman Plantation. Not taught by Son House and Willie Brown to believe I'm sinkin' down was as mysterious and brilliant as Shakespeare. What special circumstances could give us a picture of how he learned what no one else knew and why without doubt.

263. No school this boy ever went to legend would have us believe.

264. That Robert was always neat. He could ride highways and things like that all day long, and you'd look down at yourself and you'd be as filthy as a pig and Robert'd be clean -- how, I don't know. Who had fantastic ideas of human ability to overcome and captured by a wild tribe taught him twenty-nine songs are all we have.

265. But what can I say beyond he went from place to place bound by a past unlike my own.

266. And the blues fell mama's child on compelling grounds outside Greenwood when his new deal came due.

267. To which a decrease in crop brought an increase in aid and abuse of whom there is little doubt.

268. That federal subsidies replaced one form of paternalism with another for fifteen cents per day per hand could possibly hold less and loss of labor for example.

269. Nearly three hundred thousand left the Delta in the forties for jobs in the North and eighty-five thousand joined the effort to keep the world which wasn't Mississippi safe for democracy. Then returned. From fighting. Fighting.

270. For what little was left once a one-row cotton picker came on the market in 1947 compelling grounds turned by mechanized not human hands.

271. Harvested half the crop in little more than ten years time.

272. I know = less need to treat workers well.

273. Countless empirical propositions state Muddy's case. Left in forty-three two years after Lomax played his voice back on a three hundred pound machine on Stovall's Plantation. Said man this boy can sing the blues. Which he plugged in soon after he reached Chicago and heard himself singing I Feel like Going Home on radios and jukeboxes in 1948.

274. However experience does not teach us these propositions in isolation but in conjunction with others makes them beyond doubt. Such as an increase in violence follows a decrease in need we enumerate all circumstances lead so many to believe in separate but equal to what.

275. Was overturned in May of 1954. Rumors of which formed the Citizens Council in Mississippi waged a war of reprisal against who registered to vote or fought Jim Crow and whose experience was certainly not theirs to own and order. A white-collar Klan took control of the courts the police the banks backed up by legalized intimidation and terror.

276. We believe so Senator Eastland said the South will not abide nor obey. And will take whatever steps are necessary to retain. Our great crusade to restore Americanism.

277. Which I can't help believing.

278. Those that are comfortable with how things are.

279. Find it possible to believe everything we say is untrue and twisted like kudzu consumes all it covers. If my daughter starts going to school with nigras now, by the time she gets to college she won't think anything of dating one of 'em. This town is

70 percent nigra; if the nigra voted, there'd be nigra candidates in office. Who would want to believe otherwise. But how does this hang with all the rest. Does agreement with a conclusion mean agreement with a form of life.

280. And who could doubt whether all those acronyms resist this form.

281. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Congress Of Racial Equality. Council Of Federated Organizations. Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

282. Or that he caught the eye of the first when he tried to enroll at Ole Miss seven years before Meredith and named him their first field secretary in the state. Which also got him named on the enemies of Mississippi's Old Way Of Life list published in most Delta newspapers. Medgar Evers just after George Lee.

283. Got Lee in fifty-five and eight years later.

284. Huddled in brush across from Evers' house Beckwith shot him in the back and hid his gun in honeysuckle. Left his fingerprint on the Golden Hawk scope of his Enfield 30.06. Left Medgar to die on his own doorstep. Left Myrlie a widow with children ten seven and three. And two hung juries left him to join the Klan and run for lieutenant governor. He's a Straight-Shooter one button read.

285. If someone is looking for something Appendix B has all the answers unseen. Whose garbage was it to pick up. Twenty-five hundred tons a day looking and smelling will tell in Memphis.

286. What we know depends on who let it stack up beyond belief. Loeb refused to recognize and dues paid through checkoffs so nine hundred and thirty out of eleven hundred let the man pick it up himself. The news said only what he said to say not their side was taken by few. If we compare his system of knowledge and dispersion with theirs no account would emerge without resistance or little regret expressed.

287. 23.2.68. Which law of induction open to abuse justifies mace on everyday knowledge next week as well as now we know it was provoked by predictions.

288. That King would be killed a week after the first march was subverted that spring dogwood azalea and redbud waited to bloom the night he spoke rain poured down and lightning coursed the sky. Against which darkness allows us to see the stars from the mountain top he said he could see. Somewhere I read of freedom of assembly and speech hard by a dangerous road they wait in ambush. Or in a bush I believe below the window where we are told the bullet came from. Set up by who

rhymes with Hoover. And why shouldn't I say I know this for not only I but others believe as well.

289. I am firmly convinced that others can or will not speak of.

290. Who cut the security detail from ten to two and pulled one from the job an hour before and transferred two black firemen from the station across from the Lorraine Motel on April 4. Frank Holloman chief of police and fire worked in Hoover's office for eight of his twenty-five years with the Bureau before coming to Memphis.

291. Or who threw Charles Stephens in jail until he recalled seeing Ray leave the bathroom after he heard the shot he was too drunk to hear and who had Grace Stephens committed against her will when she said she saw a short man maybe fifty years old. Clearly not the man they wanted her to see. And who refused to hear Harold Carter's account of a man with a gun running from the bush beside him.

292. Their answers concealed in Appendix B which remains unseen. Which could change our whole way of looking at things.

293. Similar to the sentencing of Beckwith in 1994 thirty years after the fact.

294. Which is how we acquire conviction in King's case has not occurred. Test-firing Ray's rifle is one way. Exhuming Hoover and checking for powder burns is another.

295. In time certainty assures its complicity with proof gone up in smoke. One hundred and eighty boxes of evidence burned by the mayor after Congress authorized and inquired.

296. Leaving only a smoldering foundation for our assumptions of truth.

297. As entangled we learn it lingers like still air in August. A cicada sings from memory or little is left if the past isn't.

298. In a community bound by ceremony and sound it seems a magnolia curtain covers the South like sleep wakes no one knows who.

299. Broke through the dream and into the garden again.

Sources

On Certainty is an ongoing dialogue with Ludwig Wittgenstein's book of the same title. The numbering in my piece corresponds to the numbering in Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*. Part Three also draws on the following works:

- Beifuss, Joan Turner. 1990. *At the River I Stand*. Memphis: St. Luke's Press.
- Belknap, Michal R. 1987. *Federal Law and Southern Order: Racial Violence and Constitutional Conflict in the Post-Brown South*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
- Booth, Stanley. 1991. *Rhythm Oil: A Journey Through the Music of the American South*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Charters, Samuel. 1991. *The Blues Makers*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- Cobb, James C. 1992. *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dittmer, John. 1995. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Douglass, Frederick. 1984. *The Narrative and Selected Writings*. New York: The Modern Library.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. 1919. *Crisis*, 19.
- Evans, David. 1982. *Big Road Blues: Tradition & Creativity in the Folk Blues*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- Faulkner, William. 1990. *Absalom, Absalom!* New York: Vintage Books.
- Guralnick, Peter. 1989. *Searching for Robert Johnson*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Honey, Michael K. 1993. *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Hurst, Jack. 1994. *Nathan Bedford Forrest*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. 1992. *The Ku Klux Klan in the City: 1915-1930*. Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks.
- Johnson, Robert. 1990. *The Complete Recordings*. New York: CBS Records.
- Lane, Mark and Dick Gregory. 1993. *Murder in Memphis: The FBI and the Assassination of Martin Luther King*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.
- Lewis, Furry. 1991. *In His Prime: 1927-1928*. Yazoo Records.
- Lomax, Alan. 1993. *The Land Where the Blues Began*. New York: Delta Books.
- Marx, Karl. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- McKee, Margaret and Fred Chisenhall. 1981. *Beale Black & Blue: Life and Music of Black America's Main Street*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- McMillen, Neil R. 1990. *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Palmer, Robert. 1982. *Deep Blues*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Patton, Charley. 1994. *The Voice of the Delta: The Paramount Recordings*. Black

- Swan Records.
- Sigafoos, Robert A. 1979. *Cotton Row to Beale Street: A Business History of Memphis*. Memphis: Memphis State University.
- Trelease, Allen W. 1971. *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Tucker, David M. 1980. *Memphis Since Crump: Bossism, Blacks, and Civic Reformers 1948-1968*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.
- Vollers, Maryanne. 1995. *Ghosts of Mississippi: The Murder of Medgar Evers, the Trials of Byron De La Beckwith, and the Haunting of the New South*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Wells, Ida B. 1995. *The Memphis Diary*. Boston: Beacon Press.

I Need to Know If This Is Normal

Jeff Derksen

That's a nice sunset you have there.

I'm three years younger than the term *Third World*.

This is where your body goes after you donate it to "medical research."

I'm a cultural nationalist waiting to happen.

"Note: these awards are custom made to individual requirements and are NOT mass-produced."

Is longing desire stretched over distance.

You make me feel like having my own "internal crisis."

Imagine yourself a geopolitical power, imagine me at your side.

"The problem of getting workers to work harder for lower pay is inherently difficult."

This landscape demands another attention span that mediates me flatly and broadly.

The apex of the swoon is where sexuality's spliced in.

Do you really want to use it that way, I mean to *use* it?

The sun reflects off the triangular glass tower downtown and into my bedroom -- I sprawl on this corporate light.

"Writing can be no more definitive than can one's place in history."

Just don't touch me during the drum solo.

Trees are cod.

Outside of a metaphor I would like to have a body, but as a statistic I can at least show up on a bar graph.

So, in order to vote you have to ask yourself are you any better off since you began reading this poem or has your economic situation remained the same?

Hey, that's *my* ashtray collection.

1976: 0.9861.

"Land Rover owners go on forever."

Canadian dollar?

But the city is an architectural mistake imposed on a place that makes sense -- a monument to a certain model of history.

By this I mean I'll take the bigger one and put it on my card.

To be in the "world" in the position of quotation marks.

I would rather have your fingers in my mouth than "find my own voice."

"Mr. X, a capitalist who produces woolen yarn in his spinning mill, has to 'reproduce' his raw material...."

Grass is trees.

This "transaction" translates me until I become my own ethnographic smear.

A tendency to read all languages as anagrams of english -- as slang gauges.

"The flow of thought is not accompanied by a simultaneous unfolding of speech."

The corporate core without a body.

I respond with my managerial skills, organizing genitals into discourses.

If white people can find *one another* exotic, that's how I find you.

The kind of consumer support of the Third World.

And a rusty gas barbecue on every balcony.

Something deep inside "synchronic ethnographic liberalism" says "Can I borrow

that for a minute?"

"A colleague of mine insists the color of a man's watchband should match that of his belt and shoes: Who is correct?"

Porque soy Jeff, hijo de mi madre.

He carefully explained his "I'm so privileged that now I'm marginalized" position to me.

"Let us now return to Hegel."

Walking, drunk with a cup, it's nationhood.

Leisure is just organized pleasure.

A proud yet flexible and disposable worker.

"On the other hand many well-intentioned people have resisted jumping on the guilt bandwagon for lack of convincing data."

The practice of plastic.

Is the "middle class" a race?

Is management a culture?

We just wanted to hear ourselves say it.

In the morning I want a voice to attenuate touch.

"Uninhibited working-class sexuality" in the basement.

Technicians of the Abbreviated.

1978: 1.1402.

Haig, what is a Haig -- is it like a Schwarzkoph?

I see the boys walk by with their sunburnt nose.

I'm barely getting wider.

Mind the bollocks.

I missed the "Kiss Me I'm Polish" moment.

It's not that the content is mine, but that it has been made generic.

Bright yellow label.

"Mr. Y, a heavy engineer producing machine-tools..."

False centre of accusation with moral funding.

I become a "world citizen" with the arrival of my phone card.

Investment banking as a sexual term.

Post-Desert Storm Tumours.

I'll stand in for form, for me.

It's the "political economy of genitals" that puts us inside production.

Desire's tendon tightens.

Bootstraps will pull me up through the masses, classes.

I could use a bit of that "privileging of the proletariat" every now and then.

Just how are you replicated in architecture?

Autonomous condo.

"You can now capitalize on emerging markets and Latin America from just £30 a month."

The plane drops into a cartoon version of heaven.

1980: 1.1690.

"Money traders and ordinary people."

Does your sculpture just stand there, or does it spin?

Tourism as a method of state control for both the tourists and the hosts.

"This applies to everything you purchase."

Suddenly nausea, my body's back and there's goint to be, gonna be trouble.

"How are we going to see those who we have not yet seen" -- by asking them to appear differently.

In my name an anagram for an act.

From the air, the canals are darker, crooked roads.

Why don't you "master" your own culture first?

Clothing becomes an optional signifier this day in the park.

"At some point in my life I became obsessed with having just the right wristwatch."

So-called maleness, so-called critical investigation.

Upper-class classism versus working-class racism.

"Latin America: Rich in History Resource Potential."

I'll quietly wait for my big break.

Good morning little graduate schoolboy.

If only we could elevate poetry to pop culture -- smells like corporate spirit.

To give this a context, I'm writing below sea-level, but I don't know what time it is and I don't speak the language.

Haiti Panama Granada, Granada Panama Haiti.

1982: 1.2341.

An oil strong enough for today's hyper-referential poetry.

Any mood-altering substance please.

It's erotic to say everything, but let's just do this and talk later.

"Possible military intervention" so people can live "ordinary lives."

If only the rich people could see us now!

Foreign policy?

Technicians of the Horny.

However, I am practicing walking the walk.

"An erogenous zone the size of an index card."

Nice "unique moment" you have there.

"Mr. Z, etc., etc."

This city needs a rain (a sleepy cafe).

The cars outside are singing, they're the rights that won't be shimmied.

"Thus history replies, 'Who will do the dirty work'...."

And who remembers the Squamish Five?

This one's going out to my detractors out there in their tractor caps (class solidarity).

A day of similes finally.

A personal moral (mole) outrage applied to friends at a distance.

Can we blame it on the discovery of the double entry book-keeping system? --
I doubt it.

I consider myself too young to be reamed in that way.

Soft tissues in three languages.

One of the four *Hs*, Haiti's a UN crisis with unscreened blood.

The problem has not been *me*, but my inability to *admit* that I am the problem.

Junkie bike economy.

Having a "past life" only illuminates the library, among the stacks and recalls.

I aspire to a dental plan -- to make myself human.

1984: 1.2948.

Rank your unhappiness and then write a book.

"My complex memories of my father are vividly colored by my recollection of Pall Malls, Heaven Hill Bourbon and Bright red Alfa Romeo Guilietta, take away any of these elements and substitute Kents, Champagne or a Pontiac, and I'd be remembering a different man."

Loss is the pleasure of the sexualized sign.

Under no circumstances does the theme from *Shaft* apply to you.

Glands against classism.

"Bathed in money."

You are value waiting to happen.

I'm not trying to perceive the world but lozenge senses with a stroke.

The cultural plan has me a highrise whereas I want to be a stadium.

Guarded argued.

The cold humanizes the city -- its body steams.

Is the reverse of moral masochism a military intervention -- only the UN's psycho-analyst knows for sure.

Waiting for the train, I'm thinking of you in italics, where the text meets the latex.

So would you like to, uh, ethnography.

An embarrassingly heterosexual reaction to the car.

Do you put apostrophes on yourself -- I'm in quotes.

The big trip to Safeway [Canadian reference] today (timeless literature).

The sunlight, idealistic, "cheerful," and unrelenting.

At the moment of address I forget you are dead.

"We're gonna find [a poetics of] feeling good and we're gonna stay there as long as we think we should."

An insomniac's muted blue logo light at ten stories.

This migraine enables me to view the world anew, pronounced "eyes."

The day, indecisive, disperses.

A class anxiety attack has me destitute after taxes.

1986: 1.3652.

If "workers are those who are not allowed to transform the space/time allotted them," then "takes a licking but keeps on ticking" is an ontological prospect.

You have to include a little agony in the agony.

Am I *a priori* to you or am I *a priori* to me?

Describe yourself as "student," or "pop can" or "summer wear."

Translatable body language of "I am a prick."

"What is important, however, is not to be a Monday morning quarterback to the world's antisystemic movements."

Sucking the pleasure right out of it breaking the trademark.

Mood of production: through what do I decipher myself.

Capitalism, no longer able to be embarrassed, arrives as sentence structure.

The sky sweeps by -- this is coverage at its finest: the landscape is value to happen.

To shuffle fled or an individual, say person, history rounded
deft surface course.

Technicians of the Belated.

I'm not sure if this syntax lets me "engage" with the world.

"Friends as Footnotes," therefore enemies as endnotes.

This deferral of the day loses the sign or site underhand.

"I've noticed that the tip of my thumb reaches the bottom of some of my suit jackets but not others: How long should a suit jacket be?"

Citizens reproduce themselves.

I'd rather shrink than multiple.

"*Arguments opposed*: The MLA should not tell people what to do."

I heart carbohydrates.

Weather fulfills the phatic function of language.

Currently is proof that ideology is eternal, I'm writing this on February 24, 1995 and you may read it at any following time.

Yell, listen to really loud music, then go out.

Suddenly, cigars: books bigger than my jacket pocket.

Large seventies glasses, like televisions for your face.

A lifetime supply of guitar power chords.

1988: 1.2309.

Made in the image of your workplace, in place of "work," a labour harbour.

Can one holiday without employment?

"Confrontation, Informative: Can you say the same about your phone bill?"

Invertebrate as a corporate logo.

Genre concerns - don't lose my place.

In my lifetime I have witnessed the invention of the Self-Serve Gas Station.

Petrochemically yours.

Between crisis, been in the verb of immigration as DNA.

A petit me epistemology.

Why fronts.

"Thus the interest in faeces is continued partly as interest in money...."

1990: 1.1668.

A phrase or utterance stripped of its context as a timeless device?

A slough of pop culture with its eternal returns.

Monopolistic tendencies.

"I have three pairs of clip-on suspenders which I wear frequently with my business suits...I need to know if these suspenders are considered fashionable."

Every day is Male Pride Day.

Polyphonic saturated thoughts -- footnote the music.

You don't need me to tell you this.

"As a banker or a citizen."

I'm so bored with the ATM.

The Buzzcocks are ideology under three minutes.

It's only in the process of writing that we notice this, for your comments please phone 1-800-ask-jeff.

I own markings -- make mine gelatin.

"Save As" goodbye finger labour.

If the city is sexualized, then the landscape is gendered.

Is there a psychology of the oppressor?

"White rastas back to Africa."

Like a jury.

Will you do what hasn't been done to me?

"How to identify a worker" -- they're the ones on display.

"I am also postponing, for a short time, the exposition of my analysis of anxiety."

What, the Human Conditioner?

The bottle economy on wobbly bikes, the outline of a car burnt into the back lane.

Please enter my mode of production, momentary and mummified like a lock is to logic.

"A similar tendency can be seen with underwear, shoes, basic furniture, etc. -- at least in the richest countries."

Scientific, like aviator glasses.

"Target as small as an arm or a leg."

Thirty thousand dollars of untaxed corporate profits a minute in Canada: don't forget to personalize the "national" "debt."

Technicians of the Technical.

1992; 1.2083.

The Canadian Prime Minister quotes Popeye on identity.

"I've got your stomach thing."

The unimaginable conversation outside of commerce.

Don't Lunacharsky me.

If "the workingmen [sic] have no country" then there can be no working-class nationalism: how does this explain hockey?

I questioned authority and the question won.

Once your ethnicity is reduced to cooking, it's a lot easier to join the parade.

Can you parody something you are a part of?

It's "cult of facts" time again.

Suited to the "suppressed actualities" you see in others but imagine your own.

"In North America, it's very important not to confuse consumers."

The quotation marks from one word, like a performative middle-aged biker on holiday.

The randomness was invigorating as ice.

The linebreak possibilities of "I feel funny."

Is it unreasonable to think that I am reasonable and you are not?

His card simply read "expert."

"Take me in your arms / And ameliorate me baby."

Social facts are vertical.

Please tell the government to stop sending me cheques.

Momma, take my adrenal glands, I don't need them anymore.

It wasn't that you *hated* me, but everything about me.

Self-censorship -- rarely practiced by the right people.

A liberal reaction of the embarrassed subjectivity.

"Before October, Formalism was a vegetable in season."

1994: 1.3659.

"You're looking at one Canadian -- he's got pressures."

The aliens were gentle but did not offer me a permanent position.

Or just thanks for the hostility.

“U.S. dollar in Canadian dollars, average noon spot rate.”

When one’s minimums are not being met.

“On the one hand, we applaud your decision to opt for suspenders instead of a belt.”

Is all language exoticizing?

“I wanted.”

It’s not often I lament a product.

People bloom.

“We ‘persons’ therefore are artifacts of labour” or fluctuating wages.

The homes on display are not display homes.

This film is “historically accurate.”

Flat, Silent Soda

Fernand Roqueplan

Something here now that doesn't want a necktie
or Anson IV stainless carpet and sends an earth-
quake under it. Past my coughing Geo a leathered
Harley-stud rockets firing the finger then uses it
to clean his eye.

Courage in America, more than mere wattage
makes wild-pitch fundraising out of road-rage;
if you nod with John Walsh disgust guarantees order
no matter who becomes the impact-mascot. The American
man--myself too--is a flat silent soda. No more guns;
I spent a decade in the Marines & all that did was make me
a ridiculous freshman. After all I've seen to say America's OK

I need a heart of darkness politically convincing
where suns surrender light & gods in gaga
headdresses claw with green-tweed limbs fond liberties;
not here--a collapsing duplex where voices
importune always out of tune & I pay
slight attention--not stricken in abysses of fear
as I might for a decent commandment or two
but average annoyance I'll miss the pizza-knock.

Oh, faith--christ it demands much--pursuing the bird
to its insect and consuming both! And peace, when found,
sounds like mold-starched church bells stirred by pigeon
flocks panicked by hail. Peace, when found, shines
as rain-greased torsos of storm-torn sycamores shine at the all-
clear siren. And those pigeons, where will they go--through
the empire corn, the perennial pinwheel until at last a tuneful
impact into clean, clear glass?

I remember the brisé flash & foul prelude of war
but I'll never write it interesting--I delude myself I have a good
mind--no honest soul ever considered panegyrics superior
to the costly circling crowds of doomed but sweet endeavor.

A Thousand Cranes

Fernand Roqueplan

Saint Shoji, blistered in Hiroshima's
savage sudden sun,
discovered in the Harai Forest a godsend
glowing pulp which, pressed into silken
washi, created a fiber talisman to rival fleece--

Shoji's paper cranes--strung into blessed
necklaces for curing sores and lameness.
She believed, she worked; dunned
to oblivion by the salty runoff of blackened
shrines Shoji's nails fell like pearls
as she folded, stitched, and hung her cranes.

A thousand cranes collared the wind-
borne bridges of a running-down war: Shoji
shrank from the designated deadly star
and followed the gentler pentagon of Auriga--
the silver-shifting makeshift charioteer
favuist under its caricatures & challenges.

Fifty-Six Churches

Fernand Roqueplan

He dreams of cutting foreign throats,
of breaches, ambushades, Spanish blades...

SHAKESPEARE

Soldiers of the mestizo Padre de Chalco
duck the whistling baked-mud cannonballs
and lob bombs of their own out to jungle
as fifty-six church'd civilized outposts
fill and empty their well-buckets with bells
for windlasses. At post twenty-seven, worshippers
dance as a bishop's buried with hurried pomp.

Antique language and broken roofs prove
that hoary gospel, prophecy, and other
misanthropic blather stakes a deluding
curfew for hallowed *anything's* tutelary
boredom: the lovesick heathen's mind
shrinks to a sour curd in a skull

too poor to afford vistas. Priests & their
captains drink port in pigeon & rat-musked
sepulchers: Is it over? Is today mild? The runner
Heredia warns them to remain cloistered. Fifty-
six times he runs and speaks without resting;
some of the churches are still glorious and some
are broken piles.

All his life Heredia has served
them. He sets sail atop a musty sack laden with
linen-wrapped relics, his final destination not
the promised Barcelona but Guernica. Happy
Heredia! He swings his hammer, flattening
and folding a chalice into a gold tortilla.

Highway 75

Lise McCloud

A little trickle, sparkle in a spin of a glen, concrete river sliding northward, a point at which to exit town and follow ancient fishbait: this caravan of thought a hundred two-wheeled carts creaking, snaking down the trailway, deoxyribonucleic acid trip they call a racial memory. The curious looming of an object, Big Jim Traversie, between the earth and sky; Jeemie a Red River cart driver, his natural cousins use a peculiar hand sign to signify that species of men made partially of wheels: half wagon, half man. Half Indian, half white, half devil, they sing a lusty Plains-French sailor-song. Many more sons of voyageurs come screeching, swearing and praying along behind him on the way to St. Paul. Or to honor its not-sainted father, Pig's Eye a mixblood whiskey trader also on this earth. A million bison thunder off in a separate cloud of dust and then night comes down upon the coteaux: a hemisphere of stars. If the valley were to suddenly fill up again with water, I too would navigate by Polaris by the north star *ke-wa-din-an-nung*. I am but a fish in the ancient ocean, an ice-age carp cruising a scrap of the gene pool, a subliminal sperm who follows the ghost of a coastline. *Coteau* a knife of land rising up from the gigantic water a north-south four-hundred-mile escarpment *wit dis dang ting* stretched out alongside, creaking under a load of buffalo robes, tongues, and fur. The cart train shrieks to a stop--a few day's rest at a customary point halfway between Pembina and the seventh wonder Pig's Eye spawned. Here, Jeemie spies a lovely maiden combing her hair with a porcupine tail in a shaft of sunlight just at the trickle sometime between 1820 and 1870 except 1862 at that spot in the rearview labeled Minnesota Massarce Historical Marker, let us say she was ma grandma. Mon dieu! Mon Jeu! Praise all the dogs and saints! Then one day a shadow-catcher came along and fixed them to this day: *Metis Family and Red-River Cart*, courtesy *State Historical Society* on their way to the steamboat camp on Summit Hill, the megamall of empire--cradles, chairs, clocks, potato peelers, blankets! A saddle for papa, tin milk pails, candy for lee zawnfawn, black and plaid bolt of cloth for the good catholic wife--look at that horse-powered sewing machine, the railroad tracks come soon. The cart drivers with their brightly flowering sashes, bandolier bags, floral moccasins flow away in the swell of the grass, a mirage upon the sea. It is no surprise to be coasting down the coast and pass them on the highway, but what else can a mind do on a drive so old and flat and boring for so many years now that every clod of dirt in this abyss should have its own identity. But wait--there is a cornfield. It is a gold colored dried cornfield arrangement left standing in a square where there was a whole entire square of cornfield, a deer and Chinese ringneck pheasant now can hide in it. Why can't a bear with a monkey face burst suddenly out of there, the way it did in Iowa?

Writing (In) the Past

Hilton Obenzinger

Travel some miles out of Minneapolis or San Francisco and you reach countryside, and if that countryside is rural enough you might consider yourself in the boondocks, and if you had to live there with some reluctance you might even consider yourself to be “stuck in the boondocks.” The word boondocks, usually filled with a deprecating sense of urban sophisticate versus hayseed naif, is securely a part of American language, entering “the pure products of America” at the very end of the last century through the impure vehicle of colonial violence. Boondocks is a corruption of the Tagalog word *bondoc*, which means mountain, and the bondoc was where the “bolomen,” the Filipino independence fighters resisting the U.S. occupation after the defeat of Spain nearly a hundred years ago, would hide in a ferocious guerrilla war that lasted in some areas decades; and “boondocks,” its meaning transformed from a zone of terror spoken by frightened Buffalo Soldiers and other American infantrymen to an area of rural isolation and idiocy spoken by disparaging city slickers, circulates through our language cut off from the anchor of its origins, infiltrating slangy talk with the ghosts of massacres through a kind of linguistic chemistry that turns fear and pain and death and colonial appropriation into something else altogether.

Imaginative writers, fictionalists and poets, are not etymologists, at least not in the scientific or academic sense, and yet we activate and are activated by an acute sense of the history of words as well as the words of history. Through language, pasts invariably occupy presents, the pains, delights, violence, individual pulsations of lifetimes drifting in and out of casual conversations. Poets are still the hidden, unacknowledged legislators of that past, conductors of currents that often surge through life without consciousness of their presence. My somewhat coy title alludes to some of the multiple effects of the relationship between writing and history, between remembrance and memory, that the self-conscious effort to recall, reiterate, reincarnate the past involves, and this talk is an evocative meditation on these multiple effects, particularly as drawn from my own direct experience of writing in the past. My use of “we” may seem presumptuous, perhaps, since there are so many positions, experiences, commitments, but I will assume a common bond of democratic engagement similar to that which allows the shared perceptions of cultural studies and poetics will inform this discussion.

We *write* the past, we create what is no longer living memory and make it current; we write *in* the past, already in the past, writing in the moment that instantly becomes a future gone; and we *write in* the past, in the sense of filling in blanks, of including what was never considered worthy of remembrance or of imagining and rearranging items, a bricolage of historical debris, often attempting to revise or reinvent or restore what has been distorted or forgotten or never even remembered in the first place, even if that “past” is the moment generally known as “now.” These

three senses of "Writing in the Past" are activated any time a poet or imaginative writer or particularly attuned scholar decides to engage in accounting for the present.

The past is, of course, "another country," and in a conference devoted to cross-cultural poetics, the discussion of the past -- of what is remembered and what (often violently) is not, of imagined communities seeking mythic sources, of mythic sources debunked and harsh realities decentered, of a whole myriad of effects -- further complicates the criss-crossing of all cultural encounters. There are communities in which poets and storytellers keep memory and identity alive through the generally understood or assumed imperatives of that culture, but the general experience of American life and of American writing is otherwise. Those of us old enough to have lived through a time sufficiently gone know the feeling of unrecognizability and alienation and rootlessness which most of us experience when we are aware of even what we alone have witnessed. For example, those who were active in the cultural and political rebellions of the sixties and seventies not only feel that so much of the program of the time -- civil rights, for example, or the critique of American empire that has led me to remember "boondocks" in the first place -- is today being eroded, but even the account, even the story, the feeling, the sense of that time is constantly under assault by powerful forces attempting to reverse those changes or render them ineffectual through unrelenting trivialization and commodification: hippie beads, afros, platform shoes, memoirs of recantation but not of politics; no actual sense of movements generating meanings, no sense of the vast, great awakening to the absurdities of power that involved millions. "Anyone who remembers the sixties wasn't there," Robin Williams jokes -- and it's a joke we can enjoy -- but as a result of the assumption of forgetfulness the official memory is now created by those who have other designs than the appreciation of psychedelic delights. It is a sickening, hollow sense of being ripped off, of having one's own history stolen right before your eyes, and it is a feeling repeated again and again, particularly since speaking of pasts inherently means refraction through the structures of power. Poets, generally, are not in power, and the winners write history, while the losers can only remember, if they can. In this regard there is a difference between "history" and "memory," for history is sanctioned, public, is a structure to organize feelings, while "memory" is made unofficial, private, a feeling which may organize structures but only imperceptibly -- until "memory" becomes a material force and "history" acknowledges its source.

There is, as E.P. Thomson and others have identified, the "arrogance of history," an arrogance that not only makes selections of worth from positions of power, but often makes those selections through the corresponding rendering of so much of the past as invisible, as "memory." I spoke and read poems from *New York on Fire* before a literacy workshop at a settlement house in Harlem composed mostly of Latino and African-American women, and when I spoke of that arrogance or condescension of history they understood immediately because it is a condescension and invisibilization they perceive in daily life. At that very moment, at this very moment, so much occurs in the lives of people, all the people -- there is simply the

arrogance of being able to look back upon a moment from the present and try to extract slices of key actions, cross-sections, when so very much occurs -- and even with that overwhelming totality kept in mind, there is the immensity of that fragment which does get selected as "history" and that immensity which gets forgotten. How many people were/are working at this moment washing dishes in kitchens, pressing pants in laundries, changing diapers, and these acts constitute the complexity of the moment that others identify perhaps with one significant act -- the President signs a bill, a Princess dies in a car wreck, etc. -- but they are also what constitutes the historical past □ and who decides why they are not "History"? Those women of that workshop knew they were part of that swirl which was history -- and they would be given voice if they as writers themselves, or through the medium of imaginative rendering of writers who knew their moment, would challenge the immensity of condescension, would "make" history simply by the knowledge of who they were. Within the last 20 or 30 years developments within history as a scholarly discipline have also moved in the direction of seeking what has previously been ignored, such as the history of private lives, all the questions of what constitutes the knowable, the construction and elisions of the archive, the search for the voices of the subaltern, even when those submerged voices were never heard in the first place, or the rendering of those who previously had been invisible as visible, as actors with agency and subjectivity, at the same time that "the linguistic turn" has made the language of historical discourse itself a realm of scholarship.

If the past is, indeed, "another country, a foreign country" then questions of the semiotics of tourism must intrude, the dynamics of tourist and anti-tourist, the transformation of a site or a citation into a "sight" in the visual sense available for reification and commodification with the possibility not only of involving "use value" but also of "misuse value." Those of the present -- that always superior advanced country □ can look upon those of the past -- that backward, underdeveloped region in dire need of our presence in order to lift itself out of obscurity. It was not always like this, of course: the roles were reversed with the past as a "Golden Age." But today, indeed, history is becoming more and more touristic: those "authentic" Indian villages, those Civil War reenactments, that lived-in colonial Jamestown, the possibilities of reconstruction by Disney, the constant privatization of public spaces yanked from contestation. Can the present travel to other histories without condescension? In the dialectic between tourist and anti-tourist can there be a meta-tourist of this other country or simply a traveler that does not aggrandize?

I will draw from my own experiences of these questions, particularly in regard to poetics and history involved in writing two books, *New York on Fire* and *Cannibal Eliot and The Lost Histories of San Francisco*. I was hired to write a history of the New York Fire Department on behalf of the firefighters' union, a commercial history, a hack job which puffed up the reputation of the heroic firefighter, and I dutifully went to work. The hack job went belly up when the company who hired me bankrupted at the same time the president of the union lost his election, even though the book had been written. But I knew something else would emerge almost

immediately, even before the commercial job was scraped. I met with the Fire Commissioner, who directed me to archives and key people, and at the end of our meeting he leaned over and whispered conspiratorially, "Psst, come here." I leaned towards him, and he looked side to side to check if we would be overheard. "You know, Dalmatians?" "You mean the fireman's mascot, the spotted dog?" I answered, a little perplexed. "Yeah. I'll tell you something: keep it to yourself: *Dalmatians are the stupidest dogs around.*" At that moment I knew something was up, that the history of fires in New York and the whole mythos of fire and fighting fire contained more than it seemed, and as I delved into the archives and literature of firefighters and New York's social history, as I uncovered more and more, I knew I would write an entirely different book than the one demanded by my commercial clients.

For example: Fire escapes were invented because Irish workers died in horrible tenement fires -- one in particular, the Elm Street fire -- and if the northern industrialists wanted those workers to remain passive if not allies during the crisis leading up to the Civil War they had to be given concessions, one of them being the possibility of surviving a fire by fleeing down metal steps. Such a politicized provenance for the invention of what today we take for granted -- such a thing is worth poems. Reading first-hand accounts, memoirs, official reports, I tried to reconstruct the voices of those times. I had to imagine what was left out, and I had to spend months at a time hanging from the ledge of the Triangle Shirtwaist company or some other horrendous disaster imagining, revisioning, inviting ghosts to appear as the words made their way to the page, voices of victims and heroes, but also of the evil, violent, perverse who also require embodiment. There is the uncomfortable exchange between narrative and the past that documentary or "non-fiction" or collective (and uncollected) memory provokes: how much do I make up? (Historians are more and more wrestling with the same question. A historian at Stanford who had all the data around the center of an event but nothing in the center itself asked me if he could simply fictionalize what he otherwise knew to be true, even if speculative, without the necessary two, documented witnesses. Of course, he was asking the wrong person, that is if he wanted the stamp of the official discipline, since I see no problem with imagination.) In fact, the creation of history always involves the literary imagination, and I knew that in my own book as much as I found someone else's voice I was finding my own, even my own voice of evil. It is problematic -- the sense of distortion, even if so-called poetic license -- but I felt I was being transformed, even led by the spirit of people long gone. This is not an oral tradition, as Simon Ortiz and other Native American poets can call upon, but one that must become oral by sizing up strange documents and searching for the voices behind reportage or bureaucratic obfuscation or private utterance.

In *Cannibal Eliot*, a book that revolves around invented documents -- memoirs, diaries, reports, interviews -- of participants in San Francisco's history, particularly its history of mass psychosis and violence, I would be moved by small footnotes in Hubert Howe Bancroft's histories of California. The first murder in what would become San Francisco was a hideous rape and murder of two infants during a fan-

dango during the Mexican period. A soldier was accused, but the case was so politicized, became so entwined with other issues, that the execution was continually delayed -- and even then there were doubts -- and when the new governor sent from Mexico City eventually carried out the sentence, was it the execution or the fact that he was "black," either of African or full-blood Indian background, the final cause for the revolt which ensued? I found the court records in Spanish, as well as the unpublished memoirs of the dons, the Californios, and I felt ghosts to such a degree reading them that I ended up writing the account of the one surviving child as a ghost story, one which involved evil and uncertainty and racial politics all too familiar to America today. I frightened myself writing it. But now this murder rendered as a strange tale, much more than a footnote, has become a part of San Francisco's history, so much so that tour guides have written to me how they use the ghost story that I have evoked as part of their spiels. A legend thrives where one did not exist before -- although, with some irony, once again, almost inevitably, the past enters the touristic economy.

In such ways poems about history enter history, can be confirmed by history, so long as they reverberate with what is known. It so happens, for example, that the Happy Land Social Club fire took place on exactly the same day as the Triangle Shirtwaist fire -- both disasters involving immigrants and locked doors and scores of deaths. I read excerpts of *New York on Fire* in response to the "Happy Land" fire on WBAI radio and took phone calls for an hour and a half. People from the neighborhood called up to explain about what had made the boyfriend of the ticket taker at the dance return with a molotov cocktail, and why the dancehall security people were at fault for not taking his threat seriously. I read a poem on the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, then read a poem about the Bronx burning in the eighties, a monologue of the only landlord that was arrested and convicted for torching his own building. Employing the research of housing activists, the poem explains the intricate, Byzantine details of codes and interest rates which actually made it profitable to allow a building to decay and even burn down. I received a call from a former building inspector from the Bronx who confirmed all that the poem elaborated in the strange language of financial shenanigans. A poem's truth confirmed by a building inspector over the radio -- it was an astonishing moment -- and while I do not consider that poem among the best in the book, it held deep resonance, a truth content, that went beyond any designs I might have intended.

Such moves to criss-cross boundaries of genres and expertise and actualities have come under considerable attack, more within historical circles than within poetry and probably less among poetry circles, first because poetry itself is one of those practices, widespread and constant though it may be, which is continually marginalized within American culture; and second, because poetry has utterly different understandings and standards for the notion of "fact." Many reading *Cannibal Eliot* in particular were very unnerved because they could not tell what was "true" and what was invented -- "what a wonderful parody of Ambrose Bierce!" but it IS Ambrose Bierce -- and yet such uncertainty should always be a part of

what is projected as "history," and our interpretations, those parts of narrative that we emphasize, are all subject to revision.

Consider this as a piece of history and poetry:

As cruel as a Turk: Whence came
That Proverb old as the Crusades?
From Anglo-Saxons. Who are they?

...

The Anglo-Saxons -- lacking grace
To win the love of any race;
Hated by myriads dispossessed
Of rights -- the Indians East and West,
These pirates of the sphere! grave looters --
Grave, canting, Mammonite freebooters,
Who in the name of Christ and Trade
(Oh, bucklered forehead of the brass!)
Deflower the world's last sylvan glade. (4.9.112-125)

An example of "new formalism," perhaps? Or perhaps such a passage would be characterized by many as simply an outburst of race rage or "political correctness" (an insidious term which veils more than it reveals)? The fact that this passage is by Herman Melville, from his long and virtually still unread poem, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, and is spoken in the voice of an embittered part-Cherokee Confederate veteran employed as a mercenary for the sultan in Ottoman Palestine -- an improbable but by no means impossible occurrence in history: Confederate and Union veterans were in fact hired by General William Tecumseh Sherman for the Khedive of Egypt, for example -- the fact that these lines are by Melville might give some readers pause. The historian C. Vann Woodward termed *Clarel* "the blackest commentary on the future of his country ever written by an American in the nineteenth century," although, even here, a poem by such an acclaimed, canonized, and very Anglo-Saxon writer is barely read -- and rarely employed within anyone's notion of history. Would William Carlos Williams' *Paterson* or Reznikoff's *Testimony* figure in history courses? The work of Paul Metcalf? Nazim Hikmet? Ernesto Cardenal? Adrienne Rich? Eduardo Galleano? Perhaps -- but probably not. This is one obvious barrier imposed by the crossing (or attempted crossing) of institutional lines -- the institution of poetry and fiction or creative imagination in general with that of academic history. This is a barrier we are used to, breached from time to time in classrooms by famous, social novels: notably, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. More difficult are the barriers imposed by the even more problematic institutions of publishing and bookselling, and I want to touch upon them briefly.

When *New York on Fire* first appeared I gained a deeper appreciation of such barriers -- and I was astonished by my own naiveté. The book's reception was

marked by the marketing limitations of bookstores due to the confusions of genres, heightened further by the fact that the book was profusely illustrated. The book was hailed by the *Village Voice*: "Poetry or not, this is great history," and an excellent essay in *The Hungry Mind Review* regarded it at length as an example of architectural history, barely mentioning the fact that it was poetry. The book was listed in San Francisco's poetry bookstore Small Press Traffic's newsletter, but it was listed under the heading of "non-fiction" -- a curious and not altogether negative category for any book of poems, but one which placed this particular book outside of the accepted boundaries of verse. Some bookstores carried it in the history section; others under fiction; some under poetry; while Barnes and Nobles in New York placed it alongside guidebooks for tourists. The New York Public Library ordered it for the Young People's shelves in all the branches, while the single largest distributor of the book was a mail-order catalog directed to a list of over 25,000 "fire buffs," those people fascinated with all things pertaining to fires and firefighters. The Bay Area Book Reviewers Association did select it as a finalist for its award for poetry, so the book was ultimately recognized as a citizen of the nation of poems. But the problem posed by multiplicity and cross-over was driven home by the book's unplaceability. The book may have sold ten times the amount of the usual small press book of poems, but it still did not reach the breadth of readers it may have been able to because shelves did not allow more than one slot -- and the placement on one shelf and one shelf only makes multiplicity of any sort especially difficult. As an experimental poem, it was not of a certain type of experimentation recognized as such; it was not on the surface difficult, and while it was narrative -- and entertained the notion of the structures of narrative as tropes of poetry -- it was not official history. Books do cross-over successfully: I think of Spiegelman's graphic Nazi genocide narrative *Maus* as a prime example, but categories on bookshelves are becoming more and not less intransigent. Reification is not simply a kind of lockjaw of the brain, but a process carried out in material realms: have you ever wondered why there is one category in book stores called "Poetry" while another is called "Literature?" In the Borders Bookstore in Palo Alto there is even a section called "Popular Poetry" alongside the regular (unpopular?) poetry section.

I would like to end these meditations with a call to arms, but I suspect the best tactic is simply to persist and trust to the power of language and the irrevocable unraveling of human contradictions to free up minds as well as bookshelves, no doubt a very romantic gesture. Writing in the Past means creating the Present, insisting upon the validity of the imagination now, no matter what the publishing or academic definitions demand. Artists create because they have to and certainly not as a career choice; oppositional art can exist outside of commodity relations. We will find ways to pass around our handwritten scrawls, if we have to. Writing in the Past is almost a religious calling, an insistence that voices can be and will be heard, that memory will not be forgotten. With the rise of computers we have perhaps never heard so much about the amazing capacities of memory -- all the RAM and speed of retrieval, etc. etc. -- but the fact is, paradoxically, we are forgetting more and

more. Think of all the Web Pages and email. Where do they go when they are used up? How are they archived? Does someone keep a record of each day's internet? Tim Lenoir, history of science professor at Stanford, tries to maintain an on-line history of Silicon Valley, but the rate of expansion is always faster than he can keep up with. At the same time the more the machines remember, the more people push delete. It is one reason, at least, that I trust that books and speech will remain low tech constants of life wielded by people who can wrest contingent truths from the clutter of bullshit. Perhaps 1898 will be remembered, and someone will recall the "bondoc." Or will the passage of one small anniversary escape us, filled with Teddy Roosevelt's "Charge!" up San Juan Hill on cable TV? Will the poem of the Buffalo Soldier emerge? Will the poem of the Buffalo Soldier who switched sides, who fought with the Filipino insurgents, emerge? Will we re-fashion the ancestors of Minneapolis or New York or San Francisco or any other place in this country and know the ground upon which we stand?



The Woman Who Was A Red Deer Dressed For The Deer Dance

Diane Glancy

"My deer dress is the way I felt, transformed by the power of ceremony."

This dramatic/poetic piece is an intermixing of ethnographic material (the story of *Ahw'uste* was taken from Doi on Ahu'usti and Asudi on Ahwtusti, *Friends of Thunder, Tales of the Oklahoma Cherokees*, Edited by Frank and Anna Kilpatrick, University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), pieces of the old language (Cherokee), and contemporary materials (the granddaughter's life in the soup kitchen and dance bars). It is a dialogue/monologue between a grandmother and her granddaughter, both arguing against the other for her own way of life. The grandmother talks about stories and the Spirits and the red deer dress she has made to feel more in tune with *Ahw'uste*, a mythological spirit deer. The granddaughter talks about the problems of a contemporary life, including her experiences with several men. The grandmother continues talking about *Ahw'uste* and the Spirits, who in the end, she realizes, let her down. "Damned Spirits," she hits the table with her fist, "didn't always help us out. Let us have it rough sometimes," she says as she talks of hunger and the uncertainty she faced in her life. The granddaughter says she has to look for work, which she can't find, and says she doesn't have time for the *Ahw'uste* and the Spirits, and longs for more practical help from her grandmother. In the end, the granddaughter enters some of her grandmother's world and says, "You know I've learned she told me more without speaking than she did with her words."

The Woman Who Was a Red Deer Dressed for the Deer Dance was created in part with commissioning support from Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

It was presented Sept. 14, 1995 at the New Dramatists in New York, and on Nov. 11, 1995 at the Walker Art Center

The red papier-mâché dress titled, "The Crone": Carolyn Eler, artist

Photo credit: Jim Turnure

THE WOMAN WHO WAS A RED DEER DRESSED FOR A DEER DANCE

In this I try. Well, I try. To combine the overlapping realities of myth, imagination & memory with spaces for the silences. To make a story. The voice speaking in different agencies. Well, I try to move on with the voice in its guises. A young woman & her grandmother in a series of scenelets. Divided by a line of flooring. Shifting between dialogue & monologue. Not with the linear construct of conflict / resolution, but with story moving like rain on a windshield. Between differing & unreliable experiences.

	Girl
Have you heard of <i>Ahw'uste</i> ?	
	Grandmother
I have but I've forgotten.	
	Girl
They said they fed her.	
	Grandmother
Yes, they did.	
	Girl
What was she?	
	Grandmother
I don't know.	
	Girl
A deer?	
	Grandmother
Yes, a deer. A small deer.	
	Girl
She lived in the house, didn't she?	
	Grandmother
Yes, she did. She was small.	

Girl

They used to talk about her a long time ago, didn't they?

Grandmother

Yes, they did.

Girl

Did you ever see one of the deer?

Grandmother

I saw the head of one once. Through the window. Her head was small and she had tiny horns.

Girl

Like a goat?

Grandmother

Yes like that.

Girl

Where did you see her?

Grandmother

I don't know. Someone had her. I just saw her. That's all.

Girl

You saw the head?

Grandmother

Yes, just the head

Girl

What did they call her?

Grandmother

A small deer.

Girl

Where did you see her?

Grandmother

What do they call it down there?

Deer Creek. Girl

Yes, that's where I saw her. Grandmother

What did they use her for? Girl

I don't know. There were bears there too. And larger deer. Grandmother

Elk maybe? Girl

Yes, they called them elk. Grandmother

Why did they have them? Girl

They used them for medicine. Grandmother

How did they use them? Girl

They used their songs. Grandmother

The deer sang? Girl

No, they were just there. They made the songs happen. Grandmother

The elk too? Girl

Yes, the elk too. Grandmother

Girl

And the moose?

Grandmother

Yes, the moose.

Girl

It was like talking to myself when I stayed with her. If I asked her something she answered flat as the table between us.

Open your deer mouth and talk. You never say anything on your own. I could wear a deer dress. I could change into a deer like you. We could deer dance in the woods under the redbirds. The bluejay. The finch.

U-da-tlv:da de-s-gi -ne-hv'-si, E-li'-sin

Pass me the cream, Grandmother.

My cup and saucer on the oilcloth.

How can you be a deer? You only have two legs.

Grandmother

I keep the others under my dress.

Girl

It was a wordless world she gave me. Not silent, but wordless. Oh, she spoke, but her words seemed hollow. I had to listen to her deer noise. I had to think what she meant. It was like having a conversation with myself. I asked. And I answered. Well --I could hear what I wanted.

When I was with her I talked and never stopped because her silence ate me like buttered toast.

What was she saying? Her words were in my own hearing?--

I had to know what she said before I could hear it?

Grandmother

I don't like this world any more. We're reduced to what can be seen and felt. We're brought from the universe of the head into the kitchen full of heat and cold.

Girl

She fought to live where we aren't tied to table and fork and knife and chair.

It was her struggle against what happens to us.

Why can't you let me in just once and speak to me as one of your own? You know I have to go into the *seeable*--Live away from the world of imagination. You could give me more.

Girl

You work the church soup-kitchen before? You slop up the place and I get to clean up. You night shifts think you're tough shit. But I tell you, you don't know nothing. I think you took my jean jacket. The one with Jesus on the cross in sequins on the back. Look-- I see your girl wearing it I'll have you on the floor.

Don't think I don't know who's taking the commodities--I'm watching those boxes of macaroni and cheese disappear.

I know it was you who lost the key to the storeroom and I had to pay for the locksmith to change the lock. They kept nearly my whole check. I couldn't pay rent. I only got for payments left on my truck. I'm not losing it.

Girl

She said once, there were wings the deer had when it flew. You couldn't see them but they were there. They pulled out from the red deer dress. Like leaves opened from the kitchen table--

Like the stories that rode on her silence. You knew they were there. But you had to decide what they meant. Maybe that's what she gave me-- the ability to fly when I knew I had no wings. When I was left out of the old world that moved in her head. When I had to go on without her stories.

They get crushed in this *seeable* world.

But there `re still there. I hear them in the silence sometimes.
I want to wear a deer dress. I want to deer dance with *Ahw'uste*--

Girl

What does *Ahw'uste* mean in English?

Grandmother

I don't know what the English was. But *Ahw'uste* was a spirit animal.

Girl

What does that mean?

Grandmother

She was only there for some people to see.

Girl

She was only there when you thought she was?

Grandmother

She had wings too. If you thought she did. She was there to remind us-- You think you see something you're not sure of. But you think it's there anyway.

Girl

Maybe Jesus used wings when he flew to heaven. Ascended right up the air. Into Holy Heaven. Floating and unreachable. I heard them stories at church when I worked the soup-kitchen.

Or maybe they're wings like the spirits use when they fly between the earth and sky. --But when you pick up a spirit on the road, you can't see his wings --he's got them folded into his jacket.

Grandmother

They say rocket ships go there now.

Girl

The ancestors?

Grandmother

Yes, all of them wear red deer dresses.

Girl

With two legs under their dresses?

Grandmother

In the afterworld they let them down.

Girl

A four-legged deer with wings --wearing a red deer dress with shoes and hat? Dancing in the leaves-- Red maple, I suppose. After they're raked up to the sky? --Where they stay red forever only if they think they do?--

Sometimes your hooves are impatient inside your shoes. I see them move. You stuff twigs in your shoes to make them fit your hooves. But I know hooves are there.

Why would I want to be a deer like you?

Why would I want to eat without my hands?

Why would I want four feet?

What would I do with a tail? It would make a lump behind my jeans.

Do you know what would happen if I walked down the street in a deer dress?

If I looked for a job?

I already know I don't fit anywhere-- I don't need to be reminded-- I'm at your house, grandma, with my sleeping bag and old truck-- I don't have anyplace else to go--

Girl

(angrily) OK dude. Dudo. I pick you up on the road. I take you to the next town to get gas for your van take you back when it still won't start I pull you to town 'cause you don't have money for a tow truck. I wait two hours while you wait. Buy you supper. I give you love what do you want? Hey dude your cowboy boots are squeaking your hat with the lizard band. Your CB's talking to the highway the truckers the girls driving by themselves that's what you look for. You take what we got. While you got one eye on your supper one eye on your next girl.

I could have thought you were a spirit. You could have been something more than a dude--

Grandmother

The leaves only get to be red for a moment. Just a moment and then the tree grieves all winter until the leaves come back. But they're green through the summer. The maple waits for the leaves to turn red. All it takes is a few cold mornings. A few days left out of the warmth.

Then the maple tree has red leaves for a short while.

Girl

(angrily) I can't do it your way, grandma. I have to find my own trail-- Is that why you won't tell me? Is that why you won't speak? I'm caught? I have no way through? But there'll be a way through-- I just can't see it yet. And if I can't find it, it's still there. I speak it through. Therefore, it is. If not now, then later. It's coming-- if not for me-- then for others.

I have to pass through this world not having a place but I'll go anyway.

Grandmother

That's *Ahw'uste*.

Girl

I'll speak these stories I don't know. I'll speak because I don't know them.

Grandmother

We're like the tree waiting for the red leaves.
We count on what's not there as though it is because the maple has red leaves --only you can't always see them.

Girl

You'd rather live with what you can't see-- is that the point of your red leaf story?

Grandmother

I was trying to help you over the hard places.

Girl

I can get over them myself.

Grandmother

I wanted you to look for the red leaves instead of the dudes on the highway.

Girl

A vision is *not* always enough--

Grandmother

It's all I had.

Girl

You had me-- Is a vision worth more than me?

Grandmother

I wanted to keep the leaves red for you.

Girl

I don't want you to do it for me.

Grandmother

What am I supposed to do?

Girl

Find someone else to share your silence with.

Girl

I was thinking we could have gone for a drive in my old truck.

Grandmother

I thought we did.

Grandmother

Ahw'uste's still living. Up there on the hill, straight through [indicating] near Asuwosg'

Precinct. A long time ago, I was walking by there hunting horses. There was a trail that went down the hill. Now there's a highway on that hill up there, but then, the old road divided. Beyond that, in the valley near Ayohli Amayi I was hunting horses when I saw them walking and I stopped.

They were this high [indicating] and had horns. They were going that direction [indicating]. It was in the forest and I wondered where they were going. They were all walking. She was going first, just this high [indicating] and she had little horns. Her horns were just as my hands are shaped-- Five points, they call them five points. That's the way it was. Just this high [indicating]. And there was a second one, a third one, and a fourth one. The fifth one was huge, and it also had horns with five points. They stopped a while and they watched me. I was afraid of the large one! They were turning back, looking at me. They were pawing with their feet and I was afraid. They were showing their anger then. First they'd go [paw] with the right hoof and then with the left and they'd go: *Ti! Ti! Ti! Ti!* They kept looking at me and pawing and I just stood still.

They started walking again and disappeared away off and I wondered where they went. I heard my horses over there and I went as fast as I could. I caught a horse to ride and took the others home. There was a man named Tseg' Ahl'tadeg and when I got there [at his house] he asked me, what did you see?

I saw something down there, I told him.

What was it?

A deer. She was just this [indicating] high and she had horns like this [indicating] and she was walking in front. The second one was this [indicating] high and the third one was this [indicating] high and the fourth one [indicating]-- then the rest were large.

It was *Ahw'uste*, he said.

Girl

I thought you said *Ahw'uste* lived in a house in Deer Creek.

Grandmother

Well, she did but these were her tribe. She was with them sometimes.

Girl

She's the only one who lived in a house?

Grandmother

Yes.

Girl

In Deer Creek?

Grandmother

Yes, in Deer Creek.

Girl

Your deer dress is your idea of them? --The way you felt when you saw the deer?

Grandmother

When I saw *Ahw'uste*. Yes, I tried to do it with my deer dress. The idea of her in the forest of my head.

Girl

Speak without your stories. Just once. What are you without your deer dress? What are you without your story of *Ahw'uste* ?

Grandmother

We're carriers of our stories and histories. We're nothing without them.

Girl

We carry ourselves. Who are you besides your stories?

Grandmother

I don't know-- No one ever asked.

Girl

OK Bucko. I find out you're married. But not living with her. *You aren't married in your heart*, you say. *It's the same as not being married*. And you got kids too? Yeah, several, I'm sure. Probably left more of them behind to take care of themselves than you admit. You think you can dance me backwards around the floor, Bucko?

Grandmother

Why would I want to be like you?

Grandmother

Why can't my granddaughter wait on the spirit? Why is she impatient? It takes a while sometimes. She says--*Hey spirit, what's wrong? Your wings broke down? You need a jumper cable to get them started?*

My granddaughter wants to do what she wants. Anything that rubs against her, well, she bucks. Runs the other way. I'm not going to give her my deer dress to leave in a heap on some dude's floor. It comes from long years from my grandmother-- I have to live so far away from you. Take me where you are-- I feel the pull of the string (she touches her breast bone). Reel me in. Just pull. I want out of here. I want to see you ancestors. Not hear the tacky world. No more.

Girl

You always got your eye on the next world.

Grandmother

I sit by the television and watch those stupid programs.

Girl

What do you want? Weed the garden. Do some beans for supper. Set a trap for the next spirit to pass along the road.

Grandmother

The spirits push us out so we'll know what it's like to be without them. So we'll struggle all our lives to get back in--

Girl

Is that what life is for you? No-- for me --I get busy with day-to-day stuff until it's over.

I told 'em at church I didn't take the commodities--well not all those boxes-- I told 'em-- shit-- what did it matter?

Have you ever lost one job after another?

Grandmother

Have you eaten turnips for a week? Because that was all you had in your garden. In your cupboard. Knowing your commodities won't last because you gave them to the next family on the road? They got kids and you can hear them crying.

Girl

Well just step right off the earth. That's where you belong. With your four deer feet.

Grandmother

Better than your two human ones.
All you do is walk into trouble.

Girl

Because I pick up someone now and then?
Didn't you know what it was like to want love?

Grandmother

Love-- Ha! I didn't think of that. We had children one after another. We were cooking supper or picking up some crying child or brushing the men away. Maybe we did what we didn't want to do. And we did it everyday.

Girl

Well I want something more for my life.

Grandmother

A trucker dude or two to sleep with 'til they move on? Nights in a bar. The juke box and cowboys rolling you over.

Girl

(she slaps her.) What did I do? Slap my grandmother? That felt good!

You deserved it. Sitting there in your smug spirit mode. I don't curl up with stories. I live in the world I see.

I've got to work.

Christ-- where am I going to find another job?

Grandmother

You can't live on commods alone.

Girl

You can't drive around all day in your spirit-mobile either.

Girl

I been paying ten years on my truck, Bub. You think I need a new transmission?

'Cause I got 180,000 miles on the truck and it's in the garage? You think you can sell me a new one, Bubby? My truck'll run another hundred thousand. I don't have it paid for yet. You think you can sell me a used truck? You couldn't sell me mudflaps. Just get it running-- Try something else and my grandma'll stomp you with her hooves. My truck takes me in a vision. You got a truck that has visions? I don't see it on the list of options, Bubby.

Grandmother

Gu'-s-di i-da-da-dv-hni My relatives--

I'm making medicine from your songs. Sometimes I feel it. But mostly I have to know it's there without seeing. I go there from the hurts he left me with all those kids and no way to feed them but by the spirit. Sometimes I think the birds brought us food. Or somehow we weren't always hungry. That's not true. Mostly we were on our own. Damned spirits. Didn't always help out. Let us have it rough sometimes. All my kids are gone. Run off. One of my daughters calls from Little Falls sometimes. Drunk. Drugged. They all have accidents. One got shot.

What was that? *E-li'-sin*-- Grandmother?

--No, just the bluejay. The finch.

Maybe the ancestors-- I hear them sometimes-- Out there raking leaves --Or I hear them if I think I do.

Hey-- quiet out there, my granddaughter would say.

Just reel me in, grandmother, I say.

Girl

So I told `em at my first job interview-- no, I hadn't worked that kind of machine-- but I could learn.

I told `em at my second interview the same thing--

I told `em at the third--

At the fourth I told `em--

My grandmother was a deer. I could see her change before my eyes. She caused stories to happen. That's how I knew she could be a deer.

At the fifth I continued-- I'm sewing my own red deer dress. It's different than my grandma`s. Mine is a dress of words.

I see *Ahw'uste* also.

At the rest of the interviews I started right in-- Let me talk for you-- that's what I can do.

My grandma covered her trail. Left me without knowing how to make a deer dress. Left me without covering.

But I make a covering she could have left me if only she knew how.

I think I hear her sometimes-- That crevice you see through into the next world. You look again it's gone.

My heart has red trees.

The afterworld must be filling up with leaves.

You know I've learned she told me more without speaking than she did with her words.

The Language of Endangerment

Victoria Lena Manyarrows

the language of endangerment
means language that endangers
 language that defends
means language that stretches boundaries
& opens new doors.

the language of endangerment
are words from people under attack
 a world under attack
the earth, trees & sky endangered
by a selfish & money-driven culture...

we are the people who speak the words & language
 of endangerment
we speak words that endanger lies...

our hearts are open
our spirits are free
we speak
we speak
we listen & learn...

the language of endangerment pounds in our ears
 courses thru our blood
threatens us no more.

Reviews



Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century

James Clifford
Harvard University Press, 1997

Culture is one of those *key words* that is indispensable in any serious humanistic discourse, but that is also a profoundly troubled figure of speech. James Clifford is well known in anthropology and beyond for his (productive) complication of our understandings of "culture" in his *The Predicament of Culture* (1988, Harvard University Press). In this remarkable collection of essays, Clifford continues and extends the argument he began in his earlier work by focusing on our tacit spatial and temporal premises that shape the way we think and talk culture. Ten of the chapters here were published elsewhere, including the important articles, "Traveling Cultures" (*Cultural Studies*, edited by L. Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and P. Treichler, 1992, Routledge), "Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology" (*Anthropological Locations*, edited by A. Gupta and J. Ferguson, 1997, University of Chicago Press), "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections" (*Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by I. Karp and S. Lavine, 1991, Smithsonian Institution Press), and "Diasporas" (*Cultural Anthropology*, 1994). The author has added a useful Prologue, as well as two original articles, "Museums as Contact Zones," and "Fort Ross Meditation."

Clifford's central argument in this book is that we have been entirely too *place-oriented* in our understanding of culture, and its more politicized and contested twin, identity. While culture and identity are necessarily "located" in time and space, *location* should be understood as an active *process of locating* or an itinerant stop-over, rather than a fixed, rooted, or otherwise essentialized place. After all, "everyone's on the move, and has been for centuries" (2). Clifford proposes that we pay as much attention to "routes" as we have to "roots" in our interpretations of culture and identity. What if, for example, we came to see *displacement* as at least as important as stasis in the constitution of culture? What if travel, rather than dwelling, served as the central organizing trope of our questions about culture and identity? The travel trope is not perfect because of its class, gender and racial specificities (think of who, historically, has been both enabled and authorized to write "travel literature"), but all tropes are *partial*, and given proper critical contextualization, travel has the advantage of problematizing our assumptions of stasis and facilitating fresh questions. For example, if travel is the "normal" condition of human location, then perhaps some of the seeming inevitability of *nations* can be fruitfully interrogated. Are nations or bounded "cultures" merely "safe spaces where the traffic across borders can be controlled" (7)--for the time being and in the interests of some to the disadvantage of others? And who might challenge these

safe spaces, even as they choose to dwell in them--again, for the time being--and how effective is the challenge? Many critical insights flow from this experimental focus on routes. I will mention only some of them in the remainder of this review, moving from the most particular to the most general.

First there is the matter of ethnographic fieldwork in the discipline that invented it and aggressively claims it, anthropology. The professional method of fieldwork is, of course, a lens that has both occluded and focussed. What has been occluded? Among other things, the dense history of colonial pacification that underlies the historic white privilege of the ethnographer:

Why was Evans-Pritchard not killed, or at least hurt by the Nuer when he set up his tent in their village on the heels of a military expedition? Underlying his safety, and that of a host of other anthropologists, missionaries, and travelers, was a prior history of violent conflict. All over the world "natives" learned, the hard way, not to kill whites. Most anthropologists, certainly by Malinowski's time, came into their "fieldsites" after some version of this violent history. My point is simply that the safety of the field as a place of dwelling and work, a place for neutral, unpolitical social science, was itself a historical and political creation. (40)

But this gets erased in the professional constitution of "fieldwork." Even so, fieldwork remains critical in Clifford's view. Serious cultural study is not be possible without "juxtaposition, estrangement, rite of passage, [and] a place of transit and learning" (82). But this kind fieldwork is now possible only if ethnography relinquishes its historic fiction of a worldly ethnographer traveling from a cosmopolitan center to a rooted periphery to study spatio-temporally fixed "natives." Again, we all are on the move. Can fieldwork be reworked as travel encounter--or *contact* in Mary Louise Pratt's sense (*Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 1992, Routledge), not only for the ethnographer, but also for the "native"?

Then there is the larger matter of what anthropology and museums with "ethnographic" collections might usefully do in a world of travellers on profoundly different routes through modernity. Both "The Science of Man" and the museum originated in colonial conquest and domestic repression, and are epistemologically based on a Eurocentric and hierarchal panopticism. Can either institution be effectively "reformed"? Clifford sees reason for optimism, or at least he proposes practical programs for democratization. The museum might be thought of not as a central exhibition point for collections of national (or even global) patrimony over which the museum claims stewardship, but rather as a "contact zone" (In Mary Pratt's terminology), where what necessarily goes on is negotiation--and conflict--between divergent locations or worldviews. Museums might purposely *seek* to "bring a wider range of historical experiences and political agendas into the actual planning of exhibits and the control of museum collections," not for public relations purposes, but in order to change the *content* of what museums aim to *do* culturally. Clifford

admits that this might be utopian and that we may have to be content with a plurality of museums, each with its "point of view," but even this would necessitate substantial democratic change since it would require a redistribution (repatriation) of the major national collections. Similar avenues might be pursued by anthropology: "Can anthropology be reinvented as a forum...[a] site where different contextual knowledges engage in critical dialogue and respectful polemic?" (91). For example, in my field of Anthropology, Native American Studies, why should the "contextual knowledges" of my Indian students, who have no particular stake in--and may even be hostile to--*anthropological* knowledge, not be admissible in a course titled "Native Americans?" Perhaps readers will recognize how much radical change that would require in classrooms around North America.

Finally, and most generally, there is the matter of critical history. In what this reviewer thinks is the most insightful chapter ("Ft. Ross Meditation"), Clifford reads the Fort Ross state historical park in California. Fort Ross was a trading post established by the Russians in 1812. The trading post and its environs were inhabited by a remarkably diverse and cosmopolitan mix of travellers: Siberian Russians, Aleuts, other native Alaskans, Kashaya Pomos and Miwoks from California, and crosses--both culturally and biologically--of all these. What Clifford achieves in this chapter is to break "the spell of [historical] inevitability" (328) (a method Foucault called genealogy): at the end of the twentieth century, California may seem inevitably, even aggressively (think of Proposition 187), *American*. But how long has that been the case, and how long will it persist? And who in California might dispute that "fact" of Anglo California even now? To think historically--and counterhistorically--Clifford shows, is to undermine the seeming naturalness of contemporary geopolitical and geocultural formations. "It is strange to stand on the California coast and imagine yourself at the farthest extension of an *eastward*-expanding empire centered in St. Petersburg" (303; emphasis added). And what drove the Russian quest for sea otter pelts was the Chinese demand for luxury goods: "Fort Ross is as much part of Asian as of Western history" (*ibid.*). And then there is California's deep connections to the South, connections that are too easily erased in Anglocentric cognitive maps: "It is still a shock to come across a map from 1845. The border begin at New Orleans, twists north and west until it reaches the forty-second parallel in what is now Montana, and then runs straight to the Pacific. The vast area south of this line is labeled 'Mexico'" (328). "Can we imagine Los Angeles as part of Mexico? Or perhaps California, New Mexico, and Arizona as an independent, Spanish-speaking country?" (*ibid.*). The answer is, of course, that many people do so imagine. A genealogy of California, then, should not look only at where California "was," but also where it is *going*. And here Clifford has more in common, methodologically if not theoretically, with Marx than with Foucault: "The West Coast of the United States, not long ago the eastern edge of Russia, is being bought up by investors from Japan and Hong Kong. Is the U.S. American empire in decline? Or perhaps in metamorphosis?" (330). And then again, California might be transformed by "sheer numbers of people"--the new immigrants of the late twen-

tieth century (as it was when Anglos poured in after the discovery of gold) (ibid.). The point of all this for cultural studies is that to think historically is to take seriously the "differently centered maps/histories"--the remarkably discrepant standpoints--that necessarily exist out there. Can Native Americans or African Americans, for example, contemplate modernity in the same way that Anglos can, when for them "modernity" meant conquest and enslavement? Given this inevitable lack of a cultural center or agreed upon "universal" values, what is left for those of us interested in cultural studies? For anthropology? For museums? For the contemporary study of the humanities? Is there an epistemological high ground from which we can orchestrate a consensus? What should we be doing in the classroom? Clifford's answer: "there is only...translation" (13).

There is much more to this book that is not possible to convey in a short review. It offers remarkably rich food for thought about culture and translation, and will be, as Clifford's work always is, the subject of controversy (among other questions: does the limiting of our work to translation or interpretation mean that we might not provide a coherent analysis of domination?). I learned a great deal from this book, and I highly recommend it as an important source of theory and method.

Thomas Biolsi
Portland State University

The Spanish American Roots of William Carlos Williams

Julio Marzan
University of Texas Press, 1994

Julio Marzan has written a book about William Carlos Williams that, while it is "not a biography. . . is predicated on a new, as yet unwritten biography, one extrapolated from his works and a revision of the criticism" (xii). The emotional and critical force of the book emerges from a moment of auto-biography, when Marzan, in the late 1970s, realized that he had never given thought to the fact that Williams's background was half-Latin. Having gone to college in the 1960s, Marzan writes that, "when I first read somewhere that Williams's mother was Puerto Rican, I followed the example of my education: I thought nothing of it" (x). In this book, Marzan thinks of and about that heritage, using a method that is at once strikingly contemporary (based on ethnic studies or cultural criticism) and old-fashioned (his analysis concentrates more on the language of Williams's poems than on their politics, or on Williams's life history). Marzan is sensitive--perhaps too sensitive--to the charge that he operates at cross-purposes, "beg[ging] the reader to approach this book without preconceptions about my critical approach" (xiii). In the epilogue, Marzan notes that, "while my book naturally lends itself to being conscripted for the left side of the controversy [over ethnic identity], my critical method, which some might call unfashionable, was not intended to reflect solidarity with that friendly faction" (260). Such an approach is often appropriate in dealing with a poet who, according to Marzan, sought "to find the balance between his person and his persona" (xi), who, "on the canvas of his work became a harmonizing composite of components and simultaneous opposing viewpoints best captured in the style of a cubist portrait" (xiii). By marrying the seemingly paradoxical methods of cultural studies and formalism, then, Marzan makes an argument whose implications operate beyond the immediate subject of his book.

Peter Quartermain and Charles Bernstein have written about "the fundamental alteration of the language base" (CB 107) that occurred in the United States during the 1880s and 1890s. In 1900, approximately one quarter of the white U.S. population did not speak English or spoke it as a second language. Among the writers who learned English as a second language was Williams, who grew up in a home where Spanish was spoken more than English, especially since Williams's English father preferred speaking to his wife in Spanish. Yet this apparent strength in Williams's background made him suspect to as important a literary friend and influence as Ezra Pound, whose reactions to Williams's book, *Al Que Quiere*, were xenophobic, to put it mildly. Pound accused Williams of being downright un-American:

*What the h--I do you a bloomin' foreigner know about the place.
Your pere only penetrated the edge, and you've never been west
of Upper Darby, or the maunchunk . . . But I have the virus . . .
the bacillus of the land in my blood, for nearly three bleating
centuries. (quoted on 234)*

Marzan sketches a portrait of a poet who is bicultural, but also bifurcated, and whose name presents that conflict symbolically. Having internalized some of the attitudes Pound displays in his letter, Williams is a poet at odds with his own heritage, and especially with his mother. But Marzan, in attempting to render the complications of Williams's career, tends to oversimplify and sentimentalize the poet's struggle, as in the following passage, which presents Williams rather too neatly as "Bill" and "Carlos":

Behind the politic person of Bill, it was the balancing counterweight Carlos who embodied newness itself, whose foreign heart beats in his most important works; Carlos, not Bill, was fired by the need to prove the "catalogue" wrong and the imagination superior to the mainstream's specious natural laws. (14)

The problem with passages such as this one is that Marzan's use of formalist analysis, while useful in his treatment of the specific language of the poems, is less valuable as a biographical tool, even if Williams's own obscurity about matters such as the reason why he chose to use "Carlos" as part of his pen name, invites such a close reading. Insofar as Marzan sticks with the linguistic evidence, he does well to read Williams as well as to read his poems. He is much better, however, at discussing Williams's "imaginary translations" from Spanish to English than he is at talking about Williams himself as a translation.

Marzan is most interesting when he re-invents Williams's "imaginary translations"; he reads Bill's English poems as having a buried, "imaginary," subtext, which is Carlos's Spanish. One of the most striking of his readings involves that battle-axe, "The Red Wheelbarrow," which has surely been read to death--until now. Marzan's interpretation more than flirts with over-reading (and so at times resembles Paul Giles's obsessive, punning book about Hart Crane), but is compelling, nonetheless, for the way in which it shows Williams's poem working through the net of his two languages. Marzan argues that "The Red Wheelbarrow" consists of an imaginary translation from the Spanish that draws on another of his poems, "Brilliant Sad Sun," about Williams's mother. So how did he get the red wheelbarrow? "In Spanish," Marzan writes, "to know things by heart or to do something by rote can be described by the phrase *de carretilla*: *hacer de carretilla* or *saber de carretilla*. The image evokes carrying around the knowledge using a small cart. Colloquially, one can refer to someone's habitually prattling on about something as bringing back one's *carretilla*. And *carretilla* also literally denotes 'wheelbarrow.'" So, when a woman named Rose (who I gather is based on Williams's mother, Eleni), speaks nostalgically about *de carretilla*, the wheelbarrow acquires its color. Marzan is less effective when he claims that this act of "imaginary translation" (a phrase he gets

from Williams) also describes Williams's life. He waxes romantic at this point: "Against that stifling European line, America's spirit had to shine through, if his country was also going to absorb his unique interpretation of its language, a translation of himself. His being a translation gave him that mingling advantage over those so-called Americans whose minds and hearts were still in Europe" (141). At this point I want to ask for translations of words like "mind" and "heart," as I do elsewhere when Marzan refers to Williams's "soul." The very specificity with which he treats Williams's use of words grows fuzzy when Marzan makes generalizations about Williams and about American and European cultures.

Marzan's Williams is a poet more difficult than most readers have allowed him to be. If his surface text has often seemed all too clear, at least in the imagist poems, then Marzan insists that there is a coded subtext that needs to be "translated" in order to give us the range of Williams's emotional and intellectual power. What Marzan also gives us, without quite announcing it, is a hybrid form of criticism that returns the "subtext" of poetry to the work of cultural criticism. His work, despite--and perhaps because of--its excesses, points us toward a critical method that returns poetry to the critical center that it occupied under the New Critics, without also enforcing the subtexts of their decidedly anti-ethnic politics. I, for one, would like to see the imaginary biography of a truly bicultural Williams written by someone so sensitive to the hearts of words (in two languages) as Marzan.

Work Cited

Charles Bernstein, *A Poetics*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.

Susan M. Schultz
University of Hawai'i

Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization

Arjun Appadurai
University of Minnesota Press, 1996

"Masterful" might be a correct description of Arjun Appadurai's book, not simply because it is a masterful anthropological work based on social science, but also because it strives to be a master narrative of modernity. At a time when the word "master" can seldom fail to raise some eyebrows, Appadurai doesn't even hesitate to allow his meta-narrative to take over a discursive field that is now "shaped by a concern with diaspora, deterritorialization, and the irregularity of the ties between nations, ideologies, and social movements" (18). The internal contradiction between Appadurai's ambition for a master narrative and what he has described as a world that escapes narrative mastering--modernity "at large"--is not a puzzle of formal logic. Instead, the contradiction should be understood by positioning his book in different disciplines and examining the interdisciplinary claims he has made for these intellectual fields.

When I say this "is a masterful anthropological work based on social science," I don't mean it lightly. As a work of social science, this book is an important engagement with a key term--the imagination. Embodied in media and migration, the work of the imagination is defined by Appadurai as "a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" (3). Drawing upon Benedict Anderson's thesis on imagined communities, Appadurai pushes the working definition further and acknowledges the "newly significant role" that the imagination plays in the postelectronic, postnational world. He rests his case on three distinctions: first, "the imagination has broken out of the special expressive space of art, myth, and ritual and has now become part of the quotidian mental work of ordinary people in many societies"; second, the distinction between imagination and fantasy; third, the distinction between the individual and collective senses of the imagination (5-8).

The first and third distinctions, closely related, delineate a global space in which the collective imagination (as opposed to the faculties of a gifted individual) both consolidates and threatens ideas of community, locality, ethnicity, and nationality. Appadurai has coined five terms as a framework for exploring the dimensions and disjunctures in global cultural flows (33-6): (a) *ethnoscape*, "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals"; (b) *technoscape*, "the global configuration...of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries"; (c) *financescape*, "the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges,

and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units"; (d) *mediascape*, referring to "the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world," and also referring to "the images of the world created by these media"; (e) *ideoscape*, concatenations of images that "are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it."

Despite the elaborateness of the terminology, these -scapes, in terms of changing our conceptualization of the world, are not very far from what Anderson conceives as "imagined communities," except that Appadurai has managed to emphasize the disjunctiveness of these communities or dimensions in the global space. For him, "the critical point is that the global relationship among ethnoscapescapes, technoscapescapes, and finascapescapes [and mediascapescapes and ideoscapescapes] is deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable because each of these landscapes is subject to its own constraints and incentives...at the same time as each acts as a constraint and a parameter for movements in the others" (35). But Appadurai's treatment of the distinction between imagination and fantasy, the second of the three distinctions mentioned earlier, is a significant revision of our understanding of modernity. Here he attacks the whole body of writing by the Frankfurt School, which "views the modern world as growing into an iron cage and predicts that the imagination will be stunted by the forces of commoditization, industrial capitalism, and the generalized regimentation and secularization of the world" (6). Appadurai points out two flaws in this school's conceptualization: "First, it is based on a premature requiem for the death of religion and the victory of science.... On another level, it is wrong to assume that the electronic media are the opium of the masses. This view...is based on the notion that the mechanical arts of reproduction largely reprimed ordinary people for industrial work" (6-7). To correct the second wrong assumption, in particular, Appadurai maintains that "[t]here is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and, in general, agency. Terrorists modeling themselves on Rambo-like figures (who have themselves generated a host of non-Western counterparts); housewives reading romances and soap operas as part of their efforts to construct their own lives; Muslim family gatherings listen to speeches by Islamic leaders on cassette tapes; domestic servants in South India taking packaged tours to Kashmir: these are all examples of the active way in which media are appropriated by people throughout the world. T-shirts, billboards, and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing, and slum housing all show that the images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance" (7).

Appadurai argues against Frankfurt School's proposition that industrial technology and scientific rationality have created Marcuse's "one-dimensional soci-

ety," which is supposed to lack imagination and negation, and which at best generates fantasy as impotent, utopian escape. Instead, he asserts that in an age of electronic media and globalization, the imagination, in its collective forms, "creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rules, of higher wages and foreign labor prospects" (7). In a word, imagination "is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape" (7). Here shines the brilliance of Appadurai's book as a work of social science.

But the light dims when we look at the book's engagement with anthropology and cultural studies. In the discipline of anthropology, this book can be regarded as part of an ongoing effort to "recapture" anthropology (see Richard Fox, ed., *Recapturing Anthropology*, Santa Fe, 1991). In fact, Chapter 3 in Appadurai's book first appeared in Fox's collection. While we cannot give an immediate answer to the question of who has abducted an anthropology that now needs to be recaptured, we can at least draw a hint from some of Appadurai's pronouncements. Appadurai advocates, among other things, an anthropology of literature (58), or ethnographies of literature (61), by which he means reading and writing literature as "exercises in the interpretation of the new role of the imagination in social life" (61). It looks as though Appadurai's interest in ethnography had benefited from the "writing culture" proposition, as he admits: "Because we have now learned a great deal about the writing of ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Geertz 1988), we are in a strong position to move to an anthropology of representation that would profit immensely from our recent discoveries about the politics and poetics of 'writing culture'" (58). But, this is hardly the case. What lies at the heart of the "writing culture" project is a recognition of discursivity in any anthropological work; it is a critique of a social science-based anthropology that aims to produce master narratives and objective knowledge. And Appadurai's book exactly strives for such a master narrative. At a time when most master narratives --Western humanism and its hidden epistemologies, evolutionism, individualism, bureaucratic rationality, and Marxism--are seriously embattled, Appadurai calls for a cosmopolitan ethnography, or macroethnography, that "takes on a special urgency given the ailments of these many post-Enlightenment master narratives" (52). What this macroethnography can do is "to capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived, local experiences" (52; my emphasis). The macroethnographer's capability to "capture" an outside, extralinguistic experience is apparently at odds with the fundamental proposition of "writing culture," which problematizes this capability. The question now is: What has enabled Appadurai to ignore the skepticism toward macronarratives expressed by those who are often labeled "textualists," while at the same time advocating an interest in literature?

This question takes us to another field that this book intends to cover: cultural studies. In response to "the hijack of culture by literary studies" in the past decade, Appadurai sets out to recuperate culture from the literary hijackers by engaging with cultural studies. "The subject matter of cultural studies could roughly be taken as the relationship between the word and the world.... Cultural studies

conceived this way could be the basis for a cosmopolitan (global? macro? translocal?) ethnography" (51). Thus Appadurai establishes a kinship between anthropology and literary studies--not by recognizing the textual nature of ethnography, but by relying on representational realism (even if it's magical realism at times). Looking at his thematic reading of Julio Cortazar's fantastical story titled "Swimming in a Pool of Gray Grits," one can immediately tell that Appadurai is drawing upon a prevailing but problematic reading method often adopted in cultural studies: this method aims only at grasping or abstracting a theme that is extrinsic to linguistic or textual reality: "The story is partly *about* a crazy invention that captures the faraway imagination of Tashuma.... It is also *about* the transnational journey of ideas.... The vignette is also *about* the internationalization of sport" (59-60; my emphases). To answer the question we just raised, it is this *aboutness* of a text that has enabled Appadurai to claim literature as an object under the 'eye of anthropology,' while at the same time offsetting the impact of textualism upon anthropology. It is also this *aboutness* that has created a distance between a text and its reader similar to the well-maintained line between the observer and the object in the old anthropological work. In this sense Appadurai's "anthropology of literature" is merely a change of the research object in which the methodology itself is never questioned. This is clear from his construction of the relationship between a "recuperated anthropology" and cultural studies: "Anthropology can surely contribute its special purchase on lived experience to a wider, transdisciplinary study of global cultural processes. But to do this, anthropology must first come in from the cold [?] and face the challenge of making a contribution to cultural studies without the benefit of its previous principal source of leverage--sightings of the savage" (65). Once the object was the savage, and now it is globalized us; but we still write in the same way.

Feeling the impact of the textualism that seems to have "abducted" anthropology, hardliners in the field are turning to social science and/or cultural studies for a way to get the genie back into the bottle. An easy way out (or in) is to appropriate the thematization of literature, which reduces literariness to isomorphism between the word and the world. In this approach, everything in a story can be treated as something in reality, and literature simply becomes equal to ethnography understood in the old way: an objective description of cultures. Hence the influence of literature upon ethnography is now reversed. Ethnography reinforces an outmoded, problematic ideology in literature: representational realism, which is often incapable of self-criticism and oblivious to its own methodology. But realism lies at the core to Appadurai's anthropological approach to literature. It enables him to produce a master narrative that incorporates literature, meanwhile deflecting the impact of textualism upon anthropology.

When considering Appadurai's assertion that "[f]or those of us who might wish to move toward [a] new master narrative, whatever its form, new global ethnoscaples must be the critical building blocks" (65), we have to agree that the concept of ethnoscape, introduced in this book, is useful. But "capturing" lived experiences in the global space created by mass migration and electronic mediation,

especially capturing them in the same way that the others and their cultures were captured by earlier anthropologists, will not get us very far. The genie is out, and has grown bigger; the bottle don't fit no more.

Yunte Huang
SUNY-Buffalo

The Magic of the State

Michael Taussig
Routledge, 1997

This is a work of ficto-criticism -- a work which defines its stance as one "torn between the overlapping claims of fiction and those of documentary." It is a book where writing matters, where "meaning" is performed in the poetics of form. It is a book *about* the magic of the state and this is a "thing" -- this magic -- that emerges out of a dreamy surreal theater of possession where the state takes the form of spirits of the dead. There are rituals, spells, waiting, sleeplessness, time passing, drumming, prayers, parables, sleep-walking. The magic of the state is not an easy thing to grasp but an endless circulation of power which effects surreal transformations between spirit and matter. A danger that cannot be contained but leaks, it marks the cultural-political space where the sword and the word come together. Surfaces and depths merge in a theater of ecstasy which culls the effects of power and history into the body. Poetics of fetishism and bricolage rework fragments of the Great Story of the State into crude representations and kitsch objects which tell a tale about representation and power in their very form. There are warnings, guardians, letters sent that never get there, copies more powerful than the originals by virtue of their circulation through dense viscera of sociality and desire.

The story takes place in an unnamed Latin American country -- a European Elsewhere filled with figures of an enchanted mountain, The Spirit Queen and The Liberator. These figures mark the stage of a drama of Dada-like transformations in which reason and violence come together to generate paradoxes of knowing and unknowing, the sacred and the profane. The secret to the magic of the state is its power to effect these transformations through dizzying oscillations between redemption and abjection, the spellbound and the skeptical, the official and the popular. Center and margins draw together here, locked in a co-dependent dance with death. Official monuments and popular shrines draw their magic from each other in defacements, in crude representations where the metaphoric is rendered carnal, in offerings, exchanges, and frightening gateways. The magic of the state is a kind of power "in which baseness and transcendence circle around each other so as to produce power in the play of the shadow cast by the other (p. 96)." There are official statues and boulders painted with the national colors and there are candles, oranges, talcum powder, cigarettes, amulets, medallions, plastic figurines, paintings of Indians, bottles of urine, needles, black mud, money, the police, corrugated iron sheds, solid ruins, frogs rubbing their back ends together in the night. This is a book about the nature of figuration in the context of particular "reals" of Power and History and an experiment in how to convey the strange and beaten-up concreteness of that process of figuration.

The Magic of the State is a poetic act in itself. It tracks the generative

power of signs of power. "Meanings" or "culture," as we come to know them here, are at once sublime and surreal, fixed and explosive, magical and mundane, ephemeral and deadly serious. Here every "thing" is both make-believe and all-too-real; desire takes off in flights of fancy, seduced by the romances of enchantment, and then folds back into history and "the real" and is fundamentally marked. Here interruption, incommensurability, moments of shock and encounter, and live desire are taken to be not extraordinary structures and events but part of the regular working of things and the nature, or rather the "matter," of the systems under scrutiny. There is no "in short" -- no summing up or final page on knowing about "culture" and "reality" but only the dizzying cycle of exchange where nature becomes culture, matter becomes idea and idea becomes matter, margin becomes center, the "high" meets the "low," and liveness moves through the space of death through acts of founding violence. The economy of the sign is the economy of the gift; the more it spends itself the more it expands and grows. It is contagious. It produces an excess and the need to squander. It leaves us not at rest but in the middle of an ongoing demand for repeated and sustained engagement with pains and pleasures, ghosts and phantoms that have effects, ruins that mourn and reify, fetishes that cull and deflect attention, little things that contain an impossible fluid tension.

Here Taussig fashions both the elusive nature of stately being and the excessiveness, the baroque, the kitsch danger of figurations of stately violence into an object of theory and writing. For Taussig, the modern state shares with the writer of fiction the practice of fusing reality with dreamlike states. He has written a book that in its very poetics performs a mode of cultural critique that is at once historical materialist and fundamentally engaged with the potential liveness and violence of cultural-political acts. Skirting and taunting the dual dangers of aestheticism and realism, it makes a profound intervention in the often stymied debates over "representation" and "reality" by forcefully pushing cultural theory beyond the trite recitation of constructionism (that meaning is socially constituted) into a serious and sustained theory of the social and political basis of figuration. The reader follows this theory of figuration as it unfolds through intricate detail and opens into a world of haunting and daunting implications performed as a visceral/ethereal experience.

Kathleen Stewart
University of Texas, Austin

Panoramas

Victor Hernandez Cruz
Coffee House Press, 1997

and

Cantos to Blood & Honey

Adrian Castro
Coffee House Press. 1997

"THE TONGUE IN YOUR EAR: Hearing History and Singing Poems"

How do words come to you, stay in you, leave you? Is it history that brings them to you, or sound? If you are Victor Hernandez Cruz, words come to you through channels of history-- say, like through the Moorish arches inside the cathedral of Cordoba, winding their ways past the invasion of the Moors, the settlement of the Catholics, bringing echoes of prayer, grief, memory in Arabic, in Spanish. The words travel through the monuments built by history, crawling through the arches of the past and into the present. In *Panoramas*, Hernandez Cruz' most recent collection, the utter physicality of language springs (boils? spills? erupts?) forth as a fountain. In his prosepoemessaymemoir "Water from a Fountain of Youth," Hernandez Cruz' story-- his love affair with language, his naming of his inspirations--reads like an apologia. This is how and why Hernandez Cruz brings his literary influences into the big scene of his personal poetics. Part of his poetics spring from being fifteen, being Latin "from Manhattan walking around the Avenue D housing projects..." The "fountain" is the constant inspiration Hernandez Cruz could feel walking around Manhattan being the reader of poems by William Carlos Williams, Garcia Lorca, Jose Marti, Whitman, a teenager full of poems, the physicality of them, the history of them, the joy of responsibility that comes with being a reader of amazing works. In this short memoir in the middle of the book Hernandez Cruz shows what a fountain of youth is for a poet when the poet meets the poets he will carry with him forever: It's vinegar meeting baking soda. It's a gardenia joining its scent. It's the young poet carrying the flames of poetry from the past and into the future.

And it should be no surprise that the poets who move him on are Williams, who wrote of his own mother's Spanish roots, and Garcia Lorca, who wandered the same New York Streets (if a little bit north) and carried the same Spanish sounds.

It's that very same young poet who evolves into the man who still celebrates, who still carries with him the vibrancy and joy of discovery as his pen moves on-

ward. And that young man becomes a wise man when writing "To Kairi" in "Letters From The Island" dedicated "To my daughter Kairi and to children everywhere." Here, Hernandez Cruz asks a loaded question disguised as a simple request for news:

Are you speaking Spanish?
So that next time you come
You can talk with your
Girlfriends
Remember the game where
You clap your hands and sing--
As if the words were in the palms.
The language where you are is English
But they sometimes
Speak Spanish--
It sounds like something warm and round
It sounds like love--
Spanish like feathers in air
Romantic.

What starts as the quiet question and musing in the opening of the letter becomes an occasion for Hernandez Cruz to voice his own physical relationship to his languages:

I think of the two languages
I write in both
In one I find something
That I can't find in the other
I make a little bridge
I can walk across the bridge
All day long.

Some poets choose form for content. Even if all form stands the chance of being used ironically in the postmodern age, a poet might still choose a sonnet for a love poem, a villanelle for a celebration. But Hernandez Cruz' choices are wider: Spanish gives him one canvas; English offers another:

To me Spanish seems round
and vegetable--
English is vertical and goes
Straight up into the air
Like cylindrical pipes--
In English it is like being inside
walls--

Spanish is outdoors and circles.

As someone who writes in both languages, I know exactly what the poet is explaining here. Spanish is plumper than English. Yet, some of Hernandez Cruz' critics claim he is sometimes "surrealistic." If a critic can't SEE Hernandez Cruz as the documentarian of evolving worlds and languages, then maybe that critic should...look again. Because Hernandez Cruz uses his power of synesthesia (after all, we do use many of our senses simultaneously) to show Kairi that her other language "...is full of agricultural glances/ Harvest rhythms of Jibaro dances..." and tells her to look at a map of Central and South America, tells her to realize all the places full of people who "sing" in Spanish all over the world. Then the poem becomes a letter from a concerned father:

So you should practice your Spanish
Think of all the countries you can
Speak it in.
If one language is good
Two is more flavors
Don't forget your Spanish--
Through the cold nights of the north,
Next time you are down here
I'll take you by the hand
And in Spanish you can
Tell me the names of things
As if for the very first time.

In part II of the poem, the father tells of songs that are "The true old feelings of a people/As if right then and there/You were being made..." Because song is eternal, because song comes from grandmothers, from traditions, from our histories. At the close of the poem we read "Listen:/The voice is yourself." The self that celebrates the language, that remembers the ancestral language, that harvests the language of its lands--that is Hernandez Cruz' richest voice.

This self made of languages and histories jumps up in the poems of Adrian Castro. *Cantos to Blood & Honey* is the first collection of poems by the Afro-Latino performance poet. Taking his cue from Hernandez Cruz (indeed, Hernandez Cruz is thanked as "silent mentor" in the early pages, and the elder poet has written the welcoming introduction), Castro too opens his bursting bag of vibrant history in "Poem to Greet Your Memory." The poem starts quietly, telling us of a face out of context--its own context or our context. What the poem will show us is the permanent fact of the face:

We are of tropical blood

no matter how you paint yr face
you
will always be del Caribe and her waters
you
were born in a downpour
of heat & humidity

"you" will always be a descendant, and will always carry what was. The only question is, How to celebrate? How to make what was into what is? Robert Creeley's poem "Theresa's Friends" tells of a bursting moment when he's told that his name is Irish, and there's a moment of glorious epiphany as he finds himself the descendant of famous and infamous tellers of tales and singers of songs. In *Cantos*, Castro pulls the pain of the past into the pride of the present. These poems are a series of tugs: the poet insists that regardless of the resistance, and regardless of the fact that he's moving on barely charted trails, he WILL bring this tricultural language to the fore. And sometimes the poems themselves split in their urgency, showing the seams of their intention, telling us that translation only *seems* as if it works. In "Poem to Greet Your Memory":

Entonces/then
then/entonces
yes we can resist the urge to forget
(se puede)
yes we can glimpse into each bubble
we can aspire to greet those three masks
(se puede se puede)
yes we can speak their names
the past the present
imagination
the waves in her eyes
the shell for the turtle
the needle that guides the thread
Punto y aparte

The poet struggles with the primacy of language: does Spanish come first ("Entonces")? Or English's "then"? Well, the solution might be to choose both; show the struggle. And when it comes to direct translation...forget it. When he writes "we can aspire to greet those three masks/ (se puede se puede)," the English affirms a direction of acceptance. But the Spanish "se puede" almost removes possibility, since "se puede" is the passive, carrying the meaning "it is possible," but NOT meaning "we will do it" or even "we CAN do it." What almost makes it to affirmation in one language (English), falls behind into possibility for the Spanish. And the hopeful motion of drawing together is rent asunder when "the needle that guides the thread/

Punto y aparte" tells us that the point of togetherness lasts a second, and is pulled apart again.

Although Castro's poems reveal the motion of anguish and separation, distant possibility against slight possibility, the action of the struggle is a celebration in itself. The sounds of Yoruba, Spanish and English all traveling in the same poem are a quick lesson in history and alchemy. And when we move towards the end of the book, the collection offers a kind of remedy: the chance of union through the return to one's own power, the power of ancestors:

yr ancestors
yr name
was never writ
in snow was always writ
in sand
soothing yr feet

("Connection Between Land & Identity")

If the ancestral magic doesn't work, ultimately, then the poet moves forward anyway. He closes the book with "In The Beginning (III)", last line:

"toda esta bien/the story continues..."

A reader of any language can learn stories about all language from reading both of these poets. As Hernandez Cruz has explained (in "Water From A Fountain of Youth") "Poetry is the sound of air in your head. To make it into language is a translation..." We are all pulling rabbits out of hats whenever we try to show the words that live in our hearts and lodge in our throats. But when the magician pulls a rabbit out of one hat while pulling a parrot out of the other...Now that's really a trick.

Elizabeth Burns

Cross-Mojado Poet, West Coast Salsista, dream pagan, Toon theater dancer, Chiapas drifter, & Sub-Minister of Conga Word Jams, **Juan Felipe Herrera** teaches culture studies, creative writing and Chicano teatro at CSU-Fresno. He lives with performance poet Margarita Luna Robles. Forthcoming ouvres: *Laughing Out Loud, I Fly* (Bilingual Poems for Children, Harper Collins) and *Cilantro Facials: The Big Book of Latina and Chicano Toons & Comedy* (Temple).

Zhang Er's poetry has appeared in journals in mainland China, Taiwan, and the American emigre community. Her chapbook, *Winter Garden*, was published in English translation (Goats & Compasses, Publishers) in the fall of 1997. Her poems have also appeared in *Five Fingers Review*, *River City*, *Trafika*, and *The Journal of Chinese Religions*, among others.

Leonard Schwartz's most recent book is *Words Before the Articulate: New and Selected Poems* (Talisman House).

Chung Na Yei (Deanna Utz) is an occupational therapy student at the College of Saint Catherine. She was born in South Korea and adopted to a Minnesota family at the age of 7. "Departure" is her first published poem.

Born in the Svey Rieng provinces of Cambodia, **U Sam Oeur** received his MFA from the Iowa Writer's Workshop in 1968. Oeur was elected to the Cambodian National Assembly in 1972 and in 1973 was appointed Secretary General of the Khmer League for Freedom. *Sacred Vows*, a collection of Oeur's poems translated by Ken McCullough, is due out later this year from Coffee House Press. He now lives in Minneapolis.

Ken McCullough has received numerous awards for his poetry including the Academy of American Poets Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Pablo Neruda Award, and the Capricorn Book Award. He lives in Winona, Minnesota.

Wai-lim Yip has authored over forty books in two languages, among them (Poetry) *Thirty Years of Poetry, Between Landscapes: (Criticism and Theory)* *Ezra Pound's Cathay, Diffusion of Distances: Dialogues Between Chinese and Western Poetics*; (Translations) *Chinese Poetry: Major Modes and Genres, Hiding the Universe: The Poetry of Wang Wei, Lyrics from Shelters: Modern Chinese Poetry*. He has been professor of comparative literature and creative writing at UCSD since 1967.

Paul Naylor edits *River City* at The University of Memphis. Earlier sections of *On Certainty* have appeared in *Sagetrieb*, *Phoebe*, and *Hambone*. His critical book, *Poetic Investigations*, is forthcoming from Northwestern University Press.

Jeff Derksen has two books of poetry, *Dwell and Down Time*. He is editing an issue of *Open Letter* due out in early 1998, "Disgust and Overdetermination: a poetics issue." As well, an essay on Canadian multiculturalism and antisystemic writing is forthcoming in *West Coast Line*. He currently lives in Calgary and is working on a dissertation on nationalism/multiculturalism and cultural poetics.

A graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop & currently working as an interpreter for social services in Olympia, Washington, **Fernand Roqueplan** has recently published in *International Poetry Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Revista/Interamericana Review* and the anthology *Anyone is Possible* (Red Hen Press, 1997).

Lise McCloud is the 1996 winner of *Minnesota Monthly's* Tamarack Award for fiction. Her work has been published in journals and anthologies including *Aboriginal Voices*, *Cream City Review*, *NDQ*, *Sing Heavenly Muse!*, *Tamaqua*, *Two Worlds Walking* (New Rivers Press, 1994) and *Prairie Volcano* (Dacotah Territory/St. Ives, 1995).

Hilton Obenzinger's recent books include *Cannibal Eliot and the Lost Histories of San Francisco* (Mercury House) and *New York on Fire* (Real Comet). He has recently completed a novel of the 1968 student revolt, *Busy Dying*, and is working on a long poem on time and memory, *First Things First*. He teaches at Stanford University.

Diane Glancy is author of two collections of short stories, five volumes of poetry, and *Pushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears* (Harcourt & Brace, 1996). She teaches literature and writing at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN. Currently the Poet Laureate of the Five Civilized Tribes, Glancy is of Cherokee and German/English descent.

Victoria Lena Manyarrows is Tsalagi/Eastern Cherokee, and a member of the Native Writers Circle of the Americas and the Indigenous Women's Network. Her essays and poetry have been published in *Unsettling America: An Anthology of Contemporary Multicultural Poetry* (Viking Penguin Press), *Raven Chronicles*, *Callaloo*, and elsewhere. *Songs From the Native Lands*, her first book of poems, is available from SPD.

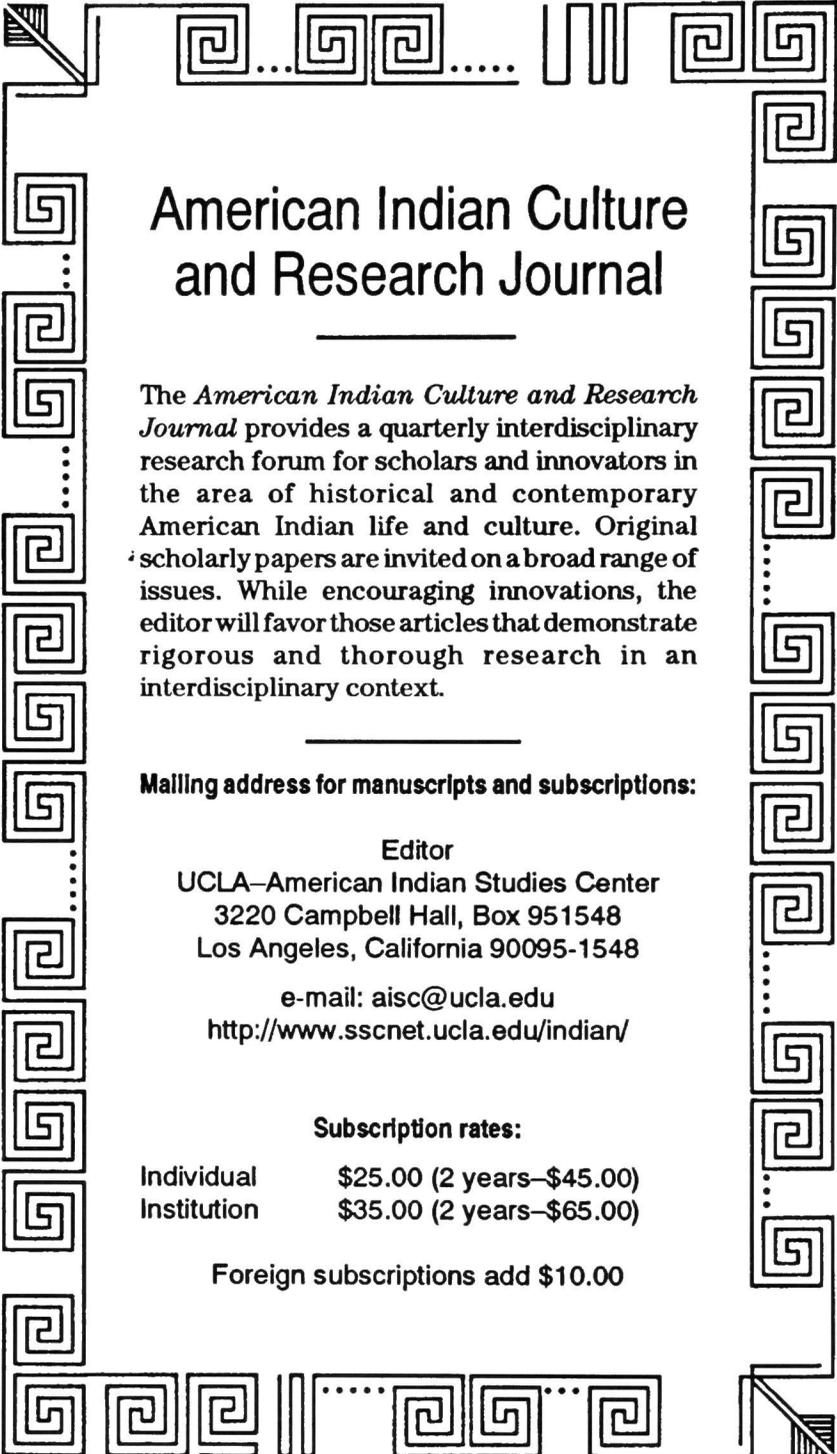
Tom Biolsi teaches Anthropology at Portland State University. His research interest centers on the history of Indian-white relations. Among his published work are *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (1992, University of Arizona Press) and *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria and the Critique of Anthropology* (edited with Larry J. Zimmerman, 1997, University of Arizona Press).

Susan M. Schultz teaches American poetry at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa. She edited *The Tribe of John: Ashbery and Contemporary Poetry* and is author of the forthcoming book of poems, *Aleatory Allegories* (Folio, Australia).

Yunte Huang is a Ph.D. candidate at SUNY Buffalo. His *Shi: A Radical Reading of Chinese Poetry* was published by Roof Books (1997).

Kathleen Stewart teaches anthropology at the University of Texas, Austin. Her first book is *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America*. She is currently completing a book on "The Private Life of Public Culture" and a third project on Las Vegas and the culture of risk and abjection in the U.S.

Elizabeth Burns is a poet, essayist, mother and Director of Legacy, Vision and Whimsy for the Grotto Foundation in St. Paul. Her *Spanish Poems* were recently published in *New Sequence Length Writing By Women* (Public Works, UK).



American Indian Culture and Research Journal

The *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* provides a quarterly interdisciplinary research forum for scholars and innovators in the area of historical and contemporary American Indian life and culture. Original scholarly papers are invited on a broad range of issues. While encouraging innovations, the editor will favor those articles that demonstrate rigorous and thorough research in an interdisciplinary context.

Mailing address for manuscripts and subscriptions:

Editor

UCLA—American Indian Studies Center
3220 Campbell Hall, Box 951548
Los Angeles, California 90095-1548

e-mail: aisc@ucla.edu

<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/indian/>

Subscription rates:

Individual	\$25.00 (2 years—\$45.00)
Institution	\$35.00 (2 years—\$65.00)

Foreign subscriptions add \$10.00

SAGETRIEB

A Journal Devoted to Poets in the
Imagist/Objectivist Tradition

Sagetrieb, whose components are "to tell" and "life force," means "to perfect a humane tradition in music and poetry gleaned from the past and pass it on to the future."

教

"The need for such a magazine is obvious."—Jonathan Williams

"*Sagetrieb*" has a real chance to be that rarest of creatures, a magazine for which a genuine need exists and which, therefore, has an unquestionable right to our attention and energy."—Michael André Bernstein

—Subscription Information—

3 issues per year; individual \$20.00; institution \$37.00;
foreign (including Canadian) subscription, please add \$5.00 per year.

Please send:

1-year subscription to *Sagetrieb*

2-year subscription to *Sagetrieb*

Check enclosed (U.S. funds)

Please charge my Visa Mastercard

Account number _____ expiration _____

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Make check payable to National Poetry Foundation and send to:

The National Poetry Foundation
University of Maine
5752 Neville Hall, Room 302
Orono, ME 04469-5752

Please visit us at our website: <http://www.ume.maine.edu/~npf/>

River City

presents

The Ninth Annual River City Writing Awards in Fiction

First Prize	\$2000.00
Second Prize	\$500.00
Third Prize	\$300.00

CONTEST RULES

1. Any previously unpublished short story of up to 7,500 words is eligible. No novel chapters, please. Writers may enter only one manuscript in contest. **NO** simultaneous submissions.
2. All manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and accompanied by a cover letter. The author's name should **NOT** appear anywhere on the manuscript itself.
3. Please indicate Contest Entry on your outer envelope.
4. **DEADLINE:** All submissions should be **postmarked** by January 20, 1999.
5. All manuscripts should be accompanied by a **\$9.50 entry fee**. The fee will automatically begin or extend a subscription to *River City*. Please make checks payable to The University of Memphis.
6. *River City* will publish the prize-winning story, and retains right of first refusal to publish any contest entry.
7. Entries will be screened by members of the Creative Writing faculty at The University of Memphis. Winners will be chosen from 15 finalists by a nationally prominent author.
8. **Winners** will be notified in April 1999.
9. All other entrants will receive winning stories in the Winter issue of *River City*. **NO manuscripts will be returned.**

Send contest entries and subscriptions to: Contest Editor, *River City*, Department of English, The University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee 38152-6176, USA.

Xcp



cross cultural poetics

Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics, a scholarly journal of poetry, poetics, ethnography, and cultural & ethnic studies, seeks submissions, proposals, and inquiries regarding potential publication in its forthcoming volumes:

Xcp no. 3: "Fieldnotes & Notebooks"

— scheduled to appear: October 1, 1998

— submissions due by: May 1, 1998

Xcp no. 4: "Voyage/Voyageur/Voyeur"

— scheduled to appear: February 1, 1999

— submissions due by: September 1, 1998

Xcp no. 5: "Dia/Logos: Speaking Across"

(plus a special Nathaniel Tarn section)

— scheduled to appear: July 1, 1999

— submissions due by: February 1, 1999

Xcp 2000: "Documentary in the New Millennium"

— scheduled to appear: January 1, 2000

— submissions due by: August 1, 1999

All correspondence should be accompanied by an SASE and directed to:
Mark Nowak, ed., Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics,
c/o College of St. Catherine-Mpls.,
601 25th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN, 55454.

E-mail inquiries can be made by writing the editor: manowak@stkate.edu

Visit our website for more information and updates:
<http://www.stkate.edu/xcp/>

Xcp

cross cultural poetics

PRICE (\$9)