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29. Gruber, *Darwin on Man*, p. 450 (C123).
30. Ibid., p. 454 (C243).
31. Ibid., p. 276 (M57).
32. Ibid., p. 281 (M84).
33. Gillispie as cited in Manier, *The Young Darwin*, p. 19; Gruber, *Darwin on Man*, p. 12.
34. Peckham, *Origin of Species*, p. 165, 3d ed.
35. Manier, *The Young Darwin*, p. 40.
36. Gruber, *Darwin on Man*, p. 278 (M69-M73).
37. Manier, *The Young Darwin*, pp. 39-40.
38. Ibid., p. 199.
39. Ibid., pp. 61–64, 149, 150, 154–56, 158, 161.
40. Peckham, *Origin of Species*, pp. 168–69, 2d ed.
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42. Chaim Perelman, and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 79, 132–35, 450.
43. John Milton, *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, vol. 7: *Paradise Lost*, introduction by Cleanth Brooks (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 260.
44. Manier, *The Young Darwin*, p. 174.
45. Ibid., 174–75; Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, *Evolution by Natural Selection*, with a foreword by Sir Gavin DeBeer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 45, 114, 115.
46. Stauffer, *Darwin's Natural Selection*, pp. 175, 569. Darwin attributes the phrase "All nature . . . is at war" to the elder De Candolle rather than to Hobbes as Manier affirms. See Manier, *The Young Darwin*, p. 181.
47. Manier, *The Young Darwin*, p. 181.
48. *The Origin*, pp. 62–63, 1st ed.
49. Manier, *The Young Darwin*, p. 13.
50. Darwin, *The Origin*, e.g., pp. 159, 482, 1st ed. For the role of *vera causa* in the dispute, see Hull, *Darwin and His Critics*, pp. 27, 45, 109, 115, 163, 180, 355.
51. Ruse, *Darwinian Revolution*, pp. 205–6.
52. Ibid., pp. 222–25; Ospovat, *Development of Darwin's Theory*, p. 89.
53. Ospovat, *Development of Darwin's Theory*, pp. 87, 88.
54. Ibid., pp. 210–35.
55. See nn. 18, 21, 22.
56. *Autobiography*, p. 139.

6 WHERE OBJECTIVITY LIES

THE RHETORIC OF ANTHROPOLOGY

RENATO ROSALDO

One foggy night a number of years ago, I found myself driving with a physicist along the mountainous stretch of Route 17 between Santa Cruz and San Jose. Being a little anxious about the weather and having nothing better to do, we tried to talk about our respective fields. He began by asking me, as only a physicist could, what anthropologists had discovered.

"Discovered?" I asked, pretending not to know what he meant and hoping something would come to me.

"Yes," he said, "like the properties or laws of other cultures."

"Oh," I mumbled, my heart sinking, "you mean something like $E = mc^2$."

"Yes," he said.

"There's one thing," I suddenly heard myself saying, "that we know for sure. We all know a good description when we see one. We haven't discovered any laws of culture, but we do think there are classic ethnographies, really telling descriptions of other cultures, like the Trobriand Islanders, the Tikopia, and the Nuer."

What a relief! Probably I burbled on about Tom Kuhn's notion of exemplars: classic experiments that physicists learn in the process of mastering their trade.[1] Though such experiments cannot be reduced to rules or recipes, they are vehicles through which young physicists learn to recognize and produce a good piece of work. Similarly, perusal of classic ethnographies rather than a set of methodological procedures teaches young anthropologists what a good description of other lifeways looks like.

Considering the discipline's folk belief in an ethnographic canon, it is peculiar that apprentice anthropologists, as a matter of course, do not

study rhetoric with a view to learning how the sacred texts were made. They could, for example, not unlike young artists or physicists, imitate exemplary ethnographic modes of composition and argumentation. In a manner both literary and conceptual, they could study, as I shall in a moment, narrative point of view, tone, and mode. In studying point of view, they could, for example, ask whether analyses of exploitation depict the system as a whole. Or do they instead assume the position of the oppressor? Alternatively, though in fact less frequently, analysts can adopt the perspective of the oppressed. Playing subversively on a masculine idiom, analyses of narrative viewpoint attend to the differences between how the arrow and the target experience a bull's-eye. Matters of tone, in contrast, involve characterizing distinctive moods and asking whether particular human subjects are just going through the motions or are actually caught up by intense emotions. Mode, finally, requires assessments as to whether people are joking, teasing, insulting, playing, pontificating, pleading, whining, speaking in earnest, or simultaneously assuming more than one of these postures.

Indeed, the human sciences have, in the manner of Monsieur Jourdain, only recently noticed that their work is written.[2] Even today a course on methodology routinely includes a battery of techniques for the collection and manipulation of data, but precious little about how to write field notes and record interviews, and certainly nothing about how in the end to write articles or books. How can one write about other people's lives in a way that preserves differences without losing sight of similarities; that displays both structural constraints and more improvised struggles; that moves between lucid distance and telling closeness?[3] These kinds of questions about how to represent other forms of life rarely enter discussions of method in anthropology. It is as if one imagined that photographs told the unadorned real truth without ever noticing how they are constructed—framed and taken from particular angles, at certain distances, and with different depths of field.

The relative silence about writing in discussions of method seems especially conspicuous in anthropology, where the book-length ethnography has been so enshrined as a form of knowledge that we speak, often rather unreflectingly (and sometimes desperately, as on the road to San Jose), about classics or well-described cultures. Such lists usually begin with Bronislaw Malinowski's work on the Trobriand Islanders, Raymond Firth's on the Tikopia, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard's on the Nuer. The notion of classic ethnographies assumes a discipline-wide consensus about great works (canonized, one might add, more for their descriptive veracity than their compelling narrative).

Arguably, the rhetoric of ethnography, like that of the human sciences in general, requires study in two modes, which one can call the appreciative and the critical. The appreciative mode reads texts in their own terms and attempts to evaluate them in relation to their own goals. This approach introduces the admirable caution of trying to understand what somebody else is saying before engaging in argument. In this vein one can argue that ethnography *is* what ethnographers *do*. One should therefore begin with exemplary works and through close readings discover what they *do* say rather than imposing rules about what they *ought* to say, as the philosopher Carl Hempel did to the historians.[4]

The critical mode, on the other hand, begins with a project for the discipline and assesses works, methods, and theories in relation to desired forms of analysis. The admirable quality that this approach introduces is that of giving direction to future studies rather than rehearsing past achievements. This approach sets goals and considers means of achieving them. It looks wherever it can (both within the discipline and beyond its bounds) for the resources needed to pursue the project.

In my view the appreciative and the critical modes need to be combined in studying the rhetoric of the human sciences. The former mode taken by itself provides significant exemplars that can orient vanguard work, play a pedagogical role, and guard against reinventing the wheel. Yet it can prove less effective in defining projects that look into the future. The latter mode in isolation, on the other hand, fails to recognize that the state of the art rather than an imagined final goal constitutes the point of departure for current projects. One measures progress in the human sciences in relation to current knowledge (better than before) and not in teleological terms (the ultimate truth). Thus in what follows I shall attempt to tack back and forth between the appreciative and the critical modes of inquiry.

Let me begin by advancing a version of the anthropological project along with a criterion for assessing the validity of ethnographic descriptions. Anthropologists aspire to describe other cultures in ways that render them familiar (or at any rate intelligible and humanly plausible) without losing sight of their differences. Good descriptions neither bring other people so close that they become just like ourselves nor so distance them (in the name of objectivity) that they become objectified and dehumanized. Anthropology's project thus is viewed as the study of human possibilities. Its activist trajectory calls for culture-specific analyses oriented toward the actual workings of particular societies rather than toward the metropolitan Eurocentric designs of planning agencies. Its contemplative conception affirms that the actual

variety of human cultures far exceeds that imagined within the confines of any single tradition. Ethnography can expand our imaginations by teaching us how other cultures conceive and confront such fundamental life issues as labor, love, cooperation, conflict, play, birth, and death.

One plausible criterion, among others, for descriptive adequacy could be a thought experiment: how valid would we find ethnographic discourse if it were applied to ourselves? Perhaps I should begin by taking this question one step further and asking about the validity of other people's actual (rather than hypothetical) characterizations of ourselves.

All anthropologists surely have been moved, if not shaken, by the astute ethnographic observations that their subjects of research have made about American or European culture. The most dramatic experience of this kind in my fieldwork suggests a dialogic potential, one of critical reflection and reciprocal perceptions, as yet rarely realized in the official rhetoric of anthropology.

When I was residing in the late 1960s as an ethnographer among the Ilongots of northern Luzon, Philippines, I was struggling against a diffusely overwhelming reaction to one of their central cultural practices: headhunting.[5] Despite my indoctrination in cultural relativism, headhunting seemed utterly alien and morally reprehensible. At the time I
hunting seemed utterly alien and morally reprehensible. At the time I wanted simply to bracket my moral perception in order to carry out the ethnographic project of understanding the practice in its own terms.

Early answers to my questions suggested that headhunting had ended with the last Japanese beheaded in June 1945. These beheadings, Ilongots said, aided the American army. When asked about more recent headhunting episodes, they indignantly replied, "How could you think such a thing of us? I helped carry you across a stream. I fed you. I've cared for you. How could you think such a thing?" I could not but agree.

After about a year of fieldwork there, Tukbaw and I were flying in a small plane when he pointed down below and said, "That's where we raided." He had gone headhunting here more recently than I had dared imagine. Soon everyone began to tell me their headhunting stories. Within a few weeks I realized that every man in the settlement had taken a head. I was shocked and disoriented because my companions had indeed been kind and generous. How could such caring hosts also be brutal killers?

Some months later I was classified 1–A for the draft. My companions immediately told me not to fight in Viet Nam and offered to conceal me in their homes. Though it corresponded to my sentiments, their offer

could not have surprised me more. Unthinkingly I had supposed that headhunters would see my reluctance to serve in the armed forces as a form of cowardice. Instead they told me that soldiers are men who sell their bodies. Pointedly they interrogated me: "How can a man do as soldiers do and command his brothers to move into the line of fire?"

This act, ordering one's own men to risk their lives, was utterly beyond their moral comprehension. My own cultural world suddenly appeared grotesque. Yet their earnest incomprehension significantly narrowed the moral chasm between us, for their ethnographic observation about modern war was both aggressive and caring. They condemned my society's soldiering at the same time that they urged me not to sell my body.

Through such encounters the possibility for reciprocal critical perceptions opened between the Ilongots and myself. This encounter suggests that we ethnographers should be open to asking not only how our descriptions of others would read if applied to ourselves, but also how we can learn from other people's descriptions of ourselves. In this case I was repositioned through an Ilongot account of one of my culture's central institutions. I could no longer speak about headhunting as one of the clean addressing the dirty, the innocent addressing the guilty. My loss of innocence enabled me and the Ilongots to face each other on more nearly equal ground, as members of flawed societies.[6] We both lost positions of purity from which to condemn the other without at the same time having to condone what we found morally reprehensible in ourselves and in the other. Neither war nor headhunting, in deeply serious ways, has been the same for me since.

That their telling question ignored state authority and hierarchical chains of command mattered little. Their off-centered observation, though offering raw material for caricature, was critical rather than parodic or satirical. Satire and parody, of course, tend to be modes of speaking assumed by marginal members of the society being caricatured. My position, that of a person neither an Ilongot nor about to marry one, barely allowed such rhetorical liberties between us. Such cross-cultural observations, nonetheless, do lend themselves, as shall become clear in a moment, to being understood as humor.

Consider once again the question of how ethnographic descriptions would look if applied to ourselves. The available literature in fact indicates that a divide between serious conception and laughing reception can separate the author's intentions from the reader's responses. Human subjects have often reacted with bemused puzzlement over the ways they have been depicted in anthropological writings. It suggests, in other words, that ethnographies written in accord with disciplinary

norms, though humorless in intent, can be read by their subjects as parodic. The record of such readings indicates that anthropologists could profit from defamiliarizing their discipline's most taken-for-granted rhetorical strategies. This excursion in analyses at once rhetorical and conceptual can be most productive if it leads to a shift in anthropological norms that encourages practitioners both to read the past and to write the future with more critical and humane representations of other forms of life.

The problem of validity in ethnographic discourse has reached crisis proportions over the past fifteen years, among other places in Chicano responses to anthropological depictions of themselves. The most balanced yet most devastating assessment of these issues has been put forth by Americo Paredes. He begins rather gently by saying, "I find the Mexicans and Chicanos pictured in the usual ethnographies somewhat unreal."[7] He goes on to suggest, in the following manner, that the people studied find ethnographic accounts written about them more parodic than telling: "It is not so much a sense of outrage, that would betray wounded egos, as a feeling of puzzlement, that *this* is given as a picture of the communities they have grown up in. Many of them are more likely to laugh at it all than feel indignant" (his emphasis).[8] His critique of the somewhat unreal picture put forth in ethnographies about Chicanos continues with a stunning item-by-item enumeration of such errors as mistranslations, taking jokes seriously, missing double meanings, and accepting as the literal truth an apocryphal story about brutal initiation rites in youth gangs. To top it off, a team of anthropological researchers in south Texas failed even to notice the emergence during their research period of a locally powerful political movement called the Raza Unida Party.

Paredes's diagnosis is that most ethnographic writing on Mexicans and Chicanos has failed to grasp significant variations in the tone of cultural events. In an ethnography he sees as representative, Paredes says, for example, that Chicanos portrayed "are not only literal-minded, they never crack a joke."[9] He argues that ethnographers who attempt to interpret Chicano culture should recognize not only the larger context, but also matters of mode: "whether a gathering is a wake, a beer bust, or a street-corner confabulation."[10] Knowledge about the cultural framing of events could aid the ethnographer in distinguishing earnest from joking speech. Even when using technical concepts, the analysis should not lose sight of whether the speech is serious (to be taken literally) or deadpan (to be read as farce).

Lest there be any confusion, I am saying neither that the native is always right nor that Paredes as native-ethnographer could never be

wrong. Instead my claim is that we should take the criticisms of our subjects in much the same way that we take those of our colleagues. Their criticisms simply should be listened to and taken into account, to be accepted, rejected, or modified, as we reformulate our analyses. At issue is not the real truth versus the ethnographic lie. After all, the pragmatic concerns of everyday life can diverge from those of disciplined inquiry. Technical and everyday vocabularies differ in large measure because the projects they reflect and create are oriented to different purposes. In addition, natives can be just as insightful, sociologically correct, axe-grinding, self-interested, or mistaken as ethnographers. In this case Paredes has called attention to how straight ethnography can easily be read by natives as parodic, "somewhat unreal" and more "to laugh at" than "feel indignant" about. His response, among other things, calls for a reassessment of ethnographers' rhetorical habits.

The difficulties of using ethnographic discourse for self-description should have long been apparent to anthropologists, who, for the most part, have read the classic, if heavy-handed, paper "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" by Horace Miner. In that paper a particular distanced normalizing mode of ethnographic discourse became parodic (not unlike certain anthropological writings on Chicanos) when applied to Americans ("Nacirema" spelled backward, of course, is "American"). In the following passage, for example, Miner says:

> The daily body ritual performed by everyone includes a mouth-rite. Despite the fact that these people are so punctilious about care of the mouth, this rite involves a practice which strikes the uninitiated stranger as revolting. It was reported to me that the ritual consists of inserting a small bundle of hog hairs into the mouth, along with certain magical powders, and then moving the bundle in a highly formalized series of gestures.[11]

His essay thus defamiliarizes both through the narrator's position as uninitiated stranger and through the distanced idiom that transforms everyday practices into more elevated ritual and magical acts.

Clearly there is a gap between the technical idiom of ethnography and the language of everyday life.[12] Miner's description employs terms used by a certain group of professionals rather than the words most Americans, the people described, would normally use in talking about their life experiences. Both kinds of language, of course, have their place. My project is to juxtapose the two with a view to showing the debilitating consequences of restricting unduly the range of legitimate technical rhetoric.

In Miner's case the discrepancy between what we all know about brushing our teeth and the ethnographer's distanced discourse is precisely what makes the article parodic. Here jarring discordance enters less in terms made explicit in the text (despite what text-positivists may think) than in the disjunction between textualized technical concepts and the reader's tacit everyday life knowledge (held prior to and independent of reading about the Nacirema) that Miner is simply talking about people brushing their teeth in the morning.

It is curious in retrospect that Miner's article was taken simply as a joke rather than as a scathing critique of ethnographic discourse. Who could continue to feel comfortable describing other people in terms that sound ludicrous when applied to ourselves? In certain cases the detached observer's objectivity arguably resides more in a manner of speaking than in apt characterizations of other people's use and experience of their social forms. How can one widen the range of possible descriptive idioms so that they can prove appropriate to other people's and our own experiences?

Lest it appear that no actual ethnography has ever been written in the manner of Miner's ritual mouth-washing, one should probably cite an actual case. Otherwise the reader could regard the particular rhetoric of anthropology under discussion as merely a straw man rather than as the dominant, most legitimate, and most frequently deployed assemblage of discursive practices in the discipline. Consider, for example, the following passage from A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's classic ethnography, *The Andaman Islanders:*

> When two friends or relatives meet after having been separated, the social relation between them that has been interrupted is about to be renewed. This social relation implies or depends upon the existence of a specific bond of solidarity between them. The weeping rite (together with the subsequent exchange of presents) is the affirmation of this bond. The rite, which, it must be remembered, is obligatory, compels the two participants to act as though they felt certain emotions, and thereby does, to some extent, produce these emotions in them.[13]

This passage, we should keep in mind, describes the tears of greeting between long-separated old friends. Nonetheless, the ethnographer manifests skepticism as to whether or not people actually feel anything under the circumstances: they "act as though they felt certain emotions." Indeed an obligatory ritual is required to do the job and "to some extent, produce these emotions in them." Yet the status of Radcliffe-Brown's term "obligatory" remains obscure. Does it mean

that when he witnessed weeping greeters they always turned out to be long-lost intimates? How could he have observed greetings without tears between long-lost intimates? Or did people simply tell the ethnographer that when long-lost intimates greet one another, they weep? It is curious that obligation as a cultural construct carries such analytical weight yet remains simply asserted rather than explored in conceptual terms.

Radcliffe-Brown's detached, dehumanizing descriptive idiom, of course, could potentially offer analytical insight not available through more everyday concepts. Certainly Thorstein Veblen and Erving Goffman, for example, used distanced normalizing descriptions with a deliberately satirical intent to jolt their readers into thinking afresh about their everyday lives. The problem resides less in the use of such descriptions than in an unreflective attachment to them as the sole vehicle for literal objective truth. Thus Radcliffe-Brown, following the descriptive norms of natural history and legitimating their extension to professional ethnography, so detached himself from his human subjects that his account lends itself to being read as unwittingly parodic, even absurd. Surely tearful greetings between long-lost intimates, however defamiliarized in discourse, must be deeply familiar in the lived experience of most readers.

Nonetheless, most anthropological readers of Radcliffe-Brown probably take his account at face value. When, for example, I told a colleague about my analysis of Radcliffe-Brown's depiction of Andaman weeping rites, she correctly followed the code for ethnographic readers and replied, "Yes, but for them, unlike for us, the rites are obligatory." Such are the costs of ignoring rhetoric and following rarely examined habits of reading and writing. Why, one wonders, does this kind of discourse sound earnest when applied to the Andaman Islanders and parodic when applied to ourselves? Could an ethnographer write a parodic account of the Andaman Islanders? Would the Andaman Islanders find Radcliffe-Brown's account parodic? It does seem curious that ethnography is so uniform in its tone that its characters, to the extent that it has any beyond the group noun ("the Andaman Islanders"), rarely laugh and enjoy themselves.

The detached objectivity of the dominant legitimate form of ethnographic discourse can work against the anthropological project of understanding other cultures by familiarizing yet preserving differences. In what follows I shall review a series of ethnographic instances with a view to indicating how ethnographic discourse can fail to apprehend the realities it attempts to describe and analyze. This critique will end by suggesting positive changes—experiments with point of

view, tone, and mode—that can improve our apprehension of other people's life experiences.

One arena for judging the adequacy of ethnographic accounts could be anthropological writings on death and mourning. Indeed the discourse on death, compared with that on other topics, appears particularly distanced and normalizing. Yet it has the virtue of being relatively well represented in the literature (unlike such similarly emotion-laden significant topics as love, adulterous passion, and spontaneous fun). The problems of rhetoric and analysis that emerge so clearly with reference to mourning and bereavement also obtain, with appropriate modifications, for a number of other topics as well.

That the topic of death has proven refractory for ethnographic analysis probably comes as no surprise. Most intensive ethnographic studies have been conducted by relatively young people who have not yet experienced devastating losses. Furthermore, such researchers usually come from upper-middle-class Anglo-American professional backgrounds where people (unlike policemen and crop-dusters) often shield themselves by not talking about death and other people's bereavement. Such ethnographers probably have grown up with the notion, itself a version of the stiff upper lip, that outsiders should not talk to the chief mourners about how they experience their grief.

My sketch of reactions to death and bereavement in upper-middle-class Anglo-American culture represents a central tendency, more a statistical probability than a monolithic certainty. Since readers can judge the representativeness of anecdotes about their own culture, a brief example from a local newspaper, a source as familiar as it is rarely used in academic writing, can probably suffice to fill in the sketch. The *San Jose Mercury News* on January 17, 1984, carried a story about how parents react to their children's death. The reporter pointed out that most upper-middle-class people strive to live out the illusion of being in control of their lives. Death, the brute fact of human mortality, threatens their sense of being in control. In this context one of the parents featured, Pamela Mang, whose daughter Jessica died of cancer, said: "One of the most profound insights I got out of Jessica's illness was that the way most of us live in the American culture is to try to protect ourselves from disasters and difficulties, and that we miss a lot of life because of that." She went on to describe how friends could not cope with her bereavement:

> Oh, God, you just want to get it out, to talk about it, because somehow getting it out into the air makes it something of a size that is manageable, that you can handle. There is a lot of love and sympathy from friends in the beginning, but they have a lot of fear in them and they begin to withdraw as the illness settles down into just a horrible daily grind. You represent to them the living proof that cancer can just come right in and strike the all-American family.

Pamela Mang's statement is indicative of the difficulties most ethnographers without personal experience of loss could have in confronting the bereavement of other people, whether next-door neighbors or far-away members of other cultures. Young ethnographers in particular are unlikely to have learned much about loss and could find it awkward, in doing field research, to interview the chief mourners about their experiences. Such matters, culturally speaking, are not to be talked about. It thus is no accident that normalizing, distanced ethnographic discourse has found extensive application in studies of mourning.

Most ethnographic writing on death collapses funerary ritual with mourning and discusses only the former while pretending to analyze the latter.[14] Indeed, even discussions of funerary ritual usually employ it as a vehicle for the analysis of social structure rather than—perhaps in order to avoid—discussing bereavement as a humanly significant experience. Thus one finds what can be called "they vary with" statements as central organizing tropes in the analyses. Representative of such statements are the following (italics added):

> The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites *vary with* the age, sex, and status of the deceased.[15]

> Any death plunges a Kwaio community into the shock of collective bereavement. How deep the shock, how dramatic the subsequent events, *depend on* the age and identity of the decedent, and the circumstances of the death. We shall first look at these *axes of variation*, then turn to their outcomes.[16]

> The role of the living in the rituals *varies according to* sex as well as degree of relationship to the deceased.[17]

> These different methods of tying and restraining the bereaved are *indices of* the socially expected reactions to grief on the part of *various categories of person* and are therefore of particular value in elucidating certain general aspects of these roles.[18]

Funerary ritual evidently has proven an elegant arena for studies in concomitant variation (a methodology pioneered by Emile Durkheim)

that have repeatedly demonstrated how social structural factors determine visible differences in mortuary scale and elaboration.

Most descriptions of death stand at a peculiar distance from the obviously intense emotions expressed. There are a number of strategies for normalizing what from the point of view of the bereaved husband or mother cannot be other than a unique and devastating loss. In certain cases ethnographers relate intense expressions of bereavement to expectations and conventions, as in the following (my italics):

> A man *will be expected* to display great grief at the death of a young son.[19]

> Another indication of the same imbalance in the parent-child relationship is to be seen in the occurrence of suicide attempts, which are a *standardized method* of demonstrating grief at the loss of a relative.[20]

> Only the chief mourners among the women—the mother, sisters, and the widows of the deceased—*are expected* to express their grief more violently, by loud sobbing and an occasional high pitched wail (called *tigi*) which is the *conventional expression* of deep sorrow.[21]

Why does ethnographic discourse promote skepticism, a distanced agnosticism about the authenticity of heart-rending expressions of emotion when a father loses a son, a bereaved person attempts suicide, or a woman sobs and wails violently? Surely nobody in that culture, or in any culture, would be surprised to find a father distraught over the loss of a son.

It is difficult to imagine, for example, a San Francisco ethnographer actually following the above formulas and telling a bereaved father that his son followed the expected, standardized, conventional method of committing suicide by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. On the other hand, the ethnographer could use such formulas to discuss Bay Area suicide in general rather than somebody's son's suicide in particular. The latter could be a telling and humane enterprise. Yet the problem remains that unreflective talk about culturally expected expressions of grief easily slips, for both readers and writers of ethnography, into skepticism about the reality of the emotions expressed. These canonical writings substitute the term "conventional" for Radcliffe-Brown's key term, "obligatory." It is all too easy to mistake the force of conventional forms of life for the merely conventional, as if sobs and high-pitched wails were the same kind of culturally preferred gestures as those used in brushing teeth.

Neither one's ability to anticipate other people's reactions nor the fact that people express their grief in culturally specific ways should be conflated (as in the cited passages above) with the notion that the devastatingly bereaved are merely conforming to conventional expectations. Even eye-witness reports cast in the normalizing ethnographic idiom trivialize the events they describe by reducing the force of intense emotions to spectacle. Their accounts visualize people's actions from the outside and fail to provide the participants' reflections on their own experiences. They normalize by presenting generalized recipes for ritual action rather than attempting to grasp the particular content of bereavement.[22]

The dominant mode of discourse appears, among other places, with particular clarity in Jack Goody's book *Death, Property and the Ancestors*. A chapter entitled "The Day of Death: Mourning the Dead," for example, begins with the response of the close kin of the deceased and provides a recipe drawn in a composite manner from a number of observations and descriptions:

> While the xylophones are playing, the lineage "wives" and "sisters" of the dead man walk and run about the area in front of the house, crying lamentations and holding their hands behind the nape of the neck in the accepted attitude of grief. . . . From time to time, one of the immediate mourners breaks into a trot, even a run, and a bystander either intercepts or chases after the bereaved and quietens him by seizing his wrist.[23]

The analyst has positioned himself as a spectator who looks on from the outside. Do the women experience their lamentations and gestures as an accepted attitude of grief in the manner portrayed by their ethnographer? What about the experience of the bereaved person being restrained? In the latter case the ethnographer simply remains silent, though this chapter, subtitled "Mourning the Dead," purports to describe the process of mourning. Only a detached observer witnessing, or at any rate representing, devastating loss in the most external manner could write such an account.

The ethnography immediately goes on to discuss not the bereaved, but the structural determinants that govern who can play the role of restraining the chief mourners from injuring or killing themselves. Within a paragraph the reader is presented with the following table giving a mechanical index of degrees of bereavement:

> *Man's funeral*
> Father . . . . Tied by hide

Mother	Tied by hide
Wife	Tied by hide
Brother	Tied by fiber
Sister	Tied by fiber
Son	String tied around the ankle
Daughter	String tied around the ankle[24]

Put into words, the table simply says that a dead man's parents and wife can be tied by hide, his siblings can be tied by fiber, and his children can be tied with string around the ankle. (One can only wonder at the objectifying impulse behind casting such a readily verbalized statement in tabular form.) The ethnography continues in this manner: "Before analyzing these categories of bereaved in greater detail, note should be taken of some other ways in which mourners are visually differentiated."[25] The ethnographer's position as uninvolved spectator has become yet more evident. The spectacle itself, seen from the outside, is largely visual: "ways in which mourners are visually differentiated." The violent upheaval of grief, its wailing and attempts at self-injury and suicide, have become normalized both in descriptive narrative and analytical presentations.

This mode of ethnographic discourse makes it difficult to show how social forms can be both imposed by convention *and* used more spontaneously to express feelings. In relying exclusively on such an idiom, ethnographers can represent other lives *as if* they doubted even the most visible agonies of the bereaved, including, for instance, a father mourning a son or a husband grieving his wife who died in childbirth. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, places normalizing rhetoric in its most general theoretical garb in the following passage:

> Men do not act, as members of a group, in accordance with what each feels as an individual; each man feels as a function of the way in which he is permitted or obliged to act. Customs are given as external norms before giving rise to internal sentiments, and these non-sentient norms determine the sentiments of individuals as well as the circumstances in which they may, or must, be displayed.[26]

Lest the reader wonder how fully Lévi-Strauss intends to dismiss the explanatory import, indeed the reality, of emotions or sentiments, he continues as follows:

> Moreover, if institutions and customs drew their vitality from being continually refreshed and invigorated by individual sentiments, like those in which they originated, they ought to conceal an affective richness, continually replenished, which would be their positive content. We know that this is not the case, and that the constancy which they exhibit usually results from a conventional attitude.[27]

Lévi-Strauss finds such customs so devoid of affect that he can assert that emotions are experienced, not in the performance, but in the violation of conventional acts: "Emotion is indeed aroused, but when the custom, in itself indifferent, is violated."[28] What would the mourners, "crying lamentations and holding their hands behind the nape of the neck," reply to this assertion that they felt nothing at all and were simply conforming to indifferent custom?[29] The normative rhetoric of objective ethnographic description in this case both stimulates and appears to provide evidence supporting abstract theoretical statements that are neither humane nor accurate. In attempting to apprehend the complexities of other cultures, disciplined inquiry can ill afford to build its theories on such a slim rhetorical foundation.

What, one wonders, can supplement normalizing distanced discourse in ethnographic writing? A positive critique, after all, should attempt to develop alternative modes of doing ethnographic writing rather than simply multiplying negative examples. Other rhetorical modes, of course, are possible and have been used. In this paper, for example, I have used, among others, moral indignation, satire, and critique. For present illustrative purposes, however, I shall consider two among the myriad possible ways of writing ethnography. First, a more personal, particularizing, experiential rhetoric can offer another way of representing other forms of life. This mode, I should add, already appears in ethnographies, though with a status so secondary as to be relegated, for the most part, literally to the margins: prefaces, introductions, afterwords, footnotes, and italicized or small-print case histories. Second, normalized discourse deployed in more oblique, off-centered, or satirical ways, rather than in its usual monolithic, authoritative mode, can render its subjects in surprisingly multi-dimensional ways. In what follows I consider three instances of the first mode and one of the second with a view to developing a more varied array of rhetorical instruments for the analysis of other lifeways.

To begin, Godfrey Wilson has produced a rather different account of mourning: "That some at least of those who attend a Nyakyusa burial are moved by grief it is easy to establish."[30] In speaking about dancing, he begins by describing it as spectacle but goes on to remark that although "there are no very apparent signs of grief," the onlookers say that the dancers "are mourning the dead."[31] He cites an old man, for

example, who describes the experience of dancing as mourning: "We dance because there is war in our hearts.—A passion of grief and fear exasperates us."[32] The reader can both envision dance as spectacle and apprehend the sense in which dancing can be a form of mourning. Wilson achieved this shift simply by recording spontaneous as well as more conventional expressions of emotion and by asking people to talk about their experience of the dance.

In another case Clifford Geertz has described the mood of a Javanese funeral as "a calm, undemonstrative, almost languid letting go, a brief ritualized relinquishment of a relationship no longer possible."[33] After a brief normalizing description ("the men begin to cut wooden grave markers and to dig a grave"),[34] he describes a particular case, a boy's death, where one thing after another went wrong. The cutting of wooden grave markers, just cited as recipe, becomes transformed in this manner:

> After a half hour or so, a few of the abangans began to chip half-heartedly away at pieces of wood to make grave markers and a few women began to construct small flower offerings for want of anything better to do; but it was clear that the ritual was arrested and that no one quite knew what to do next. Tension slowly rose.[35]

Always at risk in living through the anguish of loss, normalizing cultural patterns were shredded by confusion between divergent religious and political practices that made a mockery of routine. Delving into the particulars of this agonizing event rather than the generalities of a composite construction revealed the severe limits of collapsing mourning with ritual and ritual with routine.

In yet another instance Loring Danforth begins with an account that moves from spectacle to rather more intimate portraits of mourners. Early in the account one envisions what people do in this vivid though external manner:

> Soon the graveyard was alive with activity, and a forest of candles burned at the foot of each grave. About ten women, all dressed in shades of black, brown, or blue, busied themselves lighting lamps and sweeping around the graves. Several women began hauling water in large buckets from the faucet in the church courtyard nearby.[36]

Though a particular rather than a composite account (notice, for example, the past tense rather than the normalizing ethnographic present), this smacks of visual spectacle complete with candlelight and dresses of various colors. The mood is one of almost bucolic calm and routine.

Yet as the account proceeds, the analysis shifts so that the reader soon learns the particular histories of the mourners. Thus the following passage:

> The death of Irini's twenty-year-old daughter Eleni was generally acknowledged to have been the most tragic the village of Potamia had experienced in many years. Eleni died almost five years earlier, in August 1974. She had been a very attractive young woman, tall, with long black hair. . . . One month before she was to begin her first teaching job, Eleni was struck by a car and killed in a hit-and-run accident in the city of Thessaloniki.[37]

The reader then hears verbatim laments, learns how the mother never left her house for a full year following her daughter's death, discovers the friendship that developed with another bereaved mother, and witnesses the daughter's exhumation as the participants, by then known in certain biographical particulars, find themselves overcome with emotion. The ethnographer provides a sense of the emotions experienced by the actors through their words, their gestures, and their biographies. One begins to approach the content of mourning.

Now another anecdote seems in order, but this time, in the spirit of moving between appreciation and criticism, the story concerns my surprise at how earnest ethnographic rhetoric, applied to ourselves, can be both revealing and parodic. It all began in the summer of 1983 when I spent a couple of weeks at a family cottage on the shore of Lake Huron in Western Ontario. The family owning the cottage were by the next fall to become my in-laws, hence my ambiguous (Victor Turner would have called it liminal) position as an outsider on the way in. Much as one would expect (unless one was, as I was, too much in the thick of things), the parents-in-law-to-be treated the groom-to-be with reserve and suspicion.

My peculiar position, literally surrounded as I was by future in-laws, nourished a project that began to unfold over a two-week period in barely conscious daydreams. I started to turn the daily family breakfast into a ritual described in normalizing ethnographic discourse. The morning of our departure I began telling, with feelings mixed between malice and tenderness, my in-laws-to-be the ethnography of their family breakfast while we all were still eating.

My dense description, as told that morning, started with the reigning partriarch, who every morning, as if off on the hunt, shouts from the kitchen, "How many people would like a poached egg?" Women

and children take turns saying yes or no. In the meantime (while the patriarch hunts), the women talk among themselves and designate one among them the toast-maker. As the eggs near readiness the reigning patriarch calls out to the designated toast-maker, "The eggs are about ready. Is there enough toast?" "Yes," comes the deferential reply, "the last two pieces are about to pop up." The patriarch then enters, as if just in front the hunt, bearing a plate of poached eggs before him. Throughout the course of the meal, the women and children, including the designated toast-maker, perform the obligatory ritual praise song, saying, "These sure are great eggs, Dad."

The reception of this ethnographic vignette about (and with which I interrupted) the family breakfast startled me because its telling was greeted with such amusement. Instead of seeming thin and earnest, as I had anticipated, my description was received as revealing and parodic. The reception of my tale, as has become evident in retrospect, was conditioned by the family's enjoyment of witty, teasing banter colored by hues of tender malice. All the participants, including the singers of the praise song, the designated toast-maker, and even the reigning patriarch, laughed and laughed, saying they had learned something. They said that the microethnography contained a recognizable measure of insight and truth.

My ethnographic discourse, in other words, not only transformed a particular experience (say, a fun meal together) into a generic family breakfast, but it also transformed a relatively spontaneous event into a caricatured analysis of routinized hierarchy organized along lines of gender and generation. The descriptive idiom deployed in the microethnography shifted jaggedly between terms ordinarily used by the family (mainly in such direct quotations as "These sure are great eggs, Dad") and those never used by them (such as "reigning patriarch," "designated toast-maker," and "obligatory ritual praise song"). The technical concepts displayed both tender hostility toward the future father-in-law (the reigning patriarch) and hesitant sympathy with the future sisters-in-law (the designated toast-maker and the singers of the praise song). One could, of course, have told a different story. On the one hand, there is the tale of how this breakfast differed from all others. On the other hand, the narrator could assume the father's point of view by describing how the "family provider" distributed his gifts to the "starving horde."

The ethnographic account turned out to have been a timely intervention that altered without destroying mealtime practices. The participants—the father approaching retirement and his daughters well along in their careers—had at the time been in the process of changing certain aspects of their relations. The insight I only half-consciously offered was that family breakfast routines, by then closer to empty ritual than they had been when the children were growing up, themselves embodied certain of the relations of gender and hierarchy that were being altered. My normalizing account inserted itself into this process by helping my in-laws-to-be see more clearly yet another arena for change.

The analysis was not an eternally objective statement, but an objectifying intervention that made the system under that description obsolete. The breakfast routine will doubtless change in certain respects and not others. The ritual praise songs honoring the well-poached eggs and their maker, for example, will probably continue to be sung, though in a different key and with tongue in cheek. In this case to defamiliarize was to transform everyday taken-for-granted reality.

The discourse deployed to describe the family breakfast formally resembled Radcliffe-Brown's, but the objectifications were so differently situated that the former could be called transformative and the latter dehumanizing. My account turned out to be parodic in large part because of the peculiar distance—that of an outsider becoming an inlaw—at which I was analyst-narrator found myself positioned. This difference between transformative and dehumanizing objectifications thus resides more in how the analyst is positioned within a field of social interaction than in the distanced, normalizing text read as a field of intrinsic meaning. How rhetorical forms of discourse are read depends not only on their formal linguistic properties, but also on how narrators are positioned.

This paper has ended where its composition actually started. It was in fact the startling experience of having an earnest narration greeted with gales of laughter that made me wonder why a way of talking that sounded so serious when applied to absent Andaman Islanders could be so funny when applied to present Canadians. This question revolved around a pair of closely related difficulties. It is difficult to use distanced discourse to write an intentionally parodic account of such markedly distinctive customary lifeways as those of the Andaman Islanders. At the same time, this idiom so readily lends itself to parody, when applied to ourselves, that serious rather than satirical self-description becomes difficult to achieve. This paradox—a single rhetoric's being either parodic or serious depending in large measure on whether it is applied to Self or to Other—was the point of departure for this project.

In time I came to see that anthropology as a discipline has authorized normalizing accounts of so-called primitives to be read as earnest, ob-

jective descriptions of their forms of life. Ethnography beckons us to grow so accustomed to distanced normalizing discourse that it seems natural. Its authority has become so well established, so much taken for granted, that it appears within the norms of the discipline not as one rhetorical mode of representation among others, but as the one and only legitimate form for telling the literal truth about other people's life-ways. Yet no single rhetoric, whatever current fashions may dictate, has a monopoly on objectivity.

As a corrective to such literal-mindedness, I have taken this rhetorical mode, one that defamiliarizes the everyday world, and made it itself appear strange. This analysis has indicated how short is the distance between objective characterization and objectifying caricature. A discipline that grants detachment, or at least distance, exclusive rights to objective truth condemns itself to being at least as likely to reveal where objectivity lies as where it tells the truth. Ethnographies written in the present tense and cast in an idiom of generality usually gain their authority by contrast with more particular personal narratives and case histories. Yet the latter forms, using the past tense and talking about particulars as they do, can depict the experience of mourning in ways more difficult to achieve through normalizing discourse. If people suffer through their bereavement, it hardly appears objective to represent their experiences as if they were merely conforming with conventions by going through the expected motions.

In the end, of course, there is no single recipe for writing enthnographies of fine insight and imagination. Indeed Ilongot observations on modern warfare and mine on the family breakfast suggest that off-centered normalizing rhetoric can at times yield forceful accounts. Certainly standing current fashion on its head by substituting tales of specific cases for distanced normalizing discourse will not yield a solution to the vexed problem of representing other lives. Instead an increased disciplinary tolerance for diverse legitimate rhetorical forms could allow for reading and writing any particular text against other possible versions. Allowing forms of writing that have been marginalized or banned altogether to gain legitimacy could enable the discipline to approximate people's lives from a number of angles of vision. Such a tactic could enable us better to advance the ethnographic project of apprehending the range of human possibilities in their fullest complexity.

NOTES

I am grateful for the critical comments that I have received on this paper from Don McCloskey, Susan McCoin, Mary Louise Pratt, and Kathy Weston. Clifford Geertz, as a discussant, gave a particularly thoughtful critical appraisal of it.

1. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 43–51, 187–98.

2. The essays in this collection, of course, indicate that a number of people in different disciplines now have come to similar realizations. Other works that I have found especially helpful in studying the rhetoric of the human sciences include: Richard H. Brown *A Poetic for Sociology: Toward a Logic of Discovery for the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Robert H. Canary and Henry Kosicki, eds., *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964); J. H. Hexter, "The Rhetoric of History," in David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 6: 368–94; Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Donald N. McCloskey, "The Rhetoric of Economics," *Journal of Economic Literature* 21 (1983): 481–517; Mary Louise Pratt, "Conventions of Representation: Where Discourse and Ideology Meet," in Heidi Byrnes, ed., *Georgetown University Round Table in Languages and Linguistics 1982* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1982), pp. 139–55; idem, "'Scratches on the Face of the Country,' or What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen," *Critical Inquiry* (forthcoming); idem, "'Under Our Very Eyes': Ethnography and Travel Writing," in George Marcus and James Clifford, eds., *Writing Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). Within anthropology I have learned particularly from the following: James Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes: Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions, and Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority," *Representations* 1:2 (1983): 118–46; Vincent Crapanzano, "On the Writing of Ethnography," *Dialectical Anthropology* 2 (1977): 69–73; Clifford Geertz, "Slide Show: Evans-Pritchard's African Transparencies," *Raritan* 3:2 (1983): 62–80; George Marcus and Dick Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts," in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 11 (Palo Alto: Annual Reviews, 1982), pp. 25–69.

3. The first project, that of seeing cultural differences without losing sight of human similarities, has been most influentially articulated by Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The*

Intepretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3–30, esp. p. 14. The second, that social analysis should include both structure and agency, can be found, among other places, in the following: Richard J. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). The third, that of moving between closeness and distance, has been discussed in the following: Clifford Geertz, "'From the Native's Point of View': On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 55–70, esp. 56–58; Renato Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage: On the Cultural Force of Emotions," in Edward M. Bruner, ed., *Text, Play, and Story: The Construction and Reconstruction of Self and Society* (Washington, D.C.: American Ethnological Society, 1984), pp. 178–95; T. J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 77–128, esp. pp. 115–16.

4. For a series of replies to Hempel, see William Dray, *Laws and Explanations in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957); Hexter, "The Rhetoric of History"; Louis Mink, "The Autonomy of Historical Understanding," *History and Theory* 5 (1965): 24–47.

5. For further information on the Ilongots see Michelle Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Renato Rosaldo, *Ilongot Headhunting, 1883–1974: A Study in Society and History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). For outsiders' perceptions of Ilongot headhunting, see Renato Rosaldo, "The Rhetoric of Control: Ilongots Viewed as Natural Bandits and Wild Indians," in Barbara A. Babcock, ed., *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 240–57.

6. Perhaps I should add that the American army strategy of taking lowland highways and driving the Japanese into the hills where they would starve to death or surrender decimated the Ilongots. One-third of their population died in June 1945. For a largely Ilongot perspective on this period, see R. Rosaldo, *Ilongot Headhunting, 1883–1974*, pp. 120–34.

7. Americo Paredes, "On Ethnographic Work Among Minority Groups: A Folklorist's Perspective," in Ricardo Romo and Raymund Paredes, eds., *New Directions in Chicano Scholarship* (La Jolla: Chicano Studies Monograph Series, 1978), p. 2.

8. Ibid., p. 2.

9. Ibid., p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 28.

11. Horace Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956): 503–7.

12. My distinction between everyday and technical language is borrowed from Clifford Geertz, who expressed this distinction in the terms "experience-near" and "experience-distant" (which he in turn borrowed from the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut). In his words: "An experience-near concept is, roughly, one that someone—a patient, a subject, in our case an informant—might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others. An experience-distant concept is one that specialists of one sort of another—an analyst, an experimenter, an ethnographer, even a priest or an ideologist—employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims. 'Love' is an experience-near concept, 'object-cathexis' is an experience-distant one." See Geertz, "'From the Native's Point of View,'" p. 57.

13. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 241.

14. See R. Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage."

15. S. F. Nadel, *Nupe Religion* (New York: Schocken, 1970), pp. 122–23.

16. Roger Keesing, *Kwaio Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 143.

17. Jane C. Goodale, *Tiwi Wives* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), p. 241.

18. Jack Goody, *Death, Property and the Ancestors* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 87.

19. Ibid., p. 91.

20. Ibid.

21. Nadel, *Nupe Religion*, p. 125.

22. See Renato Rosaldo, "The Story of Tukbaw: 'They Listen as He Orates,'" in F. E. Reynolds and Donald Capps, eds., *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), pp. 121–51; idem, "Beyond the Rules of the Game," in Edward Bruner and Victor Turner, eds., *The Language of Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

23. Goody, *Death, Property and the Ancestors*, p. 87.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., p. 88.

26. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 70.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. In this context it probably comes as no surprise that most anthropologists, including Lévi-Strauss, write about incest (despite widespread publicity on its occurrence in the United States) as if it never happened.

30. Godfrey Wilson, "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial," *Bantu Studies* 13 (1939): 22.
31. Ibid., p. 12.
32. Ibid., p. 13.
33. Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 153.
34. Ibid., p. 154.
35. Ibid., p. 156.
36. Loring Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 11.
37. Ibid., p. 13.

7 PARADISE LOST

THE THEME OF TERRESTRIALITY IN HUMAN EVOLUTION

MISIA LANDAU

I might as well begin with a confession. I have never studied Milton's poem, despite the allusion or, you might say, illusion in my title. Nor am I the first to suggest an analogy between the Fall and the Descent of man from the trees. In his *Cartoon History of the Universe*, Larry Gonick not only draws the connection but manages to capture the central hominid dilemma in a single balloon: "What do we do with our hands?" asks a tottering ramapithecine. Rather than redraw old parallels, I would like to look at a broader archetype, familiar even to those who have not read Milton, Darwin, or Gonick. That is, the myth of the turning point.

To speak of turning points is already to say something still more general. To speak of turning points is to say something about beginnings and ends. It was, of course, Aristotle who first drew attention to this obvious fact. Telling a story does not consist simply in adding episodes to one another. It consists in creating relations between events, in constructing what Paul Ricoeur has called "meaningful totalities" or configurations. Elsewhere I have described theories of human evolution in terms of a nine-part narrative structure.[1] Following Aristotle, however, we can see them simply as stories consisting of a beginning, middle, and end. Basically, the course of human evolution can be viewed as a passage between two equilibria:

ARBOREALITY——X——TERRESTRIALITY
(successful life in the trees)—(successful life on the ground)

Given this formal and admittedly oversimplified description, we might expect, first, that arboreality and terrestriality will be dialec-