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EDITORIAL

Once again, we are extremely privileged to a premiere: another poem from bill tremblay's long poem, *Fire With Fire*. *L*ike "PANIC BREATHING," "ELECTRICIANS' UNION BUILDING," is a stunningly good lyric from tremblay's unpublished study of the amazing life and powerful murals of Mexican social realist and revolutionary David Sigueiros. *Fire With Fire* is currently seeking a press, so we are among the very first to see selections from this work. *The quint* will be premiering one more poem from *Fire With Fire* in its upcoming issues. B.C. Artist and poet Gail Whitter has also sent us taut and beautifully crafted selections from her canon. Notably, Sharon Proulx-Turner's *The Underbelly of the Wind* is an incredibly powerful and courageous work.

As well, our 2011 March issue packages some of Thompson's best for you: the people and artists of Thompson's Heritage North Museum have opened the doors and invited quint readers in for a discussion of museology above the 55th Parallel. We are honoured to be able to display the works of painter Jasyn Lucas and soapstone carver/artist Cyril Pierone**.** As always, this *quint* is designed to stimulate the mind and satisfy the eye. Dr. Yvonne Trainer from the University College of the North has generously provided a thought-provoking paper about the possibilities that neuroscience holds for biographers, and Dr. Harvey Briggs from Algoma University has sent us an excellent article examining the ethnographic conundrums concerning aboriginal identity.

I won't keep you from this issue of *the quint* any longer. We are looking forward being back in June with more from the North for you to discover.

Sue Matheson
Managing Editor

selected from *Fire With Fire*

by bill tremblay

"PREFACE"

In the winter of 1997-98. I was on a bus in Mexico City with Phil Garrison heading southwest on Insurgentes when I saw a big billboard with the word SIQUEIROS in red, featuring a processed portrait of him in photographic black wearing a crown of thorns made of bayonets. It was an ad for his permanent exhibit, *The March of Humanity,* at the Polyforum. Maybe it was Mexico, the mixture of folk art and liberation theology, but it astonished me that at least some people regarded a modern painter as a Christ-figure.

The metaphor set its hook in me, though I had already been to Coyoacán taking notes for what would become a book of poems about Leon Trotsky's death in Mexico. So Siqueiros was set on the back-burner. After *Shooting Script: Door of Fire* was published [2003] and I went through my usual period of gathering strength, I turned my attention to him, wondering if there could be a verbal equivalent to his style, a kind of *concrete expressionism*, as opposed to the Cubism, abstract expressionism and easel painting that were prevalent during his lifetime. The trope of this book has become that the poems are murals, operating on a big canvas, that they are

ELECTRICIANS' UNION BUILDING

Two coiled serpentine staircases

pull all eyes up to steel power stanchions

to ethereal plasma of auroral rainbow waves

pulsing from factory smokestack radio towers

the siren song of salt and servitude,

clanging the sun disk with a funeral drum-beat

drub-drub, drub-drub

above the Temple of Justice consumed in fire.

Soldiers in gas masks holding rifles

herd human hosts into a blue-oiled screw shaft,
the painting a bitter pun that crushes
men, women into gold coins,
the ultimate and perpetual *reductio* splashing out
to the invisible Elect who receive the eagle's bounty.

His steps clack marble. Mural spooks haunt each step.
Luis' cigar stub chides him in waggles for being late.
He clambers up platform bamboo triangles.
—Salazar picked me up again.
Snatching up his spray-gun, connecting pneumatic hose,
flipping on switch, modeling black eagle wings
in plasmo-technic glow from *el norte*
spreading its talons, keeping its prey panicked
easy pickings.
Luis chews his stub with some chagrin,
a little hang-dog that David promised him the eagle.
—I want an *industrial* eagle, he says,
an eagle whose feathers can slice flesh, whose claws
can keep an entire continent a bandit-ridden hell-hole.
Luis stubs out his cigar.—I looked for you
at the farm collective meeting last night in Xochimilco.
A beggar-woman enters the hall, carrying a crying infant.

She turns her head up and back at the mural

spits on tiled floor.

—I can't be everywhere, he says, regarding the woman

on the bottom stair breast-feeding. The baby stops crying.

He wants to paint her glistening nipples

able to feed Mexican farmers the milk of justice.

Luis's voice climbs into the sound vacuum.

—The Bank of Commerce is foreclosing on them.

The web he uses to keep his bull in check

breaks. He slams the spray-gun down, tears off

his apron, un-nozzles, rushes out bronze doors, past

boarded-up bookstores, tourist junkshops,

alleys of homeless living off restaurant garbage.

Stooping to pick up a loose pavement brick

he enters the Bank of Commerce, leans over a dowager.

—How can you put your money in a bank

that forecloses on farmers who've toiled for five hundred years?

The woman looks up at him: —*Don't hurt me!*

—I don't want to hurt you. Just answer my question.

—*Help!* Two bank guards rush over, pistols drawn.

—*He's got a brick!* In a flash he's on the marbled floor,

guns at his head.

SNIBBLETS: by Gail Whitter

today the world
a great jar of
grey water –
no green
for my gathering …

+++++++++++++++

whenever you please
you travel back
to where i am
your body
pours itself
over my limbs
across my breasts
around my hips
warm like tears

& i wake
reaching for your
sweetness

& know
i have been dreaming …

++++++++++++++++

you pull me
in to the dark
as it in taking me
you could be
my finest poem

+++++++++++++

i can't tell
if its tuesday or friday
- i've been writing for days
surrounding my self
with protective magick
pushing you   out
of my body
in drafts & poems
with all the passion
i can remember …

Ethnography: Telling Stories About the Other/Self(?)

by Harvey Briggs, Algoma University, Sault St. Marie, Ontario

You are there, because I was there.

Representation

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

(T.S. Eliot)

The beginning of this text is comprised of a title, a somewhat famous drawing (by John White at Frobisher Bay in 1577), and the line "You are there, because I was there," (Clifford, 1983:118). Leaving aside the title, what one is presented with is a drawing of an early explorer - probably European - posing with a bow in what is a classic image of the European explorer: garbed in Native clothing, but still retaining the benefits of European civilisation displayed in the upright stance, and the focused – though, cast-off - expression. Above him the line "You are there, because I was there" refers to the colonial outlook toward the "New World" of North America: you exist because I have discovered you.

But is that what you see? Look closely; because in reality this drawing by John White is supposed to be a drawing of an Inuit. Representation is not only problematic in the realm of words, but also in the world of images. Here the features of the Inuit are erased: transposed by European features - in the act of making his image more "civilized." Our problems of interpretation impose themselves upon every mode of action, and ethnography—like this image—is no exception. Ethnography is faced with the same problems of interpretation and understanding that confront other social science methods (when they choose to be conscious of such problems).

Why is understanding so problematic? In particular - at least in the terms of the present inquiry—how can we more accurately understand the event-account relationship so integral to the social sciences in general and ethnography in particular? To begin with I think we need a more complex understanding and usage of the term *event*, and, further, we need to distance it from the production of an *account*. I think that such an understanding requires, first of all, coming to terms with the event at the level of space/time. Stephen Hawking, author of *A Brief History of Time*, provides some "natural science" answers that can be reformulated into "social science" answers:

> Our subjective sense of the direction of time, the psychological arrow of time, is therefore determined within our brain by the thermodynamic arrow of time. Just as a computer, we must remember things in the order in which entropy increases. This makes the second law of thermodynamics almost trivial. Disorder increases with time because we measure time in the direction in which disorder increases. You can't have a safer bet than that!"(1988:147)

The implications for ethnography here are that an initial order of the event or a position from which the event can be ordered is not available to the ethnographer: no such position ever exists[1]. In fact, this sort of positionality is only ever possible in the production of an account, and its subsequent ordering of certain perceived elements. The event itself is never really ordered: but the account must be if it is to be intelligible. The account is a "double effacement:" "a story in itself, a story of story, a story of the

[1]Congruent to the second law of thermodynamics: in a universe of increasing disorder (i.e., an expanding universe) would not understanding itself also be increasingly disordered? Accordingly, is not everything in a universe of increasing disorder involved in that disordering? Thus, are we as humans agents of universal disordering? If so, then human knowledge must be a mapping of the process of universal disordering.

story."(Derrida, 1979:102) The account tells us, most of all, how an account is to be produced: the account itself is never anything more than the story of its own assembly. Yet in ethnography we persist in our desire to understand the event, the people, the problem. In order to separate the event off we would have to mark the boundary of all possible (or, more importantly: all probable) histories that led up to the event. Effectively we are faced with a fundamental human problem of understanding: understanding is already pre-ordered (ordained?) in human terms. Ontological understanding is based on epistemological orientation. In these terms: the event is already the historical genesis of the infinite production of possible accounts; the only limiting factor being the epistemological diversity of those that produce the accounts.

Perhaps it is even wrong to think in terms of an event-account relationship. As Stephen Hawking states the issue: "But maybe that is our mistake: maybe there are no particle positions and velocities, but only waves[2]." (1988:173) If so, then an event could never occur: without some fixity in time and/or space there is no presence . . .no event. The account is more akin to this wavelike existence: it is less fixed in temporal or spatial position than in the consciousness of the informant or the researcher. The elimination of the event also means the elimination of a "master method" by which to

[2]This is a play on the **uncertainty principle** of physics which states: "One can never be sure of both the position and the velocity of a particle; the more accurately one knows the one, the less accurately they can know the other."(1988:187) In this context the question is how could this be applied to the event? To the account? To a text?

account for the event. We are denied Pangloss' "metaphysico-theologo-cosmolo-nigology" and its surety, and faced with a Heideggerian world of possibilities (Heidegger, 1962:185).

Ethnography

Leaving aside the event-account relationship momentarily, I want to look at some of the critiques of conventional ethnography, as well as some of the emerging methods. In his article "On Ethnography: Storytelling or Science?" Robert Aunger elaborates what he terms the "textualist's critique" of ethnography. This critique is centered on the claim that "ethnographic research must be reflexive[3]" (Aunger, 1995:98) and comprise a "dialogical" approach as opposed to the "monological" approach of the classic ethnographers such as Mead. One way this is accomplished is through the inclusion of first hand narratives by informants, which is included in the body of the text. Another method is the multi-layered approach used by Marcus and Fischer (1986) and Rosaldo (1989) who argue for "an experimental ethnography' that juxtaposes in the document autobiographical recounting of fieldwork experiences, multiple narrative voices, transcriptions of historical texts, and so on." (Aunger, 1995:98) Another strategy is the emancipatory ethnography employed by feminist

[3] Aunger's usage of reflexivity in the context of his discussion of the textualist's critique is taken from Meyerhoff and Ruby (1982:2): "Reflexive knowledge . . .contains not only messages, but also information as to how it came into being, the process by which it was obtained."

researchers in which the practice is centred in involving the group to be studied in the research at an organizational level, and allowing them full access to the study. This displaces the traditional power relationship between the researcher-informant to a high degree and allows the informant to set the terms of the research and provides them with a high degree of input into the final work.

In opposition to these "textualist[4]" strategies Aunger presents a "two-step approach" for "scientific" ethnography. The first step, the *Reflexive Analytical Approach* combines: "(1) the introduction of variability into each aspect of the data collection protocol, (2) multivariate statistical analysis (to isolate the many aspects of the data collection situation that can influence observations), and (3) the incorporation of elicitation effects *into the analysis* (i.e., reflexivity)." The second step, *the Comparative Event-History Approach,* is to: "(1) determine a typology for events, (2) determine how particular sequences of such events are structured (i.e., find a grammar to describe patterns in individual event histories), and (3) develop a framework within which different structures can be compared (i.e., determine the generality or breadth to which particular structures are applicable)."

[4]Aunger states his opposition to the "textualist's" practice of including other voices in a footnote on page 98, I quote: "Textualists often include firsthand narratives as some portion of their ethnographic account, placed side by side with other textual material, in order not to privilege the ethnographer's viewpoint. I argue, on the contrary, that the ethnographer's interpretations are privileged because of firsthand acquaintance with the subject matter of the report. If a reflexive approach is used, readers are nevertheless able to determine independently on what basis interpretations are made and hence to what degree they will concede those interpretations. As a result, the ethnographer's point of view does not preclude or pre-empt those of readers."(1995:98)

Aunger argues that his method introduces reflexivity into the analysis of data as opposed to the presentation of the document. Reflexivity is further enhanced by elaborating to the reader the author's data collection and analysis process. Aunger achieves this reflexivity through *methodological situationalism* which involves presenting the reader with the specifics of the data collection, and is based on the idea that: "human social behaviour is contextualized both in time and space and with respect to the simultaneous action of other individuals." Aunger opposes methodological situationalism to both *methodological individualism* ("no phenomena emerge in the context of a social interaction that cannot be reduced to the characteristics of the individuals who partook in that interaction") and *methodological collectivism* ("reference to individual mental constructs or behaviours is superfluous because humans are merely the passive instruments of social-structural processes").

However, the critique of conventional ethnography is not only from the "scientific" front. Conventional ethnography is challenged even more seriously by the "textualists." Edward Said, in his article "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," says of ethnography: "the impression of a deep sentiment of Kuhnian paradigm-exhaustion persists, with consequences for the status of anthropology that must be, I believe, extraordinarily unsettling." (1989:209) Said argues for an ethnography that is less concerned with making cultural generalizations; and, rather,

wishes to present the voice of "cultural" others within a discourse that attempts to deal directly with cultural complexity. Said posits the preconditions for such an ethnographic practice by stating: "If we no longer think of the relationship between cultures and their adherents as perfectly contiguous, totally synchronous, wholly correspondent, and if we think of cultures as permeable and, on the whole, defensive boundaries between polities, a more promising situation appears." (1989:225) James Clifford goes further to state the importance of revising ethnography: "It is more than ever crucial for different peoples to form complex concrete images of one another, as well as of the relationships of knowledge and power that connect them . . .But no sovereign scientific method or ethical stance can guarantee the truth of such images. They are constituted--the critique of colonial modes of representation has shown at least this much--in specific historical relations of dominance and dialogue." (1983:119) My question here is how do the "new" forms of ethnography change this? The images presented are still constituted in "specific relations of dominance and dialogue," e.g., under feminist ethnography these relations are organised under the paradigm of emancipation. If ethnography is to be emancipatory then does it not construct the community as in need of emancipation or in the process of emancipation? Or, at least, place them at some point on the "emancipatory continuum" to be "managed" by feminist praxis?

There are two other problems that I see with the "textualist's" critique; both have to do with the problematic manner in which Said and Clifford relate to the practice of interpretation. The first of these problems I offer in reference to the work of Clifford, who writes, "The research process is separated from the texts it generates and from the fictive world they are made to call up. The actuality of discursive situations and individual interlocutors is filtered out." (1983:132) In what way is the interpretive activity of the researcher lessened to a "fictive world?" Could the same not be said of the "emancipatory" act of feminist ethnography, or the direct reporting of experience of multiple narratives? In what way are the "discursive situations" and "individual interlocutors" present in a multiple narrative account not comparably "fictive worlds?" The second problem relates to the issue of authority, "The words of ethnographic writing, then, cannot be construed as monological, as the authoritative statement about, or interpretation of, an abstracted, textualized reality." (1983:133) This issue is echoed by Reinharz in her work, "The researcher usually has no obligation to take the subject's opinion into account when publishing the findings and thus has the ability to frame the public's understanding of the subject's life." (2011: 207) While to some extent this may have been true in the past – and may remain true in other areas – in Canada the current TCPS2 (2010: 33 – article 3.3) does include a much more inclusive sense of the idea of consent. However, the hermeneutic tradition

underlying interpretive ethnography clearly understands the problems of authority, and many working within this tradition are clear in makes no such claims for their work. The account of the word, its transformation from discourse to text, is already an interpretation and thus the hermeneutic desire to reinvest it with its interlocutionary setting is a recognition of this "already-interpreted" status. Thus, it is a conscientious understanding of this "already-interpreted" state that underlies the necessity of its translation from "discursive-text" to a textual form in which the interlocutionary setting is reinterpreted and reconstituted (to the best of the researcher's ability).

The Ethnographer As Ventriloquist: Problems of Accuracy

Ethnography that is largely composed of interview material brings to my mind the image of Socrates and Plato in Jacques Derrida's text *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. In this picture Plato stands behind Socrates who is seated at a desk with pen in hand (in fact, with a pen in each hand). Plato's left hand points to the page while his right pokes Socrates in the back imploring him to write. Plato's look is serious, concentrating on Socrates' production; while Socrates has a studious, though somewhat pained look on his face. Now it is transposed, and in its place is the image of the ethnographer forcing the "community" or "people to speech (as if they were

not already involved in their own form of speech); not with a prodding finger and serious glance but, with tools, trade goods, research funds, political organisation, or just a chance to be heard. Representation reaches its highest peak here.

At what point did sociology become locked into representation? What about understanding/explanation? Leaving aside the problem of understanding - a problem that Aunger, for one, never directly confronts - why is it that we have to concern ourselves so completely with representation? If ethnography merely entails a process of representation than it dooms itself to failure and dismissal; the enterprise must somehow rediscover its roots as an essential part of the creation and structuring of knowledge in the anthropological tradition. Though many see this as a problematic claim, I think it is both more valid and less problematic than any claim to representation. It is a question of importance: does ethnography merely exist to give us the facts about a group or people or is it part of our larger process of structuring knowledge?

The problem goes deeper than the movement from understanding to representation that - I think - characterizes experimental ethnography. There are underlying issues of the accuracy of such representations. On one side of this problem is the researcher's potential lack of membership in the community that they study: "In Dilthey's influential view, understanding others arises initially from the sheer fact of

coexistence in shared world. But this experiential world, an intersubjective ground for objective forms of knowledge, is precisely what is missing or problematic for an ethnographer entering an alien culture." (Clifford, 1983:128) The other side of this problem is the accuracy of the informant's account. For me the second problem is of greater concern and I will deal with it at some length here.

The problem is characterized by Malcolm Dow: "The current preoccupation in ethnographic writing is with the *presentation* of various accounts and not at all with their accuracy."(Aunger, 1995:117) Though the information given by ethnographic sources is often incorrect either by omission or commission, the ethnographer - in the face of such standards of ethnographic work as held by experimental and feminist ethnography - is supposed to give some form of *representational* priority/authority to the informant/group. In their article "Cognitive Structure and Informant Accuracy" Freeman, Romney, and Freeman (FRF) drawing on research by Bernard, Killworth, and Sailer state: "Informants, it seems, are typically unable to report accurately on the others with whom they have interacted. They make two kinds of errors: (1) they forget some of those others and (2) they generate false recalls by claiming to have interacted with others with whom they have not . . .these inaccuracies are so common that about half of what informants tell us is wrong in some way." (1987: 310) Clearly this presents

problems for ethnography (though not only for ethnography). By way of explaining this problem FRF put forth what they term a "Proto-theory of Human Memory" which I have condensed somewhat:

> 1. *Human memory is organized.* People construct memories, they are not passively stored.
> 2. *The organization embodied in a mental structure is revealed in free recall.* Humans reorganize events and the way that they do this reorganization can be revealed in the manner they recall the event.
> 3. *The organization of memory is based on experience.* People reorganize events in memory based on their experiences and on their perception of order and structure. But individuals vary in experience. They differ, that is, in terms of their exposure to, and knowledge about, the regularities exhibited in and among the elements found in a class of events. Low-knowledge individuals have seen only a few regularities. They are able, therefore, to develop only rather simple mental structures about the events they experience. But high-knowledge individuals have seen more. Their greater experience is embodied in more elaborate structures that contain more information about regularities among the elements.
> 4. *The tendency of a person to recall an element that occurred in an event depends on two factors: (a) the amount of elaboration of the person's mental structure, and (b) the degree to which the element is typical in events of the kind being examined.* The degree of development of a mental structure determines not only the amount remembered, but what is remembered. The likelihood that a particular element in an event will be recalled is determined by the degree to which it is typical in events of that class. One important kind of pattern that people incorporate into their mental structures is the regularity of occurrence of an element in a context. Elements that occur regularly are seen as typical; they are embedded into the mental structure as expectations. The more regular the occurrence of the element, the greater the expectation, so the incorporation of elements into mental structures is hierarchical.
> 5. *The tendency of a person to falsely recall an element that did not actually occur in an event depends on two factors: (a) the amount of elaboration of the person's mental structure, and (b)*

> *the degree to which the element is typical in events of the kind being examined*. Though elaborate mental structures aid in recall, they are not without a cost in accuracy. What seems to occur is that with increased experience on the part of observers and increased structure or regularity of the elements they experience, there comes an increased tendency for *default processing* of those elements.

What this comes down to is that no matter who is doing the recounting there will be problems with the way the account is organized: it will never approximate the event in a direct manner. The problem of memory organization is further compounded by the fact that: "informants do not remember a detailed inventory of cultural facts or social events. Instead, they are more likely to recall the system of rules that generates the events." (1987:322) Even ethnographers are guilty of this activity as Dennison Nash points out in his article "The Ethnologist as Stranger: An Essay in the Sociology of Knowledge:

> The typical initial response of strangers is to assert the more valuable elements in the habitual frame of reference derived in part from their home reference group and to deny incongruous or threatening stimuli. They respond by denying what does not fit their preferred hypotheses and emphasizing what does. This reaction has been found in a number of experiments of the type carried out by Bruner and Postman (1949), in a small group experiment by Nash and Wolfe (1957), and in observations of travellers abroad. (1963:153)

In light of the growing primacy of ethnography as a method of qualitative research, displacing other practices such as participant observation, sociologists - under the pressure of such standards - are increasingly forced into the role of the

"sociological reporter." And, though (maybe) better educated than other reporters, the sociological reporter is a much less apt reporter than the conventional journalist-reporter. We are increasingly faced with restrictions on our activity that the journalist would never allow; for example, the guidelines set down in the current Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2: 2010) . We are held to a code of ethics that decrees disclosure of our identity, activities and even - as some sociologists propound - our work must be somehow "emancipatory." If the goal of ethnography is to be representational and emancipatory we are going about the process in the most disingenuous manner possible. Granted, in communities where the power differential is in the researchers "favour" we have guidelines that will provide for an adequate level of damage control. However, ethnography should not only be "practised" on groups that occupy the margin, but also on those who are relatively powerful (Reinharz, 2011:207). Such groups have no need for "emancipatory"[5] projects, and - quite simply - resist illuminatory efforts. The maintenance of status and power is accomplished, in part, by the control of information, and such ethnographic practices only legitimate and mirror that control of information.

[5]With respect to the typical manner in which "emancipation" is made manifest, I see some similarity between the recent practice of providing temporary research positions and research funds to a community and the "colonial anthropologists" practice of trading pots and pans for information. Perhaps the only difference lies in the honesty of the latter admitting that information was the basis of the exchange. Many of the anthropologists labelled with the "colonizer" label by contemporary critiques cared as passionately for the communities they studied – and had emancipatory agendas for those groups they studied – as the contemporary finger-pointers that accuse them (usually posthumously). Lewis Henry Morgan was very concerned with showing that the Iroquois were every bit as human as their European conquerors (a point of much contention in his time); Julian Steward passionately stressed that the Great Basin Shoshone possessed a viable social structure against accounts which presented them as little more than "apes" not yet at the level of "human society;" and Robert Lowie was a defender of "modified indigenous cultures" pointing out that they were viable societies and not dispossessed groups in need of assimilation.

Conclusion

"Every man his own methodologist! Methodologists! Get to work!"

(Mills, :123)

At what level does all of this lose any concern for the creation of critical consciousness? Why all this concern with facticity? After all: "Facts can only be selected and arranged in the light of theory."(Evans-Pritchard quoted in Clifford, 1983:126) - thus the production of facticity is what should be of interest here: not the facts themselves. To me it is a question of importance: does ethnography exist merely to give us the facts?

What are we in search of in sociology? An account of the event, or an explanation of eventing, or some deeper understanding of the connection of humanity to events - or, could we just be telling stories about events? Possibly we do all of these, but what is more likely is that at some level these are all collapsible into each other. Whether this is true or not, what must concern the sociologist is the cognitive accuracy (this also implies the ethical dimension of accuracy: honesty) of the account: be it a story, a concept, or a theory. How is it possible to determine such accuracy? This is the problem that I wish to engage here. One possible avenue is rhetoric. Though I do not see different forms of rhetoric as inherently truthful or untruthful,

one can better understand an account if one knows the conventions of the rhetorical devices used by the author to present the account. Poetry can be as truthful as factual reporting, or scientific research, but one can only demonstrate this by assembling a picture of the rhetorical presentation of that "truth."

I am using 'truth' in a conceptual manner here. I am not specifically concerned with truth, but with the most probable account. Thus, the search here is conducted among the many possible accounts - or, more specifically: among the histories of the many possible accounts - for the most probable account. Probability, like truth, is not inherently connected to a particular rhetoric, and so any version of probability that links certain types of events with certain rhetorical devices is necessarily misleading. Rhetorical devices have no *a priori* relationship to particular actions; thus, any relation of the event to a particular rhetorical presentation must be denied epistemologically. Rhetoric and event are separate, however they are brought together in the account. Thus, one of the limits we face is the indivisibility of rhetoric and the production of the account. However, at some level the performative aspects of rhetoric can be illuminated, and the logic of the argumentation in an account can be teased out. Rhetoric, event, account, the possible accounts (or possible histories of the accounts), and the most probable account together comprise the essential terminology or elements of what could be called the *rhetorical-distance analysis* of the production of an

ethnographic account. Such a rhetorical analysis would be concerned with understanding the way in which an argument is presented (and possibly, why it is presented in such a manner), and from that understanding examine the account itself for ways in which it does not correspond to the logic of its own manner of presentation. It is a counter-factual form of investigation, in that it possesses no separate knowledge of the event; thus, it is an investigation of the account of the event, and not the event itself.

What does the positionality of the observer have to do with the ordering of the event? Literally, it has nothing to do with the event, beyond the involvement of the observer in the event itself, but it has everything to do with the observer's account of the event. The problem is that we are looking at the event as if it was bounded. Our method in the human sciences is heavily influenced by that of the natural sciences, a point that Gadamer makes in his text *Truth and Method.* This includes the way in which we orient our enquiries into "reality." One overwhelming influence on the methodology of the human sciences is Einstein's theory of relativity, in particular the "boundedness" of phenomena in that account. If we consider time and space to have boundaries then logically events have some sort of boundaries. This is where the problem begins, and where the issue of usefulness enters the picture. One tenet of this

practice of rhetorical-distance analysis would have to be the necessity to "give up" this boundedness, and by this I mean the facticity of the event, in order to understand the account. Effectively we have allowed ourselves to limit our understanding of the event/account relationship to the Aristotelian paradigm of phronesis.

Reinharz provides an interesting tool for the reflexive side of this practice with her understanding of the "different selves" that we bring into the research context. In her text *Observing the Observer*, she elaborates three "selves" that she identified in her own research practice: "research selves, personal selves, and situational selves." (2011: 5) She describes these, "there are selves that are concerned with doing the research (research selves), selves that one brings to the field (personal selves), and selves that are created in the field (situational selves)." Understanding each of these as both observational positions and as rhetorical strategies can provide a much deeper context for structuring our won relationship to the data we analyse. Similarly, understanding the rhetorical construction of the accounts given by our informants can allow us to penetrate deeper into our data.

What escapes from the "boundaries" of an event are the many possible accounts - never the event (which we could liken, in some ways, to the truth). Events in this sense are much like "black holes," which, rather than occurring in space/time, occur in

the human version of space/time: reality. Events are black holes in reality: we know there is something there, yet all that we can produce are accounts and not the event itself. What if consider the event horizon of the black hole to be a model for the nature of all events and structure our approach to the practice of ethnography with that understanding? We would be faced with a process of generating the account in both a factual (empirical) and counter-factual (rhetorical-distance analysis) manner. Perhaps the latter is akin to what Nietzsche tells us of the pursuit of knowledge in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* "And when all footholds disappear, you must know how to climb up upon your head: how could you climb upward otherwise?" (1969:174)

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A Selection from *Sad Peninsula* by Mark Sampson

The following is an excerpt from a novel-in-progress called Sad Peninsula*, by Mark Sampson. It is set in South Korea and is comprised of two main threads: one involving the expatriate ESL teaching community in Seoul, and one involving the history of Korea's 'comfort women', the euphemism for sex slaves for the Japanese military during World War Two. This excerpt, taken from Chapter 13, is where the two threads collide for the first time.*

Chapter 13

So here is me in my classroom. After a year and a half of this teach-by-colours curriculum, I've pretty much gotten a handle on it. I've become a conscientious teacher, tacking student essays and drawings to the wall by the door, using the white board and coloured markers to great effect, standing more often than sitting, making grammar come to life with silly stories from my past, performing magic tricks and telling jokes that leave the kids giggling or groaning. All of this has helped put me in Ms Kim's good books, which is why she offered me a second contract. She sees me as a 'senior teacher' now, and as a result assigns me more than my fair share of upper-

level courses. I love it. The big purple textbook I teach from has Hemingway short stories and excerpts from *The Joy Luck Club* and *Roots*. The kids in these classes are not necessarily older, but their English and critical-thinking skills are as strong as they come at a hagwon. I'm required to be tough on them, cruel even, but in my heart I admire each of these children so much. There's one boy in particular, his English name is "Joe", who brings to my Senior 5 class an unwavering meticulousness and a genuine joy for learning. Twelve years old and cursed with fish-bowl glasses, he is nonetheless imbued with confidence, an assuredness about what he wants to be when he grows up – an international diplomat. He happily puts himself through English grammar drills each night, and his essays teem with his own unique interpretation of the world.

He's also insatiably curious about *everything*.

"So as we can see in this paragraph," I say, pacing in front of the kids with the textbook on my arm, "Roland and Barbara are married, but do they love each other?"

"No!" the class chimes in unison.

"Exactly. They don't love each other. So then why are they married?"

The kids ruminate on this for a bit. Joe raises his hand. "MichaelTeacher, I have a question."

"Go ahead, Joe."

"Are *you* marry?"

Am I merry? Oh wait, he's confused by the adjective, that revealing mix of present and past tense in a single clause: *Are* you *married*.

"No, I'm not married," I sigh.

"Do you have girlfriend?"

A few snickers chase their way around the class. I hesitate, chew on my smile. Big mistake.

"MichaelTeacher," pipes up 10-year-old Tony, "are you a *player*?"

"RobTeacher was a player," points out 13-year-old Jinny, as if she'd know.

"Alright, back to the story!" I say.

Nine-year-old Susan looks confused. "'Player'? What's mean? What's mean 'player'?"

One of the older, dimmer boys in the back, Dylan, begins answering her question in a litany of forbidden syllables.

"*No Korean please!*" I bark, and the class snaps silent. I give Dylan the evil eye, then march over to the tray at my whiteboard, seize a marker (not the red one, obviously), uncap it and write Dylan's name in the far right-hand corner of the board. There it sits for the whole class, and the closed circuit camera hanging in the corner

(and thus possibly, eventually, his mother, whom he would fear worse than God) to see.

I turn to Susan. “A player is a guy with many, many girlfriends.”

Jinny hikes up a dainty elbow. “MichaelTeacher, can a girl be a player?”

“No. There’s a different word in English for a girl with many, many boyfriends.”

“What is it?”

“I can’t say in front of children. It’s a bad word.”

“Ugh! Bad word for girls, but not for guys? Ohhh, *sogg’ghee*!” she says, using the Korean word for *unfair*.

“Jinny, no Korean!” I march over and write her name under Dylan’s, just to prove that I believe in equal wrongs as much as equal rights.

We finish examining the story and then I assign an essay topic and grammar exercises for homework, writing them with a flurry on my board. the kids fall over their notebooks to get it down, scribbling and scribbling. When they finish, there are still a few seconds left to the class.

“MichaelTeacher, do magic! Do magic!” the kids demand as they pack up.

This is a thing I’ve started: Based on my digital watch, I know the precise second when the bell is going to ring. Smiling, I float my right arm upward while keeping an

eye on my watch, splay out my hand, twiddle my fingers, make a low, mysterious groan in my throat, and then, at exactly the right moment, I thrust my arm at the speaker in the ceiling and yell out "Pow!" *Mary Had a Little Lamb* chimes out just then, and the kids cheer as they bolt for the door.

I pack up their workbooks and essays from the previous night and slip them into the plastic tray on my windowsill, glancing at Seoul's nightly traffic as it moves through the street four storeys below. I wipe down my board and then go around the empty room, straightening chairs and looking for rogue pencil cases. Then, throwing my satchel over my shoulder, I saunter out to the school's lobby where I find Jin already waiting for me.

"Hello there, Mr. Teacher man," she beams. We share the slightest of hugs, just a brief placing of a hand on a hip. But unfortunately there are a number of my students, including Joe, loitering together in the lobby. "Ohhhhh MichealTeee-chorrre!" they sing, and scrape one index finger over the other: *tisk tisk* …

Joe walks up to us. "MichaelTeacher, I have a question."

I brace myself. "Go ahead, Joe."

"Can I write you *two* essays this weekend?"

"Of course you can. But that's a lot of extra work."

"I know. But I want to write about my trip one month ago to Pusan to visit my grandmother. Can I? I will write your assignment too, of course." He looks up then at Jin. "Who is this?"

"This is Park Jin-su."

"*An'yon*," she addresses him, but then cuts him off before he can pose his next obvious question. "So tell me, do you like attending this hagwon?"

Joe nods vigorously, his eyes undulating in their lenses like poached eggs.

"And what do you think of *him*?" she asks, tilting a chin at me.

Joe begins answering her in Korean, but she cuts him off. "No, say it in English."

He squishes up his face in mock-annoyance. "Ohh, MichaelTeacher is very crazy – but also … *super genius*!"

She bursts out laughing. "Really?"

"Yes. He knows all about America, and Canada, and Michael Jackson! And he tells very good jokes about President Bush."

She gives me an approving look.

"Alright Joe," I say, "I'll see you on Monday. Have a good weekend."

"You too!" he croons at us. He starts to leave, but then hurries back and

addresses Jin, measuring each word methodically. "By the way – What. Are. You. Eating. Under. *There*?"

"Under where?"

"You're eating *underwear*?" Joe explodes into laughter, and jabs a finger at me. "He taught me that!" Jin and I watch him hustle out the glass doors with his backpack pulled tight on his shoulders, a little Sherpa ready to scale another mountain of weekend homework.

We just sort of grin at each other for a moment after he's gone. "So what should we do now?" I ask.

Her eyes fall briefly to my mouth. "Let's go back to your place … *super genius*."

~

We need to have a discussion about what's going to happen tomorrow night. I am to show up at the Park apartment at seven o'clock. I am to bring a gift – something small and inexpensive, but it must be wrapped. I am not to take offence when her parents set the gift aside rather than open it in front of me - it's not the Korean way. I am to keep in mind that her parents speak very limited English, and that Jin will translate when necessary. And I must also remember that they're still coming to terms with their daughter dating a waegook. It was difficult for them to hear the news, and

more difficult to agree to have me over. Her father will be okay with it. He will be fine. Her mother's a different story. The Korean term for what we're doing is 'muddying the waters'.

Saturday night, and I sit with a book on the subway en route to Jin's neighbourhood of Mangwon, listening to stop after stop go by, and hold the gift I'm bringing in my lap. It's a small crystal bowl, good for candy or spare change, wrapped in rice paper and tucked inside a glittery gift bag with strings. When I arrive at Mangwon station, I find Jin waiting for me outside the turnstiles. Her hug is cool, disinterested. I get the message loud and clear: we must suppress any and all signs of physical affection in front of her parents.

"My father is still at work," she grumbles as we head outside.

"It's 7'oclock on a Saturday night."

"I know. Mother is not pleased with him. And neither am I."

I'm not sure what I'm expecting from the Park apartment before we arrive. I imagine it huge, sprawling, glimmering hardwood floors and giant windows overlooking the busy Seoul skyline. When Jin welcomes me in after a 22-storey ride in the elevator, I find something different. Her family home is not that dissimilar to the cramped apartment that Justin and I share: it's a bit bigger, a bit nicer, and more lived-

in, but still very Korean with its faux-wood flooring, wallpapered cement and LG air conditioner hanging like a barge over the living room. There is a venerable forest of potted plants on the marble ledge overlooking their balcony. Off to the side, in an alcove, I see the glowing green digits of the washing machine that Jin has spoken so derisively about. The beast is enormous, and far more elaborate than the oversized bread maker that Justin and I do *our* laundry in. Jin and I take our shoes off in the entry and she calls to her mother: "Oma! Oma! Come meet Michael."

Jin's mom comes out of the kitchen in a cloud of delicious smells. She wipes her hands on her apron and bows once to me.

"*An'yon hashimnigga*," I say carefully, addressing her in the more formal tongue, and hand her the gift. She barely looks at it before setting it down on a small table by the door. "Well come, well come," she says, measuring her own words.

Jin's mom Tae is 50 years old, her face lined with the signs of strictness, years of making nonnegotiable demands upon her children. She has the biscuit haircut, tight rolls forming a helmet over her skull, a proud artifact that would need weekly tending. Her eyes are set tightly inside their sockets, two ancient stones, and they flash up at me for a second before turning away.

Tae says something to Jin in Korean. Jin turns to me. "Dinner won't be ready for

nearly an hour. Father's running very behind. Come. Let me give you the full tour."

Jin shows me the bathroom (they have a *tub*, I notice jealously), the kitchen (countertops lined with an armada of expensive appliances), her brother's empty bedroom (he's off to chef school in L.A.), and finally her own bedroom. She pops on the light as we step inside. "We won't be able to stay in here long," she says. "Mother will get nervous."

"Of course."

This space is still very much a teenager's bedroom. The single bed against the wall has a bright purple duvet with a golden sun star embroidered on top. Her bureau and nightstand are littered with books and jewelry boxes. There is splay of girlish magazines on the floor – *Cindy the Perky* and *Korean Vogue*. On the walls, she's hung an assortment of paintings. I walk over and take a look at the garishly colourful pictures. There's one of the Eiffel Tower in Paris and another of a Korean rural scene – jagged mountains in fog, a Buddhist temple with its dragon-backed roof off in the distance. The compositions are a bit jumbled – the warped perspectives of Van Gough mixed with the vagueness of Impressionism. The colours are so bright they practically hurt my eyes.

"You did these?" I ask.

"Yes. I told you I like to paint."

Jin sits on the edge of the bed and I'm about to join her when I spot another picture. It's hanging in the corner over her nightstand and is smaller than the others – no bigger than the size of a magazine cover. Unlike the others, it's in black and white, a charcoal sketch. I walk over to it.

It's of an old Korean woman.

"Michael—"

Jin comes up behind me as I take the drawing in. The old woman is dressed in traditional *hanbok* and hunched a little at the waist, a Quasimodo stance. Her hands are collected on the butt of a cane and her eyes are downcast in an incomparable sadness. I take a closer look and sense an anger there too – a tightness to her shoulders and the stare in her eyes that hides something so deep it frightens me a little. Jin has caught that hybrid essence of sorrow and fury with just a few hand strokes.

There is also what looks to be a scar running under the old woman's nose.

"Your grandmother," I say.

"No. That's my *eemo halmoney*. My great aunt. It's my grandmother's sister."

I point at the line running above her lip. "How did she get that scar?"

"She got it in the war."

I turn to her. "What, she was a soldier?"

"No Michael, she wasn't a *soldier*." Jin's looking at the floor. Her hair is in her face. She turns back up at me. "She was a comfort woman. Michael, do you know what this means?"

I can do nothing but blink. It's like a flower has opened up inside my mind.

"It means she was a sex slave for the Japanese during the w—"

"I know exactly what it means," I say. I point at the sketch. "A member of your family?"

"Yes."

"You *wanted* me to see this. It's the real reason you brought me here, isn't it."

She hesitates, but then nods. "Yes."

And suddenly, I understand so many things that I didn't before – things that happened, or didn't, at the beginning of whatever it is that we have now, between us.

"What was her name?"

"*Is* her name – she's still alive. Her name is Eun-young. Though that's not what they called her during the war. She had a Japanese name back then: Meiko. Everybody had a Japanese name back then."

"Jin, why didn't you say something? Why didn't you tell me?"

"I don't know. It's hard, figuring out when to mention something like that. I mean, at what point in a relationship do you say 'I have this relative who was raped 35 times a day for two yea—'" She cups her mouth in surprise. "You're the first guy I've ever said that to. That was the first time I've ever expressed that in English."

Tae is suddenly yelling from the kitchen: "Jin-su! Jin-su!" She rhymes off a big, complicated sentence.

"I have to go help her," Jin sighs. "You should probably come and wait in the living room."

"Of course."

"And Michael, don't say anything to my parents about—" and she nods at the sketch on the wall. "My mother would be very angry if she knew I told you about Eun-young. We don't, we don't … talk about her in this family."

And the rose in my mind blooms even further. "I understand," I say.

We go back out and Jin flutters off to the kitchen to take orders from Tae. I sit on the couch alone, trying to relax, trying not to relax, trying not to touch anything, upset anything. And trying very hard not to think about what Jin has just shared with me. After a bit, the front door opens and her father, Minsu, comes in. He's wearing a full business suit, the tie not even loosened around his neck. He sees me on his couch

as he slips off his shoes and breaks into a smile. He comes over to pump my hand up and down and bow. "Hello, chief! Hello! Welcome to my home." He points at my face and motions to his own. "Oh, Jin *said* you has a handsome beard."

Minsu heads off to the master bedroom to change while the women set the table and begin adorning it with the savoury meal that Tae has prepared. I offer to help but Jin tells me to just sit. This table is in the traditional style – low to the floor and no chairs. Because I'm about as flexible as a two-by-four, I've never been able to sit on the floor comfortably at a table like this. Koreans, on the other hand, do it as naturally as breathing. We all settle in and our chopsticks begin making the rounds, dipping into dishes and pulling towards our mouths the flavourful food – marinated beef strips, fried dumplings, spicy leaves of kimchi, pickled zucchini. Tae pours me some ice water, but I seem to be handling the spices well.

Jin's parents begin asking me questions that reveal just how little they've been told about me, and Jin does the translating. Where are you from in Canada? The east coast - Halifax. What did you do there? I was a journalist. Why did you come to Korea? To pay off some loans and see a different part of the world. Do you *like* Korea? Yes, very much: I love the food, the language, and the people here are very nice. Will you go back to Canada? Yes, I think so – eventually. *When* will you back to

Canada? Jin hesitates before translating this one. After she does, we sort of look at each other. "Tell them I haven't decided yet." Her parents spot the awkward body language between us. Tae's face is inscrutable – a forbidding calm. Minsu gives her a stern look, then smiles at Jin and nods at me. "Hey chief, Jin's brother is went to America." He gives a jiggling thumbs-up. "Very good! We proud. If Jin go somewhere too, we … we …" He turns to Jin and finishes in a flurry of Korean. "What did he say?" I ask. "He says if I decide to move to Canada, they will support it." I flash my eyes up at Tae – I can't help it. Her face is bald of emotion. Her icy stillness speaks to her *real* position here, the true head of this household. I keep waiting for those words to appear in her eyes: I. Will. *Not*. Allow. This.

We eat and eat. I try to ask Tae thoughtful questions about the food with Jin as my proxy. Her answers come back polite but abbreviated: she clearly doesn't think I'd grasp the nuances of these culinary acts. I switch gears and ask Minsu about his job. He huffs and makes another earnest effort at English. "Oh, very hard. Every day long day. I will be old man soon." He winks at Jin. "But important!" When the meal is done, we stand and begin collecting bowls and plates from the table. I sort of limp around, my hips and thighs aching from sitting on the floor. Tae comes over and takes the dishes out of my hands, an insistence that I not help. She turns up to me and

speaks more English than I thought possible of her. "Michael – maybe you want go on balcony for cigarette with Jin."

"*Oma*!" Jin snaps at her, rattling the dishes in her own hands. "I told you: I don't smoke!"

"She *do* smoke," Tae says. Then she lobs a full Korean sentence at me as if I'd understand.

I turn to Jin. "What did she say?"

Jin sucks her teeth. "Ugh. She says I'm not very *Korean*."

Minsu and Tae are adamant that we don't help with the cleanup. So Jin and I do find ourselves out on the balcony. This high up, we have a fantastic view of the lolling Han river and the manic city lights that embrace it.

"Things seem to be going well," I say.

"You must forgive my mother," she replies. "She does like you. But she's uncomfortable. And she gets extra strict when she's uncomfortable."

"I'm sorry I make her that way."

"It's not you that makes her uncomfortable. It's, how you say, the *idea* of you. What you represent – to me."

"And what's that?"

She just shakes off my question. “Mother has very fixed ideas about what she wants for me. She tries to be open-minded, but deep down she just wishes I would marry a Korean and end up with the same life as her. Because it’s safe. Mother is all about what’s safe.” Jin leans over the rail, lets the summer wind blow back her hair. “But the *world* is not a safe place. And I don’t want to be *safe* in it. I want to be myself in it, and let – what’s the phrase in English? – let the chips fall where they may. That’s the only real way to be safe.” I notice only then how angry and hurt she is. “Who is she to say I’m not very Korean? Does it matter that I’m ‘Korean’ enough? What about that I’m *happy* enough? Isn’t that more important?”

I swallow. I feel awkward here. “You know, they love you very much. They’re only looking out for your future. But at some point, we’re going to have to talk to them about it. We owe them that.”

She comes over. Glances through the window to make sure that her parents are away in the kitchen, and then she kisses me, pressing her lithe body into my frumpy one. “You are a very decent man,” she says, but says it like she’s quoting somebody else. “You are more decent than even you realize. Come on, let’s go in.”

So we do, and soon the evening winds down. As I’m gearing up to go, Minsu addresses me with curiosity on his face. “So Michael, you come to birthday party next

month?"

The women freeze, stiffen.

"Birthday party?" I ask and look at Jin.

"Yes, it's for my grandmother."

"Your …?"

"Grandmother, Michael. Ji-young. We're having a birthday party for her next month." She looks at me quizzically. "Do you *want* to come?"

"Yes, please come," Minsu says.

I turn and look at Tae. Her expression is impenetrably neutral. Then back over at Jin. Arms folded. Head tilted. And all the mysteries she continues to keep from me. "Yeah," I say. "I want to come."

The Biographer as a Personality Theorist and Neuropsychologist

By Dr. Yvonne Trainer, University College of the North, The Pas, Manitoba

Typically, biographers research to uncover the external lives of their subjects, and then write about those experiences in chronological order from birth to death, or from birth to some particular point in those lives. In other instances, the biographer honours the tradition of the 18th century Boswell, who penned the famous *Life of Johnson*, and allows the subject to do the speaking by presenting anecdotes, quotations, and so on. By and large, though, biographies include background information concerning the subject, facts about his or her parents and siblings, where the person lived, where the person was educated, married or single life, parenting, social obligations, and the subject's publications, visual work, scientific contributions, or other performances. In general, these biographies focus on the formative years more

than the later ones.

Intermittently, biographers combine the chronological view of the subject's life with a more psychological approach (typical of psychologists such as Adler with some Freud "tossed in"), noting, for instance, the birth order of the child, the emotional relationship to each parent and towards siblings, instances of childhood abuse and the effect of such trauma on the subject's relationships and ability to survive and socialize later in life (Feist & Feist, 2006). In cases where there is mental illness (biographies of Ann Sexton and Sylvia Plath are two examples), biographers note accounts of hospital stays, medication, names of doctors, and visitors to the hospital and the dates of release from the hospital. Further, they give mention to the artistic or scientific accomplishment of their subject (or lack thereof), that occur while the subject is institutionalized. This type of biography generally contains some analysis and / or summary of the patient's artistic or scientific endeavors. In more recent instances of biographies, case studies prove to be valuable research material. Two examples are Oliver Sack's (1999) *Awakenings* (perhaps more a memoir than "true" biography) based on cases of patients with encephalitis lethargica, and Sylvia Nasar's (2001) *A Beautiful Mind*, borrowing to some extent from case studies of the mathematician and Nobel

Prize Laureate, John Nash, who was diagnosed as having schizophrenia[6].

Prerequisites for the biographer of the future, however, will likely include increased and varied psychological approaches to the writing of biographies. Biographers can anticipate searching medical records, x-rays, magnetic resonance imaging pictures (MRI's), electrocardiograms (EKG's), papers on genetic make-up, cognitive measurement tests, personality theories, and so forth, concerning the subject. In short, the biographer of the not-so-distant future will add to the role of writer and literary researcher that of at least partial personality theorist and/or neuropsychologist and/or scientist.

With this in mind, it is tempting to speculate that if future biographers choose not to pursue the direction of personality theorist and neuropsychologist, they will need to work extremely closely with experts in psychology and science or risk being considered antiquated and out-of-date. In such a situation, the biographer will learn the language of neuroscience and personality theory and new ways of reading, as graphs, medical acronyms, and statistical information become major sources of information about a subject. Considering the fact that creativity and the personality traits of creative

[6] The general information about biographies comes from my own extensive reading of books in this genre, while I was preparing for my Ph.D. comprehensive exams. My reading of medical memoirs and biographies comes from my year of reading, while I was at the University of Texas, Medical Branch, Institute for the Medical Humanities at Galveston, Texas.

individuals are to some degree measurable, the biographer will look to the internal functioning of the human mind and not merely external features that presently make up much of a life-work. Finally, the "new" biographer will meet the challenge of evolving and / or new ethical issues concerning the rights to privacy, patient autonomy, et cetera.

All these considerations come under a larger question: What do these challenges—new discoveries in the areas of creativity and personality, and creativity and neuroscience—mean for the biographer of the future?[7] This discussion focuses on the third concern—that of measuring creative personality—and attempts to demonstrate how Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) "ten complexities" of creative personality in *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*; questions posed by physician/psychiatrist Kay Jamison (1993) in *Touched with Fire: Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament;* and instances of scientific work in Nancy Andreasen's (2005) *The Creative Brain: The Science of Genius* may be useful to biographers. Further, this discussion employs examples from two biographies about Margaret Atwood—Natalie Cooke's (1998) *Margaret Atwood: A Biography* and Rosemary Sullivan's (1998) *The Red*

[7] Kay Redfield Jamison poses a similar question in *Touched with Fire*; however, she focuses exclusively on manic depressive illness in that particular text, p. 8.

Shoes—in order to demonstrate how the "new" biographer working with recent theories and notions of creativity and creative personality traits can re-shape and invigorate the structure and content of a biography.

Csikszentmihalyi's Theory about Creativity

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996) says most of what is "interesting, important, and human" (p.1) stems from creativity. It is doubtful that biographers would argue with this notion. Biographers seldom attempt to write about a biography unless there are some points of interest and uniqueness about the person's life. Even if the occasional biographer writes about everyday life, he or she most often does so to demonstrate the extraordinary in the ordinary. Csikszentmihalyi explains that without creativity "it would be difficult … to distinguish humans from apes" (p. 2-3). He also notes creativity is what makes us feel more "alive" than at any other time. In short, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) casts a favorable look at creative individuals. He states that "creative individuals are remarkable for their ability to adapt to almost any situation and to make do with whatever is at hand to reach their goals" (p. 51). He addresses several factors, among them, having luck, being in a particular location, and being able

to access a field useful to creativity. Interestingly, he views creative people as highly complex and discusses this "complexity" as the first main point in what he terms the "ten dimensions of complexity," by posing a question concerning complexity and then answering it: "Are there then no traits that distinguish creative people?" Csikszentmihalyi says, "If I had to express in one word what makes their personalities different from others, it would be complexity" (p. 57). He further states that a complex personality "does not imply neutrality…. Rather it involves the ability to move from one extreme to the other as the occasion requires" (p. 57). According to Csikszentimihalyi, the personality traits of a creative individual include the following: (1) energy and the fact that energy is under the control of the creative person; (2) intelligence and naivety: (Convergent and Divergent thinking is part of this intelligence.); (3) a playful attitude coupled with persistence; (4) imagination and fantasy but also "a rooted sense of reality"; (5) extroverted and introverted at the same time; (6) humble and proud; (7) disregards "rigid gender stereotyping"; (8) rebellious and traditional; (9) passionate and objective; (10) openness and sensitivity (p. 55-73).

Margaret Atwood is considered—not only in Canada, but also throughout the world—to be a highly creative person. Interestingly, Atwood's personality, to the extent it can be gleaned from some of her works, several biographies, and various

interviews, overlaps or is synchronous with Csikszentmihalyi's notions of creativity and particularly what he calls "the ten complexities of creativity." Indeed, it does not take long to discern that Atwood, as Rosemary Sullivan (1998) describes her in *The Red Shoes*, embodies the various personality traits Csikszentmihalyi describes. From the time she was young, Atwood was capable of integrating her life in the bush, where she, her parents and brother spent part of the year, with a return to the city for part of the year.[8] Further, Atwood, despite being a young woman, was lucky enough to be in a time and place that allowed her opportunities to write. In the 1970's, the Feminist Movement was in full-swing in Canada, especially in Toronto and Montreal, so Atwood was able to have the freedom to speak up. Furthermore, small publishing companies were emerging throughout the country, so she could connect with other well-known writers, such as Dennis Lee, Patrick Lane, and John Newlove. Atwood attended Victoria College at the University of Toronto and studied under some female professors. She met with poet /professor Jay McPherson and with the noted Canadian critic Northrop Frye. Frye, rather than suggesting she become a housewife, encouraged Atwood go to graduate school because a scholarship would give her time to write. She

[8] Atwood fictionalizes her experience of living in the bush in *Cat's Eye.* Elaine, the main character in the novel appears curious about both places, but demonstrates no sense of nostalgia for one or the other. This curiosity reflects Atwood's own curiosity—a curiosity I have noted upon my various meetings with Atwood over the years. (She and I are both members of the League of Canadian poets.)

applied and was accepted to Harvard on a scholarship, at a time when few women were allowed entrance to the Ivy League schools (Sullivan 320-330). In addition, Atwood's energy is intense and unrelenting. Concerning Margaret Atwood, writer Robert Fullford states: "'Certainly her intensity and brilliance have always frightened many of her contemporaries'" (as cited in Sullivan, 1998, p. 336). Phoebe Larmore notes: "'Representing Margaret Atwood is like representing a dynasty of writers. I am always racing to keep up with her. There are some important things that have to be said. This woman is larger than life'" (as cited in Sullivan, 1998, p. 337). The sheer amount of creative work Atwood has produced is also a convincing sign of her intense and focused energy (Sullivan, 1998, pp. 330-335).

Not only intense, Atwood is also intelligent, another aspect of "the ten complexities." Csikszentmihalyi couples intelligence with naivety (p. 59). Atwood skipped a grade in school, was accepted to university—again at a time when many women were relegated to the roles of housewives, waitresses, or secretaries. Perhaps, she was a bit naïve in terms of social graces. There are humorous stories about how Atwood ran the nature center at summer camp, playing roles that generally only boys would be considered capable of doing. She handled frogs and toads and gave talks about them. She later entered graduate school at Harvard. She also was either

extremely brave or naïve to think that Harvard would openly accept her without prejudice; certainly, Harvard was, for Atwood, a place of upper-class snobbery and male domination (p. 123). Also she was not allowed to use certain libraries, which were open only to men. She withdrew from Harvard, and it was many years later before she received an honorary doctorate from there. It is obvious from the stories about Atwood and from the books she has published that she is not only intelligent but also extremely imaginative. Most of her poems and stories, centered in reality, have a surreal-like atmosphere about them.[9]

Atwood is in many ways quite traditional as well. She chose to be a writer, but she also studied home economics. She has been married to Graham Gibson for over thirty years and has one daughter, so her life is grounded in real, everyday matters (p. 38). When one first meets Atwood, one senses she is quite shy and introverted. Not much gossip prevails about her private life, but Atwood, in front of an audience, appears to be very much her own person and quite open in her comments.

Paradoxically, Atwood is sensitive as well. For one thing, she is not keen to have people write about her and states she would prefer to have people do that when she is

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[9] Note for instance the image of the woman in black—a Virgin Mary image—appearing into Elaine in *Cat's Eye*, or the surreal-like atmosphere of the island in Atwood's *Bodily Harm*.

dead [Calgary, AB reading, 1988]. She is humble; yet, from early on, she made no secret about her desire to win the Nobel Prize, at a time when other poets were hoping for the Governor General's Award. Atwood is playful; that humour is apparent in her works, even on the book covers, which are quite often comical sketches she has drawn of herself.[10] Even the people who work for her say that she is "fun." The dualities found in the creative personality mentioned by Csikszentmihaly are present in Atwood's work—or at least Atwood as her biographers present her (Sullivan, 1998; Cooke, 1998).

Rosemary Sullivan and Natalie Cooke's biographies about Atwood are set primarily in chronological order, leaning, as is typically the case, towards Atwood's early years rather than her later ones. A re-making of Atwood's biography might pull it out of chronological order and show how her creative traits are present both in the early and more recent decades of her writing life. These traits appeared in childhood, but were both continued and sometimes renewed in adulthood. For instance, Atwood has allowed her creativity to go on screen with the production of the *Handmaid's Tale* (1985), as well as in written operas that were performed. Life is simply not orderly, and when biographers attempt to make it so, they leave out many of the complexities of

[10] See the covers of Atwood's first edition of Atwood's *Journals of Susanna Moodie* and *a* more recent work *Good Bones.*

the creative artist. The tensions set up between the dualities within Atwood's creative mind, for example, would make an interesting biography in itself. When one examines *The Red Shoes* (1998) as biography—although Sullivan calls it a non-biography[11] —it becomes evident that Sullivan provides external details, dates, and events, with humorous anecdotes thrown in to keep the reader interested but does not deal with the complex, inner workings of Atwood's creative mind.

To provide a different slant and more depth to biography, it is also interesting to explore, briefly, Kay Jamison's observations about creative artists and writers. A glimpse at some possibilities can also suggest a further direction that future biographers might consider.

Jamison's Observations concerning Creative Personalities

In *Touched with Fire* (1993) (a title from the fifth line of a Stephen Spender poem), Jamison establishes the purpose of her book: "It is about manic depressive illness—a disease of perturbed gaieties, melancholy and tumultuous temperaments—and its

[11] This insistence by Sullivan that *The Red Shoes* is a non-biography lends itself to my argument that biographers need to find new ways of constructing biographies and researching information based on new scientific experiments and findings concerning creativity and artistic personality. Sullivan is obviously searching for a new way to present the biography.

relationship to the artistic temperament and the imagination…[and adds that]…It is also a book about artists and their voyages, moods as their ships of passage, and the ancient persistent belief that there exists such a thing as a 'fine madness'" (p. 2). Considering the personality traits that can occur in the person who is manic depressive and in the artist or writer who may or may not be manic depressive, she lists the following as positive traits: (1) "fierce energy" (2) "high mood" (3) "quick intelligence" (4) "a sense of the visionary" (5) "a restless and feverish temperament" (p. 2). On the flip-side, she includes these: (1) "capacity for vastly darker moods" (2) "grimmer energies" (3) "volatile brooding" (4) seeing "world as mercurial" (p. 2). Quick to qualify, she also notes: "Labeling as manic-depressive anyone who is unusually creative, accomplished, energetic, intense, moody, or eccentric both diminishes the notion of individuality within the arts and trivializes a very serious, often deadly illness" (p. 3).

Jamison also reminds the reader of the notion of the "mad genius" in the Romantic period, and quotes from Robert Burton from the 17th century: "'All poets are mad.'"(p. 4). Among numerous other examples, she notes the 20th century American poet Robert Lowell, whose family saw him as mentally ill, while his professional colleagues made every attempt to protect him.

At first, it seems that Kay Jamison's observations cannot be applied to Margaret

Atwood's creative personality. Atwood clearly falls into the category of someone who is unusually creative, accomplished, energetic, intense, and so forth; moreover, there is no mention of mental illness in Atwood's family except for a brief image of a distant relative who was considered a witch. Her parents appear to have been hardworking, practical, and well-educated, with no indication of mental illness. Atwood's sister and brother are never mentioned as having a mental illness. Atwood's daughter, Jessie, attended Cambridge and there is no indication that she or her father, Graham Gibson, are ill (Sullivan, 1998). Surely, with all the hype about Atwood over the years, something about mental illness would have emerged if such were the case. However, Jamison's discussion of the association that exists between the artistic temperaments of the artist and the manic depressive may explain in part how a writer such as Atwood has been perceived by her biographers: Sullivan, in particular, views Atwood's eccentricities as those of a writer only and not someone who is mentally ill. As Jamison states: The idea of using formal psychiatric diagnosis criteria in the arts has been anathema, and in any event, biological psychologists have displaye relatively little interest in studying mood disorders in artists, writers, or musicians" (p. 3).

Nonetheless, Kay Jamison's *Touched with Fire* introduces opportunities for "new" biographers. As she states: "The main purpose of this book [*Touched with Fire]* is to

make a literary, biographical, and scientific argument for a compelling association, not to say actual overlap, between two temperaments—the artistic and the manic-depressive and their relationship to the rhythms and cycles, or temperament of the natural world" (p. 3). Jamison notes the following similarities between the "artistic and the manic-depressive": 1) "the relationship between moods and imagination (2) the nature of moods (3) their variety (4) their contrary and oppositional qualities (5) their flux (6) their extremes of mood" (pp. 2-4). Currently, biographers tend to allow the anecdotes about a celebrity to stand on their own rather than delve into their feelings and psychological background, unless they draw on the medium of gossip. Biographers of the future, who have access to medical tests, may be better able to speak to the moods of their subjects via the emergence of these new tests and studies of creativity. Towards the end of *Touched with Fire*, Jamison asks the following questions: "What are the implications for society of future gene therapies—and early prevention of manic-depressive illness? Does psychiatric treatment have to result in happier but blander less imaginative artists"? Then she comes to a similar question—a question that she does not attempt to answer—posed in this paper. "What does all of this mean for biographies of writers and artists?"(p. 8).

Like Jamison, Nancy Andreasen (2005) does not refer specifically to Margaret

Atwood's creative personality, but her text, *The Creative Brain: The Science of Genius*, and the experiments discussed in it, also provide fodder for the future biographer seeking new ways to explore the life of literary artists.

Andreasen's Explorations concerning Creative Personality

Investigating the "neuroscience of creativity," Nancy Andreasen studies how the "brain produces…the capacity to be creative" (p. 6). In *The Creative Brain: The Science of Genius,* Andreasen reveals "common themes" in the works of highly creative people. She notes that "one essential component of creativity is originality" (p. 16). She defines "originality" by saying that "creativity involves perceiving new relationships, ways of observing, ways of perceiving" (p. 17). She describes the "second component of creativity" as being that of utility. Because utility in the arts may be "novel," she notes: "It [creativity in the arts] resides primarily in its ability to evoke resonant emotions in others, to inspire, or to create a sense of awe at what the human mind/brain can achieve" (p. 17).

Andreasen further acknowledges a third "component of creativity: It must lead to a *product* of some kind. That is, creativity requires the *creation* of something" (p. 17).

Andreasen also discusses how creative people like adventure, and how they "dislike externally imposed rules, seemingly driven by their own set of rules, derived from within" (p. 31). She also notes how the lack of commonality with the rest of the world may produce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Like Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996), she notes how the creative person's indifference to convention is combined with sensitivity. She goes on to discuss playfulness, persistence, and curiosity as other traits common to creative people. According to Andreasen, "creative people are more prone to be flooded with ideas and thoughts, and also less like to censor them, because they are the stuff of which their art or science is made" (p. 38). Andreasen notes a further characteristic of creative people: "The capacity to focus intensely, to dissociate, and to realize an apparently remote and 'transcendent' place is one of the hallmarks of the creative process" (p. 37).

Interestingly, Andreasen explains how experience can change the brain by using the example of taxi drivers (in London, England) who memorize thousands of street numbers and how, as a result, the hippocampus, the "place where memories are consolidated" (p. 154) is enlarged, as is shown via MR imaging. The implications from this for writers is that "when we store memories we increase the number of synapses in the normal healthy brain. That might actually translate into an increase in the

volume of gray matter in the specific regions where the synapses increase" (p. 154). Do writers like Margaret Atwood have increased synapses? Of course, one will never know, unless they allow their hippocampi to be imaged in a way that would permit one to see if these areas are increased, but it is easy to speculate as to what the implications of the possibility are for biographers—MR photos instead of the usual black and white photos of artists as children with their mothers and fathers, grafts and scans drawn out among the pages of text and measurements of parts of their brains listed and compared with those of other creative artists. There is some evidence that active brains are less susceptible to gray matter loss due to aging than less active brains (Andreasen, 161). Therefore, one can speculate that future biographies about artists will not be littered with symptoms such as Alzheimer's. Now, studies of creativity and the brain in biographies are minimal, but there could be hints of what is to come in the works of neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, and neuroscientists, such as Csikszentmihalyi, Jamison, and Andreasen.

Conclusion

The question posed throughout this discussion is as follows: What do these challenges—new discoveries in the area of creativity and personality, and creativity and

neuroscience—mean for the biographer of the future? If "new" biographers work with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's "the ten complexities" of creative personality in *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*; Kay Jamison's questions concerning the similarities of the artistic and manic depressive personalities in *Touched with Fire: Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*; and Nancy Andreasen's ideas in *The Creative Brain: The Science of Genius,* it seems that we can look forward to a re-shaping and invigorating of the structure and content of biography itself. As a genre, biography will come to represent both the internal and the external aspects of the creative personality, and in doing so will present a scientific view of creativity, that will challenge academics and readers to extend their intellectual, imaginative, and research abilities to incorporate these emergent and burgeoning areas of study into their thinking.

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The Underbelly of the Wind: Living with Flashbacks

by Sharron Proulx-Turner

The deliberate (attempt at) creation of multiple personality in children is an explicitly stated plan in the Mkultra subproject proposal submitted for finding on May 30, 1961. Top secret clearance status for the principal investigator on subproject 136 had been initiated by the technical services division of the C.I.A.
Colin A. Ross

Ritual abuse is a brutal form of abuse in which the victim is assaulted at every conceivable level, usually by multiple perpetrators of both sexes, over an extended period of time. The physical abuse is so severe that it often involves torture and killing. The sexual abuse is typically sadistic, painful and humiliating. The psychological abuse relies on terrorization of the victim, mind-altering drugs and mind control techniques. The spiritual abuse causes victims to feel that they are worthless.
Catherine Gould

forty thousand feet

when I was an undergrad, I learned
there are certain things you don't talk about
in a poem, like things indian, child sexual abuse
womanly things, like childbirth or menopause
depression or rape, dismal things that alienate
your audience

tonight, westjest flight 655
montréal to calgary, couldn't have known
this unbearable delight

flying from darkness into the light
an orange horizon, bending
beneath a crescent so blue, so bright
mother earth's belly, full and black
the simple joy of nighttime
kept at bay, that opening there
a northern star suspended

well, time, it changed inside that star
from the window seat of the westjet plane
I saw things for my eyes to see
and I was frightened by my fear
things from my own past, my ancestors'
my infancy, my younger years of terror inside rain

i'm five. when i'm thinking i'm someone special they put me in the chicken coop. i make up that name myself: chicken coop. i think it's funny. i like chickens. i try to stay happy in the chicken coop. can't stand up. can't lie down. i squat. I'm a chicken. i feel funny too. i laugh too and my arms love to flap around. i'm a chicken in the chicken coop. when i come out from the foggy in my head i see the other kid. big big hurting. the kid is above me. i see my own face above the barbed wire. can't touch the other kid. can't reach her. can't help her. it's my fault. i won't do what i'm told. it's my fault that kid is there. my beating heart breathe small my beating heart breathe small hate hate i hate me i hate me. kill it.

a walking path, between awake and asleep
I slipped into that star, with ease
for real, three, four hours
there were priests in there
from another time
priests there of all kinds
corralling the one-and-a-half men
the one-and-half women, children, the babes

they'd say, here we are, us, straining our star-voices
to be heard, us otepayemsuak, us métis
those are half-indian, half-white, half-devil
those priests would say, pray
because them, they couldn't do
a darn thing with us otepayemsuak, us métis
except beat us, rape us, make us pay for their sins

hard to believe, but easier to swallow
with bottled water, pretzels, cookies
at forty thousand feet
then publishers get wind
hard liquor, six bucks a shot
voyeurs, explorers of forget-me-nots
want details, but not too much
can this really be true
want the sensation of it all, but
not too much, have to tone the story down

publisher: your sample -- I'm going by memory at the moment as I don't have your piece before me -- you talk about ritual abuse and abuse at the hands of the canadian military. now a piece that discusses abuse by the military (mental, physical, forced drug experimentation and the like), we could accept as these are issues with a lot broader evidence to support the claims.

inside that star, there were judges, too
the ones from ontario criminal injuries
compensation board, back in '98, nice people
came, talked to me of crime and torture and flashback
ritual abuse and the military's "project bluebird"
tweet-tweet, terror, torture, in front of so many
there isn't a day goes by their meagre monetary
award covers two sweet mornings
gives me back my life

us, we're over saskatchewan now
forty thousand feet
that star still inside my pain
medical records peeking out from
years inside a file, forget-them-not
says the buffalo, the old priests
praying for the glory of god

editorial team for side effects*: we read your draft. what we felt was missing was an example or two of the ritual abuse you suffered, some content of your flashbacks. you need not be overly graphic, but this would give some grounding to your discussion of flashbacks.*

another paper turned down, too lifelike, too
too true, keep trying, the grandmothers tell me
put it all down in a poem
us otepayemsuak, us métis, we do
what's right us, despite the fight
me, I write, that's what I do, a nokomis too
there in photos and right up close, I look pretty
ordinary, fearless, see, I like the colour red
piano solo playing in my ear
me, my sense of humour, my rich spiritual ties
that star is reaching, teaching of brighter days

i'm seven. i hate me. how long did it take? seven years. seven years of bad luck. i stare at myself in that mirror. smash that mirror with my fists. hate i hate me. hate. hate. hate. i hate you i hate you i hate you. kill it. cut cut cut it up. i want to die. i want to die.
kill it.

travels skyward, that first northern star

same one out there from this westjet plane
mirror mirror on the wall
torture through my early years
army shrinks pushing babies' pain
beyond the rain, didn't know, hey, you
don't want to believe, tough guys, them
inside their doctor's garb, barbed wire
there's lots of them for hire

am I a poet, then, am I working
to set us free, to speak out our spirits
help us know what we must do
is this poetry, my lifestory, my medical file
I ask, how to make something beautiful
from something like
I am a poet, my childhood life, is
in me

from medical file: this patient suffers from post traumatic stress disorder. she is a survivor of severe childhood abuse, which includes:

1. sophisticated torture over a period of nine years, including having her hands and/or feet squeezed in a vice-like device causing unbearable pain.

2. put in a cage where she was unable to sit or lie (only squat) for up to two days.

3. hung by her wrists for up to three days.

4. confined in a small, cold space and left without food or water for up to three days.

5. placed in a large room with high ceilings and narrow horizontal windows at the top of the walls for days at a time, woken at all hours of the day and night, fed at all hours of the day and night and exposed to loud noises and music at irregular intervals.

6. received severe, repeated beatings.

7. sexually assaulted by multiple adult perpetrators from infancy until the age of eleven.

8. exposed to long-term isolation.

9. lowered into coffins with decomposing bodies.

10. lowered into outhouses, where she was left for long periods of time.

I am a writer. I'm a nokomis (grandmother), a Métis, a two-spirit. My favorite colour is red and I like to listen to women's piano and cello solos. I exercise regularly and I eat reasonably well. I have a great sense of humour and a rich spiritual life. In photographs and in person, I look very ordinary. Yet I am a survivor of childhood ritual abuse as well as torture throughout my early childhood at the hands of the Canadian armed forces. In 1998, I was heard by the Ontario Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and granted a monetary award for criminal abuse for the atrocities committed against me during childhood. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't see the faces of my perpetrators and there isn't a day that goes by that I don't recognize the importance of living moment to moment, the inexpressible value of small acts of kindness.

And speaking of moment to moment, a while back I had my little grandbaby overnight and before I dropped her off the next morning, I took her to swing on baby swings, something she loves to do. The weather was mild and it was the first time since the autumn that I had her out in a playground. On the swings, I'd push her back and forth, back and forth, and she'd just smile, open-mouthed, and occasionally say, fun, nokomis, fun, in her monotone, excited baby-voice way. When I'm writing, that's how

I feel: fun, nokomis, fun, only for me, nokomis is both the great mysteries and language itself. Language is what's kept me alive and keeps me alive to this day. There are times when my passion for language outweighs all other passions, and I'll come up from the depths of the despair of post traumatic flashback through language, through diary and creative writing. When I write, I know I'm part-way into my spirit-self and I'm able to hold onto the english language like it's a gift held out of itself, unrestrained by prejudice or fear -- forming pictures in the air.

I'm reminded of a couple who lived next door during my late teens. Their daughter passed away from cancer when she was sixteen, after years of holding on. She died at home and spent almost all of her time at home during her illness. Her sisters and brothers grew up for five of their childhood years with photos of their dying sister all over the house, and then pictures of her emaciated body in her coffin all about the house for years after her death. It's been nearly forty years since I saw these photographs, yet I can look inward and see them with exact clarity even now.

Or the woman I met in the book store at the children's hospital after my son fractured his skull in his early teens. The woman just walked up to me and started talking, a ten- or so year old daughter standing next to her the whole time. I noticed the girl seemed uncommonly quiet, reserved, like vapor or liquid, while her mother

spoke to me. The girl's face remains in my mind's eye, forever there, like a pencil drawing whose lines find their way into the distance around her. The girl's sister had just died of cancer and she was the last of four children, all of whom had died of the same cancer. She was the only one to live past ten. The mother didn't introduce herself or her girl. Instead she asked me to go with her to sit and listen and she talked until she was talked out. Then she got up and walked away, holding her daughter's hand.

Or the time in my mid-twenties when I worked in this old building in Calgary. From the open door of my office I could hear machines and hammering and the smell of smoked hide, and I'd always been drawn to the smell of smoked hide. One morning I noticed the door down the hall was open, so before going to my office, I stood in that open doorway, the intimate smell of the smoke entering my own soft pores. Behind the open door, half-hidden among gloves and boots and coats, there were two elderly people, a woman and a man. They invited me in and motioned for me to sit on the only other chair, a stool a little higher than the ones they sat on. Before I'd spoken a word, they said I looked like a very beautiful woman who'd been through a lot of suffering and sacrifice in my life, that I was a survivor of torture, like they were. They both took off the aprons they were wearing and lifted up the sleeves of their shirts,

touching the scars on their arms, a long list of block numbers in blue-black ink. They told me they were survivors of Auschwitz and they found settling into the everyday world difficult, as I must, that they had two very happy adult children and they considered them to be their most successful accomplishment after what they'd been through, that they were happy to have each other. To this day, I remember their bodies, small and close, and their thin faces looking slightly upward to see me. They seemed surreal and unreal and I felt like vapor, like the smell left behind inside smoked hide. Their portraits have always stayed with me, and their warmth and kindness is something I can still feel when I pull up their image.

As the couple sensed intuitively, I am a survivor of an extreme form of childhood violence known as ritual abuse, as well as torture perpetrated during the "cold war" by psychiatrists working for the Canadian armed forces. Ritual abuse is widely practiced today and from time to time floats in and out of public awareness. Denial protects ritual abuse perpetrators. Such heinous crimes against children fractures ordinary peoples' sensibilities and hurls them into disbelief. A similar kind of denial protects the Canadian armed forces from their role in less widely known sophisticated experimentations on children during the 1950s and early 60s, known by those of us who are survivors, as "Operation Bluebird" and "Operation Yellowbird,"

where children were systematically tortured and deprived of water, food and sleep for extended periods of time. For most ordinary people, it's more comforting to believe that only monsters like Hitler and his regime were capable of such crimes.

Not long after meeting the couple, I was diagnosed with depression and I spent years in and out of survival mode until I ended up in an outpatient program. The program didn't help. At the time I didn't realize I suffered from severe flashbacks and night terrors and it wasn't until many years into this or that treatment that a psychiatrist said to me, there is no medication for flashbacks, and gave me a crumpled pamphlet leading me to a survivor of torture at the hands of the Guatemalan government, a woman who was considered a Canadian expert on government-sanctioned torture and ritual abuse. Though this survivor wasn't a counsellor (I'd completed three and a half years of individual counselling by then) -- more important to my own recovery process -- she was a survivor of torture. From her I learned how trauma finds its way into the muscles of the body, including and especially the heart, and only then did I begin to understand my childhood experiences; only then did I begin to understand the way images and their concomitant, deep and raw emotions rest inside me with such detail and clarity, pushing their way into consciousness like precious photographs in the round.

Initially, I remembered nothing about my childhood between the age of two and eleven, and I didn't think to think this was unusual. But the moment my mother passed in 1986, I had my first memory from those in between years, from around age four. My mother, a Métis, was fostered out as a child into my father's family in an Irish farming community. That family had major problems with violence and torture. Like many other Native children, my mother's life was horrific. This was passed on to my generation.

After my mother's passing, my childhood memories flooded back from there and I was fortunate to see a psychologist at the University of Calgary for three and a half years, from approximately 1988 to 1991, once a week. University was difficult, but I was very successful and received a masters degree in english literature in 1994. I published a book in 1995 called, *Where the Rivers Join*, under the pseudonym Beckylane, that discusses some of my childhood abuse with organized ritual abuse. This was made very difficult in that the publisher (Vancouver: Press Gang, 1995) wouldn't allow me to use my own name. What is more, this was a version of my masters thesis, which the University of Calgary sealed after a year's scrutiny by the university lawyers, meaning my thesis does not appear in the university library, in my supervisors' offices, at the national archives. All of this had a major, negative impact on my life. It was difficult to

feel valued when time and time again I was required to "deny" my own existence. After I finished university, I really believed when I went back out into the working world things would be better, but I was very wrong. I went through years of flashbacks and severe trauma, depression, irritable bowel syndrome, suicidal thoughts.

At age seven I attempted suicide the first time. I had been abused so badly that I couldn't talk. I'd lost my voice for several weeks and one afternoon found my way into the porch of our house, where I stood on a stool and stared at myself in a mirror. I hated myself. I wanted to die. I smashed the mirror with my fists and started slicing myself with the glass. That was the moment my voice returned, and I put the memories from that earlier part of my childhood "into" the mirror, only to resurface after my mom passed away in 1986.

By now I was in my mid-thirties. After twenty years of feeling insane, of having others around me treat me like I was insane, I began to attend Indigenous ceremony. I began to help with the sacred fire at ceremony and I began to understand flashbacks. I developed a very personal relationship with fire: fire, a breath-eater and a great creator, transformer. I began to see Elders, whose teachings, though complex and intense, involved drawing on common sense. The answers are all inside, I kept hearing. The answers are all inside. I realized, too, that what was also inside involved programmed

answers that were no longer applicable. These "answers" were raw and cruel and they were imprinted onto my psyche like rare, beautiful flute music.

Years of torture can do that, and I was reminded that back in my late teens I attended the concerts of a band called *Jethro Tull*. The lead fellow played a beautiful flute, backed by hard rock music. I found the combination strangely familiar, and I enjoyed seeing the band live. There was always a smoke screen throughout the stadium, weaving its way around, caressing each person there, charging the unlikelihood of sweet, powerful, deep, joyful, earth music, played next to virtual noise loud enough to hum ear drums for days afterward. That flute saved me from my own doom during my teen years, kept me alive inside the tangible, real world, like a room inside a loon call, ancient and inviting anyone awake and fortunate enough to take the chance. Flute music is something that grounds me to this day.

But it wasn't only flute music that kept me grounded; there were many things, but two events during my late thirties and early forties stand out as life-altering for me. Both revolve around ceremony. I will not give detail of the ceremonies themselves, but what I will do is describe the involvement of two Elders in my healing process. I had a feeling the flashbacks could be prevented, which is why I went to see the first Elder. I truly believed the flashbacks had had their day. They'd terrorized me for years, albeit

not intentionally. The Elder and I discussed what I would do, what I believed would work for me, and guided me as I gathered all my flashbacks I may have in the future and took them down into a fresh water lake to help them find homes there. That way they would be with water, Mother Earth's cleansing power, her sea of tears, her healing. Those flashbacks who wanted to go there, could go, transform, heal, become one with the water spirit. I had tried this earlier in counselling, but without success.

As the psychiatrist so clearly said years earlier, there are no medications to prevent flashbacks. I got that. My sense of self was at the mercy of the monsters who did their best – my parents, ritual abuse perpetrators, the military physicians involved in "Project Yellowbird" and/or "Project Bluebird" – who did their best to reshape my identity, my sense of myself, for their twisted self-gratification and perceived "science." Now my "control" was limited to my ability to manage myself while in flashback. I didn't need flashbacks for my survival and I would have a much better opportunity to become the woman I was meant to be, to achieve my potential, if I were flashback free. It stood to reason that my improved sense of myself would continue to develop and I would be free to grow uninterrupted if I was free of flashbacks. By this, I'm not suggesting that I was looking to forget about my past. That wouldn't happen. What I am suggesting is that the idea of taking all my future flashbacks down into a fresh

water lake and helping them find homes there – permanent homes – was sounding like a darn good idea.

I had come to the understanding that they're like children, flashbacks are, and each has her own simple needs. They don't ask to be here any more than I ask them to be, but there they suddenly are. Their needs are simple and require simple acts of kindness, taking them through steps they (and I) don't understand, yet I knew what I must do. A flashback is like a movie set that you wake up in, or drive into or walk right into. I needed to work together with the flashbacks, in harmony and patience. I needed to concretize them. It was going to take a while, but at least I could imagine an end in sight, a giving back of my own life, the life given to me by the ancestors, free to live that life without flashbacks. I knew it could be done. I saw it in my prayer and in my dreams.

Nine years of my life, from age two to eleven (and then on into my late teens at home), had dictated my sense of self for almost forty years and I wanted better for myself. I wanted to be free to express myself without the fear of flashback looming, preventing my own growth as a human being. I'd had lots of practice in race sensitivity and anti-oppression workshop facilitation, having people attack me, yet still able to listen to and absorb their every word, feel their fear through their anger, not take any

of it personally, even when the attack appeared personal enough to convince every person around me except me. This prepared me for the onslaught of my own living past. But I wanted better.

Ceremony was successful to a large extent, though I then had an new obstacle to overcome. What I didn't realize was that flashbacks are alive. They have a "mind" of their own. They are vicious, merciless, *real* experiences, just as real as any table top. As real as any workshop. In flashback, though, I was not an adult. I was a very endangered child who was experiencing unspeakable tortures. True, that careful, wise adult was present, but I was also reliving -- for real -- my own past. I knew I was in the present. I knew I was safe. I was sure this knowing helped; I knew this knowing helped. Still and all, although I no longer became completely incapacitated, flashbacks are like being tortured all over again, and having the opportunity to self-debrief between bouts was invaluable. Ceremony taught me all of this.

That was 2001. I was plagued with flashbacks until then. When in flashback, I was in the past, emotionally confused. Words were far, far away. After working with the first Elder, I could finally bring words to my experiences, and another Elder, recommended by the first, was able to help me even further. The work we did together would take years off whatever future mainstream individual counselling I might have

had to do. To this day, almost ten years later, I have not had a full-blown flashback episode. Back then, that Elder asked me to give back by writing about flashbacks for the benefit of others who experience them. I was frightened. I thought writing about flashbacks would trigger an episode. And I honestly believed I had nothing of value to offer.

Then recently, a friend of mine who works with survivors of residential schools asked about my flashbacks. I was fearful, but I felt this was an important opportunity for me to give back. What my friend asked was, what is it like to have a flashback? That she had clients who have flashbacks and she was at a loss as to what they mean. How would I describe them, she asked? I asked her, being she was a social worker, had she ever learned self-hypnosis, and she said, yes. I told her, it's kind of like that or kind of like a lucid dream or if you've ever had a vision in ceremony, but different from all of those too. Being in flashback is like being in more than one place at one time. I'm here and I'm there, *in* the past, at the same time, I told her, and I also know I'm not in the past. For years I didn't know, though. I was just in the past, for real. Once I learned to be an agent in my own flashbacks, I had to put out tremendous effort and energy because I would feel the feelings I felt back then and I would feel the pain. I would feel/become my past self, I told her.

When I have flashbacks, they don't go away the way they come. They come hard and immediate and they go slowly over a period of weeks or months or years, like an injury. I once had a knee injury, a torn ligament. (I was in physio for months and I was still recovering from the same flashback run I was in when I got that injury two and a half years earlier.) I was convinced after several months that the physio wasn't going to work. The physiotherapist kept telling me, keep coming, it'll work, it's scar tissue, it needs time to heal. Don't give up or the injury may bother you for the rest of your life. I kept reinjuring my knee, just by stubbing my big toe or moving something out of the way with my foot, my big toe leading, and the pain would be back again. Then my knee would feel the same again, and I'd be back where I started.

Flashbacks are like that, I told her, back again in a flash, after weeks or months or years at bay. I went more than five years without flashbacks, and after the flashbacks returned, they were relentless. They'd go away for a while – days, weeks, and even months – and then, flash, they'd be back. I told my friend, yesterday I looked closely at a simple stone on my path to see what I could see there. One of the images was a catfish, and what I was taught about the catfish is that her confidence comes from the family, from persistent, hard work and clever disappearing acts when in danger. This may indeed describe the catfish, but it also described me while growing

up. My (lack of) confidence came from my family of origin and my lack of confidence was/is learned. I worked hard to stay safe. Didn't always work out, though, and, like the catfish, I became an excellent hider when in danger. Folks will say to me now that I'm no longer in danger, and on the surface, this is true.

My friend told me she'd learned more about flashbacks in the past few hours than she had in her years of reading about them in texts. She said she felt helpless to help her clients who were in flashback but now she felt she'd be in a better position to help. My friend and I were sitting at my kitchen table at the time, surrounded by the safety of my own home. Yet in this very room where we were sitting -- at this very table -- I began a series of flashbacks that lasted for years. Generally, the idea is to tell myself I'm safe now and no one can hurt me. This is quite true and a common sense practice. The initial flashback is just the beginning, though, and there's my own calm voice, coupled with my own triggered fear response. I withdraw. I withdraw and I continue to live my ordinary life, talking to myself (out loud worked best for me -- to hear my own calm voice) all the while. The part that gets left out of most scholarly discussion and social science information is the part about the realness of a flashback. True, there is no apparent danger in my kitchen. It's a warm and welcoming room. I know that, even when I'm in flashback. But that knowing doesn't prevent the self-

loathing, the relentless, programmed knowing, from taking over during the actual flashbacks and invading my everyday life.

Right now I'm flashback free. That's not to say I will not experience flashbacks again in my life and that's not to say I'm free of the aftereffects and symptoms of post traumatic stress. No such luck. I've received Canada Pension Disability for about ten years now. Next to ceremony, that's the best thing that's ever happened to me. As it was, I wasn't able to work full time, not even when I was. At that, I am considered a "high functioning" survivor of torture and ritual abuse. Most of us have either died from suicide, are institutionalized, are addicts, or live secluded, sheltered lives. I was very fortunate the survivor of torture I connected with told me about a physician who was one of two general practitioners considered an expert on survivors of torture where I live. Wow. What a difference that made to my overall survival.

My social work friend asked me, what would you recommend for my clients who experience flashbacks? I wasn't sure what she meant by that question, but I did suggest to her that she recommend they talk to trusted Elders in their communities, attend ceremony if they are able and interested. The Elders tell us, ceremony is where we receive our healing. Ceremony is where we encounter our psychologists and psychiatrists, our spiritual advisors. And ceremony has brought lasting, day-to-day

peace and calm into my world.

In fact, it is for the Elder who helped and guided me to lasting peace in my life that I finally write this paper. Chi-miigwech, Aunty. Even still, my life is often exhausting, just trying to find the creative tools to survive mentally and physically, never mind to survive financially. I receive CPP Disability for post traumatic stress and my level of poverty is nothing short of shocking. That said, it is very important to me to remain a positive person, and I help people who have been through difficult times. I feel it is my responsibility to help others when I can -- to give back that way -- because of what I've survived. I am what is called a "high functioning survivor." I don't feel very high functioning, but when I meet many others, I understand what that means. I consider myself fortunate to have been given the skills and learned the skills I have, and that includes personal work.

Me, I've done so much personal work since my early twenties, I feel like a personal workaholic (and even at that, this is my first time writing publicly about the torture at the hands of the Canadian military.) I'm approaching sixty. I want a break, not from personal work -- I'm sure I'll continue to do personal work until I'm no longer able -- but I want a break from the future of my own past. I want to leave those horrors behind me where they truly belong. I want to be eighty and say, oh, yes, flashbacks, I remember those. They used to plague me. Haven't had one since I'm fifty, though, and don't plan to have another.

three poems by Gail Whitter

AND THE BIRDS SANG

A fool sees not the same
Tree that a wise man sees …

- William Blake

i'm here
when you split the matrix
of earth
remember how at each
repeat, repetitiously
the garden spade shrieked
shaking my frame
back & forth

lunch never came that day
helping you plant
those douglas-fir seedlings
symbols of immortality you said

how did you know?

chosen for their straight spine
to replace the red rowan
many summers dead
- it had been a lonely tree
more silent than any
i'd ever known

remembering …

season after season
sun   moon   sidebyside
the three seedlings
made an enormous effort
to grow long length
strong strength
over you & me
& the green grass

now in this twilight
see how their mighty mass
pacifies the rage
of the howling wind

music that might belong
to somebody …

IN MATRIMONY'S GOLDEN CAGE

Married to Christ
they kiss the cross
that keeps the hurt
self-sacrificing
desires
appetites
their religious silence
stuffed into a neat
little package of black

they speak
Mary-words
crucifix
catechism
communion
confessional
telling beads

they never preach
the duties of daughter
or poet

they never teach the
abuse of forgiveness

i learned that on my own
when the blood in my mouth
kept me from eating …

AT THE RIVER

the water prickles
across her dark hair
her face saying: *i have tried*
staring into the river
water moving her hair darker

huddled we are rooted
to the stone wall
no escape – only the awareness
of infinite distance
between the hand
& the mad self
between the river
& the blurred eye
as vision clouds over
reminds us …

i, a stranger, however close
to the woman next to me
chattering about currents
undertows, deep dark coldness –
little things

the river knows
i don't like it here

my unease interfering
with death as i watch
the silence begin
& pray for her soul
her family
her family
my family, two sons

one next to me

& another woman weeps
closed up

there is no comfort
as we stiffen in
the metal envelope of air.

more words: *her body will wash up*
on rock island or dead man's alley…

my son believes
she will be saved
she will be found -
he is young yet
& youth has hope
like the ducks
cut out on the black-blue
water
hands away
in the gap between
what separates us

hanging on to every detail
i feel the river
audible & odorous
looking at me
as it twirls & dazzles along

like a sense of dynamite
it shakes the mind
& i tell myself:
mortality is all there is.
perhaps there was relief
in her casual jump
falling through
empty space into
the dizzying cold comfort
of the river deep
under the greening leaves
& sun-filled sky
that now illuminates her
cold head of blackened hair
& all the yesterdays
& the present that goes on
until my eyes start again
exploring up & down
the river, carefully
until woman asks: *why did they*
get rid of the boat? the boat
is the only thing to save her.

or the knock on a door
or the poem no one
will want to read

& that once having been born
one has to die

it would be better perhaps

to leave this experience alone
- remember the moment
has its uses & NOW
will return
- that's just the way things are

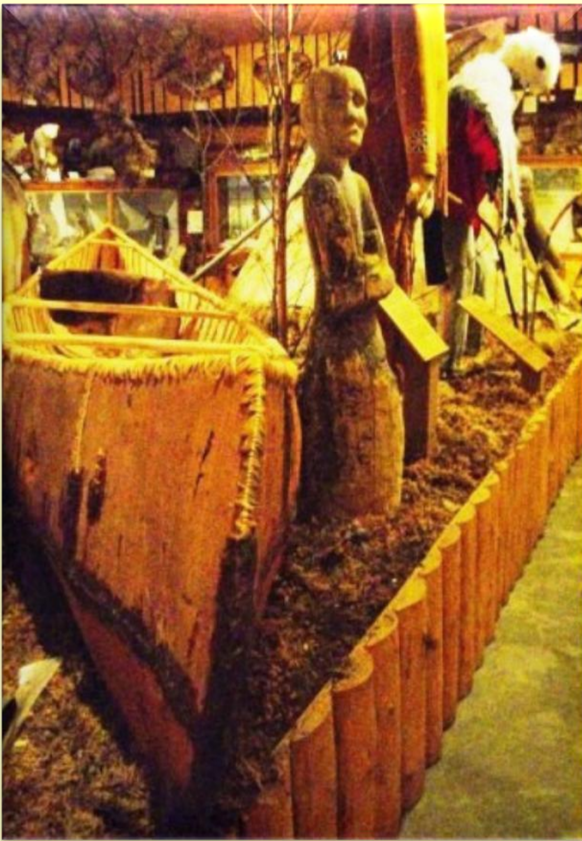
death is, after all
what we here, are outside of
hanging small slices of life
out broken windows
or in a river flowing
weeping rust & ducks
however silent
in the loneliness
of forgotten pockets
or poems like white & black
ignored, unmeasured
with no where to get to
while the river shines
unchanged
immense & dangerous
with its perfect peace
i could never paint
choosing instead to paint
the sterility & anger
at the injustice of choice

& my throat will constrict
seeing her death
for all its worth
& that later i will sit
at my table
as the light leaves
& analyze this noon of death
externalizing on paper
the agony to see her go
& i will know …
carcasses in a river-field of sleep

i know that soon
my son & i will
look across the river again

INTERVIEW

Northern Heritage Museum



Located above the 55th Parallel in Thompson, Manitoba, the Heritage North Museum introduces visitors to the Aboriginal peoples of Northern Manitoba, and the surveyors, fur traders and mining families who have made this part of the PreCambrian Shield home.

Quint interviewer, Anne Jevne spoke with a member of the Heritage North Museum's Board of Directors and museum volunteer, Grace Bindle; the Heritage North's Executive Director, Tanna Teneyecke; and the Museum's Vice-president, Sharon McLeod about their involvement with the Heritage North Museum and life in Thompson.

Grace Bindle's

long relationship with Heritage North is the result of a love affair: she met her husband in Thompson in the 1960s while he was managing The Thompson Inn. Now retired, Grace she still continues to work as a substitute teacher for kindergarten children and spends a good deal of her time volunteering at the Heritage North Museum. She was one of the original board members. Her love of history, in general, and museums, in particular, began when, as a young girl, she visited an outdoor heritage museum with her parents and grandparents.

Bindle's long relationship with the Heritage North Museum in Thompson is an intensely personal one--every item is highly signficiant for Grace because she knows most of the people who donated items for the displays. For instance, the handsome icebox now on display in the Museum's main building was donated to Heritage North by her uncle in Flin Flon.

As a museum volunteer and board member, she particularly enjoys introducing young people to their parents and grandparents' past--encouraging them to go back, as she

says, and imagine what it was like.

Quint: How long have you been living in Thompson?

Bindle: Forty eight years.

Quint: You've seen Thompson grow from its beginnings. What do you think is important about having the museum here?

Bindle: Well it's a history of the area up here and all the things that are around. You know, having lived here I know a lot of the names of people who donated things.

Quint: Could you talk a bit about what Thompson was like in its early days?

Bindle: Well, there was no road out. You either came in by the train station or the plane. And there were no crime problems because there was no way out. They were either picked up at the train station or at the airport.

Quint: I was aware that Snow Lake had no road into town but I didn't know that Thompson didn't have a road at first.

Bindle: There was no road. Then there was a road past Paint Lake and then we were able to have a road up to Snow Lake and then later from Ponton up to Highway Ten. Before 1965, we used to drive to the end of the road and there was a coffee shop at Paint Lake. We'd go and have coffee with the Jogensons and come back. Paint Lake was the end of the road.

Quint: Having the road put in must have been exciting.

Bindle: People would say, what's the road like? And I'd say I think it's pretty good considering we had none a couple of years ago. Everybody would complain about the road but when you didn't have one and then when it was built on muskeg, you made allowances. From The Pas I'd bring someone back with me. The train took forever and it took a long time driving back too.

Quint: I wasn't aware how many people were in Thompson when the town started up.

Bindle: There were lots then (the Sixties) because the mine was opening up. There were people from all over the world.

Quint: It must have been very different then.

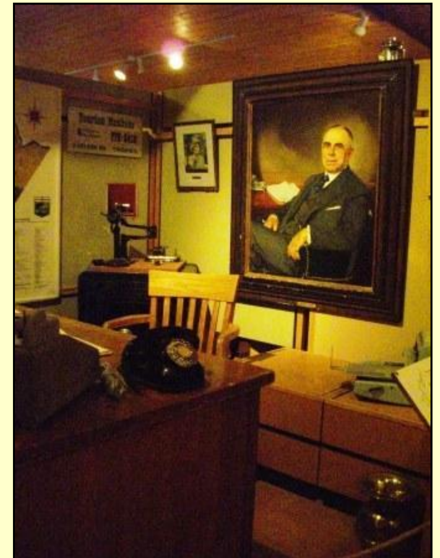
Bindle: In 1962 it was lot and block. We didn't go by the address. So your house would be Lot 17 on Block 30. When you went downtown, you'd get your groceries delivered, and they'd just come and put them in the door. You'd feel like there was nothing to worry about. You never locked your door. And you knew everybody.

Quint: I understand you've been active on the museum board for a number of years.

Bindle: There are seven to eight on the board and we have a list of volunteers. It's like everything. You phone somebody and they're willing to help. The younger people aren't coming forward like we used to.

Quint: Do you think younger people aren't as interested in the past like we were?

Bindle: No. When I went to the outdoor Museums with the young kids, they were about twelve or thirteen, they couldn't get over no electricity. There were these tall buildings with no electric lights.
So my granddaughter used to tease me all the time, "Gram, in the olden days, did you do this or that?" She wanted to know how people used those old saws and things like that.



She was interested in that and the old pump. We used to go down to the well and pump the water--we had one in the yard. Between Winnipeg and Devil's Lake there was a pump. Well, I couldn't get them away from there. They couldn't get over this pump…that we actually used one.

Quint: So the interest is there.

Bindle: Of course. Now, we don't want to go back to that. There's the dishwasher and the mom does the laundry. There aren't all these other chores we used to have. We used to bring the snow in and melt it in on the stove. That was my job and to throw the wood in the basement, because I never cooked. That was my mom. I did the outdoors work.

Tanna Teneyecke

Museum Director Tanna Teneyecke knows all about her city's past and its symbol, the wolf. Born in and raised just down the street from the museum, Teneyecke makes the Heritage North a vital and warmly welcoming place for Thompson visitors and residents alike. As Teneyecke points out, every item in the museum has its own story to tell.

Quint: Could you tell us something about your work at Heritage North?

Teneyecke: I've worked here for 4 years now. I worked with Paul [Legault at the museum] for a bit and then they had a baby. He went on maternity leave and I stepped into his shoes. I was born and raised in Thompson. I was actually born across the street which is terribly exciting for the tourists who come in. I've travelled all over the world and lived in different places but this is where my family is so there is where we came back to settle.

Quint: Who comes to visit the Heritage North Museum?

Teneyecke: Our traffic, our tourists who come to this museum and I'm honoured to meet, are

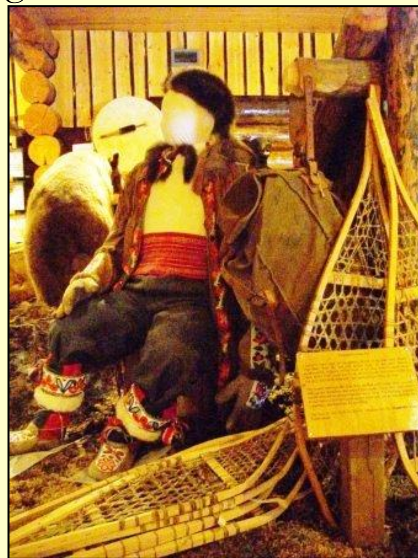
from all over the world. We have people from New York, from Paris, France, from Israel, from China, from everywhere. And it's beautiful for us to be ambassadors for the City. We tell them all about the North and the Northern Lights. There are a lot of things that we take for granted.

Quint: This is such a welcoming environment.

Teneyecke: It's a beautiful place to come--they love our museum and see the history and what we have to offer--it's not only that but also our knowledge and our passion for the museum. They're always interested in what we do.

Quint: Could you tell us about your work?

Teneyecke: I've always been interested in history and museums. This is something that I love. We're active with the schools. We have the school children come through here. Going through museums is so enlightening, and people often don't take advantage of museums, and this is just a little gem.



Quint: It sounds like Heritage North is very active in its community.

Teneyecke: We're active in the field. The children see us: they know us, and they come to the museum, and they experience the museum. We have games and puzzles and scavenger hunts in the summer time for them to do.

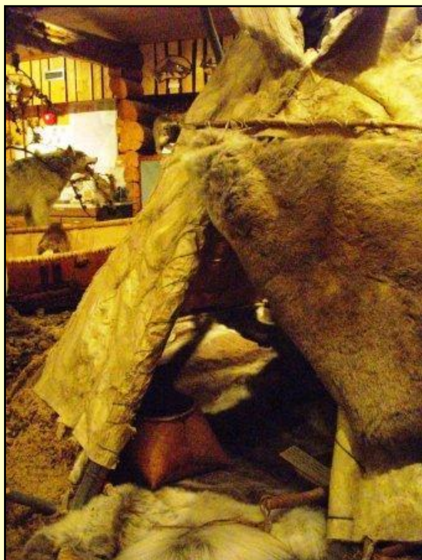
Quint: You really like what you do.

Teneyecke: We're passionate about it. I take great pride in doing this. We try to be active in all the communities. We like to be a community museum. We open our doors for different experiences. We have had different cultural activities happen at the museum.

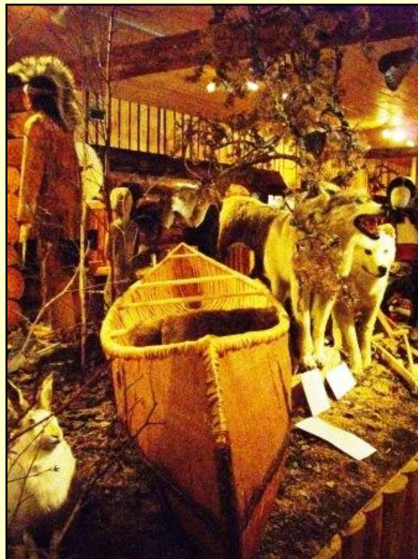
Quint: How does Heritage North support the First Nations population in this area?

Teneyecke: We've have a large amount of aboriginal agencies, and children come through the museum. We've had Elders speak here before, so we have a lot of our area's heritage and our history.

Quint: I noticed the caribou-hide teepee when I looked at the diorama. It caught my eye right away.



Teneyecke: They love our teepee and that it was built locally. Our canoe was built locally: it can work, it floats, it's exciting that it's not made of plastic, and it's not something shipped in.



That picture of the ladies smoking fish has started more conversations than you can imagine.

Quint: It's a wonderful picture.

Teneyecke: It's what our area is about. People who come from different parts of the world don't experience that. It's exciting that we can offer that to the people who come here.

Quint: I understand you have archives here.

Teneyecke: We do. Storage is a big issue for us. I guess it's an issue with every museum in the world. It's a big concern. We do have archives. People come here who are writing books and interested in different things. And we open our doors, and they are welcome to look through what we have. Our archives are accessible to everyone.

Quint: What sorts of materials do you have in the archives?

Teneyecke: We have a lot of the works of Bob Lawrie who was a local author. We have the

local Thompson news from beginning to date. We get a lot of interest in that. One thing that is near and dear to us is the beginnings of our museum. We have it in a photo albumn and we bring it out and show it to people. People can look at how we started and where we are today.

Quint: I understand Heritage North also has fur trade artifacts from the…

Teneyecke: You mean the McKay House. There was an archeological dig that was done just out by Paint Lake. That's not very far from our front door. It was a trading post from 1790-1792. Unfortunately, with the fur trade, the buildings were made out of wood, and they disintegrated very easily, but we have quite a few of the finds. Part of our future plans is to build an authentic fur trading post in the lot adjacent to the museum.

Quint: Where do your collections come from?

Teneyecke: Our collections come from a large assortment of people. We have a really interesting rock that is in our exhibit. One of the fellows who was walking through our museum one time said, you know when my bother and I were really young, we were waiting for my Dad to come out from work, and we were kicking some rocks around out on Hayes Road, and this is the rock we found. That's where that part of exhibit came from.

From the tiniest thing to the most monumental thing, everything here has a story.

Quint: Is Heritage North's funding raised locally?

Teneyecke: The city of Thompson is our major funder. We do apply for grants both federally and provincially--we do get a small amount from those sources.

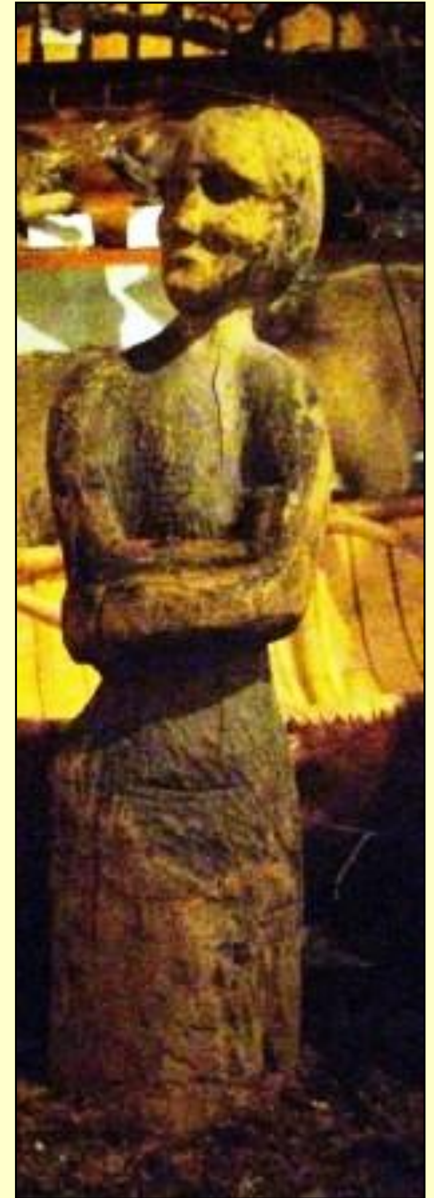
Quint: Could you talk a bit about the museum's Board of Directors?

Teneyecke: Our Board of Directors is outstanding. As a team we do fundraising, and we also offer museum memberships. We are

always looking for board members, so if anyone is ever interested in volunteering for an exciting and worthwhile board…

Quint: Being on a museum board would be a really interesting experience.

Teneyecke: The museum is always grows to be very near very quickly in your heart. I've always said that it's such a feel-good place to come. People are always happy to come to the museum. There's always a story to tell, and it's a beautiful spot in Thompson.



Sharon Mcleod, the Vice-president of the Heritage North's Board of Directors, is also the Chair of the Aboriginal and Northern Studies Area at the University

College of the North. Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Mcleod has lived and worked in Thompson for 14 years. Her areas of interest include holistic approaches to aboriginal women's issues, aboriginal culture and heritage training, oral traditions and storytelling, the relationships between First Peoples and museums, and treaty and land-related research.

Quint: How did you get interested in museology?

McLeod: I had just finished a term at the Northern Step Committee, and I was looking for something to get into and I heard about the aboriginal internship program they were running at the Manitoba Museum and it was for aboriginal people training and culturally related heritage work geared to the development of cultural centres so the Manitoba Museum was offering a one-year internship program. I was encouraged to apply. I walked over to the Manitoba Museum and met the curator, Dr. Katherine Pettipas, and Doug Leonard, who was administering the grants. I applied, and I was accepted into a program. I started in September.

Quint: Was museum work what you thought it would be like?

Mcleod: It was very eye-opening for me. It was the start of my cultural development in terms of focusing my cultural experience and the work that I do. And it opened a lot of doors for me. I realized that I needed some grounding. I needed to focus and the Manitoba Museum gave me that focus-- how to put together exhibits and to conduct research in a culturally relevant way. It was really exciting.

Quint: Could you explain what you mean by culturally relevant research?

Mcleod: When I graduated from high school in Grand Rapids and went to the Manitoba Museum, the first history course I took was European history. I thought it was boring stuff but I'm going to get the credit for it. I was there but there was something missing. I was learning someone else's history. The second course was World politics, I think, to 1945…or something like that. And again, it was ok, it was history, and I was only doing it as a credit for my BA.

Then I took a course from Jean Friesen, a Canadian History course, 3rd year level--that kind of got closer to home.

Quint: And home was?

Mcleod: The Museum experience taught me about the community-based approach, and I incorporated it in my approach to the history that I was learning, and I finished my BA as a history degree.

Quint: Did you take Native Studies courses while you were studying history at university?

Mcleod: I took my first Native Studies course with Emma LaRocque at the U of M. in the 1980s. It was starting to hit home, slowly and gradually, and then I really wanted to learn about my own culture and not somebody else's. So the Museum experience taught me how to exhibit and relate to issues pertinent to myself and to the com munities.

Quint: Everything fell into place then…your background and your work with the Museum of Man and Nature led to your involvement with the Heritage North Museum?

Mcleod: I'm an executive board member at the Heritage North Museum. They rely on me for the technical aspects of how museums operate, and the functions of museums. and how to put together exhibits. I don't spend as much time there as I should. I'd love to spend more time there and do some research projects but I've got my family life and my work at UCN keeps me really

busy. In terms of research I could see myself doing some really valuable work there in terms of access to their collections and helping them organize the collections and documenting some of the artifacts, but I just don't have the time right now.

Quint: There are some very interesting First Nations materials in the exhibits. Could you comment on them?

Mcleod: The former curator, Paul [Legault], he really had an interest in First Nations history He built the caribou-hide teepee with Madeleine and Wellington Spence. He contacted them and got the grant money, and they actually built the caribou hide teepee. It's authentic. They did it in the museum: they tanned the hide there, and they did all the construction there. So he had a real interest in that particular history. Most of the artifacts are local.

Quint: Aren't there also artifacts from other places?

Mcleod: Now when you're talking about the mandate of the museum--some of the artifacts were brought by settlers coming to Thompson from somewhere else so they are not necessarily artifacts of the North. So you have to distinguish when you are interpreting the history of the North. We try to respect in the mandate of the museum in the artifacts as what is local to Thompson and region. We expanded the museum's mandate to the region, so a lot of the artifacts are local: we've got furtrade, we've got First Nations History, we've got photos of Thompson when it first started, you know, the development of the mine and the early organizational work in Thompson.

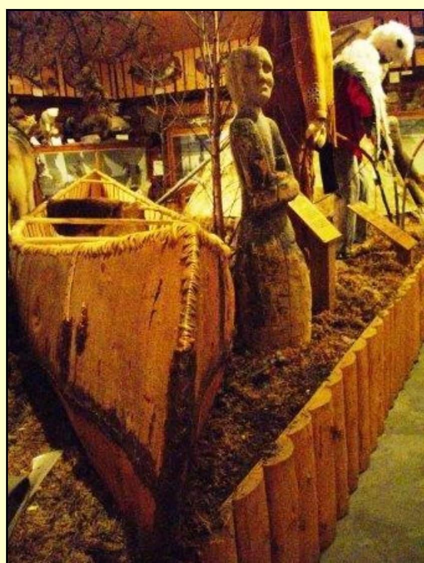
Quint: What is it like to preserve local history?

Mcleod: When you are working with organic materials there is a high degree of conversation effort that goes into it. A lot of it is lighting or temperature control there are threats like pesticides and lice and things like that that can get into the artifacts. Most of it is temperature control in the museums.

Quint: Could you comment on the relationship that this museum has with the First Nations communities in this area?

Mcleod: Much of what is done is in Thompson although in the mandate there is the regional

approach. In terms of the history between museums and relationships with First Nations: it's been more



of building relationships, connecting with the First Peoples of the North. It's the history the North--being a local and regional and city-based museum, has a huge mandate and job to portray history of the North because it is so diverse--the settlers and the First Peoples.

Quint: Are you satisfied with the work that is being done?

Mcleod: It's a matter of having the time and resources. I think we could do lots. Actually it would be really good to run a training program for aboriginal people in the North in Thompson cultre and heritage development.

Quint: That would be such an interesting project in Thompson.

Mcleod: Particularly when you portray history, when you exhibit history. Our Western based historians have to be careful when working with the communities that they don't bring their bias with them when they ask them what they want for their history, what would be considered relevant.

Quint: What would be relevant in terms of First Nations history in this area?

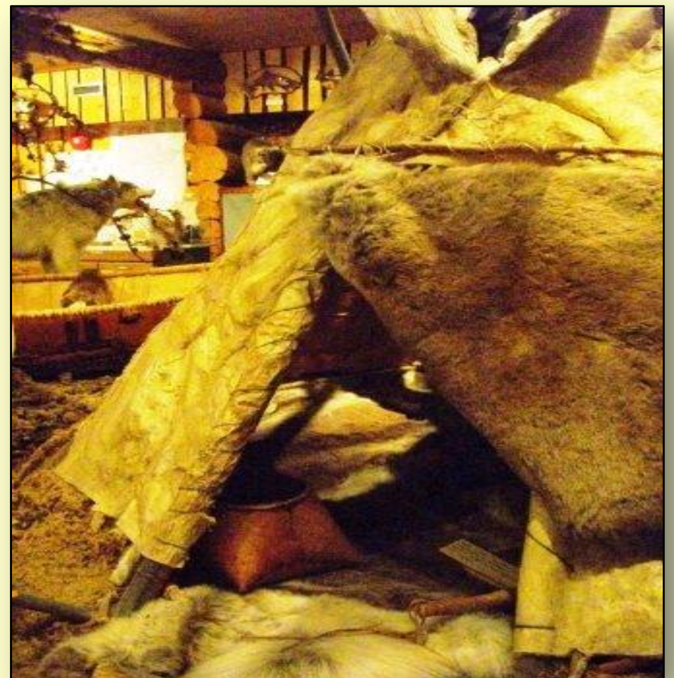
Mcleod: For example, in a community up North the artifacts may not be extant but programming would be--collecting old stories and the traditional in the arts and the crafts and the legends. That's what I think a Museum of the North would focus on--more on the storytelling, the intangible things, as opposed to collecting the material part of the history. Our history is a living and organic history--preserving the traditions. I think it's still a very viable thing. I don't think the stories are lost. I think that if someone was to support communities to do those things it would be just great.

A NORTHERN HERITAGE EXHIBIT

This traditional carbiou hide and birch bark tipi, built for the Heritage North Museum as a permanent exhibit in Thompson, Manitoba, was builty by Cree Elders Wellington and Madeleine Spence. Traditionally the Cree used a mixture of brains and water as a tnning agent agent. The mixture was applied to the de-fleshed side of caribou hides which were then the hides smoked or smudged over a low fire. Regular animal fat was never used because it rots the hide.

Today, vegetable oil is often used in place of brains. After being treated with a tanning agent, the hides are hung in the smoke house for a day. The heat from the smoke helps the hide absorb the tanning treatment and it kills all insects that may have taken up residence in the fur. After the hides are smoke, they are hung to dry in the sun, and at night brought inside the home. Hides that are left outside overnight often get eaten by bears.

The wood of choice for smoking hides and meat is Red Diamond Willow. The fire must be well regulated so that large flames do not burn the meat or hides. Incidently a whole moos or 500 kg (1000 lbs) of meat or 19 caribou hides can be smoked at one time in a tipi smokehouse.



REVIEWS

John Butler

Giacomo Leopardi, *Canti*. Jonathan Galassi, Tr. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2010

Giacomo Leopardi

Nothing lasts but Leopardi

The Italian poet Count Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) is, according to critics, arguably one of the greatest European Romantic poets, easily surpassing Wordsworth and equalling Goethe. His non-Italian admirers included Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Samuel Beckett and Bertrand Russell, whose mention of Leopardi in his *Autobiography* prompted this reviewer into first reading the poetry some twenty-five years ago, as well as Marchesa Iris Origo's fine biography of the poet. He is also celebrated, according to his newest translator Jonathan Galassi, as the writer of Italy's "first truly modern lyrics, the wellspring of everything that follows in the European poetic tradition." It seems odd that Penguin Books has not seen fit to issue a translation of the *Canti* before, but given the difficulties of translating Leopardi and the fact that at least partly because of this his name is not as well-known as it should be in the English-speaking world, we should perhaps not be surprised. "Trying to make Leopardi sound plausible in English," Galassi says in an interview, "has been very laborious—and exhilarating." In any case this book more than makes up the deficiency in Penguin Classics' series of poets. Galassi is a very fine translator who manages to get in

tune with Leopardi's thought-patterns, avoiding the pitfalls of former translators such as a tendency to overblow the diction (presumably to make Leopardi sound more "Romantic") or to employ archaic language to convey the solemn dignity that is so often characteristic of Leopardi's verses.

Leopardi led a sad life, by any standards, although being a nobleman he did not lack for material comforts, at least when his spendthrift father Count Monaldo's bad financial habits had been curbed by his penny-pinching wife the Marchesa Adelaïda Antici, an extremely religious lady who habitually carried an egg-measurer with her when she went shopping, to make sure that she was not swindled by grocers trying to sell undersized eggs. She also thought that bereaved women should rejoice when their children died, as they would never know sin, and envied their good fortune. Count Monaldo Leopardi, the last Italian nobleman to habitually wear a sword, was a kinder and more interesting person than he has been given credit for; although he was ultra-conservative in politics he was a writer himself (he produced an autobiography and wrote works on philosophy and politics) who possessed a huge library of over twenty thousand books in which young Giacomo spent the happiest hours of his youth reading works of literature and philosophy. The Leopardis lived in a dreadful little backwater of a town called Recanati, which was then ruled by the Pope (it was in the Papal States), and Giacomo simply hated the place. There was no intellectual stimulation and nothing much for him to do; even more stultifying, he was tutored by priests, a group for which he had little use, especially after he was encouraged to become one by his family. To make things worse, Leopardi was virtually a hunchback, having one shoulder higher than the other, and was short in stature. Women liked him as a friend, but did not find him physically attractive, so his whole life was spent yearning for love and understanding (he fell in love several times but died a virgin), although he appears to have been a charming, good-humoured and un-self-pitying man, his outer demeanour often reflecting the opposite of his poetry, which expresses alienation from society, philosophical skepticism and a tragic sense of unfulfilled desire. His whole life consisted of attempts to get away from his rather dysfunctional family (he did like his sister Paolina and Carlo, one of his brothers) and from Recanati, which, even when they were successful initially, eventually ended in failure. Leopardi did achieve considerable poetic fame as well as becoming known in the scholarly world as an editor of Petrarch, but he could never quite adjust to life in places like Rome, Florence, Naples or Bologna, and found himself turning down offers of professorships before returning again to Recanati with his tail between his legs and feeling even more of a failure. He did finally get away, but died at the age of thirty-nine of respiratory failure in Naples, shortly after requesting an ice-cream, which his doctor had forbidden him but which his friend and future Italian senator Antonio Ranieri, who later made much of his relationship with the famous poet, had gone out to fetch. Apart from the forty-one *canti*, Leopardi left a massive miscellany entitled the *Zibaldone*, many critical essays and the *Operette morali*, a series of quasi-philosophical reflective essays full of humour and satirical commentary, both of which will be published

by Penguin by 2012.

Reading too much Leopardi can become depressing, especially if one has read his biography, but there is something about him which also captivates readers and makes him likeable. The patriotic poems are full of stirring stuff about young men and women getting together to fight for a united Italy and throwing off the yoke of either the Austrians or the Pope, although Leopardi does not mention either potentate directly, referring more to ideals of what Italy should be; the poems are remarkable because they lack the kind of stridency and jingoism one might expect, yet still come across as moving. "O my country," he writes, "I can see the walls/ and arches and the columns and the statues/ and lonely towers of our ancestors,/ but I don't see the glory" ("To Italy"). Of course, Leopardi did not live to see a united Italy, which finally materialised in 1867, thirty years after his death. The real "meat" in Leopardi's works may be found in the self-reflective poems in which he mourns a youth not simply lost but never there to lose, love which never developed enough to become externally-satisfied, and a kind of gentle *angst* which rarely, if ever, degenerates into self-pity or self-indulgence, so unlike the poetry of too many of his modern successors around the world.

It is poetry of memory, unfulfilled desires, pathos, longing and sadness, but it also celebrates nature and has its roots in the accessible emotions and activities of ordinary life. Indeed, optimism often comes through: "See, brightness/ breaks through in the west, above the hills," Leopardi writes in "The Calm after the Storm," "The countryside unveils,/ and the river shimmers in the valley./ Every heart is happy." In spite of his preoccupation with melancholy, Leopardi never sounds mawkish like Wordsworth or bitter and cynical like Byron sometimes does. Leopardi has a kind of innocence about him which makes him vulnerable; his acute awareness of his surroundings, his longing for something outside himself as well as outside his environment are tempered by his knowledge, deep down in his soul, that he will never get away from the world of Recanati nor will he ever fulfill his desire for mortal love. It does not stop him trying, although he realized that he would always be a misfit, not because of his appearance but because of his sensitivity, temperament and profound intelligence, which was ultimately doomed to be misunderstood even by his most perceptive friends. It is no accident that the moon, "th'inconstant moon," as Shakespeare has it, that symbol of deception and duplicity, figures so prominently in his work: "What are you doing, moon, up in the sky;/ what are you doing, tell me, silent moon?" The world beckons, tempts, and then administers a resounding kick to the nearest vulnerable part of the body. The moon symbolizes the changeableness of nature and the world.

What, then, makes this man such a great poet? There is no room here to do justice to Leopardi's significance in Italian and European literature, but a look at one of his best-known poems in Galassi's translation might at least serve to whet the appetite of anyone who is curious about this wonderful writer. In "To Silvia," for example, Leopardi takes the tragic death of a young girl, usually identified as Teresa Fattorini, the eighteen year-old daughter of Conte Monaldo's coachman, and turns it into a symbol of his

own lost youth and blighted development. He succeeds in mourning Silvia herself whilst at the same time mourning what would never come to pass in his own life as well, despite the social gap between the aristocratic poet and the poor peasant girl whose thoughts could have in no way paralleled his own. He addresses the dead girl directly, asking her what she remembers now, and then transforms her into the personification of his own unfulfilled thoughts and dreams, a universal symbol of the loss of young hope and aspirations. "Silvia, do you remember still," the poet asks,

> that moment in your mortal life
> when beauty shimmered
> in your smiling startled eyes
> as, bright and pensive, you arrived
> at the threshold of youth?

And then, at the sound of her singing, he evokes in himself positive and negative emotions at the same time, beginning with "light thoughts" and "hopes," but ending the stanza with "O Nature, Nature,/ why don't you deliver later/ what you promised then? Why do you lead on/ Your children so?" After this comes one of the most poignant parts of the poem, as the poet returns to Silvia herself, and here it is best, perhaps to quote the original; even if reader's don't know Italian, I think the rhythm and the sound of the lines can be intuited, and Galassi's translation almost perfectly catches the cadences:

> Tu pria che l'erbe inaridisse il verno,
> Da chiuso morbo combattuta e vinta,
> Perivi, o tenerella. E non vedevi
> Il fior degli anni tuoi;
> Non ti molceva il core
> La dolce lode or delle negre chiome,
> Or degli sguardi innamorati e schivi;
> Nè teco la compagne ai di festivi
> Regionavan d'amore.

> [You, before winter had withered the grass,
> stricken then overcome by mortal sickness,
> died, gentle girl. You didn't see
> your years come into flower.
> Sweet talk about your raven hair
> or your beguiling, guarded glance
> never melted your heart,
> and on holidays you never talked
> about love with your friends.]

It is then that Leopardi makes the final connection with his own youthful hopes and dreams, which are as dead as Silvia's even though he himself is still alive. "Before long, my sweet hope/ died, too; the fates/ denied me youth also." Perhaps it is better to die not knowing what one has missed, rather than living to realize precisely what it was, as the poet does. By the end of the poem Silvia has gone, and it is then that the reader understands what she really means in the context of the poem:

> Ah, how truly
> past you are,
> dear companion of my innocence,

my much-lamented hope!
Is this that world? Are these
the joys, love, deeds, experience
we spoke so often of?
Is this man's fate?
When the truth dawned
you fell away, poor thing, and from afar
pointed out cold death
and a naked grave.

Note how Silvia's "[you] died, gentle girl" (perivi, o tenerella) is paralleled by hope's "you fell away, poor thing" (Tu, misera, cadesti"), just one example of the careful structure of Leopardi's poem. The last word on this poem comes from Michel Orcel, Leopardi's French translator, whom Galassi quotes in his notes at the end of the book:

> The tramsparent and melancholy speed of the verse, whose rhythmic
> syntax acts contrapuntally with the apparent measure, and the mirac-
> ulous weight of a language capable of amplifying in two words its
> historic measure or of making literary profundity and the flavor of
> dialect resonate in the same word ("tenerella," "innamorati") are at
> the heart of this masterpiece of the Italian lyric.

The poetry of Leopardi will not be to everyone's taste, but what he shares with modern poets, or indeed with many poets of his own time, is his sense of alienation and a profound philosophical scepticism about modern life and what it promises. Jonathan Galassi's new translation goes a long way towards bringing this aspect of a nineteenth-century Italian poet who may be a household name for generations of Italians, but who is not as well-known to English readers as he should be. Leopardi is a poet who belies the notion that Romantics had few or no ideas, and that their poetry was confined to effusions about nature or mawkish praise of the ordinary or the mundane. Put Wordsworth back on the shelf and pick up Leopardi. "How quickly you flew, lovely, serene hours!/ Nothing else that is delightful lasts/ down here, nothing ever lasts, but hope."

Gary A. Kozak

Peter Steele: *The Man Who Mapped the Arctic.* Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2003.

Sir George Back: Good Historical Reading While Romancing the Snow

Peter Steele's *The Man Who Mapped the Arctic* is a biographical account of the exciting life of British arctic explorer, hydrographer and cartographer Sir George Back (1796-1878). Steele's biography covers Back's life from the time he initially joined the navy through to his final years. Special emphasis is placed on important episodes in Back's life such as his involvement in the Napoleonic War, his wartime imprisonment and his several remarkable explorations. The book combines a standard historical account with

detailed literary descriptions and limited characterizations, which make it good reading. Steele accomplishes this without deviating from historical literature.

Sir George Back

George Back was born in Stockport, England, and volunteered with the navy at a time when underage recruitment was not uncommon. This was an important time as Britain was at war with Napoleonic France. His ship *HMS Arethusa* was involved in a significant battle in the Bay of Biscay. Later, he was captured by the French and imprisoned. While living as a prisoner of war in France from 1809-1814, he learned important skills such as drawing and the French language, which would later prove valuable as they would supplement his naval skills.

After the war his imprisonment ended and he served as a midshipman on two other ships, the *HMS Akbar* and the *HMS Bulwark*. His life of adventure continued as he served with John Franklin in the first of his arctic expeditions in 1818. Back later served with Franklin on two overland expeditions to survey the northern coast of North America. The first of these was the *Coppermine Expedition* (1819-1822) and the other was the *Mackenzie expedition* (1824-1826). After his promotion to lieutenant-commander he would lead another expedition to explore and survey what later became the Back River. He led another expedition to the northern part of Hudson Bay in 1836 as captain. He was planning to cross the Melville Peninsula but was stuck in ice for ten months. The ship later suffered iceberg damage and was beached in Ireland.

Back's post-exploration life is also discussed, although rather cursorily—one would have liked more details, although of course the author's intention was to concentrate on Back's importance as an arctic cartographer. Back was promoted to rear admiral and worked as an advisor in the search for Franklin's last expedition. Afterwards, he became vice-president of the Royal Geographic Society and finally married before his death in 1878.

Steele uses more than enough detail in method of factual story-telling. Franklin, for example, is described as being "charming and bombastic, deeply religious and inexperienced." Another member of the expedition, Richardson, is mentioned as empathetic to native people. Hood is

described as a hard worker and meticulous meteorological observer. The real-life characters are talked about in more detail and they provide a good background that adds an element of interest to the story. Steele also provides contextual descriptions which add depth to the narrative. For example, he talks about the operation of the navy and life aboard a naval ship during wartime. Back's unfortunate time as a prisoner of war adds to the interest and gives us insight into the man's personality and resourcefulness.

The problems on board a ship in time of emergency are described in such a manner as to add suspense. An example is the following:

> She was taking water fast, so carpenters tried to stop the leaks by forcing oakum (made of loose fibres picked from old ropes) between the timbers. Passengers, in terror for their lives, worked the pumps and carried water buckets in relays. Some women and children, of Selkirk settlers heading for the Red River Settlement, rushed on deck in panic. Crewmen promptly chased them off because of danger from falling spars.

Steele also gives us a feeling of place by informing us about the details of exploration. For example:

> Each night the party bivouacked, often at …-40C…Some men felled trees for firewood, others cleared the ground and laid a bed of pine branches. Back notes 'if you wish to avoid being frost bit it is absolutely necessary when once laid down under your blanket and buffalo skins that you do not move on jot, though you may ache in every joint.' Everyone slept in a circle with feet pointing towards the fire. On the embers and caught alight, so he jumped into the snow to quench it and to ease his pain.

Steele's exciting story of exploration and adventure becomes increasingly grim as discusses one of the expeditions as Back and his companions have to cope with such problems as frostbite, starvation and the resulting behavioural problems. They are forced into cannibalism. Steele mentions the following:

> Richardson pieced together some clues about Michel's strange behavior. He never reported that Perrault, as well as Belanger le Rouge, had turned back; he asked for the hatchet when normally a hunter would use only his knife to skin and animal, but he would need a hatchet to cut up frozen meat; and he became increasingly surly, erratic and evasive while he stayed away from camp all day, refusing to hunt, cut wood, or sleep in the tent at night. When Hood chided Michel for his selfishness he replied, 'It's no use hunting, there are no animals, you'd better kill and eat me.'

Peter Steele supplements his interesting and engaging narrative with other features. He makes generous use of quotations to provide authenticity and give a more direct feeling for the environment in question, and he provides many examples of George Back's drawing. Despite being mostly sketches they are detailed and atmospheric. His sources are diverse and extensive. At times the narrative becomes too dramatic and personal as to resemble a novel. He never loses track of his historical objectives, however.

This biography of George Back is an interesting and engaging story of intuition, bravery, heroism and sacrifice. Through his accomplishments and sacrifices Back eventually earned and deserved personal fame, title and historical recognition. It is an epic story of a unique person whose life was an epic in itself, and it is good that Sir George Back has found a biographer whose work will put his name back on the map, so to speak.

Gary A. Kozak

Natsume Soseki. *Kusamakura*.. trans. Meredith McKinney. Penguin Books, 2008.

Kusamakura: an acquired taste for the Western reader

Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), born Natsume Kinnosuke, was a Japanese author and poet. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in the fields of Chinese Studies and English before studying haiku. He worked as an English teacher at the middle school level in Shikoku and lived in the United Kingdom for three years, "the most unpleasant years of my life," as he later recalled; "I lived amongst English gentlemen like a dog." His best-known novels include *Kokoro* (1906), which features a young man trying to come to grips with modernization in Japan, *Botchan* (1912), perhaps the most widely-read of Soseki's books, about the moral choice Japanese needed to make between tradition and modernity, as well as the three volumes of *I am a Cat* (1905-06), a satirical look through the eyes of a cat at the cultural conflicts caused by increased Western contact in the Meiji Era. Soseki, whose portrait used to be on the thousand-yen bill, is considered by many to be Japan's greatest novelist.

Natsume Soseki's fifth novel, newly-translated by Meredith McKinney, departs from some of the themes discussed above; it is a languid, minimalist masterpiece of literature in which Soseki captures the simplicities of life in a descriptive manner that most people would ignore. It is seen through the perception of an artist who travels through the Japanese wilderness for the sole purpose of learning about natural objects for the purpose of appreciating their aesthetic value.

The main character, who is narrating the story, travels to a mountain inn that is void of tourists. He makes daily excursions into the wilderness for the purpose of admiring its details and privately studying its alluring and inspiring values. He eventually gains interest in the inn-keeper's daughter who has been rumored to have had a failed marriage and now having a relationship with a priest.

The narrator tells the story in first person narrative and begins with an early explanation of his philosophy. This involves

the Chinese concept of balance in life and nature. As he explains in the following passage:

> ….where joy grows deep, sorrow must deepen; the greater one's pleasures, the greater the pain. If you try to sever the two, life falls apart. Try to control them, and you will meet with failure. Money is essential, but with the increase of what is essential to you, anxieties will invade you even in sleep. Love is a happy thing, but as this happy love came into your life…me if something is delicious, it goes hard not to eat it, yet if you eat a little you only desire more, and if you gorge yourself on it, it leaves you unpleasantly bloated…

Essentially, things like happiness and sorrow (or success and hardship as he also explains) should be balanced despite their change in intensity. If one grows, the other should grow and attempting to control them will result in failure. Therefore, allow them to operate on their own without interference.

The narrator further explains his philosophy through a more Buddhist type of concept but within the framework of an artist. He uses the following explanation:

> But why is there no suffering here? Simply because I see the scenery as a picture; I read it as a series of poems. Seeing it thus, as a painting or poetry, I have no desire to acquire the land or cultivate it, or to put a railway through it and make a profit. This scenery….fills the heart with pleasure simply as scenery, and this is surely why there is neither suffering nor anxiety in the experience. This is why the power of nature is precious to us. Nature instantly forges the spirit of pristine purity and elevates it to the realm of pure poetry.

The narrator believes that suffering is removed by seeing nature as a 'picture'. The scenery is a kind of picture and appreciating the scenery or natural object is preferable to strong emotions or patriotism. He believes that being engaged in something artistic (in the naturalist sense), one is leaving self-interest temporarily behind. Understanding his philosophy is crucial to gaining a full appreciation of the novel.

NatsumeSoseki

The character sees all aspects of his world through the perception of an artist. Everything is interpreted as a visual art attraction or as a poem. Even an attractive woman is given a description by her artistic impression. Her head is compared to 'Mount Fuji' and her nose is said to be beautiful if it were painted. He even describes her face in terms of lines as if they were drawn or sketched. It appears as if her personality is being judged by her lines and shadings.

Anger or sadness is not prevalent in the novel as the main character clings to hisalmost aesthetic philosophy and unique view on his surroundings. He uses haiku as a form of therapy and treats us to an abundance of it.All life is appreciated and problems are acccepted in an almost stoic manner.As a matter of fact, Soseki's novel resembles an extended haiku in prose form. Each paragraph is a description of an object, action or feeling and stated in lyrical format. A final statement gives us the final statement to give the greatest impact of the mood. Although Suzuki intends on emphasizing format, his novel's strength is its description. It is vivid to the point where any reader can imagine being in the location being discussed. For example:

> Five or six stepping stones are buried in a carpet of green moss; it would feel very nice to walk there barefoot. To the left is a cliff face, part of the mountain beyond, with a red pine slanting out over the garden between rocks….

This form of literature is ideal for anyone who has never been to Japan to acquire an accurate impression of the country. Ironically, however, Soseki's skillful use of such imagery is also the novel's weakness. Description is sometimes overused to the point of overkill and at the expense of dialogue, character development and overall plot. We never learn much about the narrating character and practically nothing whatsoever about the other characters. It lacks plot and has an atmosphere of insipid emptiness. To a Western reader it appears that Soseki somehow succeeds in combing deep thought with superficiality. However, it is his obvious intention to create such an impressionistic novel and he does it admirably. Unfortunately, it takes a great deal of patience to get through this.

To criticize Soseki's novel would be to criticize a genre. He is writing with the methodology of a chosen format that was considered acceptable by its practitioners. He is making no literary mistakes. He is using a unique literary technique that, unfortunately for many readers, is an acquired taste. A reader expecting an interesting story with conventional literary characteristics (plot, characters, emotions and so forth) will be disappointed with a novel such as this. One has to therefore readjust his or her thinking, in regard to writing methods, in order to appreciate such a novel.

Gary A. Kozak

Hari Kunzru *Transmission.* Penguin Books, 2005

Successful 21st Century Sketches

Nath Kunzru is a novelist of English-Kashmiri descent based in London who grew up in Essex and was educated at Wadham College, Oxford, before obtaining a Master of Arts degree in Literature and Philosophy from the University of Warwick. He has written for a variety of publications including *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* and was a travel correspondent for *Time Out* magazine. He has also worked as a television interviewer. He has written four novels to date and has won several literary prizes including the Whitbread First Novel Award, the Betty Trask Award and the Somerset Maugham Award for his novel *The Impressionist.* The literary magazine *Granta* named Kunzru as "one of the best fiction writers under forty."

Hari Kunzru's second novel, *Transmission*, is a satirical narration of the IT industry. In it, he explores its unique peculiarities, issues, stereotypical characters and the clichés prevalent in each. He follows up with more clichés in other industries that are connected with it and he attempts to weave them together into one central plot revolving around one major problem.

The story is about Arjun Mehta, a middle-class Indian software engineer who goes to the U.S. to work in its lucrative IT industry. He is a young naïve idealist, due to his obsession with the romanticism of glamorous Bollywood films. He dreams of a future of secure employment and a stable retirement that will make him a proud example to his family and ultimately his country. This is a quintessential ending for the Bollywood films he is often preoccupied with. While in the U.S., Arjun discovers the job prospects to be much more unattainable than he ever imagined. He does manage to secure a position with a Washington based company as an anti-virus engineer. His hopes are shattered when the company informs him of his dismissal due to a downturn in the industry. Feeling devastated and pressured to not return home as a failure, he creates a computer virus and launches it into the company's system. He hopes that his solution to neutralising it will impress his company management and thereby reinstate his employment. To his dismay, and everyone else's, the virus gets out of control. It spreads from the company's system and infiltrates a wide range of systems in the world. It becomes a type of international disaster that disrupts just about every service and eventually Arjun becomes a security risk. He becomes a fugitive escaping the authorities who have labeled him an international terrorist.

Meanwhile, two other sub-plots are underway. A British-based marketing executive, Guy Swift, is attempting to manage his venture company with worthless marketing rhetoric. He lacks the resources and corporate management prowess to expand the company. The other plot involves Leela Zahir,

a Bollywood celebrity whose hip-swinging image is the central figure in Arjun's virus. The only importance of these two characters is the effect that the virus has in their demise.

The most striking feature of Kunzru's novel is his frequent and blatant use of sarcastic irony. One manner in which he uses it is part of his character descriptions. For example, Kunzru describes a career counsellor like this:

> Every section of the man not covered with luxury cotton casual wear seemed to glow with ostentatious life, as if some kind of optical membrane had been inserted under the epidermis. He glanced down at his own arms and hands, ordinary and unremarkable. They looked like the 'before' illustration in a cosmetics advertisement.

Another example of this rather sarcastic irony is in the following:

> He took a glass from the smiling female attendant, unself-consciously bathing in the soft-porn ambience of the moment. Mentally he noted the experience as a credit on the airline's emotional balance sheet. He enjoyed the attendant's android charm, the way this disciplined female body reminded him it was just a tool, the uniformed probe-head of the large corporate machine in which he was enmeshed.

Kunzru's sarcastic writing style is detailed and witty. He tells the story by speaking directly to the reader as if it was a one-on-one conversation.

The writer adequately paints a picture of the so called 'land of opportunity' Mehta encounters. It definitely leads to Arjun's disenchantment with an unexpected type of racially- based poverty involving many aspects of a materialistic and decadent culture, which Kunzru describes with heavy irony:

> On the corner, listless young black and Latino men played bass-heavy music and leaned in to car windows to have short conversations with the drivers. A hydrocarbon stink lay heavy in the air, and during the night the traffic hum was accompanied with police sirens and cracking sounds that… announced authoritatively were gunshots.

This marks the beginning of the main character's culture shock that only adds to the disappointment of work opportunities being less available than expected. Kunzru goes on with the following:

> Arjun spent as little time as possible outside the house, convinced by his scrutiny of cable news channels that would be putting himself in danger. Even unharmed, he found Americans physically intimidating. When he went to 'middle class' areas (middle class being, Arjun had discovered, an American word for White) he felt overwhelmed.

With descriptions such these, Kunzru successfully discusses Mehta's problem with adaptation to an entirely new culture where the problems are different than an immigrant may be accustomed to or expecting. This is further supported by descriptions of Arjun's exiled life in seedy bus terminals where he encounters suspicious characters and more poverty.

Kunzru does a good job mocking technology, society and its institutions but he doesn't offer us anything new. This type of

satire has been accomplished in a variety of media as well as in books by other authors. Actually, this is a time when the now established IT industry is under attack. His novel supplements the literature but doesn't add any new insight or writing style to it.

The problem with Kunzru's novel is his use of two sub-plots in an attempt to complement the story of Arjun Mehta. The stories of Guy Swift and Leela Zahir give Kunzru the opportunity to add more skillful satire but the relevance these characters have on the central plot is unclear. They give the novel a type of convolutedness which Kunzru appears unable to unravel with sufficient skill to make it more than marginally fit in with the main plot. Arjun's superficial relationship with his rebellious colleague Christine only adds to the main character's culture shock and adaptation but not much else.

Kunzru's novel is a satire on personality types and problems that typify the current decade. There is an ambitious Indian computer geek who has misconceptions about living in the 'new promised land'. He loses his job due a high tech industry bubble. There is a vogue-orientated cocaine addicted startup entrepreneur who is attempting to gain success with contemporary posturing and ambitions but with limited resources and no sense of projection. A Bollywood film is being produced with a temperamental actress (the one whose image is the virus). They are all 21st century sketches. Kunzru's attack on society is successful but his novel could have been outstanding if he remained focused on the Arjun Mehta plot and perhaps concentrated more on the character's changing attitude.

Sue Matheson

Navy Phim. *Reflections of a Khmer Soul*. Wheatmark. 2007.

After the Killing Fields

Navy Phim arrived in the United States in 1984 at the age of nine. The daughter of Cambodian refugees who settled in Long Beach, she graduated from the University of California , Los Angeles, in 1999 with a Bachelor's Degree in English and Angthropology. She earned a Master of Science in Counseling, Student Development in Higher Education from California State University, Long Beach, in December 2006. A world traveler, Navy has returned to Chailand and Cambodia, and has also visited England, Scotland, India, Nepal, Peru, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Canada. *Reflections of a Khmer Soul* tells her story--that of a Khmer American woman born in 1975 on the day that her country was plunged into the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regieme. *Reflections of a Khmer Soul* is not a first person narrative of the events of that time told by a member of the ruling elite sent to the countryside for re-education. A narrative which explores the legacy of being an ethnic Cambodian living in the aftermath of Pol Pot's regieme, *Reflections of a Khmer Soul* reveals the political fallout which affected classes other than the ruling elite banished to the Killing Fields of the Cambodian countryside. During this period, all of Phim's family, were farmers, and some still are today. Her own early memories are of life in refugee camps in Thailand and then her adolescence in the United States as her

family's responsible older daughter. Memories of the Khmer Rouge and the war contained within this text are those of her family members, in particular, her mother's and father's.

The ruling party of Cambodia from 1975-79, the Khmer Rouge or the Communist Party of Kampuchea is now remembered primarily for its policies of social engineering which promoted a radical, anti-intellectural, and unbelievably brutal form of agrarian communism--it is estimated that 1.5 million people were killed by this regieme, generally considered the most lethal of the twentieth century. When Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge's Gneral Secretary, finally was arrested, tried as a war criminal, and convicted of his crimes against humanity, I'm afraid that I cheered--as did others who were alive during the Vietnam War. At that time, the very name of the Khmer Rouge sent cold and extremely unpleasant shivers down the spine. If you were an American soldier, the Khmer Rouge was the enemy you avoided capture by at any cost. Popular legend about their activities during the Vietnam conflict (which was true) was appalling: they had the habit of flaying their prisoners alive. Pol Pot, it was agreed, was a monster. Many thought him mad. During the Eighties, I kept meeting Cambodian refugees. One woman's napalm scars which covered one entire side of her body from head to toe was the topic of conversation during a bus trip I took from Winnipeg to Brandon. Her office building had been bombed by accident during the Vietnam conflict. The fifty percent of her body which had escaped injury had been the skin pressed against the earth by being thrown to the ground in the explosion. Living in Vancouver, she was on her way to Montreal to visit her son. She found the flatness of the Prairies astonishingly beautiful.

It was because of my personal interest in Cambodian history and contact with Cambodians that *Reflections of a Khmer Soul* caught my eye when I was given a choice of texts to review for this issue of *the quint*. Unprepossessing, Phim's narrative, beautifully bound, is a slim volume, and organized into seven parts, is only 149 pages long. Each part contains a cluster of memories, speculations, short stories, and autobiographical comments loosely organized around central events and figures in Phim's life: the significance of the day of her birth, for example, is the organizing principle of the first part of this book. Phim's mother, Phim's compulsive need to travel extensively, her experiences as a refugee, and her family's struggle to adapt to American culture are others. Overall, the narrative is well written and unsentimental while, at the same time. intensely personal and honest. I strongly recommend this gracefully written text as required reading for anyone interested in Asian history, and would like to see it become a required text for students who are interested in the Vietnam War or Cambodia's political tragedy and its continuing aftermath. *Reflections of a Khmer Soul* is not only an important piece of the ongoing documentation of the Cambodian diaspora and the experience of being caught between two cultures, it is also a gripping study of the survivor guilt that attends the Khmer diaspora and this particular survivor's need to reflect on a haunting past for which she cannot be held responsible and which she is unable to alter or repair.

gallery *quint*

Heritage North Museum

ART

Jasyn Lucas

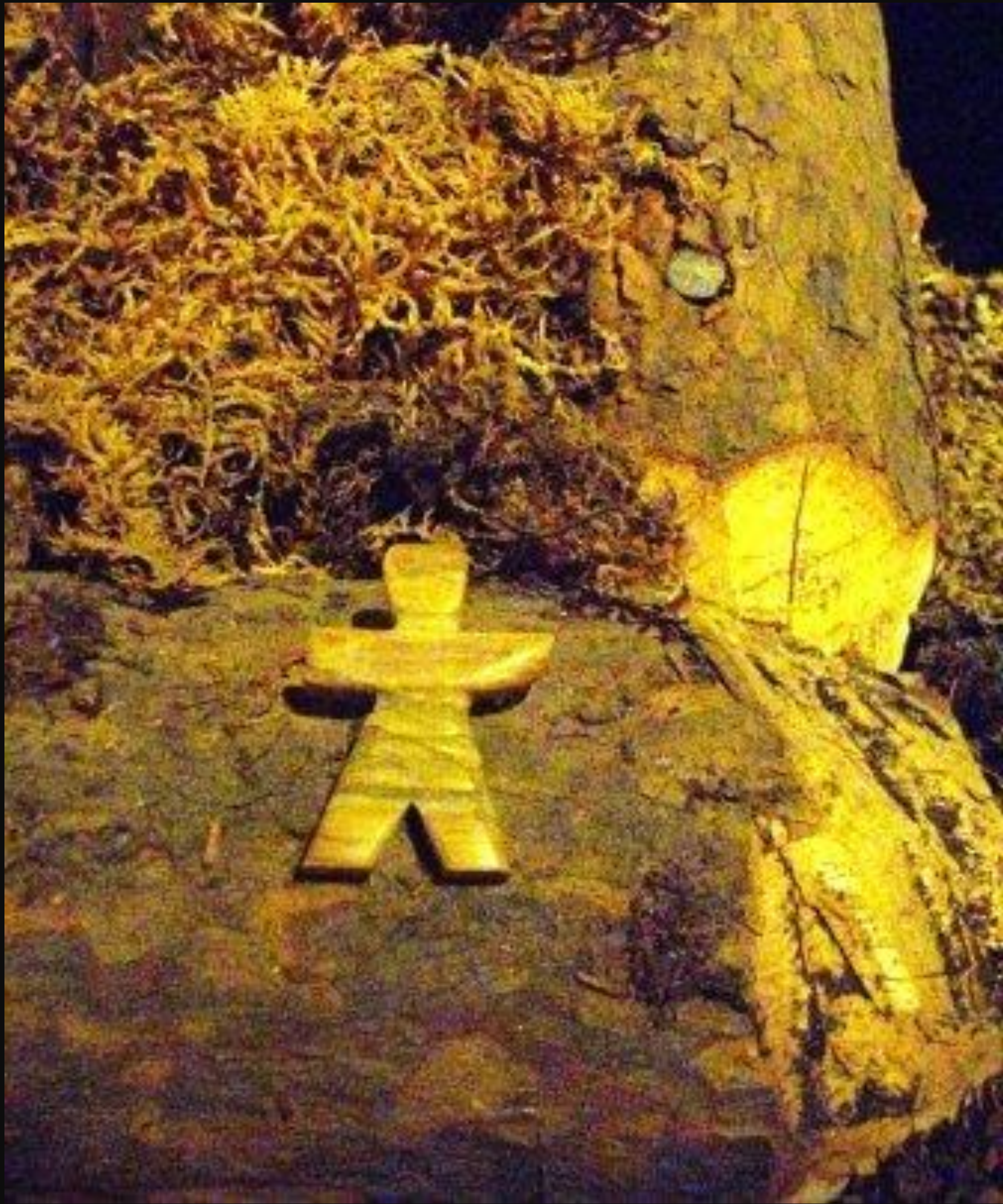
Thompson, MB

Prints and Paintings

Available at the Heritage North Museum in Thompson, MB, Jasyn Lucas' prints and paintings have become Northern icons, expressing Lucas' identity as an aboriginal artist and the energy of the boreal forest in Northern Manitoba.

Cyril Pierone

Cyril Pierone's finely balanced soapstone carvings at the Northern Heritage Museum impart a deep respect for and knowledge of Northern Manitoba and its culture.



CONTRIBUTORS

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John Butler is an associate professor of Humanities at University College of the North. Formerly a professor of British Studies at Chiba University, Tokyo, he specializes in seventeenth-century intellectual history and travel literature, especially that of Asia and Asia Minor. John and his wife Sylvia live in The Pas with their 3 cats.

Anne Jevne, who is a single mother of two children, lives and writes in Northern Manitoba.

Gary A. Kozak, has worked overseas extensively in the fields of educational management, childhood development, linguistic counselling and employment counselling. He has academic education from the University of Manitoba at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the fields of archaeology, history and geography.

Jasyn Lucas was born in Flin Flon, Manitoba. His earliest influences came from Northern Artists Eddie Munroe, Jeff Monias, and Earl McKay. He was later inspired by international artists Terry Isaac and Robert Bateman. A proud member of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Jasyn has spent the last three years working as a full-time artist. He has won a variety of awards including 2 People's Choice Awards, three through the Northern Juried Art Show and one through the Manitoba Arts Network Rural and Northern Show. His artwork is shown nationally in galleries--most recently his work has been shown at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics and the 2010 Paraolympics at Whistler BC. Currently, Jasyn lives and paints in Thompson, Manitoba.

Sue Matheson is a twentieth century generalist who teaches literature and film studies at the University College of the North. Her interest in cultural failure has become the base of her research: currently, Sue specializes in popular American thought and culture, Children's Literature, and North American film.

Sharron Proulx-Turner is a Metis writer who was raised in the Ottawa Valley and presently lives and writes in Calgary. She claims Mohawk, Algonquin, Huron, Ojibwe, Micmac, French and Irish ancestry. She has two adult children and a number of recent publications to her credit. Some of the publications include *she is reading her blanket with her hands* from Frontenac Press, 2008; *she walks for days within a thousand eyes* from Turnstone Press; and *what the aunties say* from McGilligan Books.

Mark Sampson has published one novel, entitled *Off Book* (Norwood Publishing, Halifax NS, 2007) and a number of short stories and poems in literary journals across Canada, including *Pottersfield Portfolio*, *paperplates* and *The Frequent & Vigorous Quarterly*. Born and raised on Prince Edward Island, he holds a master's degree in English (creative writing) from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg as well as a journalism degree from the University of King's College in Halifax. He currently lives and writes in Toronto.

Cyril Pierone, a carver/artist, lives and works in Wabowden, Manitoba.

Yvonne Trainer works as an Assistant Professor in English at The Pas, UCN campus, with teaching interests in Canadian Literature after 1925, Contemporary Poetry, Indigenous Literature, Creative Writing and Literature and Health Care. She lives among books and poems in The Pas and enjoys fishing, especially here in the rivers and lakes of the North.

Bill Tremblay is an award-winning poet as well as a novelist, teacher, editor, and reviewer whose work has appeared in seven full-length volumes of poetry, including *Crying in the Cheap Seats* [University of Massachusetts Press] *The Anarchist Heart* [New Rivers Press], *Home Front* [Lynx House Press], *Second Sun: New & Selected Poems* [L'Epervier Press], *Duhamel: Ideas of Order in Little Canada* [BOA Editions Ltd.], *Rainstorm Over the Alphabet* [Lynx House Press], and most recently *Shooting Script: Door of Fire* [Eastern Washington University Press] which won the Colorado Poetry Prize. Hundreds of his poems have been published in literary magazines in the United States and Canada, as well such anthologies as the *Pushcart Prize Anthology, The Jazz Poetry Anthology, Best American Poetry, 2003, The Portable Poetry Workshop,* and *Responding to Literature*. He has received awards and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as The Pushcart Prize Anthology and the Corporation at Yaddo. Bill edited *Colorado Review* for 15 years, served as a member of the Program Directors Council of the Associated Writing Programs [AWP], a nd is the recipient of the John F. Stern Distinguished Professor award for his thirty plus years teaching in and directing the MFA in Creative Writing Program at Colorado State University. He is currently looking for a publisher for his latest long poem, *Fire To Fire.*

Poet Gail Whitter lives and works in Trail, BC. Her most recent book of poetry, *A Time for Ashes* is available on-line. Also an accomplished artist and mail artist, Gail has had numerous solo art exhibitions of her work and also hosted many online mail art exhibitions.

call for papers: theme issue

The quint's eleventh issue is issuing a call for theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest on the topic of disability—as well as creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books on this theme. The deadline for this call is April 10th, 2011—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

quint guidelines

All contributions to *the quint* will be forwarded to a member of the editorial board. Manuscripts must not be previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere while being reviewed by *the quint's* editors or outside readers.
Hard copies of manuscripts should be sent to *the quint*, University College of the North, 504 Princeton Drive, Thompson, Manitoba, Canada, R8N 0A5. We are happy to receive your artwork in digital format, PDF preferred. Email copies of manuscripts, Word or RTF preferred, should be sent to the appropriate editor: poetry/fiction ytrainer@ucn.ca; articles and reviews jbutler@ucn.ca; art smatheson@ucn.ca.
Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text, including all images and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered.
Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.
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