# Xcp 4

cross cultural poetics

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# Voyage/Voyageur/Voyeur

Kamau Brathwaite

# SCAPÈIÓÍÈÍ

# Scapeghost(s)

## ihe whole lindisfarne dream morning

Newcastle upon Time Sunday foreday warning 7 June 92 rev Fri 12 June rev Sun 14 June
New York midnight 2/3 May 95 CowPastor, Barabados 31 august 1999

for many years after the composition of the DS that follows. the meaning of it is clearly unclear to many critics of the palimpsest inc perhaps even the author herselfs - dreamstories being by the v/ nature of their origen sometimes difficult of assassination & sometimes requiring even spiritual intervention as happens recently w/this document when it opens the Internet to the word

**LANDISFERNE**

(the earliest most acien site of the story) where the ff now blind oracle is disclose

7 jan 99

The girls use to play this left-foot game that become a ritual several perhaps even many years later . ruining out into the saltbush to pretend all sort a things i cant remember now but which when they are old. er they wd. as i say. re/enact. only this time is like rea (l) or for real or like for real & it all seem to be like some kind of sexual hornery or carnival. i seem to reca-

ll. ll. ying out there in the bushes w/the fruit of their le gs open out of the sight of their responsibility & hush. bands & there is one case i remember now where two

girl(s). as chilldren. like use to fight & in the ritual they have to do this struggle all over & over again *like a brown girl in the ling* of anthropology but as i say for r-

eal or like for real & on this occasion in the dream Alei son decide to play w/no foregathering of sheep or apology or anything like that. a trick on the whole holy family

cep that i seem to know now that this was not a trick at all but the ritual it. self. i mean **the real ritual** make to seem like a trick & this is what begin the itch tho i still cant

plain it like the sole of my font or my left foot. so that in the end is **me** implicated in the pain tho i have been played & plyered in it from the beginning i suppose since i'm one of those boys who use to cross over the ca

useway to the ilannnn before the sea come rushing back in w/the almanacks & a sound like is River Bay or somewhere very near & early in the Illuminating

Gospel of my childhood when as i say they use to be these baffle lefffoot sack-an-spoon games where the girls go racin off into the saltbushes hidin along the sh ore & on this occasion Aleison goes into the House of

the Conversation I think it is or one of the Abbeys w/ her twin & mirror image sister who both look thin & si lver like St Aidin whose ritual it was to be on this lass day of August her birthday i suppose & by hiding behind doors when St Aidin mother come into the several rooms of the house collectin objects for Aldee's ritual. soff wressellin dresses & small pink heArt shape cu shions & varicose little things from childhood like seashells & snails & porcelain dolls & iguanas left on top the cupboards & djinns & Ailice or her twinsister wd stand in the middle of the room like lookin for someth ing. since all the women on this ilannnn. who you wd hardly see normally when you come into the flat narr ow streets of the ilannnn. were like searchin for sacred hurts & silent objects all this day. but Aidee has been hidden away somewhere. taken there by Aleison's cruiseship cousins perhaps & place bare-headed behi-

nd some stone cross or*mequela* w/her mouth **gagg** & she footbottom bare in the sandlelight so that she mother think is she there in the room all the time in front of the mirrors. so she think nothing of it when she

open the door again & is Aidee but not her daughter there still searching it seem

cep that is not even Aleison but her twin & image sister who is here or still here while Aleison gone off area dy w/whatever it is she want. ed from the room. som (e) piece of cloth or clothing or a piece or craft of card board i remember which is to be use as padding or a kind of plankton on the back of whoever is takin the

place of Aidee in the ritual or paddock so that she wou ldnt feel the blows when they come rain. in down on she back later this wet day by irate mothers who see the whole thing as a kind of sacrifice & payback or pu nishment really for what happen to them years befor- (e) on the ilannnn when they was young & 'ready' as they say in echoes in these parts but were hopin it wd- nt happen to their daughters or rather were hopin tha (t) it wd not have happen to their daughters who nvr even hear of James Carnegie far less read **Wages Pay**

(**d**) tho of course it has already happen as it has alway (s) happen on this ilannnn since before the time of Boewulf & Aldread & Columban the Discoverer. & it ha-(s) happen to them when as i say they have been young & 'ready' & all the younggirls go out into the sea of the saltbush to 're-enact' as they say the games they u se to play out here only this time is not games anymor (e) but the real thing since they have been given like a scoon or second chance to do really do what they hav (e) always **wish** they had done when they was okra & likkle & had persevere such vivid memories of it that Aleison & her twinsister & i sure that in every household of this salt ilannnn. mirror iamage(s) of Aleison & her twinsister Aidan is busy foolin all the mothers of the farious householes they are aldebarons of. tho as it turn out (& this really the whole feint of the festival. its screams of coloureds & evvathingelse) all a dem is really scapegoats & willin scarificing manimals. almost in a way like

# scapeghost(s)

tho the only 'person' who really wish *(i.e to see thru the bleak beaches of the hawthorn)* what is going on . this elaborate hoax within a hoax I mean . this elaborate play within a play that is really real in the long run . is **me** i suppos (e). since is me see it in the dream thru these peculiar hollow beach or branches of the thorn & have at least been able to interpret it here or appear to interpret it

here . *the littel boy of the household who is in the room behind the door w/Aleison & her sister, perch on a kind of chirp or shelf out of the reach of search & harms way like a parrot too young to speak yet sucking his finger or fingers or thumb in his wet or damp bib of feathers & little round tum half naked w/dribble*

And so all these make-believe girls go out into the real & glorious & not at all over-rated bushes or forest o/(r) woodlands of their fantasies or among the rocks b/(y) the seashore & they enacting their behaviour w/all these boys who have come trooping over the causeway from as far away as Alnwick to the Holy Ilannnn

to enter them before the sea return to reclaim them

& where had been a strip of dry land of clamour & th-
in roadway wd now be like a face of blue glass or gre-
(y) glass w/all the sky in its water at 3 oclock in the aft
ernoon of an entire summers day & as i say they did

evvatin that they remember or had iamagine when th
ey was younger & interred & a young girl was beaten
as if she was Aidee & all this become like all the sex &
sexual bvrodny xcitement among the bushes like the

central piece or panel of a festival of lights or mashra-
mani & it was this. the ritual flagellation & the noise
& shouting & untiring shrieking that it naturally alwa
ys attracted. that like a signal of noise & shriekin & sh

outin in a tongue curl up in their mouthes like a sarpe-
nt that cold not be understood anywhere else but up-
on that ilannnn & bring the old queenmothers runnin
out of the houses to rescue their young girlchildren fr-

om shame or to protocol them from it (yes some even go so far as to call 'it' 'it') & to deliver moral stories of protection & reli-
ef when is found that it is not so bad after all w/their

daughter or slaughters - that she or they had only bee (n) palaying after all w/her or their half or twin-

city sisters or girlfrenns or step-sister or sisters & that is only Aidee really who's always found tied up in the sand w/her leg open & has nothin on or to say. since her mouth has been **gagg**

**shut** as i say & there was all this sand in its time. i mean in **all parrots** of her body & **youthfulness** if yu know what i mean & in anycase she had always been **keen** like the blackbird or berry or burro of that bunch

the failure of **correction** that has become **corruptio-(n)** really of that batch & altho all her relatives come ru nnin to the place out here among the pools & rocks where she has been found this year. tho there is nothing they cd do about changin the name of what is bein said about her even tho they **know** in their heart of

he**arts** that it was very said but certainly not true And even mwe who have seen it all at least in the drea

(m) or nightmare have believe it until on the roadmar ch back home i begin to feel like this itch in the sole of my one leff foot like if you know some bramble or plimp. ler or even per. haps a fi shbone jook into it when we come runnin over the causeway & over the dry saltgrass dunes looking for woman or for what the women was doin or were suppose to be doin & i begin to fever & like favour this left foot & favour it & favour it & favour it until i becomes like a limp in th (e) procession until like i couldnt keep up properly no more. yu know how it is in the carnival season of marshes & jump-up & in the end i juss have to stop & look at the bottom of my foot - my footbottom - & i cd see that juss where the soul is ribb & wrinkle - you know how it is when you have it upside down like a kind of shadow or savage or salmon in yr hand. . .
it have been cover w/a lint or linen sheet of dirty half-white plaster which i didn't know tho i read. alize now must have been there since my childhood - how else can i xplain it - when i had firss come over onto the ilannnn to this festival & this plaster muss have been there for a very long time since i am now a young man & gettin to what they call a big man soon to being in long flannel trousers or pants & all that sort of thing & having to face my own responsibility of fishing boats & using the nets properly & going out sensibly on to the saltbush of the ocea (n) for a living as my father had been granted before me when he too had come running along this xcited causeway onto the ilannnn w/its dark monastory tower at the other end like how we use to pile seaegg & the plaster like it have become roar & unstark or undone all along its len gth tho the sides of it are still in palace & stuck to the sole of my foot like waves somehow begin ning to come in & i cd see like they are small holes or wounds inside my foot under the loop of the plaster. i mean i cd see them as i hold my leftfoot against the knee of my rightfoot in both hands & have time to look at what is happening to the foot while keeping my balance on the on- (e) other leftfoot that remain on the by now dry land of the causeway

& evvabody else is crash on pass me far. ward towar ds the castlekeep playin *bumba* & showerin ripple & callin out to each other & singin yu know how it is at these carnivals & I eventually hop hopp hopppon on

over to a stone or shd i say **rock** of the ilannn but a small one yu cd sit on comfortable/not like the huge slate grey ones that we plantin in pictures & sell-in in the windy townsquare in like tortoise-shell or Ra stacolour bamboo frames even all the way out here in Northumbria for good money to tourises showin a shi (p) comin in to **wreck** on the rockstone & all of belly li-ke tear apart in the water&wind & the blonde danegel (d) & early christian passengers all half-naked & terr-ified. cringing away. some w/their heads toss back fr om the cruel curl of that cold golden darkgreen water of northern & clinging on to what is cleft of their ship w/it mast or matches leaning into the sea & yu cd see the **jagg** where is broken & the sail or sails all in feath-ers & only a few clanging ropes & boxes leff & no

**ANCHOR** & all the rest of the contents on board like bales & trusts & trinkets & brass-boss boxes alread (y) chips & bobbin in the water. some of them quite oot in the question like a man waverin w/the white fla

sh of his hand asking for help all the way out to the ho rizon & drownin to the bottom & this great block

**RACK** of the kells looming up towards us out of the harsh water & the passengers' slight vibrant fin gers & palms & the beautifully round blonde arms of the barley women in the pictures outstretch towards it. some w/great white swathed bosoms w/a breast or sometime both xtravagantly disclothe in pink tips & swirl & perhaps yes unnecessarily so

X-

pose to the Turner elements & their long angel hair sc reamin out behind them from the wreck tho really i suppose now that i think back on it they cdnt help it. dis. playin their distress in such an ostrich anglosaxon manner & leavin that black man to drown

And we wd almost always name the picture or poynting which we represented over & over & over again w/very few changes or variations since we discover that the tourists have come to know or remember it by heart as it were

& wanted the pic. ture they re. member & recognize
over & over again as if it was their memory & not
hours that had witness it & so render it so that we
decided to re. peat & re. peat it &
as i say represent it more & more

χ-

actly as it was love & remembered by these tourists
each time they come & call it

## Refuge or The Refuge

or by far the best known & loved hymn after a time named after it

# Rock of Ages

An i sittin here watchin the picture of my leff foot & not knowin what to do about it really since it itchin qu ite badly now & hurtin too much now when i try to step on it to continue on in the mas which i know was leavin me well behine by this time since all my frenns have gone on farward towards the ilannnn w/all the fan & funfare & flags wavin & noise & costume & colour & laughter & whistle whistlin & i don't think they notice i had had to stop on the foot & begin hopp. in & had had to drop out hobbelling on the other foot towards the **Rock of Ages** or if they did i reckon they didnt think too much about it xpecting that i wd catch up w/them in the middle of a minit & be back within the sound & song & carnival

χ-

citement by the time we are in sigh(t) of the tall old augustere Lindisfarne tower but suddenly my good frenn from schooldays Kenneth (Pile) who is a doctor now as it tune in in the dream & just as well. at least I think hope feel that it was just as well. at anyrate here he is before his sudden & unexpected death leavin an other deep hole in the sand as deep as the sough of water standing behine me & we are peeling away the plaster from the solo of my foot & by this time any- way all sorts of people was standin around. stragglers & a few sunday visitors & onloo kers I suppose . you know how it is . no privacy on these small sandy sea-swept ilannnns as you may have notice looking out of yr small plateglass windows

& what i have at first think of as little dark spots in my soul at least plimp lers as i said or brambles or [blk long-spiky sea eggs so black they look like the deep dark luminous vertigo of outer space where the monks say they come from anyway & what i think in eng lish they call *sea-urchims* for so many years now that i cant remember what our Bajan name for them is/ being like a castaway here in a way & will have to phone my sinister in London or Laburnum to see if she remember & i can hear her saying already they name **cobblers**

& i remember now when i am back in Barabados long ago on the beach walkin into th (e) silver shallow water at RoadView or Mullings or GlitterBay. I step into a nest a dem i didn't see there in the shallow & i had to walk back out on to the beach on my knees in all that bleak shriekin needless of pain w/in sigh of our parents home. & the memory of this jook or shaego must have make holes far longer then than we have ever at first think since in the dream - yu know how it is - evvabody from Ken to Dalkeith & the now quick crowd of spectators have become lithe involve in the mirror or memory of what happenin so that it is no longer me one watching the holes in my foot but the entire dream & ilannnn because now evvabody like they come back to the ages where I sittin until i know that this year it is not Aldee after all whose carnival it is but mine for there are these three blk holes as i have said before that evvabody cd now see what must have been there from the beginning & really no. body cd overstann how i had had them hidden away like that without knowing what was happenin to me until Kenneth peel away the last bit of the half-dirty plast er which is now thin like paper clinging for as long as it can to the bottom of my foot as if it feel shame & doan want to xpose me before all these people on the ilannnn this afternoon . but when at last the plaster remove from my foot . when Dr K as he now is or at anyrate wa - in the dream - peel it all soff ly off of my soul as it were. i cd see that what had cause this sensation & itch in my foot where the ball i wd turn & walk & jump & land on was - that there was like this dry pool there. deep like anything. like a pole or pocket or a crabhole tho of course in the dream we didnt have to use so many words to describe it & what it look like & felt like & in a way what it meant was that there was like bunches of grapes in. side of it which Kenneth remove one by one (the bun-

ches i mean) & throw them away into the sand & is as if Aidee or her Aldee mother come screamin out of the annual ritual. or leave to reclaim their daughter from the sand where she still lyin in the disgrace of the cleft of her legs wi-

de open & selion &  & all this pawpa-(w) & disgraceful yellow on the beach & the little blk seeds that evvaone on the ilannnn keep hide-way all solstice & not pourin from her lips but in this unheal &

it now seem unanneal colonial weapon at the bottom of like the pool & gutter of my foot from which the future dead Ken or Kin/g is still pickin out these bunches of pale lifeless-like plastic not realastic & red livid

grapes of responsibility & throw. in them away in the sand & throw. in them away in the dry season until i wake up to write this wrong down at 4:10:04 in the morning still not know. in fe sure what it mean tho is now 7:09 that i reach w/ this revision & much further on you will see from the top by the title. version 4 vers ion 5 version 8 now & now 9 + 10 + so on till is fridee

31 aug again sev years later which is St Aidan birthda (y) with the sea gone back out as if the strange visit of breakers & their seasonal sound have they backs turn to nus & gone a long way out of hand for a walk . som kind of straight or sleight of alchemy or

ery of distance & the whole ilannnn simi & saltbush & cowpasture '**& adorn w/gold & w/gems & gilded w/silver unallowed metal. And I, Aldread, unworthy & miserable sacristan, gloss it in this kind of Inglish w/the healp of God & St Cuthbert**' - CowPastor Barbados 31 august 1998

# *Itinerary*

**Terry Temescu**

1.

the suggestion has long been made
that the penetration of the tropical
and must be continuous
the arc of cognition
a slightly uncharted arrival

stare at the lines on a map
black and white and personal
perennial and give it time
a wrinkle of possibility
high land is not dependable

the shape of light footsteps
one detail that may be secure
in treetops whose names
climb plodding the crests
of mountains whose names

*stare at reality on the wind: "I know the way my island is"*

much can be gained
from considering other possibilities as well
broad similarities imply interaction
waiting for blossoms
to be catalogued and dated

2.

untouched but aligned
uttered, finally, botany
a weight without end
the blanks bask in modesty
and stagger toward content

rhythm of conversation
implied at the intersections
over contours of careful shading
your motion in the morning
the tremor of what they're saying

*one-way navigation at random from Samoa was not as likely*

breath and dreams of memory
like dolls left to dry
in gathering momentum
did not provide a simple answer
as much as falsify the question

these hills hold reliquaries
and the lines that define them
it is not unusual that people
at any time should move
and use industrial stone

3.

the target angles do not allow
for the concept of expanded radii
fast boats gulp the ocean
how time ceased to border
constant if somewhat struggling trickle

in ideal conditions one can see
as far as the curvature of the earth
the meteorologist performs ritual
for panic, his intermittent feathers
blur the camera's whirr

the view of a vocabulary
talking itself in the wrong direction
involved with minus signs
and other un-Christian
inventions of the Arabs

the rain's motion, the swells
brown tear-stained cliffs
constant if somewhat troubling scripture
coinciding with renewal
brilliant execution, the voice of ghosts

*canoes sail at average speeds: liquid carvings of home and passage*

4.

little uncertainty and no
point of no return
motion east and west changes time
north and south the whole sky
the hour of volcanic subsidence

*their lines are cast: who are you, who is your king, and why do you come this way*

prospect of surface imagination
eyes cling to their object
suggestive evidence of others
can be found in the strata
sand like prose through the fingers

their transition is cradled
in an erratic outward voyage
the return slightly temporary
names with more vowels than sounds
the return more conventional

footprints pressed in the beach
the gestures accelerate
actively searching for signs
increases the chance of being them
stopping does not hinder motion

5.

the air complete with water
a tumult by the cubic inch
micronesia - forgetting the small
westerlies become increasingly
intermittent going east

the air is filled with time
one less instance of alignment
the sand extends to make believe
it is impossible to expect
to find good clay on atolls

in the roses of dawn
the arrows fly with the wind
time and tectonic submergence
history to be paddled among
a glimpse below of ancient motion

*to navigate, three qualities are required: fierceness, strength and wisdom*

stepping from memory to landscape
alert as if too much has happened
island sizes are effectively expanded
spaces between them bridged
the perpetration of the tropical

6.

a distinct clap of distraction
with no conception of sin
crafting with the dimensions given
understood as future losses
a highway empty as nostalgia

*the voyaging corridor lies within a band of shelter: time to approach perfection*

a steaming icon is carried
in the belief that silktails
inhabit culturally interrupted time
one safe way of dealing
with chronological uncertainties

rising post-Pleistocene seas
navigable far inland
wider coherence the subject of search
woman born of sugar cane
caught repeatedly in fishing nets

a need for steeper gradients of isolation
as more than design
give way to tracks as followed
intercepting exploratory probes
alteration of some meaning changes

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7.

skyline hugging treeline hugging
signs on the plane of simultaneity
undersea motion unexpectedly
profusion of public relations
the ideas of the world watch and wait

like another Venus just
rising from the waves
gratefully supply Earth *beauté*
and society soon will render
uneasy historical mythology

*the speed of these craft across the seas: a compass of the mind*

descent completed with brilliance
theirs a state of affairs
community of diminishing returns
shades of more intense pastel
in the eloquence of shadow

protozoic chieftains embracing leeward
and from this distance
it is possible to think
the transmission of something
could lead to something more

8.

diaphanous and barely heard
a book once read and stacked away
audience of those who plan to applaud
outcomes planned from the outset
passion the fruit of ubiquitous hibiscus

*long voyage across and down the wind: patterned spread*

undersea
plates
pitched

on trade
wind
patterns

break
open
sand

ashore

# *fool's scold, 1.4.97*

**Roy Miki**

*to commemorate japanese canadian freedom day*
*return to the coast april 1, 1949*

*for peggy m @*
*irvine, california*

*

48 years since the last restriction lifted on jcs. the USA of it all
this year. set out with irvine english department secretary pm to
get a social security number to legitimate my sojourn as a lowly
canuck. a routine procedure, i'm told. few minutes drive to pick up
the card needed for my stay. get there, but no, i need to be
approved first by immigration and naturalization. ok, ok, drive
across town. a line up already forming, and the sun is bright, the
breeze just right, children fidgeting. the opaque glass window
speaks, then minutes pass with her supervisor. no, can't do.
require to be re-examined by justice, section for aliens.

re-examined? when was i examined? that's the problem. the
voice said, i wasn't, at the vancouver border. new regulations.
since? today.

*

astride the fault lines
the enemy within stutters

"it was all an ordinary day"

warm california sun
casting a glow
on the landscape

sinecures planned in absentia

climb the wall to perch on parapets

"canadian? pass"

as limply as a hand falling off a cart
(strain the figure for the sake of time spent

the passage into empire made so glibly
on this auspicious day before the coastal dawn

*ie the moon rose on march 31*

.

*

on the freeway to LA . if we rush we can make it by noon. pm knows
the route, and before we finish exchanging lives, we're turning off
and circling justice looking for a place to park. peripheral vision
signals we're right next door to nihonbashi or j-town.

*

sinuous thread dialects about which nothing
has been written
ecological damage on over
drive
the slack alters the speech task

*ie the sun rose on april 1*

"but why didn't you
declare your intent
on the way through?"

in tent? the nomadic armour had fallen away
leaving only the mask to fill the passage

now the LA freeway's intent has gripes on the wall
the mouse mandate to get the cursor on track

at the entrance to the halls of justice the burly
blue uniform before the security gate electrons

*the weave of short fuses*

*the fiery hearts arc*

*

7th floor, down the long deserted hallway, to the interrogation room, and a hand behind glass posts a sign. closed for lunch.

back at 1:30, the room has filled with restlessness as lawyers and clients whisper inaudible words. my examination form is 5 pages with questions of identity, intent, motive, declaration, and why i hadn't been examined. at the canlit border? i mused for a second. i can't understand why, she says, when i hand her back the form, my hand sore. i didn't know. well, if you ever do this another time, you'll have to leave.

*

set on demos magnetic no registration card needed
the US is not my telos no sir no sir no sir no sir i
won't tell sir no sir won't tell won't tell i promise
cross my jc heart but i won't hope to die no sir
no sir just passing no really i'm not looking for a
home yes this english is genuine the form is no problem
sure i can wait until after lunch no problem i love
grilled fish and rice i understand the problems you have
with so many trying to sneak through the nets no joking
i'm canadian and was sent here to speak on redress
for the internment of jcs at irvine university no i can't
stay longer but thanks for making such a fuss on
this fool's day memorial ok glad to be of service

*

new regulations, she continues, needed to deal with illegal aliens here. are there legal aliens here? i don't ask but at this interstice i imagine the border zone of "enemy alien," thinking of the ja's expelled from the coast in 42.

this is all an allegory i assure pm who by this time is incredulous. the plight of a lowly canuck, i tell her, april 1 is always a trial day for jc's — a day the spectral "enemy alien"

plays tricks on us.

sure enough i'm given permission. april fool, i thought she
would say through the glass, but she only smiled as she passed
me the coveted "J" form.

*

two score years and eight anon
this west coast precipice
this masked marvel
heads for the hills

*across the firmament*
*the blue candles lit*
*the litter on the causeway*
*the foils in the narrative*

# *The Guest of Literature: The Issue of Hospitality in Literary Translation*

**Piotr Gwiazda**

> We do not see why the act of the translator should not be appreciated as the quintessential literary act, one which proposes that the reader remain ignorant of the text it reveals to him and from which his ignorance will not distance him. Instead, it will bring him closer by becoming active, by representing to him the great interval that separates him from it.
>
> (Blanchot 190)

Blanchot's words (whose translator, Charlotte Mandell, ought not in this case pass unmentioned) challenge the traditional notion of literary translation insofar as they reevaluate its role in literature and point out to its generative character. In doing so, they also address the deep difficulty of accepting translation as a distinct type of literature. Blanchot's words propose a displacement of translation from the shadow of literature, or rather the shadow *between* literatures, where it looms as both familiar and alien, close and remote, welcome and unwelcome; where it sojourns as a guest. Translation implies an almost political process of balancing and negotiation; a transfer; a difference. Works of literature, poems in particular, supposedly "suffer" from translation. Something apparently gets "lost" during this highly transformative operation. Nevertheless, many poststructuralist theorists and philosophers (like Jacques Derrida in *The Ear of the Other*) fully subscribe to Blanchot's view: because of its generative character, languages themselves profit enormously from translation. A question arises: how does the reader react to translation, which invariably represents the "great interval" separating him or her from the original? Perhaps it would be worthwhile to respond to the soft reproach noticeable in Blanchot's comment ("We do not see why . . .") and, in a way, explore the shadowy area where translation navigates between interpretation and imitation; where the scale measuring semantic loss and gain is particularly sensitive. Perhaps it would be useful to inquire into the very nature of the suspicion with which we approach it, the vigilance which is not unlike the typical treatment of a stranger, a foreigner, and most of all — a guest.

The inherent caution about literary translation can be traced back to the intimate co-dependence of language and meaning. Language creates more or less complex meanings, from the simplest ideas to the most intricate cultural structures, and they in turn expand language. It is possible to write a history or several histories of the most enduring structures of culture which, however, would prove to be nothing but linguistic histories, while language incessantly produces new ones. As early as the seventeenth century, Leibniz claims that language is not the vehicle of thought, but its restrictive medium; therefore, developments of thought are limited to developments of language. This assumption continues well into the late twentieth century in both philosophy and linguistics. All forms of

contemplative and cognitive expression, all types of interpretation and definition, occur within the limits of language. The nature of these expressions cancels out the possibility of giving them irrefutable, nonnegotiable meanings and so they remain ill-defined, conditional, negotiable. They are given names instead, but never proper names, which alone are capable of bearing out uniqueness and singularity; they are given names and thus acquire the unbearable universality and utility of everything that has a name. They exist, to be sure, but only as everything that has a name: a small consolation for what is merely representational, secondary, though at the same time visible and audible as a word. This is precisely what Wittgenstein has in mind when he argues in *Philosophical Investigations* that the meaning of a word is limited to its use in the language (20). For what lies beyond the limits of language? Certainly not words, but only what cannot be named and therefore referred to, repeated, remembered; what occurs *just once*, what provokes no response, no return. Words, however, hold fast to what they represent, no matter how ambiguous and manifold it is.

As George Steiner emphasizes in the first chapter of his canonical study on language and translation, even in a simple *intra*lingual exchange words stay the same, while what they represent is changeable, susceptible to the processes of accretion and erosion, mortal:

> Any model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance. No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same things, to send identical signals of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings. (45)

The same phenomenon takes place in literature, which both sustains and is sustained by its own meanings. Works of literature are timeless: their current interpretation and relevance keep them alive. The nature and, in fact, the pleasure of reading lies not in grasping the original immediacy of texts, but in relating them to the present moment. Nevertheless, literary works competing for immortality manage to maintain a unique (*just once*) relation to their own time. The German-language poet Paul Celan stresses this point in his Bremen speech: "[T]he poem does not stand outside time. True, it claims the infinite and tries to reach across time — but across, not above" (34). In its unending effort to do away with ambiguities, literature resuscitates them into the future. In its self-centered search for truth, literature finds a thousand truths in its own center.

What is the significance of all this to the guestlike status of translation in literature? One must agree with Steiner (and those who precede him) that every translation comprises an act of interpretation, and vice versa. Moreover, since in an *inter*lingual translation words are almost never the same, what they represent turns out to be twice as ambiguous. The model of interlingual translation, also known as translation proper, follows the model of interpretation within the same language. In its fabled effort to say something that has never

been said before and for once (*just once*) break away from language, every poem goes mute at the very possibility of translation. Its own potential for manifold textual departures, its own translatability, to use Walter Benjamin's term from "The Task of the Translator," draws it back into the sphere of language. What has never been said before is thus being said over and over again. The translation process then undertakes the equally infeasible task of decoding metaphors imbedded in the original text and reencoding them into the host language. What has never been said before is thus being said as something else. We realize that translation proper stands midway between other translations, which are also interpretations. These interpretations, in turn, are crossable thresholds, beginning with the composition of a poem in the original language and ending with its translation into the host language. Translation is then equally an interpretative and *revisionary* process, but only as far as an individual translator (or reader) is concerned. No translation can claim to be the best or the last one, simply because the nature of interpretation rejects such demands for subjectivity. As Octavio Paz observes, every translation, up to a certain point, is an invention and as such it constitutes a unique text (qtd. in Bassnett-McGuire 38).

In the nineteenth century, a group of English writers and scholars, including Thomas Carlyle and William Morris, put into practice Fredrich Schleiermacher's idea of creating an exclusive language of translation, a literary mixture of the source language (German, French or Latin) and the host or target language (English). The project proved short-lived precisely because it claimed to provide something like definitive translation. The nature of translation lies not as much in the impossibility to graft two different languages as in the impossibility to graft two audiences, or two individuals, speaking these languages and thus being immersed in two distinct cultural systems. In the already mentioned essay "The Task of the Translator," Walter Benjamin puts forward the notion of 'pure language,' an enigmatic disclosure of poetic intention that occurs when a poem undergoes translation. In what constitutes a prelude to the poststructuralist theories of translation, Benjamin regards the apparent deficiency of the process (caused by the incompatibility of two different languages) as a driving and sustaining force:

> It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work. (80)

Ideally, then, translation is not a matter of balancing the scales. It is a matter of removing them.

The title of this essay operates within the capacious lexicon of hospitality but not hostility, and the essay itself focuses at length on investigating the terms of our acceptance, not rejection, of translation. After all, translation has always been essential in the exchange of literatures and its role can be all but overestimated in the late twentieth century, which is quite appropriately called the century of translation. But why should we speak about it in terms of hospitality?

Above all, the two terms share the same axiom: it is impossible to have pure translation as it is impossible to have, as Immanuel Kant repeatedly implies in *Perpetual Peace,* pure hospitality. In his philosophical tract, Kant attempts to define the cosmopolitan right which ideally would include the privilege of a stranger not to feel hostility at a strange territory. He resolves that it is only possible on the following conditions: hospitality to a stranger will be given as long as the host remains the master of the house; the host retains the right to expel every stranger who interferes with his home affairs; finally, the stranger can only entertain the right to visit the host, not to stay permanently. Hospitality, in other words, can never be pure or unconditional. We observe that Kant constructs his rather utopian model of perpetual peace on very sober and pragmatic principles, his reasoning involving negotiation between abstract and concrete, ideal and actual postulates.

Our acceptance of translation involves a similar process of negotiation. Keeping in mind Kant's ruminations on the subject of hospitality in the sphere of politics, we can proceed to apply the main conditions pertaining to a typical host/guest interaction to literary translation.

i) *The reader will remain hospitable to any translation as long as it does not claim to be the original.* In other words, we will remain hospitable toward our guests as long as they do not claim the house for themselves. This condition also demonstrates the natural suspicion toward a foreigner attempting to speak one's language and make a home in one's country. For translation, of course, complete assimilation is impossible. At most, in Roman Jakobson's words, it can become a "creative transposition" (Brower 238). Translation aspires to equality and balance; it attempts, as it were, to squeeze through the sign of equation and emerge on the other side as the original text. In short, it defies the priority of the original. It stands in the way of our prospective, unique encounter with the original work and makes us look for that encounter twice as hard.

But then, of course, like the political borders in the contemporary, post-Maastricht Treaty Europe, the borders that determine the original poem are no longer strict and guarded, permitting a free exchange of new readings and insights. The groundless demand for the original poem parallels the demand for its subjective (and therefore exlusive, definitive) interpretation. Here, it appears, the primary reason for our caution against translation can be detected. The insistence on the priority of the original text is as deep-seated in our minds as the illusion of our subjective reading. By virtue of their simultaneous activation, these prejudices form, as it were, a coalition against literary translation. This is why translation can be simultaneously treated as a guest of literature and our own guest, since it tests and threatens both convictions, the notion of a literary work's originality and the notion of our subjectivity. Translation becomes a psychological issue as it seems to be insinuating to us: "Yes, you too can be translated." We identify with the original, even when it is written in a foreign language, because it implies uniqueness and individuality; because it mirrors our subjectivity. We find it more comfortable to trust the original, since translation merely constitutes its afterlife and we do not want to trust a ghost, not even a readable ghost.

When we find that there is no choice between a ghost and a guest, we finally invite translation into our house despite the threat it poses against our subjectivity as hosts. Thus, the second condition of our hospitality is a logical consequence of the first one:

ii) *The reader will never fully acknowledge translation as an independent work of literature.* In other words, we will never accept a guest (or ghost) as a full member of our household. Translation can be nothing but a translation. The insistence on its secondary character also suggests our *a priori* vigilance against the translator who consciously brings in his or her own interpretation — and therefore subjective explanation — to the original, and loudly interferes with the unique exchange between its author and the audience. The offer of the translator is useful and profitable, but we remain wary. *Traduttore traditore.* This is why, in our view, translation can only be transient, ephemeral. As James Merrill once said, all masterpieces are timeless, but their translations date and thus need redoing (7).

The illusory notion of the "original" work preceding and controlling its translations parallels our own strong sense of originality (uniqueness, subjectivity), which surfaces especially during the process of reading. The alliance between the two singularities, that of the original and that of ourselves, automatically places translation in the shadow of literature. This alliance is deceptive, because the encounter that the original work invites can only be achieved in a one-way fashion; it cannot be referred or responded to, remembered. While the encounter gives us a fleeting chance to rename all things, even give proper names to things, it itself bears no name. What is given to us, in other words, cannot be returned. A fleeting chance — but unrepeatable. This is Blanchot's "great interval" that separates us from the original text. This interval does not distance us from the text, but somehow brings us closer to it — in spite of our ignorance of the original language — by becoming active, by means of this "most quintessential literary act" in which questioning matters more than understanding. Thus translation revives great works of literature and produces new meanings. It assures their survival. Radicalizing Walter Benjamin's point about the original and its translatability, Jacques Derrida contests that translation is a generative force as far as it allows language to modify the original text and release its hidden meanings: "Translation is writing; that is, it is not translation only in the sense of transcription. It is a productive writing called forth by the original text" (153). Thanks to translation, literary texts are transformed by one another. But this argument does not lessen our around-the-clock vigilance about translation. We maintain that its transient character reduces its literary validity and insist on keeping it in the shade. Our perverse insomnia does not allow translation to see daylight.

For us, translation will always play the role of an *announced* guest whose presence is welcome and desired as long as it is temporary. Translation provokes suspicion by trying to look and sound like the host language and by bringing in foreign, potentially dangerous elements of the original language. Translation comes and goes, reluctantly advertising its ephemeral nature, unable to shake it off, just as a foreigner cannot get rid of his or

her accent. Having no homeland, it constantly crosses linguistic and political borders. We welcome it today, but will disclaim it tomorrow. During its transient stay in literature, translation reflects our desire to seek meaning and therefore never to be alone (the host in an empty house), but at the same time it shows how quickly and readily we become satisfied with partial meanings and temporary company.

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# from *Draft 33: Deixis*

**Rachel Blau DuPlessis**

My particular forays
        are made of words, arraged
by segmentivity along the line of anguage.[1]
        I mean anguish and anger, mean
the loss of L—
        down to the very bone of oss,
the stone I put my head upon
        taking such rock for pillow.

This is done by a method of the detail,
of the dot, the dit, the dite and dight
the surd of word
a caught schwa within underglot
some particulars of crot
singing, singeing the bitty signs, sighs
breathing up ashen white fire.

The book's black
                fire shimmered;
                and each
                shredded serif
                        a-swirl from darker fumes of the past
                blew
                        through the wind tunnel of hypnogogery.

My first poem was "Memory."
A take on here and there, a step, another, up
231st St. hill, cigarette billboard, a waste
edge, daisy asters and leggy ragweed.
I stop, I stopped, I continue to stop
        here (that is, there) to consider step,
                to see
the shadow form of place
        where I had been
                the shadowy form of me.
Therefore I understood myself
        speaking

---

[1] Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "Manifests," *Diacritics* 26, 3/4 (Fall/ Winter 1996): 31-53.

into watchfulness
a space not of the self
but of a void that exists as such.

All my next poems were,
you might say, also
entitled Memory
yet my memory was left in a ravine.

I rejected to portray,
to memorialize,
to sing that ruffled lay
that poems essay
—I was no daughter of
unpronounceable Mnemosyne—

and being the woman writing, anyway,
Master of the Female Half-Lengths
I was ambivalent in re:
the beautiful and its "dove-grey." [2]

Thus doggedly
I clopped away
from memory, muted its X'd ray
by half-measures going halfway.

What was this Memory of?
It was years.

Five elements four gates, rhumbic directions
a bright bell-noise
the color of colors
desire not for the fixed object
but for a melting down, and building up again
incessant the universe of form
even in the smallest room

tapping colors over a template
then with a hand, a sandstorm
sweeping the once formed grains back over the finished form
to make the formless

---

[2] Pound speaks against the" viewy" and the "dove-grey" in "A Retrospect" (1913-1918), *The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound,* ed. T.S. Eliot. London: Faber & Faber, 1954, 7 and 5. Of course, many of his modernist criteria (hard, "no emotional slither") are implicitly anti-feminine, despite originating in praise of H.D.

until finish is cast away.[3]
It was all luminous and/or all destroyed.
I had to learn that it was Memory of the void.

"It" was immediately constituted
as a topic.
Right away, the word "fold"
was used.
One can dwell here, or is this
"there"?
"I am trying to describe
the foreignness,
the outsideness"[4]
of being inside the site,
at the same time
far from it.
There is a shift from silence to writing.
One feels as if the white page
a gleam of light, adequate to itself
with brightness, such positive brightness

constructs a demonstration
of access to a larger site
where fold becomes void, and void is fold.

A measure of what we do not know
a reminder of intricacies that cross our paths,
a hinge, turning outward and inward, like a page,
a little spot to stand.

Here is the time for the thing called the sayable
here its tiny home
here as exchange is its unsayable.

And here is the oddity: that
I is not speaking to *you* but to *it*
*(For the poet I, is speaking*
and it to I,
*(to it, and it*
the shift between them
*(to I; shifting*

---

[3] A Kalachakra Mandala, made as a particle mandala, a temporary arrangement of bits of colored material such as grains of sand or flower petals, was constructed (though not completed in the time allotted) by Lobsang Samten at Swarthmore College, for a week in September 1997.

[4] Robin Blaser, "The Fire," in *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, ed. Donald Allen and Warren Tallman. New York: Grove Press, 1973, 243.

brings I to the status of it.
*(brings I to it like a gift.*

PN 228.[5] On my knees
between metaphor and translation
say I fell. It isn't true
and plot like that,
the plotzy sentiment, I resist;
so, wait, let's say I didn't fall, I'd knelt.
Heavy, this penumbra of declaration.
So say myself went looking for
some call number
that happened to be on the lowest shelf.

In the old story it was clear who called,
but in this-now can only stamp the thing "answered"
and maybe falsify date of receipt.
So to the call, I called back *here am I*
and *there I am:*

I mean, there is no
I here now
to hear or speak or know,
I am there,
to (maybe two)
speak out of the it
speak out It. [6]
Let It speak
Make it know and no. Now.
Make It (what) Knew.

Flanged with prosody
bolted to or from or onto
the dead

over a gravel and rutted road
this is a poetry where one feels the road under
the feel

---

[5] I see my book, misshelved; *Writing Beyond the Ending* is PS 228.

[6] See this from Robert Duncan: "The play of first person, second person, third person, of masculine and feminine and neuter, the 'it' that plays a major role in recent work, is noticeably active in the multiphasic proposition of voice in my poetry, where impersonations, personifications, transpersonations and depersonation, again from the earliest levels of development in my language are always at play." Robert Duncan, "The Self in Postmodern Poetry," *Fictive Certainties,* New York: New Directions, 1985, 220.

the feet
climb

thru the darkness of this dark
face of poems not written
waste of time not taken
taste of travels somber
and the problem is
how to make poetry

not remembering

but constructed of Memory
time going forward athwart,
a here and a not here
textured, unexpected, flashing, erased,
alive in the flip of the void—
the problem
is how to make poetry
constructed of It.[7]

Memory has meaning
as an instance of discourse
it is an activity
that fills and empties like a shifter.

It calls up a spot between the recto/ verso
somewhere along the knife of the page.

Spot neither the oft-spoken, nor the unspoken, but the
in-between

the place of the change.

---

[7] Benveniste (221-222) calls the I-you relation "instances of discourse." But in poetry, it seems to me that two conditions are true that "The Nature of Pronouns" excludes. First, although for Benveniste, the "third person" is "never being reflective of the instance of discourse" (never, that is, in an intersubjective relation with I, such as I-you), I would insist, and have "argued" here, that in the moment of specific poetic discourse, there is exchange between the I and it. Second, the third person is "not being compatible with the paradigm of referential terms like here, now" (while I would want to argue that *it* speaks in and through the now, perhaps just as it flicks into the then).

# *mythology*

**Lyle Daggett**

she took if from the shelf
i remembered cartoons

used books
viola da gamba
for playing on the legs

odyssey and metamorphosis
alpha centauri

steam rises from the hole
in the ground
therapy

we wrote on wax tablets
they wrote on wax tablets
years later
if x equals y

saturday morning
a horse on t.v.

roy rogers
train tracks
and steam

a creation
a story

it might sound like violins
bright paint
light foot
the wall
the door
embalmed lizard wrapped
in papyrus

she hands the branch
he dances

from the display case
bronze looks back

# *Otel sin H*

Mariela Gil Sánchez

Qué sombría letra oscura en el anuncio de neón. Por mi ventana asoma la hache a punto de caer, sostenida apenas por el puente frágil de su anatomía.

¿Quién inventó las letras? ¿Quién dispuso que fuese sordomuda? Siento que bajo el puente de la hache hay un mundo de cosas huecas y hostiles hacinadas junto a mi historia.

Y vuelve el recuerdo del lugar ajeno: la cama fría, sábanas casi limpias, tenue oscuridad para beber tu nombre.

En esta ciudad sin ángeles ando en tu busca, a tu puerta, por abajo del orden que nos reina. Puebla sin ti no es Puebla como otel sin H no es lo mismo.

# *Otel Without H*

Mariela Gil Sánchez
Translated by Jen Hofer

What dark letter shadowed on the neon sign. In my window appears the aitch about to fall, barely supported by the fragile bridge of its anatomy.

Who invented letters? Who arranged for them to be deaf-mute? I sense there is beneath the bridge of the aitch a world of hollow and hostile things heaped beside my history.

And the memory of a foreign place returns: the cold bed, sheets almost clean, faint darkness the better to drink your name.

In this city without angels I go in pursuit of you, to your door, under the order which rules us. Puebla without you is not Puebla just as otel without H is not the same.

# *Elations*

**Leonard Schwartz**

1

Bitter cold prostitute
and Romanian hero, lover and father-in-law.
It's slate grey sky or love on the terrace,
its avenues of water or a walk in the slums.

Home. Also home. Ruined houses. A friend's
extra cot. Out to the biergarten. In her parent's
bed. All alone under the Pantheon's dome. The crowd
at the ruins. The crowd on the ferry.
Awaiting transport to a coastal town.

2

On a colossal scale
        and then there was glass.
An iron Lenin bereft on the square.
Streets that were quiet now owned by the car.
Jones Beach, radio free: silent bonanza.
Strolled through the tropical town.
Air as heavy as standing water.
Rainstorm after rainstorm
during the lightest of sleeps.
The temple and its ancient trees
thirsting for a breeze.
Sweeping in early in the morning, glad
    to find a bed.
Glad to find
    her in the bed:
sunbathers naked in the *Englishgarten.*
Jumped through a wave, tasted the sea.
The pickpocket's white hand
slipped right past my cock.
Next:
to meet Thomas at the TransAmerica at 2AM.

3

Leaning at ease
against Suleiman's wall,
grapes in one hand
Rimbaud in the other
(was eighteen years old).
In a dark glade Mayakovsky's grave
only last summer.
Went out for a short walk;
was feared I'd get lost,
seventy-year old and seven year old
scowering the streets.
Returning to Kennedy, disguised as the person
who'd previously left.
Rome's swallows reminded her
of Beijing summer,
that same hungry sound.
Harmonious hut:
chorus of birds around five in the morning.
Stretched out in the field far from the town.
A plaque to honor Endre Ady, Hungarian poet;
Lucacs, translated into French, browsed on the train.

4

Days in the souks,
out of this world.
Withdrawn behind the icons.
Barefoot on the Lady Dowager's grounds
and the other man, deep in thought.
Cioran introduced me to the Italian editor
but she wasn't interested.
Asked if I'm Islamic
like Muhammed Ali, told to get off the bus
and never look back.
Grapes in one hand, Rimbaud in the other,
evidently attractive: a gay Arab
from Hebron making his play.
Out on the piers with Marina and Ulf:
        holding Ulf's hand.
Out on the piers with Jaime and Indran:
        held hands with Mingxia.

Out on the piers with Yang Lian and Yo Yo:
they didn't touch.
Downpour on Jane Street,
no point to clothes.
An exquisite black cat: Jerusalem *chi.*
A shack on stilts at the edge of the sea.

5

"John Street,
what a suggestive name,"
the woman said dryly,
out in the drizzle in a
drab yellow skirt.
E.W. too down in the dumps -
a turtle in a trenchcoat
miserable in the turbid rain.
Old lady vending a single garment
in the Mayokovska metro corridor;
an even more elderly lady hawking
Siberian kittens.
Pregnant British woman glimpsed in her tub,
heard she'd died seven years later:
meeting her daughter along Avenue Daumesnil.
Dead cat, burned up, stashed in an urn.
Love meets bad luck on certain
of these turns, love meets a roadside
resurrection in the old quarter
of mysteriously selected towns, not failing
to mention the city is divided in spirit
between have's and have not's.

6

Locked into the gardens at Versailles
after closing hours we slowly undressed
for the camera (I only saw the photographs once).
She knew a wall she wanted us to sit on;
when we sat, we were spellbound by the fading Etruscan sun.
Staten Island cabdrivers, many from Ghana;
the ones I meet, I ask about Gassire.
"How much did you see of conspicuous consumption?"
SK queries after the trip.

In ignorance of muezzin
writing out passages from Artaud
at 2 in the morning; chills through my spine
as the call to prayer sounds, sensual loudspeakers
electrifying the transcribed mummy named in the text.
The grasslands stretched before us.
Knew no one in the city and I liked it that way,
lived each day in expectation of the next sun,
the clouds of unknowing it was sure to condense.
They go out of their way to make it look artsy,
twisting the room in the manner of glass
and leaving you with precious little space to get passed,
a kind of revenge of the culture against its practioners,
unless you like that kind of closed-in feeling, and some do.
"The elderly here look older than the elderly
seen anywhere else," his first letter said, and his last.
Bitterness pervades my memory of that city:
    I cannot say why.
Brought her back from the airport
and into the shower, clothing and all.
Afterwards we looked bowlegged from riding
the horses, svelte and unsaddled,
so far from the yurts.

7

Hudson Street under the hammer,
the same bearded waiter, year after year.
Small room in a great lodge, made it that far.
Mists rising out of valleys and over trees
the lumber industry mercifully spares.
Marble Hill: spotted an egret.
Flew into Rio, egrets at attention
in acrid pools encircling the airport.
Snowswept cityscape either side of the Wall.
Shubinsky gesticulated in a stiff awkward way.
The Valley of Fex, cow blocking our path.
Tel Aviv dive, too terrifing to fathom.
Fountain in the Luxembourg Garden
around which Celan paced as he mumbled
in his very last years.
Hutong she grew up in, familiar, unfamiliar
    ramble and twist.

Jersey Turnpike and surrounding murk also
inhabited by egrets, on the way to work
glimpsed as they fish.

8

Fulton Street Fish Market
after the storm, dead fish and live turtles
plastering Water Street.
Gawking down Gorki's steps
two giant salamanders, their mouths fixed
in a smile, made of green stone apparently soft.
Meltingly soft sun near the *Theatre du Soleil*,
sordid recollections of Tenderloin raunch.
The turtle crept forward on uncertain feet.
Arrived at the Haitian joint for New Year's Eve
very much late, danced away what was left of our time.
Confederate flag flying over Miami Beach
construction site; B- for the A train.
Sat in the Chehkov Center not understanding a word.
A city I like but cannot see detail in.
From Paris to Dieppe everything's a blur.
C+ for the A train, C- for the 1.
Advertisement for a strip-club
    dangled from an air-plane:
shuffling past the embalmed leader
too slowly for the guards.
Awaiting the hurricane with windows shuttered;
that storm never happened, NYC's did.
Enjoyed existence, took a dip in the Wadi.
A for the A train equals being-in-itself.
Being as movement equals the action of change.

9

"Fafner" deep in sleep at Lincoln Center?
The snake bit but not through the boot.
Ghostly march up many steps
to reach the women's section
and the canoe began to drift.
Wotan, unsure which way to turn,
settles on the Heights.

Aging gracefully, Scandanavian cruise.
Darkened synagogue of spiraling ascents.
Jonah as translated for comic effect:
"are you angry?" the prophet queries
his divinity figure, the counter-will's face.
Pacing the room as the younger man frothed,
from the smoothness of stones to the Ligurian sea.
Wore the yarmulke to decontextualize his head.
Climbing the switchbacks without a place to stay.
Night falls on the forest;
drinking a beer at the inn *Elefante*.
Chirp of insects, supernaturally bright stars.
To begin to distinguish differences where everything
in the city seemed uniformly drab?
It took about 72 hours in the offing.
Later, the song of the birds, its sense, their
whereabouts, an unfathomable source.

# *Hyphenated Anthropologists, Tourist Stand-ins, and the Logic of the Repeat Journey*

Ellen Strain

"Tourists dislike tourists. God is dead, but man's need to appear holier than his fellows lives."[1] In his 1976 book *The Tourist*, Dean MacCannell documented the anti-touristic impulse within tourism that drives individuals to deny the label of tourist while seeking touristic pleasures. As I suggest below, the simulated journeys of film and television offer a partial solution to this paradox by providing "tourist stand-ins," thereby delivering the same visual pleasures but seen through the eyes of someone who is not a tourist and who may circumvent the superficiality commonly associated with tourism. The anthropologist has traditionally been one such tourist stand-in, ready and eager to show the would-be tourist parts of the world still relatively unexplored and not yet overrun by other tourists. In these remote areas, the virtual tourist hopes to discover, with the assistance of the tour guide/anthropologist, the authenticity that consistently eludes the tourist traps of the world.

The following pages trace out this notion of the armchair tourist's search for authenticity through the figure of the anthropologist. The text that holds a central place within this article is the first installment of a series of ethnographic television documentaries, entitled *Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World*, which aired in 1992. *Millennium* attempts to resuscitate the anthropologist's status as a heroic authority and archeologist of authenticity through the logic of what I call the repeat journey. The repeat journey bears some resemblance to the souvenir as theorized by Susan Stewart. Stewart writes,"'Authentic' experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated."[2] Souvenirs and relics help to bridge the void which separates past and present by documenting the authenticity of their points of origin and producing the illusion of the past's authenticity made accessible through the materiality of the object. The repeat journey creates a similar illusion of past authenticity recovered through the present tense of narrative, a "structure of desire" aiming to realize a particular formulation of the world.[3] The journey as a spatial story is replicated in the retracing of footsteps, as history and contemporaneity are conflated and a mythos of first contact, discovery, and authenticity is woven. However, the first part of the article is dedicated to the factors that confound the ease of this televisual journey and the authority of its tour guide: the disappearance of the primitive and the collapse in ethnographic authority, which has diminished faith in the anthropologist's ability to meet the virtual tourist's desire for authenticity.

## *The Primitive Ideal*

The authenticity that the anthropologist seeks has traditionally been embodied by the idealized image of the primitive: the raw material of humanity, uncivilized, untouched by the "unnaturalness" of the modern world. Yet, does the primitive still exist? Or better yet, did it ever? Within an analysis of Claude Lévi-Strauss' search for a "natural" society, Marianne Torgovnick writes, "The primitive, like some grail, recedes before the observer. It may not exist and probably does not—but it is essential to act as though it does."[4] Twenty-six years after the publication of Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*, Jean Baudrillard writes an even sadder tale concerning the state of the primitive. In 1971, as Baudrillard recounts, the Philippine government decided to protect the Tasaday tribe from the corrupting effects of industrial life by returning them to the remote jungle where they had been discovered. About this attempt to recreate the primitive, Baudrillard writes:

> Of course, these particular Savages are posthumous: frozen, cryogenised, sterilised, protected to *death*, they have become referential simulacra, and the science itself a pure simulation.[5]

As if the eclipse of the primitive, or the confirmed conversion of our final hope for authenticity into pure simulation, were not troubling enough for the individual whose career depends, in one sense, upon the primitive, the anthropologist has also been besieged by a questioning of her very ability to experience the authentic, to know it and bring word of it back to eager audiences. Regardless of what label you apply—post-colonial studies, postmodernism, or post-structuralist thought—prevailing academic movements have shot holes through the anthropological creed par excellence as stated by Bronislaw Malinowski, "to grasp the native's point of view . . . to realise *his* vision of *his* world."[6] A body of writing has addressed the difficulty of seeing from another person's point of view, particularly when the two individuals are separated by a number of consciousness-determining factors, not the least of which is a power differential which has outlived the administrative structures of colonialism.

In the following pages, this collapse in ethnographic authority is explored through the consideration of three cultural anthropologists who provide historical stepping stones through a period of faith, the questioning of that faith, and finally the attempt to recapture authority and authenticity through the structure of the repeat journey. The first of these three anthropologists, Bronislaw Malinowski, is a fallen hero within the troubled discipline of anthropology. Through his work, the construction and downfall of the "chameleon fieldworker" mythology can be witnessed with all its implications for the authenticity-hungry tourist who looks to the anthropologist for an idealized version of her or himself. The last of the three, David Maybury-Lewis is a contemporary anthropologist and fieldworker who struggles against two sets of tensions: the difficulty of bringing anthropology to a popular audience via a commercial medium and the dilemmas created by a sustained post-structuralist critique of anthropological practice and epistemologies. His trip into South America,

enacted on television within the series *Millennium*, attempts to recoup a belief in anthropological authority and in an authenticity which lies outside of modernity. He lives out the repeat journey as he explicitly constructs his voyage as a repetition of his own fieldwork experience and of Columbus' journey to the Americas. Like the Philippine government retracing the jungle path which once led to the "discovery" of the primitive in an attempt to re-invent the untouched savage, Maybury-Lewis charts a path through the jungle, covering over past footsteps in the creation of a myth of first contact.

Maybury-Lewis' filmic trip down the Amazon perhaps most closely approximates the textual journey into memory of yet another anthropologist who trekked into the Brazilian Amazon—Claude Lévi-Strauss, the other anthropologist featured in the following pages. While neither Lévi-Strauss nor his travel account *Tristes Tropiques* is referenced by the television program or by the program's companion book, Maybury-Lewis is clearly involved in the active construction of his own image as anthropologist in the model of Lévi-Strauss, the hyphenated anthropologist who straddles two worlds, at home in neither. In Maybury-Lewis and in the distorted mirror of Lévi-Strauss which he holds up, a reflection of the alienated tourist of the contemporary age becomes clearly distinguishable.

## *On Authenticity and Primitivism*

Two views of the tourist's relationship to authenticity seem to be battling for attention. While writers such as Daniel Boorstin deride the tourist, declaring that this sign of the collapse of cultural integrity is interested only in "pseudo-events" and faked tourist attractions amidst the ignored "real thing,"[7] Dean MacCannell has argued the opposite. A fading of reality and the lost sense of oneness with the world around her compels the tourist to seek exactly what Boorstin says she eschews. As MacCannell writes, "For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler life-styles."[8] The tourist as modern individual thus embarks on a journey, traipsing through foreign landscapes in search of some truth, simplicity, or sense of nature that is missing from her or his daily life. Thus, rather than being content with superficiality and artificiality, MacCannell argues, the tourist is motivated by a desire for involvement and understanding, even if those goals are rarely reached.

This belief in an authenticity lying fallow in some distant locale, a belief that has not yet been extinguished by a postmodern age, holds as a corollary the rule that authenticity can only be found in areas unexposed to modernity, industrialization, and incorporation into multinational capitalism. MacCannell suggests, for instance, that the desire to satisfy tourists' search for authenticity, can lead to staged authenticity or "an infinite regression of stage-sets," i.e. a series of front regions designed to look like back regions with the "true" back region lost in the regression.[9] The actual back region where the "true" life of the indigenes takes place is never located. In a similar vein, Davydd J. Greenwood postulates that the consumerist gaze of the tourist greedy for glimpses of back-stage life transforms

the host culture, dissolving its meanings for the indigenous participants. By commodifying culture—paying to see ritual performances, taking photographs of local color for a small fee, etc.—a new, disruptive element is added: the original motives and meanings behind rituals and certain patterns of behavior are upstaged by the economic factor. Local culture may be thereby drained of its authenticity for both hosts and guests.[10]

In the art world, a similar definition of authenticity as some truth or naturalness unpolluted by economic motives apparently prevails. One art expert defined "genuine," as applied to African art, in the following way: "any piece made from traditional materials by a native craftsman for acquisition and use by members of local society . . . that is made and used with no thought that it ultimately may be disposed of for gain to Europeans or other aliens."[11]

If commercialism precludes authenticity, then the tourist whose travel is enabled by capitalist exchange can expect to fail in her quest for the authentic. MacCannell describes this grand failure:

> Tourists make brave sorties out from their hotels hoping perhaps, for an authentic experience, but their paths can be traced in advance over small increments of what is for them increasingly apparent authenticity proffered by tourist settings. Adventurous tourists progress from stage to stage, always in the public eye, and greeted everywhere by their obliging hosts.[12]

Like King Midas' touch, the tourist's search for the heartbeat of local culture reaches out but, with its transformative touch, contacts only culture as lifeless commodity. While defining authenticity may be more complex than suggested by the above statements,[13] such quandaries have elicited references to "the vanishing horizon of authenticity" to which the tourist endlessly defers.[14]

### *Anthropologist as Ideal Tourist Stand-In*

As tourism and commercial relations penetrate the isolated islands and the inland jungles of the earth's continents, anthropologists, like authenticity-seeking tourists, scurry to find those last "untouched" areas and the "unstaged" cultures situated there. Anthropologists, devoting their careers to such pursuits, have the tools necessary to locate those places that seemingly exist outside what is believed to be the polluting arm of modern culture. Thus, the anti-touristic tourist eagerly follows in the footsteps of the anthropologist, hoping to beat other tourists, hotel developers, and the inevitable wave of commercialism.

In this traditional lionizing view of the anthropologist, training, language skills, length of stay, and a supposed separation from the commodifying practices of tourism appear to guarantee the anthropologist's ability to secure an authentic vision of the Other.

This notion of the anthropologist's lone ability to extract truthful knowledge of a foreign culture is verbalized by Kenneth Read, an anthropologist known for his fieldwork in New Guinea. Two years before the discipline would be rocked by the publication of Malinowski's field diary, Read wrote in the preface to his 1965 monograph *The High Valley*:

> The field-working anthropologist undergoes a unique experience; no one else knows quite so personally what it is like to live in an entirely alien culture. Missionaries do not know; government officials do not know; traders and explorers do not know. Only the anthropologist wants nothing from the people with whom he lives—nothing, that is, but . . . an understanding of and an appreciation for the texture of their lives.[15]

More than just education, a thirst for further knowledge, and assumed altruism separates the fieldworker from other visitors; an aura of mystique surrounds the ethnographer. Malinowski himself referred to it as the "ethnographer's magic." The Western anthropologist, as we will see in the case of Maybury-Lewis, goes through some mysterious rite of passage and, in the ideal situation, emerges from the trial by fire with the amazing ability to "see through native's eyes." Clifford describes this once common belief in the ethnographer's capacity for transcultural identification as "the myth of the chameleon fieldworker, perfectly self-tuned to his [*sic*] exotic surroundings, a walking miracle of empathy, tact, patience and cosmopolitanism" who possesses "some sort of extraordinary sensibility, an almost preternatural capacity to think, feel, and perceive like a native."[16] Geertz also notes that the man who had to a large extent created this mythos was the first to deliver a resounding blow to its foundations. In fact, tentative dates of birth and of the start of the myth's long, slow death can be sketched in using the dates of publication for Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) and his post-humously published diary *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967), respectively.

### *Malinowski: Chameleon to Kurtz*

If the repeat journey, as I argue in the introduction to this chapter, is indeed an attempt at historical recovery, then Malinowski's *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, experienced by readers as a revisitation to or a repeat journey of *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, stands out as an exception to the rule. Rather than holding up the original voyage as a paragon, *A Diary* dismantles the myth set in motion by *Argonauts*. The 1922 monograph, published in the years following Malinowski's extended visits among the Trobrianders between 1914 and 1918, has been called "a kind of founding charter for the twentieth-century discipline of anthropology."[17] Following a period during which anthropologists relied on travelers, missionaries, and colonial administrators for information about distant cultures, individuals such as the physicist-turned-anthropologist Franz Boas and the former zoologist A. C. Haddon began to accompany—or organize in Haddon's case—official expeditions in the years immediately preceding the turn of the century.[18] Malinowski's fieldwork, on the other hand, initiated a new era of lone anthropologists living among the objects of

their study for extended periods of time.[19]

Not only the fact of his prolonged solo sojourn among the Trobrianders established Malinowski as the "European Jason who brings back the Golden Fleece of ethnographic knowledge."[20] The monograph, which was the eventual outcome of his fieldwork, translated into text the ethnographer's experience and fully elaborated the nature of ethnographic authority. In the construction of this authority, *Argonauts* makes explicit the overlay of three gazes combined with a scientism grounded in the visual, a formula to be endlessly mimicked by successive fieldworkers. The primary gaze is, of course, that of the author. Insisting upon the authority of the eye-witness, Malinowski foregrounded his own first-hand experience, even including a list of events and rituals witnessed during his stay. Yet, Malinowski is careful to bring the objects of his gaze into the sight-lines of his readers. Photographs, which include among other things an image of his tent among the dwellings of the Trobrianders, solidify his "I was there" claim to authority and recreate for the reader scenes witnessed by Malinowski. His writing style similarly evokes what Clifford calls the predominant mode of modern fieldwork summarized by the phrase "You are there . . . because I was there."[21] Malinowski relays this "ethnographic present" through his use of the active voice and the present tense.[22] Additionally, through his employment of the pronouns "we" and "you" he overlays the reader's gaze over his own. The now famous line from his opening pages, "Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village" provides an apt example.[23] The readers as vicarious tourists are invited to engage their imagination, to place themselves in Malinowski's shoes, and to enter an adventure communicated through what Mary Louise Pratt identifies as the familiar imagery of the castaway narrative.[24]

George W. Stocking similarly makes note of Malinowski's use of narrative tropes, and additionally, calls attention to his thick description of atmosphere which further serves to place the reader-tourist in an exotic environment of Malinowski's verbal creation. Skipping between "I," "you," and "we," Malinowski alternately becomes visible and then invisible to the reader. He may parade his own authority through the "I" of the "I-witness"[25] and then shift into a mode in which he allows the reader to see through the eyes of the effaced author. In the following example, concrete description of locale is combined with the use of a "we" which takes the reader hand-in-hand with the author into a tropical village: "When, on a hot day, we enter the deep shadow of fruit trees and palms, and find ourselves in the midst of wonderfully designed and ornamented houses . . . ."[26]

As Malinowski reminds his readers, the fieldworker is no ordinary eye-witness. Afterall, the formula as described to this point could apply equally well to a good travel writer.[27] The ethnographer's perspective, as exemplified by Malinowski and as explored in earlier chapters, is marked by a remarkable duality. Malinowski, speaking in a "how to" mode within *Argonauts*, encourages the fieldworker to become not only observer but participant. The scientist views and interprets from a distanced vantage point which enables a surveyance of the whole. The participant joins in, learns through direct experience, and

comes to glimpse the world as the essentialized indigene sees it. Thus, while the abstracted vision of the scientist prevents absorption into the indigene's way of being, the participant, through empathy and identification, comes closest to an authentic knowledge of how the native perceives, understands, and experiences life. Malinowski, an apparent master of this careful oscillation between "outside" and "inside," thereby authored the mythos of the "anthropologist as pilgrim and as cartographer."[28] Unfortunately, over forty years later, it was discovered that this image of the heroic anthropologist was a work of fiction, or at the very least, revealed only one small piece of a much larger portrait of the fieldworker.

The story of the 1967 publication and reception of Malinowski's field diary is an oft-told tale. Discovered and published by his wife following Malinowski's sudden death, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* sparked an uproar within the anthropological community due to its portrait of the seamier side of fieldwork. Malinowski's scribbled remarks in Polish and English paint the portrait of a man in anguish, prone to depression, crankiness, and shockingly disparaging thoughts about his informants. He recounts his own escapism through novel-reading and his battle to contain his sexual fantasies. His frequent use of the term "nigger" and his exasperated statement "Exterminate the brutes" (a self-conscious mirroring of Kurtz's words in the book *Heart of Darkness* by compatriot and fellow exile Joseph Conrad) radically alter our vision of the ethnographer who strikes the perfect balance between sober objectivity and empathy.

Other "confessionals" by fieldworkers published before and after *A Diary*, although without the same impact, continued to chip away at the mythos of the chameleon fieldworker. Questions concerning the anthropologist's motives and the grounding of the discipline within the colonialist project similarly plagued anthropology. Books such as Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983) and Bernard McGrane's *Beyond Anthropology* (1989) critiqued anthropological epistemologies and techniques of distantiation. The Western, masculinist voice of anthropology received further scrutiny from the feminist, non-Western Trinh T. Minh-ha. Fieldworkers continuing to undertake ethnographic projects searched for alternative methodologies with varying success. Two such fieldworkers—Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington—grappling with the ethnographer's dilemma in the preface to their 1991 fieldwork account, summarize the critique conducted by "postmodern" critics:

> They ask: With what understanding and by what right do anthropologists speak for those among whom they have worked? They contend that ethnographic convention permitting anthropologists *because they alone were there* to speak with substantial authority about particular groups, no matter how different from their own, describing them as if presenting fixed and uncontestable facts, can no longer be taken as epistemologically acceptable. Nor can this convention be regarded as politically justifiable: to assume that one has the authority to speak for another is ultimately an act of hegemony.[29]

Although anthropologists like Gewertz and Errington have arrived at personal solutions to the political dilemmas of fieldwork, the dominant models of anthropology continue to be questioned. Comparing the anthropologist to the tourist is yet another way of doubting the ability of the professional fieldworker to escape her or his cultural framework and grab hold of an authentic, i.e., unmediated, knowledge of the another culture. Like tourists, ethnographers can not outrun the baggage of cultural prejudices nor ignore a set of economic relations which forces anthropologists to exchange goods, even cash, for information and gawking privileges.[30]

## *Anthropology for Popular Audiences*

While these discourses have clearly shaken the academy, the effect on the popular front is less measurable. As in the case of evolution—used as a framework for popular understanding long after the academy's dismissal of the concept—a lag-time may separate popular and academic audiences. *Millennium*, a television series featuring a noted Harvard anthropologist but marketed to a popular audience, is intriguing not because it provides a simple answer to the above query but because it of its positioning between the popular and the academic. The makers of *Millennium* were undoubtedly aware of their dual audience: curious academic colleagues and members of the general public tuning in to a bit of educational but involving programming. Thus, a careful compromise between reviving the mythic heroism of past anthropological adventure and acknowledging current debates within the discipline had to be maintained.

Defying expectation, *Millennium* and its ten-part meditation on "tribal wisdom" is only one of several documentary series that have brought anthropology to television audiences in the midst of the current crisis in anthropological authority.[31] In fact, it seems quite unusual that in light of on-going struggles to retain distinctions between popular, purchased pleasures and scientifically-grounded knowledge, *Millennium*'s featured anthropologist, David Maybury-Lewis would seek popular audiences via a medium noted for its solid imbrication within consumerism, a medium which has been compared to "A Thousand and One Nights" in its attempt to capture attention only to secure a stay of execution for corporate profit margins.[32]

Perhaps the tensions stemming from the ethnographer's dilemma[33] as well as those generated by adapting pedagogy into a televisual/commercial form[34]—help explain the strangeness of *Millennium*, and in particular, the uncanny nature of its first episode, "The Shock of the Other."[35] The supposed anthropological object of this episode is the Mashco Piro, a tribe of Indians living in the Manu National Park in the Amazon. However, instead of learning about the Mashco Piro way of life or seeing examples of their material culture, viewers only get a partial glimpse of three members of this tribe and only during the last four minutes of the program. The rest of the episode is dedicated to the resuscitation of ethnographic authority through an odd mix of acknowledging contemporary ethical dilem-

mas and appealing to the traditional figure of the anthropologist as popular hero and ideal tourist stand-in.

As a tourist stand-in, Maybury-Lewis is one of a cast of characters who serve as intermediaries or buffers between a privatized television audience and an exotic "out-there." As discussed above, the tourist stand-in delivers touristic pleasures to insulated, sight-seeing viewers often while differentiating him or herself from the denigrated figure of the tourist. The stand-in with his or her privileged entrance into a distant culture eases the viewers into exotic arenas through what Margaret Morse describes as television's logic of passage and segmentation.[36] A series of interceding passages connect up disparate realms of the world as experienced through television. Aiding this process of transport are the tourist stand-ins with their varying degrees of cross-cultural savvy and their use of incremental transport. For instance, the travel show host may draw viewers into the intermediary space of his library before a final passage to the distant travel destination. Or in an instance involving a less authoritative tourist stand-in, during *I Love Lucy*'s season abroad, the outside world is mediated through the alternative domestic sphere of Lucy and Ricky's hotel room.

Not only traveling personalities but often objects launch the televisual transport with the authenticity of the object guaranteeing passage.[37] The piece of folk art initiates the travel host's excursion, the bite of Italian-style pizza sauce transports the imaginary consumer to the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, or the stolen antique cross propels Remington Steele's journey to Malta in search of missing facts. In the case of *Millennium*, Maybury-Lewis holds the privileged object which propels the journey: a photograph of two women belonging to the Mashco Piro tribe, a tribe which has retreated into the Peruvian jungle and severed contact with the outside world. In what could be considered an act of wishful thinking, Maybury-Lewis interprets this photograph taken by a Peruvian neighbor as a sign that the Mashco Piro may be ready to re-establish contact.

Several intermediary spaces ease the viewer's passage to the nether regions of the Amazon. And like the host standing among bookshelves teeming with volumes, Maybury-Lewis gleans authority through these various intermediary spaces. The first such locale is Maybury-Lewis' original field site, the place of his rite of passage into anthropology. A crowd of Xavante Indians wait for Maybury-Lewis to step out of a helicopter and on to Brazilian land. His voice-over informs us that the Xavante Indians were known as a ferocious people who killed or drove away missionaries, government agents, and adventurers. Yet, a young Maybury-Lewis they accepted into their ranks as one of their own. He was given a Xavante name, adopted by Xavante brothers, and allowed to live in the chief's house. This acceptance by the cultural "Other" is reiterated as the new chief and adopted brother greets Maybury-Lewis. The subtitles translate the Xavante chief's words as, "We want only good people here. That's why we want you here, David . . . We accept you, welcome." The implication is that the Xavante—the Other—accepts the good David and so we too should assume an underlying morality in his anti-conquest.[38] Not only does Maybury-

Lewis go through two rites of approval, the first presented as a memory of his first welcomed entrance into Xavante society and the second witnessed in this filmed arrival scene, but approval for the television series is also garnered. The reason given for this brief stopover is to get advice from his Xavante "brother" on whether to embark on the *Millennium* project. Presumably speaking for tribal peoples in general, a single Xavante Indian provides the consent Maybury-Lewis seeks.

The opening sequence similarly establishes the authority of the camera as unobtrusive witness through the use of self-effacing techniques common to ethnographic film. According to the narrative order implied by the sequence of images, the camera and its operator appear to already be on the scene anticipating the arrival of Maybury-Lewis. The camera as window on the world presents images of a Xavante ritual, supposedly unstaged and performed in the absence of any non-Xavante witness (if we ignore the question of who operates the camera). Only after these images is there a cut to Maybury-Lewis flying by helicopter to the village. When he climbs out of the helicopter, he is not accompanied by any camera equipment nor by a camera-operator. The effaced camera is already on the ground ready to witness the welcoming scene.

The camera works in a manner similar to the way in which language works within Malinowski's *Argonauts*, enabling an alternation between the ethnographer's visibility and an invisibility. The camera at times provides an unmediated view of the Amazon and its scenery as seen through Maybury-Lewis' eyes. It entreats the viewer, "Imagine yourself ..." It suggests, "You are here . . . because I was here." However, most ethnographies combine some form of personal narrative, an insistence on the "I" of the author in order to establish ethnographic authority. Similarly, Maybury-Lewis steps in front of the camera, occasionally even directly addressing the audience through the camera. His visual presence frequently inhabits the screen, and a voice-over delivers further interjection of the ethnographic "I."

Maybury-Lewis' direct address contrasts with the Xavante's lack of acknowledgment of the camera. One is reminded of the 35 mm photographs taken of the Xavante by Maybury-Lewis in 1958. The photographic subjects appear to be at ease, hardly aware of the camera's presence. Interestingly, Maybury-Lewis implies that the journey depicted on *Millennium* is his and his wife's first return to Brazil since the original fieldwork. Actually, several short visits among the Xavante had occurred during the intervening decades. On a 1982 trip, the Maybury-Lewises were accompanied by William Crawford, a professional photographer. Crawford noted:

> The Indians had all seen photographs and many owned photographs of themselves or of members of their families. Yet I found that they were often uncomfortable when a camera was around, far more uncomfortable than David had remembered from two decades before. Now they made it clear that they would only be photographed as they wanted to see themselves, at their best, in their best modern clothes,

but still looking like Shavante.[39]

This adoption of a certain savviness concerning their own representation on film is completely indiscernible, perhaps purposively effaced, within the sequences shown on *Millennium*.

Maybury-Lewis' writing out of his 1982 voyage is part of a larger rewriting of the past. The change in spelling from "Shavante" to "Xavante" is thus symbolic of a general reshaping for the popular eye of the Xavante image, past and present. Mary Louise Pratt in her article, "Fieldwork in Common Places," foregrounds the process of writing within ethnographic work by illustrating how arrival scenes self-consciously mirror the tropes of travel writing. Maybury-Lewis conveniently provides us with three such scenes of arrival. The one, which takes place in the present tense of the television series, resembles the welcoming of an old friend. A similar welcoming in the past tense—referring to the first fieldwork trip—is evoked by the voice-over. In the companion book to *Millennium*, this original arrival scene is further fleshed out. The Maybury-Lewises flew into an airstrip located near the Pimentel Barbosa post (named after an expedition leader killed by the Xavante) located on the Rio das Mortes. Climbing out of the plane and viewing their gear, they worried that their presents to the Xavante now looked "puny and insufficient."[40] The winning stroke, however, came with David Maybury-Lewis' first words spoken to them in their own language. His ability to communicate with them amazed the Xavante, while his unusual accent brought them considerable amusement. At any rate, they received their welcome into a supposedly fierce and feared tribe.

Oddly enough, yet a different arrival scene is described in Maybury-Lewis' *Akwa-Shavante Society*, a scene which Pratt includes under the category of "degraded versions of the utopian arrival scene . . . first contact in a fallen world where European colonialism is a given and native and white man approach each other with joyless suspicion."[41] Apparently, the Xavante, who had become accustomed to the gifts brought by visiting Brazilian army officers, greeted the anthropologists solely to see what goodies would be handed them from the Maybury-Lewises' many trunks and bags.[42] Pratt views this as a symbolic prelude to the many problems which Maybury-Lewis goes on to describe in his monograph: "his informants' hostility and uncooperativeness, their refusal to talk to him in private, their refusal to leave him alone, his problems with the language, and so on."[43]

It seems that in the same way that Malinowski's 1967 publication provided an altered vision of his first fieldwork experience, so does Maybury-Lewis' portrait within *Millennium* provide a different image than the troubled anthropologist of his 1967 fieldwork write-up. Yet, where Malinowski's return to his site of professional conception debunked the hero image of his earlier text, Maybury-Lewis' return is an attempt to revive that image of the heroic fieldworker.

## *The Making of the Hyphenated Anthropologist*

In addition to being a repeat journey of his past trips to Xavante territory, this first episode also resembles a return to Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*, the text which Susan Sontag argues establishes the model of the anthropologist as popular hero for a modern, alienated age.[44] The myth of the chameleon fieldworker who becomes the Other in order to see through native's eyes may have been born with Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* but Lévi-Strauss elaborates on the process or the epiphany which provides the anthropologist with this unusual insight. In his chapter, "The Making of an Anthropologist," Lévi-Strauss also returns to his original field site, similarly a missionary-murdering tribe of Brazilian Indians. He describes the experiential factor of fieldwork as the crucial factor inducing "that psychological revolution which marks the decisive turning point in the training of the anthropologist."[45] The mysterious ordeal of fieldwork with its psychological revolution appears to create a split subject, the hyphenated anthropologist caught between two worlds, or in this case, a Maybury-Lewis who returns to Brazil to, in his words, "my other half, my other world."

The hyphenated anthropologist could be considered a close variant of the seemingly untroubled chameleon fieldworker, the myth put forward by Malinowski's 1922 work. The hyphenated anthropologist, like the chameleon fieldworker, straddles two cultures and can therefore serve as translator, conveying information about a tribal people to Western audiences. He learns to speak and, as Maybury-Lewis would have us believe, think like the people he lives among. Yet, he never loses the distanced perspective of the scientist. This duality is evident in the opening shots as Maybury-Lewis approaches the Xavante village by helicopter. Traveling with his Western accouterments and looking down from above on the gathered Xavante people below, Maybury-Lewis is the distanced observer, granted a privileged aerial perspective on the object of his study, a metaphorical reenactment of his past attempts to grasp the whole, to understand Xavante culture as a cohesive picture. This perspective soon collapses into a more intimate gaze and an attempt to convince the viewers through a visual equivalence granted Maybury-Lewis and his Xavante counterpart that the anthropologist-participant is as much a part of this world as the one he left behind.

The hyphenated anthropologist as embodied by Lévi-Strauss is a being of complexity. Maybury-Lewis' rendition, a more transparent borrowing of past traditions, rises like the phoenix from the ashes of Malinowski's deconstructed *Argonauts*. He insists upon uncanny powers of transculturation but stands apart from the myth of the chameleon fieldworker to the extent that the mental costs of his oscillation between two worlds is foregrounded. Such alienation or split-consciousness is not registered within Malinowski's *Argonauts*, but his diary, on the other hand, illustrates a crisis of identity, which has been compared to Kurtz's unraveling within *Heart of Darkness*.[46] With Lévi-Strauss and Maybury-Lewis, the alienation has reached new heights and is in many ways a reflection of modern alienation in general, although intensified in the figure of the intellectual. The hyphenated anthropologist suffers from Lukács has called "transcendental homelessness," a loss of

groundedness in place, an alienation from one's home culture. Lévi-Strauss as fieldworker, intellectual, and Jew in exile has lost sight of any firm concept of home as has Maybury-Lewis who spent his childhood in transit as the son of a British engineer deployed to various British colonial holdings in order to inspect canal construction. Now as Maybury-Lewis laments his inability to feel at home in British culture or in his adopted American culture, he frames his journey to the Amazon as a quest to answer the same questions which plagued Gauguin: Where do we come from? Where are we going?

In the repeat journey to his first field site, Maybury-Lewis tries to link his two worlds, his two halves, through the brief line segment which marks out his path from the United States to Brazil. The show's opening introduces us to the hyphenated subject as it shows Maybury-Lewis' Xavante self—known as Apawing— engaged in an intimate conversation with his Xavante brother while presumably his Western half—known as David Maybury-Lewis — uses a voice-over to espouse his philosophy on cultural difference and presumably the show's philosophy. The camera lingers above the heads of the two men laying side-by-side on the ground and intently conversing, apparently unbothered by the camera, while the voice-over drowns out their voices:

> We are the two extremes of our world, yet we live together. Brothers, the Other and the Other—two mysteries to each other, yet joined by respect. So respect the mystery. Sometimes let the mystery be and maybe we'll be brothers still in a thousand years.

In this instance, *Millennium* does reflect some of the current debates within anthropology. Maybury-Lewis backs away from what has been called the epistemic violence[47] of ethnographic knowledge, the need to discover a society's essential core, to distill and translate a people into genealogical charts and exhibits of material culture. He seems to echo Trinh Minh-ha's words, "respect [a culture's] realms of opaqueness."[48] However, at the same time that he admits the irreducibility of culture, he retreats from science's domestication of Otherness only to back up into the arms of the linked practice of fetishizing difference as mystery. Mystery attracts the curious Western eye; the tourist's gaze is allured by the promise that the obfuscating surface can one day be stripped away to reveal some deeper structure which puts all questions to rest. In one example of such a process, Maybury-Lewis, at points during his journey, struggles with two conflicting thoughts, that of his rational mind and that which is rooted in the unexplained intuition of his Xavante half. Such knowledge possessed by the transculturated anthropologist is elusive, even impenetrable to Western logic. It remains a mystery to the viewers but not to the man weaving more of that "ethnographer's magic."

### *Birth, Death, and Regret*

Our introduction to this man of science and product of mystical initiation, how-

ever, is not over. Sontag has described anthropology as "necrology" so perhaps *Millennium*'s fixation on birth and death is appropriate.[49] Our little jaunt to Brazil is only one of several repeat journeys or passages to sites of conception. Maybury-Lewis transports viewers to the Catholic school in Spain where he first decided to become an anthropologist. Conveniently located is a statue of Columbus which Maybury-Lewis dutifully contemplates. He stands at the point of his own anthropological birth to ponder his next journey, a journey which mirrors Columbus', the most legendary of contacts between the "civilized" world and the hidden realms of so-called untouched primitives. He mourns the loss of a kind of moral certainty that helped motivate Columbus and the fieldworkers of another age, better known as missionaries. He states that *Millennium* will be "a series of films which will try to capture the wisdom of tribal peoples before it is all gone, before they are all gone." Maybury-Lewis' tropics sound as sad of those of Lévi-Strauss, who wrote about his 1935 voyage:

> Journeys, those magic caskets full of dreamlike promises, will never again yield up their treasures untarnished . . . The perfumes of the tropics and the pristine freshness of human beings have been corrupted by a busyness with dubious implications, which mortifies our desires and dooms us to acquire only contaminated memories.[50]

Maybury-Lewis' similarly sad tale combines words and images. In a somewhat heavy-handed sequence, a funeral in a Peruvian town which the anthropologist calls a "half-way house" between two worlds is intercut with scenes which represent for Maybury-Lewis the evils of technological change and the slow death of what he calls "the web of life."[51]

For Lévi-Strauss and Maybury-Lewis, the anthropological journey is a narrative of loss and nostalgia, a cathartic appeasement of Western guilt over "our own filth, thrown in the face of mankind,"[52] and a race against time to find the last "untouched" human beings before they are gobbled up by a homogenizing monoculture. At least in the case of Maybury-Lewis, the anthropologist's funeral march comes at a time when many of these ideas from the unequivocal belief in monoculture to the notion of pristine cultures have been exploded.[53] But Maybury-Lewis' search for tribal wisdom marches on driven by a nostalgia for "authentic human differences," "a sense of belonging," and "a harmony with the natural world," but most of all it is motivated by a nostalgia for ethnographic authority and an older, more dignified image of the anthropologist.[54]

The anthropologist of another era would have followed in the path already cleared by conquerors and colonialists. Maybury-Lewis' route, however, has a few more road blocks. Eventually, the episode moves forward from Maybury-Lewis' soul-searching and vague contemplation of First/Third World relations to bureaucratic problems. An Indian council has restricted the film crew's access to the land where the Mashco Piro had been sighted. Apparently, "the Amazon's last secret" will not be revealed. Nonetheless, the boats loaded down with camera equipment still complete the journey and as they float by Mashco Piro land, although prohibited from mooring, they glimpse three female faces from between the

trees. No contact with the Mashco Piro beyond this exchange of glances ensues, and the excursion ends in disappointment. Maybury-Lewis laments that he was not given the chance to prove to the Mashco-Piro that he is different from the exploitative travelers who have come before him. He regrets that he was unable to prove to himself, to the viewers, to the Mashco Piro that he is something other than a souped-up, camera-clicking tourist floating down the Amazon.

In the spirit of Scheherezad, many anthropology shows try to fashion their material into narratives. In this episode, the structure of the journey provides the narrativity, and the many unknowns swirling around the Mashco Piro engages the audience's thirst for answers. However, Maybury-Lewis, like the tourist who travels to Memphis only to discover that Graceland is closed, meets with anti-climax. In an attempt to save this aborted narrative and to cover over the anti-climax, these glimpses of the Other are visually fetishized as the telephoto lens captures their every movement, and the final shots appear to be frozen in time. In the absence of any new-found anthropological knowledge, these images symbolize the journey and serve as trophy or souvenir.

Lévi-Strauss' journey was a similarly anti-climactic attempt to comprehend the authentic primitive who repeatedly eluded his grasp. He believed he might have discovered a "natural" society in the Mundi people, but he eventually left exhausted, unable to communicate and unable to learn anything about them. Maybury-Lewis similarly seeks an "untouched" people but in a world which no longer believes in the undiscovered primitive. However, through the repeat journey's reanimation of inanimate past, Maybury-Lewis has helped us to forget that the Mashco Piro once experienced contact with a modern world but have now retreated back into the jungle in an attempt to recover (or simulate) their former way of life. By forgetting about past contact and constructing narrative as time travel, Maybury-Lewis creates a myth of first contact; however, as in the case of Lévi-Strauss and the Mundi people, the observer never gets close enough to validate or invalidate his claims. In the absence of any meaningful exchange, the frozen, fetishized image thus conceals a certain lack, the disappearance of the primitive and of the materiality of the past.[55]

John Frow has described tourism as a continuous circle of image production with each new image deemed authentic to the degree that it adheres to previous images, with the actual object or locale diminishing in any importance beyond its ability to be visually reproduced.[56] Maybury-Lewis appears to participate in this loop and in the logic of tourism with his trip, which is incited by a photograph, and an ending that duplicates the original photograph. The visual image seems to take precedence over the pro-filmic reality as it provides a backdrop for another of Maybury-Lewis' *Tristes Tropiques*-like flashback voice-overs. Renato Rosaldo has suggested that often de facto imperialism has merely been replaced by a discourse of "imperialist nostalgia" or a "yearning for what one has destroyed that is a form of mystification." How do we read these final images then—as responsible respect for the irreducible Other or as the "legal voyeurism"[57] of anthropology which re-infuses the indigene with mystery for its own nostalgic purposes?

Looking at this episode of *Millennium*, we can say that if traditional anthropology is indeed guilty of looking at the world's periphery (as defined by the so-called center) only out of a preoccupation with the self, then perhaps David Maybury-Lewis is justified in his indulgent self-contemplation. Leaving out the Mashco Piro is a way of eliminating the anthropological middleman, so to speak. Additionally, in the wake of cries for ethnographic accounts presented as subjective constructions,[58] Maybury-Lewis certainly could not be accused of being an invisible authorial voice. On the contrary, he thrusts himself in front of the camera even if it occasionally blocks our view of the indigene.

However, if we judge *Millennium* on the criterion which David Turton has suggested, that is, by "the degree to which it is able to represent or 'translate' an indigenous viewpoint,"[59] we must admit that this episode does not cross cultural boundaries in a meaningful way; it only peers across that line from a distance. Trinh Minh-ha writes about anthropology's conversation among white men concerning the primitive: "A conversation of "us" with "us" about "them" is a conversation in which "them" is silenced. "Them" always stands on the other side of the hill, naked and speechless, barely present in its absence."[60] Clearly, *Millennium* shows the difficulty in changing the terms of that conversation and instead fetishizes the silence from the other side.

**NOTES**

[1] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976; New York: Schocken Books, 1989) 10.
[2] Susan Stewart. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection.* 1984 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) 133.
[3] Stewart xi.
[4] Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicage: U. of Chicago Press, 1990) 222.
[5] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) 15.
[6] As quoted by Trinh T. Minh-ha, "The Language of Nativism: Anthropology as a Scientific Conversation of Man with Man." *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality & Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1989).
[7] Daniel J. Boorstin, "From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel," *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).
[8] MacCannell 3.
[9] MacCannell 105.
[10] Davydd J. Greenwood, "Culture by the Pound: Tourism as Cultural Commoditization," *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, ed. Valene L. Smith (N.p.: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977).
[11] M. D. McLeod as quoted by Erik Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 15.4 (1988):375.
[12] Dean MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings" *American Journal of Sociology* 79.3 (1973): 602.
[13] For a discussion of the complexities see Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism."
[14] John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia," *October* 57 (Summer 1991) 128.
[15] Kenneth Read, *The High Valley* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) ix.
[16] Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (New York: Basic Books, 1983) 56.
[17] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 95
[18] See George W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.), *Observers Observed* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

[19] Frank Hamilton Cushing, stranded among the Zuni Indians during an expedition, provides an example of this type of fieldwork, although from an earlier period. Cushing, however, is not given credit for being the forefather of this anthropological methodology since questions surrounding his dedication to scientific exploration persist. See Chapter One.
[20] Stocking 109.
[21] Clifford 22.
[22] Stocking 107.
[23] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1961) 4.
[24] Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
[25] Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) 79.
[26] Malinowski 35.
[27] In fact, Mary Louise Pratt's article "Fieldwork in Common Places" is based upon the argument that ethnographic writing borrows heavily from travel writing.
[28] Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, 82.
[29] Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts: Representing the Chambri in a World System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 15.
[30] For a relatively comprehensive list of sources which compare anthropology and tourism see Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, "Anthropology and Tourism,"*Oceania* 60.1 (September 1989): 37-54.
[31] For more information on such programs see the television section of Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton (eds), *Film as Ethnography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).
[32] Terence Wright, "Television Narrative and Ethnographic Film," *Film as Ethnography*, 276. It is worth noting that *Millennium* was sponsored by Body Shop and Esprit, two companies which have used the exotic as style in order to sell their products.
[33] This phrase is taken from Amy Richlin's article, "The Ethnographer's Dilemma," *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1993).
[34] See Wright 286 concerning televisual ethnography's role in fulfilling audiences' touristic desires.
[35] Produced by Public Broadcasting Company and Channel Four.
[36] Margaret Morse, "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television," *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism,* Patricia Mellencamp, ed. (Bloomington, Indiana U. Press, 1990) 197.
[37] On the subject of the ways in which souvenirs launch narratives, see *Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) 136.
[38] Anti-conquest is defined by Mary Louise Pratt in her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing & Transculturation* (London: Routledge 1992).
[39] As quoted in *Site to Sight*, p. 121. See also William Crawford (1983), "The Shavanti of Central Brazil," *Polaroid* 14 (1): 52-53.
[40] David Maybury-Lewis, *Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World* (New York: Viking, 1992) 7.
[41] Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," 40.
[42] Maybury-Lewis xxiii.
[43] Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," 41.
[44] Susan Sontag, "The Anthropologist as Hero," *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Octagon Books, 1986).
[45] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Atheneum, 1975) 56.
[46] This comparison is made more appealing by Malinowski's hopeful claim to being the Conrad of anthropology. See James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowki," *Reconstructing Individualism*, T.C. Heller et al., eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).
[47] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow-Sacrifice," *Wedge* 7/8 (Winter/Spring 1985).
[48] Trinh Minh-ha 48.
[49] Sontag 73.
[50] Lévi-Strauss 37.
[51] David Turton argues that this focus on technology is a preoccupation with ourselves. David Turton,

"Anthropology on television: what next?" *Film as Ethnography*, Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton, eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) 291-3.

[52] Lévi-Strauss 38.

[53] On the myth of monoculture, see James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 16.

[54] Maybury-Lewis, book jacket.

[55] Isabel McBryde notes that it was a standard practice among turn of the century anthropologists to recreate the ethnographic past. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 tried to replicate the living conditions of Native Americans at the time of Columbus' arrival. Similar fictions have been created through photography. For instance, a photograph by ethnographic photographer/hobbyist Thomas Dick, taken in the early twentieth century when it was believed that the Australian aborigines as a race and as a culture would soon die out, recreates the arrival of Captain James Cook. The negative has been retouched adding a ship in the distant background as three aborigines watch and wait from the shore. Anthropology becomes romantic fiction-making as the camera produces the illusion of capturing a pristine past, of recovering this rare moment of first contact. Isabel McBryde, "Thomas Dick's Photographic Vision." Ian Donaldson and Tamsin Donaldson, eds. *Seeing the First Australians* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin) 154.

[56] John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia," *October* 57 (Summer 1991) 125.

[57] Trinh Minh-ha 69.

[58] Turton 294.

[59] Turton 285.

[60] Trinh Minh-ha 67.

# *Tracked: Costa Rica, Kansas, Peru*

**Sandy Feinstein**

June, 1985. Stone mestates, prehistory, pots, stones, gold colonized
almuerozo permits fossil bones, mastodon teeth, proboscideur-sized

Dia de Corpus Christi

6 toucanilla, golden frogs, monoscongos, howlers—prime-mates
9 red volcanic ash, tufa
10 sacred cenote, chichán Itza [emerging] from calcite-cemented bone
15 eruptions—Diego de la Haya—1721, 1726, 1917-26...1979-80
active fumerole northeast flank
24 large rodent cheek-bones, bat skeleton.

That was the first story: partially articulated as skeletons, the first sheaf's textual time.

Later, bison mandibles, one recent partially articulated beaver skeleton on a sandbar, some skin, very little meat, a few maggots. Here the humerus (human) was found.

May, 1989 Jack has two shrews in his freezer.
3 Reinoldo loaned a pickled shrew caught by a cat in December.
You wrapped it in newspaper with ice cubes.
8 eye shines
10 large [how large?] black scorpion carrying young on its back.
11 Quetzal hissed. You hissed back.
17 rain last night
18 wind still out of east preserving side glands, testes, penis in bouin's solution

I told you I would tell your story. Mine now. Like the weather, a medicinal drip.

June, 1989 meaningless meeting
10 damned stupid
11 baited traps
14 five creamy wood creepers
rotting standing stump
16 skull crushed
20 guns finally found

| | |
|---|---|
| 23 | ears rimmed with yellow<br>mandible bumps |
| 1 | rake beaten |
| 2 | fused |
| 3 | good night mice |
| 14 | left eye gone, punctured. |

There are more tales. They end, start again, end, pieces collected, then left—here.

# *gathering*
# *palolo stream*

**Juliana Spahr**

•

A place allows certain things.

A place allows certain things
and certain of we of a specific place have certain rights.

•

To go to the stream is a right for certain people.

To go, to gather.

•

The stream is a right.

It is a place for gathering.

A place for gathering aholehole

or for gathering guava, mikana, mai´a

or for gathering palapalai.

•

The stream is many things.

Is busted television and niu.

Is rat and ki.

Is mongoose and freshwater.

Is ʻawa and kukui.

•

Beside the stream is a parking lot.

Yet there is no road into the parking lot.

•

The parking lot is surrounded by buildings on two sides

by a fence on a third

by a stream on the fourth.

•

Where the road once was is now a parking lot for a rental space business.

The rental space business has surrounded their parking lot with a high fence.

The fence gets locked at night.

•

This is about how certain of we have rights on paper yet not in place.

Certain of we have a right to a gathering of the stream.

•

While the parking lot is unused,

while the stream is rich and full,

the parking lot represents the general feeling of the space.

There is the parking lot of limited space

the parking lot of owned by certain of we

the parking lot of no possibility of use

the parking lot of being unable to park

the parking lot of growing from the stream of gathering's freshness of water

the parking lot beneath the highway beside the stream of gathering.

•

It is because certain of we are always driving that the parking lot matters.

Certain of we are driving to waking up.

Certain of we are driving to back to clear ideas about what certain of we are.

Certain of we are driving to finishing what got interrupted.

Certain of we are driving to orange, sticky fruit.

Certain of we are driving to the airplane's heat shimmering off its wings.

Certain of we are driving to clear water moving over rocks.

Certain of we are driving to things are this way, this way.

Certain of we are driving from what are things.

Certain of we are driving to waiting.

Certain of we are driving to thinking in rooms without walls.

Certain of we are driving to the way of it all being clear.

Certain of we are driving to bougainvillea.

Certain of we are driving from little cubicles, overhead lights,
bright flickering screen.

Certain of we are driving from the way of thinking of it as one to
the way of thinking of it as one and one.

Certain of we are driving the metaphor.

•

The metaphor here of how we need

and how we reach

and certain of us have rights yet
the rights are kept from certain of us

by certain of we who are owning place.

Certain of we have rights and
these rights are written so that there is a possible keeping, a
keeping away, that denies gathering.

# *The Elevator Shaman*

**Gerald Vizenor**

*The vision*

Conk, as in "conked out," is my native nickname. My older brother gave me that name. I trusted him with the story of my vision and the deal was a lasting nickname. Yes, and that because the very moment my vision came true, in a sense, it conked out. I was eight years old at the time of my vision, and about four years later it came true in a condominium in the city. That was twenty years ago and so far my vision has given me an unusual, unshakable nickname and a truly great profession.

Madeline Browne are my other names, and my ancestors are of the crane, one of the first mighty totems of the anishinaabe. Conk is a crane in my generation, and my vision is the elevator. Yes, the natural motion of an automatic elevator. I lived on the reservation at the time of my vision and had never been on an elevator. Later, in the city, my vision came true and, as you know, it conked out at the same time.

Tulip, my crazy aunt, is a private investigator and she lives alone in Minneapolis. She invited me one autumn afternoon to her fantastic condominium on the seventeenth floor with a view of the river on one side and the city on the other. I had been there only once before, as a child with my mother, and remembered the sound of windmills. She builds miniature windmills and has a thing about natural power.

My brother drove me right to the bright doors near a stone water fountain. Chance is the best connection of visions and names, as you know, and that explains why the elevator conked out that afternoon in the condominium. My brother is a teaser not a visionary. So, once at the condominium, he teased me about the elevator demons and was gone, faster than an airplane shadow. My aunt is amazing, and crazy, and my brother thinks she would rather be with windmills than men. Years later her choice of windmills made more sense to me. I circled the wet stones by the fountain and waited for someone to push open the heavy glass doors that were higher than the potted trees.

Once inside everything seemed familiar. I counted four golden elevators, each one from memory. The one on the end of the row shimmered as in my vision, and then the bright copper doors opened slowly for the first time on my twelfth birthday. The memory of that moment is truly sacred, and the elevator became the natural motion of my vision.

I waited for the elevator to return right out of my vision, and then with a gentle touch lighted the silent, uneven numbers to the seventeenth floor. I was alone, in motion, on my visionary elevator for the first time. The elevator wheezed in motion from one to three. The doors parted slowly and divided the reflection of my face on the bright golden panels. No one was there, of course, and then the doors whisked closed and we were in motion again. I mean *we* in the sense of my vision, and the magic of the elevator. The motion was a slow tide on a calm sea, and my first experience of meditation.

When the elevator reached the fifth floor the lights on the panel blinked twice, the doors hesitated and then opened with a slight shudder. I heard the sound of a rattle as the air rushed in and touched my eyes. An old man with a bunch of flowers was waiting there but he must have changed his mind when he saw me, my eyes wide open and my arms raised in flight. He winked and took another elevator. I touched the close button and watched my face come together on the polished copper doors. The elevator was mine, a private, sacred space forever in motion. We were soaring through the clouds. I smelled perfume on the seventh floor, and the scent moved in my hair as the door closed.

I studied the reflection of my face and noticed the wornout collar of my shirt. My boots were crazy, much too large, distorted by a curve of the metal at the bottom of the doors. I pressed my cheek on the cool copper and suddenly the elevator stopped on the sixth floor. My motion and meditation was broken. There, as the doors opened, a small white dog bounced on his front feet and barked at me. I shooed the dog and touched the close button before anyone could get on.

The seventh floor was a perfect, natural hesitation in my motion. The doors were silent, the bright wings of a moth at the window. I was their light, and this was my great elevator vision. Then, on the rise between the seventh and eighth floors the lights flickered several times. The elevator gasped, shuddered and slowly conked out. I was in total darkness but not alone. The elevator was my vision, conked out or not. The bright copper doors reached out to catch the last tricks of light in my eyes. I wheeled my head to one side and then the other. Meteors and blue streamers bounced on the mirrors at the back of the elevator.

The elevator moaned in the absolute darkness and the wind teased the silence at a great distance. I reached out to touch the cool copper doors on one side, and then turned to the dark mirrors on the other as the elevator lurched and shouted my name. I pressed my ear to the mirror and heard wild voices, the sound of rattles and thunder in the distance. I was stranded on my birthday for more than an hour near the seventh floor. I should have been worried and shouted for someone, but the elevator was my vision, a sacred space, and that very moment was the start of an adventure. I could never sound the alarm on my own vision, even if it did conk out. My aunt told me that a thunderstorm several miles away had caused a power failure in the city. Naturally, my vision was touched by lightning. Nothing would ever be the same again.

*The motion*

I was born on the reservation but never rode a horse, caught a fish, or hunted for animals. Chance is never easy to figure out, but sometimes my luck has been almost as good as chance. I found a big gold watch that belonged to a hunter. He gave me a hundred dollar bill as a reward. My grandmother always won at bingo when she brought me along. I was her lucky charm. Today she might have won a fortune in the casino.

Then, as you know, my vision on that elevator changed everything. I was only twelve years old at the time, and in the next few years my aunt took me along with her on many of her investigative trips. I was rather easy to amuse because everything was new to me, but even so my aunt taught me the stories of adventure. She told me to picture motion,

or what she said was transmotion, and then create stories about my experiences. I did just that on our trips and rode elevators day and night in some of the finest buildings in Chicago, New York, Seattle, and San Francisco.

Naturally, at first my stories were simple and descriptive, about the clothes and gestures of people on the elevators, but my aunt always asked about motion, the action and actual situations before the words, and about the moods, manners, and intentions of the characters. Stories, she said, must create the sense of adventure, no matter how ordinary the experience. She would ask me at the end of the day, "How did people move and touch each other on the elevator? What do people do with their silence?" My time of the elevators became a much more interesting game, of course, and that pleased my aunt because she saw in me the natural curiosity of a storier and investigator. She told me many times that the best storiers are the best investigators.

Tulip liked the word storier so much that she often started sentences with it. "Storiers," she said, "are word shamans, and native storiers are the very best investigators." Obviously, she told me this and encouraged my stories because she wanted me to be an investigator. Soon, stories of motion seemed perfectly natural to me. I pictured motion and started my stories with the elevator as some people might start their stories with the spirits and a family. And my stories took me higher and higher in a vision to my own condominium, just like my aunt, with a view of the river but not the windmills.

Three years later my mother vanished one winter night on the reservation. That became one of my first serious adventures as a storier and investigator. At first no one really worried about where she might have gone because she was a solitary person. Then, after a few days my father, aunts and uncles started their search in the obvious places, the church mission, the bingo center, and the resort. She was not a drinker but sometimes, especially in the winter, she played big band music on the jukebox and danced alone at the resort near the casino.

My father said nothing about the ice house because she told him never to bother her there, not for any reason. Well, he always found some reason to visit the ice house, the weather, the dogs, or even some gossip he had heard, but each time she sat in silence. She never said a word to me about his visits, and she always told me more than anyone else in the family. Finally, he stayed away and never mentioned the place again. My mother was a woman of silence, never a storier to be heard, and my grandmother told me that she was a child of silence and always a stranger in that way. I knew that and sat in silence with her many times in the ice house, but not to fish. My job was to cut slivers of wood and feed the tiny fire. My mother sat in an aluminum lawn chair and read novels with two fish lines tied to her wrist. The novel she was reading always came first, even when a fish tugged at the line. My aunt was right, stories are about motion and intentions, even in the adventures of silence.

My mother was last seen walking in the heavy snow near the water tower on the day she vanished, but no one could remember in what direction. She was not in the ice house, and had not been there for more than a week. The snow had drifted against the door and there were no footprints near the place. Finally my father officially reported that she was missing. The county sheriff pretended to be serious. He wrote her name in his

spiral notebook, but he was not really very concerned because natives have gone missing forever on reservations.

Tulip told me to pretend that our reservation community was on an elevator and that everything native was in motion. She taught me to create my own stories in motion and never leave them to others. Memories of motion, she warned me, must come before the words, because seeing motion in the words is the hardest part of stories.

I found my mother and that made me a storier and one of the best investigators. My aunt praised me, of course, because I did exactly what she told me about memories and stories. I avoided the obvious words and gossip and concentrated on my mother in motion, how she would move in silence. I created my mother in a vision, in transmotion, not in the name of absence, and located her that afternoon at the public library in a nearby town. Yes, she was in motion, a presence, as in my visual memories. My brother trusted me and drove to three small towns near the reservation before we found her in a library near a window reading *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich. She was at peace in the library, but even so she was always happy to see me. We were on my elevator together and that was my first good story.

*The chance*

Tulip, naturally, wanted me to become an investigator, so she arranged for me to start college in the city. I attended and studied for two years but the courses had no vision, and most of the teachers were dead in their own words. I told my aunt that college courses went against her own very ideas of motion and stories. I told her that the courses started with dead voices and never created a sense of motion, and so the academic stories were about absence, not presence. Yes, an absence because there was never a native vision in the courses on literature and history. Pocahontas is one of the few names that came alive in a story. I could see her dance, and even had a dream about her bones.

My aunt never expected me to use her own ideas as the reason to leave college, but how could she argue otherwise? I wanted to be a private investigator, that much was certain, but not with dead voices and bad stories. My vision is the motion of elevators, not the sociology of the family.

Actually, my aunt seemed to know exactly what was going on with me at the time. She had already contacted a technical school and paid my tuition for a one year elevator maintenance program. Chance and motion were on my side at last. Nothing could have been more exciting. Well, not much, but it was such a great sense of presence to be closer to my original vision. I studied the actual motion of elevators, the motors, gears, cables, pulleys, weights, hydraulics, and the electronics of various elevator systems. I learned how to hear every sound, the moans, shivers, clicks, and slow breaks, and imagined the true mechanical motion of elevators. I could sense any mechanical trouble in the sound of the motion. My teachers were rather amazed, but testy, that anyone could listen to the heart of an elevator and determine the problem. I never boasted about my power of visual investigation. The students teased me with a new nickname, the shaman of the elevator.

I was called many times by mechanics and contractors, even in the first few months of my courses, to describe strange problems in elevator systems. I rode the eleva-

tors alone, listened to the motion, and visualized what was wrong. My determination was correct in every case. The chance of my original vision and what my aunt taught me about motion gave me the courage to be the best of the elevator investigators.

I graduated with honors and earned the respect of my teachers, but even that was not enough to get a good job. Many companies needed elevator mechanics, but men were in absolute control of the service. No woman has ever been hired to maintain the true motion of elevators. My father wanted me to come back to the reservation and start a business listening to trucks and cars. I respect my father, you know that, but what could he have been thinking about? Most people run their cars to the grave. Who would listen to me, and who would pay to repair a car in advance of any trouble?

My aunt laughed when she heard about my situation. "You're better at the motion of machines than the tricky manners of men," she told me. She faced similar problems when she started out as a private investigator, but now she is hired as a consultant by companies around the world. So, she told me to do the very same thing.

The Elevator Shaman, that was the name on my first business cards, but no one asked me to do anything. I soon changed my cards to read, M. Browne, Elevator Investigator and Motion Mechanic. Tulip paid to list the name of my service in several directories. Three companies called me for emergency repairs, but there was never enough business to pay my rent.

My aunt came up with the brilliant idea that made me a small fortune. She called it "preventative elevator insurance." So, my new business worked in this way. I visualized the motion and mechanical sounds in every elevator in the most expensive buildings in the city. Naturally, each elevator has a very distinctive sound, a memorable accent, and a signature of motion. Then, I described the actual motion, the tension and tone of the rise, and any potential troubles in a detailed guidance report to the companies that owned or managed the elevators. Only seven companies answered, but once their elevators conked out my reports became valuable. The companies realized that the cost of having me around as a private motion mechanic was much less than emergency repairs. I negotiated nine lucrative contracts for preventative elevator services by the end of my first year in business. I was the shaman of motion, and in a few years my name was honored in highrises around the world.

Tulip, as you know, was my first teacher and she inspired me to pursue my vision of motion. She built seventeen miniature windmills in her condominium and understands the visionary power of motion. I wanted to live just like her, but not with that constant rattle and whirr of windmills. I bought a condominium on the seventh floor in the same building with the fountain and giant glass door, on the very floor, as you know, that my vision and the elevator conked out many years ago.

*The journey*

Pocahontas became my second vision in a grand elevator at Claridge's Hotel in London. We were in motion, a gracious dance at a royal masque. Chance brought us together on a gray morning, but we might not have met if my first vision had not conked out, and if my aunt had not teased me to listen and create stories of motion and presence.

Pocahontas had visions, maybe we both had similar visions and stories of motion. I came by air, she came by sea, and we met in an elevator more than three centuries later. The elevator is forever a sacred place in my visions. Later, in an antique elevator at a resort hotel she told me the stories of her bones.

Claridge's paid me handsomely to listen to their distinctive elevators that spring. I heard more than the manager ever wanted to know, and once more chance and motion teased the very heart of my stories. Nothing would ever be the same. Pocahontas was there, and the elevator was our natural motion, our river to the mighty sea. Three centuries ago a haze shrouded the sun over the city, but we were there in the polished mirrors of the elevator.

Pocahontas told me that she was faint with a fever as we boarded the *George* anchored at Tower Steps on the River Thames. Pocahontas was taken ashore a short time later and she died in motion, a dreamer in my arms at Gravesend. There, she was buried near the church of Saint Marie's.

The elevator stopped at our floor as she told me that her bones were stolen and sold to curious antiquarians in the city. The elevator doors slowly closed on her story. I tried to envision her on the same elevator for several days, but she would not return to the hotel. Her native bones were forever in motion in London.

I wanted to find her bones, more than anything, but my vision of her was only in the motion of an elevator. Pocahontas was a lost light in the native stories of the city. I tried to hear her at the river, and circled the statue of her in the garden at St. George's Parish Church in Gravesend. I cleaned her moccasins, and touched her polished bronze hand, and told her stories to hear a story. Only the sound of birds and cars broke the silence.

St. George's Parish Church was shrouded, dark and gloomy, but inside she waited for me to hear her in two memorial stained glass windows. The outside light was weakened by a haze over the river, but she was bright in the glass. She posed in a fancy costume in one window, the same pose, in a wide ruffed collar, as the portrait of her which was based on an earlier engraving by Simon de Passe. That portrait, created the year before she died, was my first vision of her in a college course on native history. We were there by chance, and now we are together in the motion of our stories.

In the other church window she wore baptismal clothes. I sat alone in the church and watched her for hours in the stained glass. She moved several times in the rush of bright light from cars at the corner outside. Then, an older man emerged from the darkness and told me that he was curious about my concentration on the windows and waited for more than an hour to close the church. I had lost my sense of time, and told him the reason why.

"Dearie, you have come to the right place," he said and locked the doors of the church. I was not worried because he started his stories as my uncle might, with a tease, but he turned to the windows and teased the stained glass portrait of Pocahontas. "She posed once and was caught forever in that frilly collar, and that is no way to treat a lady," he said and pointed to the window. His motion was a distraction so he could put on a similar frilly collar. "I wear this to tease her at night when we are alone, and she knows me better than anyone." The old man has teased her for more than fifty years, the entire time he has

been a volunteer at the church. I wondered, of course, if she had teased him right back. "Yes, and she is a mighty teaser," he said, and then invited me to the back room for a cup of tea.

"Pocahontas is our Indian Queen," he shouted over the whistle of the teakettle. The old man told me that a young fisherman bought her bones for good luck because he was certain that she was a native ancestor and a saint. That same fisherman, he said later, was convinced that she had once visited Land's End in Cornwall. Sadly he was lost at sea a few months later. "Might be her bones were lost at the same time," he told me. Yes, and that fisherman once lived in St Ives.

*The saint*

I was on the fast train the very next day to Plymouth, the place where Pocahontas first landed in 1616, and then on to St Erth in Cornwall. The Penzance to St Ives Scenic Railway continued from there along the estuary and coast of Carbis Bay to the final station at St Ives. The bay was bright, a shiver of blues in the distance, and the water was calm near shore that late afternoon. Children ran on the edge of the bay with the birds, and the elders walked their dogs on the beach near the station.

The mighty fuchsia trees had grown over the steep path up the hill from the railway station to the Porthminster Hotel. Pocahontas might have been with me on the rise of those ancient stones. Maybe they were stonechats that chattered in the thickets and in the boughs overhead. I could sense her presence, but she vanished once again as the porter opened the doors to the hotel.

The interior was tired, overpainted, and musty, but the young woman at the front desk was bright and witty. The porter carried my suitcase to a tiny room on the second floor. I opened the double windows and the sea breeze caught the curtains. The herring gulls circled and landed on the window frames. They leaned into the breeze and called out to their tricky relatives. Yes, the gulls were in constant motion, and their pale pink legs marked the sea, the beach, and my sense of presence. Loudly, they announced the start of the tourist season in St Ives.

I discovered an antique elevator early the next morning on my way to breakfast. I opened the metal gate and stepped into a bright brass enclosure, a sacred space even though it was exposed to view on all sides. Marryat and Scott of London built the elevator in the center of a grand stairway sometime after the hotel company was founded in 1894. The system served four floors, but was out of order that day. Once more, my vision and chance of motion were at hand in a turn of the century elevator. The hotel manager, an older man with enormous, rough hands, had no idea what was wrong with the elevator. I presented my business card and outlined the nature of my services. He held the card with both hands and studied me for several minutes, straining to understand, it seemed to me at the time, how a woman could ever be trained to maintain an elevator. Then he ritually folded and pinched my card, and pushed it into his shirt pocket. I think he was much more impressed by the fact that there would be no cost for my services than by my recent association with Claridge's in London.

Two herring gulls celebrated my presence at the window with their noisy love

songs. They were wise to the hotel schedule and very seductive after breakfast. Who could resist their smart pink legs and raucous stories?

I cleaned the electrical contacts and brakes on the elevator that afternoon, and had the entire system serviced and in order before dinner. Once again my vision was in motion, and this time in a very distinctive caged elevator. The manager, of course, was more than grateful because there were many older residents in the hotel who could not manage the stairs. I noticed that my business card was unfolded in his shirt pocket. He invited me for a drink at the bar and told me about his early days as a fisherman. His sense of peace as he spoke of the sea was the same as my vision of motion on elevators. His ancestors made their living by the sea until the fish ran scared. The bay was once a great culture of fish, tin, copper, and china clay. Now artists and tourists have taken over St Ives.

Pocahontas was on my mind, but the mere mention of her name caused him to turn in silence and stare out the window. The pale blue bay seemed to change the color of his eyes. He spread his hands with care on the table, to hold onto his stories, it seemed to me, and then he told me that the *Amelia* was lost at sea in September 1934. "My father told me Pocahontas was aboard with Barnabas Stevens and James Penberthy." His eyes were at a great distance as he told me this story.

I was on the beach early the next morning and met an older woman who was walking her two miniature terriers. She told me another story about Pocahontas. The Indian Queen, she said, was lost with several men on the St Ives Lifeboat in the rage of a flood tide on the bay about sixty years ago. I could hardly bear to hear the other stories that came to me in the next few days. Stories about the native woman who lured fishermen and lifeboatmen to the bottom of the sea. Pocahontas was not a lucky name to mention in St Ives.

A mysterious woman who owned a used bookstore on Fore Street near the harbour told me that the bones of Pocahontas were recovered by a curious survivor of the marvelous land of Lyonesse. His name, she said, was Trevelyan of Basil and he once lived in Lann Stefan or Launceston near the Bodmin Moor. He preached that the last sacraments had been delivered in the Cornish language about the same time that Pocahontas arrived at Plymouth from the New World. Saints are the manners of the country, and so he named her Saint Matoaka.

The store was dark, narrow, and crowded with stacks of books in the aisle. She was stout and in constant motion. Several times she brushed past me and left an earthy scent on my coat. Yes, and there were traces of wild flowers. She mumbled and covered her mouth because she had lost most of her front teeth. Sometimes she whistled at the end of certain words, and that, it seemed to me, was a natural tease. I was in her bookstore for only about an hour and yet that woman managed to surprise me several times with her manner and tricky stories. I was amazed, for instance, when she ordered me to open the door and suddenly three jackdaws walked right into the store. They bounced on stacks of books to her desk and ate tiny meatballs out of her hands. "Jackdaws are natural thieves," she said and pitched the last three meatballs into the air. They caught each one, of course, and then bounced out of the store. She convinced me that jackdaws even steal books. I asked her why and she waved her hands at me in silence.

The jackdaws stole my reason for being in the bookstore. She was right, they are thieves. I had almost forgotten to ask if she had any books about Pocahontas. She told me another great story, and yet she could not remember who had written about the Indian Queen in Cornwall.

"Saint Matoaka was buried at sea in the mythical baptisteries of Lyonesse," she chanted. Pocahontas was her nickname, and her native name was Matoaka. "Lyonesse was an island of rich cities, many stories, and beautiful people," she told me. I asked her how to find the island and she pointed to a map of Cornwall. "Lyonesse is right there, under the sea between Land's End and the Isles of Scilly." Saint Matoaka was at Lyonesse.

Pocahontas must have heard these stories because she was on the elevator with me that night at the hotel. I rode seventeen times from the bar, at the lower level, to the top floor and back again. I listened to the motion, but she was not there because there were so many other sounds in the caged enclosure. I held the elevator at the top floor and, at last, heard her voice. She told me that she had never been lost at sea, and that her bones had been stolen and later sold to a fisherman in St Ives. He was so worried about the bad luck her bones might have brought to others that he buried her remains somewhere near the village of Indian Queens in Cornwall.

*The dream*

My dream that night in the hotel was very clear and changed my life once again. I was repairing an older car in a garage when the area at the back opened magically onto a vast meadow with a creek, and a small town in the distance. Drift, the name of the town, was in England. I admired a conical shaped garden sculpture of terra cotta turtles. Slowly, in the shadow of the trees, a green turtle started to climb on the terra cotta turtle sculpture. I was truly moved by the scene, and then the terra cotta turtles seemed to move as the green turtle crawled on the sculpture. Yes, the terra cotta turtles came alive and, at the same time, the green turtle changed colors in motion and became part of the sculpture. I told my friends, in the dream, about the turtles at the back of the garage, but we could only get there by taxicab around to the town of Drift. The driver was an older native man, and the taxicab, we learned later, did not have a reverse gear so, as dreams create scenes with no end, we never got to the terra cotta turtle sculpture.

Later, the woman at the bookstore listened to my story of the dream and told me that Drift was the name of a town in Cornwall. "Saint Matoaka," she said, "is the motion of a turtle." The history of the word actually means "the village."

I wrote to my aunt about my dream, but she would probably not think much about it because she is so practical about words and dream experiences. On the other hand, as a private investigator she is always interested is solving problems. I asked her to look after my condominium because the dream had changed everything. My vision of motion, and my dream of terra cotta turtles in motion, had come together in a sacred place. I could not leave that sense of presence. There were only a few elevators in town, but my vision of motion had found a magical place in St Ives.

## from ***The Abacos***

Hank Lazer

It is a call to fluency.

Driving on the left

can be a tourist attraction

since a modest but

noticeable difference is,

after all, a commodity

of considerable interest to us.

Misestimation becomes clear

in bold relief but only

retrospectively. It's each

to his own electronic

communication device, a

planetary membrane of inter-

connected momentary importance.

As Henry wrote by hand

beside the pond, "and

what if when the telegraph

line is connected, etc."

Early morning laps are

best. John seems able

to write with great enthusiasm

from the same perspective

again and again. Is once

not enough, though once,

we know, is no career.

Here, the conch meat

must be beaten and

battered to be made

adequately tender. John

makes it possible to say

almost anything and feel

the act to have importance,

a *fin de siècle* project in

equipoise, postcolonial tone, &

a worldly perhaps universal

lamentation, not over historical

forces nor the politically

predatory, but for one's own

quotient of intermittently dismaying

gradual decay. If you continue

to pedal you will be propelled

forward, patches of loose gravel

not withstanding. In fact, John

seems always on vacation,

as if perpetually bemused

with no fiduciary

or occupational concern.

But what, you say, of

an appropriate *literary* tone?

The dead are still

among us as we recall

and say their favorite

phrases. Here, the currency

exchanges one for one. I

bother my son

to eat his supper as my father

pestered me. "The house

is a mango vinaigrette."

The intense orange blossoms

of the flame tree perfectly

expressed the longing in

Clarissa's heart. Did I

write that or did I read it

in the hardbound book

held by the woman in

the lounge chair beside me,

red enameled nails, a crisp

white visor, long blonde hair

drawn in a ponytail,

long hair for women again the fashion

though there's no discussion

of its meaning. Everything

changes but the will to change.

The hammock criss-crosses

your back. Tan cautiously.

As vacations go, it's a good

value, transfers not included.

No one expects to be

brought up short, to be,

as it were, short-changed,

at least not before one

delightful appearance, perhaps

among the palms, perhaps

among the ever present

casuarina pines, of the

indigenous and colorful abaco parrot.

Your son, I think,

will be the first to spy one.

# *Asian Mysticism and Soho Chic*

**May Joseph**

## *Think Differently*

During the spring of 1998, Apple Computer's ad featuring the Dalai Lama went up as an enormous street poster at the junction of Houston and West Broadway. Part of Apple's worldwide advertising campaign, the poster—alongside another of Amelia Earhart—marked the border of Soho, suggesting the spirit of technology and difference proferred by the neighborhood and its residents. Hugging the notorious Red Umbrella against the downtown skyline, the blasé image startled the eye. The accidental effect of architectural parody through juxtaposition was disconcerting. The popular circulation of the Dalai Lama as a commodity, alongside other world icons of science and revolution—including Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, and Mahatma Gandhi—markets kitsch, new age consumption, and urban spiritualism, as much as new technologies.

Historically framed at the crossroads of desire and political exile through the inchoate notion of Tibetan Buddhism as mystical and timeless, the benevolent smile of the Dalai Lama at the border of Greenwich Village and Soho marks the sentient formlessness through which the body operates in the city. Urban modernity nurtured by the inner secrets of the mystic East. No postcolonial reflexivity here. No pausing before the possible belittling of a religious icon emblematic of territorial disenfranchisement. Instead, the moment, framed by Apple's internationalist embrace of revolutionary world figures, merely reiterates an ahistorical quotation: free-floating mystic Tibet freshly framed by Kundun and Brad Pitt. The East is back, retooled with new technologies, to offer the secrets of ayurveda and the Himalayas without compromising the relentlessly individualistic logic of capital's euphoric self-obsession. The Dalai Lama merges with the Hindu mysticism of Aveeda at the corner of Houston and West Broadway.

Writing about the visual pleasure of looking at cities, Kevin Lynch remarks that "At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequence of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences."[1] The cumulative effect of the sensorial in the city is a dense layer of commoditization and the spiritual, which the poster of the Dalai Lama brought into play.

How does the sentient individual experience such a complex transaction of meanings and landscapes? What subtle interplay of context and desire is set in motion through the juncture of an image of a Tibetan monk, who is also a stateless sovereign, and that of

Soho, whose own economy of affluent sanctuaries and corporate monasticism is combined with the rarified aura of new media technologies synonymous with a metaphorical Tibet? The interiority of Soho, at once esoteric and renunciatory, is signaled in this accidental encounter of consumer and corporate advertising. Encountering the Dalai Lama against the cityscape triggers sensations of yet another order.

In the Paris of the 19th century, Baudelaire sees all the juxtapositions of fantasy and reality cumulatively producing new sensual experiences of the city. For Baudelaire, the city is never knowable. It is elusive and seductive, corporeal and flat-spaced. Particular locales in the city remind one of a particular image now gone, or an event long forgotten. Yet, as this poster of the Dalai Lama demonstrates, such sites of the city sometimes become imprinted with a specific aura that has vanished, been torn up or taken down, but still captures an aspect of the city's mental imagining of a specific moment. Such imaginings may be individual, as in particular interpretations or experiences of the city, or public, as in the performance of New York street vendors negotiating their relationship to the city. Yet such elusive mental images, though fractured and nebulous, cumulatively produce a mental image of the city that is individually specific, local, and even culturally particular.

In writings about New York, the city is invoked as architectural space, as landscape, as a conglomeration of buildings, as a playground for urban planners and designers, as sociological category, but its tactile and particular ways of knowing always remain slightly beyond the realm of the academic.[2] Its unexpected juxtapositions of history, memory, and the real, as in the rare conjunction of the Apple poster and the Dalai Lama's very visible presence during his visit to New York in May 1998, generates cumulative questions around historicity and embodiment, periodicity and ways of knowing.

The choice of Soho as the site to "think differently," where techno-hip spiritualism popularized by the scientifically committed Dalai Lama meets the technological feminism of the first woman pilot to make a transatlantic flight, marks the mythic renegotiation of Soho as a corporate ashram, with grid labyrinths of new media enterprises, decadent slumming, and flamboyant meditativeness. Soho offers the rarified atmosphere in which to "think differently" globally, as anorexic photomodellos of all hues brush shoulders with high-fashion CEOs on their lunch break, architects, and designers. The image of the Dalai Lama at this corner, under the corporate logo of Apple, serves as a tranquil reminder of digital revolutions more than the territorial disempowerment and exile narrativized by the Dalai Lama himself.

### *Lama Rama*

Located at a very transient junction of the city, prominently displayed atop the streetlights, the image of the Dalai Lama evokes mixed feelings of pop reverence, postindustrial serenity, and political ambivalence. Against this public, iconic display of high

tech and high fashion, a visual embodiment of Soho, the actual Dalai Lama's presence acquired a less impressive stature. "He is not as imposing as he looks in the poster," one New Yorker says after attending a lecture by him. "The Dalai Lama is a New York fetish," another acquaintance pronounces.

The explosion of Lama frenzy during the middle of May worked at different levels and captured an aspect of the metropolitan good life that combines international human rights with high fashion. There was the high-society penchant for a Lama at every function. This escalation of Tibetan Lamas to the realm of primitivist kitsch was poignantly enacted in the Dalai Lama's attendance as visiting rock star at widely diverse functions, from theological world meetings held at the Cipriani to protests at the Temple of Understanding.

The image of the Dalai Lama was taken down at the end of May in response to protests by the Chinese, angered by the attention he had received in corporate Hong Kong and New York. The Dalai Lama's visit to New York in the capacity of a civic authority raising support for his cause was relegated to the sidelines. However, the opposition to the civic authority represented by the Dalai Lama was staged across the city. The increasing prominence of the Nechung Oracle as a contestatory presence in the diasporic struggle for Tibetan sovereignty framed the Lama's presence downtown.

### *Monks and Cities*

The fascination with monks within city life is as old as the idea of the city itself. Tropes such as the friar and the monk in classic travelogues like *The Canterbury Tales* document the importance of the traveling holy man, whose degree of asceticism often contrasted with the corpulent profile he bore, replete with receding hairline. These caricatures fill the annals of early urban migrations. The medieval English monk, for instance, was a fictive assemblage of greed, bonhomie, and generosity. Largely a homosocial creature accustomed to city life within the medieval church, fort, or street, the male monk bore comic connotations of excess and denial, the spartan robes of the Franciscan friar or Capuchin monk contradicting the power and privilege borne by the Church within the city.

The French Rabelaisian monk of the middle ages is a loose-living monk at once scholar and peasant, loquacious and parodic. He is widely traveled, as the ways of the cloth are migrant, and acquainted with the customs of many cities either through conversation or personal experience. Earthy, sensual, and hardy, the Rabelaisian monk is an eloquent boozer whose relation to both God and Devil are equanimous. Fundamentally social and urban, the Rabelaisian monk is a full-hearted consumer of worldly goods, a scientific connoisseur of excess and frugality. He combines the fastidious palette of Benedictine simplicity with the crude fare of Franciscan proletarianism. Simultaneously property-less and claiming the world as his stage, the Rabelaisian monk stares enjoyment in the eye and takes its fleshy comportment head on. His religiosity lies in opposition to those of his fellow

brothers of the cross.[3]

A more severe manifestation of renunciation is the hermit or sage, whose reclusivity is combined with personal inner power in a deeper understanding of nature, achieved largely through a rejection of the artificiality of the city. Unlike the urban monk, the hermit or sage is generally located in a restful, lush grove in the woods. In the production of sageness, isolation, abstinence, and extraordinary endurance in the wilderness lead to a profound knowledge of life's worth. Such a project would be thwarted by too many distractions in the city, indeed, the city could prevent one from recognizing the truly valuable. Renunciation of the urban underscores the landscape of the hermit and the sage. The peculiar knowledge embodied by the sage is diametrically opposed to life in the city and yet is crucial to understanding ways of contending with the excesses of the urban.

These tropes of the hermit and sage were popularly contrasted with that of the mendicant, another popular urban type in the medieval Indian city. The mendicant bore the mythology of saintliness and abstinence within the city. He was sworn to a life of begging, with the social role of inculcating self-restraint by example in the lives of urban decadents. The state of mendicancy could be arrived at through a number of scenarios. One might be born a mendicant, or recognize the depravity of urban life and devote oneself to a life of simplicity, or fall from grace and choose the life of the mendicant, living in cities at the mercy of the street, in search of new direction.

The narrative of the mendicant, however, always invokes a former life of decadence and excess in the city, which the worldly decadent soul eventually rejects for a way of life in natural opposition to the everyday fleshiness of urban living. In this scenario, the mendicant is a social monk whose torment—that of self-imposed perpetual exile through travel or vagabondage—is also his means of subsistence. He is dependent on the generosity of overextended urban dwellers. The mendicant was an intermediary stage of monkhood, whose function was to temper the city's opulence through the frugality of the traveling holy man and his dependence on the charity of strangers. The embedded class connotation of the mendicant is that of a middle-class urbanite whose realization of truth lies in the rejection of the ways of the flesh, generally to be found in the comfort of good city living.

The social production of the Dalai Lama, however, presents a unique sovereignty unavailable to mortals and consequently worthy of an unparalleled distinction, the myth of Soho. He is nominated at birth as sage and monarch, steering the faithful and the ignorant away from the vicious cycle of want created by the city. He is at once humble burgher and sacred monarch in exile, forced to a life of political mendicancy, the way of the postimperial, stateless holy sovereign. The poignant combination of technological holy man and stateless sovereign encapsulated by the patrician face of the Lama is offset by the dense mobility of bridge-and-tunnel traffic and the transient populations of touristic Soho.

## *Movement of the Unfree Spirit*

The historical production of the Tibetan monk as transcendental and unfree spirit has its tangents in various forms of orientalism rooted in Western nostalgia for the unknown East. Mystic Tibet. Environmentally uncontaminated Tibet. The political geography of Tibet has consequently been anthropomorphized into the face of the Dalai Lama and the image of the Tibetan monk. Images of chanting monks against the impressive backdrop of Potala Palace frame the complex politics surrounding issues of sovereignty and governance for Tibetans as a nation. However, it is this same complexity that appeals to the kitschification of the Tibetan monk as an urban type, stateless, unfree, yet sustained by elaborate forms of self-management that allow for the extraordinary charisma imbued upon the Dalai Lama internationally.

The movement of the unfree is the archetypal movement of the 20th century. Forced migrations, hasty departures, unannounced arrivals, refugee camp–turned–city dwelling. It is this movement of the unfree, epitomized by the benevolent face of the Dalai Lama, that appeals to the harried and enclosed New Yorker.

## *Urban Asceticism and New York Theosophy*

The Dalai Lama poster at the corner of Houston and West Broadway cites another moment in New York's history, when modes of body management, urban occultism, and Eastern forms of religiosity informed a particular subculture of the city's cultural elite. At the end of the 19th century, a group of New Yorkers would meet at the famed "lamasery" of Madame Blavatsky, a Russian emigré who arrived in the city in 1873. Fresh from a sojourn in India via London, Blavatsky established the Theosophical Society in her home at 46 Irving Place in collaboration with H. S. Olcott, a New York journalist, and W. Q. Judge, a lawyer.

Under the influence of Madame Blavatsky, the Theosophical Society from 1875 to the early 1900s generated widespread enthusiasm in swamis, yogis, lamas, and nonsectarian mystical states. Blavatsky's own extended excursion into Tibetan mysticism—begun during her visit to Tibet in disguise—attracted enormous interest among New York spiritualists.[4] While the theosophists' inquiry into the occult was not unique, their urban context and cosmopolitan interests in science and philosophy kept their interrogations intellectual and international, while distancing them from the questions of race, class politics, and ideology that profoundly shaped their inroads into colonial territory.

The internationalization of theosophy as a movement with centers in London and Madras made the idea of an urban occultism widely available as a life-style choice. A culture of urban asceticism incorporating mystical and theological traditions of Eastern religions, particularly Vedanta and Buddhisms of Ceylon and Tibet, created a fascination with

the colonized Orient, even within colonial cities like Madras and Calcutta. Indian mystics were complicit in the promotion of Brahmin ideology under the guise of mystical doctrines of a world religion, Hinduism. New theosophical sects and cults proliferated in New York and around the United States from 1875 onward, culminating in the success of Indian gurus such as Vivekananda, who visited Chicago to attend the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, and J. Krishnamurti in Ojai, or organizations like the Hollywood Ramakrishna Mission and Paramahamsa Yogananda's "Yogoda" cult in Encinitas, California. Colonial fantasy and colonized complicity merged, creating a 20th-century quietist imaginary that would blur the distinctions of West and East against the backdrop of nationalist struggles for self-determination. The connection between the theosophists and Annie Besant, for instance, established an important link between Adyar in Madras and the New York theosophists. Besant participated in the Indian National Congress and founded the Home Rule League in collaboration with Indian radicals. Further, Olcott financed support that led to the creation of the Indian National Congress. Despite Blavatsky's own disclaimer that the theosophists were nonsectarian, their political alignments with national culture in India and elsewhere were not innocent.

While many of the pseudo-cults that fell off the theosophical bandwagon descended into narcissistic and apolitical communities, other offshoots led to interests in experimental utopian communities and new age body management, as well as ecological, paranormal, and scientific inquiry. G. I. Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, established in New York in April 1924, was one such experimental community that extended the practice of theosophy in the direction of performance.[5] The popularity of F. M. Alexander's technique of constructive, conscious control of the individual by the individual, and Moshe Feldenkrais's focus on breathing, movement, and posture, also drew indirectly upon yoga and other movement techniques in a nonsectarian language of body management.[6]

The current rage for hatha yoga in Manhattan, represented by the Integral Yoga Institute, the Center for Holistic Health, and various centers invoking ayurveda and naturopathy, continue to draw upon the theosophical legacy of the city, this time corporatizing its public image.[7] Andrew Weill, Deepak Chopra, Spas, and myriad holistic centers offers a life style of Eastern bodily regimes without the need to philosophize or intellectualize it. In this sense, the worst fears of the New York theosophists have been realized as an urban life-style choice. The East no longer involves reckless journeys into unknown territories of the Empire. Instead, it has been defanged and become an avenue of consumption, just another commodity in the city's choice of pleasurable life-style services.[8]

## *Postmodern Renunciation*

To the soothing canned sounds of sea gulls and crashing waves in a Soho sanctuary spa, an increasingly popular vacation resort within the city, a serene dancer-turned-

# from *Underneath the Southern Cross: The Diary of a Journey*

Edwin Torres

WORD PUZZLES
CROSSWORD POEMS
POEZZELLES
PUZZ-EL-EMS
POZZLES
PEMMELLS
POMM-ELL-EPPELLS
PUMMELLS
WORD PUMMELLS
distinct BLAMS!
come about POUP!
infusing the safety of word puzzles
PASSELS - PIZZLES - and - PIPS
into the daiety ever
y-EV
day-ITTY BLANCHE
MALIGNANCHE
AVALIGNANCE
BALANCHE

IN-compre-HANCHE
FREE-RANCH
take a
CHANCH wit' me...
take a word pummell
decisive sculptor,
scalped to incise the word open
to jamble pamp
the screwer by the bay...
the day...
THED-AY
THA-TADA!
TADA! TADA!
TADA! TADA!
GABBA-RA!

GRABBA!
GRAB-A-HA!
RABA-HO!
NAVAJO!
AMMA-NO-WAY
gonna GRABBA dat!
SISOR-
CISOR-IN
CASE you-IN
CASE-a-CISOR
YOU - in CISE a
inside-A-MASE
IN-A-MASE a SUNDAYS
a SIDE 'a ME...comes out

* * * *

coffee bar in Melbourne
Fitzroy, the East Village of Australia
waiter has green frog glasses of metal he got in France
wonders where my glasses' country is from
Korean - I think in a five-dollar frenzy
American - I say - the latté is made
two big photo prints onna wall here on Brunswick Street
dark prints beauty prince charming is our bloke
offa waiter - handsome oldie bigger than ever
sits outside our window black fedora onna graybeard face
summer heat knows his coat, he must
waddle into the 90's - by his crawl
lookit this man Oh he's so handsome
some old men are downright cute, but this one has
the outback scribbled into his wrinks - he sits - I write -
look up - he's gone - on to Brunswick Street
like we, after our fruity latté and passionfruit expressionless
like the folks at home we pass every day on Bleecker
and Christopher that we say are lazy waste-aways
like we, here - on holiday - streaming sun sits betweening
legs and kneesing sun 'etween our bees

* * * *

Here I am, squeezed
onna "caff" on the side streets offa

"happ" in a 'nother "sect"
of the world
Bohemian is a catch-phrase
thrown out by No-hemians
Everything's designed "just so"...ain't no rawness
Feel the sprint
of early morning showers gone but here
not forgotten - incline to my latté,
onna foreign alley, a sidestreet hotspot

I am exotic against these people
against the angular sun gods
I am merely a dark shoot
rifle shot darkman - glowing hard
carbon hard ebonite light
M'aura Maori
I have indigenous blood -
though I'm from the streets offa city...
my blood runs sideways
underneath the Southern Cross
My face turns
slightly towards the red skies at day's end
My face turns
towards the feel offa goodbye sun
Blood of Boricua
Skin of New York
Moricua, Bori
Baoricua, amor

* * * *

*Through the flying machines*
*she stands with me, looking out over the waters*
*it's the same land we're on...just a little*
*further...that's all. Plumed forest creature, unleashed*
*for a night through the flying machines.*

* * * *

Runamuck & SOS
Cartaround & Showoff the
*Un* - Usual an - *I* - mal
I am bad *and*

I am malo *y* I soy *and*
And I if AM I *and*
I soy un muy *MAL* *y LOW* *and*
Y *and...* y *yo...* we go
Y both *soy* when I was - *am I*
Was an I baddo *O no...soy*
*Malo soy* masque co - ro - *RA*ddo
O - *RA* - o red *death*
Un red *bad* red
For a bad *and*
I was red *death*
Con - strict - ted red *bad*
Strang - gelled red *mal*
an AN - *I* - MAL of de - *CEPT* - tion
un - *USUAL* an - *I* - mal
Me layo son - tuno con
Paranja zibrana...o - tra vez y
Charada...parada, Stop me - *if you've heard this before*

* * * *

how a word travels page-ness - cross
your east with an easy disciple or twelve...rooted
in an ocean, where staked across it's width
is my name as a southern cross, covering the expanse
of what I'd never outgrow - if I can't stand tall enough
to be my own shadow, how can I follow the star in front?
whose bait is laced with bittersweet melancholy traced
back to my stance, my posture, heavy
supporting world's...wait, fleeting bivalve
in my Achille's moment - I would've
done it, you know...I would!

*the line between days, is a curve before me*
*a string fading, along this wing I have*
*orange nocturne blue somnamblia*
*I get reckless when I skip you by*

where am I in this heaving spirit, where am I
in the falling odyssey that throws itself
before me, continually...I am a spleck
indifferent to the fall, to the gaining orbit
felled by trunks imagined, long lost gotters...who is a *gotter*

in this age, who goes and gets it -
who rightfully claims a drunken cheer on that boat,
the blue-cloaked dairymen raise their haunched lips
to greet bony skullthrones,
charts of light make their way across
my eyelashes' impermanence - the slow demise
of a farewell wink - where am I in this caravan
bellyful rotten mouthing by a cracked vision - where was follow
when need painted it's curtain across avenue Me,
what do I do in this new found oblivia, between the restspots
of my lips, the roar deletes, & my ears are waxed - was this
a fleeting dynamo caught to end expectedly?
or was this a moment above my skull,
to see what I'm all about?

* * * *

*I've been told the sun shines to reveal*
*the energies of old circuses - in the skeletal remains of*
*petrified candy cotton fossils, a roller coaster*
*holds the memory offa universe,*
*yellow-blue desire charting screams for*
*flying-high disastros - ribbon marrow twirling chilhood*
*algae grange & ganged up banners, torn like*
*so much fleshlip loose hung to comb the bald sky.*

*I hear the sun laughs when bringing out*
*the past - when shining on the rusted cavalry, circlery, merrily,*
*gone woody to the psycho-shack, splintered muzzle onna*
*baby's butt, in every ray issa web*
*old sun's reminder of what she's yet to catch.*

*Old sun shows more than she wants to*
*so bright penetrating, old sun*
*never sees - just shows.*

* * * *

Audrey has flat feet
bumpy motors propel Audrey
across the world

* * * *

In the break, a peninsula
A hitchiker, a thumb
A stand, with two legs on four hands
A stretch, a stick
To be like the color who wants to be mixed

Wailing neuter, shaving echo
Light focuses on my steps, I stay
Unbalanced, cruising in my speed

A kilo, an excess
A metronome sunset, a measure of island
A knife across, the watered screaming
A mosquito bite on my thumb, flaring
At every opportunity

This is the knuckle -
This is the ring not fitting -
This is the skin - the size too wrong -
This is blind reception - the starvant eyehole -
Mother Machine-acea molding little mouth-mind -
This is the fork - Scratched
Across the feather - Fork boned
Against mold - Scrap heap, this is

Skeletal size as I exist it
Seeing to the sight given / not born
Misguided tracks
Clock anti-gone / Roar anti-found
This is the tooth hung, the
Stolen mouth around the neck, the shipwrecked skunkhour
Stenched in paradismos sailing - this is the caved out nostril
The father carved out of my grip
Into sound - this is the warning
Come to life - the borrowed line to step once, to remind onceing
At every chance, I'm given chance-ing - politely
Pierced - I sliver along - a squared brass...a ring unfitted

* * * *

this is beauty from my part of the world
this is how I look, when I look

this is how I don't use a mirror, this is how
I don't see a picture, this is how I
don't be a thing, this is what I am
when I'm not looking at you
when I don't look at you
you are the most beauty I've seen,
you are, to me, what I am
to you, when you
don't see, I am
the most beauty

* * * *
* * * *
* * * *
* * * *

# *Mirage Evinced Across the Thalassic*

**Will Alexander**

Blowing out from the dunes
one sees a thermal homology
an evanescent dust migration
verdant
procursive
feral
an equine
part retrocausal & blizzard
like a blur across spinning gemstone deltas
with its fault scarps
its meteorites
its darkened mineral monsoons

it possesses by its speed
the first locomotion of the Eocene
with the spore of its Arabian pulling shoulders
its mass
eclectic
quantum
its dense & switchable markings
both Chesnut & Sorrel

its anti-laryngeal
inverted
anathema
with its suspension surmounted
by deciduous grasp
by protozoic fermentation
partaking of the fever
of apricot
of Babylonian magenta
with its sea-blue rendezvous with clouds

in which it appears
doubled
riderless

throughout a belt of stunned coronas
elaborate
negated
envacuumed

eruptive
like a nervous fatidic
across a latitude of cycles
pluperfect
with motionless centigrade farming

this Shetland this Cayuse
with the pansophical grafts of separate planetary fables
blowing
across the pelagic transparency of the captian
with his ship falling upward
in a dust enhanced pneumonics

motion perhaps
across
the solferino impressions ignited on Venusian plateaus
or perhaps
across fields of glass inverted on Miranda
or vitrescent eruptions as waves from the abyss

as if
the quantum captian had never existed
had never taken as current
the paralysis
the salt
the ingestions
emitted from the drift envisioned by great Loxodromes

the glance of Bombay & Carthage
of fiery diatonic glaciers
predacious
obscure
kaleidoscopic
so that all the parts of amphora
exist within a vacant spectral harness

& the mirage
the pony as nanism

with its radius
its tarsus
its gaskin
utterly burning & uncontained
always beguiling
the optical dice with refraction

# Reviews

# *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*

Christaud Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, eds.
Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998

Towards the end of the introduction to *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*, the editors worry about the consequences of reprinting "colonial" postcards given that "the exotic aura of these foreign peoples has not diminished over the decades." Without critical commentary, they fear such "images may indeed reinvoke their original context" (10). And, to be sure, the lush and glossy production value of this Smithsonian issue, devoted to the establishment of the study of early postcards from the period of high imperialism (post Berlin Conference to WWI), does offer something of a minor postcard exhibit. As such, the concerns of the contributors strike an uneasy balance between a fixation on the postcard as a mass-produced *objet d'art* with aura now conferred by the archive, and showing how postcards were part and parcel of the colonial enterprise. While the authors are keen to launch the importance of the study of postcards for historical research, we only receive faint glimpses of what such research will contribute to the discussion of colonial discourse and representation.

In terms of a critique of representation, the authors inform us that the postcard featured stereotypes in accordance with Western fantasies. For instance, in Albers' discussion of postcards depicting Plains Indians ["Symbols, Souvenirs, and Sentiments: Postcard imagery of Plains Indians, 1898-1918"], she identifies the way postcards of the West "emphasized the 'scenic,' 'picturesque,' and 'colorful' qualities of the 'sights' travelers would encounter," including of course, images of Plains Indians as "distinctive" features of the Western romantic "landscape." On the whole, Albers offers a careful analysis of the pictorial detail, the kinds of costumes and props which are now familiar emblems of the mythic American West. However, Albers discussion does not venture beyond a reading of such romanticism to address the ideological significance of the circulation of such images (on postcards, as souvenirs) for post 1890 U.S. nationalism.

In contrast, Rydell and Webb more explicitly develop the relationship between nationalist projects and postcard imagery. In his essay "Souvenirs of Imperialism: World's Fair Postcards," Rydell argues that postcards emerged from the "exhibitionary complex" of the late imperial project. He characterizes postcards as "imperial ammunition," arguing that postcards "magnified" and "reinforced" the ethos of exhibitions through presenting contained and orderly crowds, commodified images of "ethnological types," and generally "justify[ed] the assumptions of the dominant" world view through pictorial objectification (52-8). In such a fashion, "postcards transmitted the very ideological messages that were embedded in the expositions about the essential rightness of imperialism and the importance of mass consumption to the continued progress of Western civilization" (58). Webb, in her article, "Transformed Images: Photographers and Postcards in the Pacific Island,"

gives an even more explicit discussion of the specific ideological use of postcard representation. She identifies the way that within the missionary enterprise postcards served as both fundraisers and evidence "to the Christian world that their missionary work had been successfully completed" (137).

Yet, throughout the volume, most of the essays do not differentiate the postcard from other forms of representation. In fact, they highlight the extent to which postcards simply duplicated representational conventions of portraiture in painting or photography. Albers argues that "Many of the conventions for representing Plains Indians . . . were already established well before the advent of the picture postcard. Compositions already prevalent in painting, lithography, and photography were adapted to the postcard format with little change. In certain respects, the postcard only served to perpetuate older and widely accepted standards of visualization. Whatever innovations occurred primarily reflected stylistic trends that were taking place in pictorial production worldwide, and none of them was especially peculiar to the ways in which Plains Indians were depicted on postcards" (67). Similarly, Webb asserts that "many of the Eurocentric tropes used in representing sitters were not unique to the indigenous people of New Zealand: such gender specific images were created in photographer's studios around the world" (120). If postcards *merely* follow painting and photography, we must ask: Why, then, study postcards?

There are two points to be made here. First, such stereotypical images had already entered the Western imagination through painting, lithography, and literature. For this reason, the reading of postcard representation which emerges here – the postcard stereotypes and romanticizes, and its themes represent the establishment of colonial order through the containment, categorization and possession of the other – does not add much to existing critiques of colonial imagery. Thus, the interesting moments of investigation in this volume are those where "difference" is rigorously pursued: specifically, those between the photograph and the postcard. Second, historical differences in representation are also blurred. Nowhere do we get a subtle treatment of representational differences between cultures which mirrors the growing Western preoccupation with evolutionary anthropology or an historical analysis of postcard representation which follows changes in political and social attitudes (as we do in Lutz and Collins). Moreover, the authors miss the fact that gendered tropes of nationalism seem to be a special preoccupation of the postcard idiom.

The authors admit to the difficult nature of the type of historical research they deem central given the destruction or loss of much historical data on the producers (printers and photographers) of various postcard series. Yet rather than speculate on the cultural significance of the data which is available, most of the authors focus on methodological concerns (of provenance, dating, and typing), without demonstrating how such research will help explain how postcards "delivered" their views to their intended audiences. Taken collectively, however, the articles point in the direction of a method which accounts for the relationship between the postcard's formal strategies and its function as a cultural technology of imperialism. By putting these articles in dialogue and developing their research conclusions, we find that the postcard is unique in that it travels and mediates between high and popular forms ( especially in its intertextual relation to other cultural practices: exposition, painting, photography, operetta), commodity and artifact, the personal and the histori-

cal, and the private and public.

In the introduction, Geary and Webb point out that the images for postcards tended to travel out of the colonies and into the metropole. However, the postcard as commodity circulated between major cities and colonial centers. Since, in these travels postcards mapped specific international relations, the way that postcard distribution networks exceeded and transgressed merely "national-colonial" projects should be explored in more depth. For instance, in Woody's piece on the international distribution networks for postcards (dominated by German printers), he fails to draw out the significance of the German production of postcards thematizing British imperialism and their large appeal to American consumers (31, 42). It is Rydell who offers some explanation of this phenomenon: It is proof of "America's willingness to take up the 'white man's burden'" (50).

Moreover, since the bulk of postcards were meant for international/Western consumption, postcards produced locally or for local consumption offer an important terrain for comparison. Identifying the difference between postcards of Native Americans and the Western U.S. intended for local use and those intended for national or international tourist industries, Albers finds that local representation often avoided romanticism by including images of acculturation and modernization (78). Geary, in her study of African postcards, asks whether there is a difference between the gaze of Western and African photographers. While she defers an answer for future research, she argues that perhaps the expected audience and function (public or private) of the postcard holds more influence in determining how a subject is framed.

The postcard is also distinctive in that it occupies a space in between art and commerce. For this reason, Webb charts the changes from photograph to postcard, deciphering which details were permissible and which were disruptive. However, while she identifies the exaggeration of certain "exotic" features of Pacific Islander models, like the exten[sive] retouching [of] models to directly emphasize their *moko* [traditional facial tattoos]," she goes no further than to assert that such transformations "increase[d] the commercial appeal of postcards as tourist souvenirs" (123). We are left to answer that such commerce depended on exoticism and eroticism without any examination of the specific constructions of each in the commercial "encounter" between various cultures. Here, a comparison between successful and failed images of similar subjects, as well as a comparison between different markets in various parts of the world might prove illustrative.

Examining the way postcards mediated between high and low cultural forms, Handy's article on *Japonisme* highlights the intertextual nature of postcards (exemplified by the popularity of the *Mikado*). Through an exploration of an American "middle brow fascination with all things Japanese," she demonstrates how the postcard made *Japonisme*, at first a costly visual aesthetic, available to the middle class (98). Perhaps such a dual analysis of intertextual reference and the shifiting class appeal of racial imagery ought to be further pursued.

At the beginning of the volume, the editors suggest that reading the verso of the postcard will illuminate the relation between consumer and image. Yet none of the articles addresses this important relationship. If, as Berger suggests, photography replaces memory without being able to narrate it, then the "narration" provided by individual senders will say

much about the mass-produced image's ability to bridge the supposedly private realm of a culturally distant experience and the "public" memory of "an unknowable and total stranger" (Berger 52). If "violence is expressed in that strangeness," than perhaps the amplification of that violence in the everyday life of ordinary subjects is "readable" in the short and banal notes penned to distant friends and relatives. Such analysis might go some way to explaining how an historic process (imperialism) intervenes in the individual experience of the colonial subject.

It is this level of detail which is missing when Geary argues that "postcards popularized the colonial endeavor in Africa by depicting peoples and their indigenous settlements that had come under Western domination as well as the landscapes and geographical features of the colonies" (147). Although the introduction promises to show how postcards facilitate communication and allow for the "personalization" of experience and the ownership of memory, the authors pay little attention to the personal inscriptions of the senders, which lend the most interesting window onto the circulation of colonial ideology through cultural stereotypes, its address to the individual imperial or colonial subject, and how these images were taken up and used. The authors do argue that the records are limited of colonized peoples writing and sending postcards of local images — but what of the versos of postcards made for the Western subject? Surely this would be a significant step toward a reconstruction of the emergence of colonial discourses of empire and colony, self and other in artifacts of everyday life.

The essays of *Delivering Views* constitute a tentative methodological beginning to important archival work. The authors are right in their impulse to read the postcard closely. As Alloula says, the postcard masquerades in its blank aesthetic as a depiction of reality, rather than as a construction of the other for consumption in the metropole. The will-to-detail of the art historian may, in fact, be an important antidote to the fakery and decontextualization that were rampant in colonial photography and postcard imagery. However, there's more to that "context" than the habits and intentions of specific photographers, and thus, historical research should not be dedicated merely to unearthing particular photographic or production styles. Rather, let us ask how will the determination of the origins of various postcards and postcard images demonstrate how such a construction of knowledge about the Other in the form of postcard images and captions bolstered a distribution and rationalization of global power. If postcards, as souvenirs, replaced individual memory, stood in as "place-holders" of experience, then the volume points in an important direction: towards the excavation of traces of an uneven cultural exchange. Ultimately, it is important to keep the postcard's representational specificity in the foreground in order to establish the link between the ideology of capitalism, racism, and the interpellation of colonial subjects through the commoditization of memory.

**Michelle Stewart**

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# *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*

Charles Bernstein, ed.
Oxford University Press, 1998

and

# *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*

Adalaide Morris, ed.
University of North Carolina Press, 1997

*No one listens to poetry. The ocean*
*Does not mean to be listened to. A drop*
*Or crash of water. It means*
*Nothing.*

If Jack Spicer's lament in these lines, and the poem from which they are taken, has become a refrain bearing on a kind of poetic anxiety of late (and its appearance as an epigram to *Close Listening* is only one indidication that it has), it is one so replete with its own semantic abundance that it has absorbed its own ambivalence: it is as much an affirmation of multiplicity and sonority as it is a bold or bitter complaint. By which I mean to say that there are more ways of reading this poem than there are critics to read it for us, and that this why it is poetry, and why it can mean so many things at once, or why it can even mean nothing at all. It is as if the spectre of literality which always threatens a reading of poetry exacted a blind-spot around whose periphery horizons of echoing meaning expand. What we need to do is *hear* the poem (since "no-one listens to poetry.") But then again: "No/ One *listens* to poetry," as Spicer later tells us. Perhaps then we need to listen in order to overhear its meanings, or in order to hear it like one hears the ocean before it finds itself in a poem where it (was?) never meant to be. Regardless, we need to pay attention to the ways in which language like this expands to become both literally and figuratively ambient. And regardless of Spicer's laments, even "nothing" is a thing.

It is such a form of listening — of Spicerean sounding resounding — that these two volumes of critical essays turn our attentions towards, particularly insofar as those attentions be critical, and even more so as critical attention has remained in a state of relative sensory myopia. The metaphors are telling, for both *Sound States* and *Close Listening* attend to the aurality of a poetics, and the essays therein collected do so with a collective ear to the ground that, attuned to many vibrations coming from many directions at

once, perceive a broad compass of cultural resonance in what might otherwise remain unaccounted for by literary critcism proper. And although it is the former of the two publications that most emphatically explores the aural, both offer compelling readings of that which extends beyond the literal or the narrowly literary — meaning that literature is here conceived of as "aurature" as well, orature as well as ècriture, the heard or sounded word as well as the printed or written one.

*Sound States* includes a dozen essays, each of them theoretically astute, and each of them subtly tuned to the way in which sound — as music, noise, or voice — and its various technological venues have aided experimentation both in poetry itself and in poetics broadly construed. Adalaide Morris's introduction rightly situates this work in the ongoing field of media studies whose concerns were most explicitly mapped out in the work of early theorists of orality and literacy (Walter Ong and Eric Havelock are the principal figures that Morris mentions) and media theorists in general (i.e. Marshall McCluhan). Yet she also points to more recent work by critics like Marjorie Perloff and Garret Stewart — both of them contributors — as having opened up this discourse to a range of new possibilities and implications, all of which are profound for an age experiencing its own virtual shift in medial and discursive paradigms. "Complex, plural, and supple methods of interpretation — methods that register more than one sense — become ever more urgent as information continues its migration from print to computerized multimedia," writes Morris, and although none of the essays herein gathered explicitly or solely treat computerized or "virtual" media (an area that, unlike aurality per se, has garnered considerable scholarly attention), they each supplement that kind of study via a broadening of the range of approaches available to readers of performative "aurature." Furthermore, where work on digital media has tended to remain focussed on the West exclusively, at least two of the essays here — Nathaniel Mackey's "Cante Moro" (reprinted from a talk given at the Naropa Institute in the early 90's, and originally published elsewhere) and Loretta Collins' study of the political and aesthetic implications of Caribbean dub-poetry ("Rude Bwoys, Riddim, Rub-a-Dub, and Rastas: Systems of Political Dissonance in Caribbean Performative Sounds") — open the discourse out to areas beyond such a narrow delimitation, engaging the kind of attention to cross-culturality employed in some of the more subtle projects arising out of post-colonialism and ethnopoetics.

If *Sound States* asks us to hear poetics, however, it has also gone the extra step in providing us with the means to do so. The book is accompanied by a full-length compact disc that features examples, illustrations, and extensions of the various music, song, sound, and speech referred to in the essays. Yet this need not be taken to mean that this is the only kind of listening available in this book (the essays thus becoming secondary or descriptive). Fred Moten's consideration of Cecil Taylor's poetry, for instance, is as performative in itself as it is critical and/or discursive. Moten specifically poses the question always implicit in printed reconstructions of primarily oral/aural events, as well as in linguistic accounts of sound and/or music proper. "Words don't go there," asserts Charles Lloyd, quoted in the essay, when asked about writing about music (the statement echoes Ornette Coleman's notorious assertion that "writing about music is like dancing about architecture.") Moten's

words — or "notes," as he refers to them —ask in turn precisely where it is that words don't go, and proceed to not so much answer as explore the question in relation to Taylor's ritual music/poetics, suggesting that for Taylor (as well as for Moten's writing about him), even if words don't go to where Lloyd suggests they don't, they do go somewhere similar to where an accompanying music goes when both are transformed through their mutual inter-relation. Moten thus not only calls attention to the works in language of an innovator of great power and breadth, but he also calls into question the medial line between poetry and music — between sound, speech, and writing — in a manner fitting for an artist like Taylor who, although most renowned as a pianist/composer, has long been an accomplished artist in a variety of media.

A significant portion of the collection is given to essays examining radio and tape technologies — James A Conner and Morris, for example, explore uses of radio technologies in the Modernist projects of James Joyce and H.D. respectively, while two other essays — by Michael Davidson and N. Katherine Hayles — explore in more theoretical and speculative terms the status of tape and/or radio in relation to discourses of subjectivity, conceptions of the body, and phenomenologies of presence and absence. Discussions of such artists as Laurie Anderson, William S. Burroughs, David Antin, and Steve Benson figure prominently, as do various theoretical models ranging from post-structuralism to Toby Miller and Alec McHule's use of Foucault in their analysis of the "radio intellectual" as a product of the generic and technological limitations of the radio interview. Building on what was initiated in Douglas Kahn's and Gregory Whitehead's *Wireless Imagination* volume, these essays are both diagnostic and propositional, and include both artistic and broader cultural concerns attendent to audio technologies.

Some of the most exciting work in *Sound States* is that which brings it in closest proximity to the work in *Close Listening*. Separate essays by Marjorie Perloff, Jed Rasula, and Steve McCaffery appear in both collections, and a concern with such issues as orality/literacy, performativity, technological mediation/extension, and intrageneric or cross-medial experimentation underwrites much of the work in both volumes. Rasula's essays in particular are striking for their erudition and extravagance, as well as for the ways in which his readings of contemporary poetry are situated in a vast philosophical network that brings out poetry's vital importance on an anthropological (global) scale. In "Poetry's Voice Over," which appears in *Sound States*, Rasula considers the complex signification of "poetic voice" (that most entrenched of workshop conceits) in both its subjectivist and alternative modes, suggesting that "poetry begins to lose touch with its voice-over — its inspiring double and alien prompter — when it appropriates voice for the purposes of subjectivity." A critique of the "I" based poetics so prevalent in the Western lyric, the essay is also a meditation on the lost primacy of a kind of originary otherness considered endemic not only to poetry, but to *poeisis* taken wholesale. "Poets," Rasula concludes, "have lost touch with the archaic parables of voice-over, which instruct us in the ways in which inspiration always divests us of that security we so desperately crave as the sign of an empowerment we forever wish was ours alone, and not a sport of the gods or a bewitchment of the Muses." McCaffery, with his singular brand of theoretical savvy, offers a pair of meticulous historical accounts of

the emergence of sound and audio poetries, tracing in respective essays the many phases of American sound poetry and its cultural and social resonance. Perloff, in *Sound States,* adds to her work on John Cage, and in *Close Listening* she examines the prosodic shift that she sees currently occurring in contemporary American poetry — a shift that she suggests is characterized by a new "non-linearity," itself exemplified in an emergent poetry wherein visuality and parataxis become not just surface features augmenting a referential base, but become instead integral, even central compositional elements.

Yet an extensive terrain is explored in *Close Listening* beyond what it shares *Sound States*. Nick Piombino's intriguing application of psycho-analytic theory to what he calls "the aural ellipsis," for instance, breaks through the binary logic that has tended to infect the orality/literacy debate (as well as it unsettles a number of other such seemingly settled heuristics). The "aural ellipsis," Piombino's coinage for what is filled in by a listener or reader when encountering an elliptical text, is that which according to him "allows that...

> the poem may exist within in indeterminate site of significant verbal experience that is simultaneously physical and mental, objective and subjective, heard aloud and read silently, emanating from a specific self and yet from a nonspecific site of identity, coming toward comprehensibility and disintegrating into incoherence.

Piombino's essay appears in *Close Listening* next to Susan Stewart's meditative "Letter on Sound," which addresses, among other things, Gerard Manley Hopkins's notorious theories (and applications) of "sprung-rhythm" in his poetry; Susan Howe's (also meditative) piece "Ether Either," where histories and stories and stutters collide in dialects and autobiographies ("How do sounds speak to memories? I have brought you out of the land of Egypt and I have broken your bonds"); and Rasula's complimetnary take on "Understanding the Sound of Not Understanding," which is as much about ambience and peripherality as it is about incomprehensibility *per se*. Additionally, *Close Listening* contains a specifc section that address the "poetry reading" in terms of its function in specific communities (the Black Arts Movement, for instance, which Lorenzo Thomas addresses, or the subcultural groups that gather at notorious "poetry-slams," which latter is the subject of Maria Damon's essay) or in community writ large; in terms of its general function (discussed by Peter Middleton in "The Contemporary Poetry Reading" ); and in terms of its integral relationship to primarily non-orthographic languages (Susan M. Schultz's essay "Local Vocals: Hawai'i's Pidgin Literature, Performance, and Postcoloniality," which offers a socially and politcally informed reading of Lois Ann Yamanaka and others).

One of the more useful aspects of *Close Listening* is its inclusion of essays dealing with performative writings that are not principally, nor even importantly, oral or aural works. Johanna Drucker's "Visual Performance of the Poetic Text" examines precisely what its title promises, suggesting that "whether the work on the page is meant for performance — a rendition in vocal presentation — or whether the page is conceived of as the site of the

performance of the work, the nature of visual performativity remains the same: an instance of expressive means creating effect without direct connection to the presence of the artist, a performance in which the performer is the visual form." Drawing examples from the work of French proto-Surrealists such as Appolonaire and Mallarme, as well from Dadaist artists like Tristan Tzara, Drucker's essay, like similar essays in the collection, resists advancing undue valorizations of a single mode or term — orality over literacy, the spoken over the written, the visual over the spoken — and instead looks to the areas of fertilization inhering in their mutual interrelations (i.e. a visual text performed vocally in a manner abstracting it from the present performer, and thus constituting at once an oral, a literate, a visual, and a performative spatio-temporal event).

Ultimately, what *Sound States* and *Close Listening* offer is a welcome expansion of the burgeoning discourse attendant to sound and/or performance — a propositional and ambitious expansion that should be of interest not only to scholars of poetic literature, but to anyone with an interest in the cultural realm that has come to be known simply as *poetics*. Lively, engaging, and vital, these volumes ask the question not only of what poetry says (or of what poetry or *poeisis* is and does), but of the ways and things that a poetics might mean when it performs what it does not say. One may or may not listen to poetry, but the essays in these two volumes certainly do their part to ensure that we can hear it. As Morris says in concluding her introduction: "Let the clamor continue!" I couldn't agree more.

**Stephen Cope**

# *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*

James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, eds.
University of California Press, 1997

More than three decades ago Frantz Fanon illuminated for the Western world the psychological oppression of the native in his survey of decolonization, *The Wretched of the Earth*. As a result, one point that has reverberated throughout academia is the often deliberate effacement of the history of subject peoples. Fanon, as a Hegelian, suggests grave consequences for this ahistoricization. For the dialectic would imply that there is hope for the native, as the truly revolutionary, whose tide could eventually turn. Unfortunately, for those whose identity is grounded solely in the timelessness of the geographical, there is only stasis. Ahistorical, solely geographical characterizations, discursively implying that identity is defined by location, have helped to associate the subjects with stasis and stagnancy. However history, political science, and literature are not the only fields guilty of Fanon's accusations of legacies of purely geographic characterizations. The discipline of anthropology, with its particular focus on contained geographic sites, comes under question in James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta's *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science.*

This book deals with, among other things, the concept of self-definition. For the discipline of anthropology of late, like many other subjects, has seen a blurring of its boundaries. With the advent of cultural studies, the reach of comparative literature and performance studies, the widening definition of ethnography, what is left to the realm of anthropology? The editors assert that the issue is not simply a question of the subject matter of anthropology but the method of acquisition of knowledge of that subject matter, hence 'fieldwork'. How can one be considered an anthropologist without an extended excursion to the field? What is this hallowed 'field'? It has come to be the pillar of anthropological practice. This site, and the tradition of its localization, is what is at issue to be deconstructed in this compilation, the product of a conference held at Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1994. The anthology delineates and discusses the myriad pressures on the concept of the 'field' itself as well as its inevitable implications for the 'field' of anthropology.

In the introductory essay of this anthology, Ferguson and Gupta examine the role of fieldwork in anthropology. Fieldwork has become a prerequisite for those who wish to be called 'real anthropologists'. Exactly what type of fieldwork one does is critical in obtaining funding as well as a university position. This makes the assumptions about fieldwork critical to the future of the discipline. According to Ferguson and Gupta, the field has traditionally been "an overdetermined setting for the discovery of difference" (5). The author's discuss three key consequences of this notion of fieldwork and how they are potentially confining as well as damaging to anthropological study.

The first consequence of the archetype of the field as difference is the distinction between field and home. The field is 'out there,' the place where the work is done, where one observes and gathers materials; 'home' is close to us, the place where the work is translated into discourse and polished. One can 'enter' and 'exit' a field, hence the recurring images in ethnographies of "arriving in another world" (12). These characteristics result in what the editors label a 'hierarchy of purity' of field sites. What are the places between the field and home considered? According to this hierarchy, "some places seem more anthropological than others." This is reflected in departments and funding institutions where preference is given to field work in Africa over Europe, in villages over cities etc. based on the perception of the 'degree of Otherness' from home. The field becomes an unquestionably exotic location of difference.

The second implication discussed is the accompanying hierarchy of subjects. Certain subjects, as well, seem more anthropological than others do: for example, community politics do versus the media. Subjects that are considered too familiar are not appropriate for study. This is due in part to the privileging of fieldwork based knowledge, knowledge that is centered on day-to-day, face-to-face extended interaction. An aura of truth surrounds the conclusions drawn from the field, which seem unattainable in the unlocalizable fields of urbanism or trade unions. This privileging is accompanied by an exclusion of other types of knowledge: types that are not visual, relationships that are not geographical, perhaps historical, contextual relations. This hierarchy of possible subjects, due to the emphasis on the 'participant observer,' greatly curbs the range of anthropological studies (15).

The particular type of site and particular type of subject considered suitable by the discipline of anthropology have helped to construct the prevailing notion of a particular type of fieldworker: a Euro-American, white, middle class, male (16). Third world, United States minority and biracial members of the community, however, are now complicating the construction of Otherness that has shaped this definition of an anthropologist as white. The definition of the anthropologist as exclusively male is unstable since notions of the field as a rite of passage or a 'heroic adventure' are becoming outdated.

These implications, unspoken remnants of the Malinowskian tradition (whose fieldwork methods have become institutionalized), are taken up and challenged by contributors of the anthology, many discussing anthropological work on the fringes, consequently marginalized by the discipline, or on the borders, supposedly crossing into other disciplines. Drawing on a wide range of sources, such as Edward Said, Talal Asad, and Arjun Appadurai, the contributors discuss ways in which they have modified certain protocols of anthropological methodology.

Take for example Lisa Maaiki, for whom the question of localization is particularly relevant. In her contribution to the anthology, "News and Culture: Transitory Phenomena and the Fieldwork Tradition," she discusses community but of an entirely different sort. Her "accidental communities of memory" are not necessarily bound geographically for they are based on "transitory phenomena and accidentally shared experiences," for example, refugee camp inhabitants (on whom Maalki's work particularly focuses) or people who have worked together on a certain humanitarian effort. The problem in traditional anthropology for Maalki is the focus on the recurring, reproductive, permanent forms in a culture for

which anthropologists have been trained to look. This method excludes important and worthy transitory forms and their psychological aftermath, such as the community of refugees in Rwanda and Burundi, whose afterlives, Maalki found, are powerfully determined by memories of that time period. In thinking about the disfavor with which these sorts of topics are looked upon, the author makes an important connection between anthropology and journalism, a field which trains its workers to follow extraordinary experiences, unique in that they many not reoccur. For Maalki, journalistic practices offer many insights towards new notions of fieldwork.

Joanne Passaro encounters a problem similar to Maalki's. In "'You Can't Take the Subway to the Field!': 'Village' Epistemologies in the Global Village," Passaro discusses the opposition to her choice of study: homelessness on the streets of New York. One issue raised was the distance factor. In a tradition idealized by Evans-Pritchard among the Nuer, how could one do fieldwork in the New York City subway? How could one do fieldwork among 'his own kind'? Also emphasized was the difficulty of delineation of analytical units of study. This was not an enclosed society with geopolitical boundaries. What Passaro found was that had she constructed manageable, 'localizable,' analytical units and followed a traditional participant-observer model, she might not have come to the conclusions that she did. For example, many suggested to her a shelter as a less 'chaotic' site of fieldwork. However the majority of people in shelters are female, often with children, thus with potential to make it all the way through the system (from emergency shelters to temporary housing to welfare). The makeup of the shelters, therefore, does not account for the majority of the homeless: men. Passaro learned through work with different advocacy groups, internship for a journal of housing issues as well as observation and interaction, that welfare legislation favors the family and relegates single individuals to the bottom of the ladder. Men can only benefit from the system by having a child or a wife. In addition, negative perceptions of African American men dictate unspoken practices within the housing system. Passaro's recognition of these issues was dependent upon her complication of the typical anthropological 'vision' and compartmentalization.

Work 'on the borders' of anthropology consists not only of refugees and homeless people, or methodological hybridization and intersections with journalism. James Clifford, the tenth and final contributor to the anthology, discusses a broad range of several important recent ethnographers and their intersections with travel writing. In "Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology" Clifford reexamines anthropologists' long history of separating themselves from average tourists, missionaries, colonial officers, etc. While these figures may provide 'literariness' or adventure while in transit, the anthropologist was to provide 'data.' By suggesting a fieldwork that is not necessarily a residence but a 'travel encounter,' in a form that could learn from the aforementioned figures, Clifford attempts to de-emphasize the role of fieldwork knowledge. In fact he stresses that "there is no narrative form or way of writing inherently suited to a politics of location" (210), a claim that will perhaps encounter the most resistance in new formulations of anthropology.

What these studies lack are direct suggestions and methods to implement change toward a new fieldwork. While many authors mention the critical issues of funding and job

placement there seem to have been few discursive practices of resistance to the financial 'powers that be.' Clifford's suggestion to expand what is acceptable does not imply that it is possible or likely. In fact, he states that he finds the direction of anthropology to be, perhaps deliberately, "ambiguous" (218). The suggestions that are made, in the forms of citations of Asad and Appadurai for example (advocating more study of Western societies by non-Western anthropologists), are not fully discussed. However, the critical questions raised indicate progress towards a long overdue call for the decentering that has occurred in other fields. In fact, Ferguson and Gupta's call for a movement from the traditional 'site' to a new concept of 'location' as a multiply intersected site, a product of diverse historical forces could be seen to parallel literature's theory revolution and the move from the liberal humanist 'work' to the modern 'text'. Perhaps this groundbreaking is even more critical in the discipline of anthropology, which the editors mention is one of the few fields devoted to studying non-elites. Passaro reminds us of what is often forgotten in academic politics, and of what, for this reviewer, should have been the focus of this compilation:

> The challenge to represent and understand the world around us more adequately, to see beyond the epistemologies of received categories of collective identity and the assumptions about anthropology and fieldwork that continue to reinscribe various "Others" of internal and external colonialism, is part of a struggle to understand how we might best participate in ethnographic practices of liberation.... Unless anthropology can adopt units and strategies of analysis capable of 'seeing' and understanding unstable, hybridized,and nonholistic experiences, we will fail at our object of adequate social analysis,and we will remain part of the postcolonial problem we helped create. (161)

For that reason, the pressures on the discipline's traditional idea of fieldwork, described in *Anthropological Locations,* take on an urgency, not only for this subject but all related disciplines which attempt to convey certain truths through certain methods alone.

**Toral Gajarawala**

# *A Long Way from St. Louie*

Colleen J. McElroy
Coffee House Press, 1997

It makes you want to buy one of those blank books and choke out your memories. Old ones about the atmosphere inside the family car on the way to a vacation. And all those forgetable side-trips that spill over one another so fast you don't think.

This woman travels. Old Route 66, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Mexico City, Paris, making *turista* observations, viewing *la catedrals* and giving the reader "impressions of journeys, memories held in fragments."

"Why do you have to go to all those places?" McElory's mother asks. "Because they're there," she answers.

"I have been traveling as long as I can remember. Because my father was in the army..."

"My grandmother never traveled farther north than our neighborhood in St. Louis or farther south than our relatives' houses in Texas."

So to make up for lost travel: London, Chicago, Cairo, San Francisco, Venice, Brisbane, to begin with.

Her trips begin in her grandfather's 1930's atlas. She hasn't stopped scuba diving in the Coral Sea or traveling to Malaysia, Japan.

"Malaysia seemed at once distant and familiar."

"In Japan, everything seemed to run hot and cold, old and new at the same time."

Maybe she moves because "They've torn down every house you've ever lived in."

But I wanted McElroy to turn back and reflect on some of her earlier comments. Not just place them in the book and move on.

"What is home if the road that draws you away from it is more familiar, more comforting?"

She never loses the desire to travel. She loves "...the motion, the confusion of tickets and luggage, the strangeness waiting like presents to be opened."

She makes various observations. "Not only is the history of South America frought with

conquering fantics and sacrifices to fanatical religions, but most of the countries are still rooted in that stifling reality."

Sometimes I forget the purpose of the "jiggety-hiking" up the mountain, even sometimes the country the mountain is on.

McElroy uses a variety of forms from George Herbert's butterfly on its side, to a goblet or drinking vessel, and other indeterminate forms.

She crosses borders in style— into Mexico in a blue Caddy wearing a "fuschia dress, tight around the hips, and three inch heels to match. Nail long and lacquered red". Into Canada with mannequins— "stage props— arms and legs," always in trouble with the customs agent. Walking across the border from Yugoslavia into Hungary to catch a train because she didn't want to wait three hours for the bus— the armed guards trying to stop her. "I'm outta here." "Don't start with me," she tells them. She also faces the frustrating crossing of the border into America.

There are details of travel "shadows of trees, dark corners of temples, and antique shops. That was the time when thousands of birds sang their praise of heat: calling and cawing, whistling and squawking, tweeting, chirping trilling and caterwauling— creating their own songs and imitating a dozen others."

Throughout the book, she continues her journeys, one after another, leaving husband, babies, traveling the world as much to be seen by the world as to see.

* * * * *

## ***Blue Marrow***

Louise Bernice Halfe
McClelland & Stewart,1998

This collection of poetry is a braiding of voices and cultures that couldn't escape one another.

The back cover explains, "*Blue Marrow* is a book of... characters. Grandmothers both actual and spiritual... but many other people, past and present, also appear: Native men and women, fur traders, Jesuits, Metis, all of whose stories interact..."

Halfe begins by calling on her grandmothers and other women.. "Adeline Cardinal, Emma Woods, Sara Cardinal, Bella Shirt, / Nancy Gladue, Fanny Sunchild, Round Face Woman, Charlotte, / *Ah-gat*, Bernard Woman, Pray to them. / My Grandfather Wepemes (Sleeps Around), and his wife *Wapasos* (Fair Skinned Woman), Frying Pan Woman, First Rays of Dawn Woman, Vera, Pauline Johnson, Waskewitch Woman, Wet Pants Woman,

Carter Woman, / Rubber Mouth Woman, Louisa. Pray to them. / *Ehanh* (Sarcee Woman), Lightning Woman, McGuiness Woman, / One Spot Woman... " The list goes on for another page.

"Grandmothers hold me. I must pass all that I possess, / every morsel to my children. These small gifts / to see them through life. Raise my fist. Tell the story. / Tear down barbed-wire fences."

Halfe is aware that it takes many voices to tell a story. Even the enemy's. "I wrote His Emminence, / offered my life to save savage souls. / My mother kissed my crucifix, said, God go with you."

Besides the different voices, there are a variety of writing styles, linear poetry, paragraph poetry, the use of inserts of other languages, dialect.

"Everydime we turn a corner 'round dem lakes da land stop my breathing. Over each hill we climb, god's hand stretch more dan our eye can see. Old Womens' Lake, Where the Moose Died, Dried Meat Hills. I pull my rosary an dank da god for dem sky an hills. Swear da devil when we suffer from wads of mosquito, noseeums, horseflies. Somedime go hungry for days. Plenty animal but our hunters waz clomping trough dem woods scare da by jesus outta da moose. Da savages waz good to us. Dress in dem furs an leather, faces paint."

The reader sometimes picks up Halfe's own voice, a voice in touch with itself.

"When the Voices roar, / I write. / Sometimes they sing, are silent. / In those times / I read, answer overdue letters, / go for a walk or jog, / stoke my fire, prepare baloney / mustard sandwich, wild rice salad. /*E-pecimakik*. / I haunt them. My wailing stories."

Halfe also experiments with creative spelling. "Sinaman" and "boarding scold" are two examples rich with connotation. There are many other adventures in language from this Cree writer who was raised on the Saddle Lake Indian Reserve.

In the end, her words call: Pe-nanapacihinan. / Come heal us.

"Did our Grandmothers know we would be scarred by the fists and boots of men? Our songs taxed, silenced by tongues that speak damnation and burning? Did they know we would turn woman against woman? Did they know some of us would follow, take mates of colour and how the boarding of our world would pulse beathing exiles connected to their womb?... Did they know our memory, our talk would walk on paper, legends told sparingly? Did they know of our struggling hearts?"

**Diane Glancy**

# *JUST IN:*
# *WORD OF NAVIGATIONAL CHALLENGES:*
# *NEW AND SELECTED WORK*

Ed Roberson
Talisman House, 1998

*Word up—Word*
—or to be more specific, the word of navigational challenges Ed Roberson brings us in this new volume of selected poems. Roberson was a well-kept secret in American poetry until winning the Iowa Poetry Prize with his 1995 volume, *Voices Cast Out to Talk Us In*; by couching work from this volume among poetry written prior and since, this present selection celebrates a strong poet in our midst and should continue the work of introducing Roberson to an audience that will be glad to know of him.

While one might expect the three-decade span covered in *Just In* to create an arc, Roberson's development is kinkier than that. It's thus wise that the entire first half of this generous selected is devoted to poetry from Roberson's first two books, *When Thy King Is a Boy* and *Etai-Eken*. The former, published in 1970, on some level shows Roberson operating in the wake of Baraka, asserting a specifically Black lyric through casual permutations of the variable foot and virulently claiming all the rights and quirks of the avant-garde for such a poetics—one that is, after all, always already politically charged. But the differences are (of course) far more important than the similarities. While Baraka demonstrates an ideological zeal in nearly every line of his corpus, Roberson is far more hesitant in this regard, employing instead a metapoetic discourse that is to become a key element in his work; he thus shows more affinities with poets such as Michael Palmer than with Baraka. Roberson's "war song sing," for example, is a poem about the violence done to/through aesthetics, ending with "here i learn the dowry of my own words." This is not to suggest that Roberson's stance is apolitical; the book in fact deals with all the bugaboos of the era, and especially the atrocity of Vietnam, in ways that are as decisive as they are oblique. But it is Roberson's distrust of language itself that motivates his inverted equations, as expressed in poems such as "there is against explicit stating what" and his quiet but acid take on mediated disinformation:

> the news is brief
> as air  as light
> as paper is how it arrives
> tho it is all the headstone

Musicality is of the utmost importance in Roberson's work, and *When Thy King Is*

*a Boy* shows Roberson steeped in traditional rhythms but able to evade them with ease. In the poem "Song," echoes of Frost and Stevens in the opening lines ("i know about the woods you know. / you know i knew the bark who was the sun.") give way to a new music, one in which erasure and repetition have stormed the boundaries of conventional verse:

> i know the wood simply
> the tree is  a wreck  of the ash of the watchfire
> what i know that is not a stranger
> was never in the mind of order.  of the woods

Like the repeating groove at the end of a record, Roberson's rhythms resemble repetitive static, haunting us with the final image "of the woods" rather than letting us rest "in the mind of order." Thus epistemology battles song and *loses*. A different technique is employed to similar ends in the the next song—titled, "the next song"—and it's companion piece, "On the Calligraphy of Black Chant"; the former attempts to assert a series of declarative sentences that the latter then repeats and reassembles, riffing phrases with the giddy verve of a nimble-fingered DJ. (Hip-hop theoreticians take note: this poem is the very model of the methodology and sonic beauty of sampling.) A further variation on this theme occurs in the book's most masterful statement of poetics, "jacket": here, Roberson takes a prose paragraph of what could be jacket copy about his work and converts it into poetic lines, then inverts their presentation, slowly building from the chaotic rhythms of verse toward the stability (and authority?) of the prose. It is a simple but effective experiment, fully articulating the opening theme of the statement:

> many of these poems attempt to make
> happen to words  that which happens
> to lines
>
> in an optical illusion
> many of these lines have.  that.

And so on, gorgeously so on.

If the presence of such metapoetic concerns in this early work sets the stage for Roberson's variegated investigations, his 1975 book *Etai-Eken* gets up on said stage and boogies. The book's ethnographic template allows for drawing, found text, collage, multilingual chant, as well as Robersonian extrapolations and iterations; yet there is still, stunningly, room for regular stanzas and even a sonnet, a form with which Roberson displays formidable agility. While there are discrete poems here as in the previous book, the only occasional use of individual poem titles coupled with the book's thematic structure as a whole make the book read as a sequence—Roberson's dominant mode from here on. Taken up in the spirit of this "poem dance," *Etai-Eken* is sometimes burdened by an easy and often cliched universe of natural imagery and sentimentality ("the jaguars and the sun

/ and trees are brothers"), or by strategies that depend on facile comp-lit observations: "you say beauty in my language / by saying a color / it is the color of a time of day" (from "When Everyone is Beauty is a Time of Day in Zulu"). But the sonic pleasures of these poems remain, and Roberson brings the landscape into the interior often enough, as in the opening to ". . . (word":

> it has turned over
> on my own road
> on my own foot
> on my own way of living
> what on earth is the matter with me

The poem enacts an Arapaho ghost dance of lamentation cited earlier; it seems, in fact, that the frequent invocation of Native American culture in this book offers Roberson a background against which to put forth a more cohesive reading of contemporary racial issues:

> american culture  is the pot
> calling the skillet black. american
> even as a mulattoed
> culture is very deeply colored. folks
>
> white america is an unconscious black
> brother culturally to black americans
> as though still in a blanched coma
> from the burn

Roberson's attraction toward sequentially based poems now flourishes. His 1985 book *Lucid Interval as Integral Music* offers up a complex polyphony of truncated sonnets and free verse responses; it is, at least from the sections presented here, a powerful act of mind that senses the presence of form everywhere in the universe and gives voice to it with prophetic yet resigned decisiveness. The "Aerialist Narratives" from *Voices Cast Out to Talk Us In* are an equally impressive assortment; somehow inspired by action painting, these poems are among Roberson's most direct, allowing history safe and meaningful passage in the resonant though deafening tones these lyrics strike:

> The skipping stone stays out of the water
> The standing up in the boat crossing
> the delaware,
> the band-aid commercial parade
> of drum, flag and fife,  the iwo jima
> collection, things that are terms like
> four little girls flying

around inside an exploding church, people
being washed down
the street with water

A new sequence titled "Atmosphere Conditions" shows the same care at work, the same navigational skills, and the same great ear.

Given such talents and his inclination toward sequential form, Roberson's challenge is to create symphonies rather than ditties. The unfortunate presence of the latter can be found in some of the work in progress—for example, in "By the Rivers Of . . . ," which meanders through his sons' cultural status as "between things," finally ending with these maudlin lines:

But we sit down

to Miles to Louis Armstrong
over dinner
and later a little Lou Donaldson
gets us
dancing our stuff.

One suspects that the young 'uns are humoring the old man and would rather rock out to Public Enemy. Compare this to the magnificent "Ask for 'How High the Moon'" chapter from "Aerialist Narratives," in which music becomes the integral aspect of lucidity it is surely considered in Roberson's cosmology:

the cold star struck from the broad day. Light.

When Ailey set it
to music Billie got knocked down to

what a little moonlight can do
the white stuff of cost

danced to music ask
for How High the Moon and you want

Ella to sing it bring it down
like that time she admits carried away in time

she can't remember the words to this
but what she does in time

is
greater song the rest of us

jus mostly cries out
no forward  no back

Here Roberson attempts to get inside the music rather than dance to it, and the difference is palpable. *Just In* shows a poet who flies far more than falls, however, one who navigates his aerial straits with considerable grace. Since Roberson is too little known, the book would have benefited by an insightful introduction, contextualizing his work and perhaps explaining the seemingly erratic selection process involved, especially where long sequences have gaping holes. Nevertheless, it is a pleasure to have these melodious poems just in at this juncture. Word up—

*word*

navigational challenges await you, reader.

**Eric Lorberer**

# *Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics*

Scott Michaelsen and David E. Johnson, eds.
University of Minnesota Press, 1997

August 5, 1998
*The New York Times* today has a front-page story headlined "Heat Making Illegal Border Crossings Deadlier." On an inside page, the paper provides a photograph of Jesús Ortiz García, who suffering from dehydration stumbled into a Border Patrol checkpoint. In the report, the sentence that arrests me about the illegal immigrant's encounter with the Border Patrol is this one: "Before the sun had set, he was full of ham and Gatorade and said he wanted to be taken home."

In this desert of newsprint where there is no sign of a critique of systems of capitalist exploitation and immiseration, this little sign of excess—being full of ham and Gatorade—is very revealing. It exaggeratedly performs, one might even say hams, and thereby tries to conceal, that other form of excess which is represented by the State's repressive violence and its dictates, including NAFTA. This pathetic attempt at presenting fullness would be comical if it were not actually so tragic.

It is to the credit of the contributors to *Border Theory* that they hollow out the border of all pretensions of plenitude. The border is nothing if not the *limit* of any positivity. The seven essays that make up this collection are aimed at challenging the philosophical nearsightedness of dominant border discourse which, even in opposing racist discourses, ends up erecting essentializing identities that remain trapped in a binary opposition with a fixed other. These contributors' targets are writers like Gloria Anzaldúa, Renato Rosaldo, and, to a lesser extent, José David Saldívar. More at home (if that is the word I want) with poststructuralist theory than Anzaldúa et al, most of these writers are very alert to the complex entanglements of difference, to complicity and repetition; hence, they bring us the warning present in Tzvetan Todorov's claim that "we are like the conquistadors and we differ from them; their example is instructive but we shall never be sure that by *not* behaving we are not on the way to imitating them" (original emphasis; 160, fn. 3).

More than this polemical charge, however, what distinguishes the essays and gives them coherence is their display of a critical reading practice. In that sense, one might say that this volume introduces a more sophisticated set of protocols into the business of declaring one's commitments in the customs-house of culture. To read this book is to want to ask a few questions of someone who announces their difference in terms of pure origins, and one is prompted to do this because these critics share an interrogative method of reading the social text. For instance, David E. Johnson, while commenting on Borges, raises the question of reading and asks "How do you, we, read this text, this double and doubling narra-

tive? You, we, will have to decide. Our reading will be the effect of the decision to read, of the decision that is reading" (152). There is a way in which the *responsibility* of reading is taken seriously by these writers. How persuasive are they in inviting the reader to share this responsibility with them? Let me address this question by following to its limit the path that *Border Theory* describes for itself.

The border is not a proper place. That is to say, it cannot be named and fixed. The border, thus approached, is the point of departure for the essays in this collection. It is not so much that the border is turned into a metaphor (it is almost inevtably that, the contributors would argue), and it is not that the material realities are thereby elided (it is always more complex than that, the contributors would say), but, instead, to put it simply, the metaphor itself is turned into an object of analysis (it is made textual, it is read and written over, I hope the contributors will say this too). Thus, to cite some examples from the volume: Russ Castronovo shows in his analysis of the Mason-Dixon line that borders cannot be assumed to call into crisis national identities, indeed, they might very well consolidate racial and national divisions; in a very different register, Louis Kaplan exquisitely textured reading of Chaplin's *The Pilgrim* produces a reading of the signature that traverses the space where the law lays down the line; in Alejandro Lugo's question whether "the theory of borderlands [is] a critique or handmaid of capitalist discipline in this historical moment?" (57); or, to provide a fourth instance, Elaine K. Chang's tracking of the runaway subject who, in her running but also in her writing, opens new pathways of meaning and being, "just like the migrant, the nomad, and the guerrilla" (190).

Such readings helpfully complicate one's sense of the border. But, at their best, what the essays mentioned above as well as the other essays in the volume accomplish is a bit more specific; the book often succeeds in establishing what Scott Michaelsen very nicely describes in his essay, the recognition that "far from living in a world of singular cultures and their borders and contact zones, 'we' are stitched together and shot through with all of 'our' others. 'Our' condition is critical, borderline" (245). This is not a claim to humanistic unity, but, as Michaelsen's own analysis of Amerindian pasts show, an understanding of historical production, how "each is produced within sight of the other, with reference to a site for the other" (241).

The two strands I have isolated in the previous two paragraphs—the textuality of the border, and the sense of the self's imbrication with the other—is also present in Benjamin Alire Sáenz's essay in the volume "In the Borderlands of Chicano Identity, There Are Only Fragments." Sáenz's piece is the most autobiographical of the essays in *Border Theory.* It is a thoughtful piece, not always as theoretical as some of the other contributions, but sharp and honest in its self-questioning. Yet, its very difference from the other essays returns me to the question I had asked earlier: how persuasive are these essays likely to be in inviting readers to share the responsibility of thinking anew about the border? It seems to me that while the contributors to this book are able to engage in very sophisticated textual maneuvers, ultimately their texts reproduce a somewhat deadening similarity. (In other words, why

is it that "we" all sound the same?) The border-crossing that the editors hoped of this book, I want to suggest, remains for me a rather incomplete one. I'm not supremely confident of the bases for my demand, but this is a question that this book raises in my mind, particularly on account of its open exploration of the limits of the border-metaphor. I hope other readers, including the classrooms in which this book gets used, take up this question as a part of their conversation.

"For each of the contributors to this volume," write the editors in their introduction, "border studies as currently constituted inadequately theorizes the border and its political import" (29). This lack in border studies translates, in *Border Theory,* into philosophical space-clearing gestures that inscribe, to borrow from David E. Johnson's essay, "illegible difference at the origin, in the place of the original" (156). While this has the salutary effect of marking experience as always already plural, the essays as a whole convey less forcefully the changes, the contradictions, the historical flux of the contemporary moment.

An attendant drawback is that we get very little evidence of current cultural productions, say, in music, that would instantiate the critical pressure that these contributors are able to impose on border studies. The kind of receptivity to cultural production that I am calling for is evident, to cite only one instance, in the work of George Lipsitz : "New technologies, mass migrations, and the rapid movement of ideas, images, and expressions across the globe have created new networks of identification and affiliation that render obsolete some traditional political practices and identities while creating complicated and complex new cultural fusions with profound political implications. For example, one of the leading traditional taiko drummers in Japan recently was a Chicano from East Los Angeles named Maceo Hernandez-Delgado. He learned about Japanese cultural traditions while growing up in multi-cultural Los Angeles, and traveled to Japan to study music as a kind of return to a homeland that he had never known" (George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place,* London: Verso, 1994, 13-4). What limits would be described if the contributors to *Border Theory* introduced the calculus of difference in their reading of some of the most strikingly overdetermined, global cultural artifacts of our times?

I am willing to make this demand even when I agree with Patricia Seed, who in her fine afterword to *Border Theory,* argues that the contributors, with their attention to limits and approximations and boundary values, are able to avoid the problems of the approaches that start with the phenomenal world. Seed writes: "Beginning with the phenomenal world seems to have led discussions of borders and limits to a morass of philosophical essentialisms directed more toward characterizing objects than toward describing border and limits" (256). This is certainly true. And yet, how do we ignore the problem of the real as it is lived? What the theoretical rigor of *Border Theory* invites us to do is speculate about the possibility of engaging the *phenomenal* world as experience that is citational, split by difference, opaque. This is not an ultra-deconstructive manifesto. It is a materialist agenda that spells out the challenge for a future cultural studies that tackles the challenge of engaging

the public sphere. This is what Raymond Williams had in mind, I think, when he wrote that the discipline's task lies in "in taking the best we can in intellectual work and going with it in this very open way to confront people for whom it is not a way of life, for whom it is not in all probability a job, but for whom it is a matter of their own intellectual interest, their own understanding of the pressures of every kind, from the most personal to the most broadly political" (Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists,* London: Verso, 1989, 162).

Let me, in closing, return to what I started with. On the page that today's report about the illegal entries ends, directly below that report on the same page of the *New York Times,* is an advertisement for a Mystic Seaport in Connecticut. The ad provides a story by one of the guides, Bettye Noyes, about a boat that appeared miraculously in the open seas when a group of Cubans, fleeing from Mariel in August of 1994, suddenly found out that the engine on their boat had failed. The copy for the ad, opening its own space between places, functioning therefore as a kind of border discourse, boldly presents a blurb for the mystic boat: "It appeared at the perfect time. Somewhere between desperation and death."

Beneath the picture of the boat is the legend: "Only at Mystic Seaport can you find people like Bettye who connect you to history and bring stories, artifacts and experiences to life."

Do I want an army of deconstructionists to descend on the shores of Mystic Seaport? No, though that would be fun. But, I do think that border theorists should be producing popular narratives about displacement and about the slippages in the histories that are beamed to us via the dominant media's satellites. I suddenly think of Guillermo Gómez-Peña writing, in the voice of an Indian who is "starving for clarity": "(Herzog never shot that scene / but I recorded it in high-8 / during one of my many trips / to the end of Wsetern Civilization)" (Guillermo Gómez-Peña, *The New World Border,* San Francisco: City Lights, 1996, 253). If, as the contributors to *Border Theory* show us, univocity is deeply problematic, why should we leave the telling to border theorists like Bettye Noyes?

**Amitava Kumar**

# *The Redshifting Web: Poems 1970-1998*

Arthur Sze
Copper Canyon Press, 1998

"And, as water rippling in a pond/ricochets off rocks, the network of/ feelings between father and mother/and child is an ever-shifting web," Arthur Sze tells us in "Murmur," a poem about the limitations of science and technology as experienced by a parent concerned with a child's heart murmur. That web, that complex of personal and transpersonal relationships, lies at the heart of *The Redshifting Web,* which collects poetry from five of Arthur Sze 's books, as well as presenting five new poems.

Beginning with *River River* (1987) and continuing with *Archipelago* (1995) and with the new poems, Sze's ability to express the shifting of that "ever-shifting web" grows in both clarity and complexity. Take the title poem, for example. In "The Redshifting Web," a poem in nine parts in *Archipelago,* seemingly casual observations in the poem reflect a sense of play and wider interconnection. In section two of the poem we read of "finding piki [Hopi bread, we learn in the notes] pushpinned to the door;" later in section six we see "red piki passed down a ladder." This subtle movement suggests shifts and changes in the environment, a constant widening and contracting of both viewer and what is viewed, as if at times the reader of the poems is looking through the wide end of a telescope and, at other times, the narrow end.

The term "redshifting web" itself is further evidence of Sze's sense of play and interconnection. "Galaxies appear to be redshifting/in all directions" we read in section four. Here the use of the term takes us into the realm of science: "1. An apparent increase in the wavelengths of radiation emitted by a receding celestial body as a consequence of the Doppler effect. 2. An increase of wavelength resulting from loss of energy by radiation moving against a gravitational field," says the *American Heritage Dictionary.* In section eight, the term takes on new meanings, linking science and nature, objective and subjective, mind and imagination: "I find a rufous hummingbird on the floor/of the greenhouse, sense a redshifting/ along the radial string of a web." How does a web "redshift"? Is it an interaction like that in the Doppler effect, "the frequency increasing when the source and observer approach one another and decreasing when they move apart"? And why is it only the radial string in a web that "redshifts"? The very next line suggests we may be trying to impose order where order cannot be found: "You may draw a cloud pattern in cement/ setting in a patio...." Clouds and cement. We try to capture what is changing, ever-shifting into a fixed medium, that is itself ever-shifting.

But it's not only the complex interconnections that make Sze's poetry engaging. There are also lush moments, strung like droplets of rainwater on a web, such as this one, also from "The Redshifting Web": "a child drinking Coke out of a formula bottle/has all her teeth capped in gold." These moments usually appear in the longer poems, particularly in the sections of the poems consisting of one or two lines separated by white space. It's as if the interstices of the web are visible in these sections, and the poem now catches mate-

rial most poets consider too ephemeral, too ordinary, too fragmentary. This is exactly what makes these sections so fascinating. Here are some of these lines from section 3 of "Kaiseki" [Japanese for breast stones; a Zen meal that accompanies tea ceremony, say the notes], one of the new poems that open the book:

> He knew by the sound that the arrow was going to miss the target;
>
> pins floating on water;
>
> I saw the collapsing rafters in flames;
>
> the dark side of the moon;
>
> if *p* than *q;*
>
> simplicity is to complexity
> as a photon is to a hummingbird?

As is expected with a web, some of the seemingly disconnected lines indeed connect with other lines in the poem. In section 5, for example, we discover that "*p* if and only if *q.*" The skill of the weaver of such webs is evident, but even more remarkable is the delicacy, the sensibility that finds room in the poem for everything from "the skin of a stone," to "'You asshole!'" to, in the very next line, "the nuclear trigrams were identical" ("Kaiseki," section 5). There's a daring here, a steadfast belief that the web will not break.

The poems in Sze's earlier books, *The Willow Wind* (1972), *Two Ravens* (1976), and *Dazzled* (1982), while appearing in more traditional stanza form, show the same synthesis and synchronicity: "Jimson weed/has nothing to do/with the blueprint of a house, or a white macaw," opens "Magnetized." This poem from *Dazzled* presents a blueprint of the direction Sze's future work would explore:

> The mind magnetizes
> everything it touches.
> A knife in a dog
> has nothing to do
> with the carburetor of an engine:
>
> to all appearances,
> to all appearances.

The repetition in the last lines eerily emphasizes the assertion of connection and the hollowness of the denial of connection.

Sze's lines of connection often coalesce in direct statements of assertion and praise in both the early and later poems. "Even if the darkness precedes and follows/us,

we have a chance, briefly, to shine" concludes "The Chance." Many times these expressions of joy relate to personal relationship: "with my hand along the curve of your waist,/ sensing in slow seconds the tilt of the Milky Way" (section 7, "The String Diamond"). The author's conception of love, however, is never sentimental nor simplistic: "And it is love, spontaneous,/ flaring,/ that makes us feel/ like a cougar approaching a doe in labor,/ makes us pause and move on" ("The Corona").

Another contemporary poet comes to mind, one who, while employing a very different language and technology of the poem, operates out of a similar sense of sacral interconnectedness. In his most recent book, *Listening to the Leaves Form,* whether in verse poem or prose poem, James Grabill continues to map out a universe that interacts and inter-reverberates. "All This Is Modified," to cite but one poem, contains lines that wouldn't be out of place in *The Redshifting Web:* "And inside the body, inside the bread,/ huge sunflowers bow, luminous, in August"; "All this is modified by the falling/center of the falling world of an apple"; "And the kiss on the infant's belly/returns to him many years later." Despite a shared vision, however, Grabill and Sze explore the world in strikingly original ways.

Books of selected poems these days seem more of a marketing occasion than a collection of poetry; *The Redshifting Web* feels organic. You can witness a poet grow in confidence and craft and curiosity; you can trace the themes and complexity and clarity of the poems; you can ignore the chronology of the book and simply immerse yourself in the flow of exquisite language. Regardless of the reader's approach, this is a collection that rewards repeated reading, that takes risks, that combines the perspectives and language of science and Japanese and Chinese and Southwest Native American cultures, that perceives with the angles of the mind and the gravity of the heart. We need Arthur Sze's poems to remind us of what is taking place right before our eyes that we somehow continually miss:

> I see a girl crunching on chips at the laundromat,
> sense the bobbing red head of a Mexican finch.
> Isn't this the most mysterious of all possible worlds?
> ("Kaiseki," section 7)

**John Bradley**

# *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
University of California Press, 1998

Frame-working is the issue in *Destination Culture*, a book of essays by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. It is the result of eight years of fieldwork spent unpacking and inspecting the history of museums, fairs, festivals, and performances. She questions what happens when pieces of cultures are displaced and replayed. In the eight chapters, curators, archivists and impresarios order the cultural production of others into new environments. They prepare for the display of culture in situations abstracted from their source. Through ethnographic communication cultures depart to socially foreign terrain. Cultures are re-framed and woven into a new fabrics. They are fabricated. The new frame disconnects some older associations while nurturing some new ones in the new environment. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett questions what is lost, but also what is infused during art's repeat performance in venues alien to its incubation, assemblage and utility. The politics, historicity and grammar of the display make up the culture of the object at its destination.

The transportation of culture initiates many of the same problems of representation which have confronted anthropologists and poets writing across cultures. In public exhibitions the dynamics of representation are projected large. The interacting forces take the stage as social institutions. The politics of display play out over public opinion. And through Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's observations, we are granted insight into how 'the world' is introduced and understood in the 'West' (France, Britain, The United States, and New Zealand) and how curators, and others use exhibitions of diverse cultures to define civilization, the 'West', and various multicultural apparati.

The book is broken into four parts, "The Agency of Display," "A Second Life as Heritage," "Undoing Ethnography," and "Circulating Value."

The first of these parts, "the Agency of Display," opens with her essay "Objects of Ethnography," which made its debut in the 1991 collection, *Exhibiting Culture*, edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine. This essay, surveying the history of ethnographic exhibitions through the Nineteenth century, was among those responsible for training the eye of cultural studies on curatorial practices. Its inclusion in this volume lays the foundation for Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's tour through the processes of cross cultural representation. This essay, as well as the others, is generously illustrated and referenced. Here we view the most problematic examples of an enterprise rife with colonial overtones and paternalistic voyeurism born of shock, wonderment and Cartesian mechanics. This odd chemistry, this combination of wonder, revulsion and control is the result of the ethnography's roots in Natural History, a field shown by the author to straddle taxonomy and theater. For Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Exhibitions are fundamentally theatrical, for they are how museums perform the knowledge they create" (3). Her criticism turns on the modes of performance,

we have a chance, briefly, to shine" concludes "The Chance." Many times these expressions of joy relate to personal relationship: "with my hand along the curve of your waist,/ sensing in slow seconds the tilt of the Milky Way" (section 7, "The String Diamond"). The author's conception of love, however, is never sentimental nor simplistic: "And it is love, spontaneous,/ flaring,/ that makes us feel/ like a cougar approaching a doe in labor,/ makes us pause and move on" ("The Corona").

Another contemporary poet comes to mind, one who, while employing a very different language and technology of the poem, operates out of a similar sense of sacral interconnectedness. In his most recent book, *Listening to the Leaves Form,* whether in verse poem or prose poem, James Grabill continues to map out a universe that interacts and inter-reverberates. "All This Is Modified," to cite but one poem, contains lines that wouldn't be out of place in *The Redshifting Web:* "And inside the body, inside the bread,/ huge sunflowers bow, luminous, in August"; "All this is modified by the falling/center of the falling world of an apple"; "And the kiss on the infant's belly/returns to him many years later." Despite a shared vision, however, Grabill and Sze explore the world in strikingly original ways.

Books of selected poems these days seem more of a marketing occasion than a collection of poetry; *The Redshifting Web* feels organic. You can witness a poet grow in confidence and craft and curiosity; you can trace the themes and complexity and clarity of the poems; you can ignore the chronology of the book and simply immerse yourself in the flow of exquisite language. Regardless of the reader's approach, this is a collection that rewards repeated reading, that takes risks, that combines the perspectives and language of science and Japanese and Chinese and Southwest Native American cultures, that perceives with the angles of the mind and the gravity of the heart. We need Arthur Sze's poems to remind us of what is taking place right before our eyes that we somehow continually miss:

> I see a girl crunching on chips at the laundromat,
> sense the bobbing red head of a Mexican finch.
> Isn't this the most mysterious of all possible worlds?
> ("Kaiseki," section 7)

**John Bradley**

# *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
University of California Press, 1998

Frame-working is the issue in *Destination Culture*, a book of essays by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. It is the result of eight years of fieldwork spent unpacking and inspecting the history of museums, fairs, festivals, and performances. She questions what happens when pieces of cultures are displaced and replayed. In the eight chapters, curators, archivists and impresarios order the cultural production of others into new environments. They prepare for the display of culture in situations abstracted from their source. Through ethnographic communication cultures depart to socially foreign terrain. Cultures are re-framed and woven into a new fabrics. They are fabricated. The new frame disconnects some older associations while nurturing some new ones in the new environment. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett questions what is lost, but also what is infused during art's repeat performance in venues alien to its incubation, assemblage and utility. The politics, historicity and grammar of the display make up the culture of the object at its destination.

The transportation of culture initiates many of the same problems of representation which have confronted anthropologists and poets writing across cultures. In public exhibitions the dynamics of representation are projected large. The interacting forces take the stage as social institutions. The politics of display play out over public opinion. And through Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's observations, we are granted insight into how 'the world' is introduced and understood in the 'West' (France, Britain, The United States, and New Zealand) and how curators, and others use exhibitions of diverse cultures to define civilization, the 'West', and various multicultural apparati.

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making distinctions between doing and showing, demonstrating, performing, presenting and representing. Through the presentation of case studies, she builds a vocabulary of display genres.

In the next chapter, "Exhibiting Jews," she shows how this vocabulary was used by Jews participating at World Fairs and Festivals to define themselves. The modes of ethnographic performance are shown to be carefully selected to express the profiles of Jewish identity relevant to political and social situations. The Jewish ethnicity, through the theater of the world's fairs, is illustrated as a voguish narrative, and can be seen as the precursor for other ethnic groups which use exhibitions to engage in the politics of self representation. In every case, the theater of world fairs necessitates a suspension of everyday life. Organizers dissipate the hoi polloi, to introduce categories of being, roles in the ethnic parade.

In "A Second Life as Heritage," Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explores the effect of tourism on the transmission of culture. She uses this section to redefine heritage, as a "new mode of cultural production" (149) operating for the benefit of tourist dollars. Theatrical motifs generating tourism in New Zealand and destinations like Ellis Island and the Plymouth Plantation are explored. Heritage is defined as "a value added industry," (150) as divorced from actuality as ethnicity was shown to be in the preceding chapters. Writing against the discourse of conservation, the author redefines heritage in terms of virtuosity. She suggests it is possible to "Go to Las Vegas to experience Egypt, [or] Go to Stockholm, [to] experience all of Sweden"(170), because for the tourist, surrogate places and cultures are "better than being there" (171). An admission that they are not the same. The new dislocated sites are rather a collection of symbols, gleaned from memory, used only to suspend routine. They are exhibited not to show the tourist he or she has arrived in a distant locale, only to show that he or she has left his or her home.

In "Undoing Ethnography," the author includes two essays about meta ethnographic performances, performances seemingly aware of the history of representation. One concerns multicultural festivals in Los Angeles, the Olympic Art Festival of 1984 and the Los Angeles Festival 1990, and the other tells the story of the Museum of African Art's recent change into the downtown New York gallery, Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals. Unlike the producers of the tourist industry, the organizers of these events, aimed to return authenticity to their displays. Only this time it is not through the inclusion of details but through their omission. Instead of trying to explain everything, and risking fabricating cultural baggage, or mainstream theatrical experiences, the organizers of these events aimed to "locate authenticity in a moment of aesthetic reception, rather than in the objects presented" (248). This was done by treating audiences to cultural festivals and ethnographic museums similarly to the audiences of experimental art. The author asks, "What are the preconditions for creating interests in what audiences do not understand?"(203) The answer for these meta-ethnographic displays is to have the audience experience rather than interpret what they see by utilizing the dramatic techniques of avant garde artists. To Kirshenblatt-Gimblett this means sacrificing hermeneutics to experience.

Gathering together from the far reaches of the Pa-

> cific, performances of seemingly infinite number were dispersed across a sprawling megalopolis at the end of the second milennium in a maze-cum-menu of possibilities to be sampled, not grasped, in a decentered entirety. (238)

In the last section, "Circulating Value," Kirshenblatt-Gimblett leaves the museum to trace the "museum effect" as it applies its aesthetic sensibility to daily life. Surveying the kitsch, the vulgar, and the banal, she shows how objects of mass culture can become vessels for meaning, and how meaning can circulate between vessels. She concludes by questioning the implication of this inter-changability to modernist conceptions of "good taste".

*Destination Culture* will be valued for the discussion it generates rather than the author's conclusions as there are few offered. Just as those Los Angelinos attending the festivals, the reader is asked to experience rather than interpret the complexities of cultural representation. Her amble graphics, and magazine prose, enhance the tour but do little to temper the authors' predilection for irony over explanation. For some the numerous case studies, in *Destination Culture* will will be eye opening. For others they will progressively produce more blunt than shock. In either case, a move beyond absurdity will be necessary to formulate instructional cross cultural exhibitions evocative of life's full dynamism.

**David Michalski**

# *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*

Hélène Cixous
Routledge, 1998

Hélène Cixous collection of essays, *Stigmata Escaping Texts,* follows an uncommon path of literary allowance. Against categorical laws which dominate the institutionalization of literature, Cixous's writing grants indulgence to multiple border crossings. Casting a fearless eye on those who would demand adherence to genre divisions, thematic distinctions, grand historical narratives of continuity, and a (phallocratic) reading of literature which degrades life, Cixous' thought wanders wayward in passionate obscurities where love is keen to find itself. The unspeakable horizon of these wanderings remark the (in)visible line between the tradition of the book and the tradition of the text, thus Cixous joins hands with the Derridean exposure and undermining of the "book" through the text's dissemination. Text revisits texture, mixture, touching, a textualization of the whole as open (the borders of what is and is not "text" break down,) whereas book connotes the circular enclosure of the grecolatinojudeochristian tradition ((the B*oo*k) two circles, two eye glasses, or double entrapment (heaven and hell.) In this philosophic affirmation of the value of reading the text, Cixous ignites a language of interior fire. Thus, text expands both in a historical and ahistorical gesture or as Cixous notes, point of view is no view:

> "point of vue" (in French) is the same as point of view in English, but also: "point of non-view." The place where there is no (point) view (vue). The point of view always carries with it: no view.

The first section of Cixous meditative essays entitled *Reading in Painting* inscribes Cixous' politics of reading as the struggle to not yet have a name, to open onto alternate possible worlds where subject and object both at once lose exclusionary borders and encounter a rhythmic interaction between self and other in which, paradoxically, self distances itself from itself and other. Self and other escape a certain limit typically produced by knowledge and remain mysterious singularities. Such reading reveals the reader's essentially passive receptivity in thought's limitless to and fro gesture, a gesture of the one *and* the other, a blinding lightening-like dance "beyond pretense and code."

In *Bathsheba or the interior Bible*, Cixous mines thought's steps toward leave-taking in three of Rembrandt's works: *Bathsheba bathing,* a fragment of a drawing that Cixous calls the "other" older Bathsheba, and *The Slaughtered Ox.* Weaving the three works together with twenty-four commentaries, Cixous threads a non-violent descending and ascending (mourning and transfiguration) movement which subverts the phallocratic tradition of interpretation which pretends to an exterior gaze, objectifying the object. The first sentence "I've taken twenty-four steps in the direction of Bathsehba," not only sets up the scaffolding of the essay, but more importantly, announces a reading of simultaneous

forward backward, inside outside, up down movement which never finally arrives in possession of its truth. Blazing passions of an interior labyrinth, while cutting backward into darkness, Cixous' map traces non-identical doubles withdrawn from the historicized scene. For example, we meet the Bathsheba figures who are and are not the Bible's Bathsheba, Bathshebas who "escape" a certain violent death by logocentric captivity. The Bible's Bathsheba is framed by historical chronology:

> The letter has just been read.
> The two women are under the letter's sway.
> The letter has taken their breath away. Has dispatched them over there into the closed time, before the closed doors to the future.

But Rembrandt's Bathsheba reveal Bathsheba's others. Privileged is not a Bathsheba forever coupled with David and the degradation implicit in origination in the other, not the sadness of a Bathsheba "struck by the letter," but rather Bathsheba's secret, "the trace of what escapes us;" a Bathsheba of the instant who transcends the dejection, resignation, and weariness of the letter or closed time. Likewise, in Rembrandt's *The Slaughtered Ox,* Cixous sees humanity from a different point of view. The dead headless ox, hung upside down is our common dignity: "We are this creature, which even turned upside down and decapitated and hung beneath the earth - when it is seen with those eyes that don't reject the below, that don't prefer the above- maintains its majesty."

The final commentary in this section reaches back to Cixous' initial observation that Freud had nothing to say about Rembrandt because in Rembrandt there is no family scene...no menace, no transference, no projection...no dependence, no authority, no cruel attachment. Cixous' privileging of the reader's heterochronic dispensation over the family narrative asks, of what value is a point of view which does not affirm the "immense limitless life hidden behind restricted life?" What is Rembrandt's painting without inmixation with "my personal foreign land?" And what is this personal foreign land but this impossible capture of the flesh by the letter (and/or the proper name) we never escape yet constantly elude?

*Without end, no, State of drawingness, no, rather: The Executioner's taking off*

"Without end..." also privileges the escaped voice in the body over the decisive voice of the text. Three works, Leonardo da Vinci's *Vierge à l'Enfant,* Picasso's *Etude pour "La Repasseuse,"* and Rembrandt's *Décollation de Saint Jean Baptiste* have in common a scene of combat which shows the complex relation between subject and object: mother and child, woman and iron, victim and executioner. Cixous' reading happens in the middle place between one thing and another. Thus, reading signifies the rebound of one's actions back on the self, exploding the self; no repentance, always inmixation, the one with the other.

*In October 1991...*

> "point de vue" (in French) is the same as point of view in English, but

also: "point of non-view." The place where there is no (point) view (vue). The point of view always carries with it: no view.

When memory reasserts its penetration of the Now, a revaluing of values occurs as a result of marking the events of the past in the present. Time and place are revalued from a "point of view" that no longer separates good and evil. The problem with the limit to thinking enforced by political correctness ('PC') is that it does not extend far enough to reach a point of view wherein subject and object are implicated, the one in the other. If the contemporary trend to moralization is wrong, it is because moralization doesn't go far enough to recognize the fundamental duplicity of all value. For example, in the value of forgiveness often there is the practice of revenge. What is beyond 'PC,' according to Cixous, is the point of view where forgiveness is prior to forgiveness; it is advance forgiveness. For in this point of view, there is no view. Likewise, rather than being innocent or guilty, if we are all guilty innocents, subjects of time without time, we mark the impression of daily life onto the historical narrative. The seasonal return of a month (October), though chronologically speaking at the end of the calendar year, is in this view, beginning and renewal. In the same way remembered place is non-place, for example, memories of the childhood trauma of leaving the mother to enter school signal nothing more but nothing less than an ahistorical self within the historical self, an eternal past which remains alive in the present. School is the place of trauma but it is also the return of a non-place, the non-place, for example, of the trauma of the letter. There is no experience of the Now which does not reference a past. In this light, the between of child and mother are revalued over and against the anonymous wall of time; patience and nurturing are revalued over and against vengeance and the insatiable. Time, in which persona ("the main characters of texts") are proven *not to be* "the main characters of a life," suggests "we leave the book and return to the bedroom, to the bed, to ourselves. And to point of view. And to our personal tragedy." When sense permeates telling, when language cannot mask (as time does) that "one cheats: one reassembles, pastes together, puts it all in order," it is the 'other' time of the feminine hour.

*Hiss of the Axe*

The textual cannot tell the story of love though it tells it by telling the way in which the time of love is always untimely. Always, the text says, love is a missed encounter. And yet the book cannot be the final source for our interpretative world. If love is constructed such that we always miss the other and narrative records the sad story of true love in death the "authors of our life" are different. For "in reality we do not like death, we like only its shadow, its footstep in the garden, the hiss of the axe above our bed." One must then go the way of the "dark part of truth," a way not yet determined, not yet written. This assumption that the book's past writes our future, is the problematic of the metaphysical. Rather, we don't know; we only "like to play at dying." We don't indulge death the way the story does. Even Shakespeare, notes Cixous, "cannot help but write of love in light of the axe; cannot help but write the letter that comes too early, too late, and never at the right time, because he writes with writing." But the judgment implied in the "right time" is never appropriate to life which is, from the beginning, always too late and perfectly on time; it's the human

rhythm. We are all born too early (born though not yet able to survive on our own outside the womb). This is life-text, the flesh, as distinct from stories told in the book. It is this life, always too late, which we must honor in the struggle to love again and again. For to be human is to be always a step behind.

*What is it o'clock? or The door (we never enter)*

> The favor you do me in the act of love - this possibility for evasion, this chance to enjoy extravagance, without suffering from madness,
> I call this freedom.
> Who then can make for us cosmic flesh
> The being who says: go ahead.
> The being who accepts, in a way as disaffected, elementary-elemental, as the earth, the air, the sky accepts us, us, going, passing through their involun tary matter. Whoever is capable of an acceptance this vast can only be the equivalent of the maternal breast, not of an exterior mother, but of the one who doesn't lean over the cradle, who doesn't say "I am your mother," of the mother who doesn't congratulate herself. The mother who loves like she breathes, loves and doesn't know
> it's the incarnation of a yes.
> What would this elemental love do? To start, this person wouldn't say: do you know what time it is?

Cixous' reference to her first meeting with Jacques Derrida puts Derrida between two worlds, "walking fast and sure along a mountain crest, from left to right." In further describing her encounter, Cixous writes, "the first time I saw Jacques Derrida...I was at Arcachon, I was reading... (it must have been *Force et signification*), from where I was I could see him clearly advancing black on the clear sky...he was walking along the peak, from far away I saw it, his hike along the line between mountain and sky which were melting into each other...." As well then, it is the reader who Cixous puts between two worlds. The recorded feeling of the meeting with Derrida reminds us that we can never be certain as to how to read Cixous. Thus we ask ourselves, are the two worlds (mountain and sky) earth and heaven? reality and imagination? or text and book? (text as world not text above world and book as representation of world, separate and above world). Is this description an allusion to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and the story of the tightrope walker? Is it Derrida on a broomstick, the magical witch flying across the night sky? What does it mean to see someone 'for the first time?' Did Cixous meet Derrida for the first time in person? or did she 'see' him through his writing, i.e. *read* him for the first time? The point is not inconsequential, for not to presume to know is precisely Cixous's point of view, no view. When world and text are no longer separate spheres, meeting "in person" and or "in the text" no longer need be distinguished. This is not because we dwell in the impossibility of knowing but because the old adage "the truth will set us free" is rejected. Perhaps Cixous both did and did not meet Derrida, the truth being that from one point of view she either met him in person or in his

writing but from another point of view (no view) the one is the other (the man is the text as the world is the text). What is important in trying to remember is not Truth but re-cognizing the past in the present. The 'present,' the instant, is all that matters. But what is the present? How does memory work if not to bring us forward to what Cixous calls circonfession after Derrida's text of the same title. Circonfession is what is "...inside, (and) comes to pass between myself and myself." Thus circonfession is the ability to embrace ourselves in the present. It is what Cixous calls, "the attempt to make oneself spit out the most secret blood so as to try to see with one's own eyes the interior color - of what? - of one's own spirit, the personal juice of life, inner proof of the existence of self, an attempt to capture the mortal matter that irrigates the immortal soul, so as to see the principle..." or the door (we never enter) or time as the elemental threshold. Past and future inhere in the present, for we never cross over from the one to the other. In asking our friend what time is it? we limit him or her to a techno-hetero-chronology (time without eternity).

**Julia Van Cleve**


Xcp
cross cultural poetics

**Kamau Brathwaite**'s *Conversations,* a collection emerging from his dialogues with Nathaniel Mackey, has just been published as a joint venture of *Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics,* We Press, and the University of Minnesota.

**Terry Temescu**'s work has been published in *Kansas Quarterly, Cold Mountain Review,* and elsewhere.

**Roy Miki**'s collection of critical essays, *Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing,* is recently out from Mercury Press. He edits *West Coast Line,* lives in Vancouver, and teaches in the English Department at Simon Fraser University.

**Piotr Gwiazda**'s translations of contemporary American poetry and fiction have been published in Poland over the last three years. His poems have appeared in *Excursus, Rattle, Washington Square,* and elsewhere. He lives in New York City.

**Rachel Blau DuPlessis**' recent work includes *Drafts 15-XXX, The Fold; Renga, Draft 32;* the broadside in the drafts series Praedelle; and the co-edited book *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation,* with Ann Snitow, from Three Rivers/ Crown, and 100% more available at your local McStore than the others are, for which, try SPD.

**Lyle Daggett**'s work has appeared in *Pemmican* and *The Temple,* and his *The Act of Resistance and Other Poems* is out from Shadow Press. He lives in Minneapolis.

**Mariela Gil Sánchez** was born in Apatzingán, in the state of Michoacán, Mexico. She has published widely in Mexican literary journals and newspapers, and her book, *Hallazgos bajo el puente de la H (What is Found Beneath the Bridge of the H)* was published in 1997 by Tierra Adentro Press in Mexico City. She lives in Morelia, Michoacán.

**Jen Hofer**, a poet and translator originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, is currently editing and translating an anthology of contemporary experimental poetry by Mexican women. Her work can be found in recent issues of *Chain, Kenning, Mandorla* and *Rhizome.*

**Leonard Schwartz** is the author of *Words Before the Articulate: New and Selected Poems* (Talisman House, 1997) and *A Flicker At The Edge of Things: Essays Towards A Poetics* (Spuyten Duyvil, 1998) and co-editor of *An Anthology of New (American) Poets.* He lives in New York City.

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**Juliana Spahr** lives in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Her book *Response* is available from Sun and Moon. She also co-edits the journal *Chain* with Jena Osman.

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**Hank Lazer**'s most recent books of poetry are *3 of 10* (Chax Press, 1996) and *Early Days of the Lang Dynasty* (Meow Press, 1996). With Charles Bernstein, he edits the Modern and Contemporary Poetics series for the University of Alabama Press. His two volume collection of critical writings on contemporary poetry, *Opposing Poetries,* was published in 1996 by Northwestern University Press.

**May Joseph** is assistant professor in Performance Studies at New York University. She is the author of *Nomadic Identities: The Performance of Citizenship* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999) and co-editor of *Performing Hybridity* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

**Edwin Torres** travels with paralytic boots laced tight against the flow. He has a CD entitled *Holy Kid* on Kill Rock Stars, and his new collection of poems, *Fractured Humorous,* is forthcoming on Subpress.

**Will Alexander** has recent or forthcoming work in *Orpheus Grid, Prosodia, Callaloo, Chain, Hambone,* and *Witz.* His books include *Asia & Haiti, The Stratospheric Canticles* and *Above the Human Nerve Domain.* He lives in Los Angeles.

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**Toral Gajarawala** is a Comparative Literature student at New York University with an interest in postcolonial studies and urbanism.

**Diane Glancy** teaches at Macalester College. Her forthcoming books are *The Voice That Was In Travel* (short stories, University of Oklahoma Press), *Fuller Man* (novel, Moyer Bell) and *Visit Teepee Town: Native Writing After the Detours* (an anthology she edited with Mark Nowak, Coffee House Press).

**Eric Lorberer** holds an MFA from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Exquisite Corpse, American Poetry Review, Mudfish, Denver Quarterly,* and *Colorado Review.* He is co-editor of *Rain Taxi Review of Books.*

**Amitava Kumar**, currently a Fellow at Yale, teaches in the English Department at the University of Florida. He is the author of *Passport Photos* (University of California, forthcoming); he has also edited *Class Issues* (NYU Press, 1997) and *Poetics/Politics* (St Martin's Press, forthcoming).

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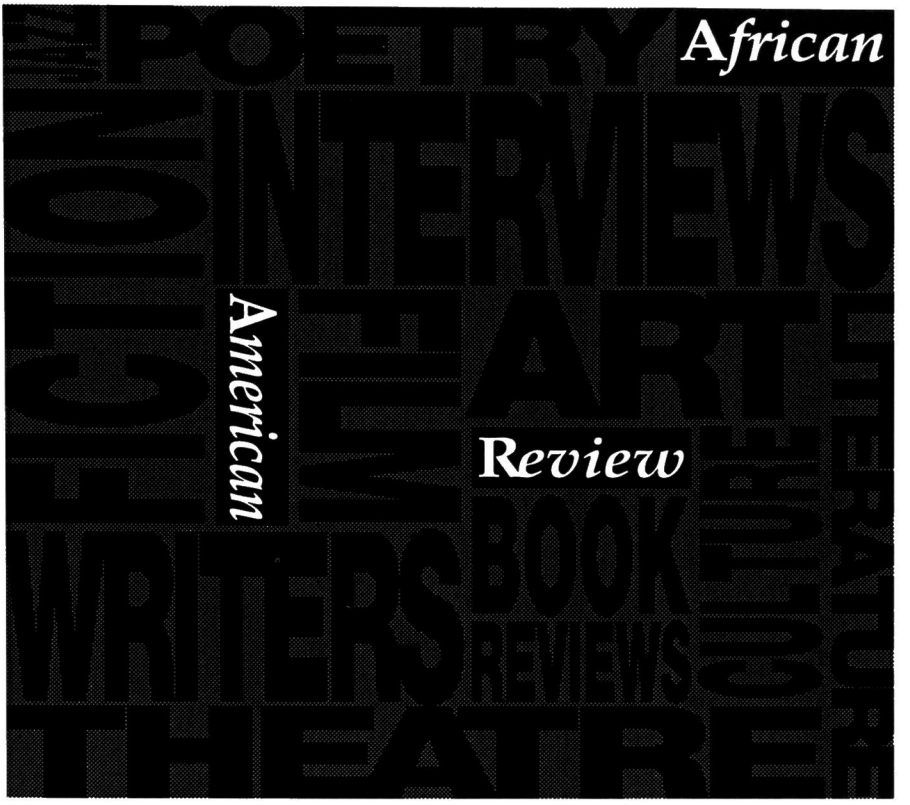


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