

Xcp 3

cross cultural poetics



Che Qianzi, Fred Wah, Dhann Polnau, Allison Hedge Coke,
Lila Abu-Lughod, Mark Nowak, Elaine Equi, Carolyn Erler,
Carolyn Lei-lanilau, Jack Turner, Roger Sanjek, David
Michalski, Deborah Reed-Danahay, Paul Naylor, Hilton
Obenzinger, Jefferson Hansen, Tsianina Lomawaima, &
Maria Damon

Xcp

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Contents

Fieldnotes & Notebooks

- 7 ***Che Qianzi***
 Hand-Copied Paperback
- 12 ***Fred Wah***
 from "China Journal"
- 27 ***Dhann Polnau***
- 32 ***Allison Hedge Coke***
 News Flash: Tagging Death
- 34 ***Lila Abu-Lughod***
 On Photographs, Fieldnotes, and Participant-Observation
- 42 ***Mark Nowak***
 "Back Me Up"
- 72 ***Elaine Equi***
 Blue Notes
- 75 ***Carolyn Erler***
- 80 ***Carolyn Lei-Ianilau***
 Parabalabia(id): the 21th generation
- 98 ***Jack Turner***
 Field Report
- 99 ***Roger Sanjek***
 What Ethnographies Leave Out

Reviews

- 115 **David Michalski**
 After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary
 Anthropology
- 119 **Deborah Reed-Danahay**
 Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing
- 122 **Paul Naylor**
 Paul Metcalf—Collected Works, Volume One: 1956-1976
- 126 **Hilton Obenzinger**
 Paul Metcalf—Collected Works, Volume Two: 1976-1986
- 130 **Jefferson Hansen**
 Paul Metcalf—Collected Works, Volume Three: 1987-1997
- 133 **Tsianina Lomawaima**
 Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria Jr. & the Critique of
 Anthropology
- 137 **Maria Damon**
 The Journal of John Wieners / is to be called / 707 Scott Street

Fieldnotes & Notebooks



Hand-Copied Paperback

Che Qianzi

(translated by Zhen Zhen & Jeff Twitchell-Waas)

1. Background

Preface: For many years, a secret society in Southeast Asia has been searching for a book entitled *Hand-Copied Paperback*. It is said that with this book in hand, one would have the secrets of running the country at their fingertips.

However at the same time, there exists another secret society which does not believe such a book exists. But in order not to disappoint the book-hunters, they have forged a *Hand-Copied Paperback*.

This *Hand-Copied Paperback* contains excerpts copied from other works. Cards. One-sided. Unrelated to either *Hand-Copied Paperback*, that the book-hunters look for or to those making the forged book. Crucial. Urgent.

Stylistic musical works culture is a kind of copying process in it there are many slips of the pen and parts left out when we open our eyes and want it is just like the “descendants passing off modern works as ancient.”

Wittgenstein says: “Culture is a kind of hobby, a hobby founded on copying.”

What a person copies may be what he himself left out

My head knows nothing of what my hand is writing down

Culture, —handwritten forms.

Afterword: fake book fake money fake man;
 true theory true story true stuff

Appendix: For my part the *Hand-Copied Paperback* is completed—or rather half completed. For the other half, I will invite 99 people with different levels of education to copy it.

The copying process will be as follows:

The second person copies my original; the third person copies the second person’s; the fourth copies the third. And so on.

When it is time, I will make a comparative study of the 99 copies.

I expect to find some interesting variations and ways of transformation.

The deadline set down for the process is ten years.

Hand-Copied Paperback

Ceylon

that which can be destroyed by fire, can be destroyed by water
the most fragile can best preserve humanity
out of convenience

towering athenaeums, library domes
dream of a manuscript, era of printing
from then on, facilitates exchange
racer no. 185 first reaches the history of paper

Hand-Copied Paperback

Thailand

mistakes coax people into storing filled with mistakes high prices
smart people's height grows, people grow, lazybones
shorten their bodies
lazybones short short riders
passes over the shoulder: squatting on the shoulder
a cat or a lion

lingering warmth

monkey trainer in the warehouse doorway, the one on duty holds the ladder
leaning against a wall, bits of a broken glass stuck on it
like a dentist

"open your mouth, and legs, hmmm, ok."

Hand-Copied Paperback

Burma

Burmese child shy Burma
9-year old adult strict monastery rules silver pagoda tops
like an antenna wave long wave short dangerous big ships
women carry on their heads men holding chickens frequency modulation stereo
three dimensional cartoons small bird and the king
Buddha crosses river, does not get wet, not that the river is not wet

gold buddha clay buddha are all buddhas
good man bad man are all men
truth

lies
are all formed of words, —real genius never reveals himself
photos are only phantoms

take photos to keep the image, record words to keep the sound, read books
to keep the mind
children do not study hard: stay down to keep up golden sail on huge green waves
children's visual lunch

Hand-Copied Paperback

Nepal

ready for dinner, both hands on the map

choice goods: elastic bands are made of imported three-splice
high power rubber bands and seven-colored soft satin
ordinary goods: elastic bands are made of imported two-splice
rubber bands and soft satin and embroidery

not too tight

Hand-Copied Paperback

Vietnam

lurid, lurid botanical garden
a steamship passes by peels away half an orange
lurid, lurid orange peel
reveals plain style flesh, steamship, shipbow, in Hanoi
raging waves
botanical garden

Hand-Copied Paperback, rolling snowballs
little snowballs, big snowballs, little snowballs
little thaw, big thaw
water temperature lower than that of snow, clay urns filled with plum pollen
knowledge: a secret joy

- 3371 out Shiguan China (Analects · 30)
 3372 + that city wall + at that time
 3385 must be assailed
 3394 all these
 3414 + the people ++
 3426 to no avail (Analects · four six)
 3438 + house its sun man (Yin · one two)
 3476 gold (Yin · three)
 3477
 3519 down +++
 3553 have +
 3570 • three
 3571 • five
 3579 + its place
 3580 + the state
 4028 inner wall too (Analects · two five)
 4486 eating fish (Six · one)
 4488 as husband (Yin · four)
 4489 + take
 4548 + yin yang
 4557 + ten
 4675 + position

Aug 13/96 1:45 pm Vancouver Airport

Bored - ing!

"Dead time" critiques the oil engineer who works in Libya 35 on 35 off of flying. Now, a couple days later at Gate D93 flight delayed an hour for Beijing, I pick up or mumble around that notion of "dead" time and with Dead Man movie resonating in background along with "what if dying means you are dead already."

The flow back into China and black hair. That visage, not of me but of that little blood part of me – does it matter which part - quarter, quantity. The customs agent, a young Vancouver Chinese-Canadian guy: "I was expecting someone Chinese - but you shouldn't assume" he reminds himself when he sees me. Without even such minor complications (reminders) of identity, expectations, appearance, what would that be like. Do George Bowering and Vic Coleman ever wonder about themselves in that way, ever test or question their skin or names against a norm of race?

Aiming at:

Originals

Nanjing

Che Qianzi
Zhou Yaping
Hong Liu
(Zhang Ziqing)

*In the summer of 1996 I made 3-week trip to China as part of a small group of Canadian artists on a government-funded cultural exchange. I was interested in meeting as many contemporary Chinese poets as I could in that short a time and I was guided principally by a publication I had noticed a few years earlier, *Original: Chinese Language-Poetry Group*, translated by Jeff Twitchell (Parataxis Editions, Brighton, 1994), and by help from Yunte Huang in Buffalo and Tim Lillburn in Saskatoon. I had some names. I was primarily interested in hearing "their side of the story." Since Tianamen, there has been an increasing number of translations of contemporary Chinese poetry based, I believe, mostly on a kind of current western Orientalism that seeks cultural inhabitation by "globalization." So I was interested to talk with these poets about how they see themselves in such a context. This journal is just that, a journal. Many of my discussions remain on untranscribed tape. I have collated some of the material for talks I've given and an interview with Leung Ping Kwan from Kong Kong was published in an issue of *West Coast Line* (#21 [30-3] Winter 1996-97), "Translating the Emporium: Hong Kong Art & Writing Through the Ends of Time." The first portion of this journal was published by Yunte Huang in his journal *Displace* (Buffalo, 1997) and *Prairie Fire* (18/4 Winter 1997-98, Winnipeg).

Suzhou

Yi Cun
Haung Fan
Xian Meng

Shanghai

Liu Manliu
Mo Mo
Chen Dongdong

Kunming

Hai Nan
Yu Jian

Beijing

Xi Chuan
Mo Fei
Wang Jiabin
Zhou Jingzi

Hong Kong

Leung Ping-kwan

960814 8pm

I'm met at airport by Chinese Ministry of Culture person, Zhang Min. She gets me to hotel and helps change some money. We have tea in my room and she explains that Xi Chuan has agreed to interpret and help me meet poets I've mentioned in proposal. After some phone calls she says she can't reach him. He calls after she's gone, his English is fairly good; he suggests we get together in morning.

Trying to jump the jet-lag. Nice room on 11th flr of Beijing hotel, posh. Just went for walk up Wangfujing. I strained to find the familiar; construction, McDonald's, many department stores, rumbling changes since I was here in '81. And cars, cars, cars. But still lots of bicycles. You can buy just about anything. I buy some bottled water, beer, and instant noodles.

960815 9:30 am

Nice walk this morning from hotel sort of looking for street food breakfast and find it over on Dongsì Beidajie where I have a very greasy bean paste ball (at least recognizable from home) and a kind of rolled pancake filled with rice noodles and vegetables - excellent. I have two of them for 5 yuan (about \$1). I'm silent, no language, so I just point and gesture. Nice now that the Chinese are used to foreigners and there's very little gawking to contend with. In fact, I'm now the one doing most of the gawking. Self-conscious gaze and cameraing the scene.

Waiting for Xi Chuan to show up at my hotel room to yak about possibilities in Beijing - who to meet, how to handle the city, etc. Questions to ask him about the containment and present construction of Chinese poetic language.

We talk for awhile in the room, drink tea, feel one another out about poetry, until I realize he's a smoker and I suggest we go out for tea and/or lunch. Very hot and humid as we walk up east side of Wangfujing Dajie looking for place to eat. He finds us a little place and he orders noodles with egg and I noodles with beef. We talk about Yu Jian and many other poets, general sense of poetry in China. He mentions Yu Jian's "Zero Document" (Yu Jian gives me a copy of *File Zero*, a collection of postcard images and poems, later in Kunming), a long poem that he thinks is important but with which he doesn't necessarily agree.

Wonderful walk back to hotel talking about "culture," which he thinks is too split between high and low. We make arrangements for tomorrow when he will take me to his school area - Academy of Arts where he teaches English - out near airport, late afternoon.

Tonight I go back to Dongsì Beidajie. Seems to be a better food street. I find a pretty good restaurant - tofu with cilantro, plate of eggplant, potatoes, green peppers, rice, beer - 25 y. (little over \$4) plus nice young waiter from Harbin who speaks English and is happy to try it out on me. Harbin, northern, cuisine. I didn't try the dumplings with ginger. All the food's greasy but very tasty.

Leans over and down to his noodles and slurps.
Lift my bowl to my lips, sip.
Brings his face down to the bowl on the table, tilts it slightly,
and shovels and slurps the noodles and liquid into his mouth
with noise, fullness, fillness.
We eye each other, watch our eating.
Same noodles.

Little beggar boys out with their mothers on the streets at night use the kow-tow jab hello hello money, pick at my arms, legs, step in the way, hey money, money. No. Now here, too.

She's sexy street corner in her tight long white dress and
slithers all over him, no shirt, crew cut, tight tummy, long white
cigarette between teeth, they flash themselves out in the
crowd as flashy whitenesses, hot and testy Beijing night.

I walk along Chang'an Jie towards Tianamen and I guess I set up more of a difference than usual, wearing my Dorfman Crusher felt hat. A guy on a bench lets out a really strong smile, almost laugh, so that I smile right back at him but walking away feel bad about doing that, proving back to him my own place of potency, white, now I am white and act it out in the face/smile of this guy who's just noticed difference and let it out, his own, same social place,

there, on a bench, the heat and humidity tarmac throughout the city over us, heads testing the difference.

(Xi Chuan's poets)

Chen Dongdong
Liang Xiaoming
Liu Manliu
Meung Lang
Mo Fei
Mo Mo
Wang Jaixin
Xi Chuan
Xue Di
Yan Li
Yu Jian
Zai Yoming
Zhang Zhen
Zhao Qiong
Zhen Danyi
Zou Jingzi
Lu Yimin (woman in business)
Wang Jing, Shao Caiyu (Shanghai)

Questions for Xi Chuan:

- why pseudonym? (Liu Juen is real name)
- what/who would you include in an anthology of contemporary poetry? (list above?)
- who is important to you in the Chinese language?
- Hong Kong-Taiwanese poets?
- which of Wang Ping's writers are women (River City)
- are you at all interested in borrowing forms (ghazal, utaniki, etc.) from other cultures?
- Do you adopt older Chinese forms?
- deconstruction or construction of the holy, the cult-ish, the ideal, re Michelle Yeh.
- does poetry have anything to do with social change?

Stuff it boy scout
Your militaristic upper lip lisps tourism
The Imperial brick bridge
 over conquered water
Grab it

Be looked at - and I look into space - avoid (contact!) (and right now I turn to find a young

guy looking over my shoulder as I write this)

Breasts usually small - under newer western fashions, tight dresses push out the falsies, cups.

She's riding a bike and wearing lace gloves.

Noon - at lunch in sidestreet restaurant w/ Tsingtao beer and trying to order Tofu & vegetables. The girl struggles with my English - and I feel guilty for only having that, imposing my lack.

The babies all seem to be boys and spoiled too.

Nice quiet restaurant (but w/ muzak) - worth the extra few yuan.

Excellent lunch of vegetables (not too greasy), stir-fried lettuce, tofu w/ scallions, mushrooms, lots of garlic, rice (slightly unpolished).

Outside bicycle stand - she's paid under yi yuan.

Come out of the cafe, mushrooming
humid back into the hot day
pavement neutral desert, hawk
into the gutter stray gob rice caught
throat pollution.

Sudden face

in face she's at me arms akimbo
miming no-no and finger scolds
across my eyes, distanted tongues
all her language backing up her book
of tickets old citizen cadre street cop
ten yuan (ok finally understand)
– fined for spitting in Beijing

980817 Saturday Beijing 3:15

Last night went with Xi Chuan and Huaizhou Liu (her boyfriend is Saskatoon poet Tim Lilburn who put me in touch with her and Xi Chuan) out to Xi Chuan's room at the Arts Academy in suburbs, toward airport. Taxi thirty-five yuan each way. Sat around his apartment (one room, porch, bathroom w/ wall shower, small kitchen w/ washing machine, closet

where he writes) one wall lined w/ books. He says village is dirty but he plans to use all that dirt in his writing, We talk mostly about my writing - he has questions - (I think I talk too much, I should have the questions). I try to give them a sense of my context as "Chinese-Canadian" writer so I wax a little positionally.

Turns rural dark dark and 3 of us go out to local restaurant for fish (Huaizhou's fav), chili tofu (Tim Lilburn's, fav), chicken and peanut, corn, lily shoots, flat peas, beer. Nice pecky meal - too much; Xi Chuan takes a doggy bag, We hurry a little heading home because Huaizhou has to catch subway in opposite direction. She and I agree to meet at 8 Sunday morning for trip out to countryside temple where she grew up.

Talk in taxi on the way back about lack of female poets; Xi Chuan a little at a loss to take that on. Huaizhou talked earlier about "political correctness." Even she seems prepared to let it be.

All the dirt that fits –

Lost into the back alley of the living - taxi still pushes mind blur of traffic into pothole and bike body - Xi Chuan's beast the minotaur - him lost in the dark stairwell - architecting his paradigm of dirt - no crows, finally the cicadas quiet down as the warm evening settles, cardgame on the doorstep of the hutong, dusk and the dust smoking against old bricks, earth grounds the heart.

Very relaxed morning - tea, noodles, bath, reading stuff Xi Chuan gave me last night. At eleven I start out along Jianguomen Daije to Friendship Store, old touchstone from earlier tourist days. Extremely hot and humid trip – and tiring. Takes me about an hour. Just about try Pizza Hut but the lineups too much. Baskin-Robbins next door has pizza slices for 7 yuan (about \$1.50) so that's what I have, a coke, and then head back, hunting a little for some bottled water along the way. Shower, wash sweaty clothes. Now cooled down after a shower and a cold Beijing beer, waiting for Xi Chuan to come by to take me to meet the Beijing poets.

No. 50 Huang Tingzi Bar is in NW of city and is run by a poet friend of Xi Chuan's, Jian Ning, also a film-maker ("Chinese Moon," "Black Eyes"). Others there are Mo Fei, Shu Cai, and another whose name I didn't catch. Zhou Jingzi couldn't make it but sends along, from himself and Mo Fei, a copy of a Spanish-published antho of contemporary Chinese poetry (*Equivalences*) with both Spanish and English translations.

We sit outside on a patio in extreme (for me at least) heat. Beer and tea. I drink lots more beer than they do. They have wives and girlfriends there who seem to seem to be at another table. Xi Chuan's girlfriend brings a Brit who's lived in Beijing for three years - so after evening's conversation I get an interesting take from her. She's annoyed by their (particu-

larly Mo Fei's) dismissal of the Taiwan/Hong Kong writers. She thinks Beijingers are becoming too self-confident (and self-centered). Mo Fei is the most vocal of the group.

Conversation starts around translation and they question Shabo Xie's translation of my own stuff that I've handed out to them. We all seem to agree on the problem of transparency, particularly Shu Cai who reads and speaks French and has translated some Reverdy. They praise Xi Chuan's translations of Borges.

Their response to my question about the lack of women writers is blank. Silence, quizzical side glances.

Heated discussion, briefly, about "Language poetry," which they all seem to dislike. So they're critical of Zhang Ziquing's and Huang Yunte's translation and publication of Bernstein, Sherry, and Lazer. But I'm not sure they understand; they have a lot of questions about LP. The posturing by Mo Fei, and less-so by the others, re their relationship to the outside, seems a little self-centered - though the connections with Shanghai and Yunan poets appear strong. I think they're reacting to my surfacing of the Nanjing-Suzhou "so-called Language" poets and my own interest in the social and the diasporic. I can't get any sense from them about ethnic writers.

But it's a good evening and Xi Chuan is a very useful and generous interpreter. His own poetry seems an interesting mix of lyric sensibility (though he's praised for not using "I") and formal innovation. He's also quite well read and thoughtful about writing.

Monday 960819 Beijing Hotel

Yesterday Huaizhou Liu took me out to the temple at Hairhou. She was born there and her parents spend the summer in a peasant's house in the village. Her parents were academics and during the cultural revolution were sent out to Hairhou to teach in a small school (a Buddhist temple converted by Red Guards) and be reeducated. The temple has been restored as a tourist attraction and Haizhou and I wandered through it briefly only to discover that her first home had been demolished by the restoration. We sat in the shade under some trees and talked since my stomach felt a little tender and I didn't have a lot of energy. We managed to get a taxi for the hour long ride for 80 yuan - a bargain - so the trip was quite pleasant. We had a wonderful time in her parent's yard; they basically live out doors in this heat. Her mother cooked up fresh food from the garden - corn bread, weedy greens and garlic, tofu, cucumber and tomato. They had black eggs but I didn't try them. She came back into town with us in a rickety but cheap taxi. Quite a good day.

for Huaizhou

mother's green's
garlic

like your father
fist

family bodies sister
skin

inside that egg
100 years

outside distances
lime

fine ash, salt
and straw

Last night drinks and dinner-walk with my Canuck compadres, Roger Lee and Kai Chan (Lee Pui Ming tired out from their long flight).

Finally cooled off a little overnight from two days of intense heat and humidity. Today I meet with Chinese Writers Association people.

4 pm. Just back from meeting with Jin Jianfan, Ye Yanbin, Niu Baoguo, and one other, a critic, all representatives of the Chinese Writers Association (government approved). I received a lecture on the nature of Chinese poetry from Mr. Jin and an explanation from Mr. Ye on why the Misty poets and the Campus poets have not been successful - i.e. their poetry is hard to understand by the general reader. I cringe at the power of construction these people hold. As soon as I could I steered the conversation to the "Association," its response to Taiwan (good from Ye Yanbin) and Hong Kong and other matters such as ethnic minority writers (they have a committee and have created a magazine only for "ethnic" writing) and women (10% of 5,000 members, but rising since 1949).

A disheartening meeting with power. I long for the open tongue of Xi Chuan. Tonight we have another official function; dinner with Ministry of Culture people.

960820

This is a stomach pausing.
Way up that street of potholes
on the other side of Behai Park
Madamme Politics looped her jail term.

The cure for diarrhea is not food.
Take plenty of liquids
deflect attention to the word
read Urumqui.

Raining and, thankfully, a little cooler today. Huaizhou has kindly set up meeting with Wang Jiaying for the afternoon. He's a very confident writer and speaks knowingly about international writers. We go to tearoom south of Tianamen. He talks of context and discourse, reads a little Foucault and Derrida. Uses "soul" a lot. Likes language poetry like T.S. Eliot. Ashbery rather than Ginsberg. His wife is doing comp lit PhD in Oregon; she's translated Atwood. Nice guy, a bit of an "internationalist," quite a record there. But he has a good sense about how writing works for him.

960821 Wednesday Beijing

cloisonné fish
in the restaurant
shell fish
for lunch
dao fu
rice w/ cold dish
of cucumber salad
slightly pickled
words silent
beyond the window
bike stand
pay for it

960822 Beijing — Nanjing

After nearly two-hour taxi ride through huge traffic jams to airport - a little anxious going through ticketing and security because of lack of directions, but I just flow the flow and I'm now on Shanghai Airlines flt 156. Unsure of what awaits me over next six days until I meet with Zhang Ziqing who I'm counting on to set up meetings with the "Originals" in Nanjing and Suzhou.

Good airplane lunch of rice, beans, meat, beer.

flying into Nanjing
waiting for the ringing
writing out my naming
fathering the landing

body intestinal ginseng
greening the furnace city
liminal [the black hair
of her armpits, body
lifting
this bell ringing hyphen
weighting
Chinesing ending

Thurs night about 10

after afternoon and evening of intense discussion w/ Zhang Ziqing, Huang Fan, Zhu Jun, Yi Cun, first at my room at Nanjing University and then at expensive restaurant where the food much better than Beijing (shrimp, chicken, pork, beef, tofu - meat very fatty but tasty and side-dish of soya, as opposed to none in Beijing - great talkers these guys:

Ziqing does interpreting, but he gets sidetracked into arguments w/ the poets. He's fairly knowledgeable about American poetry and has translated and published, with Yunte Huang, a *Selected Language Poems* of Charles Bernstein, Hank Lazer, and James Sherry. He's central pin in connections w/ the Chinese "language" poets I want to meet with here and in Suzhou.

Huang Fan is a very likable "Original" poet, serious, a little English, worked w/ Jeff Twitchell as a student at Nanjing University.

Zhu Jun is a younger poet, after the Originals, considers himself a pure language poet. No English but very engaged during discussions.

Yi Cun is an "Original," apparently a successful "misty" (writing under the name Lu Hui) he changed his name to escape them. He feels close to my own sensibility. He's now a businessman - chain-smokes, constant cell-phone in and out of breast pocket.

After dinner we walked back to Ziqing's apartment and argued about Stein, ate water-melon, and sweated out the 90 degree humidity.

My room at the University is air-conditioned. Sightseeing in the morning Huang Fan and Yi Cun and then a formal session with a group of writers tomorrow afternoon.

Jade Rabbit
equals moon

Dead Man =
nv s ble
tr ck

the period
a mirror
for roast potatoes

my name is...

Huang Fan
a yellow tree

the bottle
is garbage.

960824 Train to Suzhou

Sitting across from Sam Chin, from Chicago, in China as a consultant for GM. He's going to Suzhou too so he'll help me negotiate the get off.

Yesterday was quite good. Toured in the morning with Huang Fan and Yi Cun - Sun Yat Sen mausoleum - ancient Ming Wall. Great treat was the Nanjing lunch of eighteen courses - very small dishes of vegetables, meats, soups, eggs, noodles, etc. - each dish distinct - only one dish I couldn't stomach because the smell put me off. Very nice to be with Yi Cun and Huang Fan. Fan's English is enough for minimal conversation.

Afternoon I gave talk for writers group at a mansion on top of mountain - built for brother-in-law of Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek. Shang Ziqing asked me to talk about Canadian poetry rather than complicate talk I had planned on "noise." They all got into arguments during question period - and Zhang would start arguing rather than interpreting. Went until late afternoon and then we walked down the hill for supper - mediocre meal with lots of beer, lively discussion. Back to hotel to arrange meetings in Suzhou with Che Qianzi.

jade rabbit
year of the ox
age, my age
after liberation
June 4 or 64
dynasty and long wall
after 2000 what
cars like rabbits

960825 Sunday - Train from Suzhou to Shanghai - 5:50 pm

Wow! What a couple of packed days w/ the Originals (Che Qianzi, Zhou Yaping, and Hong Liu (she's Yaping's wife and Qianzi's sister - first woman poet I've met here)).

Both 3-shower days and I haven't had one since I left Nanjing. Stayed at Zhou's home - fairly recent modern apartment on 8th flr. Very nice people, generous, a grandmother around to handle their small child. Too hot to sleep - I've been spoiled by air-conditioned hotels.

After they, with interpreter Wang Yiman, picked me up at the train station we dropped off Sam Chin (Chicago Chinaman) - he going to visit in-laws in Suzhou - then we went for large lunch w/ beer. Got to know one another and late afternoon went to Zhou's and Hong's place where we got into long talk on poetry*. Late, around 9, whole family goes for visit to night park and then a very good supper of duck's tongue.

Got to bed about midnight. Much caffuffle all evening about getting me a train ticket and having me met in Shanghai by one of Zhang Ziqing's students.

Today they made TV interview (Zhou Yaping works for local TV station) with Zhou and Che Qianzi supposedly asking me questions about western poetry but they ended up using the occasion to mostly focus on the Originals, their own work.

Went for lunch with new interpreter, a bit of sightseeing on the canals and then finally got me on train. Station was complicated but Che Qianzi helped wonderfully (though he has no English). I'm pooped. Try to recoup later.

try tea

green canals of continuity to the edge of my dream
I had a rill over the tidal plain my plan was entre-
preneurial but I only remember feeling pure, be-
hind the wall of ocean were her legs
outstretchedand cooling

or rice!

*Our discussion here, as it had in Nanjing, centred on the publication of *Original: Chinese Language-Poetry Group*, translated by Jeff Twitchell (Parataxis Editions, Brighton, 1994) because my copy of this anthology was the first the writers had seen of it. Though the anthology had been published and distributed in the west since 1994, the poets themselves had not received copies. I found this matter quite reprehensible and I have since written to Drew Milne, the publisher of *Parataxis*, and Jeremy Prynne, the editor of this particular issue, with no response. I have since found out that many of the translations we read in our western literary magazines are frequently made without the writer's permission or awareness.

Tues 960827 - Shanghai Park Hotel 11:15 am

Rather trashed yesterday and still quite tired today. The travel work has overtaken me so I've decided not to contact Chen Dongdong here but rest for a couple of days before flying to Kunming. Our group (Roger Lee, Kai Chan, Lee Pui Ming, and myself) is touching base here before we all move off in separate directions again).

I'll see a little of Shanghai today after lunch with Pui Ming. The heat and humidity takes its toll. I'm also a little tired of the inclination of the Chinese writers to negotiate a representation in the "west." My TV interview in Suzhou, for example, was mostly about the Original poets and how important I thought they were to the N.A. audience.

"Stones come from the world" display jade value sitting there worthless as the silk on the 5th floor style now lagged out sleepy salespeople lined up with no war left but money now flowing past the shiny dark mahogany treasures of history become trinkets or grids for museum mind who cares antique CL. THING AND CO. the media not just message messed but the only food available to the beggars and urchins pinching arm insistent on the touch of stone in this filthy world.

Yesterday met with culture ministry guy in morning to get flight to Kunming lined up (6:30 tomorrow morning). Then went with Roger and Kai to new Museum of Art - gorgeous building and fine display of bronzes and porcelain. Spent afternoon walking and looking at commercialization of this city. Last night went for dinner with Roger, Kai, and Pui Ming to an old restaurant in Bundt district. Afterwards we walked along the new Bundt promenade by the Yangtse - very leisurely. Roger and I walked back to hotel along Nanjing Road, about an hour through late-night, low-lit street.

Nanjing Road is the main thoroughfare past my hotel and's needed on this page as a geographical plot line for reading through the quickening and too early summer darkness of Shanghai though the rhythm in that change of light does not quite reach the margins here and neither that rumbling clothes dryer of humid air outside nor the air-conditioning of the room can hold these words cooled in the gutter of the notebook as I close it nor out there in the gutters of the night now turning to food and other bodies.

Wed 960828

Plane from Shanghai to Kunming - hope to meet Hai Nan and Yu Jian and see a city that is a little different from the highly commercial eastern cities - but probably not.

Flying into Kunming can only mean.

Questions:

- “high brow” avant garde?
- search for an international master poet?
- what is this cultural negotiation w/ the west?
- minorities (Kunming is noted for its minorities)
- women (Hai Nan) finally?
- what is editorial window of *Da Jia* (Great Master) magazine?
- Yu Jian - How has *60 Poems* been received, reviewed, translated
- how interested are you in translation?
- what aspects of composition are important to you?
- Do you, like some of the Beijing poets, use formal innovation to distance social and political dogma?
- Xi Chuan says he's paid 2,000 yuan for publishing in *Da Jia*. Is that reasonable payment?

YUAN
YOU ON
YOU WON
YOU OWE ONE
YOU AN' ME
YOU END!

Picked up at airport by Gu Qun from Foreign Affairs Division, Cultural Department of Yunnan Province. We take taxi to nice hotel and I have afternoon on my own. He says check out Yunnan Nationalities Village. He writes Chinese characters in my journal which I then show to taxi driver: “I want to go Southwest Commercial Building.”

Fifty yuan taxi out to Minorities Village, moderately interesting outdoor replication on the outskirts of the city. I managed to get a bus back into the city for 2 yuan and got off in what I thought was roughly the centre and started walking. Turned out I was within walking distance of Kunming Hotel.

Thurs 960829 Kunming

This morning I had a meeting with Yu Jian and Hai Nan that was pretty frustrating. The government interpreter, Gu Qun, was not, I could tell, doing a very satisfactory job. So I asked if I could record our session, with the notion that I could get their answers translated by someone back home. But, though the two writers agreed to the taping, indeed, encouraged it, Mr. Gu forbid it - Yu Jian, particularly, showed consternation. Thus the questions and answers were very simplistic. Every time I mentioned the name of a writer I had met earlier on my trip, Mr. Gu questioned the writers and then wrote in a notebook. I could see Yu Jian was hesitant to engage through Mr. Gu. Nonetheless, I had confirmed most of the impressions from others in Beijing about Yu Jian's attitudes.

Hai Nan is also a novelist and, I sense, more traditional — though, from looking at her photo-pose in her books she seems to be playing into a kind of soft and erotic Miss Misty representation (very Hong Kong commercial?). They both gave me books so I hope to get a clearer sense when I get home and have my colleague Shaobo Xie look at them.

The four of us plus Mr. Lee, the chief editor of *Da Jia* went for a pretty nice lunch where I tasted roasted baby silkworms. Lots of chili in the food and a great emphasis put on the medicinal value of some of the soups and condiments (since Yunnan province is known for its great variety of plants). I slipped Yu Jian my hotel information in the hopes he'll engage some friend of his who can speak English and contact me for further conversation.

960831 Saturday

Leaving Kunming this morning for Hong Kong. Pretty good visit as it turned out. Yu Jian did call me so we had another chance to meet. His interpreter, Yang Jinqing, a young man who teaches English at Yunnan University, has pretty good language skills so we were able to have more intense and valuable dialogue than the day before. We went to Yu Jian's apartment in the north end of the city and a Hani (ethnic minority) poet, Guo Bu, joined us. We were able to talk specifically about Yu's resistance to international elitism, his sense of what's important in poetry (ordinary, actual language), and, usefully, we got into his "fragmentation" (which, it turns out, is really breath phrasing). Conversation also turned to Guo Bu and senses of ethnic marginalization. He's fairly happy w/ his lot, feels honored by being recognized by Provincial Writers' Association. He writes in Hani and then translates himself into Chinese.

We talked for a couple of hours and then went for an interesting dinner at a busy, local on-the-street (literally) restaurant. Bacon, duck rind, fried tofu, stewed tofu, something that looks like ham, corn soup, noodle-tomato soup, egg rolls, and a few other things — rice last. Beer and tea. Pretty decent meal, though I'm getting tired of meat.

eating Kunming
meaning missing
letters missing
you absence makes
all day inging
ache song de
note signing
city fitting

Kunming has been a fairly easy city. Good walks within a few miles of hotel for photos and shopping for gifts. 1 of 4 days rain. Otherwise moderate summer weather (nice to be away from the steam-pots of the coast). But pollution and traffic a problem here as elsewhere.

Notebooks

Dhann Polnau

“Certain puppets,” writes Dhann Polnau, “have a curious luminosity of their own. It is as if they are ‘birdnests’ for spirit. Try as one might, there is no formula to achieve this. It seems to happen of its own accord.” Polnau’s Puppetry Arts Studio on Bloomington Avenue in Minneapolis has evolved into a regional nexus of activity for local and national puppeteers, educators, theater and music groups, and performance artists. In a 1994 *High Performance* article, Polnau discussed the activity in his space: “[it] has an open front room performance and teaching space, a back workshop/studio and an outdoor picnic area—inhabited by a wild urban snake. It has been used by groups, teachers and artists who do not have money or immediate access to space. The space has been used for a gospel group and a bluegrass band to practice in, dance and movement workshops, African drum classes and free Saturday matinee puppet shows for children.”

An Arts International residency allowed Dhann Polnau to spend an extended period in Bali and Java several years ago, studying with puppeteers there called *dhalangs*. Of his newer puppets which grew from notebook sketches (both reproduced on the following pages) he says, “Many of the puppets I create emerge from clay and/or found tree roots. When I begin, I have no idea what will happen. Others tug at me, insisting manifestation in the material world. I do not always know what the role or character of the puppet will be. I only know that this being wants to dance and live and breathe.”

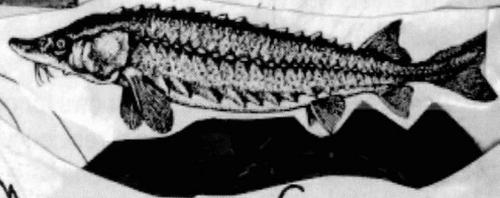
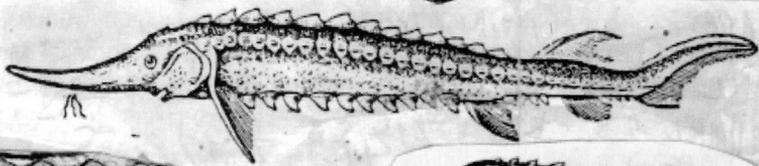


Hag

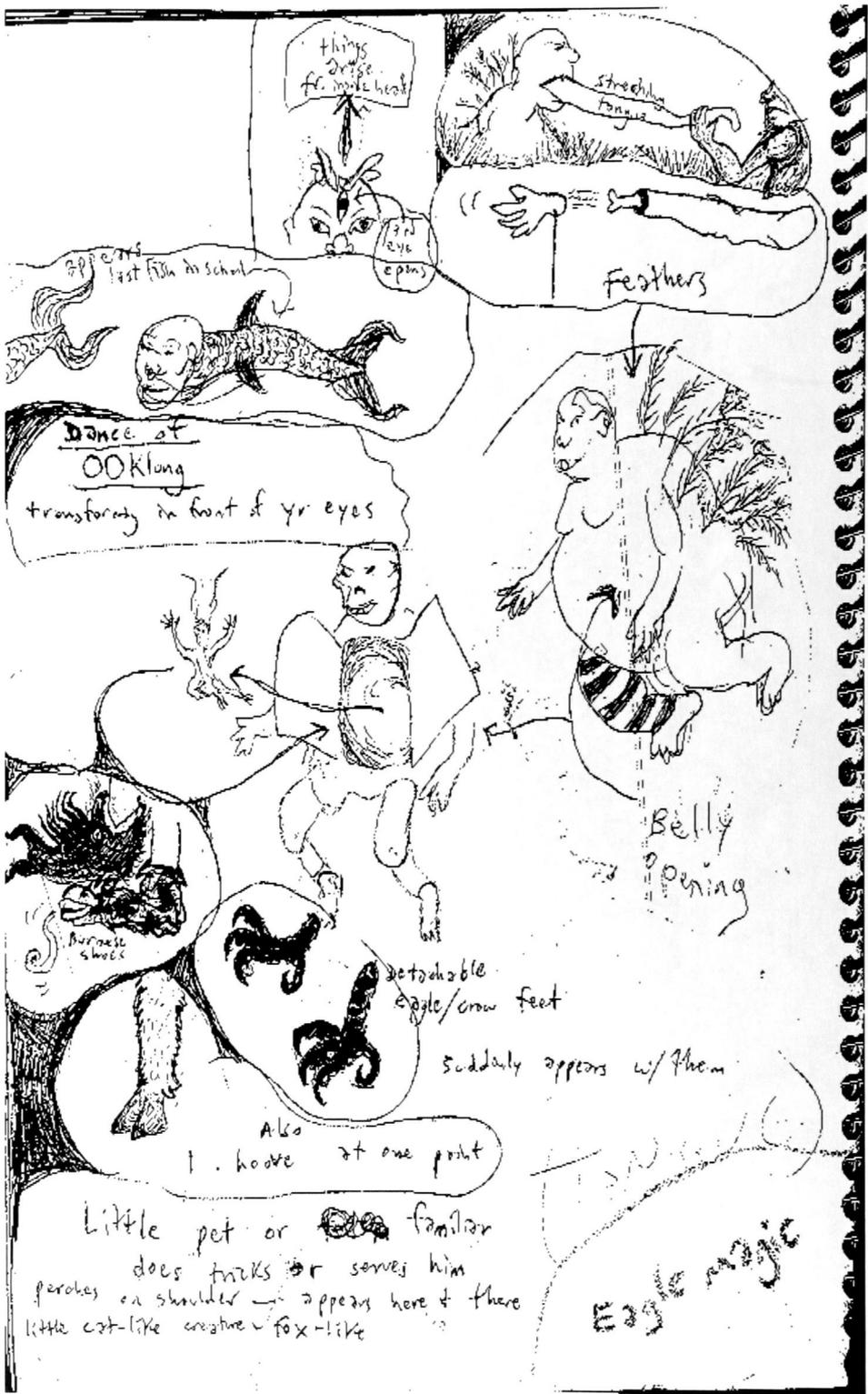
Originally "Holy Women," the Hag was a cognate of Egyptian *Heh*, a prehistoric matriarchal ruler who knew the words of power, or *hehok*. In Greek she became *Hecate*, the Queen of Hags as patron of the dead, incarnate on earth as a class of wise-women or high priestesses.

In northern Europe, the Hag was the death-goddess corresponding to *Hecate*, like the Hag of the Iron Wood whose daughter or virgin form was *Hel*. Old Norse *lag* meant a sacred grove, the Iron Wood, a place of sacrifice. *Haggas* went to chop in groves, which is what happened to sacrificial victims (dismembered for a feast). "Hags" may have been priestesses of sacrifice, like the Sphylian matriarchs who butchered for their sacred cauldrons and read oracles in entrails. Northerners colonized Scotland, where a hagg or "hag's dish" was made of internal organs.

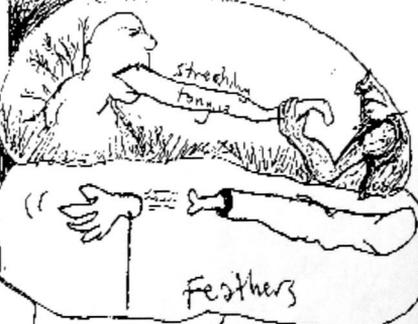
sturgeon ↗







things drip fr. nose head



Dance at OOKlung
transforming in front of yr eyes



Little pet or familiar
does tricks or serves him
perches on shoulder - appears here & there
little cat-like creature - fox-like

Eagle magic





News Flash: Tagging Death

for Vaughn

Allison Hedge Coke

My son's a tagger.
Sprays his name key all over
Santa Paula cinder block.
Caught him twice.
Once after my husband left,
once after we lost our house.
Good thing it was me.
In California
tagging is a death sentence.

An ocean away in Singapore they
hang Philippine maids without
trials, paddle taggers with canes,
but hey, when a white American teen-age boy
vandals Singapore you know the
whole-scale Americano world outcries to
protect the lad, who comes stateside
to vandal again,
film-deal sure of his place in society.

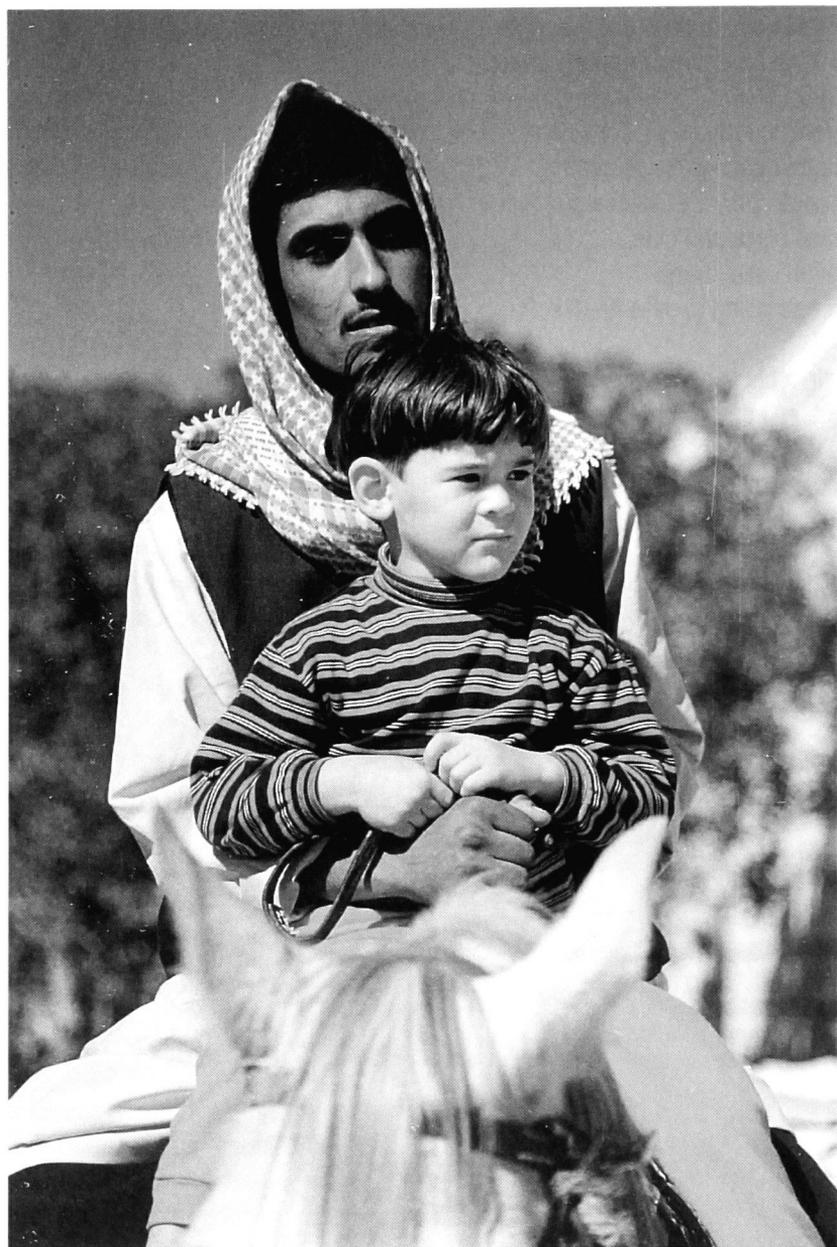
In LA two Latinos are shot, one teen-aged killed, by a guy
detectives say "looks like he belongs in England"
bragging, "I shot him because he was spray painting."
County press says good job.
Simi Councilwoman says, "This guy's a hero."
compares him to the unnamed man
from Tiananmen Square
standing in front of combat tanks with
nothing but shopping bags in his hands,

Tiananmen Square back across the water
where after the students' bloodied bodies
soaked white sheets deep red
tiger tank commanders censored outcrying public
poetry and artwork. Captured and
destroyed runs on the press.

Council says she packs a gun herself
and is so proud, so vigilante.
Yes, her hero says he will keep his gun, too.
while strolling through a county
where Graffiti Hotlines fill yellow pages
and all you have to do is call, *keep your finger
off the trigger and drop in twenty cents,*

where kids in juvie do life for writing
their name three strikes straight,
where cops spray La Colonia graffiti with
patrolman black and blue,
mid-game, Little League,
so no one's going to miss it—The Patrol Boyz crackdown.

All this in a place where the only convictions
certain aren't green wad issue.
Where the sentences are cast aside
for shooters, slashers, and
murder in the first
degree is saved for teen-age aerosol artists,
for brown-skinned boyz
crying, "Look at me,
Hurry they're coming. Look!
Look at *my* name!"



On Photographs, Fieldnotes, and Participant-Observation

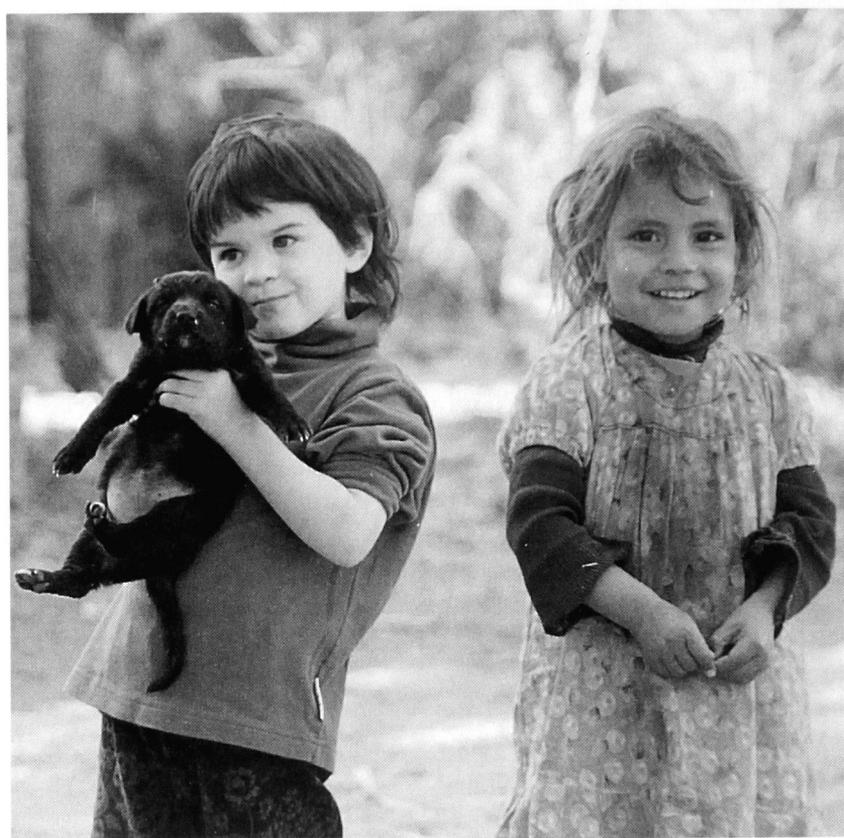
Lila Abu-Lughod

One of the peculiarities of anthropology is its claim to the method of participant-observation. Introductory textbooks present this as a straightforward technique. Critics within and outside of the discipline question what kind of duplicity the notion entails. Can some reflection on the material traces of fieldwork—those precious objects we bring back from the field in our hand luggage—give us a different way to think about that complex relationship between participating and observing? Or, more precisely, about the process of participating for the purpose of observing, analyzing, and fashioning representations for a primary audience that has not shared the participation? Can thinking about the traces of fieldwork enable us to take participant-observation seriously, as something neither self-evident nor ridiculous? Something that we might better think of in terms of varying forms of continuity with experience?

I was struck many years ago by a contrast John Berger made, in his book *About Looking*, between private and public photographs. He wrote, "The private photograph—the portrait of a mother, a picture of a daughter, a group photo of one's team—is appreciated and read in a context which is continuous with that from which the camera removed it... The contemporary public photograph usually presents as event, a seized set of appearances, which has nothing to do with us, its readers, or with the original meaning of the event. It offers information, but information severed from lived experience" (1980: 56). In this contrast, public and private are utterly distinct. Each is defined by the context of reception and described in the loaded language of warm continuity with life versus cold severance from experience.

My experiences with photography and anthropological fieldwork make me less certain about such boundaries. Photographs, like fieldnotes, are for me among the traces of being in the field. I bought my first camera just as I was about to leave for Egypt in 1978 to do my fieldwork with the Awlad 'Ali Bedouin. I have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of images of the people I have lived with (and written about) in Egypt. But I have noticed, since I had children almost six years ago, a slight shift in my treatment of my photographs.

Whenever I look at photographs from my earlier fieldwork (B.C., or before children), I see them with a double vision. I see them, like the private photographs John Berger described, as continuous with my experience: as pictures of people I knew, lived with, cared about, and in many cases, had watched grow up. This is similar to the way people in the communities I worked with view these photographs and I was sensitive to this when I chose the photographs to include in my books. Not reading English, my Bedouin friends



merely flip through the book, going from photograph to photograph and remarking on who is in there and what they are doing.

At the same time, however, I can read the same photographs as others from outside the community, those who had not shared our experiences of living together, would: as ethnographic portraits illustrating Bedouin life or, with the best of these photographs, as aesthetic renderings of that life. Besides using the photographs to illustrate my books and to lecture with, I also let them be used in introductory textbooks in cultural anthropology. Read in such contexts, the photographs are, as Berger notes, severed from their original contexts. They are public photographs conveying information.

Once I had my children with me in the field, two things happened. First, of course, I did not have as much time or any hands free for photography. So the traces of the experience in the field are there for me in the absent images—the people and activities not photographed. Second, I began placing many of the photographs from the Upper Egyptian village where I was now working not in labelled boxes and slide trays but in our family albums. The double vision with which I see them is even stronger, but weighted in the other direction. More than the photographs from my earlier fieldwork, these are private photographs because continuous with family experience, not just personal experience. They are part of family memory. For us, whether my children are in the photographs or not does not matter. If I have photographs of the children they played with, or the families we were closest to, I include them in the album, just as we include family and friends who visit us during the summers in England or who come to Thanksgiving dinner or to the children's birthday parties in New York. Some of these same photographs are also pinned up on people's walls or stuffed in old suitcases in the village in Egypt.

I do not deny that many of the photographs from this Egyptian village where we have been working for nearly six years can serve as public photographs, to be published in books and magazines to illustrate anything from sugarcane farming to women's friendships. But what I am keenly aware of, and excited about, is the way that the presence of my children in so many of these scenes of alterity disrupts the ethnographic gaze and the treatment of photographs as informational. I like having the categories of private/public, personal and ethnographic, confused not just in my treatment of the photographs but in the way they can be read by others. This is because unsettling the divide between another "culture" and the one in which such photographs are viewed embodies the kind of theoretical project I articulated in my last book, *Writing Women's Worlds* (1993a). The project was one of "writing against culture" and I will return to it after considering the more significant material trace of fieldwork—fieldnotes.

Far more often than I take photographs in the field I take notes. All of us take fieldnotes. We take them in different ways. Some used to type. Some now use computers. Some, like me, still write them by hand in notebooks. For the many years when I was working with the Awlad 'Ali Bedouins, I used the same kinds of notebooks that worked well

for me: small lined notebooks with textured plastic covers. Some were red, some green, some brown—whatever I could find at the one stationery store in Cairo that carried them. I have transported these little notebooks in my hand luggage back and forth between the countries where I have done my research, thinking, and writing. They now sit stuffed into a large plastic DHL envelope in a corner bookshelf.

These fieldnotes also confuse boundaries between public and private. They are more private than my photographs. The intimacy of the notebooks with the experience of living in the Bedouin community is most tangible in the fleas pressed between the pages. For some reason, these fleas remind me of the intimacy a Bedouin poem captures: “Don’t fear for your love/It is pressed between my eye and eyelashes.” The fieldnotes are the record of my having been a participant in other people’s lives for a while. They record what I observed, what I thought, what I understood, and what I didn’t understand. In the backs of these notebooks are urgent thoughts and feelings about myself and other parts of my life that were separate from the life I had with my Bedouin family.

The fieldnotes are different from my photographs because in the end they are doubly mediated. When choosing what to write down, as in photographing, I framed experience and depended on exposure, so to speak. But then I also had to do something to what I had written—quite a lot, in fact—before readers would be allowed to glimpse something. These tracings on paper of our observing presence in the field get turned into something for the public, what Berger called in photographs “a seized set of appearances.” Before the late 1970s, of course, anthropologists were fairly happy to fashion the public documents known as ethnographies by erasing their own presences and the participation that saturated their fieldnotes. Then came reflexive anthropology and the various attempts to find ways for anthropologists to keep themselves present in their ethnographies, to describe their participation and personal involvement in what they made public.

In my second book, *Writing Women’s Worlds*, for example, I not only placed myself in the stories I told about being in the Bedouin community but tried to recreate the immediacy of being in the field by actually reproducing conversations. This depended on more than fieldnotes. In my second fieldwork with the community in 1987, I had tape-recorded. I tried to shorten the connection between my experiences and those of the reader, hoping that in representing in the ethnography the arguments, discussions, and stories people told to me and each other, readers would have more of the confusing sense of being there. What would happen was not known in advance; that people didn’t agree was clear. Was this more like the way things happen in life—life in that community in Egypt and anywhere?

I called this strategy “writing against culture” because I was trying to fashion from my fieldnotes and tapes a representation of another community that did not turn people in it into something object-like, coherent, whole, and separate from ourselves: a culture. In a sense, I see now that I was trying to make my ethnography more continuous with my expe-

riences, closer to the private world of my fieldnotes. I had argued that we needed to find ways to write that work against the generalizing and typifying of communities that made them into distinct and alien cultures. In our own worlds, whatever objectification takes place in forms of social scientific representation is countered by what I called the discourses of familiarity—the way we talk about ourselves and our friends and family in the everyday. We know that everyone is different, that people are confused, that life is complicated, emotional, and uncertain. This counterdiscourse does not usually exist for us with regard to distant communities where all we might have is the social scientific analysis, the ethnographic description, the timeless ethnographic photograph, not to mention popular racism and political domination. I argued that this absence of a counterdiscourse produces and reinforces a sense of difference and distance—undermining anthropology's ostensible goal of working against ethnocentrism or bringing us closer to others who seem different.

In my new research, I am thinking differently about how to “write against culture.” Just as the inclusion of my children in the photographs from the field and pasting my photographs into our family album confuse the boundaries between private and public photographs, so the state of my fieldnotes for this new project will result, I think, in a book that cannot place people in Egypt in another coherent space or make them “a culture” I have observed, or “seized.”

Since 1990 I have been trying to understand something about the enormously popular national television soap operas that are so much a part of people's lives in Egypt. To understand this mass mediated popular cultural form, I have done several sorts of fieldwork. I have lived on and off in an agricultural village in the heart of the tourist area of Upper Egypt. I have tried to see how television fits into people's lives there. I have interviewed domestic servants in Cairo—stereotypical soap opera fans who move back and forth in their own lives from middle and upper class homes like the ones they see on television to their own cramped and difficult spaces in poor neighborhoods. I have interviewed directors, writers, and actors and spent time on the sets of soap operas being filmed. I have done most of this while I was also taking care of my children, aged only four months (they are twins) when I first began in the village.

My fieldnotes are very different from what they were for my Bedouin research. In this, they too are continuous with my experience. Each notebook is a different shape and color; each purchased at a different shop and a different time over a long span. There are not many of these notebooks and much is missing. If the gaps in my Bedouin notebooks were traces of the failures of my body (“Too dizzy to write today, will fill in tomorrow,” followed by many blank pages), the gaps in my current notebooks trace the presence of my children. The absences are directly linked to breastfeeding, changing diapers, playing games, breaking up squabbles, and cooking macaroni. As a mother I am, in the field, now more of a participant and less of an observer. The village notebooks are fragmentary in another way. They mention people and what they said and did. But they also describe soap opera plots and what characters said and did. The Cairo notebooks are even more fragmentary

because this “fieldwork” takes place in such varied settings. One day I will dress in my best to meet a writer at the Marriott Hotel for a tape-recorded interview. The next day I will watch a soap opera episode with a maid I have known for years. In my hand luggage I now carry not just my notebooks with their private jottings but the already public, yet just as important, clippings from newspapers and magazines (their corners curled and the paper beginning to fade), and audiocassettes of the formal interviews public figures like television directors are so used to giving. I have to trust to my suitcases the videocassettes of soap operas recorded from television.

What will come of these material traces of fieldwork, marked as they are by my children’s presences and the utter impossibility of participating in all the events where mass media touches people or of grasping what mass media means for different people in a nation-state? I am not sure. Perhaps some of the intimacy of *Writing Women’s Worlds* will be gone as I have to move in my writing between presenting the producers who seek to uplift and mold a citizenry and the less privileged farmers who sense their regional marginality and obsess over how to make ends meet. Or as I weave into this analysis material from the public fora of newspapers, magazines, and television soap operas.

At the same time, the representation of conflicts between educated cultural critics and less educated audiences, state officials and ordinary people, all within the framework of a complex nation confronting political, economic and cultural crises, would seem to prevent any of the homogenization and typification that have plagued ethnography. “The Egyptians” or “Egyptian culture” will have no place in the public document that will emerge from these fragmentary fieldnotes. In this way, the ethnography that I write will remain continuous with my experience, even if in a different way than the photographs from Egypt with my children in them, or the experiment in “writing against culture” that was *Writing Women’s Worlds*. It will bear the traces of my peculiar participations, as it carries my observations.¹ The hope is that the context in which it will be read will be affected by the content and the form. Readers who are not familiar with Egypt but who themselves know television well and think in terms of conflicts and differences among people in a nation, may not automatically read the ethnography as a timeless portrait of something alien, a set of seized appearances severed from their experience.

Is there always a sharp divide between the personal or public, that which is continuous with life and that which is severed, that in which we participate and that which we observe? Kirin Narayan’s sensitive observation about the ways all anthropologists, “native” or otherwise, are both insiders and outsiders, moving back and forth between these positions, should have already warned us against setting up such boundaries. These reflections on the forms of continuity photographs, fieldnotes, and ethnographies can have with our lives suggest other ways of thinking.

Author’s Note: Small portions of this article began life in a presentation in the session “Re-mapping the World: Shifting the Boundaries of Culture” of the Critical Dialogues Series at

the New Museum for Contemporary Art in New York. I am grateful to Jennifer Raskin for first bringing to my attention the quote from John Berger. My fieldwork over nearly twenty years has been supported by many foundations and universities to which I am grateful. My most recent fieldwork in 1996-97 was supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. It goes without saying that my greatest debt will always be to the many people in Egypt who have taken me, and now my family, into their lives.

¹ I have already written a number of articles based on this research. For example, see Abu-Lughod 1993b, 1995, 1997.

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“Back Me Up”

Mark Nowak

(1.)

**Your bartender story
reminded me of**

* *
* **Stan's** *
* *
* **Tavern** *
* *

I was surprised
my father wanted
to go along
while I shot these
photographs.

“shadow

“mirror

“the blank piece of paper

“I “went “back

**where shots (Wilson's
Union lable)
and beers
reigned supreme.**



(2.)

"rummaged *"Return*

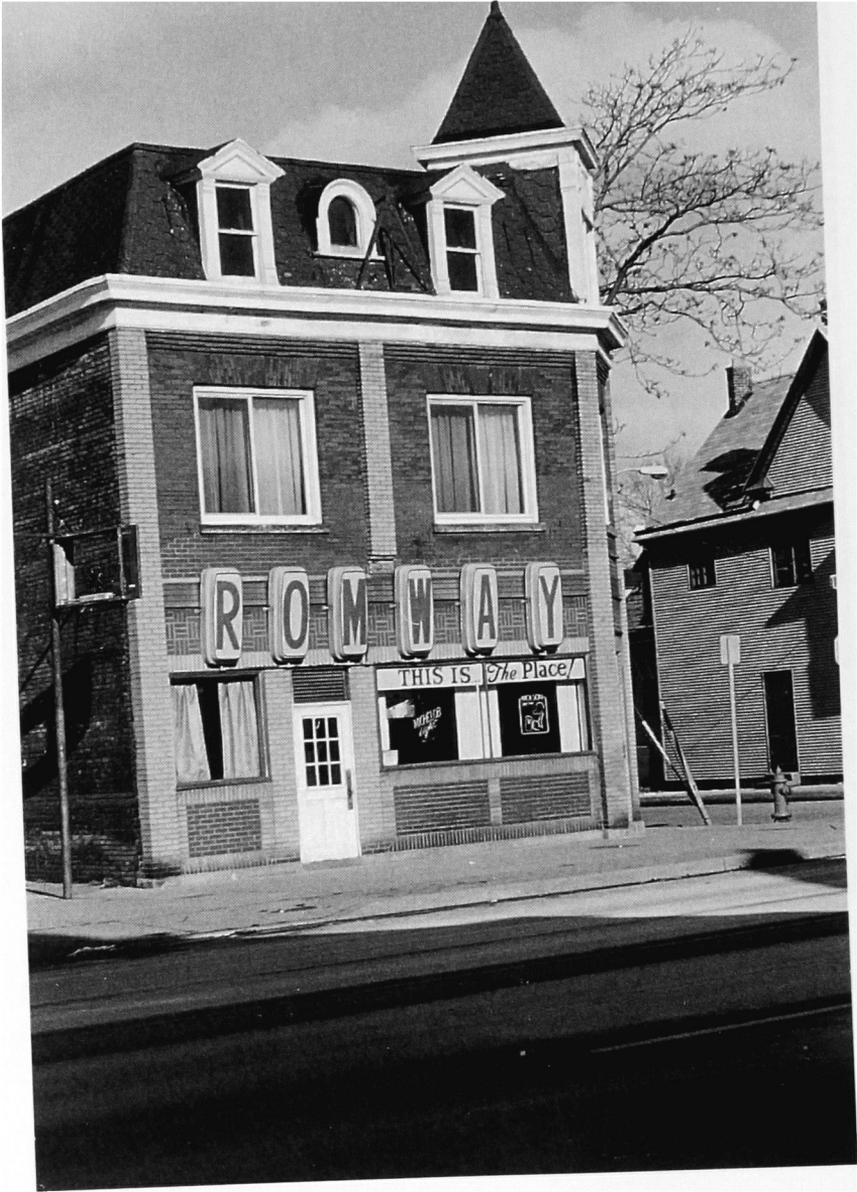
"disquieting *"light*

Your Aunt Edna,
when she first got
married, lived
just down this street.

No ice

teas or orange

blossoms here.

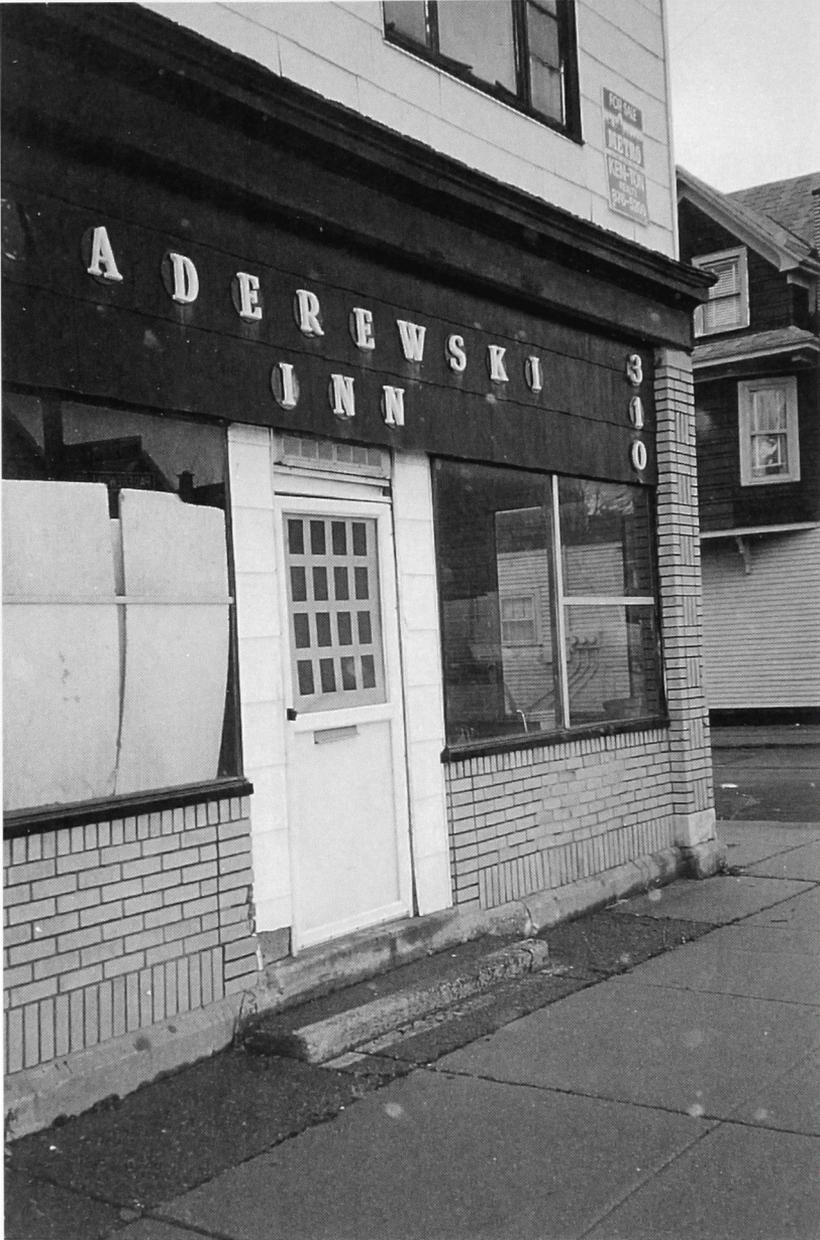


(3.)

Bartending is easy in these places.

"e "evaluation\ "eyes
"t "translate
"h "his\ "her [possessive pronoun]
"n "native\ "nationality
"o "organize
"l "language\ "life
"o "outside
"g "getting\ "getting\ "got it all
"y "[wh]y

My father, in his silver
Oldsmobile Achieva,
is just outside this frame.



(4.)

December 27, 1917:

*"I made it a point of honor
"to think about "what I am
"here to do.*

The owner
of the bar
across the street from this one
asks, "You the guy
who took
pictures here yesterday?"

**My Friend, Hank Lodowski,
had "avoiding to buy a round"
to a science.**

I try to explain
my project *"About the need
"to collect many documents.*

& he starts remembering
"the old neighborhood."



(5.)

**Since Hank never worked,
cash was always short.**

"outside of "my work

"seclusion

"something

"I "looked "through

"knowing

"reciprocated

Dad said

his father
took him here
to meet his work-buddies
from the railroad.



(6.)

**To be able to
drink yourself into oblivion**

*"intenser than
"before*

over a six

**or seven hour period
and with p-ssing off
your buddies**

**took some guts,
thought, preparation
and a system.**

This is more
my old neighborhood
than theirs,

"taken down the day before

where I came
around midnight, when
I got off from work
at the restaurant.



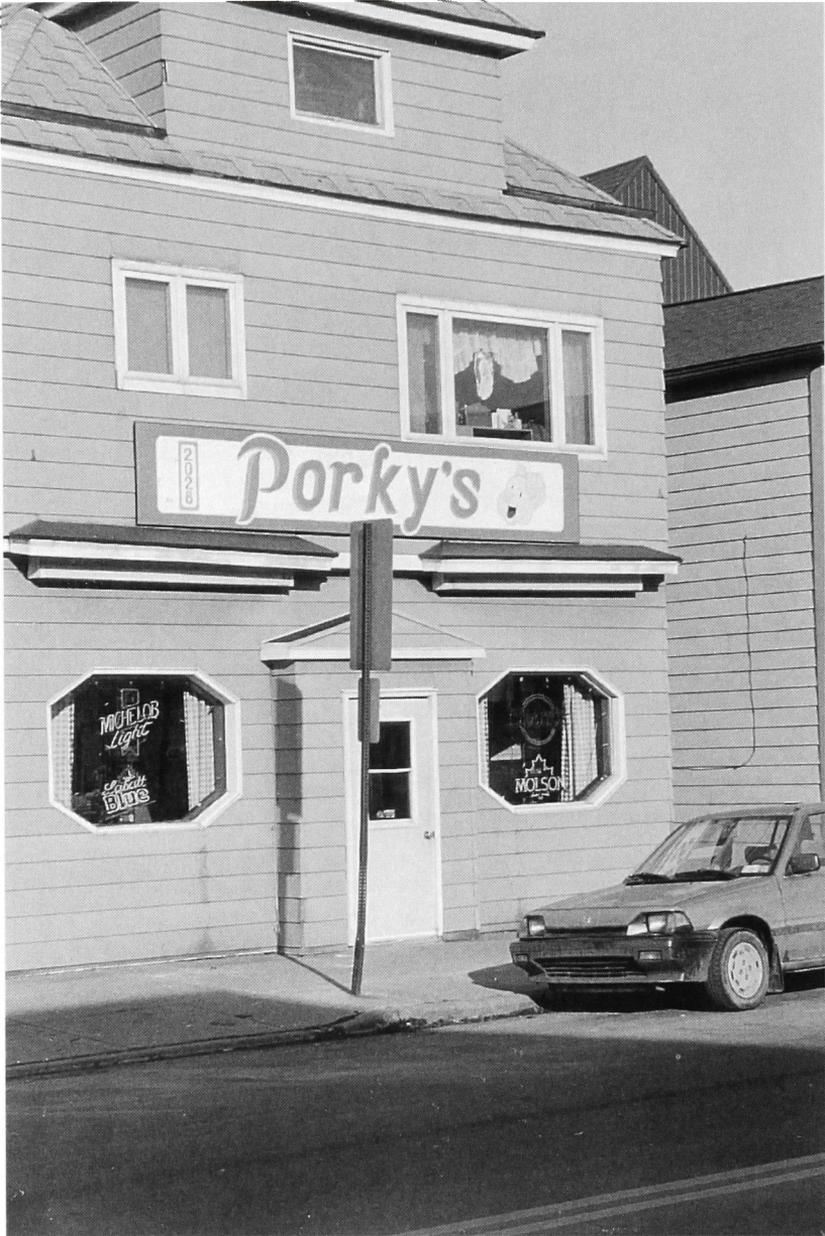
(7.)

We shot this photo
from the parking lot
of a car wash.

**to start, Sonny
(Hank's nickname)
came in early
before
most of the guys
arrived.**

Trains rolled back
behind the camera.

December 29, 1917:
*"Eyes tired (field
of vision like a screen).*



(8.)

December 27, 1917:

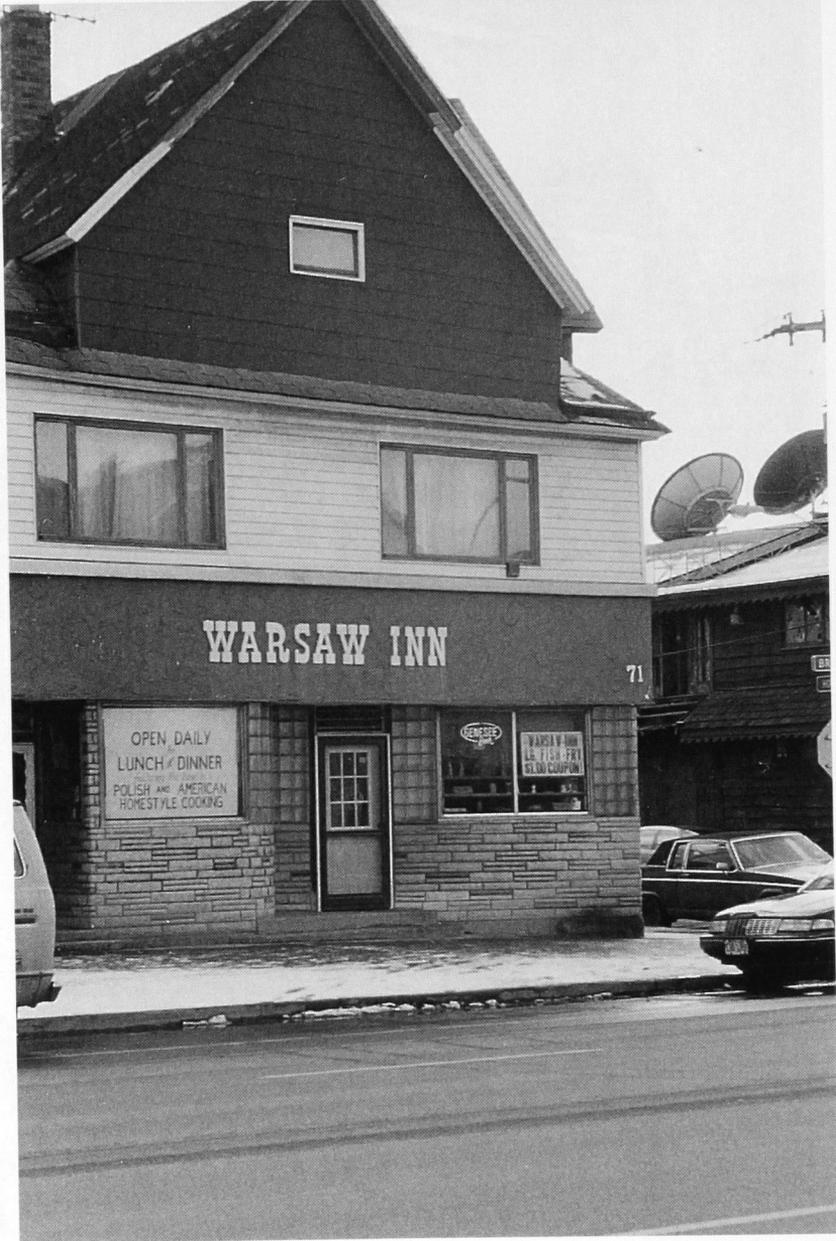
*"I have a general idea
"about their life..."*

**He bought an early
round when only
1 or 2 guys were there.**

*"...and some acquaintance
"with their language..."*

Asked inside, we
talk about our project
& have our first Labatt's Blue
of the afternoon.

*"...and if I can only
"somehow 'document'
"all this, I'll have
"valuable material.*



(9.)

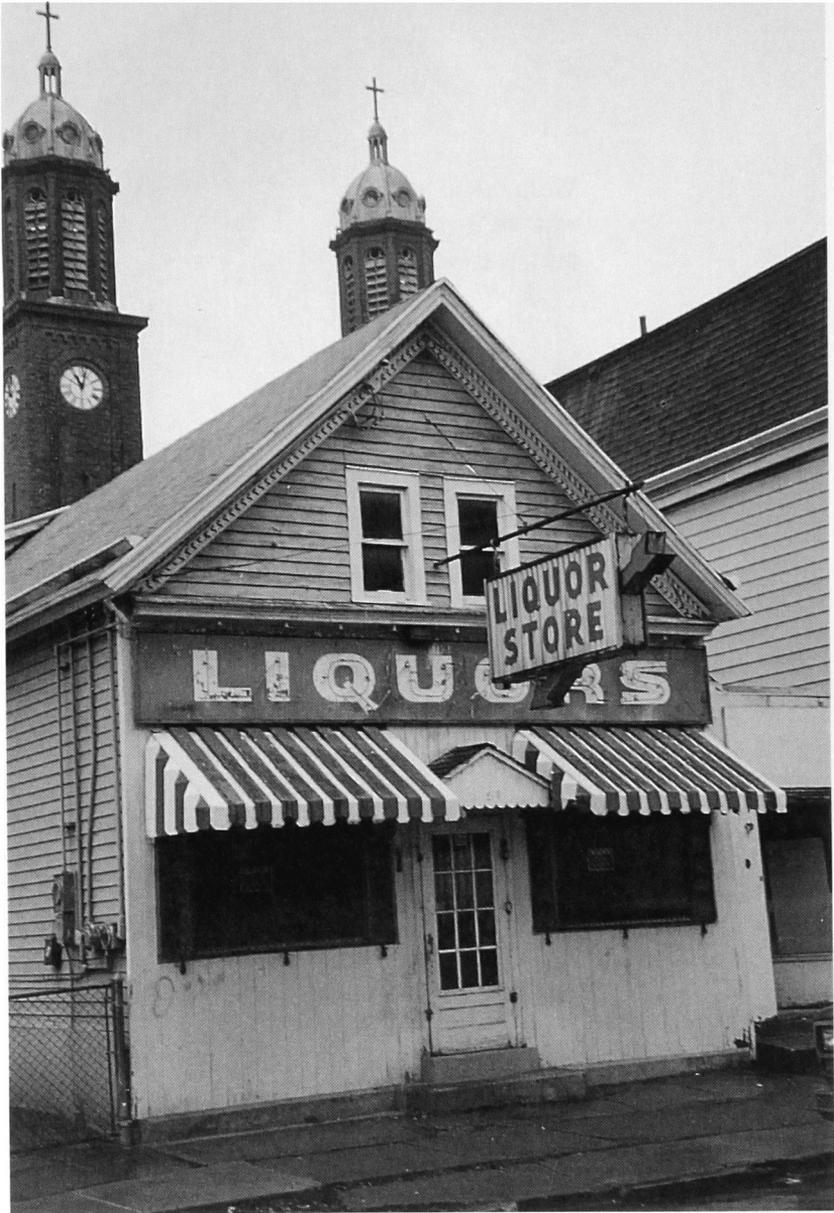
We're asked
what we're doing here
but not asked
inside.

"alternate

"social

"representations

**From then as new people
joined the group
they bought rounds.**



(10.)

**Hank payed close attention
to everyone's drinks**

Here's the church

and drank accordingly.

Here's the steeple

Almost all the bars
down this street
have closed.

Open the doors

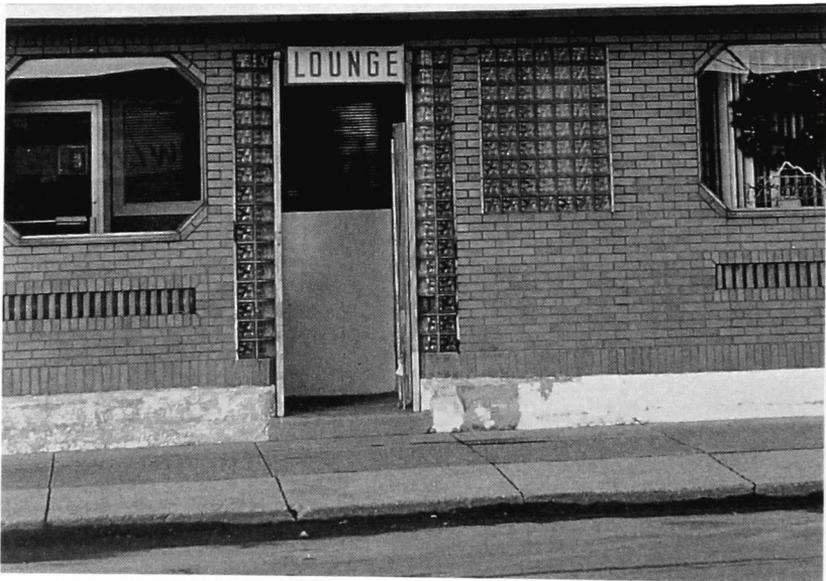
Fewer folks working
at the market, fewer
downing a couple
shots & beers at the end
of their days.

See all the people

"The clear sky

"the promise he did not keep

RAY'S



(11.)

"Return

"around

"y[our]

"story

**The trick was to have
just enough to ask for another**

I used to dance here
all the time, polka dances,
with your mother.

**and not enough to need one
when someone
finally bought a round.**



(12.)

**Sonny's famous words
for which we remember him
to this day (with fondness**

**for his ingenuity) was
"back me up".**

The film ends here. *"vanishes*

We decide to shoot some

pool & have a few more Blues.



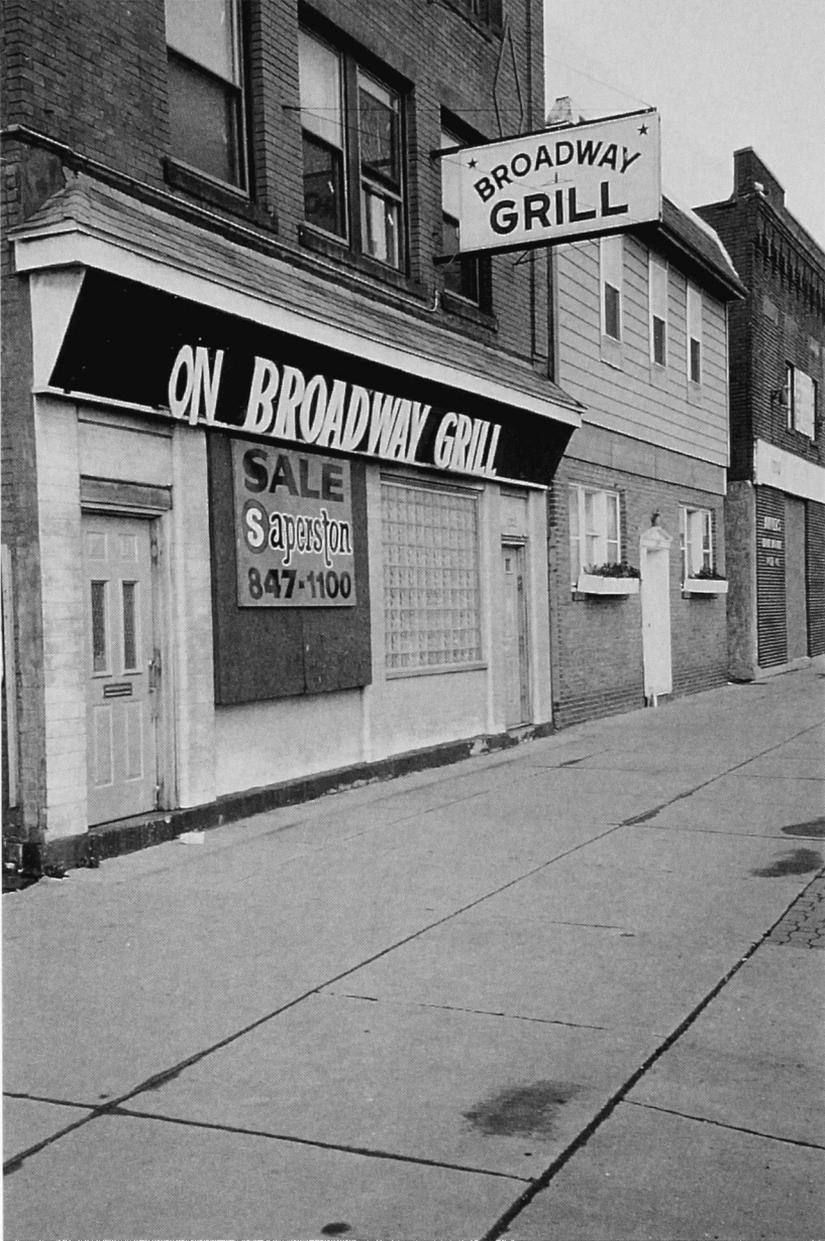
(13.)

I shot photos from this angle
on several consecutive days.

December 28, 1917:

*"(I felt weak, exhausted,
"my brain didn't function properly).
"Then disorganization..."*

**By the time the party
broke up and we were all
broke,
 Sonny
at times with great
generosity offered to buy
the remaining guys
a drink
 with the upside down
shot glasses
before him
(his back-up drinks).**



(14.)

We used to go see
Stan himself
wrestle at this place,

"paper

**Sometimes he said
goodnight and goodbuy
and stayed to polish off
his backups himself.**

"shadow

they used to wrestle
right there
in the front window.

"wandering around



(15.)

December 27, 1917:

"But the packing took

"a long time.

"After lunch I again

"rummaged in my things.

Before I left to catch
the train I took
this photograph.

Sonny was a genius.

Note: Boldface quotations are a direct transcription of a story communicated to me (via e-mail) by Ed Michalski. Underlined dates and italicized quoted materials are taken from Bronislaw Malinowski's 1917-18 journals, published (posthumously) in *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (Routledge, 1967). The dates of the journals themselves that material is taken from, December 26-31, 1917, correspond to the exact dates (in 1997) I shot the accompanying photographs and did fieldwork in Buffalo, NY. A Super-8 film of this collecting experience, *Only Ask the Sick* (directed by David Michalski), is usually show as accompaniment to any reading of this text/viewing of these photos. All other material in the text is taken from my fieldnotes and from memory. Names, as standard practice dictates, are pseudonyms.

Blue Notes

Elaine Equi

1. The sort of day where everyone, even the cashier, seems close to tears.
2. ... in the sugar cookie of the spotlight.
3. The poem — a place to hide things under the guise of revelation.
4. Just as I used to fantasize about the secret life of objects, so poetry became a way to fantasize about the secret life of words.
5. My childhood: a clumsiness so sturdy no one could knock it down.
6. The truth about Modernism: feels like everyone is still at *Finnegan's Wake*.
7. I can imagine a Gulliver tied down by perfume — flowers instead of ropes.
8. Tabloid thinking is the triumph of democracy: revenge on anyone who thought they were better than us.
9. Jars make whatever you put in them shine. Wallace Stevens knew the pleasures of jars. Jars display whereas boxes conceal and bury. The ultimate box is a coffin.
10. We forget that being a good listener also means listening to ourselves.
11. I want to read, but I'm too tired. My words keep slipping off the eyes on the page.
12. The voice I'd most like to hear right now — money's!

13. Shorn of spirit.

14. Caught a whiff of lightning right before bed.

15. On the persistence of hierarchies: "... the spirits of less important folk also went to the abode of the blessed, but did not cut much of a figure there; while commoners had no souls at all, or souls made of such poor and attenuated stuff that they perished with the body." (C.E. Vulliamy)

16. Like bells ringing in a silent movie.

17. ASH WEDNESDAY

Squeezing through
the darkest part —

even words
get left behind.

Ashes
softer than skin.

18. The *earth* is finite. But the *world* keeps getting bigger. Too big for just this planet to hold us in its spinning glance.

19. The smell of gingerbread in the hallway, and from behind a neighbor's door, the cackling of a cartoon witch.

20. Separation Anxiety: phantom pain in the phantom limb of the therapist.

21. Erotic Flashbacks: The windshield wiper swoosh of the pendulum in the movie *The Pit and the Pendulum* as it sweeps across the protagonist's stomach. The laser beam inching its way toward Sean Connery's crotch in *Goldfinger*. Both men tied down — helpless against technology, whether it be barbaric or state of the art.

22. Only music can convey walking and flying at the same time: the bass on the ground, the flute in the air.

23. An inherited trait: asking for directions and promptly forgetting them.

24. "Their minds are always busy — always decorating." (my mother on our relatives)

25. Looking at before-and-after pictures of people in heaven.

26. Finding the necessary blank spaces to wander and grow in.

27. "I" in my own hands.

Notebooks

Carolyn Erler

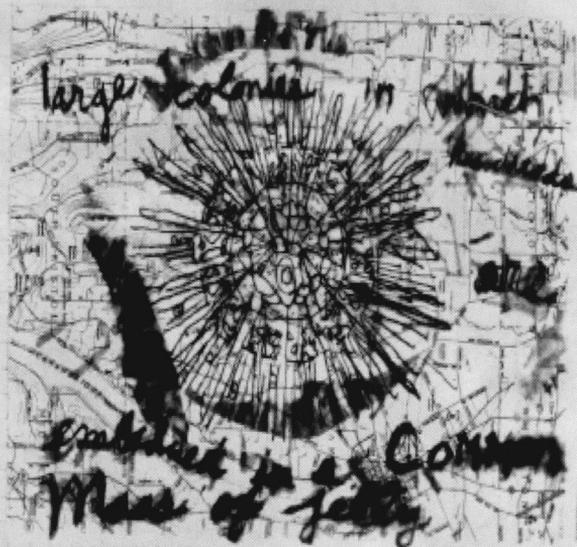
The notebook entries reproduced on pages (76-77) correspond to a group of small-scale environmental artworks conceived and installed around the area of Rochester, N.Y., from 1991 to 1992. These unobtrusive sculptures of stones and sticks gathered and assembled on-site signalled the artist's efforts to mediate a new landscape through the making of material forms that drew upon her personal responses and readings on local geology, mineralogy, microbiology, and architecture. Her work continued with small-scale built environments along the Mississippi River in Minnesota that were documented in the 1994 *Public Art Review* article, "Dwelling & Dialogue."

The more recent work (pgs.78-79) explores painting, minimalist sculpture, fragmentary text and issues in post-structuralist feminist pedagogy that the artist has engaged as a teacher and a continuing student. This series has been adapted to fit a mail-art pamphlet format that serves as one counterpart of an extensive and ongoing in-class collaborative public art project.



capsule membrane, through which the central mass extends several kinds of outgrowths: cytoplasmic sheaths surrounding the skeletal spines; reticulopods, cross-connected netlike pseudopods lacking axonemes; filopods, very thin pseudopods stiffened by one or very few microtubules. At the periphery of the organism is the cortex, a thin, flexible layer of microfilaments which may be arranged in intricate designs. The cortex is underlain by a network of reticulopods. Where the strobilium sulfate secreted spines pass through, the cortex is pushed out; at these points are filaments that apparently control the tension of the cortex and bind it to the skeletal rods. Acantharians produce small secret cells, each containing a mass of crystalline and a crystal and bearing flagella, flagellipodia, probably one trailing and the other directed forward.

In polycystines and phaeodarians, the capsule membrane contains a central mass of cytoplasm is not a thin microfibrillar net with open spaces as in the acantharians, but is made of massive organic material. The capsules are made of numerous juxtaposed plates separated from each other by narrow gaps. The poly-



cystine capsule can grow in diameter during the life
 of the organism, whether by lateral growth of the
 cells, or by both processes is not known. The phaeo-
 cystine capsule cannot increase in diameter once it
 has formed.

The polycystine skeleton is made of spines, skeletal
 elements that look solid under the light microscope,
 but which electron microscopy often reveals to be an
 intricate network of thin channels and plates in their ske-
 letons. The skeletal elements of phaeodarians are
 hollow even under the light microscope; their spines
 are hollow and the skeletal plates of many species
 have a spongy, reticulate ultrastructure. Rarely visit
 their... (be the skeletal components) of st.
 504 are secreted by some.

The organism Spumellaria is usually spherical, ellipti-
 cal, or flattened, and so, naturally, is the skele-
 ton. Some form large colonies in which hundreds of
 individual organisms are embedded in a common mass
 of cells... their exopods are grouped in a band
 that leaves the cell at that pole. The cell is
 typically egg-shaped, the shell is usually...

Parabalabia(id): the 21th generation

Carolyn Lei-lanilau

The Bounty of White Bread

or

Enitharmon's Afterglow

or *Directions on How to understand Hawaiian Poetics
within the confines (of) Contemporary English, Chinese
and French*

for Annette Majit Newhouse

AUTHOR'S NOTE: to accurately interpret the following text, please refer to Israel Kamakawi'wo'ole's recording of *Ē Ala Ē* whereby in the text of prophecy he mentions, "As far as Hawaiian music—all music is concerned—it's not especially understanding what is, but it's the *feeling, the feeling*; in Hawaiian music, a feeling."

Directions for performance: chorus—single usually bold lines from Sam Beckett's *Worstword Ho*

soloist—Ē Ala Ē entries

soloist—references to heroes

soloist—numbered entries

something==(or someting)

1. Remarkable. An old hag such as myself (I pulled in that corset. I lined my lips in four rich reds beds browns blues pinks at sunset). Not only opinionated but Too opinionated And with straight legs "that just *need* to be touched" inherited from my mother (my mathematician mother), I squeezed into that little

black skirt, black sweater with gold sequins and my low rider mules to truck into the City on a Friday night.

2. There at the gallery, I would meet my date—the well-known sculptor, Sam.

not

wrong

3. Together, we had planned an evening of attending the opening at the American Indian Contemporary Arts followed by the other opening to be followed yet by the lecture on Mina Loy (overbooking, or whaat?). It promised to be an evening almost impossible to rival what with hitting the lit-art-native scene.

TRes chic, peut-etre.

with one: 1*

4. Everything was groov'in along—my hair was championing my ego, I loved the art and Sam yakked with some of his own. Upon leaving however, when we got into Sam's car, I couldn't help but notice that Sam was not my kind of driver: he sped*. He changed lanes erratically. I tried to trick him by reminding him about the newly installed cameras that took pictures of cars that sped and ran red lights. But ultimately, so what? We were on our way to an opening, it was going to be night of FUN. As usual, his long legs and feet extended beyond mine and he raced ahead of my short imprints in the mud. No matter, we were almost *there*. We chatted. We laughed. We felt Young.

Ē Ala Ē!

5. Upon rounding the corner to enter the “space”, a crown of light dashed from beyond the glass fort which in/cased humans and furniture sculpture. For a person who has spent the last several months swimming with old ladies and grading research papers, this (“gala”) was all too stimulating: such high ceilings! So many different shades of people. *de trop tres multicolore*, So many

different color of pants, shirts, ties. *tai dou les yeux*, So many eyes; way too many **engaging** faces: I felt like a monkey swinging from vine to vine in the urban jungle. ‘*A’ole soignee*: ehvrybody like sculptures staring down everybody—as though we were all scripted for sale. Needless to mention, underneath the patina of “sous wrap”, the ghouls of *joie de vire* partied while I yearned to be stunted by the lit scene where everybody is so into their head and *les idées*. I am used to the Hawaiians who kiss, kis, kiss wet kiss and hug and laugh a lot; or the activists who are way too cool to be in the material world. AND, while I am not a great fan of the Chinese, I know the swear and charm words—what’ happening, baby? Nothing changes: the first bird out of the forest gets shot. The nail that sticks out gets hit on the head: nobody out of order, everything corrupt.

Meaning--

6. Sam took my hand and led me forward as the cramp of bodies was getting woven into every other body. Grown ups there to be noticed! plebian. Subtlety snorring itself in the mirror.

meaning!

7. AFter Sam made it known to the Art Servants who were pouring wine that he had been on the Committee for the Installation and was aware that they had given the Reception Committee “money” as he said not “funds” for the reception, we took our Cabernets into the courtyard.

--meaning

8. Visual artists do not like to discuss the process of or the meaning of their art.

Give them money to produce it and that is fine, but request a couple of sentences from them and 'a'ole, no thank you. No can do. So that's how the evening was going—tedious, if you please. And Sam had to talk to everyone in the world—which was cool. There is nothing worst than going to a place where you expect to be with friends and the person whom you've chosen to be with (you imagine Understands this) wants to bunt. I was only so glad to browse inside where the crowd was too thick. The music which according to the tempos—if I stretch my generosity—imitated jazz, but jazz it was not, and no one cared. The trio of white bread did not need to impress: the crowd was already abundantly pleased with Itself.

Ē Ala Ē!

9. Eventually, I rejoined Sam. After this or that lengthy but Fun chat with this or that artist after artist (*ka mea, ka mea, ka mea*), he announced that we were heading out for dinner. And as we were leaving, he had to say hello to yet another + more + this or that artist. Cool. I went to look at another section of the installation. I didn't give a fuck. There, in the glut of human intrigue, I wandered and wondered.

the kneeling one.

10. While it was impossible to breathe, I managed to notice the woodwork which made me think of all the *koa* carvings and wish that some *koa* furniture was in the exhibit, and of course, I was wishing hard for some 'ohana. Was I dreaming for too much? because *koa* is too hard to get. I think there's a limit to how many *koa* trees can be cut and while I was day dreaming, someone behind me began to address the back of my head in Con-versation! Poour l'estranger complet, this one gave goohd ear. And since I was hungry for a bite of complex sentences, deh buggah was like the Red Cross.*

From one now two for the twain.

11. What hooked me was the tone of the words, smooth with a bit of carriage. And while he made little or no attempt to enunciate each syllable, his *ha*, his breath of life SEEmed *very* well connected to his brain. Occasionally, he applied the appositive with frequent personal commentary. Lancelot appeared as a head above his sweated yellow and purple jacket: monsieur **seemed** intent on commitment. eh bien, qui est cet serial *Rapist*?

12. (Here I would be tempted to mention that I was minding my own business [that part is true] and I was only trying to be polite—that I had no proximate notion of the pick up. [Either I am getting smarter or I am getting more honest with my Self]) **He was picking me up And I was** participating. It reminded me of the time my mother shoplifted and not only did I conspire in the crime—in questioning her, I identified the crime.

He was *picking me up*.

Apollo galloping after Daphne; Daphne whispering, “faster.”*

I was putting one unbound foot in front of the other; my one eyeball sailing to the Aegean, l’autre skating to Atzlan.

$\bar{E}Ala\bar{E}(a)$ *ea* *ea*

The
as one
plodding twain.

13. What was ths ffeminist Doing*? I was falling in love with myself—after all: what was happening in my life? My mother was loving and missing me. Both my daughters and their boyfriends were being impressed and curious with

my *au courant* motherly, sexual, political and intellectual interests—*suprise*. The Best Poetry thing and now the book and above all—the buzz around the book more than anything else coupled with me looking so cute from Now—Me, the architect of Neo Beat, the polyrhythms creative genius and very funny: why shouldn't he be interested? I hadn't yet turned around to see what he looked like.

14. *aye*, Lonomakahiki.*(see Reflections) Los.

Chevy Chase, but far far more eccentric and sweet as a dog.

Slightly bent over which he described as his “old geezer” talents.

Lono elevated from beyond the middle and other extremes.

The sky and ocean live in his eyes. His eyes: the *he'e* squiggly all over with turtles, their mysterious universes quiet <but you must be very soft and not move to notice the turtles>.

He was very—so, not like any *haole* I know. Believe me, he sMells like a *haole* but haoles could take a lesson from Los. His body smells weren't coarse and rancid like some *haole* ; he was—as the Chinese say—”pungent”: pudgy, pungent, Peach Boy.

Apparently, his pheromones were initiating my dendrites. I didn't know This when I looked at him.

(He's *haole* boy, that First *haole* boy who loved me. *Haole* Boy Knew me like no one. *Then*, I was mad cap with that <oh so elegant, so intelligent> unusual looking flesh and blinding wheat hair Because he was so nice to me. *Haole* Boy was vuhry smart. He was funny and he would go east for college, *dung ren, c'est entendu*, of course. That was it, the end. Jeff.)

̄ E A L A E ̄

As from now three for the head.

15. And *this* guy who is I'm sure, Young Urizen, makes me feel *la'ie la'ie*, calm. And he would tell me again and again how I would feel so full, so so full. And I replied that I was the greedy insecure type but I said it in fancier words to diffuse the issue of my profound insecurity—which was named by my wonderful teacher Jack. But Neo *Haole Kane* was a Blake engraving and I believed his body without any rational procedures.

16. The tone of his voice and light behind his shoulders were the deep waters of Kanaloa, soft and pulling.

His eyes were so closely communicating it appears his third eye is the one that really propels and excites his fantasies And disappointments the most. He knows he has this third eye—that he sometimes tires of caring for and carrying—which is why he bought a tux. A tuxedo is important if you want to pretend to be bourgeoisie. Bourgeoise, Hamlet was not: he was a little island on the moon, his favorite image of himself.

The head as first said *i* *mua!* missaid.

17. Back to Sam: as One could imagine, Sam is in the ethers. Within the first twenty-four hours of our total history—and I do emphasize TOTAL history as it Was NOT entertained sequentially—nonetheless, but near the end of that time from my Portuguese mouth the words announced, “**You fuck the way you drive like you’re going out for a loaf of bread.**”

While I believed those to be excellent examples of combined metaphor and

simile, Sam *just did not understand* what I meant (I, failing [in communication] once again).

On another occasion Sam, changing his voice charmed by himself, inquired if I **“would like to put on the condom [for him]?”**

and once again from my Portuguese-Hawaiian mouth I exclaimed, **“That’s not my kuleana. What do I know about putting on a condom? Do you know how to put on pantyhose? You wanna wear a condom, put it on yourself.”**

—that part was the Chinese for sure. Later, after he had fed me a most delicious cheese omlet—and I was only slightly impressed—for the personal safety of my hormones, I told him—not that he had to fuck* me but that I had to come—

which everyone knows translates to mean “I going to ram this bowling ball in your function if I can’t.”

Finally I could say,

“Don’t more.”

and I came, simple as that.

*ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka pu ana**

18. After the opening, *apres le diner*, after the morning’s evaluation where I determined that I could at best be an *object d’art* in Sam’s highly social art-life, Sam drove me to the the BART station where I said “*A tout a l’heure.*” and never turned back.

So

from now.

19. Who needed his underkilned philosophy, permission or hurried attempt to harness a heart attack?

For to gain time.

20. Meanwhile, back in the midst of *la grande ahupua'a* (Oakland), I am once again within the routine of work: attention to detail, interpretation, discovery, contemplation, measurement, analysis followed by Theory. Everyday work. Day and night non-stop flights into interpretation. Commentary and humor.

Kalanihiapo—*aloha nō, aloha nō!*

21. While I was thinking and looking out at the backyard the telephone sprung into my wisdom and I felt naked.

What language would vomit from my mouth?

my imagination, my bicameral ancestors—

Would the words from all the languages rumble at the junction between tongue and breath?

And would I do my infamous cross-word puzzle of the languages which so far only Baldy (once in a while) or maybe Birdie (sometimes) might or could Blake draw me in *ou/or outt*?*

It is at once dangerous fun and opportunity for nightmare misunderstanding if one is caught speaking the words of one language and meaning something entirely different. REgarde: I had this repeated disaster with my recently-from-China Chinese mother-in-law. Oh I was Hawaiian in my intent, Chinese in sound but very very Portuguese in my actual delivery of the words. I remember one time I meant to say “**Tell him to call me back [on the telephone] later.**” but I was so nerved out by her own bitter nervousness that I said, “**Right now, tell him to call me back again.**” More what iz Because I'm always teetering on the angle of disaster, I'm usually too excited—*hen jie dung*—when I have a message to deliver or something (of consequence) to say: the shape of a tree or shoe will form within my mouth and like a newborn, it is There creating its own demon or domaine with little control from this body that is practiced in the art of ballet.

memo to: Lu Xun

from: Bu Yau Shu Cai “I love

you”

Time to lose.

22. So when I heard this astral sound from the little ear piece, I wondered aloud if this was my new friend. There again, I erred. In Chinese, it is monstrously common to refer to anyone as “my good friend.” As I spoke “new friend”, sheepishly and for once, I felt triumphant in finally feeling correctly Chinese and therefore, proceeded to speak in Chinese. This: all to encourage interest and excitement in ME.

23. Before I forget, it is imperative for me to footnote that I never have any trouble in Hawaiian. If I speak English or Hawaiian, if I mix them up and add the *ajinamoto* of common words or phrases in Japanese or Chinese, ‘*a’ole pilikia*: no problem. Why haven’t I ever taken this body to classical Europa? Why should I? *Hawai’i nō ka ‘oe! Na Kanaka mai ka’i nō! Pau.* What has this to do with the Practicing Language(s), global norms and in Local Literature? Listen on friend.

24. From the first day of 1997, I once again began to read and sleep with my thick complete Blake. Everyday, I was noticing this or that and finally understanding something that I didn’t get or matter to me since the last read. From every reading, punctuation became more and more inconsistent; vision more precise*.

And it was still the Makahiki, time of rest and relaxation in preparation for Lono. And so my body craved the *Kumulipo**. *Tous les jours*, everyday, *un peu de Kumulipo* (Hawaiian Creation Prayers), *un peu de Blake*: companions for eternity.

plant I am desire and I desire come inside the hole plant and fish come together
like a flag over waves fish and plant intoxicate each other live in the
sea live in uplands thrusting pulling salty whet who(le) owl lover sailor
and I have a right to come

As the soul once. The world once.

(*I ka 'ōlelo no ke ola, i ka 'ōlelo no ka make*)

27. According to my observations from studies and/or notes on Hawaiian music, it is frequently based upon the *Kumulipo*; whatsmore, if a writer commonly refers to Hawaiian place names and/or words in “creating” literature”, And is genuinely respectful of Hawaiians and Hawai/ian culture, it is inconceivable, unprofessional, disrespectful by local standards that that artist avoid and/or be naive in knowing the *mana*, power of the 'ōlelo. The only acceptable excuse for pleading ignorance is a hard local version of arrested development. Otherwise, I would further insist that it is an insult to the host culture (Hawai'i/Hawaiians) at this stage of “literary ‘Hawai’i exploration” aka “critiscism” to continue in this narcissistic endeavor/habit without educating the self—if not for anything else—for the benefit of “saving face”. While these may sound like hard words that may cause discomfort to some, but for the “common good”, the fact of the matter is that literature can not be called “literature” or “art” if it is a lie. here It is important to make a distinction: this is not to suggest that “art” and “literature” must conform to one standard. 'a'ole. From the 'Ōlelo No'eau, it is known that multiple sources, forms are not only acceptable, but necessary

'A'ohē pau ka 'ike ika halau ho'okahi"

All knowledge is not taught in the same school.

28. What this is addressing is a matter of *pono* and it seems fair to generalize

that ultimate “WE” know what this means. *Pau.*

Remember *Huan Qi*, 2 AD, China

29. Why am I writing about this as I’m sure to lose—or better yet, make friends—?

Factor into this hypothesis yet another aspect of interpretation, gender.

At best, men and women communicate poorly: Sweet Intent dying in battle.*

Worse, men believe that women want what they want and women are too scared and/or reluctant to determine exactly what they themselves independently want because this takes time and a constant re-education of one’s entire history.

Moreover, like a monk prostrate before the Divine, she has to invent new concepts as well as new constructs to get the thing to work. More time. Meanwhile, Nobody wants any woman to succeed. This is the scary but fuckin truth. Women are so p^Arogrammed to be drones. Remedy? women should determine what the secret of the queen bee is about and *hele* on!

See the attached **Sailor Ho—please come back**

Ei Nei—‘auhea! hele mai hele mai

PRODUCTS OF PARABALABIA (id)

1. A Disinfectant for screening reductive resonance.
2. Annual update on “Watch Out”—passe phrases that may appear in text or speech such as
“unmitigated gall”. If such a phrase might appear in text or speech, WATCH OUT.
3. Good-hearted friends who will tell you to shut up if you are Wrong.
4. Deep curiosity and belief that life iss GOOT.

Men are so like canoes: nice to have fun with; go for a ride in or perhaps

“Voyage-with” directed by the stars; And if you fall out the canoe, it’s fun too.
Salt wata, fresh kind: feel goohd.

30. The Family of Givens: male heads—generally white (virtual toilets re-programing old stuff, wearing new clothes, dancing vintage phrases and always smiling) in every pore of authority; fee-male (after all, women Pay. They give their bodies as infrastructure to male design; have the babies and teach the babies to both monitor and conform to the design. When there is a leak in this faulty “creation”—because it can change—do women celebrate Tuwanda as Kathy Bates so charmingly portrayed in Fried Green Tomatoes? ‘A‘ole, women go shopping.) Fe-male, supposedly the bone from Adam’s rib, suffer from bad habit syndrome.

Since habits are merely biological, racial and individual, this HABIT of bridging male agenda into product is simply not women’s *kuleana*.

WHAT is woman’s *kuleana*? Women don’t know—yet—because women have not sufficiently practiced and advanced language in such a way and degree that creates windows of vision for that are **fun** and useful.

While it is commonly understood (through not yet universal recognized) women are far more superior to men; whatsmore, that women are condemned to believe—AND accept (or accept and believe) if change does not occur—as a shameful fact that if they are not re-attached to the male rib by a certain age, they are worthless. Sure!

31. What is the link between gender, language, interpretation, Litterature?
Wellll, if the literature is to be written in English, William Blake has already set a precedent in liberating a gravity-bound form of English. As far as gender is concerned, any Blake devotee will sing eesalalee the praises of his Songs, his cosmogony (poetry/philosophy) which fevers a humanity unheard of in his days and not having reappeared since. His English is generative And like Hawaiian

reconciles sexuality and spirituality simultaneously. Hermeneuticist dream, Blake's is an Abundance in his attention to punctuation and spelling that it knot represent itself like standing water and conform to bred reptiles of the mind.

pauhana

(complete publication list to be included as footnoted text)

Reflections:

PARABALABIA(id): of or relating to ejaculations (long or short) that teach a lesson. These "insights" originate from the (id) or instinctive energy which in Hawaiian is referred to as the *na'au* that in the human body which includes the mind, heart, intestines, bowels<an emanation from the *piko* which includes the "openings" at the crown of the head, the mouth, navel and genitals>. Therefore, **PARABALABIA(id)** is an attempt to transfer/translate these "ejaculations" from the collective unconscious into an English language that demystifies some of the sources of head, heart and in some instances, groin ache.

(2) Since the nature of **PARABALABIA(id)** reflects the rhythms of the cosmos, it is not static but changes in conception and gestation of each ejaculation. Hence, similar to William Blake's own work, is generative. At this moment, **it** is in its 25th generation.

#3. What is this obsession with "one-ness"? One is not such a good-luck number. While Christianity is rigid with the quasi "standards" regarding fidelity, covert or overt, no one

follows this imposed construct/contract. Whatsmore, with both the demand and availability of the condom, consequence regarding the former “raincoat” standard appears to be an entry to liberation in that the once obsequious condom has become a metaphor for “buffet table” i.e., eat, throw the plate away; and start again. Prior to the situation facing *humanitas* regarding AIDS, “normal” unenlightened heterosexual males were reluctant not to sample a condom which to the sex activists in likened to the pill.

#4. An indication of his libido.

#10. The tome for burglars is that “You go into the place of lease resistance. If there is any difficulty which factors into time delay, Move on!” This time-honored dictum seems to be shared by male-kind: if a woman is “difficult”, be wise and do not interpret this as “challenge”. “There’s always an easier place to enter.”

#12. Malia said that the dumbshit’s afraid of me (she’s twenty-three, smart, pretty, sexy, Nice: a critic and editor). She said I’m Medusa but who said Medusa had to be Ughly. “No, you’re the Venus Medusa, the Pretty One. And instead of his dick getting hard, it turned to stone.”

#13. Commentary from Moroccan anti-feminist A. Derass,

“Why do you want to fuck ths guy?
You always like intelligent men, this guy is assshole.
What you want wi’ ths man?”

In the process of analysis, the Researcher reviewed and re-evaluated the contents of the discourse and pleased by the clarity of vision responded,

“because he’s a dumb fuck.”

To honor the science of research, it is here mentioned that entry (3) under #24 precluded the aforementioned insight

#14. the woman priest learned she was under the spell of an old proverb. Upon perceiving this, she realized the misadventure of altering a useless emotional habit implanted by the imaginary Lono which induced her to fry and eat Spam. Thus she reacted when the mortal Lono misunderstood her yet another time. At the moment she was preparing her fatal feast, her loving ‘ohana ‘aumakua bequeathed her with yet another vision: *haole ke ia ‘a’ole akua Lono*: he was just a fat white guy on the prowl. For a complete analysis on the compelling nature and consequences of eating Spam, refer to the author’s essays *ONO ONO GIRL’S HULA* to be published by the University of Wisconsin Press, fall 1997

(2) Error. This incorrect comparison pares (white) Youth with (white) Decline.

#17. The metaphor to be examined for this miniparabalabia (id) is “good”i.e., “good weather”, “a good cup of coffee” a good night’s sleep” “good luck” The Good Shepherd”; the focus of this paper is to reflect upon the metaphor “the good fuck”.

(2) *ha’ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana* is an example of mnemonics.

#21. Fortunately, this list increases with each discourse regarding PARABALABIA (id). Others to join these two names include the woman who sat next to me on the airplane and teaches English to students in Japan; the elderly woman who had written a book on the Nez Pierce, who waited next to me at the airport and replied, “Good for you!” when I told her that I had lectured on philosophy at Evergreen State College.

#24. I met a man during this period. He sang to me as we went by canoe to Uncle Sonny’s. Before lunch, both Uncle Sonny and Pratt serendaded me in the old Hawaiian way. I teased Sonny saying that they didn’t have to chant my genealogy—they didn’t know the complete history anyway and had been memorizing it the days before—it showed. I was so hilahila—and everyone thinks I’m not—I showed them! I accused Sonny of trying to seduce me because he was singing his favorite song, “Akaka Falls”. Back to the man. Oh he wasn’t anything special but when he came inside the *hale* and we listened to Kekuhi Kanahale’s new CD, something was going on with him and me—at least on the Kamehameha line. His side—I dunno. But I felt an sense of ancient connection to this *kane*—who pulled heahvee on the Port-a-ghhee side. And we—I believe—felt strong hearing Izzie’s voice. And today when I reading history, genealogy, diary entries and (as Annette would say) “what not”, I discover that this man and I are related through a marriage that occurred sometime after 1829.

(2) In the author’s complete work regarding the *Kumulipo*, the translation relied upon is rendered by “Lili’u” (0-kalani) herself. For the purposes of NOTES (and only new notes from now on—no more starting from the bahlehead rows down to the *makaikau*?) non Native Hawaiians <and it is rarely, if not almost a consequences of unfamiliarity or extreme reverence and respect>non Kanaka do not refer to “Lili’u” as such because they do not have the common exciting history of genealogy as Hawaiians: that is to infer Hawaiians are all cousins which can be documented through the archives (that is collapsing into and upon itself from lack of infrastructure). The purpose of this miniparabal <from the forthcoming series, PARABALABIA(id)> is that most non Hawaiians have no idea as to what makes Hawaiians: Hawaiians. Conversely, contemporary Hawaiians have limited or no idea also because it is not a natural human behavior to explore instinctive traits! **What can said in observations of Native Hawaiians is that they possess a talent to give good directions and an insatiable sense of patience, love and good taste. This signature of congeniality is a kind of “habit” formed exclusively by ‘ohana as a consequence of the selection**

process(es)—a molecular bonding if you will—with the combinations (*haku*) of genealogies among earthly forms (*kinolau*) through marriage, birth and/or adoption (*hānai*). Further, during observations of Native Hawaiians performing a variety of complex tasks, under multiple circumstances, historically, Native Hawaiians prove to be a most sincerely gracious people whose values are based FERVENTLY, COMPLETELY on the concept of unconditional “love” unknown, therefore, unrepresented and finally **without model for a non-Hawaiian** earthly form to recognize and identify. What does exist is the tourist version of Hah why ya! (Hawai‘i) Fortunately, the beauty of this lecture is that some of this can be learned. Marry a Hawaiian. Find out. Haave that cute Hawaiian baby—whew! find out

(3) The Researcher followed the client’s suggestion to demolish the established route of communication by creating a more “real” model as a means of “controlled” communication. While the Researcher was bewildered by the request, by the next morning as the sun made its many pathed rays to the laboratory, additional data regarding “outreach” had been factored into and updated according to detailed specifications. What follows is text that documents the communication which was produced via a beeper:

First Message interrupted by insufficient “space” for message.

“ I realize that we’re communicating on a brand new level now.
I want to be fucked as soon as possible.”

Second Message.

“Just to clarify the first message—
I don’t want a fuck that means commitment, endearment, tenderness.
Do you think you could deliver a good, hard, insincere fuck?”

As accompanying vocabulary (anthropological word wealth), the language of the observation also includes tangential practicum phrases such as “What chips and wine go with a ‘good, hard, insincere fuck’?”

#25. Forget about that stupid Leda and the duck. Who wants to fuck a duck? fuck-a-duck. fuckka dcuk duck ffk a dk. If this were a Chinese translation (*fanyu*), the Chinese maiden would be slitting the duck’s throat to save the blood for the spritual offering And also to eat while performing getting the blood out for health reasons. “Owl” is far superior to “Swan”—“crummy” swan at that. “Owl” means “Envisioning future.” “yeah, I’ll have sex with *that*” said the cuz.

#29. Do we not yet realize that the Peloponesian War(s) are past item!?

#30: Remember the walled-up wife—never heard of her, huh?

Field Report

Jack Turner

Mere expertise is not enough.

Children must be taught to reform, to say no.

Exercise is good for the soul.

So essentially what you're saying is that the proactive demands of the business require the synergy of a melting-pot mindset.

Not many employees showed up for last year's picnic.

During the test, it is important to be still but relaxed.

Try not to move.

It's simple: he's a terrorist because his father was killed.

New taxes for school improvement were voted down two to one.

Here we are at Camp Granada.

Next Christmas, residents of Holly Hill will craft their own ornaments.

Glossary: "Deliverables" are what customers wind up with.

For God's sake, all he did was have a few drinks and then drive.

Look, I just don't believe Jesus should be used to sell toothpaste, that's all.

Yes, it's true that such activity could be legally seen as signs of senility and the lack of ability to care for oneself.

Don't be long. Don't belong. Darling, be home soon.

Fragmentation becomes art only when it meets the criteria.

I am his Highness's dog at Kew.

We may need a compliance-testing tool for the year 2000.

Question: is he merely buying an entry into a catalog?

When the building blew up, some of them were working on their five-year plan.

All I want to know is who the hell has the job of taking out the trash.

The migration of birds is only generally predictable, in most cases.

Being customer-focused is fine, as long as we realize that it's also self-serving.

She was crest-fallen: "You're going back to her?"

According to yesterday's report, some of the cave-dwelling refugees had become cannibalistic.

Delay system implementation by at least nine months.

The meeting was adjourned after Mr. Fitzwater choked on his coffee.

People want meaning more than sex; the fear of chaos must be genetic.

Could he get rid of the dandruff by changing shampoos?

ESP = Expert time, Studies, and Presentations.

An Itsy-Bitsy, Teeny-Weeny, Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini.

Imagine there's no hell.

Dance.

What Ethnographies Leave Out

Roger Sanjek

In 1927 Margaret Mead prepared to write her second book on Samoa, *Social Organization of Manu'a*, published in 1930. Having completed *Coming of Age in Samoa*, which was aimed at a popular audience (and appeared in 1928), she now wanted to write a "monograph" to establish her place among "scholars." Before beginning, she read a handful of what we now call "classic" ethnographies. "I gathered together a pile of the famous monographs of the period—Rivers' *The Todas* (1906), Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), Roscoe's *The Baganda* (1911), and Grinnell's *The Cheyenne* (1923)—and studied their arrangements."¹

What Mead discovered, of course, was that the "arrangements" in each of these works was unique; there was no single all-purpose model to which her Samoa data could be affixed and a monograph result. Each author presented a mass of material, and each had designed an internal architecture upon which this mass was hung. These two properties—rich ethnographic detail and cohesive supporting framework—continue to animate the anthropological aesthetic. We applaud works that contain both, and we remain unsatisfied by those with too little ethnography (they are "thin"), or too much architecture ("too theoretical"), or those where the architecture is inadequate to carry the ethnography ("too much detail," "not well-organized").

Mead's teacher Franz Boas understood how an ethnography could fail in its architectural mission, and had told her, "The trouble with a monograph is that you need the end at the beginning, and this is true of every chapter—you need each chapter in all the others."² (Good advice for any ethnographic writer upon completing their first draft!) Boas, however, misunderstood from where the desired cohesiveness arose. He imagined it lay within "the culture" an ethnographer studied, and as his student Marian Smith explained, "Masses of data may therefore be worked over with no clear knowledge of what is to be gained at the end. A new hypothesis or a new slant [the architecture] will 'emerge' or be 'revealed' or 'suggested.' The data will 'speak for themselves.' This is the procedure by which the exponent of the natural history approach prefers to arrive at a hypothesis: they do not come from systematic thought but from systematically ordered data."³

Anthropologists long ago freed themselves from such illusions. (Even in 1927 Mead was looking for architectural inspiration outside her Samoa fieldnotes.) We know that a range of conscious and unconscious biases mold what we see, hear, and record in field notebooks; we attempt to reveal and control these biases, not deny them.⁴ We no longer pretend that there is nothing on our desk between the fieldnotes and the ethnographies we produce; we acknowledge that there are also our fieldnote indexes, a progression of writing outlines, and the substantive and theoretical writings of others that we turn to for contextualization.⁵ While writing my ethnography of a Queens neighborhood inhabited by white and black Americans and Latin American and Asian immigrants,⁶ my desk was covered with: (1) two boxes of fieldnotes in the center, with my index to them

sitting on top; (2) a succession of constantly evolving chapter and section outlines on the left, each keyed to fieldnotes, newspaper files, and cited works; (3) file drawers, maps, and piles of books and xeroxes on the right; (4) the computer screen where the ethnography was typed off to one side; and (5) the printer where it all came out on the other.

As index categories are formulated, writing outlines refined and expanded, and sources to cite reviewed and selected, we respond to the architectural pole of our aesthetic, and move away from the fieldnotes. Yet the other pole, the desire to present as much “well-hung” ethnographic detail as the architecture will bear, constantly sends us back to the notes themselves. Anthropologist Sol Tax once told a despondent M.N. Srinivas, whose Rampura fieldnotes had just been consumed in a fire, “that no social anthropologist, not even the most industrious, had ever published more than a small portion of his data.”⁷ Tax had spent six years doing fieldwork in Guatemala, and his classic ethnography *Penny Capitalism*, chocked with ethnographic detail, plus a set of articles, came no where near utilizing all his fieldnotes.⁸

Still, most anthropologists, like Srinivas with less extensive fieldwork experience than Tax, remain driven to “use” the fieldnotes they produce in a comprehensive ethnography. There are different ways to do so; some ethnographies are more through-composed and analytic, others more raw and immediate, with many fieldnote examples.⁹ All however will leave out most of the direct experience captured in the ethnographer’s fieldnotes. Indeed, they must do so if anthropology’s two-poled aesthetic is to work its power.

Yet not without regrets. There remain certain events that do not find a place within the architecture the ethnographer creates but which nonetheless remain etched in one’s headnotes. What follows are two such fieldnote accounts from my Queens research that “got lost” or severely compressed as my book’s architecture took shape and prevailed. The notes bring these episodes into my consciousness with a vividness no one else can share, but they also relate stories that may be appreciated by others. The first account finds established white residents claiming their place within the new multiethnic, multiracial reality of Queens; the second describes newcomer children who are growing up amidst it.

* * * * *

Elmhurst Baptist Church Revival

Background. Elmhurst Baptist was one of three historically white Protestant churches I studied, and I had been there six times before attending the two evening revival services described in these fieldnotes. The church was pastored by Reverend Kelly Grimsley, a white American; his wife, Susie Grimsley, was Filipina. In addition to its English language service, Elmhurst Baptist also rented space to independent Spanish, Korean, and Haitian congregations.

I took no notes during church services, but jotted down brief handwritten

scratch notes in the subway on my way home, and then typed out a full fieldnote account on the following day. Aside from correcting typographical and spelling errors, printing out abbreviations in full, and adding a few words in brackets, these and the following set of fieldnotes appear as I typed them. The section on Elmhurst Baptist Church in *The Future of Us All* (338-340) draws on my fieldnotes of 20 services and events, church programs and other documents, newspaper clippings, and an interview with two members.

18 May 1988—I arrived at the church at 7:30 on a rainy night, and the large banner announcing the revival looked wet, but still bright and white against the dark stone church walls. The revival services program, to be used for all three nights, was distributed by Earl and the other older white American usher.

[Reverend] Kelly [Grimsley] said that this was an experiment for the Elmhurst Baptist Church. There has never been a revival in the 15 years he has been here. We have a full house tonight: the Boy Scouts, the Koreans and the AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] are all meeting in the church.

The congregation and choir, about 45, included two dozen Filipinos of all ages; about ten white Americans, mainly older people, women and a few men, but one young white man and woman; three Hispanics, a woman and a couple, who are [all] regulars; Claudia, the West Indian woman, and her daughter later at the coffee hour; one man who may have been Korean; and two [other] black people, a woman who came for [a] short time and left, and a man who came late, perhaps a Haitian. Susie [Grimsley], Kelly's wife, was in the choir, which was mainly Filipino tonight, with Claudia.

The older Filipino man who is [the church's] financial secretary led off the service with four or five hymns. The hymns sung in this church are mainly American hymns, of the 19th and 20th century. Some are published by the Rodeheaver Company, and Fanny Crosby is a composer of one or two we sang. "Love Lifted Me" was sung tonight.¹⁰

Kelly asked another older Filipino man, "a friend of our church," whom I have not seen at the service before, to give the invocation prayer. When we came to the [individual] testimonies, a Filipino man sitting with the invocation leader in the front row came up to the pulpit and introduced himself as Mr. Acosta, a minister from Iloilo in the Philippines. He is visiting New York, and was told about this revival by a woman [medical] doctor, whom he pointed out in the congregation. She is a regular member, about age 50. He gave a very well presented sermon on the need to accept Christ out of love, not out of fear. It was a well-paced, measured, rehearsed presentation, with several stories interspersed in his exhortations. It was a hotter emotional tone that anything I have heard here before from Kelly, who later told me he did not know that this was going to happen.

The [volunteered] congregational prayer, which followed, opened things up. Bert [Pueblos, a Filipino member,] gave a prayer, addressing "Lord" throughout, and [he] was followed by the invocation giver; [by] a young white man with beard, who speaks with the fervor of an ex-druggie Jesus person, about how God helps him, a sinner, in his life; and by the woman doctor, who was very fervent and tight in her presentation. Three of [these] four were Filipino, and all expressed firm religious commitments on a personal

level of [a] believer's expression that is different from Kelly's more social, haven in a heartless world, liberal sermons.

Kelly said again [that] this was an experiment, "We don't know what will happen. Perhaps I am too low-key for a revival, but tonight I will start things off, tomorrow Reverend Michael Easterling of the Madison Avenue Baptist Church in Manhattan, will put us on a roll, and by Friday night we will be out of control." His sermon, as he often does, criticized the TV evangelists for their hypocrisy, and also the glitter and glitz of modern life and pursuits. His examples of the lack of witness to Christ were the Chambers murder of Jennifer Levin, the case of the East Harlem white minister accused of sexual abuse of two teenage girls, and other current cases of sexual excess or accusation. He also spoke, in his liberal tone, against the oppression in South Africa, of Palestinians in Israel, and the homeless and contrast between the rich and poor in the US. He said [that] we are divided by race, age, sex, and turf, but we are all united under God. Christ's forgiveness of our sins was a gift of God's that we don't deserve; it was given purely out of love.

The service lasted about two hours.

Afterwards, [at] the coffee hour in the church hall, I asked Kelly if he felt it unusual that the control of the service was distributed among several others (a multivocality), sort of like the early church with gifts of the spirit appearing spontaneously. He said yes to my question, and added quickly that he didn't know Reverend Acosta would speak, and that made another sermon, his [own], almost unnecessary. He also said he hoped that the Antioch [Baptist Church] choir [coming on Friday] would not tone down for a "white" audience, which black churches sometimes do. (An ironic way to see it, in that this church is not white, but half Filipino, and only a third or less white, if historically it is a white church.)

The whites here included Vic, the [church] treasurer; the woman who has lived in Elmhurst 68 years, and a woman who looks like her sister¹¹ and [who] sang a duet with the Filipino financial secretary from the choir; and the woman from the South who lives in Rego Park, and told me she doesn't like the TV evangelists, but is from the South, "So I know revivals."

Bert Pueblos sings in the choir, as do his wife, who served coffee, his two sons, and his daughter, who sat next to Susie [Grimsley]; he introduced them all to me. Bert—Kelly thanked [him] in the service—made the [revival] banner in front, and the flyers [advertising the revival].

Annefiora, the organist and choir conductor, talked with me. She has been at the church for 17 years, and has seen big changes in the congregation. She is Italian, and taught in Latin America for three-and-a-half years, so she speaks fluent Spanish. She lives in Jamaica Estates, where many "Asians" are moving in: "Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans." She teaches music at Newtown High School, and said they are getting a new principal; the current one is there just a few years, [and] is moving to Long Island. She said she finds the Asian students more disciplined, and harder working than the Latin Americans. I told her about the [New Immigrants and Old Americans] Project, and she asked about the music that is used at the Presbyterian and Lutheran churches [I am

attending], as well as about the [ethnic] composition of the congregations.

20 May 1988—It was a warm night, unlike the last two rainy evenings. Ruby [Danta, a member of my research team]¹² and I arrived at 7:30, and met Kelly and Bert standing in front waiting for the Antioch [Baptist] minister and choir to arrive. I asked how things were last night—about the same number of people [they said]. Reverend Easterling had a different approach: he gave a questionnaire, which Bert showed me, about being born again and again as a concept, rather than being born again just once as some other churches practice.

Inside people were sitting and waiting, talking with each other quietly. Claudia [the West Indian Elmhurst Baptist member] had another daughter, Pat [with] her husband and little girl, who sat with Claudia. Next to her was the regular Hispanic woman. The other regular couple, [a] Puerto Rican woman and Nicaraguan man Ruby found out, came in and sat in the same pew with a younger couple, perhaps their son and his wife (this woman was introduced to Ruby as Puerto Rican). There were about 26 Filipinos tonight, including the choir members now sitting in the congregation, and dressed casually except for the older men and the woman doctor. There were about ten elderly whites, the men in ties and jackets. The younger bearded white man came with a young black woman whom I haven't seen before.

The Hispanic woman went forward after a while, and began leading people in hymns, asking for requests. She seemed to take the initiative in getting things started, asking [Claudia's daughter] Pat to play piano, which she did, serviceably, but not very well.

Kelly then came to the altar and began, saying that the [Antioch Baptist] choir is here, having had trouble finding the church. He was relaxed, and talked about the first two nights a bit. "It's the same crowd" here, an older white man told me in the coffee hour later, and it was.

Reverend Laura Sinclair, in her mid 30s, came to the altar to join Kelly in one of the heavy wood chairs. She wore an afro, a black robe (Kelly always wears a jacket and tie), and a *kente*-styled long scarf falling on both sides of her robe. She spoke very forcefully and dramatically, with a black English accent, and very clear enunciation. Eight women in blue robes, her choir, came in and sat in the front row. One had a young child with her. Another woman, the church's youth director, also came, sitting in the congregation with her young daughter. They both came with the choir from their place, as did a young black man who came much later in the service. The pianist and choir director, a man in his mid 20s, came in with them, and asked for help in moving the piano sideways so he could face the choir standing in front, and also see the congregation.

Their first selection was a wonderful moving gospel piece, with one of the members leading the women. They all began to sway together with the gospel piano before beginning to sing. This was a rocking performance, not the watered down 'white church' presentation that Kelly feared might happen. Reverend Sinclair then welcomed everyone, and said that while people meditated on the next selection she wanted them to think about the two words, "I Can. After the choir is through, I'll be back with 'I Can.'"

[Individual] testimonies followed. An Antioch member began with a short thanks to God because her sister had had hip surgery recently, and everything was all right. Another said she wanted to just thank the Lord for this day. The young white man spoke, as did a Filipino man. The testimonies, except the white man's, were fairly short tonight. An elderly white woman finished the testimonies.

The congregational prayer was at first silent, Kelly not leading off, and then Bert spoke, but that was all. The choir followed with another hymn, much slower, featuring a solo from one of the women. They all swayed in time as she sang, as did one of the young Filipino women who seemed quite enthusiastic about the music. I looked around a couple of times while they sang. The elderly whites were less expressive than the Filipinos, but no one seemed dismayed or uninvolved in the music. Only on a few occasions did people clap with the choir, and here more Filipinos and the Hispanics and Claudia clapped than did the elderly whites.

Reverend Sinclair gave "I Can," contrasting the "I Can't" attitude as an expression of sin. "I can't go to church because I'm too tired, ... [or because] I don't have the right dress." Later, in the coffee hour, Bert's children were joking with his wife about how they had heard and said these things. She also mentioned South Africa, Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, oppression in the South, the homeless and hungry, showing the "I Can" attitude to overcome sin.

The pianist then sang "Amazing Grace" to the tune of "Danny Boy." This is an Andrae Crouch arrangement,¹³ as I asked him [about it] later in the coffee hour. He seemed surprised that I knew this, and was caught, and said that he listened to a lot of Andrae Crouch, and his arrangement was similar. Several Elmhurst Baptist members told him how much they liked his solo, including several elderly white women.

The offering was collected by the white usher, the Nicaraguan man, the (Filipino) financial secretary, and Bert.

The [Antioch] choir then began singing, in a gently but firmly bouncing manner, "Come, Come to Jesus." Reverend Sinclair said if there is anyone who has never accepted Jesus, now they could come forward, and stand with Kelly, and pledge their faith in Jesus before everyone. No one did, as the choir sang on and people began singing with them, and clapping at Reverend Sinclair's urging. Things were [now] heating up, and exciting.

Next she said, if anyone would like to renew their faith in Jesus they could come forward, but if they wanted to make that renewal in their heart, silently, and stay where they were, that was all right too. People sang another verse or so, and then an older Filipino woman in front came forward, and Kelly put his arm around her.

She was soon followed by the Hispanic woman, and then by the Rego Park white woman from the South. A few moments later, another eight older whites all came forward, including all but three men or so of the elderly whites present. The two sisters, in Elmhurst 68 years, were among them. They all stood as we sang "Come, Come to Jesus."

It was remarkable. A symbolic embrace of "their" church by the older whites, nearly all of them, in a changed congregation where they are the minority, and in a

service led by a black Baptist minister and choir. They were symbolically demonstrating both their claim to the church, and their right to be here, to be included, if they are no longer “the owners” they once might have been.

The coffee hour was very open and friendly. The Filipinos, though tending to sit together, and joking and talking together, also socialize with the others. Many, especially the elderly whites I thought, made an effort to speak with the [Antioch] choir members, and make them feel welcome, though they also tended to stick together, knowing each other and not the [Elmhurst Baptist] congregation members. It was a friendly atmosphere, with about 60 people. Again the service lasted about two hours, and I left a bit before 10 pm.

* * * * *

Public School 89 International Festival

Background. In addition to this account, I observed the PS 89 International Festival in 1986 and 1988, and my description in *The Future of Us All* (333-334) draws on all three sets of fieldnotes, programs, newspaper clippings, and an interview with school principal Cleonice LoSecco. That book also provides extensive coverage of Community Board 4’s district cabinet, and its district manager Rose Rothschild. Hsiang-shui Chen, Steven Gregory, and Milagros Ricourt were all members of my “New Americans and Old Immigrants” research team.¹⁴ For this event I took scratch notes during the outdoor activities, added to them following the classroom visits, and then typed this fieldnote account shortly afterward.

27 May 1987—I arrived at PS 89 at 8:45 am and met Chen and Steve, who both took pictures. Milagros and [her husband] Miguel arrived later, after the parade. The crowd was very much as last year, the same mix of faces among the children, and [also among] the parents, mainly women, many Hispanic and Asian—including Koreans, Chinese, and South Asians, with some Indian women in various styles of South Asian dress. There were, as last year, a few men, [and] grandparents, and this year one or two newspaper photographers, [including] one from *Newsday*.

The day was not nice, in the 50s to 60s, jacket weather, and raining very lightly through the march and dancing. The kids were lined up [to one side of the school] on Gleane Street on the sidewalk, with police barricades at the end opening on to Britton Avenue, and in midblock. An art show was posted on the fence in front of the school facing Britton Avenue. Many of the mothers were carrying food, in bags or in dishes wrapped in foil. A police “No Parking Wednesday” printed notice was fixed to the telephone poles on Britton Avenue; handlettered on it was “miercoles” [“Wednesday” in Spanish]. A printed program was passed out to the crowd by a student.

Traffic was still moving on Britton as the parade was about to begin. Yesterday at the district cabinet [meeting] Rose [Rothschild] had made a fuss about the marching through the street, calling it unsafe, but, I think, really being bothered about something

else--perhaps conflict between her and [PS 89's principal] "thick-headed Mrs. LoSecco," as she termed her, dating to when Rose was PTA president at PS 89. The public address system, as last year, was terrible--a large, long table piled with about six components, yet inaudible sound when announcements were made, and loud, but undistinct music for marching and dancing. Mr. Steven Klein, the parade coordinator, who last year was dressed in a tuxedo, today had on a cream colored double-breasted suit, ruffled shirt, large bow tie, and Borsolino hat. Steve, who thought he looked a lot like [his teacher, anthropologist] Stanley Diamond (he does), later talked with him. Klein said when he came to the school about seven years ago the kids just paraded through the street. He introduced the dances, which is one of the things he teaches in PS 89.

At 9 am the school color guard came to the middle of the cleared space on Gleane Street next to the school. A Hispanic girl carried the American flag; she was dressed in blue and purple, the western dress from the OKLAHOMA production group who later did the Virginia Reel. Behind her were three school flags carried by: a Hispanic boy with white shirt and pants, vest, and straw cowboy hat, also in the OKLAHOMA group; a black boy in the outfit of the [French] minuet dancers; and a black girl in a long dress. After a recorded "Star Spangled Banner" was played, without any singing, the color guard returned to the street and the school building, and the parade began.

The first group was boys in black pants, white shirts, white lace ties, and paper cocked hats, something like pirate hats. The girls wore long dresses. A teacher of Class 4-15 told me this group would dance the minuet; the costumes were "like the court of Louis XIV or XV." The first minuet dance class carried crayoned paper flags, of their own countries presumeably. The next class had yellow paper sashes with their home countries written, crossing their chests. These included: Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Guyana, India, China, Philippines, Ecuador, Korea, America, Laos, New Orleans, Guatemala, Honduras, Viet Nam, Italy, Cuba, Nepal, Costa Rica. One of these classes had banners: "The International Festival PS 89"; "PS 89 Bilingual Class 5-401," a Spanish language class.

As they marched out, they went right into the street, with help from the [110th Precinct] Police. Britton Avenue had been cleared of traffic; a police van blocked the Gleane Street intersection; and a police scooter, followed by a school car with p.a. system playing march music, led off the parade down Britton. It followed the same route, pretty much, as last year: turning north on Layton, coming back down Pettitt, and returning on Ithaca to Britton, where the kids went back into the school on the Hampton Street side.

Following the minuet classes, 5-411 [and] 5-401, came class 403 with several paper signs: "Computers"; "Bits and Bytes"; "We Are the World"; "Languages." Another class had a paper collage of pictures, including a large one of astronaut Sally Ride, with the message: "We Are the Future."

Class 5-409 were wearing the western outfits. One of the kids said they were for a school production of OKLAHOMA, and they would do a dance from that. This class had [a] banner with a score of flags drawn on it. They also had a sign with a world globe

and the message lettered: "Friendship."

Class 4-405 were dressed in white, with couples of boys and girls carrying flower arches about three feet across. The kids told me this was for a Filipino dance they would do. They had been rehearsing since April, a boy said. The teacher looked Filipina; I remember that her class did a Filipino stick dance last year. Actually, none of the dances or costumes from last year were repeated this year; overall the costumes were more imaginative, with more classes all dressed uniformly in costumes oriented to the dance they performed. Classes with students all in their own [various] national dress were fewer this year: perhaps half or more last year, but less than half this year.

The kids in a class dressed in blue with orange polkadot costumes—long dresses of this material for the girls--told me they would do "a Spanish dance." Another class was led by a hand-colored map of the 48 US states, with the legend: "This land is made for you and me." These kids were going to do a Swiss dance; the boys had shorts and colored suspenders.

A class in [various] home country dress, carrying handmade flags, had a banner reading: "Visit the World - Come to PS89." Another, dressed similarly, had a "Peace - Goodwill" banner. Class 2-103 banner: "Bienvenidos - Welcome." Class 2-102: "Different People from Different Countries." More paper flags were carried by the first and second grades that finished off the parade.

I saw the Korean bilingual class again, with the same teacher as last year, with most of the kids in Korean dress. I also saw a dozen or so Chinese kids, the girls in Chinese [satin] tops and pants. I talked to the teacher who said this was a bilingual first grade, just started at PS 89 in September 1986. Her children were from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China, she said, and speak Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Mandarin.

Class 1-17 banner: "We've Got the Spirit." Class 1-16: "We Are the Children of the Rainbow," wearing [various] home country dress.

A class in Greek costume, with boys wearing white skirts and white stockings (many of them; some wearing pants under the skirts) were in the middle of the march, as I had walked up to Pettit to join up there. One girl said: "We're doing a Greece dance" (sic) when [I] asked her what the costume was. Another class had a banner reading: "Celebrate our Nations", with many flags on it.

A few people along the way watched the parade. The cool and rainy-damp weather accounted for fewer watching than last year no doubt. The Little Friends preschool [children] at Ithaca and Britton were out on their front steps watching. As the parade came back into the school, the police directed traffic at the Hampton-Britton intersection, stopping cars for kids to pass, then halting the parade for the cars to continue up Hampton toward Roosevelt.

As I returned to the Gleane Street side of the school for the dances, I met Rose Rothschild. She was in a bad mood about the children having marched in the street, not on the sidewalk as she had stated they would yesterday [at the district cabinet meeting]. She said she would write "the commissioner" to complain that the 110th Precinct had allowed this to happen. She said they did not have a parade permit; she wouldn't give them one. "I'll give [outspoken Elmhurst civic activist] Ron Laney a permit, for spite, and

see what they do.”

As I arrived the dances had begun. (See program for numbers and classes.)

1. Minuet (France), had the same amazing mix of faces--Asian, Hispanic, fewer white, a few black--as last year. As they finished, a mother said “Que lindo!” [“How cute!” in Spanish]. They then left around the corner to enter PS 89 through the Britton Avenue front entrance. The p.a. system was lousy.

2. Virginia Reel (U.S.A.). The girls wore long dresses with bonnets or kerchiefs, and the boys white shirts and pants, colored vests, and straw cowboy hats. At Mr. Klein's urging, people began clapping... 1,2, 1,2. The crowd was a couple of hundred, mainly mothers, with Asian and Hispanic women predominating by far.

3. Flower Dance (Philippines).

4. Flamenco (Spain). The girls wore long, ankle length skirts, of a blue material with orange polkadots. The boys wore black pants, white shirts, and polkadot cloth sashes around their waists. The kids seemed quite well rehearsed, and one could hear the spirited foot-tapping on the streets of the flamenco rhythms.

5. Swedish Schottische (Sweden). Boys were in white short pants, with dark print colored suspenders; girls in white blouses, blue skirts, and white aprons. European peasantry looking costumes.

6. Jiffy Mixer (U.S.A.). Boys and girls were all dressed in white, with colored elbow bands, waist sashes, and (for some) bow ties for the boys. Girls in two classes wore headbands with three small feathers over their foreheads; the others had spangly red headbands. One class had blue pants and skirts instead of white like the other two.

7. Jingo Lo Ba (African). This was the biggest hit of the day, with wildly enthusiastic applause and shouts from the audience. This was Mrs. Montgomery's second grade class; she is black, and last year did a Jamaican dance. The girls were dressed in black leotards, with a tiger skin cloth miniskirt and bra-top cloth wrapper; the boys in Hausa-style overshirts and black pants. The kids danced enthusiastically, shaking their hair around, and moving their arms up and down. Mrs. Montgomery looked like a West African woman, with a blouse top and waist tie of the same cloth as the kids, black skirt, and nicely tied head cloth. The kids looked mainly Indian and East Asian, with a few Hispanics. I noticed no white or black kids, but Chen saw one black kid.

8. Children's Polka (Germany). Several kids were wearing their coats, in the cold, overcast weather. The rain had stopped but the feeling was still damp. The crowd was the same size as last year. There were many cameras, including Ellen Young, the unsuccessful [Chinese] School Board [24] candidate in 1986, who had a second grade child in PS 89; also several videocams, including one for the school, set up next to Mr. Klein's p.a. table.

9. Tamborine and Spring Dance (China). This was the Chinese bilingual first grade class. Nine girls, each with two ring-hoops with bells, were dressed in Chinese-style shirt and pants. Ten boys with wrist bells, dressed in short pants and running shoes, waited on the side as the girls danced. When they finished, four of the girls took off their costumes, shook out their pony tails, had red paper carnations put in their hair, and joined the ten boys. While they danced, the other girls stood on the sideline with the

teacher who was directing the boys and girls, and they mouthed the words to the recorded song.

10. Dei Leider Strompf (Switzerland). The girls wore white blouses, blue skirts, and white aprons; the boys white short pants, blue suspenders, and bow ties. Like their costumes, their dance was very similar to 5, the Swedish dance.

11. Miserlou (Greece). Boys and girls wore white skirts, though some boys had pants on underneath, while others wore the white stockings of the Greek outfit. The girls wore several paper flowers in headbands. The music was "Never on Sunday." Two of the teachers directing the classes in this dance were black.

12. Two long chorus lines of three classes stretched up and down the entire dance area, with six lead dancers in front; they danced quite well, while many in the two lines barely made it. They all wore black pants, white tops and gloves, white socks, cardboard bow tie and three shirt-button bibs, gold or silver spangled top hats, and carried black white-tipped canes. Very Broadway looking. They danced to "New York, New York," ending with the line, "If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere. New York, New York."

To end, Mr. Klein introduced Dr. Thomas Piro, the assistant principal. He explained that [PS 89 Principal] Mrs. LoSecco could not be here today, but International Day was an important tradition for the parents, the teachers, staff, and children. "It seems that every year it gets bigger and better. It's a day when we recognize the backgrounds of many of the children who come to our school." Most of the parents had deserted Gleane Street and the cold by now, so by the time Dr. Piro ended the audience was just about gone. Mr. Piro then thanked Mr. Klein, the staff, and the 110th Precinct. Ms. McCarthy, the other assistant principal, wound up: "Thank you for coming and giving us your children."

At that point it was 10:45. Everyone was invited into the school for food and to visit the classrooms. A man dressed in Indian shirt and pants with white vest and turban, who had been taking pictures, invited us in when we told him who we were; he turned out to be a white American teacher, caught in the spirit of International Day, I guess.

Steve, Chen, and I went to buy more film, and then returned to visit several classes. We went into the mini-school [building] to find the Chinese bilingual class where Chen talked with the teacher, a parent, some of the kids, and Ellen Young. We also ate there, and [again] next door in the Spanish bilingual first grade, 1-13A & B. The place was full of mothers, the kids having gone to the lunch room for the school lunch. We talked with the teacher who showed [us] a chart the class had made listing the birth places of students and their parents. She pointed out that most of the kids were born in the US. The parents were from: Argentina, 2; Chile, 1; Colombia, 32; Costa Rica, 2; Dominican Republic, 15; Ecuador, 16; El Salvador, 5; France, 1; Mexico, 6; Peru, 5; US, 5; Uruguay, 2.

Another teacher told us this may be the last year of such a large International Day. Next year several classes and 24 teachers will be moved to other schools in the district to relieve the overcrowding. In addition, Mr. Klein told Steve, Rose Rothschild at the Community Board [office] is giving them difficulty.

We talked with another group of first grade girls in a regular class, and Steve took their picture before we left. They were Indian, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The Chinese girl was told by another Puerto Rican girl that "Carlos" said she was his girlfriend. She said to tell Carlos to come out to the hall; she wanted to punch him in the nose.

Rakhee, the Indian girl, told me they had their "home country" food in the class today. She had brought "samosa—the triangle, you know?"

Notes

¹ Margaret Mead, "Introduction to the 1969 Edition," *Social Organization of Manu'a* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, [1930] 1969) xvi; "Introduction," *Margaret Mead: The Complete Bibliography 1925-1975*, ed. Joan Gordan (The Hague: Mouton, 1976) 3-4. See W.H.R. Rivers, *The Todas* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, [1906] 1982, 2 vol.); Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (New York: Dutton, [1922] 1961); John Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London: Macmillan, 1911); George Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Ways of Life* (U of Nebraska P, [1923] 1972, 2 vol.). Mead's information on when she read Malinowski's *Argonauts* corrects my error on p. 217 of *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*, ed. Roger Sanjek (Cornell UP, 1990).

² Mead, "Introduction," *Margaret Mead: The Complete Bibliography 1925-1975*, 3.

³ Marian Smith, "Boas' 'Natural History' Approach to Field Method," *The Anthropology of Franz Boas*, ed. Walter Goldschmidt (San Francisco: Chandler, 1959) 54.

⁴ Simon Ottenberg, *Seeing With Music: The Lives of Three Blind African Musicians* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1996); Roger Sanjek, "On Ethnographic Validity," *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*, 385-418.

⁵ Roger Sanjek, "Ethnography," *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer (London: Routledge, 1996) 193-198; Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), reviewed by Roger Sanjek, *American Anthropologist* 99:195, 1997.

⁶ *The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998).

⁷ M.N. Srinivas, *The Remembered Village* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976) xiv.

⁸ *Fieldwork: The Correspondence of Robert Redfield & Sol Tax*, ed. Robert Rubinstein (Boulder: Westview, 1991), reviewed by Roger Sanjek, *American Ethnologist* 21:929-931, 1994; Sol Tax, *Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian Economy* (Chicago: U of Chicago P [1954] 1963).

⁹ On "using" fieldnotes see Michael Agar, *Independents Declared: The Dilemmas of Independent Trucking* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986) 178-179. For a particularly vivid and effective use of direct fieldnote observations see Aidan Southall, "Spirit Possession and Mediumship among the Alur," *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*, ed. John Beattie and John Middleton (New York: Africana, 1969) 233-243.

¹⁰ See Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business, The First Four Hundred Years. Volume II: From 1790 to 1909* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988).

¹¹ A portrait of these two sisters is found in *The Future of Us All*, 230-232.

¹² Ruby Danta, *Conversion and Denominational Mobility: A Study of Latin American Protestants in Queens, New York*, MA thesis, Queens College, City University of New York, 1989.

¹³ Compare "He Looked Beyond My Fault" on Andrae Crouch and the Disciples, "Live" at *Carnegie Hall*, Light Records, 1973.

¹⁴ Hsiang-shui Chen, *Chinatown No More: Taiwan Immigrants in Contemporary New York* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992); Steven Gregory, *Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998); Milagros Ricourt, *The Creation of a Pan-Latino Ethnicity: Gender, Class, and Politics in Corona, Queens*, PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 1994.

Reviews



After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology

Edited by Allison James, Jenny Hockney and Andrew Dawson
Routledge, 1997

After Writing Culture is the latest volume in the Association of Social Anthropologists Monograph series and is based on the papers delivered at the Association's 1995 conference held at Hull University. The volume poses radical questions to all students of culture, questions concerning the varieties and potential of ethnographic representation. For instance, what is it that the ethnographer is doing when she or he relates a social system? To what end are such demonstrations aimed? How, why and for whom do we write about the world? These are epistemic questions arising from the sociology of knowledge, questions placed squarely on the discipline by the publication of this volume's namesake, *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

Writing Culture, its important companion *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Marcus and Fisher, 1986), and the Writing Culture debate that has resonated since can be seen as a glasnost for cultural studies. The writings of anthropologists, formerly judged as social science documents, were offered to a wider critical audience. Anthropologists were asked to account for the political consequences of their work. The documents were viewed as cultural artifacts themselves, a kind of poetry at times. The representations were questioned in regard to the ability to which they demonstrate honest experience instead of the authority to which they reference truth. The discipline was to be whisked from the hands of colonists, and taken up by or at least shared with the intimate authorities of fieldwork, the research participants. Conversation in the ethnographic project was brought to the fore. Critical theory swept through the discipline. A new anthropology was fostered, cross pollination and hybrid studies developed, utilizing the best tools of the ethnographic craft in combination with those of the investigative humanities. This journal, *Xcp*, is shaped in part by the ideas addressed in that debate, as are many fields of inquiry today, from popular culture studies to art history.

After Writing Culture is an acknowledgment that none of the fundamental questions of the Writing Culture debate are resolved. It is a testament to the persistence of the predicaments which confront the socially descriptive writer. *After Writing Culture* engages the debate over the "crisis" of representation ten years later, with fifteen essays using fieldwork experience to address issues in anthropological theory and practice. And now ten years after, with the essayists standing on the cooler ground, with the previous book's manifesto heat diminished, we are able to survey some new ways of reading and writing ethnography.

The tone of this book is remarkable as well for the room it opens for critiquing

Writing Culture. The book takes on the tangled issues; Gypsy identity, the caste system in India, and Japanese domestic tourism, as if to show us that while these cultural topics may be exceedingly complex, they need not be interpreted as evidence for a muddled relativism.

Declan Quigley in his essay, "Deconstructing Colonial Fictions: Some Conjuring Tricks in the Recent Sociology of India", critiques what he sees as a "theoretical impasse and self censorship"(118) resulting from deconstructionist anthropology's renunciation of essentialism. He asks, "Are we to be left commenting only on the positions from which we look, and no longer at what we look at?"(117)

Glenn Bowman in "Identifying vs. Identifying with 'the Other'", also questions what he perceives as contemporary Anthropology's celebration of radical alterity and cultural relativism. This he writes, "threatens... the idea of a common humanity" (42).

A new humanism is sought within the process of identity making. In their heightened concern with the process of cultural representation, the contributors set "about amalgamating him or herself into the culture's conceptual space" (5). Instead of studying how to best know a people, the drive in this volume is to find the best way to communicate how the other comes to know their selves through public culture. *After Writing Culture* turns on three themes: the reconciliation of the reader with the process of description, the evocation of cultural praxis, and the use of anthropology in the advocacy of human rights.

Lisette Josephides in her essay "Representing the Anthropologist's Predicament," reviews three different representational modes in recent ethnographic literature. Josephides analyses these modes as situated responses to particular ethnographic problems. Underlying all three is the question of motive. Ethnography is looked at as a communication device. The reader is brought into the hermeneutic circle of participant, ethnographer and audience.

In *The Realm of the Diamond Queen* (Tsing, 1993), Josephides sees an inspired interpretation which "covers vast expanses of epistemological and geographically discontinuous terrains"(17) to allow the ethnographic participant to influence cross cultural dialogue. Here both subject and ethnographer occupy a space in the borderlands of fragmented theory and local polity, where "one situated commentator meets another"(20) each maintaining a critical awareness of their reasons for communicating with distant readers.

In *The Last Word: Women, Death and Divination in Inner Mani* (Seremetakis, 1991) she sees a reflexive-authorial text where the writer blurs the boundaries of subject and object. This brings the reader into a personal relationship with the subject/author.

Thirdly, Josephides speaks briefly of a new kind of symbolic interaction exhibited in her own work with the Kewa people of northern New Guinea (Josephides: n.d.), which she states, relies on "understanding 'culture' through the actions and talk of its participants" directly (16). She attempts to step outside the circle, providing seemingly raw, and lengthy conversations. Here the responsibility for narration is passed to the reader.

Throughout her analysis and by her own yielding to the potential of fieldnotes to express ethnographic data, Josephides experiments. She asks, to what extent must concessions be made to the participant and the reader when redescribing lifeworlds? And in what situations are such dynamics useful?

In Nigel Rapport's chapter, "Edifying Anthropology: Culture as Conversation; Representation as Conversation," social life is viewed as a meeting of voices, "a diversity of stories that must be told together" (178). After displaying some of the multiple origins of this theory of culture and culture making, juxtaposing among others, Geertz, Tedlock, Berger and Luckmann, Nietzsche and Kant; "Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made" (182). Rapport goes on "to write conversationally"(185) about his own ethnographic experiences, introducing his fieldwork among (American) Jewish immigrants to Israel. The subject of the recorded conversations is pertinent, the making of a new settlement town into a home. This is acknowledged as a continuous effort, accomplished through justifications and conjectures expressed in the face of entropy and anomie. Rapport numbers his snippets of conversation and then displays different groupings, each highlighting overlapping strategies of homemaking. By providing this series of interpretations Rapport offers "a text that represents the conversation of social life..." while simultaneously "conversing with itself in such different voices that any one voice acts to call into the question the possible completeness of any other" (190).

Rapport's work carries on one of the central topics of the Writing Culture Debate. Utilizing Richard Rorty's distinction of two kinds of representations of social reality, he argues that anthropology is an edifying enterprise. "In the face of systemic arguments... it offers aphorisms, satires, parodies; it esteems the continuous metamorphoses of metaphor and poetry" (191).

Yet while this view of cultural knowledge seems to defy systemic analysis, *After Writing Culture* warns against a retreat into subjectivism and argues for the anthropologist's role in the advocacy of human rights.

Robert Layton's essay, "Representing People's Place in the Landscape," disputes post-modern postulations that meaning can not transcend a particular cultural language. Layton argues that representations made by indigenous Australians should be seen as implementing a certain artistic style, the choice of which is selected to "convey certain types and qualities of information" (125). Following the art historian E. Gombrich, he compares 19th Century landscape painting to topographical maps, illustrating that each medium provides details the other can not, and that each is informed by references outside the medium of representation chosen. Layton writes, "anthropological representations depends on identifying the objects to which those representations refer. Only then can we search our own cultural repertoire for corresponding representations and attempt to translate indigenous discourse into a familiar one" (127).

Such issues have practical and contemporary legal consequences. Layton writes of the Alawa people's effort to demonstrate land claims under the Australian Northern Territory Land Rights Act. A similar case was decided recently in western Canada (See - DePalma, Anthony. "Canadian Indians Win Ruling Vindicating Their Oral History," *New York Times*. 2/9/1998, p.1). In both situations the internal logic and idioms of native oral histories clashed with western legal culture.

Layton argues that when references in indigenous representation can not be found, or when they do not correspond to representational modes in the dominant culture, the courts mustn't jump to theories of indigenous irrationalism or primitive mysticism. Citing

the degree to which western culture is bound by its own constitutive rules, Layton suggests we “suspend judgment and allow sufficient cognitive space for conflicting ontologies to coexist” (128).

Once again ethnography is linked with the idea of concession. A simple thought perhaps but so crucial. We must, it seems, be reminded to listen and to accept and account for what we hear.

These are a few of the important arguments in this book, a book that at times ascends to great heights while admonishing us to stay close to the ground. And as this book critiques the contemporary language of anthropology, I as reader would be remiss if not to acknowledge a type of language that permeates this ‘critique of anthropology’ itself. The space opened for this discourse is riddled with ambiguous and redundant phrasing developed in high academic prose. As these writers nobly attempt to deliver us from a “crisis in representation” we are noticeably left with a crisis of vocabulary. Must cross cultural and multi-disciplined writer’s replace their own vernaculars as they engages in theory, mimicking the elitist prose of comparative literature just as they shed the jargon of social science? Or can we instead trust that the languages we use in the field are suitable for conveying our research among colleagues and the widening interested parties? By doing so we can restore anthropology as semantically nurturing area of human studies.

David Michalski

Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing

Hélène Cixous and Mireille Calle-Gruber

(translated by Eric Prenowitz)

Routledge, 1997

On the day that I sat down to finish this review, there was an article in *The New York Times* concerning the resistance of the Académie Française (the body in France that regulates the use of language), to the new trend of “feminizing” labels for women in various positions of power -- such as “*la médecin*” (for a female doctor) rather than the generic/masculine “*le médecin*.” Hélène Cixous holds a pivotal position in the movement called “l’écriture féminine” that has called into question, among other things, the use of masculine or feminine articles in the French language. Although she would not necessarily take a position in support of any institutionalization of such articles, one can see Cixous’ influence in the recent debates described in the *Times*. *Rootprints* contains a short essay written by Jacques Derrida, who muses on sexuality and language by way of a dream that Cixous had about “un fourmi” (an ant). In French, ant is always written with a feminine article -- “une fourmi.” Both Derrida and Cixous have questioned the deeper sexual politics inscribed through language in this way. To read *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing* is to question ways of writing about the self, and the ways that language can be used both to constrain and to liberate thought.

In this book, Cixous and her interlocutors (Calle-Gruber, Derrida, and Prenowitz) explore the thought and work of Cixous. It is, to use a phrasing typical of Cixous’ prose, an anti-autobiography, an autobiography that is not autobiography. It is more of a collaborative autobiography. The unitary self who narrates his or her life in the conventional autobiographical narrative form is very much written against by Cixous and her collaborators. This book can be read at two levels: first, for its insights into the work of Cixous; and, secondly, for its novel approach to life writing. It is a fascinating volume that delights, irritates, and surprises the reader with its play of genre and language. Cixous remains elusive, very much a moving target, in the descriptions that she and others offer of her life, work and thought. The text is not “confessional” and the reader is not privy to the details of Cixous’ everyday life. Rather, the text explores her mental life and her approach to the use of language through writing.

Cixous emphasizes three points: that she prefers poetic writing to theory, that her writing and her life cannot be distinguished, and that dialogue is essential to self-knowledge and to the self-portrait. The book, therefore, begins with a dialogue between Cixous and Mireille Calle-Gruber (a French professor at Queen’s University, Ontario) concerning Cixous’ views on writing, reading, and language more generally. These “inter views”, written with a space between the two halves of the word, take up one-half of the book. The second half of the book is composed of several shorter pieces. Following the “inter views” are appendices which include the Derrida text mentioned above and a piece of writing by Cixous on Stendhal and time. A third section, entitled “Portrait of the Writing” is authored by

Calle-Gruber, and is a text of literary criticism. The fourth section, written by Cixous, is called "Albums and Legends," and contains a family history, with photos. Finally, there are a "Chronicle," a seemingly straightforward chronology of Cixous's life with dates and events presented in "factual" form; a "Bibliography" of her publications, arranged, despite Cixous' defiance of genre, by genre; and a short final chapter written by the translator.

"Rootprints" is a translation of the French "Photos de Racine," first published in France in 1994, which has a different connotation -- literally photos or snapshots of roots, rather than prints. The image of the snapshot conveys more the overall approach of the book, with Cixous' work being approached metaphorically through a series of snapshots, views provided by others as well as by herself. One chapter in the book contains family photos, and is literally a chapter of "photos de racine" as well, although it might also be seen as one of "rootprints" if tied to an image of photo prints (rather than to "footprints"). In the case of both French and English versions of the title, a visual image is conveyed. The notion of print (as in footprint) or snapshot is one of trying to capture a moving image and keep it still for one moment. "Roots" or "racines" in the text refer to the roots of Cixous' thought as well as of her family origins.

For a reader not familiar with Cixous's writings, reading the dialogue between the author and Calle-Gruber that opens the book would be much like diving into the deep end of the pool and then trying to swim through to more shallow waters and a firmer footing. One is plunged into a way of writing and using language, which Calle-Gruber shares to some degree with Cixous, that is full of word play, metaphor, and musings. For the writer familiar with Cixous, however, this dialogue revisits many themes that have been central to Cixous' work for the past four decades, and addresses important questions about the relationship between her fiction, much of which is autobiographical, and her life. Despite Eric Prenowitz's fine translation, however, reading the dialogue between Cixous and Calle-Gruber in translation gives only a glimpse into Cixous' impressive facility with language play.

For me, the most interesting chapter was that entitled "Albums and Legends." Here, Cixous narrates her family history, her "roots." The chapter begins with the epigram "All biographies like all autobiographies like all narratives tell one story in the place of another story." Family photos are interspersed with Cixous' memories and those of her ancestors. She grew up in a Jewish family in Oran, Algeria. Her origins underscore her attention to issues of difference, language, and "the other" in her writing. Her fathers' family was from Spain and her mother's was from Germany. Her father's early death, which has been a theme in her fiction, re-emerges here as a traumatic event. Cixous describes, accompanied by photos, the important influence of her brother as her "other" in childhood and her own replication of this pattern in the birth of her own son and daughter. Lovers, husband, or friends are not mentioned in this narrative; only "blood" kin. The chapter ends in the mid-1950s, when H el ene leaves Oran for Paris and her eventual life as a Joyce scholar and leading French intellectual. Much of her early life in Oran has already been treated in fictionalized form in her first novel, *Dedans* (1969), which won the Prix Medicis. Cixous' personal narrative of family in "Albums and Legends" lacks the sentimentality and nostalgia for one's origins, the theme of what one has lost or "left behind," that characterizes much writing by migrants from colonial settings to the metropole. Yet it is, neither, a

rejection of one's origins. Cixous writes that "from 1955 on, I adopted an imaginary nationality which is literary nationality" (204). Her origins defy easy identity markings -- Jew, woman, Arab, French?

Because Cixous' form of writing defies straight chronology, preferring what she calls a more "poetic" approach, her own "autobiographical" chapter is paired with a more "factual" description of her life, entitled "Chronicle" and supplied by Mireille Calle-Gruber. Contained in this chronicle are the types of events normally included in a conventional autobiography; here they are supplied not by the autobiographer but by the biographer, the interlocutor of the author and interpreter of the work. A list of significant dates in Cixous' life are accompanied with short descriptions of meaningful events. The chronicle begins in 1948, with the death of Cixous' father (rather than the more conventional date of the author's birth), when she was 11, and ends in June 1998, the date of a planned colloquium on Cixous' work in Cerisy-la-Salle. The "Chronicle" is a curious document, part curriculum vitae and part personal history; it is unique in its blending of these two often separate ways of telling about a life. Listed are such events as Cixous' various schooling and professional appointments, her marriage to Guy Berger, the births of her children, her political involvement, the date of her first meeting with Derrida (who she tells us earlier is her "other"), and various speaking engagements.

At times, Cixous and her collaborators in this book write in labyrinthine prose that succeeds better in some cases than in others. One cannot help, however, but delight in the play of words and thought of Cixous and (during his brief appearance) Derrida during various segments in these essays. It goes without saying that this book will be valuable to those with a special interest in Cixous or in French feminist thought. But this book is also valuable for anyone who writes, and who thereby struggles with the connections between life and writing.

Deborah Reed-Danahay

Paul Metcalf

Collected Works, Volume One: 1956-1976

Coffee House Press, 1996

Multiple from the start. Almost.

Paul Metcalf's career, so beautifully and carefully presented in the three volume *Collected Works* published by Coffee House Press, began with the publication of *Will West* in 1956, and that career has been animated throughout by a search for a method of presenting historical, philosophical, psychological, and geological multiplicity. In volume one of his *Collected Works*, which covers the twenty year period from 1956 to 1976, Metcalf develops and perfects his method of presenting many at once.

Will West is, as most reviewers point out, unrealized. This short novel shows great promise, but its disparate elements never quite connect in the multiple ways that characterize the rest of his work. "Metcalf's method is not quite yet in place," as Guy Davenport says of *Will West* in his introduction to volume one of the *Collected Works* (v). Critics fault Metcalf's first book for weak characterization — *Will West* is more an archetype than a person — and a lack of motivation for the violent act at the center of the book — West's murder of a woman he just met and seduced — and these points are well taken, yet those judgments assume that Metcalf set out to write a conventional novel. For me, *Will West* doesn't quite succeed because the connections between the elements at play are simply oppositional; they haven't yet become multiple. There is a kind of binary logic at work in the oppositions between "Smoky Will West Cherokee Indian pitcher" (5) and the dominant white culture he confronts, between male and female, between east and west. In short, connections in Metcalf's first book are *between* rather than *among*.

But the power of Metcalf's subsequent work is intensely present in the italicized portions of *Will West*. These start out as internal and perhaps subconscious monologues of the putative protagonist, Will West, but soon become theaters in which Metcalf stages scenes from the history of the Cherokee people, from Hernando de Soto's sixteenth century journey from Florida to the Mississippi River and of the resultant clash with and exploitation of the native inhabitants of that area, from the relocation of the Cherokees in the nineteenth century, and from Grant's siege of Vicksburg during the Civil War. In one of the first of these interior monologues, Metcalf reveals through Will's stream of consciousness those whom I take to be the real protagonists of the novel: "*It is those of us who cannot untangle ourselves from the past that are really dangerous in the present because we are only partly here our eyes are blind because our appetites are turned inward or backward chewing on the cold remnants of our inheritance of our facts of our history to try to find who we are what we are where we came from what is the ground we stand on to whom does it belong and did it belong*" (7). *Will West* is less about Will West than about "those of us" who are unable and perhaps unwilling to "untangle" ourselves from history, personal or cultural — and "those" people populate virtually all of Metcalf's work.

Genoa, Metcalf's second book, begins with a fairly standard first-person, present-

tense narration. Michael Mills is walking home from his job at General Motors. We soon find out he has his medical degree but does not practice — a fact that is unexplained to the reader and seems to be unexplained to the narrator as well: “I am unshingled, I cannot, will not practice, and this is mysterious to me” (77). We find out he is a married man with three children, and that he lives in Indianapolis, in the house his great-grandfather built, his father lost, and his mother regained. But before we learn any of this, we learn that Mills has Melville on his mind. The novel’s third sentence is a fragment of Melville: “*When ocean clouds over inland hills / Sweep storming . . .*” (73). Is the reader to assume that these lines are rattling around in Mills’ head? It’s not likely, but certainly not impossible. The next time the first-person narrative point of view is disrupted, though, the illusion that all that occurs in *Genoa* takes place in the present-tense of the narrator’s consciousness is exposed. As Mills walks home on a cold spring day, he leans into the wind, “letting the rain and sleet beat against my face, so that forehead, cheeks, nose and chin, and the lines incised into my face, become a mask, at once me and not me, alive . . .” (74). Metcalf’s ellipses are followed by a four paragraph insert on the geological and anthropological histories of the region. I doubt any reader would continue to assume that such inserts are “part of” the consciousness of the narrator as he lives the present of his life. Something exterior to Mills’ consciousness intrudes on what could have been, up to this point, another attempt to produce a seamless narrative with a consistent point of view.

Metcalf, then, uses the narrator of *Genoa*, Michael Mills, not only as a character in the novel but as an agent of assembly within the novel. When Mills gets home, he spends a sleepless night upstairs in his attic study musing over books, letters, and memories. Metcalf takes us into the thought-life of Mills, where we observe him assembling a multiple text that moves beyond simple opposition. He draws on the narrative of his own life and that of his brother, Carl, on excerpts taken from many of Melville’s novels and letters, on medical texts about physical and mental abnormalities, on historical accounts of Columbus’ voyages and excerpts from his journals, and on discussions of genetics and reproduction drawn from *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Sex*, to name the most prominent components of this assemblage. The result is a stunning collage dynamized by a narrative that helps connect the journeys of the three central figures in Mills’ recollective text — Carl, Melville, and Columbus. But the book is not just a collage of multiple journeys: *Genoa* is primarily a collage of the journeys of the multiple, and the journey that takes place as we read the book is Mills’. He may have stayed at home, but his subjectivity roves over all these journeys.

The most extended instance of this state of psychological, literary, and historical multiplicity occurs midway in the novel. Still in his attic study, Mills fixates on a passage from *The Odyssey* in which a drowning Ulysses is saved by Leucothea. Soon, it’s Mills who is drowning. He feels an intense pressure from inside his body, followed by “an explosion, detonating somewhere in my head”:

It is like shipwreck in a storm, the ship broken and scattered, the timbers — timbers of my skull — crashing against one another in gigantic waves. The structure — the partition between left and right sides in my head — is shattered, so that there is no longer an origin of direction, of motion, and I drift randomly, with-

out form or shape . . .

(*Moby-Dick*: “. . . the breaking-up of the ice-bound stream of Time.”)

and Cosmology: “For then . . . we see that . . . all the nebulae were packed into a small region . . . years ago and moved away as though an explosion had taken place there, each with its own individual velocity . . .”

“. . . for an infinite period in the distant past there was a completely homogeneous distribution of matter in equilibrium . . . until some event started off the expansion, which has been going on at an increasing pace ever since.”

At the zero point of creation, when all is infinite mass and zero size . . . from this point — to one second — the distribution of elements occurs . . .

(190-91)

The connection between Mills' psychological shipwreck and the Pequod's is made explicit by the quotation from *Moby-Dick*, which is then connected via ellipses with two passages from Herman Bondi's *Cosmology*. What all three texts suggest is that creation, whether individual or cosmic, entails an explosion of compacted forces, a “big bang” theory of the origin of artistic expression and of the universe in which those forces are dispersed out from the “center” of the self and the universe. At that “zero point” of creativity, Mills' body “is relinquished, abandoned” as his sense of identity becomes increasingly multiple: “I am no longer Michael, but have become everyone . . . no longer compact with pain, fear, anger and contentment, I am only aware . . . / aware of explosion and outflow, of letting go and spreading apart, of vaporizing into widening space . . .” (191).

After *Genoa*, Metcalf leaves the form of the novel behind to create the kind of hybrid, multiple work for which he is best known. The final three books of volume one — *Patagoni*, *The Middle Passage*, and *Apalache* — dispense, for the most part, with even the minimal strand of linear narrative that characterizes his first two books. *The Middle Passage* brings together accounts of the Luddites' destruction of looms in the early nineteenth century, the African slave trade, and the hunting and slaughtering of whales in “A Triptych of Commodities.” *Patagoni* takes us from the south of America and the Darlington 500 car race to South America and the origins of pre-Incan civilization, then on to Detroit and Henry Ford's exploitation of the assembly line, followed by accounts of two trips by Metcalf, one to see Charles Olson in Gloucester and the other to Patagonia itself. The second section of *Patagoni*, “Tihuanacu,” is, for me, the best stretch of writing in volume one. Here, Metcalf realizes what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call the “geology of morals” by tracing the geological, mythological, and anthropological history of Patagonia:

“the earth is a great creature, the rivers the bloodvessels, the earth turns one way and another, to warm itself in the sun . . . the first man mated with a gentle doe, and deerlike, generation by generation, the race of indians evolved . . . out of the phallus of the chief came the first maize, from his head, gourds” (304). Metcalf will return to geology throughout his career as a way of literally grounding his writing in the earth. In “Beothuk,” the final section of *Apalache*, he follows the development of eastern North America from the splitting off of Pangaea due to continental drift to the uplift of the Appalachian mountains and the migration of humans across the Bering Strait and the Atlantic Ocean. In Metcalf’s work, all things, animate or inanimate, have a place and often a voice in the multiple drama of life, and *Apalache* is the most complete realization of that vision in volume one.

Coffee House Press and its editor, Allan Kornblum, have performed a tremendous and, I imagine, financially risky service by bringing out the collected works of a writer whose books are so difficult to categorize and, consequently, to market. What exactly are those books? Poetry? History? Fiction? Documentary? The answer is a resounding Yes, they are. What they are not, however, is one and only one of those possibilities. In volume one of Paul Metcalf’s *Collected Works*, we encounter a writer unwilling to do just one thing: he insists on being multiple, and that insistence makes Metcalf’s books singular and well worth the attention they require and deserve.

Paul Naylor

Paul Metcalf

Collected Works, Volume Two: 1976-1986

Coffee House Press, 1997

“Not . . . yet at times some or all”

“Not a poem, not a novel, not a history, not a journal, yet at times some or all of these,” so Paul Metcalf introduces “I-57,” the first piece in the second volume of his *Collected Works*. “Not . . . yet at times some or all” goes far towards describing Metcalf’s poetics, starting even with his first published work “Will West”: an “idiosyncratic approach to a place, a region, and to an interior and exterior life” (3). While his work is often regarded as documentary, since he draws upon broad fields of historical discourse, baseball statistics, medical tracts, and other, diverse elements as resources to construct his dynamic of “Not . . . yet at times some or all,” the descriptive term “documentary” seems too narrow, too reductive: it gives the inaccurate impression that Metcalf merely yanks material from sources instead of actually *creating* an entirely new document out of the extant language of natural, historical, and personal events. For Metcalf the document or source, the language and presence of others, operates very much in the same fashion as he describes the earth responding to seismic lurches in “U.S. Dept. of the Interior”: a document, like a solid object, “can be made to vibrate all over if it is hit hard enough. . . (191).” Each hit produces an entirely new thing — and for Metcalf, both earth and document (place and language; time and pattern) are hit very hard, indeed.

Another vantage point from which to view Metcalf’s effects: in “I-57” the journey passes first through vivid expressions of schizophrenia, as well as neurological descriptions of schizophrenic brain functions, until emerging finally to the exteriorized, fractured world of southern Illinois along Interstate 57 on which he has chosen to travel (an area around Cairo known as Egypt, but he has also chosen I-57 because the number of the interstate matches his age, the writer constituting yet another alien or fractured landscape). So, consider schizophrenia: not the schizophrenia of common parlance or folklore (typically perceived as split personality), though splits and multiplicity are very much in evidence in Metcalf’s work, but the actual symptoms of clinical schizophrenia, such as auditory hallucinations (voices) and disordered thought (“loosening of allusions”): “I hear / voices in my feet, / swarming about me like bees” (7).

Yet another: the creation of a new document from fragments of old documents, a collage or assemblage-like technique, which makes Metcalf a Kurt Schwitters of discourse. Yet the new documents in this volume are not William Burroughs-like cut-ups or exercises in the illuminatory possibilities of “pure” chance, as evocative as these techniques may be. There is in fact an overarching intelligence guiding these assemblages, an intelligence that may seem either transparent, as in “Waters of Potowmack,” inclusive, as in “Both,” or perhaps even didactic, as in “U.S. Dept. of the Interior.” In all cases, Metcalf constructs this

“loosening of allusions” with exactitude, drawing broad swatches of descriptive or narrative or expository texts into careful if irreducible patterns — broad swatches, for the most part, and not individual words or phrases (an array of which would produce a “word salad,” in the terminology of schizophrenia, such as in early Clark Coolidge). I would be tempted to regard Metcalf’s works in ways similar to his ironic description of Alaska in “U.S. Dept. of Interior”: “a series of veneers, loosely shuffled together, with air spaces instead of glue” (217), except that none of these “veneers” of discourse are “loosely shuffled together.” To those who suffer from the disorder schizophrenia is, in fact, terrifying, which makes its analogy with Metcalf’s creative process only partial, although the cut-and-paste disorder of collage also produces anxieties by seeming to undermine linear assurances of stability before asserting its own de-fragmented closure. Because of the presence of Metcalf’s controlling intelligence, there actually is a kind of glue which produces a great liberatory sense to his “loosening of allusions,” an ease with which the works in this volume shift voices, modes, genres yet produce integrated, ineffable wholes, a pleasure in the way distinctions are disregarded in favor of hitting language hard enough to make it vibrate. The quotation from Ishmael Reed used as an epigram for “Both” seems to express this: “He was so much against slavery that he had begun to include prose and poetry in the same book, so that there would be no arbitrary boundaries between them” (256).

Perhaps Metcalf is also an Abolitionist — which would constitute another scenic vantage point from which to view his ribbon of highway. At the same time, his freedom of allusion, juxtaposition, incongruity makes him an enormous ironist (“Celtics on / the Cimarron” [232], “Oklahoma / Punic” [233]) who produces a dynamic of constantly unfolding (and enfolding) evocations arising from both his technique and his New World sensibility. While the boundaries may be arbitrary, he draws and re-draws them nonetheless, as he articulates in terms of “I-57”:

first, there is time, only so much time, for so much to happen — and time is a discipline of formation, as in physiology and human growth pre- and post-natal, physical and cultural: — a phase of growth must occur and complete itself; at a specific time, in the overall pattern, or it will never happen at all (or grows as a malignancy, a gross, unending compensation)

second, in establishing the interstate as a central discipline, I have created a spine, all of whose vertebrae and ribs must observe formal proportion: which places formal limits to visits and photography, whereas literary reference, as an extension or projection of life itself may occur — but only up to a limit, there are rules here, too, beyond the first limits. . . (71)

Time is “a discipline of formation,” while place, in this case an interstate, provides “a central discipline.” There may be randomness, serendipity (the 102 year-old woman he meets on I-57, the perspectives and personalities of lecturers gathered together for a conference in Anchorage), but such possibilities are always regulated, disciplined by an interstate, a conjunction of minds, a cataclysm of civil war, the fact of volcanic or seismic disruption. In the

end, Metcalf does invent discursive histories, but only within the bounds of already existing “formal limits.”

The end result is, as I have said, highly evocative. For example, in this volume, I find that “Both” is particularly haunting with its “loosening of allusions” as the poem presents historical and psychological meanings through radical juxtapositions that can only be expressed through such cohering alignments. Anything explanatory or expository would be useless or flat. Ranging together Poe’s life, the white supremacist, cannibal nightmares of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, the accounts of voyagers discovering Antarctica to confirm the prevalent theory of an opening to the center of the earth which also inspired Poe, the eerie story of the Portuguese girl saved by the captain who must afterwards practice cannibalism to survive shipwreck (as in *Pym*) and of how the saved girl then returns with the gender and assumed name of the eaten sailor, the theatrical madness of John Wilkes Booth — with all of this “Both” embodies driven identities, doubles, interchangeabilities, theatrical masquerades with vibrant meanings that can only be expressed in the gaps between relationships:

Margaret Fuller thought “he [Poe] always seemed shrouded in an assumed character.”

. . . actor and character, role and player, interfused, the other become his own, his own another. . . (270)

Such interfusions of the other becoming his own and his own another pervade all the works in this volume: “I-57” with its transactions of neurology and travel; “Zip Odes” with its whimsical song of the states according to its names “as the Great Dispenser of Zips has preserved them” (126); “U.S. Dept. of the Interior” with its conjuncture of earthquakes, headaches, geographic elucidations, travel and intellectual ruminations, along with its designation of Alaska as “North Bolivia;” “Willie’s Throw” with its hurling from outfield to homeplate as from America to ancient Greece; “Both” with its elusiveness of personality (even digestion/absorption/transference of personality) and place; “The Island” with its sense of eruption and “the idea of green fire” (335); and finally “Waters of Potowmack” with its exchange of river and human perversity:

The railroad, mills, little industries, mines, municipalities — the very people themselves — turned their backsides to the river,

. . . and shat into it. (573)

Of course, some works in this volume are stronger or more to my taste than others. For example, while I find “Both” to be masterful, “Waters of Potowmack,” though the longest and in some respects most encompassing, seems less evocative, even linear (and the absence of the 1622 Powhatan uprising and Bacon’s Rebellion I find disconcerting). But as a whole these texts, along with “Genoa,” “Patagoni,” and other major works, provide

a unique testament of America as a collision of cultures, ghosts, tectonic enormities, histories, voices, a place Metcalf brings us to for the first time, although we've walked the ground many times before without quite seeing it in this way: Egypt in southern Illinois. Certainly, there is an eeriness and abiding sense of perversity, something about America that seems "strange," in the sense Melville intends in "Clarel" of weird, of a "holy" land of immanent meanings, although the land's significance maddeningly resists retrieval, remains inscrutable. When Boston Corbett, who earlier Metcalf informs us castrated himself over a decade before, is asked why he shot John Wilkes Booth without orders, he replies, "Colonel, Providence directed me" (565). It is that weird Providence — some sort of "strange" force of necessity with all its attendant violence embodied in such figures as John Brown, Booth, Corbett, Alaskan oilmen, Metcalf himself — which is at play. Interestingly, the strange place constructed in these poems is in the end not depressing, despite all its horrors ("... and shat into it"), perhaps because Metcalf's accumulation of dislocations opens up possibilities, allows for a sense of new location. What is so interesting is that Metcalf's layerings of concrete discourse and details seem also to produce a sense of transcendence: American Providence, so often a disaster, ends up in Metcalf's hands as a kind of divine comedy. Indeed, a passage in the introduction to "Willie's Throw" can stand as the final vantage point on both Metcalf's technique and the America he seeks to reveal: "good comedy is produced when the artist takes an absurd idea and pursues it literally and seriously, to its conclusion" (247).

* * * * *

One final note: Metcalf deserves to be read as a major American writer, and the present edition by Coffee House Press goes some distance towards making his works available to the broader readership they deserve. Coffee House needs to be congratulated, although it is not surprising that an independent literary press, and one so fine as Coffee House, would take up the task, particularly considering Metcalf's long history of publication by such presses. However, Metcalf's expansive work does not fit very well within anthologies, one of the main vehicles for introducing writers to new audiences (it's hard to visualize a piece the length of "Both" or "Genoa" in the Norton anthology of American Poetry, for example; and an excerpt would not do the trick at all). If this reviewer has a vote, I cast it in favor of Coffee House eventually producing a paperback edition.

Hilton Obenzinger

Paul Metcalf

Collected Works, Volume Three: 1987-1997

Coffee House Press, 1997

Throughout his career, Paul Metcalf has used counterpoint and dialogue to form his visionary montages. In this, the third volume of his collected works, Metcalf uses both approaches to good effect. While most all of the ten books collected contain something to commend them, *Firebird* presents counterpoint at its best, and *The Wonderful White Whale of Kansas* uses dialogue.

In *The Wonderful White Whale of Kansas*, published for the first time here, Herman Melville's life and writings are compared to L. Frank Baum's life and his book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The books of both men are placed in dialogue with one another. The prairie of Kansas speaks like the sea. The tornado is the *Pequod* finally spinning into the sea. Baum is in dialogue with Melville. Ishmael is Dorothy. You get the picture.

This playful book gives as good a glimpse at Metcalf's technique as any other. He begins by quoting the Baum book describing the wind on the prairie as like a sea:

From the far north they heard a low wail of the wind, and Uncle Henry and Dorothy could see where the long grass bowed in waves before the coming storm. There now came a sharp whistling in the air from the south, and as they turned their eyes that way, they saw ripples in the grass coming from that direction also. (515)

The sea-like imagery is rampant here: waves, ripples and the open directions — north, south, east and west. In case we've missed it, Metcalf quickly brings in an observation from Charles Olson that the plains are "half sea, half land." The sea and the prairie, the settings of Melville's and Baum's classics, are linked. This is the beginning of a net that will encircle details of both these men's lives and writings.

In the next sections the rocking of Dorothy's house in the wind is compared to concentric circles carrying "the smallest chip of the *Pequod* out of sight" (515). The tornado is the disaster is the shipwreck. In both cases we have the whirling circles. Does the similarity end there? Is there more to find? How "deep" does it go?

Before these questions can get answered, we get another: As the sea covers the *Pequod*, so sleep comes over Dorothy in her spinning house. How deep does this one go? As with all the others, you can take your pick — from not far to all the way. Metcalf does not answer for us. Comparisons accumulate until their weight is too much. It's like raking leaves in a wild wind.

Strangely, in spite of this weight, Metcalf's books rarely get heavy. We skim along the surface seemingly accumulating little, even though so much is given so quickly. Bits and snatches seep in, and begin to add up on their own. Metcalf allows this to happen by keeping his subject matter within a limited number of domains which creates repetition and

web-like connections.

(Of course, both Melville and Metcalf would be interested in the oddballs and crazies who do not fit in any domain — the Bartlebys.)

In a series of essays that begin this volume, Metcalf proves to be a witty and charming aphorist and writer of short vignettes. We learn much about his relationships to Melville and Charles Olson, and we learn about his attitude toward the land. But in the middle of some we encounter passages such as the following:

Something in the French psyche, however, that refuses to dislodge itself is arrested in the days of lingua franca, when Paris and France were the hub of the civilized and cultural universe. (American tourists with whom I have talked report without exception that the French are the rudest of all European peoples.) (90)

Metcalf goes on to say that the French, Gertrude Stein, and the Language poets are all reductive and without depth. Coming after a number of essays in which Metcalf has celebrated Melville, Whitman, Olson, and American art, this attack on the French — when it is clear that Anglophone literature enjoys more world currency than does Francophone — and the only woman writer he mentions in the essay are telling. I do not like to “catch” the politics of a long under-appreciated writer, but Metcalf’s choices and the format of this journal leave me no choice.

In one essay Metcalf tells of a Robert Creeley interview he read in which Creeley describes an anthropologist wanting to introduce “a Mayan” to him. Metcalf quotes Creeley’s description of the man at length, then adds on his own: “the wild animal, with no abstraction, the centering of the physical being, the sensory system absolutely alert”(93). This attitude is in keeping with that displayed by Charles Olson in “Human Universe,” where Mayans are lauded for being “present” while white Americans are abstract. The Mayans are good and whites are bad. The noble savage.

Metcalf was born in 1917 and wrote the essay from which the Mayan description was taken in 1983. It is essential when evaluating such comments to remember that most men of his generation could only see Mayans as savages. To have gotten beyond such narrow stereotypes, as Metcalf does in most of his writing, is laudable.

Perhaps the most riveting book in this collection is *Firebird*. In it, Metcalf juxtaposes what appear to be first person accounts of the 1871 Peshtigo, Wisconsin fire with descriptions of broad-winged hawk migratory flights. We move back and forth in a counterpoint between two extremely different domains.

Below is one juxtaposition:

“...a quiet, windless day; a light curtain of mist hung over the terrain. There was scarcely a movement of any kind of bird life, till nearly eleven o'clock, when 32 broad-wings appeared, very low...”

“...the smoldering fires in the pineries...”

“...a tiny tongue of fire that ran along the ground,
in and out, among the trunks of the trees, leaving
the pines untouched but burning up the dry leaves
and pine needles on the woods floor.” (195)

A quiet, windless and wet day is juxtaposed to the quiet fire burning at the foot of great pines. How can we find connections? The birds come in very low, as the fire is very low. Both are low, small and slow, but also harbingers of greater things: a day when hawks will fill the sky and a night which will burn brighter than day.

Later in the essay? poem? we get the following:

The capacity of the wooden ware factory was
about as follows: 600 pails, 170 tubs, 200 kanna

In the space of one hour—from twelve noon to

kins 250 fish kitts, 200 keelers, 5000 broom

one P.M.—a total of sixteen thousand two hundred

handles, 50 boxes clothes pins, 45,000 shingles,

and sixteen broad-wing hawks were recorded

8 dozen barrel covers, 260 tobacco pails, 200 paint
pails per day. (210)

In this passage, the damage done to a factory, understood in numerical terms, is compared to a count of hawks. The hawks and the fire are looked at from the perspective of numbers and arithmetic. As usual, Metcalf is looking for connections and tensions between two domains.

What does this counterpoint reveal? Perhaps that both the hawks and the fire are sublime natural wonders that put our puny little human world in its place, that all about us is the making of fire, and birds and their migratory instincts are about us, in the sky and the park and the trees.

The hawks fill the sky as the fire does. Paul Metcalf is in some ways a 20th-century Metaphysical poet. Where the Metaphysicals came up with surprising conceits for the sake of wit, beauty and love, Metcalf does it for the sake of the empirical worlds of history, nature, and biography.

Jefferson Hansen

Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria Jr. & the Critique of Anthropology

Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman
University of Arizona Press, 1997

This timely anthology of reflections on Vine Deloria, Jr.'s scholastic and ideological impact on anthropology were originally solicited for an American Anthropological Association meeting session in 1989, which commemorated, twenty years later, the 1969 publication of *Custer Died for Your Sins*. *Custer* marked a turning point in the relationship between *Indians* and *Anthros*, and in this compilation ten of eleven authors meditate on where anthropology and Indians have traveled, together and apart, in the last two decades. The eleventh author, Deloria himself, has been there and done that—twenty years ago—and he seems bemused that people are still belaboring his points. Deloria's concluding essay lacks the brilliant humor and the sarcastic edge of the chapter, "Anthros and Other Friends," that sparked the whole brouhaha in 1969, but he's still intent on prodding his fellow Americans (anthros among them) to ask not what they can do *to* American Indians, but what American Indians might do *for* them. He argues that it is long past time for scholars to *use* the "values, behaviors, and institutions of tribal or primitive peoples to criticize and investigate the industrial societies and their obvious shortcomings" (220) in ways less mawkish and inept than their New Age contemporaries.

One thing this book makes clear is that Deloria is many things to many people. To the editors, he was postmodern before postmodern was cool; a social critic prompting anthropology to examine its collective conscience. To Herbert J. Hoover in Part I, Deloria is the offspring of a remarkable family from the Yankton Sioux Agency, and a polemicist who carries on the legacy of Bartolome de las Casas and Helen Hunt Jackson. Deloria shaped the graduate education of Elizabeth Grobsmith, by establishing a new standard of what *not* to do, and making anthropology "defensive," in her words, in the positive sense of self-evaluation (37). Murray Wax characterizes Deloria as a shape-shifter, deserving of the title "Doctor of Arts, Critical Theology, and Satiric Prose" (51).

In Part II of the book, which focuses on archaeology and American Indians, Randall McGuire acknowledges Deloria's jibes, but admits it has really taken the force of law (such as the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act) to cause archaeology to listen. Larry Zimmerman, like Grobsmith, sees *Custer* as a "scathing attack on anthropology" (92), while other authors admire Deloria's wit and sarcasm, and recognize his quest for a new kind of anthropology, rather than the end of anthropology. In Part III, "Ethnography and Colonialism," Native American scholars Cecil King and Marilyn Bentz use Deloria as a foundation, as they call for even higher standards of professional conduct and scholarly conceptualizations.

Thomas Biolsi simply takes Deloria at his word, and concretely illustrates that Deloria's charges against anthropology were reality, not hyperbole—at least in the Lakota country work of Haviland Scudder Mekeel, an applied anthropologist who worked for the Indian Service under John Collier's administration. Blinded by his "theoretical orientation" of cultural relativism, Mekeel ignored the Lakota reality before his very eyes as he helped construct the "traditional" political organization of *tiyospaye*. Biolsi and Gail Landsman are the two scholars whose articles in this collection use or respond to Deloria at more than a polemical level. They actually do a kind of scholarship that might not have seemed predictable or possible before 1969. Landsman's study of the dispute between non-native scholars known as "Iroquoianists" and certain Iroquois over the "real" Iroquois history reveals the fault lines of power and privilege that continue to cleave some Indians from some Anthropologists. Landsman turns to jazz improvisation as an analogy for the partial, situated, and contextualized view each side in this dispute presents to the world. At issue was a social science syllabus developed for seventh and eighth grade classes in the New York school system. Iroquois contributions to the syllabus, which stressed the influence of Iroquois political knowledge and organization on the development of the United States Constitution, were criticized severely by "Iroquoianists" for gross misrepresentation of historical "truth." In the power struggle over controlling historical representation, Landsman, and her colleague Sara Ciborski, found academics to be touchy research subjects. The lines between researcher, informant, and critic were more than blurred, they were obliterated in the ensuing push-and-shove. Iroquois historians seemed to welcome Landsman and Ciborski as allies, because they did not call the Indians liars or racists; while Iroquoianist scholars berated them for not agreeing with their interpretation, and for publishing on-the-record remarks made in paper presentations at public academic conferences. Landsman concludes by posing the question to anthropology: "If we ourselves resist the role of informant, should we expect any less of the others about whom we write?" (174).

In the concluding chapter of Part III, "The End of Anthropology (at Hopi)?," Peter Whiteley tosses out a variety of scenarios, scenes, and scripts of intercultural transactions among Hopis and everyone else: a private land owner who threatened to blow up a prospective gravel pit site rather than return the property—a sacred domain of boundary, clan and kiva shrines—to Hopis; the sale of sacred kachinas, the Hopis' celestial *quatsi* (friends), at Sotheby's; the racist burlesque known as the "Smoki (pronounced Smoke-eye) Snake Dance" performed by non-native Arizona politicians and businessmen (including the late and widely eulogized Barry Goldwater). Whiteley examines how anthropological writing about Hopis is deeply implicated in the "popular culture" domination and fetishization of things Hopi, but goes beyond his critique to recognize how both Native America and the anthropologists who work there are being marginalized, one within the nation, the other, within the discipline. Native American communities may still be "proving grounds" (if not boot camps) for anthropologists-in-training but the center of gravity of anthropological theory and intellectual ferment has most definitively moved elsewhere since *Custer* was published in 1969. I think that's not a coincidence. Why is it that Said, Bourdieu, Foucault, and myriad other speakers for the subaltern have provoked an outpouring of reflexive reflections by anthro-

pology on the nature of power and colonial relations; but when Deloria poked with his stick, anthropology just howled? Now that tribal Cultural Preservation Offices and Committees have asserted the power to review and amend research proposals, and can grant or deny researchers' access to reservation populations, now anthropology decides that the "interesting" theoretical questions and issues are no longer in Indian America? Grobsmith looks back on anthropology 25 years later to note that the field of applied anthropologists working in Native America has dwindled to an aging few. Because reservation communities are perceived as "closed, impregnable, [and] inaccessible," the "next generation of students, far more politically conservative and complacent . . . will likely not withstand or sustain challenge and will end up taking the easy route to success. They will find something else to study" (48). What a sad state of affairs, if the coda 25 years after *Custer* is that Indians asked anthropology to play by fairer rules, and asked to play, too, and anthropology's response was to take its ball and go someplace else.

Whiteley concludes his article with the rueful, and truthful, observation that in addition to whatever else anthropology needs, it desperately needs more aggressive "affirmative action" (197). Indians and anthropology have never been separated entities. Indians have been not only the "informants" (and how I detest that term); they have also been, in Landsman's terms, the scholars, the researchers, the critics. I suppose worse things than no more anthropology could happen to Indian America, but I would regret the thought of never another Francis LaFlesche (Omaha), or Archie Phinney (Nez Percé); never another George H.J. Abrams (Seneca) or Arthur C. Parker (Seneca); never another Ella Cara Deloria (Yankton Sioux), or Bea Medicine (Lakota Sicasu); never another Alfonso Ortiz (San Juan), or Ned Dozier (Santa Clara); never another Gladys Tantaquidgeon (Mohegan) or Rosita Worl (Tlingit); never another George Hunt (Tlingit, raised as Kwakiutl, worked with Franz Boas), Robert Spott (Yurok, worked with Alfred Kroeber), Swimmer (Cherokee, with James Mooney), John Arthur Gibson (Seneca, with J.N.B. Hewitt), Angeline Williams (Anishinabe, with Charles Voegelin and Leonard Bloomfield), Chona (Tohono O'odham, with Ruth Underhill), George Laird (Chemehuevi, with John P. Harrington and Carobeth Laird), James Selam (Columbia River, with Eugene Hunn), Angela Sidney (Tagish & Tlingit, with Julie Cruikshank), Lawrence Aripa (Coeur d'Alene, with Ronald Frey), Jackson Lewis (Hitchiti, with John Swanton), Maxidiwac—Buffalo Bird Woman (Hidatsa, with Gilbert Wilson), or Anna Mae Secakuku Setima and Frank Masaquaptewa (Hopi, with Edward Kennard); or any other hundreds—thousands?—of the Native people who have thought deeply and spoken carefully—those who have studied, practiced, supported, and elevated the discipline of anthropology.

Deloria has the last word in the Conclusion, in "Anthros, Indians, and Planetary Reality" (209-221). After thanking Biolsi and Zimmerman for organizing the panel of presenters (which inspired this volume) who met at the 1989 meeting of the American Anthropological Association, and thanking the Association for the "calm and rational manner in which I was received," Deloria endeavors to take the discussion of issues to a new plateau. He praises the "immensely useful" anthropological work in Native America done in the last twenty years

by several scholars—Barbara Lane, Bill Sturtevant, Deward Walker, Larry Zimmerman, and Jack Campisi among them—but also notes that there has been no concerted effort to open the disciplinary ranks to Indian people. In his trenchant words, Indians apparently still can't be trusted to be objective and analytical when, after all, "In America we have an entrenched state religion, and it is called science" (211). He marks with regret some of the ways in which the Indian world has changed in the last twenty-plus years: elders with "real knowledge" passing on, younger folks educated now from books and reports, children learning from TVs and VCRs in an electrified and digitally connected world. In this era of "melt-down, breakdown, and disintegration" he argues that the bitter fight between Indians and Anthros over the issue of Iroquois influence on the U.S. Constitution (see Landsman's article) has revealed the true colors of the discipline and the true issue at hand: the power to control definitions, and to write history. Especially political history. Politics—the tribal, state, and federal governments' contests over jurisdictions and sovereignties—is what it's all about. Remarkably enough, not one of these authors so much as refers obliquely to Deloria's stature as a legal scholar and analyst of Indian law. Is anthropology still really so much *not* about politics? Deloria's impact on law studies constitutes yet another timely and necessary volume waiting to be done.

Deloria concludes that we are faced with the opportunity, and the responsibility, to leave the colonial relationship behind us; it is time for scholars to become human beings.

This important volume is a well-organized and well introduced collection of diverse scholarly reactions to, perceptions of, and implementations of, Deloria's impact on the discipline of anthropology. It is a welcome addition to the literature of anthropology and of American Indian Studies.

Tsianina Lomawaima

The Journal of John Wieners / is to be called / 707 Scott Street

John Wieners
Sun & Moon, 1996

Callow But Not Shallow

My pillow a rock of stone
My bed a bench of board
These the treasure trove I hoard
Against the rolling morn

My symphony a choir of birds
Family the passing cars
And for friend the stars
And for company words.

John Wieners, "Refrain"

So would you like to, uh, ethnography.

Jeff Derksen, "I Need to Know if This is Normal"

December 1997: Arrived here in Massachusetts to write for 2 and a half months with various writing projects on my plate, my favorite assignment surfaced as this review — of John Wieners's journal, *707 Scott Street*, for this journal, *Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics*; but the inevitable procrastinatory exercises had to be accomplished. In this oceanside house of sparse reading material, *Boston Magazine's* August 1997 Best of Boston list was the most enticing option. Among the best nightclubs, brunches, steaks, the best hot fudge sundaes, brownies, canoli and bagels, the women's haircut (multiple categories: short, curly, etc.) and best hair colorist, were nestled three categories: "Best Poet:" Robert Pinsky, who had recently been appointed Poet Laureate; "Best Poetry Bookstore:" Grolier's, with an appropriate salute to its proprietor Louisa Solano (yo, Louisa!), and the "Poet-Lifetime Achievement Award": yah, sure, you betcha, none other than

John Wieners The Poet Laureate of Beacon Hill, the Oracle of Joy Street belongs in the ranks of Boston's most distinguished literati. His remarkable first book, *The Hotel Wentley Poems*, (1959), made him an overnight star of the Beat generation. He hobnobbed with Ferlinghetti during San Francisco's late 1950's Poetry Renaissance, and was a longtime crony of the late Allen Ginsberg. Known as both Genius and Holy Mad Man, he inspired an entire

generation of younger poets with his wit and delicate lyricism. This year, after more than a decade of silence, he published a splendid new collection, *707 Scott Street*.

This entry is followed by one on “Best Professor,” someone who can recite the entirety of T.S. Eliot’s oeuvre on command. So they didn’t get everything just right, but beyond the Beat-inflected hyperbole, the fame-by-association move and the uppercase overkill, and beyond the fact that the book is a diary from an earlier period rather than a new collection, the general flavor and intent of giving someone long-overdue props is entirely appropriate.

Callow but not shallow, John Wieners’s diary from when he was 24 years old and living in San Francisco is just my cup of tea, combining post-adolescent loneliness, drugs, poetry, spiritual aspirations and magical incantations in delicate verbal yearnings. He has said in more recent times that his now very out-there life (it’s a rare moment when he utters a sentence that evinces an awareness that he’s with others, and wants to communicate with them) is a direct result of what he’s written in his early work; or, in so many words, that the early work directly predicts the current condition of his embattled consciousness. However, this diary is a lovely and entirely coherent document that many folks who have managed to look straight and respectable on the outside, or who have confined their longings to the aesthetic or spiritual realm and are not overrun by them, can resonate with deeply. It’s also a rich document of the cultural crucible that was San Francisco in the 1950s-60s, and should be required reading for anyone interested in the countercultural United States during the postwar years.

The current moment is witnessing a resurgence of interest in that era, due unfortunately and partially to the deaths of some of the people who have been designated its canonical principles, namely Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs, and due also to the academic-conference machinery at NYU that produced, within a few years, several meetings about Kerouac, the Beats, etc., and the clout of institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, which mounted an extremely popular exhibition on the Beat Generation that subsequently traveled to Minneapolis and San Francisco. Also, the conditions of the 50s and late 80s-early 90s have been sufficiently similar —repression of political dissent in the public sphere leading to cultural dissent of a depoliticized nature (or, as some have said, a regrettable valuing of *cultural politics* over *cultural politics*) —to warrant some speculation about the diversionary nature of the current Beat nostalgia. Deplorable as the fetishizing and/or depoliticizing impulse may be, the feeding-frenzy-cum-rehabilitation of the Beats has not been without its benefits. Mainstream attention to heretofore neglected writers like African Americans Bob Kaufman and Ted Joans, gay or lesbian writers like John Wieners, Harold Norse, Madeline Gleason (and the members of the Jack Spicer circle, who were not Beats but enjoyed a certain cultural and geographical adjacency to them), and women like Janine Pommy Vega, Helen Adam, Lenore Kandel and Joanne Kyger is certainly welcome, as is theoretical and literary historiographic attention to the multiplicity and complexity of identity and ideology in this Cold War era —complexity that, of course, renders the above categories (“African American,” “gay,” “women”) quaintly old-fashioned terms even when describing an era that predates the kinds of poststructural thinking that has

given academics the conceptual and lexical tools to theorize the complexities of these subjects' lived experience.

Big Props are due to Sun & Moon for publishing this beautiful book, whose full and proper title is actually *The Journal of John Wieners* IS TO BE CALLED 707 SCOTT STREET for BILLIE HOLIDAY 1959. (Perhaps they can be persuaded to publish an edited version of Russell FitzGerald's journal from the same period and place, in what could become a stunning writers' memoir/journal series.) Its design virtues are many but I will extol explicitly only two of them. 1) At 126 pages, it's short and can be read in one riveted sitting. 2) Its cover is a masterpiece, showing a torn billboard of an unnaturally smiling, bare-chested, luxuriantly-styled longtressed blonde woman; through one of the rips in this wholesomely normative tableau one can make out, at some distance, what looks like at least one man but more likely several, assembled in what looks like some kind of back-alley activity framed by rubble and tenement windows —barely hinted at, but nonetheless pointed enough to make the pathos of contrast effective. Behind the poster-girl fifties lay both the vibrant alternative communities of and the haunted individual sufferings of people like John Wieners and Billie Holiday (and we could name others: Bob Kaufman, Harold Carrington, Elise Cowan, ...), whose experience could not be contained in the official discourse of the exchange-economy of the "free world" at whose head the United States had appointed itself. Behind the Cold War was messy body heat, tangled kinetic networks of creative and struggling people, detritus of the world trying to come together without losing their jagged edges, the desires that animated them.

Wieners describes the multiple registers at which he lives: he's a writer, a junkie, a lover of boys and the occasional girl, someone who believes in other simultaneous lives within his own, a spiritual hunter in the "street/junkie" world of, as Diane Di Prima described the issue of *The Floating Bear* he guest-edited (#33), "beautiful, wasted chicks and hustlers," poets and bohemians. He writes on July 22, 1959:

She has brought her treasures out into the sun and I spring to write them down.

...

...spread out in a circle on
top of the table, 1/2 an orange rind, the top
of a crystal water jar, a sugar tin, driftwood, green stones
thrushes, my head with sleep, the brain cells
not open from the dream.

Of night and the junkies
stealing my bicycle and books. I love them because they are the
boys of my childhood who would chase me home
from school and leave this same terror.

So that even here by the sea,
the objects of my life return, from another life that never dies. (52)

Despite the display of objects in the sun in the above passage, it is the haunting memory of

San Francisco Beat poet Bob Kaufman's "Bagel Shop Jazz," written during the same era, offers a similar *tableau vivant* scene that concludes with a reference to global violence of the atom bomb, the neighborhood violence recorded by spray-painted body-outlines on city streets, and epic literary violence in its echo of the Virgil's commentary on a mural of the Trojan war: "*lacrimae rerum sunt*": "Brief, beautiful shadows, etched on walls of night" (*Solitudes*, "Bagel Shop Jazz," 15). In fact, one might speculate on this tableau technique, and the stasis it depicts, as a mode of autoethnography that is at the same time a bid for literary recognition.

Elsewhere I have described this technique as a sort of self-historicization in which the poet records, as if it were already past, the current frenetic bohemian lifestyle; and I have ascribed its peculiar split subjectivity as an effect of postmodernity (that is, after the bomb and after Auschwitz, no one could quite live without feeling that life was already over). Here I would like to suggest the additional possibility that that split subjectivity also characterizes both the trauma victim (often trauma victims describe themselves as splitting off, so that part of them is observing the abuse or the traumatic event from a corner in the room or some other perspective as well as that of themselves-as-sufferer) and the ethnographer, in the famous participant/observer mode. Need it be pointed out, also, that at the normative end of this continuum is the Cartesian subject, whose humanity consists in the talent of self-reflexivity—or the ability to split oneself off from one's body in order to observe, reflect upon, judge and regulate that body's activities? For in spite of the postmodern valorization of the "split subject," I don't see what's so new about it, unless the dichotomized "split" of "*cogito ergo sum*" is now fragmented into multiples. The autoethnographer's position is somewhere on that scale between the normative Cartesian and the deviant trauma victim/survivor, but it is useful to think of it as a continuum in which these positions overlap rather than as a set of discrete modes of subjectification. Thus Wieners's journal is at once a writer's journal that records a sorcerer's-apprentice type of submission to the discipline of magic, a set of ethnographic fieldnotes, a foreshadowing of future madness (when the split becomes untenable), and an attempt at survival through distancing himself (through writing/observation/articulation) from the traumas of postmodernity, drug abuse, poverty, homoerotic passion in a time when that was not publicly permissible, and so forth.

The function of the poet in this world of double consciousness (which, at the time when W. E. B. Du Bois wrote his famous essay about the "double consciousness" that characterizes Black subjectivity in a white world, was the popular term for what is now known as "multiple personality disorder," a disease of dissociation and splitting) is ambiguous. While in some ways he (and it's very much about "him") seems to exemplify this split person—he both lives life to its fullest and records it—, on the other hand he is also supposed to heal the split itself, partially through being oblivious to it while living it. An impossible double-bind, it seems, and one that often seemed to sharply distinguish *writing poetry* from *living as a poet*—but a role that poets of the time prescribed for themselves. Wieners writes:

And if I cannot write in poetry, it is because poetry is reality to me, and not the poetry we read, but find revealed in the estates of being around us. (80)

If this sentence echoes with Robert Duncan's sense of poetry as magic (and much of the diary is concerned with Arthurian myth and other magical allegories, which concerns Wieners shares with the Spicer-kreis operating next to the Beats in North Beach) in such phrases as "revealed in the estates of being around us," the passage immediately following it cannot help but summon up Bob Kaufman's "THE POET" from later years. Here is Wieners from "Aug 6" (1959):

It is necessary for the poet to be ignorant of the true mystery, and yet to contain it wrapped around him. Not aware that his slightest flash of eyelid is enough to set those off around him into an ecstasy of awareness. To be dumb himself. A mammoth vegetable, A. Richer says.(80)

and from "Friday Sept 10:"

I go a-
lone serving the gods within.
Is not art a sacrifice
and are we not bound
to it.
Sitting as "gods" on solitary thrones.
I move with pain. I wake and
wash tears down my face. Who can say
I should not walk in glory
when I do. (101-2)

And here is Kaufman:

...THE BLOOD OF THE POET
MUST FLOW IN HIS POEM,
SO MUCH SO, THAT OTHERS
DEMAND AN EXPLANATION.
THE POET ANSWERS THAT THE
POEM IS NOT TO BE
EXPLAINED...
THE POET IS ALONE WITH OTHERS
LIKE HIMSELF. THE PAIN IS BORN
INTO THE POET. HE MUST LIVE
WITH IT. IT IS HIS SOURCE OF PURITY,
SUFFERING HIS
LEGACY,
THE POET HAS TO BE A
STONE.
...THE POET SHOCKS THOSE

AROUND HIM...

...

I HAVE WALKED IN THIS WORLD
WITH A CLOAK OF DEATH WRAPPED
AROUND ME. I WALKED ALONE, EVERY
KISS WAS A WOUND, EVERY SMILE
A THREAT...(*The Ancient Rain*, 69-71)

The poet is prescribed and envisioned as automaton, but somehow charged with meaning in and of his own self, beyond any activity of writing (except for, perhaps, automatic or trance writing), a catalyst (a stone cast) for change both social and at the level of consciousness itself (poet as Christic figure) —how could such a poet simultaneously be an inorganic charged element *and* be the yearning post-adolescent (in Wieners's case) writing these rules —unless the POET were the channel or vessel of some greater power that the poet (split between POET and poet) is trying, necessarily in vain, to connect with?

As happened when Bob Kaufman's lapse into silence was taken by his community as the ultimate in poetic commitment, one of the tenets of this belief system seems to be that the "real" poet is not he who writes but he who embodies poetry, that is, unspeakability, in the sense that Hart Crane referred to his poetry as a frenzied attempt to find the "single, new Word, never before spoken and impossible actually to enunciate" (Crane, 221); his words are pale approximations and strivings that perforce fall short. The "real" poet is an enigma. Etymologically, "enigma" is a "riddle," from the Greek *ainos*, "story;" paradoxically, that which can't be narrated can only be approached through narrative; the Word can only be approached through words; THE POET can only be approached by poets, and in poetic language; but there is that one paradox —Zeno's—, the assurance of asymptotic relationship so that one knows one will never fully arrive.

The attempt to heal an alienation at the psychic level becomes valorized as a form of labor that is POSSESSION by the spirit rather than possession by an exploitive capitalist master. Thus the Beat imperative to not work, to the extent that work means straight-job, nine-to-five labor; but rather to experience and record extreme life conditions (voluntary poverty in the modern city, in an era of expanding national affluence), states of mind (drugs and alcohol), and experiments in intimacy and sexuality (homosexuality, primary relations not recognized by the state, etc.). And this with the hope that experiencing and recording will heal rather than exacerbate the split between the experiencing subject and the recording subject, the participant and the observer, the victim and the witness. And in fact, the dissociative state that Wieners and Kaufman describe has been described as symptomatic of trauma by psychologists, and as a state of spiritual possession —shamanism, pocomania and the like —by anthropologists. The attempt to create community in solitude, even if it's a community of oneself, is exquisitely captured in the first epigraph above, "Refrain," uncollected until Raymond Foye's superb *John Wieners: Selected Poems 1958-1984*. And of course, it resonates with Bob Kaufman's title, *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness*, showing the ubiquity of such concerns for a whole generation of writers.

In addition to the state of being possessed, romantic objectification is another symptom of this phenomenon as self as both subject and object, this splitting of subject from subject, or watching subject from observed object. In this poet's journal, many are the scenarios of unnamed sexual partners either anticipated or missed immediately after their departure; as Michel Foucault has written, sex itself is not interesting—it's the moment when the lover disappears in the cab and one can light up a cigarette and fantasize the foregoing night that it becomes significant. Then one can write about it, endowing the freshly departed or never-actually-came lover with all the properties one could wish for in a lover—if only he were here. Jadedness is the other side of this yearning. Either way, it's the ethnographic reaching for and escaping from intimacy by withdrawing into a world of note-taking *about* the intimate encounter. Wieners:

And he'll come up and
into this room expect
me to love him and I suppose
I will, Why not
with yellow flowers in
the holy water fount.
Wait for his foot on the stair.

...
And it does not come.
The long night stretches before you.
O my soul, what will you do?

With no lover. The fates
await you. (104)

And in the night lovers come
where there was no light before.
They bring their animal groans.
They creak the bed and cause
the dog to bark. At the moon.
I will endure this solitude.
I will rise to a new day.

There is a princess in the tower.
And steps like inside the Statue
of Liberty lead up to her.
Wooden, with grass and sunlight upon them
I could climb the stairs or stay
here in the poem (105)

In another moment of dissociation, Wieners is both the princess trapped in a

tower and the princess who *is* a hollowed-out tower (again, echoes of Bob Kaufman, who also writes of the poet's experience of his subjectivity as subject to, and rattling around inside, his body); he is, moreover, also the seeker who can climb up into her, and the writer —the writer both inside and outside the poem—who has to choose between the poem and active contact with others. Thus my second epigraph, from Jeff Derksen, in which sex itself is seen as ethnographic act, *a priori* split between observing and participating, and a retreat into the scientism of observation and recording—a professional, socially sanctioned version of the tormented dissociation that has marked so much of Wieners's and Kaufman's relationship to the physical world.

Elsewhere there is no mitigating presence of the romantic Other whatsoever, but a stark declaration of aloneness. This bleaker encounter with disappointment could be valorized as less exploitive (there is no fantasized or projected-upon Other to be deified or vilified) and less inclined to the palliative of sociological rationalizing, but it is almost unbearably painful to read. The poem "To Sleep Alone," for example, is primarily a catalogue of activities rendered in the infinitive, as if to suggest that the loneliness is without conceivable cessation (infinite):

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| To sleep alone | to play alone |
| To wake alone | go work alone |
| to walk alone | to grow alone |
| to wash alone | to mourn alone |
| to write alone | to climb alone |
| to see alone | to fall alone |
| to think alone | to dress alone |
| to die alone | to strip alone ... |

(*Selected Poems*, 238)

I don't believe it a stretch to characterize Wieners's writing as "minority discourse." However dated that term may strike us in a post-identitarian era, it enables certain useful connections and observations. Of the criteria that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari enumerate as pertaining to "minority" literature, the most pertinent one here is that such literature is marked by a "high degree of deterritorialization." There is clearly a consonance between this idea and that of Du Bois's "double consciousness," the clinical phrase referring to extreme dissociation that he felicitously reframed to characterize minority consciousness in the U.S.; as well as to the concept of dissociative states and of a subject "beside" or "outside" himself, as the ethnographer's imperative requires. Also, stylistic or aesthetic concepts such as "multi-perspectival," "disoriented," "high degree of self-consciousness"—which implicitly acknowledge a divided subject—, bring these descriptions of psychic states to bear on "outside" or vanguard styles of writing. Robin Blaser's essay on Jack Spicer's poetics, "The Practice of Outside," and Nathaniel Mackey's title *Discrepant En-*

gagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality and Experimental Writing are signal texts that elaborate this resonance between outsiderhood, cultural borders, and alternative artistic production. Gay historian George Chauncey's work reminds us that, prior to the the late 1960s construction of the "closet" as ur-trope for an "unliberated" gay experience, the tropes one heard most often in the gay subculture to describe the separation of gay from normative culture were along the lines of "leading a double life," "putting on and taking off a mask," and so on, and that, furthermore, there was a certain art and sophistication to negotiating the split between the two worlds. In other words, the kind of psychic alienation described by Wieners is both peculiar to his sensibility, and typical of the split between public and private spheres that many gay men (and heterosexual men, as that split characterized postwar American life in general) negotiated *without* paying the high price of their sanity. As the "divided [binaristic] self" of the modernist period, with its separation of inner and outer, good and bad, mask and "real self," public and private, evolved into the "fluid" and "fragmented self" of the current postmodern era, it passed through the cataclysm of the 60s-80s liberationist era, in which the unitary, "authentic" self was proclaimed as needing emancipation from the false and oppressive roles imposed by an external, hostile, conformist society. Identity, in the singular, was the concept around which social activism organized itself before, primarily, Black feminists reminded us that we are, and live as, more than one self simultaneously. John Wieners has lived through both transitions —from "divided self" to the mandate to be "authentically gay," and then from that era of liberation activism to the current permission to be multiple without one's multiple identities necessarily being construed as the result of oppression. He has survived and continued to write, and while that survival testifies to the resilience of creative imagination, the conditions of his survival testify to the extreme psychic hardships these changes have entailed, at least for some subjects.

There is much else to observe and explore in this diary of exquisite drivenness: the way it functions as a reading journal (passages inflected with Sappho, Wyatt, etc. cited in the context of Wieners's own erotic pain) and as an apprentice's handbook (how to be a poet); the requisite exoticizing Negrophilia of the times and of Beat culture; the journal's relationship to other records of addiction like *Junkie* and Alexander Trocchi's *Cain's Book*; its aesthetic richness. It may even take you back twenty years or so, to your own youthful, private accounts of wracked longing, literary aspirations, erotic mishaps, and ways of conceiving of your "self" that now seem quaint and short-sighted though passionate; and it may occasion a reflection on your own "lifetime achievement" such as it may be, or a reflection on your participant/observer status in your own life, your own communities. It's a gem, an amulet to put on the pillow next to yours when you have to sleep alone.

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Maria Damon

Che Qianzi was born in 1963 in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China, and has been earning a living as a writer in Beijing since 1997. He has published several collections of poems and prose. *Three Primary Colors*, written in the early 1980's, made a significant and controversial impact on contemporary Chinese poetry, changing the focus of poetry from the heroic to the ordinary, in other words, it liberated the poets from a collective consciousness to an individual orientation. Che Qianzi is currently engaged in exploring the implications between culture and language, especially that of the Chinese written character. His latest works are two poetry sequences entitled "Numbered Musical Notation" and "Hand-Copied Paperback," hailed by some as representatives of non-poetry.

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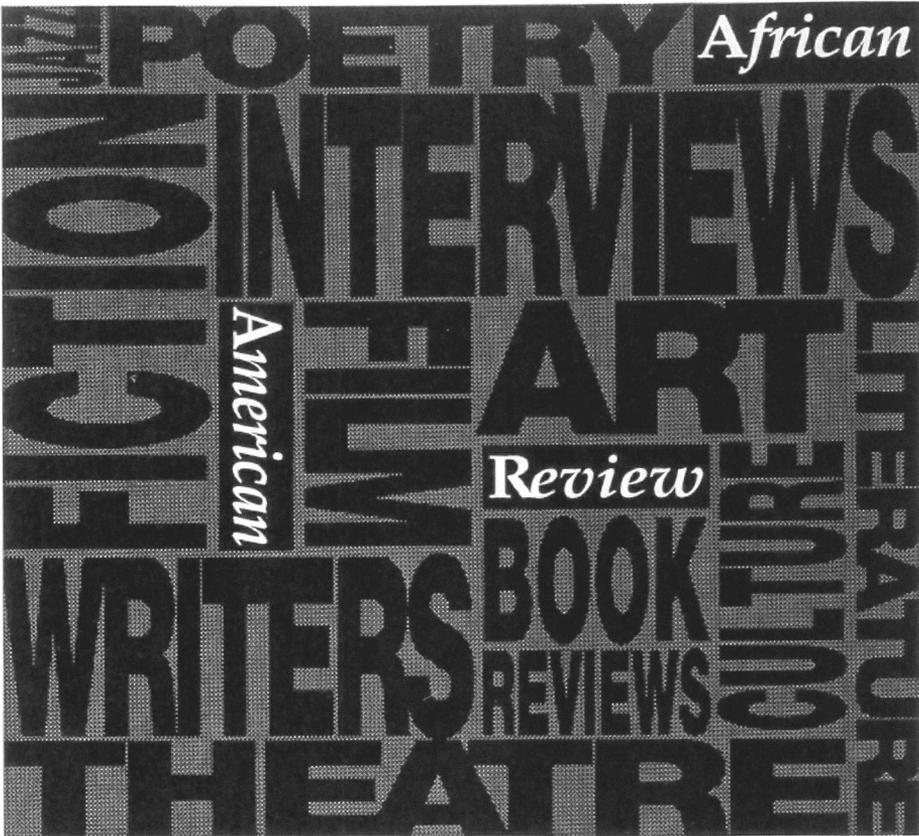
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