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by

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Crossing Through Yards: Narratives of Boundaries in East Austin

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Crossing Through Yards: Narrative of Boundaries in East Austin

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This study examines what individuals of limited pecuniary resources in an urban society have to say about how they conceive of or interact with family, neighborhood, city, and society at large, as well as what some of the material and metaphorical boundaries are they meet, and how these function. The narratives they tell delineate ways, directly or indirectly, the consultants attempt to make sense of their lives, and explicate certain of their intertanglements with and perspectives on boundaries they encounter. When boundaries are placed, according to their characteristics, on a soft to hard continuum, an opening presents itself, signaled by specific, identifiable components, to reveal the constructions of empowerment and disenfranchisement that lie behind some seemingly unbreachable barriers.

The consultants for this paper tell of skills and creativity they use to re-frame, ignore, cross, or otherwise get around many prevalent constrictive boundaries in order to conduct fulfilling lives. Since much of the success of ethnography, particularly that based on participant observation, hinges on capabilities to cross boundaries in order to understand different communities, the consultants' knowledge of ways to contend with boundaries can be applied productively to anthropological investigations.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

In this work I have attempted to illustrate crossing boundaries not only by giving examples of Sycamore Street residents' ways of doing so, but by highlighting off-course perspectives. The dissertation narrative presented as a result has slipped to the side, leap-frogged, thinned, pooled, and has been patted into unbalanced collections of similar experiences among tellers. By this looping afield as well as bumping into and pursuing disvalued topics, I hope to engender a more visceral, more gut-reliant, materially affective experience than can be achieved through intellect alone. Some boundaries that have been crossed in this way are interruption of processual order in chapter division; dissolving of the boundary that separates us from what is to some a specious *terroir* - for example, by pulling along the supernatural into the natural; and the academic boundary that at times misconstrues informality as lack of rigor or defines rigor as format.

This study began as an investigation of narratives to ascertain some of the different meanings that yards as representative of boundaries and material culture can hold for the people who have them. An inspection of the instrumentalities and variety of recounted experiences can uncover or suggest ways in which boundaries enhance or hinder the lives of humans by exposing insights given consciously as well as unconsciously, and coupling them to occurrences and conditions in the larger world. Considering yards as preordinate grounds the stories within a context of materiality, and

lends direction toward the physical experience of lives as they are lived. Material meanings of the type presented by yards often expand into metaphorical ones, and so yards can be seen as complicit in connecting with the universe of nature, with passersby and neighbors, and with the more removed aspects of living within a society - those with which interaction is not as commonplace, but all the more noticeable for its infrequency and its relative unfamiliarity.

Along the way, however, the words of the narrators, whom I approached as consultants to provide a fundament of egalitarianism, redirected me. By skimming through "the yard," or just ignoring it, the majority of consultants rerouted my intended topic and offered instead stories on subjects they wished to address. Within speech events, redirection of topics can indicate attempted assumption of control. Therefore, rather than concentrating on the material yard in those instances, I used it as a rhetorical vehicle through which we crossed to introduce comfortable engagement and facilitate speech acts about boundaries. For the most part, the resulting narratives delineate ways, directly or indirectly, the consultants attempt to make sense of their lives, and to explicate certain of their intertanglements with and perspectives on relationships across or within boundaries they encounter.

This dissertation examines what individuals of limited pecuniary resources in an urban society have to say about how they conceive of or interact with family, neighborhood, city, and society at large, as well as what some of the material and metaphorical boundaries are that they meet, and how these function. And finally, this investigation intends to add something beyond mere illustration to the study of narratives

and to the conceptualized boundary, including the relationships of narratives and boundaries to empowerment and disenfranchisement.

Crossing boundaries

In my master's paper, I described and presented numerous examples of the efficacy of the use of jargon for crossing boundaries, specifically between myself and roofers who worked for me in central Florida. Some of the walls to be breached were education, gender, and the North-South dichotomy manifested by the Civil War a century and a half ago that remains present to this day. As a single mother in a non-accepting era, a daughter of immigrants, and a student of few pecuniary resources in schools with wealthy students, my interest in boundaries has been, if not always conscious, always keen. This dissertation furthers my formal research into boundary-crossing, with the goal in mind to discover how and in what situations or conditions we humans are divided by boundaries, how they fluctuate in importance and visibility, and how they can be constructed, shored up, breached, or bridged by human actions. Because of the focus on people of limited financial resources in East Austin, the omnipresence of capitalism and modern democracy can be seen in full relief when boundaries are studied - particularly when viewed through linguistically-colored glasses.

I hope to illustrate how the East Austin contributors to my study, often bearing the brunt of imbalanced functions of both capitalism and the democracy which is found in the western world and more and more across the globe, in many cases do not live their lives as self-designated victims any more than do people of other social classes or monetary

holdings. My intention is not to romanticize the poor, but neither is it to downgrade their quality of life. Rather it is to report their procedures and ideas as individuals who carve out for themselves a life worth leading. They “backtalk” (Stewart 1990:55) the strictures of governmental bureaucracies and speak “against culture” (Abu-Lughod 1991:140) by breaking through generalities with narratives of the particular. If they experience the whip more than the carrot, the will to adhere to a conformity with standards and rules of more affluent classes thins and allows openings for a different kind of “freedom” - a personal one that views with skepticism what Adorno terms “the false needs” (1991:20) manufactured in the culture industry - needs created by and also satisfied by capitalism.

Perhaps this understanding does not always solidify into spoken words, but it can be read in the day-to-day activities of Miss Glenda as she sweeps her dirt yard and smooths the nap of an old shag rug which covers part of it, then stands back to admire the effect, and by her next-door neighbor Mr. Smith, of a family written into history by the naming of a nearby area for his great-grandmother. He plants his gray metal folding chair by his driveway, near the street, in crisp white short sleeves and sits for hours, as long as it’s cool, protected from the sun by his formally placed fedora. I believe that many people in my study area find that the needs Adorno calls “true” - “freedom, creativity or genuine happiness” (1991:24)- fill much of their days, and that while the satisfying of the artificial needs that drive capitalism in its ever-expanding sphere of spending might be more available to people of wider influence or greater resources, they can also be a trap. To me, the consultants in my research have important messages to offer in a world with decreasing wiggle room for fulfilling individual needs.

The stories of the people in this report stem from a type of life, possessed of different types of social and economic capital, most of us have not personally experienced. By comparing them to what we're familiar with, perhaps we can understand that some limits and boundaries we never comprehended can imbue lives with powerful meanings.

"Whatever your surrounding is, you just have to make use of it."

- Mrs. Rodis Johnson, aged 91, Sycamore Street resident

"...we have learned not to count on anything. If we want something, we do it ourselves." - unidentified elderly North Korean woman, part of a cohort of diplomats visiting China in 2010, as seen on BBC

Setting

Interstate 35 runs north and south through Austin, Texas, where once East Avenue, the eastern-most street in the original grid layout of Austin, was located. Just west of the interstate and immediately north of the Colorado River, which runs through Austin roughly west to east, is the epicenter of downtown. Within the southeast quadrant of that original grid lie the state capitol building, City Hall, the convention center, and the mixture of tall office buildings, hotels, upscale shops and restaurants, banks, government centers and residential towers that contribute their spires to the skyline during the day; at night the live music that has gained notoriety for Austin spills from nightclubs in the

crevices.

Records in the History Center of the Austin Public Library system indicate that East Austin has always been an area inhabited primarily by minority residents. *The Austin Statesman* of September 24, 1963, announces, “Integration of City’s Playground Smooth,” and makes references to the Rosewood Recreation District in East Austin as the Negro district, while such headlines as “East Austin Wins First Round in School Board Fight,” in *The Echo* of May 19, 1970, referring to a desegregation plan, record the area’s being regarded as a cohesive unit. (Rejected unanimously by the Austin Independent School District, the plan would have classified Mexican American children as white, thus puffing up integration compliance figures in East Austin by indicating the presence of a greater ratio of white children to black than actually existed in this racially segregated area.)

Sycamore Street (not the real name) is located in central east Austin near Manor Road and the old Mueller Airport. Demographics indicate that all houses on Sycamore were built from 1957 to 1959 except one, built in 1940; that 60% of the occupants own their homes; and that house sizes range from 928 to 1298 square feet, not counting the three duplexes, and average 1120 square feet. Their 2010 value averaged \$120,000, having climbed steadily each year.

Built in the 1950’s, the homes are somewhat decorative inside and out, with a few having fireplaces, a few constructed with clerestory windows and high, vaulted ceilings, most with numerous “built-ins” such as shelving, and simple but ornamental molding around doors. All are different from each other.

The majority of the inhabitants are African Americans, but over the last dozen years several Mexican Americans, people of Guatemalan or Mexican origin, and European Americans have moved in as residents have died or moved away. However, the change of residents occurs at a slow pace. About an eighth of the houses are occupied by single women – mostly aged 55 and older.

There are no sidewalks and not everyone has cars, so people walking in the street is a common sight. Large deciduous trees, especially pecans, elms, and hackberries, shade many of the houses, and a huge wisteria laces through several adjacent backyards. Behind the houses on one side of Sycamore Street lies a seasonal creek that borders a seven-acre vacant field separating Sycamore from Manor Road. This lot used to have a commonly utilized short-cut path, but one end was fenced off in 2008. The field is full of many varieties of wildflowers and grasses. Little bluestem lies like a lake over half, turning ruddy in the fall when liatris sports lavender pom-poms. In the creek bed are other treasures: spiracled limestone boulders crouch in line, chips of old glass with water-smoothed edges flash iridescent rays, giant fossilized snail shells, millions of years old, curl in primordial spirals. How old is that leather shoe?

Frequently, particularly in the summer, people sit out in their front yards and speak with passersby and other neighbors. Visitors, residents, animals, plants, trash, and occasionally intruders enter the yards. Material and metaphorical boundaries are created, transgressed, discarded, and repaired. Thus, the title of this dissertation refers to those, to the use of the topic of yards as an entree to further discourse, and to a reflexive view of my own crossing through my yard to speak with others who live along Sycamore Street.

Over the course of twelve years of participant observation, I, too, have undergone transitions across material and metaphorical boundaries in East Austin, and they have altered my perspective.

East Austin is where most of the city's citizens of limited financial, social and educational resources live. Its western boundary is close to downtown, and so it is now being looked at both for potential expansion of a "visitable" downtown area and, relatedly, as an area that should be "cleaned up" (Dicks 2003:22) Hopefully, this dissertation will affirm that Sycamore Street, like the neighborhoods surrounding it, is not just a reified, geographical area but that it is defined by people who conduct their lives in fulfilling, creative ways.

Soft and hard boundaries

Boundaries permeate human lives. Some of those are included in the familiar recorded classifications, such as scientific classificatory names which stretch from kingdom to species, creating ever tinier boundaries between beings. Others are the demographic categories, including sex, age, and race, used by our government to tabulate populations and by people to point out similarities and differences among themselves and others. There are also more recently established boundaries within those frameworks which are less delineated, such as varieties among plants, genders within sex. The occurrence of these less-determined boundaries, however, opens a space to note that boundaries are frequently, perhaps usually, a continuum, ranging from hard to soft rather than representable by a monolithic frontier. Furthermore, the fluidity along these

continua can be seen as playing a role in relationships as people attempt to establish equality, understanding, or control.

Although we tend to view certain boundaries, for example those represented by the property lines that surround yards, as solid and hard, partly because they are manifested by material objects and perceived as such, these also can be seen as superimposed upon a soft/hard continuum. Villagers who live in the Langkawi archipelago lift and move their houses around within family compounds with indistinct, "free-flowing" boundaries, in which resources, including food, water, and land, are shared (Carsten 1995:118.) Groups of indigenous people around the world have lived their lives without parsing out specific sections of bounded land as belonging to individuals. Nevertheless, they do have general tribal land boundaries - areas of hunting grounds, burial grounds, holy grounds, or living expanse. (The use of "territory" would be appropriate here had it not gathered many nuances and been adapted into the mainstream lexicon along with its concomitant adjective, "territorial" in such a way as to move it from a locational word into something with a different meaning - one that suggests possession. Furthermore, "territory" in this latter sense is now familiar to the degree that it is no longer reflected upon, and ownership usually is implied in its sense.)

The difference between the land in the examples of yard versus tribal areas given above is their degree of hardness. The use of "hard" in this role derives from a tendency in the majority of human cultures to value hardness more than softness. Of course, there are exceptions: who doesn't like a nice, soft pillow? Even here, some might take pride in

the fact they prefer a nice, hard one. The way to drink our coffee is black, our wine dry – without the distraction or dilution of sweetness or cream.

In the business of life, in the relations between and among people, hard is usually preferred. The most obvious reference to hard's predominance over soft, to the degree of fetishism, involves the phallus, which must be hard to function in its role of procreation, and is proof in itself of its hardness. Perhaps in our historically male-dominated society, that is the underlying catalyst for valuing hardness to the high degree that we do. This, however, can only be surmised, and there are many more examples of hardness that do not rely on supposition.

A hard copy is not as easily changed as a soft one. Research in the hard sciences finds funding more easily than in the social sciences. Softball is for women. Hardball is for men, and businessmen play hardball to be successful. People make hard decisions, but that doesn't mean they are really difficult for the decision maker.

Even if the word "hard" is not explicitly used in a term, its traits of solidness, rigidity, and permanence can be achieved and recognized in other ways. Political, governmental, medicinal, theological, and other spheres depending on authority have implemented methods to harden their structures and claims. These can take the forms of, among other things, rituals, oaths, material constructions, proof of longevity, and proof of heritage through ancestral lines. Presidents must be sworn in, babies baptized; Moses brought from the mountain stone tablets with the Ten Commandments given from God. Proponents of Christianity claim that the Bible is the Word (with a ritualized "W") of God (with a ritualized "G,") proven by its long existence.

Sometimes hardness is also claimed by size, such as with the proposed national budget or other bills and legislation, noteworthy for their number of reams of hardcopies, or with the soaring cathedrals found throughout the world. Santa Claus was revealed as real in “Miracle on 34th Street” because letters to him came through the official postal service, quantified by their material presence when they were dumped in mounding piles on desks in the courtroom at Santa’s trial.

At other times, hardness can be sought by the elimination of alternative possibilities. The Ten Commandments, for example, disrupted long traditions of polytheism, deism, animism, and other forms people had found for dealing with the vagaries of life and the unknown, and so hardened the positions of those who interpreted or spoke for “the one true God.” Later, Jesus’s teachings ascended into acceptance by claims made, purportedly not to dethrone or challenge the one true God, but to re-emphasize the original message that had been given to the people who had accepted Moses's monotheism. The claims to this alliance were buttressed and hardened by further inscription on pages, by forging a connection with the earlier Bible, by recorded assertions from God, and through the addition of amazing occurrences that could be called miracles: Jesus’s birth to a virgin, and the numerous healing acts he performed, as Moses and other stalwarts before him had done. These actions of Jesus, however, were more modest than such things as parting a sea, until his largest one: the attainment of his *post mortem* position next to God as a judge of who goes to Heaven and who to Hell. Not by good works alone would passage to Heaven be granted, however: rather, one must believe that Jesus is the son of God. God was not supplanted. Monotheism was not

threatened, at least in name. Thus, the boundaries had been drawn between multiple gods and one, between God's Chosen People and gentiles, and between those who are Heaven-bound - qualified through esoteric beliefs propounded by Jesus's followers - and those who are going to Hell. This burgeoning religious monopoly was tempered later by the rise of another formulation, Islam, which included one God, included Jesus tangentially, and elevated the newest interpreter, Muhammad, to a position of singular power among those who followed his teachings and participated in his rituals.

This discussion of the construction of formal religious boundaries is not to say that the creative leaders in the establishment and supplementation of monotheism collected and used their power for self-aggrandizement. Rather, it is to illustrate how the locus of power can become concentrated, distilled by material proofs and other factors, in order to gain acceptance and obedience within a group. The fact that the moves result in an enlargement of power of those in authority, however, makes positions within these religious groups attractive to those people who would like to enhance their own status, whatever the motive. Thus, temples and churches are created, music composed and sung, miracles performed, rituals ingrained in a continuing move to solidify – harden - their power.

Within the mix of worshippers, however, some people are not quite so devout as to completely believe what religious authorities tell them. After all, contradictions are now available for anyone to see: the Bible and the Quran are printed in understandable language nowadays, and inconsistencies in life as compared to their texts intervene to

raise questions. Some of those people reside on Sycamore Street in East Austin, and their perceptions of boundaries generated by religions in their lives will be addressed below.

Another strategy to harden boundaries is the use of stating something as fact, and can entail a style signifying import – such as one current modality found in the genre of national political speech which includes non-verbal cues including a nobly-raised chin, many pauses within a sentence, and slow tempo of speech, as if all parts of what is said are momentous. Introduced and perfected by Bill Clinton with great success, it is frequently seen being used by politicians in a grand style of speech peculiar to them in the service of their goals. This has become common now, and takes its place among language strategies designed to manipulate, from the dissembling of Clarence Thomas when faced with the allegations of Anita Hill (Ragan et al. 1996) and which won him a judgeship on the Supreme Court, to the throw-away promises made by politicians, and the officially sanctioned and by now thoroughly documented lying by police.

Nevertheless, most citizens continue to believe what is told to them, for now. The perception seems to be spreading among Americans, however, as witnessed by the signs being waved on Wall Street at the recently begun protests, that despite noble posturing intended to generate trust, governmental officials have become supported by wealthy entities to the degree that there are doubts among many citizens about their genuine leadership abilities, qualifications, and interest in promoting the good of the people. A symbolic figure of 99% has been drawn to represent the boundary between successfully self-serving social and political leaders and the majority of Americans.

Another illustration of the efficacy of style of self-presentation in defining the barrier between career politicians and citizens is discernible in Barack Obama. For the first half of his current presidential term, he held his chin up in a regal manner that resulted in making him, a tall man, still young, look down his nose. As a result, he appeared self-satisfied and condescending. After the mid-term elections in 2010 saw the taking over of the House of Representatives, as well as other offices across the country, by the Republican Party, Obama suddenly stopped his presumption-cueing pose – probably coached to do so - but continued to speak with the other boundary-preserving affectations mentioned above. Meanwhile, congressman Mitch McConnell continues to present a visual image of himself of extended boundaries by sweeping to the podium with a posse.

By considering boundaries as examples of a hard/soft continuum, several facts become clear. First, hardening tactics are frequently deployed when one wishes to assert the separation power of a boundary or to assume a greater degree of authority. Second, the common factors inherent in hardening strategies can become recognizable, making boundaries that have been understood as having an unquestionably solid position open to scrutiny. Third, the unveiling of boundaries as not as hard as they might first appear presents an opportunity to question more deeply the motivation for their construction and the authenticity of their structure. This is especially helpful in the case of observing power wielded by one group or individual over another.

Below are several narratives told by residents of Sycamore Street in East Austin. By quoting the majority of what each consultant says, I hope to develop their contexts,

including an enrichment offered by a sense of a person's narrative style and self-perspective. In some discussions of these narratives, the boundaries most frequently examined within the social sciences will again be looked at, while in others, boundaries that don't enjoy as much attention will be considered. The principal metaphorical boundaries crossed via the yards on Sycamore Street that are broached in this study have been selected in order to examine how and with what results boundaries are hardened or otherwise manipulated for the sake of slanted valuations as well as for power. In most instances, the boundaries contain implications for the people of Sycamore Street that can differentiate them from those who live in more affluent neighborhoods or who hold more societal power. (This usage of the word "power" reflects its common sense understanding held by the residents of Sycamore Street rather than the technically precise definition found within academic boundaries.) However, the boundaries met by Sycamore Street's residents are softened time and again as consultants perceive and utilize methods to subvert them through a language of civility and practicality.

Boundaries and participant observation

The narratives presented in this study are illustrative of many different boundaries, but first the role participant observation plays in crossing the initial boundaries to people's trust and their knowledge merits explication. Participant observation is designed to allow people from fundamentally different communities or circumstances to cross the boundaries of perception and understanding that separate

them, to "traffic across the specific cultural and political boundaries that separate and link" (Haraway 1989:382).

To gain a new, trans-boundary perspective from an originally unfamiliar view, participant observation entails immersion within the new community. However, until one is inside the group, it is difficult to know the values and ideas needed to be able to cross the boundary in the first place. For this reason, there are some strategies that people have used successfully, dependent, of course, on whose boundaries are being crossed.

One way is that used by Tom Wolfe, who dressed in a white suit in order to be what he called, "the Man from Mars." The idea was to convey that, "I don't know what on earth you're doing. I'm very different from you. Tell me what's going on." (10/16/08 - Carl Sandburg Literary Award, Chicago.) This direct approach which allowed him to be accepted by the Hell's Angels as well as other groups he wished to study for his journalistic projects also established him as a respect-worthy person of self-confidence.

Another way is to learn and use the jargon of the group on the other side of the boundary. This is discussed in my paper, "*Mud and Flashing: The Use of Jargon for Boundary Crossing among Roofers in Central Florida.*"

However, participant observation over a length of time is an especially valuable way to learn the subtle differences in traits that belong to a community or group because it incorporates experience in and understanding of trajectories of the group – for example, in the likelihood of its use of technologies, and if so, which; in the change of its social indicators such as fashion or music; in its responses to the changing of political stances;

in speed of change; in fads of thought or affect; and others. Participant observation is also a good strategy for crossing interpersonal as well as group boundaries because trust is often forthcoming more easily when a person who is attempting to fit in indicates enough interest to signal belief that the group with which she or he is trying to associate is worthwhile enough to spend the time necessary to do so.

Because of the depth of understanding through mutual acceptance that can be gleaned through participant observation, it was selected as an intrinsic part of the methodology utilized in this study over more short-term tactics.

The boundaries of Sycamore Street

As noted earlier, boundaries fill our lives. Some of those to be discussed in regards to crossing yards on Sycamore Street are those at play when dealing with these topics: gender, natural/supernatural, the brain and the gut, nature/the environment, generations, class designation, the state, city/country/neighborhood, science, common sense, religion, morality/cleanliness/aesthetics, plant value designations, and freedom. In order to examine how the people of Sycamore Street experience and conduct their lives, the narratives presented will each be followed by an analysis of the boundaries introduced and will include properties such as patterns, message channels, cues, grammar, tone, choice of content, and format when to do so aids in understanding.

Specific and pertinent boundaries found within the narrative will be considered for the purpose of deciphering what may lie behind their implementation. Most of the boundaries selected here are reviewed in a way to consider facets of peoples' lives which

do not always coincide with the most salient focal points in cultural studies. That is to say, in the review of the narrative of a transsexual, for example, gender is addressed but does not occupy center stage. This peripheral perspective ignores assumed prioritizations in order to break from standards and encourage the dashing of preconceived and traditional expectations. In this manner, a different path of thought can be pursued - hopefully, to encourage a neoteric reading.

The residents' words

Each of the narratives included here results from questions I asked concerning people's relationship to their yards. The first to present her story, found in Chapter 3, is Mrs. Rodis Johnson, 91, who grew up in a rural setting where she learned the value of economy and sharing. She reveals an often-ignored role of capitalism in the designation of poverty by the forefronting of financial standing as the most important characteristic of members of our society. Besides providing a look at the presence of the capitalist omnibus, her narrative is used in discussions of solidarity through sharing, agrarian slants on concepts, roles and aspects of memory, and generational boundaries.

In Chapter 4, Miss Glenda Suarez reveals the battle for survival of herself and her transsexual femininity. In her narrative, she describes an unjust run-in with police, but demonstrates the priority to her of being treated as the person she is – whether or not that is the politic stance – over the seriousness of her arrest for possession of a controlled substance. Throughout her life, she has had to deal with the judgments that separate “normal” from not normal - in its worst incarnation, being a freak or crazy. Her narrative

is used to address the pathologizing of traits that differ from those of the hegemonically dominant group. It is also used to illustrate the natural/supernatural boundary, while her concern for animals introduces the boundary between animals and humans, touching briefly on the concept of anthropomorphism.

In Chapter 5, Romeo discusses the riches he expects to receive for his family based on teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and illustrates the disintegration of a boundary in order to succeed. Parts of Lloyd Spencer's narrative are briefly reviewed in order to highlight the confusion seemingly incompatible differences within an established belief system can generate. The boundary between the natural and the supernatural is also addressed here.

In Chapter 6, the narrative of art teacher Rosa Collins illuminates boundaries that divide governmental representatives - in this case of the justice system - from the general public. Sections of the narratives of three other people combine with Rosa's to focus on the chaotic displacement of affect that can occur in traumatic situations such as rape, threat of death, or mutilation, and the encroachment of perversity that hardens within some legal boundaries. Rosa's narrative also demonstrates changes of voice and a rapid series of self reconstructions that result as she is brought back down to the de-humanizing state she experienced by reliving and describing a harrowing ordeal. This generates a discussion of a boundary within human experiences of affect.

Chapter 7 presents the words of Donna and Marcus Stark as together they depict life in the Sycamore Street neighborhood. Political boundaries are touched on, and Mrs. Johnson's theme of doing with what you have is revisited to reassert the misleading

boundary which has been hardened around the designation of poverty. The Starks add a perspective of mediation between people when they espouse giving "the benefit of the doubt." In addition, the strong and intimate family ties revealed in their interactive narrative are viewed with an eye to understanding how they cross and re-cross important small-scale boundaries to perpetuate trust and intimacy with each other.

Robert Washington tells, in Chapter 8, how a new truck helps him to cross a have/have not boundary to enhance his business. He also describes a repositioning of the boundary between the possible and the impossible.

Through the narratives certain themes recur, such as political skepticism, interpersonal bonds, religious belief, pleasures of daily life, the overcoming of odds, and the interplay of decorum and morality. It is as these themes touch and illuminate boundaries and their perceptions, maintenance, negotiations, breaching, and transformations, that the study develops its integration and focus.

The social life of words

A word used in a new way or a new word just coined can slap us, demanding our attention. It invites inspection and trial usage. Over time, however, the original sense of the word is replaced by a compressed collection of impressions to form a symbol of a symbol – a dulled stand-in for all that it may have originally expressed and implied for the one interpreting it. Slang words illustrate this well, sometimes changing relatively quickly with other fads as they become too boring or passé. There are certain slang words - curse words revolving around religion or the body and the sex act – that cycle in

and out of favor and occurrence as they lose their desired impact by overuse, then recover their sting of irreverence. Their shock value and base in areas of significant and ambivalent human concern overcomes their fall from popularity and ensures that we can speak of the same words' being recycled, but this is an unusual case for words.

In addition to the signification blurring and staleness described above - the result of mental processes and the passage of time - diachronic word slide occurs in other ways. Several of the causes of transformation are: misuse on purpose or by mistake, co-option, tainting by attachment to a phenomenon or object with pejorative nuances, category split, loss of the referent, and some forms of humor, such as irony.

Several of the word slides which are germane to narratives of the boundaries of Sycamore Street residents will be reviewed in the chapter analyses. Such words as “neighborhood,” “improvement,” “affordable,” and “hero” will be singled out and their newer, more cynical senses accounted for. Their relocation of definition signals a manipulation to present a new twist to an old concept – a deliberate tactic which can indicate who is trying to re-market the concept, and for what benefit. This shift in words unseats them from original settings and repositions them to aid in boundary hardening. The history of each can be viewed as a narrative.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

A. Narratives

Construction of narratives

Traditionally, a narrative is a story. Michael Agar notes that to conform to "the old Aristotelian virtues, a story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end - a complication, a development, and a resolution" (2005:23.) He points out that, according to Brockmeier, the conventions of traditional narratives include "linearity, continuity, closure, and omniscience" (28.) Agar finds that Deleuze has a wider view: to him, "Everything is a story" (15.) Philosophers tell them with concepts, cinema with "blocks of movements."

Hymes creates a widely-used mnemonic helpful to understand speech acts, including narratives, by providing a structure for perceiving components: SPEAKING.

Each letter represents an element as follows:

Setting and Scene: Setting is the time, place and general physical circumstances. Scene is the "psychological setting" or "cultural definition" (55-56).

Participants: Speaker and audience; sender, receiver, hearers

Ends: Purposes, goals and outcomes

Act Sequence: Form and order

Key: Cues that establish the "tone, manner, or spirit" of the speech act (57)

Instrumentalities: Forms and styles of speech

Norms: Social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reactions

Genre: The type of speech act or event

By paying attention to each of these ingredients of discourse, one is able to apprehend insights into how a specific narrative functions.

Labov and Waletzky (1967) focus on personal narratives, recognizing six components - abstract (the main point,) orientation (of time, place, and characters,) complicating action (events in chronological sequence,) evaluation (transmits emotions of the speaker,) resolution (point of the story,) and coda (ending.) Only complicating action and resolution, however, are required for qualification as narratives. Later, Labov revisits the personal narrative analysis to focus on elements which render a profound effect on the audience to the degree that these components produce "concentration of attention that creates uninterrupted silence and immobility, an effect that continues long after the ending is reached" (1997:2.) It is possible to add to this latter, largely syntactical, analysis that two more factors function to help create a type of this temporary paralysis in the brief narrative he uses as an example: an unpredictable ending - in this case, the slashing of the teller's throat - that includes an uptake in the degree of visceral communication based on the introduction of intrinsically provocative terminology that invites unexpected and loaded visuals, and the capacity of verbal composition of the teller.

Ochs and Capp (2001:7) focus on what they label "living narratives," in which people come together and talk in ordinary conversation about life events. As Agar notes,

Ochs and Capp don't pretend traditional narratives don't exist, they just want to broaden the understanding of narrative "so we don't forget the messy end of the spectrum, the more frequent one" (Agar 2005:25.) Ochs and Capp indicate that they wish to shake loose the hierarchical dimensions of narratives - the strictures that determine not only such things as what the main story line is, but also who has the right to tell what, in what order, and where or when.

The distinction between a narrative at the "messy end" and the more formally understood narrative is made graphic by Ochs, who charts them on a line which stretches from "polished and smooth" (Agar 2005:22) narratives on the left to living narratives - occasions of sense-making - on the right. She discerns as components on the left tellership, tellability, embeddedness, linearity, and a moral stance. Most or all of them appear in each narrative that falls at this end of her chart. She compares these ingredients of formal narratives with those of their looser counterparts on the right.

Ochs observes that on the right end tellership can be shared by several people who dispute, enlarge upon, or otherwise chime in to help construct the story. In the case of Brand (2007), tellership that is even more scattered is described as she attempts to pin down a story about making moonshine that is an intriguing part of the lore of a small community. Union, Virginia, where the moonshine tale wafts through the woods, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places under the sub-heading "Ethnic Heritage - Black." Brand gathers a piece of the tale here, a piece of it there, but never gets the whole story as one unit. In her case, tellership is not only divided up by people, but presented at different times, in different contexts, and in segments that overlap and are

full of holes. She notes that the official narrative of the registry has little to do with the history ("the past" - 2007:52) told by black residents, problematizing tellership by raising the question of who has the right to claim to be the authority. As a result, she argues for a "thick history" (2007:53) that is at odds with the clean narrative at the left side of Ochs's scale.

Tellability is an important aspect of traditional narratives: a story categorized at the left end is interesting (so the teller says,) whereas the narrative at the sloppy end of the spectrum "skids into known and even boring side-issues" (Agar 2005:26.) Rather than a stand-alone tale, the narrative at the right end is frequently embedded in a larger speech event with content that takes priority over it. Kramer and Cook (2004) suggest that tellability also depends on who is listening since the question of trust is a critical and determining factor.

The narration of her story by an asylum seeker on the run is discussed by Williksen, who recognizes that its tellability is impeded by spotty memory caused by trauma, by the fact that the fugitive might not know how or where to start, and as a function of the vast quantity of her experiences which are outside the realm of usual social interactions (2008).

Any linearity in a living narrative is usually by coincidence or is disjointed like a stack of kindling. Agar puts sense-making at the nonlinear end of Ochs's scale, and explains: "...to achieve its goals, sense-making will unfold with competing locally coherent sequences" (2005:32.) Vidali (2010) notices the way news is told among young adults when she investigates if they are engaged in that which is presented on mainstream

television. She learns that much of the news consumed is selective and episodic - referred by friends on Facebook and other social media. Her conclusion confirms that of Couldry et al. (2007:374): that engagement with news stories among young adults is not necessarily stable or consistent, and can be cast in terms of "public connection."

In his discussion of the production of antiracist knowledge, Hartigan focuses on a book by Alice McIntyre. He argues for the need for a local interpretation of stories and opposes a too-facile reading that disregards the ambiguity and ambivalence of real-life narratives. McIntyre says of a white waitress, who feels her black customers tip poorly but worries she might be racist for thinking so, that she "exemplifies how deeply ingrained racism is in 'the souls of white folks.'" Hartigan understands it differently: "It seems to me that Elizabeth's 'desire to know' is related to an effort to make sense of an uncertain matter" (2005: 244.) This need for humans' use of narrative to make sense is also echoed by Bruner, who states that narratives are fundamental, and points out that they are how young humans learn to share the world of their elders (2008: 137.)

Ellen Basso discusses "trickster" narratives among indigenous Americans. She contends that they are narratives that evoke responses (1996:55). The narratives she discusses seem to fit at the left, traditional end of Ochs's spectrum. As portraying a "cultural hero's opposite" (53) the trickster stories draw attention to character shortcomings and convey a moralistic message. At the other scalar end, if there is moral evaluation in a narrative, it is disputed over and colored by different perspectives.

Agee, master of an all-inclusive type of reflexivity that sweeps us - tellers, listeners, heroes, anti-heroes - into the unfolding action by liberal use of every personal

pronoun, describes how he concocts a narrative: "Very roughly I know that to get my own sort of truth out of the experience I must handle it from four planes:

"That of recall; of reception, contemplation, *in medias res*..." for which he has whittled "a sort of fore-stage" to which the action might return from time to time.

"As it happened": the straight narrative at the prow as from the first to last day it cut unknown water." Although this argues linearity, it is a linearity of side-trips and interruptions, for Agee does not stint on thickening the stew.

"By recall and memory...which is a part of the experience: and this includes imagination...

"As I try to write it: problems of recording, which, too, are an organic part of the experience as a whole.

"These are, obviously, in strong conflict. So is any piece of human experience. So, then, inevitably, is any even partially accurate attempt to give any experience as a whole." (1988:243)

Narratives' roles

Biehl recognizes the value of living narratives, which reveal "the everyday travails and stories of characters that might otherwise remain forgotten, with attention to the ways their own struggles and visions of themselves create holes in dominant theories and interventions" (2005:21.) Like Ochs and Capp, he has a political motive: "to dislodge the hierarchy of epistemological authority...to argue for an equality of intelligences" (2005:22.) Deleuze sees the danger of our attempts to communicate "the

'true' truth of the human condition," which make us complicit in "systems of control" (1968:15.) Bruner demonstrates the power of narratives to shape representations of the past (2006.) In Briggs's anthology about conflict, Brenneis observes that narratives of conflict are privileged sites for an examination of the social order (1996.)

Stewart notes that storytelling necessitates construction of meaning (1996.) In her article about the effects of trauma on narrative, Hyvarinen agrees: "Narratives structure our experience, and they are the means by which we organize our memories" (2010:151.) According to Briggs, narratives are situated activities with a role in the constitution of everyday life (1996:4.) An example of this function can be seen in Gregg's ethnography of women with cervical cancer in Brazil (2011.) Stigmas surround Brazilian women who have the disease, as it is thought to be a result of promiscuity or an overly large appetite for sex. As she conducted her research, Gregg noted with puzzlement that even women who had had only one partner "bought into" the stigma for themselves and perpetuated it until she (Gregg) realized that by doing so they could also claim redemption. Doctors aid by telling the women after their radiation treatments are over, "You're like a virgin now," or "You're asexual" (73.) Gregg cites Ewing, who says, "individuals use metaphorical processes to integrate conflicting self-representations" (74.) Gregg adds, "The narrative process...helps individuals navigate between these forces, creating and recreating selves that contain elements of sameness and of change" (74.) By accepting the narratives of stigmatization as well as of healing, the women signaled their ongoing membership in their community and its moral values.

In Ewing's article, she cites Killoran (1998:263) who writes about how Muslim social space can be a prison for women who are attempting to negotiate a feminist identity at the same time as maintaining their identity as a good wife and mother. She describes how their narratives are "articulated oppositionally but through different discourses."

Mattingly addresses the problems that can arise when people from different cultures misinterpret each other's actions. She believes the understandability of a narrative hinges on the ability of hearers to "read minds" (2008:136.) In a longitudinal study of African American families with children who have severe illnesses, she notes that interactions between members of the families and caretakers in the medical field are frequently based on mutual misunderstandings due to narratives stemming from cultural differences. The schism in understanding occurs because of inability to "read each other's minds" - a skill that entails inferring motives that underlie others' actions and depends on the ability to place those actions "within unfolding narrative contexts" (2008: 136.) Her ethnography illustrates the steep costs of narrative misreadings across cultures.

Solinger, Fox, and Irani present an anthology that describes specific cases within communities throughout the world in which the performance of narratives brought about healing after a period of great suffering, such as in genocide. The narratives addressed are conveyed through story-telling and -writing, drawing, dance, theater, and the communal restoration of a synagogue. In similar fashion, a play was devised to soothe the dissension between Sulawesi Macassans and the indigenous people from north central Australia caused by the Australians' sailing to Sulawesi to collect sea cucumbers. Palmer

describes the story told in the play, which has a cast of members from both communities, as one that looks for a common path, indicates shared histories, and reveals a desire for compromise. She notes "the latitude for story-telling was...circumscribed by the necessity for identity to be located within a repertoire of emplotted stories" (2008:4) to represent all sides of the disagreement.

Master narratives

The official line presented in the Union, Virginia, historic registry blurb Brand refers to above is typical of master narratives - it appears to carry an unquestionable and unquestioned ability to speak for all, and subsumes validity of local, smaller scale understandings. In this way, master narratives efface the thoughts, perceptions, opinions, and rights of individuals and mobilize a skewed vision. Braudel's concept of the *Longue Duree* struggles over the focus of different master narratives implicit in the construction of history (1972), while Foucault suggests the potential freeing of history from the imposition of narrative on the ordering of past events (1996:19.)

In her critique of the master narrative implicit in ethnography - that ethnographers, from their superior perch, get it right when they interpret the actions and meanings couched within a culture - Stewart notes space for a strategic stylistic choice: "fragments" collected from an "imagined alterity...can be trotted out to stand as prefabricated symbols of an initial ignorance that is overcome...or...they can be left cryptic to evoke...richness of a barely glimpsed...'real' life beyond academic analysis"

(1996:73-4.) In either case, the ethnographer retains the claim to decisions and interpretations.

Hartigan argues for a change in focus to one that considers the local, the particular, and the specific rather than abstract, grand formulations. He cites Labov to illustrate the importance of a situated view: "...ideological themes which do not appear relevant in one situation, can come to become defined as relevant" (2005:201), depending on other factors and settings.

Demerath describes how children are taught in school to adopt a master narrative of capitalism that dictates hierarchies of race and class and lionizes the work ethic, competition, and a narrow, economically-based definition of achievement (2009.) This Gramscian indictment of school as an institution for producing such narratives also underlies the findings of the Sadkers, who decry the subtle preferential training from nursery school through college that fosters secondariness among females (1995.)

In a well-documented and engrossing study, Rodriguez-Alegría explores the master narrative that indicates that Europeans brought "more sophisticated and more efficient" (2008:33) technologies to the indigenous people of Mexico than the latter had possessed. He cites Trouillot (1995:6) who observes that history is silenced to benefit existing structures of power. Rodriguez-Alegría destabilizes what he calls a "model of quick replacement" (33) that wrongly portrays stone-age tools' swift abandonment when European materials and tools arrived in the western hemisphere, and traces the use of steel blades archaeologically to prove that the use of lithic tools continued to proliferate. In addition, Rodriguez-Alegría decries the master narrative that positions technological

progress as inevitable and desirable. He supports the use of artifacts to construct a new narrative concerning the spread of metal tools that hinges on pricing, markets, and exploitation of natural resources rather than the superiority of European tools.

In a corrupting move, in the sense that they betray the not-infrequent transmogrifications of time that stand between us and the past, television presentations of historical events show them to be peopled by modern Americans or British people dressed in period costumes from stock wardrobes. The *dramatis personae* present the same morals, same spheres of affect, same dimensions of perspective as the actors' real-life contemporaries and so imply the master narrative that human change is miniscule at most and that the world is and has always been (post-caveman) dully populated by repeating generations of clones. This erasure of differences has detrimental implications for the imaginative ways of thinking that vary culture to culture in time and across space. In the recent past, accompanying script visible at the bottom of the screen would state the performers were actors, but this disclaimer has disappeared. Unfortunately, even dangerously, public television has now adopted this technique of excision of possibilities.

The use of narratives in fieldwork

The use of narratives to learn how people in East Austin construct their lives can offer consciously and unconsciously revealed understandings. Based on the speech acts of individuals as they live their daily lives through narrative, it can serve to capture patterns in communication that express socially-established meanings. There are several styles of analyzing collected narratives. The discussion below of the three most pertinent

to this study - Intercultural Communication (IC), The Ethnography of Communication (EC), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) - refers to discourse analysis, but pertains to narratives as part of discourse.

The Ethnography of Communication (EC)

The ethnography of communication is considered an anthropological discourse analysis due to its methodology and the types of information sought. Urban states that a discourse-centered approach to ethnography is founded on the fact “that culture is localized in concrete, publicly accessible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse” (1). Hymes recognizes the significance of the role of speech in cognitive and expressive behavior, and advocates an anthropological study of behavior through the use of an ethnography of speaking (1972). More recently, the mutually constitutive nature of social knowledge and discourse has expanded the perspective of the ethnography of communication (Scollon and Scollon, Tannen: 1986).

The methodology of EC is to conduct field work in which data is collected by observing, note-taking and tape-recording speech acts and events, then all of or useful portions of the discourse are transcribed and analyzed. EC is more open-ended than other kinds of discourse analysis: it seeks to discover new understandings of cultural knowledge and behavior by focusing on the functional roles of language, revealed by analyzing patterns of “characteristics of speech forms that are used within speech communities and between them” (1986:38).

Intercultural Communication (IC)

One of the most applicable approaches to a study of people in East Austin is intercultural communication. Defined by Scollon and Scollon as “the study of distinct cultural or other groups *in interaction with each other*” (1986:539), IC evolved in response to an interest in discovering how the social practice of discourse produces discrimination. Mattingly's article on reading minds, described above, is a clear example of IC.

Influenced by Bateson (1936, 1972), Gumperz, Tannen and other social scientists identified key elements of communication between different cultural groups by focusing on the production of complementary schismogenesis, metacommunicative contextualization cues such as tone and volume of voice, and the problematizing of reified cultures (Scollon and Scollon: 540). According to Bateson, “complementary schismogenesis is the processes in social interactions by which small initial differences become amplified in response to each other through a sequence of interactional moves and ultimately result in a rupture in the social interaction” (Bateson as quoted in Scollon and Scollon: 540.) Thus, for example, after first establishing the case for considering males and females in the United States as being raised in and living in different cultures from each other, Tannen uses IC to understand what frequently occurs in American marriages (1986: 20). With knowledge gained from the practice of intercultural communication, she analyzes in retrospect the discourse that turns into a fight between herself and her husband, typical of their fights in its topic and its key, shortly before they divorced. She notes that she was trying to be considerate by responding, “Do you really

want to?” to the lack of enthusiasm in his tepid “Okay” about her proposed plans. When he exploded, she felt wounded. Her analysis revealed misinterpretations based on “mutually unintelligible” (24) styles of communication that prescribe differing uses of indirectness, and a build-up of injuries due to complementary schismogenesis.

Tannen observes that intimate relationships usually deteriorate with time. Through discourse analysis and by applying IC’s insights, particularly the concept of complementary schismogenesis, she is able to proffer strategies for avoiding the erosion and loss of close relations.

In East Austin, a discourse analysis of narratives of intimate relationships such as those found within homes and between long-term neighbors can interpret the message forms and message channels, codes and instrumentalities that point out the differences and topics of contention that lie between individuals. From that information, an understanding can be extracted of the cultural expectations and styles between male and female, young and old, African-American and Latino, and other differentiated groups. As Scollon and Scollon explain, “what is sought is an understanding of how identities and meanings are constituted in and through the interaction itself” (544).

Novinger establishes a “framework of potential obstacles” (x) of significant, common categories that cause misinterpretations between members of different cultures. These she divides into perceptual and linguistic processes of communication, and lists and elucidates the following as Verbal Processes of Communication: Competency (Accent, Cadence, Connotation, Context, Idiom, Polite Usage, Silence, Style) and Literacy/Orality (48). She notes, for example, the positive correlation of language

competence and attractiveness in intercultural communication (Kim, Schneider and Jordan: 49) as well as other findings. In accordance with the applied quality of IC, she recommends study of each element included in her two lists of communication obstacles for a smooth understanding of a narrative from someone of another culture.

Since two households of Mexicans reside on Sycamore Street, Novinger's detailed description, much of it discourse-based, of salient differences between Mexicans and citizens of the United States is helpful to this study. However, in their call for a "mediated discourse approach," Scollon and Scollon speak against the reification of cultures inherent in her approach:

"...the analysis would not presuppose cultural membership but rather ask how does the concept of culture arise in these social actions... a mediated discourse analysis is a way of erasing the field of intercultural communication by dissolving the foundational questions and reconstituting the research agenda around social action, not categorical memberships...to start from culture...is to start with a theoretical commitment to groups"(2004:545).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis is defined by its goal rather than by its methodology. It centers around the analysis of discourse for the purpose of revealing the production and reproduction of social structures of dominance and power inequalities among people, as well as how these are resisted. Since they deny that there can be any "value-free science" (Van Dijk: 2001:352), practitioners of CDA consider themselves complicit in

the establishment of power hierarchies. CDA incorporates a perspective of viewing social power as social control, and focuses particularly although not exclusively on two basic questions: 1.) How do powerful groups control public discourse? 2.) How does such discourse control less powerful groups, and with what social consequences? By means of discourse analysis to discern who controls the topics and when they change, the pacing of turns, the utilization of transitive and intransitive forms of verbs and other discursive actions and components, strategies of domination can be recognized.

In the anthology *The Lynching of Language*, referred to above, CDA was used to decipher Anita Hill's, Clarence Thomas's, and confirmation committee members' utterances at Thomas's hearings for a position on the Supreme Court. Close examination through the different analytical approach or perspective of each essay's author, including use of intercultural communication, rhetoric, pragmatics and others, displayed Thomas's dissembling and the ignoring or dismissal of Hill's testimony by committee senators. For the interpretations of some of the narratives which appear below, CDA is used.

Key areas of analytical focus

The efficacy of discourse analysis in understanding certain specific areas has led to its relative popularity among those academics studying related issues. Included are conflict, racism, legal and medical professions, the power of naming and the meaning of rituals. Narratives that occur in most of these areas can be viewed through critical discourse analysis for the workings of social control.

Tannen offers an effective argument-breaker that can be used with a quick discourse analysis: using Bateson's and Goffman's notion of frames, she suggests looking at the frame of a disagreement, then reframing it in a way to position yourself outside (1986:98). This practical and fertile maneuver is further discussed below.

Wodak and Reisigl indicate the usefulness of narratives to examine prejudices, stereotypes, rationalizations of discriminatory acts and distance/difference-perpetuating talk. They list strategies deployed at every level to depict oneself positively and give "negative other-presentations" (2004:386), from the use of a definite article before naming a group - characteristic of stereotypical discourse - to evasion and euphemisms spoken "more or less consciously."

Briggs's anthology, *Disorderly Discourse*, includes analyses of how discourse and conflict intersect. Although he speaks of a focus in the book on "narratives," as Brenneis explains (1996:43), "the view that narratives are produced by single speakers...cannot be sustained here." He adds that narrative events, with negotiating co-narrators, are what need to be considered, and suggests areas in which dispute narratives help "transform social realities" (47): they often serve to constitute knowledge; they distribute entitlement to the information expressed; they share authorship by co-narration; they catalyze personal experience of emotions.

B. Boundaries

Material boundaries

Some boundaries are part of the world of material culture. These are literal,

measurable boundaries, such as the perimeters of property, that can be confirmed by surveyors or by legal records and have often been established by consensus. However, material boundaries may be vulnerable to transgressions that occur in numerous ways. When investigating Andrew Jackson's Hermitage Plantation, Battle points out that the fences and roads which defined the boundaries of the plantation were regularly contested and crossed by slaves to suit their needs, "regardless of the slave-owner's intentions" (2004: 43).

Mountz reports on "Borders on the Move: the Shrinking Space of Asylum" (2008). She notes that nation states are in practice re-doing their boundaries, moving them outward to include, for example, islands or parts of islands, as the United States has done with Guantanamo and Guam, Australia with Christmas Island and Nauru, Italy with Lampedusa, Spain with the Canary Islands, and others. Canada, on the other hand, effectively moved its border inward by transforming Esquimalt, a peninsula in British Columbia, into a naval base, making it subject to military rather than civil law. These boundary manipulations allow denial of rights and legal due process to those people, most frequently migrants or political prisoners, who are sent there and hidden from view. More proximal to Sycamore Street, the City of Austin has annexed large subdivisions in order to expand its tax base.

In her article about human rights and undocumented Mexican workers who cross to the United States, Scarpellino sees boundaries between nations available to governments as soft to hard, dependent on how strongly they wish to exclude people who are seeking asylum. She notes that in the first decade of this century, there has been an

increase of border crossing-related deaths around the world despite the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," promulgated in 1948, which validates all individuals' rights to life, liberty, and security and is supposed to wield the force of international law.

Metaphorical boundaries

Individual Choices

Other boundaries are metaphorical. In contrast to the depiction of malleable material boundaries offered by Battle, Mountz, and Scarpellino, Frow problematizes the perception of the rigidity of metaphorical boundaries of groups of people, especially those which are related to class, which he considers to be an artificial construct with heuristic functions. He disputes conceptions of boundaries' falling neatly around traditional census-type packaging, and notes that the most important factor of bonding or exclusion is an individual's choice (1995:5). Similarly, Barth observes that the most important feature of a bounded social group, such as an ethnic group or occupational group, is the categorization of it as a group by individuals who also ascribe membership to themselves. "Self-identification (is) the critical criterion of (the group) identity" (1969:24)...When members interact with other people, they perform according to their group's criteria of evaluation "maintained by continued expression and validation" (1969:15).

Like Frow, Barth notes a porosity of group boundaries. He speaks of the "changing participation and membership" (1969:10), an "osmosis of personnel through the boundaries" (1969:21). The important qualification remains that a person who

belongs attribute to himself or herself the same values, the same appreciations, and the same traits by which members define themselves as members. However, “flow of personnel [is] clearly far more common than the ethnographic literature would lead us to believe.” In his discussions of race, Hartigan points out the instability of its definition by referring to statistics of racial self-identification that indicate 75% of Americans describe themselves as "white or partly white," with "white" being "the most polyglot category, and it's morphing" (2005:7.)

Frow points out that while it is true that individuals are enculturated, continuing processes of boundary formation (and penetration) revolve around discursive representations and are frequently in flux rather than inexorably entrenched. According to him, the most accessible representations of what it means to “fit in” to a monolithic “society” are those normalized to dominant interests. Such discourses are a “language game” (1995:4) which succeeds in creating excluded “Others.” In real lives of real people, the discourses as well as the narratives which are shaped by people and which shape them in return are in constant evolution of expression.

Boundaries in Ethnography

This holds true in anthropology, also, when scholars in the field cross cultural boundaries in order to create bonds for the purpose of learning about different peoples. In "Melancholia and Anthropology" High describes her experience after she has returned home from Laos, leaving behind an adopted family. Such non-biological families are commonplace there, and all members have a reciprocal obligation to nurture each other. This is expected to be continual or people feel lonely and jilted, with "true" family

disrupted by abandonment. For example, since death is a type of abandonment, family members attempt at funerals to "shout down" any vestiges of desertion by intensification of symbols of nurturance (2011:219).

High received word that her Lao sister was very sick with kidney stones and needed money for hospital care. This was the same sister who had helped High tremendously in getting established in her first successful fieldwork project. High reasoned that kidney stones are not fatal and waited for her next payday to send money, but her sister had died: she had actually had malaria, which could have been treated at the hospital although at great expense. To attend the funeral, High traveled to Laos and was met by her eighty-year-old Laotian mother, sobbing because there was nobody now to care for her. At that time, High realized she means very much to her family in Laos and that they also mean much to her, but the sentiments are tempered by "different metaphors" (224) of family and anthropologist. She cannot, however, shake the flood of feelings that continue to reproach her as an abandoner, and cites Kulick (2006) who says that anthropologists have a "masochistic desire to align with the oppressed," (2011:228) and Freud, who believes that loud proclamations of love and care are the first evidence of repressed hostility. Recognizing in herself the "ambivalence, hostility, repression, and anxiety" that can result from bonds established during fieldwork, as elsewhere, she suffers the self-reproaches "that identify the anthropologist as abandoner [through withdrawal] and then call for redemption through ethical arguments" (2011: 230.) In so doing, she practices anthropology as a "vulnerable observer," advocated by Behar: "...anthropologists and other vulnerable observers, can and should write about loss. But

we must do so with a different awareness, an awareness of how excruciating are the paradoxes of attachment and displacement. Above all, I think we need to be absolutely pitiless with ourselves" (1996:81.) Anthropologists are in a sticky situation: they must cross cultural boundaries in such a way that involves them emotionally, then re-cross to the other sides of the boundaries in order to reveal what they have learned.

In contrast to the disturbing experience of High with her adopted family, Shepard adopts Matsigenkas in the Peruvian Amazon, deciding to remain with them permanently even after his harrowing experience trying clumsily to save the dying woman who had served as his main go-between. He depicts the hard life experienced by his Peruvian friends, and tells of the numerous and common causes of death as well as ever-present sadness and suffering. Nevertheless, he finds that "certain Matsigenka friends strike me as being among the most content, self-confident, well-adjusted people I know" (2008:219,) and adds what he believes is part of their outlook: "expect little, and you are left with much to be joyful about" (220.) (This philosophy is also present among some of the people who live on Sycamore Street.) He participates whole-heartedly in his chosen life, seeing the utility in the loud, communal manioc beer parties, accompanied by dancing, gossip, and singing duels, that occur whenever the gardens have produced enough manioc. Shepard also recognizes the advantage to the posthumous three-day mourning period during which the main object is to defend oneself from being taken off by the dead, who want company, and concludes that "it is the dead who grieve for the living" (220.) This acceptance on his part recalls the words of both Frow (1995) and Barth (1969), who see that the key to making one a member of a group is identifying

oneself as being an insider.

Pack discusses problems he experienced when he tried to cross the boundary of acceptance that lay between himself and Navajos, and notes the relatively easy accessibility of people's public personas. He reveals that he was able to establish deeper relationships by remaining reticent, saying he "never tried to be accepted," and so he was (2006:107.) His experience also leads him to advocate the use of reflexivity in ethnographic reports.

Rules of conduct

Goffman discusses the maintenance of boundaries inherent in rules of conduct. He states: "...most actions which are guided by rules of conduct are performed unthinkingly...actions [which] have all along been consonant with the proprieties of his group [to the degree that] his failure to perform them can become a matter of shame and humiliation" (1967:49). This can even be officially policed, as illustrated in East Austin at the time of Rosa's arrest (Chapter VI below,) by the creeping in of "morality," defined to include such inherently amoral activities as housekeeping and hygiene, which members of the justice system manifest as falling within the boundaries of their jurisdiction. In Rosa's case, the police threatened to take away her cat, dog, and bird because her house was messy, so "not a fit home" for them. Rosa defended herself, declaring, "There is clean litter in the pan, and they have fresh water every day - filtered water!" Eidheim cites cleanliness as a "mode of valuation" for hierarchical position (1969:40). In her article concerning working-poor mothers, Jones observes that it is

common for Child Protective Services as well as police to either praise or oppose mothers on the basis of cleanliness of their homes and children. Under these criteria, children can be taken away. Due to the same judgments, she notes, teachers can choose not to like a child and let her or him fail (2008:169.)

Like Barth, Goffman links the drive for self-identity to the upholding of group boundaries. He terms performance according to a rule of conduct a communication of self-confirmation, while at the same time involvement in maintaining a rule generates or strengthens commitment to a certain image for oneself (1967:49).

Similar to Goffman's consideration of conduct's role in people's maintenance of boundaries, Hartigan addresses etiquette and decorum, and states they are used as tools to naturalize socially-constructed class differences. He also notes the mutability of classificatory boundaries, such as race and class. By selecting poor whites - members of the dominant group but disqualified as equals, according to stereotypes - as his subjects, he sets the stage to address the illogic of a monolithic definition of race and of any group of people that is labeled in comparable fashion. As he illustrates, "social boundaries are asserted and contested in multiple registrations simultaneously"(2005:21). Furthermore, political and social dynamics are changing fast, and so to consider social labels as anything but temporary and conditional is unrealistic.

Hartigan cites Perry, who states that "individuals will have cross-cultural competencies and fluencies that, in effect, make them bi- or multi-cultural..." (2005:272) - an observation which echoes one made earlier by Hartigan in the same book when he mentions "boundaries of belonging and difference that multiple aspects of social identity

[govern]..." (258).

Boundaries of labor

Frow addresses a common basis for discriminatory class boundaries when he points out that we are schooled "not to 'qualify' manual and mental labor in different ways, but far more to disqualify manual labor" (1995:110). He notes "a refusal to separate valued from disvalued knowledges" (1995:97), and cites demographic data to suggest a hierarchical system which reflects the historical growth of "knowledge industries" (1995:91) which exclude the knowledge - no matter how sophisticated or cognitive - found in jobs designated as manual labor.

Frow comments: "the distinction between manual and mental labour is ideological...[and] directly bound up with the monopolization of knowledge" (1995:110,) a cause for manual workers to maintain boundaries as a protective device, to use what Desjarlais terms "strategies... that enable a person, group, or institution to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection" (1996:885).

Frow has noted the steadily increasing polarization of manual from mental labors, and explains the cultural discrimination in which a set of preferred values is naturalized, accompanied by an attempt "more or less forcefully to impose one's values on others. It is thus not just a matter of self-definition, but also of struggle for social legitimation" (1995:84).

Stereotypes born of the "drive to taxonomize" (Haraway 1987:64), function to anneal the boundaries which separate members of the working class from others.

Academic discourses are among those most highly placed by Frow within "the knowledge industries." He notes (1995:5) concerning sociologist Bourdieu, whose work is highly valorized by academicians: "Bourdieu works with an inadequate conception of class, essentializing it as a coherent structure and setting it in a fixed relation to cultural forms..." Bourdieu's essentializations are detailed and specific, as when he describes "the adult males of the lower classes" with details of how these crude, nonvariable Others eat, laugh, and talk (1984:87.)

The political implications of the narrowness of definitions of knowledge is an ideological choice, described by roofer Joe Langford in my article about the use of jargon in boundary-crossing when he refers to the type of knowledge required in the roofing licensure examination: "It's to keep the little man down" (2001:23.) Friman states: "...any monopolized knowledge area will always hide alternative and potentially valuable approaches (2010:13,) and cites Nielsen's work on power relations that subordinate alternate knowledge claims - "a boundary work of 'anti-boundary' work" (2008:175.)

Schegloff discusses the locational aspects of language, as a means to assess and create relational positions among people (1972:107). Urciuoli also notes that "border-marking language elements are locational markers," adding that "they assign people a place, often opposing places between those who 'have' the language and those who do not" (1995:539). Goffman agrees: "The sharing of particulars...is perhaps one sense of membership in a 'same community.' It is by reference to the adequate recognizability of detail...that one is in this sense a member, and those who do not share such recognition are 'strangers'" (1967:113). Also seeing the local scale of group membership, Eidheim

points out the construction of boundaries around a limited "sphere of interaction... conditioned by local knowledge and valuations and to this extent only locally valid" (1969:53-4). Grenier decries "undertheorized locations of experience" which research concerning age and generational boundaries entails. She discerns a problem of interpretations of older people being made by researchers who are younger than their subjects, and notes that, in the west, society is youth-centered, with powerful organizational and institutional practices (such as long-term care) already in place for the more elderly members (2007:717.)

Schegloff says, "Name-dropping...can be done with place names as well as with personal names, and depends for its operation on the recognizability of the name...What we mean by 'recognizability' is that the hearer can perform operations on the name - categorize it, find as a member of what class it is being used, bring knowledge to bear on it..."(1972:110). The people who make a living by gleaning recyclable materials as well as household items they can sell from a city dump of Rio de Janeiro categorize themselves as "catadores," - collectors - "as a challenge to and critique of other derogatory terms like 'scavenger,' and 'trash-picker.'" (Millar: 2008:33.) Similarly, people at a construction job site in central Florida are addressed by their trade in what can be considered a type of name-dropping as Schegloff delineates it, for it carries useful recognizability which can help categorize the speaker (Steiner:1991.) "The ability to bestow meanings - to 'name' things, acts and ideas - is a source of power," writes Wolf. "Control of communication allows the managers of ideology to lay down the categories through which reality is to be perceived" (1982:388).

People who want sex change surgery in the USA are often required to engage with a phalanx of doctors and caretakers including specialists and mental health professionals. The dynamics between transsexual males and the caretakers are discussed by Bolin, who observes that the interrelationships are a system of power relations, with qualifications in the form of "recommendations" (permission) for surgery completely dependent on caretakers' evaluations. Transsexuals have to conform to demands that consider heterosexuality as preferable and a sign of mental health and place other forms of sexuality outside the boundary of validity (2008.)

Miller (2004) describes young women, "Kogals," in Japan who "challenge prescriptive norms of gendered talk... by constructing "marginal personae...through a combination of behavior, attitude, and language" that displays self-confidence rather than the modesty expected of them. They communicate among themselves via text messages full of emoticons and symbols, and additionally employ code-switching among the four principal languages of Japan to assist in maintaining group boundaries (226). "The oppositional quality of verbal art to symbolically transform social relations is limited only by the creativity and abilities of the narrator"(1992:75), notes McCarl in his article concerning boundaries among firefighters.

Speaking at the boundaries

In her ethnographic work in Appalachia, Stewart discusses the opportunities Appalachian women seize in order to carve out their identities. She notes that "...the problem is not to fragment surroundings or to emerge from silence into speech, as if these

were ends in themselves, but to...place yourself somewhere in the chinks and margins of things; to speak for yourself" (1990:55).

The truckers Agar studied express the experience of freedom from confining boundaries as important: "Independence is, in part, about the lack of *immediate* supervisory control...But there is more to independence than this...While others sleep in their homes or go to the nearby factory or office, he moves through time and space...the culturally 'normal' ways of segmenting time and organizing space no longer apply. Independence comes from a sense of distinctiveness rather than from a sense of control. The independent's world is organized in a distinctive way (1986:164). Although speaking of cars, Gilroy's insight can also be applied to truckers' vehicles, which can become part of a "culture of compensation...simultaneously a form of freedom and a means of further bondage" (2001:222.)

Barth states that, to attempt to understand people we "should examine the differing *criteria of validity*" (1995:67). Working-poor mothers are often judged as lacking due to criteria based on economic and social resources as well as cultural practices of white middle class mothers (Walkerdine in Jones, 2008:166.) Likewise, the world of the *catadores* of Brazil is distinctive in a manner that contributes to something they, truckers, and roofers value highly - their criteria of validity revolve around a sense of freedom. The *catadores'* social lives take place at the city dump, including cooking together and playing soccer. Since the dump never closes, they establish their own schedules to fit their preferences. Millar notes: They "reconstruct the workplace as a

space in which boundaries between economic and social life, public and private domains, and spheres of production and consumption become blurred" (2008:28).

Chapter 3

“Make Do with What You Have”

Mrs. Rodis Johnson

The Narrative

R: “I hadn’t bought anything. It’s all from taking a piece or a seed, you know, and putting it into the ground. I did that with that old pecan tree, you know, so I could share with the neighbors. But I never ‘cause I was always planting something under there, so I never had it sprayed, ‘cause usually it was something to eat, and so, and then finally it died from something, some bug or something. I’ve got - just about everything I’ve got, somewhere I got a seed from somebody. It’s like I was tellin’ my daughter, just - golly, ‘cause I had some cabbage in the house, so I had the bottom in out in the dirt and I just put water on it and it grew again. And you know if it’s still gotten leaves on it, you can try it. And I- I- I- learned to do all of that, you know this was just experience, ‘cause I grew up in the country, you know, and we used to do everything, but usually in the summer time maybe they was dying off, and you know, I’d have a lot of that cabbage growing out there, and I had one it just kept growing and this one had been there for years ‘til I dug it up and put another one there. And the other one didn’t do as well as the old one did and so...but anyway, it's just experience. You know, I just think about, it’s the root. If you’ve got the root, you just stick it out somewhere. Everybody can grow it with some water.”

A: “Mrs. Johnson, is it still like that with the city water? I was wondering because Gabriella got some water from the lake. She works out near Lake Travis, and she brought a big jar of lake water and she put all kinds of different plants in there and they all rooted – ones that she never could get to root in the city water.”

R: “No, uh, I would just go ahead and use city water. I always just put mine in the city water so I can share it with the neighbors and it does OK. I put some of that ivy over there on the piano in some city water, and it’s growing. You know, I don’t know nobody that’ll want it. It had gotten so low and you know little old leaves, so I just cut it, put it in some water, and it grows.”

A: “Your yard, you know all the plants in it, and you have always kept everything weeded, right? What do you call weeds?”

R: “Weeds? Well, I just had you know what I tried to get rid of some of my carpet grass. You had to keep it watered, and so I just had to, I just stopped.

“The other day I got down a bag with a rubber band and I said, what is this, and it was seeds from a persimmon, but I had written on that it was persimmons but I never planted it. (Laughs.) I don’t think I ever bought anything other than the magnolia tree. It was just this high, just a little bush, when I first bought it. But I gave some of those red seeds, you know, to neighbors and the other day - yesterday somebody gave me a peach from the peach tree.”

A: “I notice you still go outside a lot. Do you feel it’s safe here? I know now some people say it’s not too good of a neighborhood here.”

R: “No, so far. I think our street’s been pretty nice. And then, not a lot of kids now, you know, most older people, and I had a neighbor that died the other day, and it’s most older people this end now. Ms. Crawford’s husband just died last week. And I saw her son, I guess, came over, and I hadn’t been there ‘cause I been crippled almost, you know. Itabeen kinda cool, ya know. But I saw another car over there, I think it was his son. But I haven’t been over to see her since he died. I think it was in the night.

A: “Well. Life keeps changing. Life goes on.”

R: “It does. It really does. ‘Cause I had my little niece over here with me. She went home with a friend of her mother’s, she took her home, and she had a stroke! Linda had a stroke. She would always come over, and she’d like to read my magazines, you know she’s about fifty. She lived about two blocks over. So Linda was, she always came, but she drove. And she had a stroke in Waco. I asked the man with her and I think she went home with her sister.”

A: “What does your yard do for you? I mean, is it more of a stressor, because like the tree with the leaves? Or is it more where you find the most peace, or does it feel like you’re closer to God, or...? What do you think about nature and your yard?”

R: “Well, when it leaves out like that, I decided to just leave ‘em ‘til my son comes and rakes ‘em.”

A: “Right. But it still annoys you that they’re there, right?”

R: “Well, yeah. Like coupla days the wind’s sometimes coming from the south they all blow in my yard. And that old sycamore there next door, it’s the worst. That’s why I

don't worry about it. But the backyard, I finally got rid of all the carpet grass. I told my son I was going to plant me a garden, but that St. Augustine grass, he wouldn't cut it low enough. Then you have to water it a lot. Then he said, uh, I said, 'Well, I know where some people don't have any grass in the yard.' So I got it where I just plant stuff in it now if I want."

A: "So when you're out in the yard, does it do anything for you?"

R: "It does do a lot. I like being out in the yard, you know. I haven't been out there this past wintertime, but I like being out in the yard. I grew up in the country so we had trees and things growing, you know, and so I liked it. I liked it. That's where we were. We had trees all around. So being out, the yard, is more like what I'm used to. And I enjoyed that. I enjoyed it."

A: "What do you think about the things that are happening to the environment, and all the global warming, and some things dying off?"

R: "I hate when I hear. It's kinda scary. And you just wonder why. I don't know. It's just kinda scary. Just kinda scary. The birds, you know..."

A: "You like the birds a lot, right?"

R: "Well, I don't care for them much."

A: "Cause they poop and make a mess?"

R: "Yeah, 'cause I still hang clothes on the line, and stuff like that."

A: "If you could give advice to young people, everywhere in the world, what would you say is the most important thing, what would you say? About life. (Long pause as she thinks.) Sort of a big question for right out of nowhere."

R: “Well, I...Just- just, you know, whatever your surrounding is, you just have to make use of it, I think. Make do with what you have. Because, I wonder – my daddy went through so much, and he was definitely, you had to go to school. You had to go to school. We lived out in the country, and they had all kinds of jobs for the boys, you know. I was thinking the other day, that we all had to go to schools, the boys and all. I get to thinking about that a lot because on the other side of our house was this guy and he lived across the field from us, and the girl got to go to school, but the boy didn’t. I guess he had to work. You know, there was always something on the farm for him to do. And the little girl got to go, but the little girl never worked! She never worked. You know, I get to thinking about this kind of thing. I say, ‘You know he never went...’ but I guess they always had stuff that he needed to do and he didn’t get to go. But she went to school every day. She used to come by our house and we’d go to school with her.”

A: “Do you think he would have wanted to go?”

R: “I think he would, but he was staying at someone else’s place, and they had him digging up stuff, things like that. I mean her, then, she got to go to school. Then I got to think about it, I wonder why. But you know, it was just LIKE that. And sometime, I can remember when, sometime the husband would just leave, when he was staying on somebody’s place, and he would ride with the children, ‘cause they was, they was black people. And they just leave.”

A: “What did you think of when you were a kid and you saw that happening around you to your friends and stuff?”

R: “Well, I thought more about this since I been grown. I guess I was used to it. Because down on the other side of us there was a guy that had a he had a kid. My uncle had a farm, but he didn’t have anyone going to school then. After he left is when the other people had it and they didn’t always get to go to school.

“But we always had to go to school: you didn’t miss school. And when cotton-picking time come, we’d pick cotton after coming from school, and we used to go out and pick it when school was out. And every week on Friday evening, you’d come home and the truck would be gone, and we’d go help Momma in the house ‘cause Poppa was picking cotton.”

A: “Did you mind or did you like it?”

R: “It’s what I was used to. We didn’t mind. I don’t know, sometimes they’d have, me and my brother, my younger brother. He was young but I had an older brother, but they would have him and me pick cotton for somebody, and they’d have – maybe they’d have onion...patch. And they’d tell you, welcome to them. Well, my two brothers and my sister, we’d empty our sacks, and we’d go anywhere, and they’d say, ‘Smell onions. Smell onions.’ [Chuckles.] Where we lived, they z’all gone already. (Mrs. Johnson’s melodious words softly run together and flow along like a clear brook slipping over beautiful pebbles.) So we did the same thing like him. We’d make us something different, you know because and uh, I don’t know. Times were hard, you know? But we’d make do with what we had. We wouldn’t get discouraged. We didn’t know we were poor. We would go in - maybe somebody way cross the river had (a) pea patch and we’d pick on halves of it, you know. And uh, we’d go pick peas, get over there, and my

brother – I had two sisters zolder, they didn't go. I think I had a sister that died before, but I had a brother. And so by him being a boy, and I was the oldest, and so you know I could go anywhere, I'd go with him, and we'd go get peas, you know, that kind of stuff, half picked for us, half for them. The shortest cut to get there was cross on an old foot-log instead of going to the bridge, and we'd pick on halves."

A: "Does that mean you'd pick them and you'd get a half and they'd get the other half?"

R: "Yeah."

A: "What about tomatoes? Did you grow them?"

R: "Well, my daddy had some, but you couldn't grow them in the summer because it got too hot and they would die. We had to haul water. We'd go down to the spring. It wasn't far. My brothers tried to dig a well, you know. A guy came around and he had this stick, but they never found water. But the spring wasn't far – about a mile. And we'd go there 'cause that spring, long as we knew, it would never go dry. Never dry. And we called it the blackland field. And that spring, I guess it was about like two blocks over. We never thought it was hard to go there. We just didn't know. Where we were, wasn't no water there, they dug some wells, and finally just covered them up and we hauled water from the spring and then finally my father bought one of those barrels for the rain water, too."

A: "That must have made you strong."

R: "Well, I had two older brothers. They did all of that. But I realized when I got old, and I got to thinking, I said, 'We was just in the wrong place.' We'd been over at the

blackland, by the spring, that's where the water was. We hauled water. About three barrels of water.”

A: “Do people ever cross through your yard? Or come from the city and look at your meters and stuff like that and break plants down if they do?”

R: “No. One day, a water line was broke somewhere. But it wasn't in my yard.”

A: “Have you noticed any kind of a change like with the police?”

R: “I've never had any problem with the police.”

A: “I was just wondering because the police seem to be changing.”

R: “Oh, really?”

A: “At least what it shows on the news. But anyway, you have a really comfortable and pleasant little corner of the world here, don't you?”

R: “Yeah, I guess I do have. Now one time, I was staying with my son, he lives a few blocks away. I was coming – they were working on my house – and I was coming early in the morning, and the police kinda followed me in their car. ‘Cause it was really really early in the morning. So then they stopped by me when I zalmost home and said, ‘Where you going?’ and I told him, and a neighbor came out.”

A: “But wasn't he following you to watch you get home safely like you told me one time?”

R: “No, I guess he was...”

A: “Thinking you were a lady of the night?”

R: "I don't know what he was thinking. He 'sprob'bly wondering what was I doing out, you know, at that time of the morning, 'cause it was dark.

"And the police said, 'Well, we watching out for you.' And the neighbors was watching out for me, too.

"I didn't smoke or anything, and I could smell if there was beer, you know, and I'd just watch out. And one time, they had a dog that was foll'win' me and I thought, what's this dog doing out without a leash on? But he was just foll'win' me. He's somebody's dog. He's a nice dog. First time I saw him, I told the police, there's a dog there, lost off a leash, 'cause I got to thinking the police would think I'm walking my dog without a leash on, you know. So I was glad when he finally saw a cat and he stopped, but by then I was safe almost at home. And I think that dog was sent by God."

A: "How old are you now? You told me before, but I forget."

R: "I'm 91. October 14, 1919. You know, the good Lord's been watching over me for a long time, 'cause I have come pretty close."

A: "Come pretty close to death?"

R: "Well, I think I woulda been because one time I had some medicine I was taking, and I took it before I left, and all of a sudden I saw this guy driving up the road, and I was on my side – I always drive on my side of the road – and I said, 'Something's wrong,' and then I just turned my wheels back the way I was coming from, you know and drove off, and nobody saw me, and I got back on the road.

“I haven’t been one to read the Bible from A to Z, but He’s been looking out for me for a long time because I’ve had some narrow escapes. Nobody came along. I got back on the road. And nobody saw me.”

A: “I guess we’re about done. Anything else you’d like to add, that you’re thinking about?”

R: “I think a lot about my kids. I’ve got good kids, and they’re all pretty close to here.”

A: “You must have taught them right.”

R: “Yeah. I always made them be responsible growing up. They worked in the afternoons and on the weekends. They didn’t go out at night. And when they got driving age, they’d always tell me where they were going, and I’d leave the light on and they’d let me know when they came back. The kids were always good. I never had any problem with them. Never a problem. They’re still doing fine.”

A: “That was sweet of your daughter to adopt that little girl. That was great.”

R: “Uh-huh.”

Mrs. Johnson's narrative springs from a seed - a symbol of a beginning from which she will coax a story of life. Within her first sentences, it is possible to see her as a frugal and self-sufficient person who makes do with what she has, and does that so well that she has enough to share. As the first of my consultants to be recorded, she responds to the stated topic of yards by focusing immediately on its utilitarian facets. She attributes this to being "from the country," where such things are learned.

When I sat down with her to record her words, I had expected to pose questions concerning her yard and her relationship to it as a boundary. However, she was prepared for a bigger project: to toss out most of my preconceived ideas and plans and spend her time telling me about what really mattered to her. Through much of the interview, I attempted to nudge her toward answers I wanted to hear and to expose a love of nature that I imagined must have been fostered during her rural upbringing. Instead, she revealed the frank view of an agrarian.

When I ask her about weeds, she discusses her "carpet grass," expensive St. Augustine grass, and how it demanded too much care and water so she had let it die. This inversion of "weed" from the common meaning places her again within a utilitarian framework of thought, and indicates a position athwart landscaping definitions popularized by the realm of commerce.

One of Mrs. Johnson's personal strategies - perhaps one at play in her achievement of longevity - surfaces clearly when I push her about fallen leaves in her yard and she rejects the need to worry:

R: "Well, when it leaves out like that, I decided to just leave 'em 'til my son comes and rakes 'em."

A: "Right. But it still annoys you that they're there, right?"

R: "Well, yeah. Like coupla days the wind's sometimes coming from the south they all blow in my yard. And that old sycamore there next door, it's the worst. That's why I don't worry about it."

At times, I attempted to redirect Mrs. Johnson's narrative, but unsuccessfully. For example, she mentioned birds when we began to speak about global warming, but I interrupted her to inject my own opinions of what I thought she'd say:

R: "I hate when I hear. It's kinda scary. And you just wonder why. I don't know. It's just kinda scary. Just kinda scary. The birds, you know..."

A: "You like the birds a lot, right?"

R: "Well, I don't care for them much."

Another time I tried to speculate what police thought of her walking outdoors in the middle of night:

A: "But wasn't he following you to watch you get home safely like you told me one time?"

R: "No, I guess he was..."

A: "Thinking you were a lady of the night?"

R: "I don't know what he was thinking. He 'sprob'bly wondering what was I doing out, you know, at that time of the morning, 'cause it was dark."

Each time, my attempt at assertion failed. It was her story, and I could not put words into her (or the police's) mouth. It was not until I transcribed the interview that I noticed these unwitting maneuvers on my part, and regretted my attempts to exert power. Fortunately, Mrs. Johnson rebutted these and stood up for herself.

Boundaries

To discuss Mrs. Johnson's yard with her immediately connects her to her childhood, in which the sharing of the bounties of the earth was a valued custom that was and is a source of pleasure for her. It is a large part of what her being "from the country" - a proud self-description - means to her: the ability to give or receive even a little seed or cutting of a plant, which can be turned into food or shade to be shared. She has learned the satisfaction of taking a tiny thing, a piece of a thing, and watching it grow into something people need and enjoy - has learned to turn the short supplies that go along with having few financial resources into joy and a desirable way of life. Even the root of a cabbage can yield more cabbage and can allow her to share a helpful fact with her daughter. Still, she finds some old persimmon seeds, but rather than lament that they were never planted or passed on, she chuckles because they remind her of her seed-sharing habit and a rewarding way of life which has carried on to the present: do with what you have.

Her childhood is fondly described in activities of her and her brothers rather than in purchases. Traipsing all the way to a distant neighbor to pick peas by halves was injected with fun by teetering across the river on a log that provided a shortcut; gathering onions led to friendly, appreciated teasing. The spring in the rich blackland generously yielded an unending stream of water. It was a reliable source, freely sharing its life-giving water. Not only did Rodis Johnson do with what she had, she found that to be fulfilling and good to the degree that "we didn't mind" the hard work involved. Furthermore, what she had to make do with included an exchange system through sharing

that enlarged her resources. To this day, she participates in that system: she gives neighbors some magnolia seeds, a neighbor gives her a peach. She sees what she gives and shares not as charity, but rather as solidarity – a lateral move, a lateral relationship, rather than one that is unequal.

The role of social networks has been examined by numerous social scientists. Lein and her team of ethnographers studied the strategies used by families in Texas and Mexico, particularly in the communities of the Rio Grande Valley along Texas's southern border, as well as in San Antonio, Waco, and Monterrey, Mexico. She found that among people who are struggling to make financial ends meet, sharing food and resources such as baby-sitting and clothing is a wide-spread and efficacious strategy (1997). Wellman, Carrington, and Hall review the findings of numerous other social scientists who demonstrate that both kinship and neighborhood networks are important contributors to individuals' well-being and survival (1988.)

“We” is sharing

Mrs. Johnson’s narrative illustrates the ties of intra-family connectedness. As she describes tasks she and her siblings carried out, she explains what “we” did. We hauled water from the spring; we picked on halves. In response to the comment that the water hauling must have made her strong, she clarifies that her brothers “did all that,” but her perspective was as part of “we.” They shared a family life that meant help and appreciation for each other. In this solidarity, this unity, this sharing of selves, Mrs. Johnson’s personal boundary translated into something larger than herself.

This familial closeness has carried through generations: the final comments of Mrs. Johnson are praise for her children.

Among Muriks of Papua New Guinea, mothers benefit from a shared responsibility for child-rearing. Barlow (2001, 2011) notes the teaching of sharing as a joint project: actions of a "primary mothering figure," usually the biological mother, and the complementary roles of other mothers. The assisting mothers mete out swift, dramatic corrections (such as dumping a bowl of water on the child's head) in response to his or her improper or inconsiderate behavior, followed swiftly by coddling and soothing by the primary mother. In such a way, the child learns propriety while at the same time retains a sense of worthiness. As with Mrs. Johnson, the sharing is learned principally around food, which accentuates its impacts by relating it to a primary and necessary activity.

The poverty boundary

A boundary that Mrs. Johnson unknowingly skipped right over as a child was that of poverty. Demographics have split us into categories that are defined by boundaries, among others, of financial standing, but none of these that are monetarily-based are hardened to the degree of The Poverty Line, which has been solidified by its official definition to the penny, adjusted annually for the exact rate of inflation. This designation of poverty evokes unexamined, pitiable status to a group of people based sheerly on superficial standards.

The Poverty Line definition is problematic. DiNitto (2010) explains five different approaches to poverty, and points out that the author of the initial Poverty Line formula said recently that she had only intended her formula to be applicable to elderly Americans (69.) Inaccuracies are based on such outdated factors as the use of a one-third ratio of food costs to total costs of living. This figure does not account for the radical growth of housing costs which has been experienced, nor does it adjust for benefits like public housing, food stamps, and school lunches, or for family assets such as an owned home.

In *Tales from the New Great Depression*, (2011: 92-99, 128-133) Maharidge and his photographer Williamson record verbally and visually two moments in the life of Maggie, a young, single mother living in the East Austin neighborhood of Montopolis, whom they first met in a food bank line of about 200 people, then revisited nine years later. Maggie works full time for the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, renamed and reframed by the time of Maharidge's second visit to the friendlier-sounding Department of Family and Protective Services. In addition, she works two to three other jobs: December to April helping people prepare their taxes, and year 'round cleaning houses and waiting tables part time. She also bakes and sells cheesecakes.

Maggie's life seems a hyperbolic juggling match, with every down carrying added stressful impact because of her limited resources, every up a feeling of relief and celebration. Her daughter was born with life-threatening health problems that required operations and ongoing treatments. Fortunately, insurance from her job covered much of the costs. Unfortunately, Maggie lost a month of pay while tending to her daughter. Prescribed drugs had saved the daughter's life but had badly damaged her teeth – not

covered under the insurance and entailing future expensive care. Had Maggie been unemployed, the dentistry would have been covered by Welfare.

By the luck of a draw, Maggie had acquired a new Habitat for Humanity home. She also acquired a husband shortly thereafter who could help her family, which soon included a new daughter. Unluckily, the man was an unfaithful lout. To pay an attorney for her divorce battle, she had to take on an additional mortgage.

Her budget is very tight. She worries about its recent disruption caused by an unexpected brake job needed for her car. (“Something like a brake job messes up my whole month” [130].) Thank goodness her grandmother takes care of the kids during the day. Food costs have sky-rocketed. Her grandmother gets more food than she needs at a recreation center for senior citizens, and shares with her. The extra amount lasts about a week. The mother’s garden provides vegetables. Up and down. Up and down. A modern style of hunting and gathering with the prey, the fruits of foraging, now the dollar, and the time for recreation and family activities eaten up.

This type of high-tension balancing act is how many – “the working poor” (Ehrenreich, Shipler, Zavella) - live in our society. As an indication of how impactful locally this condition is, consider a survey taken in 1998: it found that 240 secretaries, janitors, and food service workers at U.T. Austin were getting food stamps (93.) Times have gotten harder since then.

The fact that Maggie works for the government, recently gaining an advancement and raise, does not exempt her from the juggling game. While doing research for U.T. Austin’s Center for Social Work Research, I met families in the Rio Grande Valley, in

Waco, in Jasper, and in San Antonio with single mothers or two parents who were struggling financially but being “cycled” off governmental assistance. Part of the stress that worries parents is that, despite their being taxpayers, they can’t really count on public help in the future. While the large, profit-amassing oil companies are “entitled” to huge tax breaks, there is an on-going political assault against entitlements for individuals. There are many different boundaries indeed separating people in need and barely getting by from large corporations and their officers.

Rodis Johnson has lived a rich life if one rejects the amount of capital as being the only or even best way to gauge the quality of life. All the stigmatizations that accompany labeling people as poor lead some to assume that poverty must be a condition of folks who lack something besides money, such as the intelligence, the will, or the desire to pull themselves up to a so-called higher position. Others more thoughtfully and humanely believe that the combination of the inequitable construction of our society and its institutions, ignorance on the part of people when it comes to regarding that structure, and circumstances of birth such as skin color, place of nativity, and other unavoidable traits or conditions are to blame for poverty: they frequently ameliorate these conditions and fight to provide, at minimum, the elements necessary for survival – food, water, and shelter - in an attempt to eliminate the power of societally-judged conditions to adversely affect people.

However, more important to the people on Sycamore Street and East Austin who personally experience what is officially designated as poverty is the possibility that exists anyway to live a full and happy life with loving relationships and opportunities. A life of

monetary lack need not be poor. Some people even choose to live at a different level of expenditure than one that would allow them more of what is perceived as valued by society rather than place themselves in a thankless earning position, offering “a blind obedience to a blundering oracle” as says Thoreau, (*Walden*, sect. 5, Ch. 1A, entitled “Economy.”) To people who live in a fashion simplified by having little and then making do with what they have, there are less pejorative and blanketing words than poverty to describe their situation - for example, frugality, or the word Thoreau chooses, economy. “We didn’t know we were poor,” says Mrs. Johnson. In the most important ways, perhaps, she and her family weren’t.

Maggie reveals that when she was a child she felt sorry for a boy at school and gave him food, thinking that he was “the poorest boy in the school” (93), only to learn recently from her mother that he was better off than Maggie was. She says, “I didn’t know we were poor until I was an adult.” Both Mrs. Johnson and Maggie have found it difficult to make this recollected, blithe, lived experience compute with knowledges acquired through life in East Austin, in which observations and understandings have been learned, with time, through the lens of an omnipresent capitalistic society. On Sycamore Street, children might not have the latest toys, electronics, or clothing styles, but since they attend school with others who live in similar conditions, this goes largely unnoticed until the age when appearances begin to matter.

If using financial well being as a yardstick, ascertaining an official point where poverty begins is flawed despite demographic claims and permutations of government labeling. Jancius describes Leipzig, in what was East Germany, which she sees as “the

Orient” “embedded in an Occidental ‘First World,’” – both “at the center and at the margins” (2008:3.) Research undertaken there focuses on financially poor citizens seen from a perspective which includes awareness of absolute poverty’s existence elsewhere and in the past. A boundary is drawn between absolute and relative poverty: absolute is measured globally and means “absence of essential needs,” while relative poverty is interpreted in cultural context, and is most associated in Leipzig with conditions of unemployment.

As has been noted, The Poverty Line in this country is insufficient, inaccurate, outdated, and in other ways would appear to be dismissible. However, because it is deployed in governmental calculations and echoed in the media and in common parlance, it functions as a hard boundary and engraves a smear upon those ascertained to fall below it. So effective has it become in helping engineer class rift that The Poverty Line’s inconsistencies are unimportant to their impact.

Mrs. Johnson’s story details a full life, a life of plenty of hard work - but the rewards outweigh the labor, or maybe include it. Real financial poverty does exist. However, the designation of poverty in today’s society in Austin and across much of the world relies on financial holdings and/or stuff as its touchstone, with the condition of poverty determined by statistics and reports, and thus hardened into a state – a verisimilitude of an unsuccessful life - that is no longer questioned. Statistics are sometimes confirmed and documented by photographs in which the subjects somehow appear as people who are estranged from the viewer because they’re seen now through eyes that are no longer unbiased.

During the interview of Mrs. Johnson, the only time a note of unsureness entered her voice was when she said, “We didn’t know we were poor.” Her self-perceptions seemed to change momentarily with this description of her family’s lives as marked by poverty. In fact, Mrs. Johnson is usually elegant, graceful, and self-possessed. The power of the word “poor” to affect her is illustrative of the impact of this financial have/have not boundary, because in a syllable it relegates a person to a different world than the one Mrs. Johnson experienced – in her case, a world that has taken the life she’s proud of and loves, and re-labeled it according to others’ definitions and perceptions based on surmises. It reduces a life of meaning to an existence of undesirable qualities. Hartigan notes that even the most neutral epithet - "poor whites" - focuses attention only on the economic aspect of identity and on victimization and degradation (2005:113.) However, a questioning of boundaries that have been hardened through statistics, labels, titles, and words that provide a massive constellation of “proofs” indicates that the separations between haves and have-nots are not so easily distinguished.

There are other kinds of poverty that could more accurately be connected to lack of a quality of deep satisfaction with one’s life than that based on quantity of possessions. (In this statement, money is included as a possession.) In an example hardened by print, ceremony, and preaching, the Christian church speaks of poverty of the spirit, meaning, it appears, showing humility and lack of ambition for worldly goods. However, related religious teachings seem to indicate that there can be an ulterior motive for this type of behavior, which is to get into Heaven. Rather than judging the moral rectitude of behaving in a certain way for one's own gain, this observation is made in order to note

that there might be some underlying matters that would be more understandable on closer review. The Heaven/Hell boundary, for example, holds a paramount position for followers of Christianity and has already been introduced in this dissertation. Related to this Christian boundary in its common goals and underpinnings of seeking benefits, however, is a life led for the sake of amassing power or possessions or constructing status.

The work (non)ethic

What could underlie the denigration of living inexpensively, whether by choice or circumstances? Looking at the boundary between “the poor” and the financially secure, it becomes clear that its construction advantages and takes for standard money and other possessions, the mainstays of a consumerist, capitalist society. Furthermore, we still live by unspoken rules that were more understandable before much of labor was replaced by machines or exported to other countries – especially the not-so-unspoken work ethic. If one is moral, one must work. Never mind that the available jobs are deadening or pay an inadequate wage. The task of people seeking employment is now, “Get a job,” supplanting “Get a good job” of not so long ago. “So you can buy our stuff” can easily be appended to these exhortations as can “if you want to be an acceptable” or even “moral person.”

This is akin to the perspective of business owners in an earlier time. Thompson notes in his story of the evolution of the metering of time that “Clayton complains that ‘the Churches and Streets [are] crowded with Numbers of Spectators’ at weddings and

funerals, 'who in spite of the Miseries of their Starving Condition . . . make no Scruple of wasting the best Hours in the Day, for the sake of gazing...' The tea-table is 'this shameful devourer of Time and Money.' So also are wakes and holidays and the annual feasts of friendly societies. So also is 'that slothful spending the Morning in Bed':

“The necessity of early rising would reduce the poor to a necessity of going to Bed betime; and thereby prevent the Danger of Midnight revels.” Thompson notes, “the leisured classes began to discover the ‘problem’ (about which we hear a good deal today) of the leisure of the masses. A considerable proportion of manual workers (one moralist was alarmed to discover) after concluding their work were left with several hours in the day to be spent nearly as they please. ‘And in what manner...is this precious time expended by those of no mental cultivation? We shall often see them just simply annihilating those portions of time. They will for an hour, or for hours together...sit on a bench, or lie down on a bank or hillock...yielded up to utter vacancy and torpor...or collected in groups by the road side, in readiness to find in whatever passes there occasions for gross jocularly; practising some impertinence, or uttering some jeering scurrility, at the expense of persons going by...(1967:115)”

It is apparent that at least some employers believed workers' entire lives should be focused on working. This sentiment of the primariness and morality of work – a useful stance for the functioning of capitalism - has continued to pervade our society, although it appears that many people from wealthy families are exempted from receiving the same moral judgments concerning employment. The encroachment of moral aspects into the function of the poverty/non-poverty boundary provides a goad for people to work

regardless of net financial benefit to them or not. In addition, the presence of morality as a reason to work overrides claims to fair wages or working conditions, having positioned the domain of work within that of morality's arbiter, religion - an institution deeply invested in capitalism.

If one shares, as did and do Mrs. Johnson and her family, there is a wider extension of use that neither enhances the profits gained from turning out new products nor stimulates the habit of or need for purchasing new wares. This can be seen to foster values that do not fit into capitalism's framework of incorporated mass producers and consumers. Rather, sharing sidesteps the valorizing of business and earning as if they were more important than other, enriching facets of society and life.

By casting poverty on the basis of money and possessions alone, by stigmatizing people below The Poverty Line, a vast number of faceless "non-contributing" beings are judged as beyond redemption. That also makes their being thrown into jail or being displaced from their long-time family-held real estate appear to be a grand-scale service to society.

If people who have few economic resources are seen to be happy and fulfilled, one might question the whole value of capitalism and perhaps look askance at the power of capitalism in its current corporatist state to determine everyone's future. After all, "Every pleasure which emancipates itself from the exchange-value takes on subversive features," notes Adorno (1938:289.)

The slide of “affordability”

In East Austin, marketing ploys have succeeded in generating a downward recalculation of residents’ financial status by use of the word “affordable.” The transferring of government property into lots for houses was carried out with the old Mueller Airport’s grounds by billing this project as being for the sake of providing affordable houses. According to many studies as well as common sense, affordable housing is a key ingredient in assuring people an acceptable place to live, and is much discussed within our society as an important element necessary to prevent poverty. However, the use of “affordable” now seems to be divorced from any connection with people of few monetary resources. Between the desks of the City Council and those of the several builders involved in the development, something occurred: “affordable” became a limited word, appropriate only for people with a level of financial resources that eliminates many people of East Austin. Between the builders’ desks and those of the local taxing authority, the Travis County Central Appraisal District, another transformation occurred: the Mueller Airport project became a source of exceptional revenue for the taxman. At a hearing of the County Commissioners I attended concerning complaints about the unfair assessments of businesses compared to residences, Patrick Brown, director of the authority, stood up and boasted that the development of Mueller was one of the most lucrative projects in the state. This makes it easy to view the government’s relinquishing of prized land in East Austin, supposedly for the construction of affordable houses, as an opportunity for a cynical local government’s grab of money instead. In addition to the unaffordability by people most needing lower

priced homes, and for whom the affordability of homes, when addressed in government initiatives, had come to mean a required condition of a society concerned with the well-being of its less affluent citizens, the development succeeded in having the opposite effect of that which officials had alluded to, because taxes of the modest homes in the area around it rose quickly. “Affordable” had become a hijacked term which further separates people with few financial resources from the rest of the society, relegating poorer citizens to the condition of not being able to acquire even “affordable” housing. "Affordable" is another category referencing a boundary that not only shifts in positioning, but also in constitution. It is clear that the manipulation of such category boundaries is part of the business of power and constitutes one means of effecting socially constructed change to the benefit of those in power.

What passes for the past

Mrs. Johnson’s description of her idyllic childhood illustrates another boundary: a boundary between what is remembered and what actually occurred in the past as current circumstances or contemporary artifacts confirm it. In Mrs. Johnson’s case, there is no evidence of the bittersweet, longing quality of remembrance that is found in nostalgia but rather a pleasure in recalling her early life as well as contemplating her present one. Nevertheless, whether focusing on nostalgia, on commemoration, or on discrepancies of memory, this boundary between life then and how life, from a contemporary standpoint, appears to have unfolded occurs frequently enough that it is widely discussed in academic writings. Bienenstock (2010) examines the assertion that memory can have a

duty, or *devoir de me'moire*, and compares the late 20th century debate concerning this in Europe in response to the Jewish Holocaust with the philosophical arguments of Paul Ricoeur, who has influenced the 21st century's perspective on the concept, and who, in turn, demonstrates that the nature of history and historiography show this property of duty to be impossible. Nguyen (2009) considers personal memories of refugees as a means to hold onto a way of life and a culturally-derived perspective after the turmoil of having it cut short. Eric Wolf addresses the monocular vision of history of Europe that renders people without power invisible except as a type of attendant zombie, an extra, in *Europe and the People without History* (1982.) The study of history itself must always be inseparable from the boundary that divides the actual past from the revisited past, for it is impossible to know a large, societal context completely: there are too many points of view, even allowing for a somewhat unified vision within groups.

The view backward can become distorted through time. For example, Riding argues that an 1891 painting of Bonnie Prince Charlie (Charles Edward Stuart) has influenced the British collective memory of his role in the Second Jacobite rebellion, fought in 1746, and notes the discrepancies between that painting and one of him completed in 1739. Wertsch discerns templates in collective memories which underlie and shape specific memories, such as the "expulsion of foreign enemies" frame that shapes much of Russian memory during Soviet and post-Soviet eras (2008:120.) Perrone addresses the fashioning of the adulated identity of a hockey player in relation to financial conditions of the National Hockey League during the Great Depression and expands her discussion to the construction of commemorative events in general. It is this

possibility, one of distortion, that opens a space within hardened “historic” moments - detailed in children’s social studies books, celebrated on holidays, chronicled in movies - and can provide us the realization that backward views can omit significant understandings, whether by inadvertently favoring a certain experience over others or by purposeful manipulation, and constructed to create a lop-sided scenario or one that in reality did not unfold at all. Trouillot addresses this notion of omission with excellent examples and incontrovertible evidence (1997,) while Nietzsche says, "'I have done that,' says my memory. 'I cannot have done that,' says my pride, and remains inexorable. Eventually - memory yields" (1966:80.)

Long and short memory and boundaries of age and time

One obvious factor in Mrs. Johnson’s narrative is that the observations from her childhood are those accumulated by a child. As such, they are subject to doubts as to their validity. Children are seen as unrealistic, and adults have been taught not to trust those memories that have been acquired early. Rather than the opposite of wisdom’s basis on accumulations of experience, however, they can be a form of knowledge more purely based on experience than are memories retrofitted as one becomes an adult. The context is the key, and a child’s innate context is naive, not artificial. It is the goal of the majority of parents and family caregivers to protect their children while they mature from a state of complete dependence. Therefore, a child is generally protected from as much painful or negative experience as possible, and at the same time any unpleasant experiences are usually counteracted as quickly and completely as possible.

Nevertheless, that does not mean that the life a child is leading, sheltered or not, is not real. Does one's later inevitable disenchantments have to be included, even given precedence, for a memory to be valid? At what moment is the line drawn, then, between fancy and reality as we continue to gather experiences both positive and negative? Perhaps this is another reason Mrs. Johnson's confident demeanor faltered when she commented, "We didn't know we were poor:" in addition to the pejorations implicit in the word "poor," the cultural practice of diminishing childhood understandings compounded doubts that were impugning her sense of who she was and what she had experienced.

The cultural practice of diminishing childhood understandings has been abetted by some special interests in this society, catering to those who have committed crimes against children and wish to cast doubt on the veracity of those who complain. For example, a foundation has been established for the purpose of refuting charges made by individuals of sexual acts performed on them as children. Called the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, it focuses on cases that come to light during counseling, and asserts that the children create their abuse memories as a result of suggestions made by therapists. However, this is not borne out by science. Furthermore, the Foundation has been closely linked to the CIA, which has conducted numerous experiments on mind control and on the effacing of emotion by continued exposure to hurtful occurrences (Freyd: 1998.)

In our current time of exacerbated stress, with inabilities to cross increasing and ever-hardening boundaries between people, one of the most stress-relieving types of

humor and one that has been loved by all ages has slid into a characterization of inappropriateness: silliness. Despite former validity, exemplified by the silliness in works of Oscar Wilde, Shakespeare, or Monty Python, if a child mugs, her mother often says, “Stop it. You’re being silly,” and that’s enough to put an end to a welcome respite for the child. Silliness is, however, the type of humor that is most accessible to a child: perhaps its attachment to such a minor being is one reason it has fallen into disfavor. The perspectives and other traits of children are devalued. Another reason for widespread rejection of silliness could be its frequent dependence for its humor on physical posturing rather than on the intellect - an example of humans' cognicentrism.

Children’s dependency on adults for physical survival, as well as their small stature in a world in which size frequently carries or connotes power or lack thereof, contributes to their marginalization. Hotchkiss (1967:711-718) explains a common practice in Mexico of using children to run errands and then reporting the activities of adults they have observed during their errands. The practice is based on a perception and treatment of children as “non-persons” and comes to an end, its use-boundary, when the children become old enough to feel embarrassed when asked to run an errand. As Merleau-Ponty points out (1951), society separates childhood from adulthood at an age tailored to fit a culture’s needs. In many countries around the world, a person’s childhood ends when he or she is able to work - Merleau-Ponty describes cases occurring as early as at the age of three years.

This use of children's labor is not a recent development. Thompson cites a man named William Temple, who advocated in 1786, “that poor children be sent at the age of

four to work-houses where they should be employed in manufactures and given two hours' schooling a day... 'There is considerable use in their being, somehow or other, constantly employed at least twelve hours a day, whether they earn their living or not; for by these means, we hope that the rising generation will be so habituated to constant employment that it would at length prove agreeable and entertaining to them.'" (1967:87)

Likewise, adulthood can be delayed if, for example, people in political or even familial power want to be challenged by as few others as possible. In our country, this age boundary is fixed by law, repeated persistently throughout cultural institutions, promoted by rituals such as getting a driver's license or voter's ID, assisted by historical records, and thus hardened in legal practice. Adulthood may vary at key moments for expedience, such as when soldiers are needed.

The collective memory and the boundary of eras

Another aspect of memory has the opposite quality of that of a child, as it holds credence that it does not necessarily deserve: the collective memory. This type of memory purports to represent the recollections and understandings of people from a period of time or a specific historically-based scenario. However, collective memories cannot be assumed to portray reality. They can be manufactured deliberately, or they can represent a segment of people whose words are more likely to be heeded than those of others who experienced a different occurrence or circumstances.

Mrs. Johnson describes a childhood that had, for the most part, escaped much of the compartmentalization that occurs when boundaries are hardened. Life without

enslavement was still in a relatively new and therefore experimental stage for families like hers. The locations of new boundaries were being gingerly groped for. This lack of a complete, detailed formulation of how to live presented a different kind of freedom which, especially compared to living as a slave, was freedom indeed.

Several of the people who live on Sycamore Street remember “The 60’s.” They consider that to be their era. However, the standard of “Sex, Drugs, and Rock ‘n’ Roll” does not coincide with memories of those on Sycamore who lived through that time. Three possible explanations for this schism of perception can be noted here: the people who experienced sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll as preeminent could have been those who were assured of the safety of their own lives, perhaps due to being in families with political connections or other power bases, and did not understand or weren’t concerned about others’ lives; or the shallow designation of sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll as more than peripheral could have been manufactured by people invested in the hegemony of the *status quo*, who wished to erase the serious revolutionary aspects of the movements of the 60’s by promoting a narrow focus on the most outrageous or titillating occurrences, ones frequently picked up by the news media to sell their own product, and thus remove even the idea of an actual, threatening revolution from the realm of possibilities in this country; third, the visceral experiences of the passion, excitement, camaraderie, and the living involvement in life and death matters for the purpose of making historic changes are difficult to convey unless one has taken part in something similar. Therefore, viewing the 60's from the point of, for example, younger persons' experiences must fall short of a deeper understanding. The Vietnam War was in full swing and young men of all cultures

and potentials were being drafted, often unwillingly, to go to a foreign land, kill humans, destroy a countryside, perhaps die or be maimed as well as watch friends suffer the same atrocities. The hard-fought and dearly paid for domestic wars over racial prejudice against minorities and over women's equality were being battled. Thus, the boundaries instated by recording through the media a misleading descriptive can define and harden boundaries between eras, and their perceived attributes, in singular and superficial terms that bury courageous, creative, transformative, and potent initiatives under more frivolous aspects of the time. Unfortunately for those who follow, the potential of human behavior is constrained by limited models.

Other era appellations have corralled people into a single classification that mass produces Flappers, Boomers, and even The Greatest Generation – the latter consisting of people heroized for living during a war. Some of these titles disguise momentous events by focusing on the peripheral. Furthermore, the use of the terminology of eras or generations or decades boxes in time and makes a cadence appear with a manufactured repetition that works subtly against the possibility of novel, long-lasting change.

Word slide: the making of a "hero"

George W. Bush re-defined many words having to do with politically-interested formulations. Such words as freedom and democracy underwent striking metamorphoses that stripped them of any lingering aspects of dignity or nobleness in favor of cheaply-paid histrionics. One of the words he co-opted is "hero." By this change, heroism lost

the exceptionality of extraordinary actions that have stirred the imagination throughout time. Now, being a hero is not so special.

Recently, Dakota Meyer, a young Marine, was awarded with the highest symbol of valor in this country: the Medal of Honor. After fruitlessly seeking help via radio to rescue four fellow fighters from his unit who were trapped with others in a Taliban ambush in Afghanistan and counting on him, he disobeyed officers' orders for him to "stay put," jumped into a Humvee and drove into the thick of battle. As soon as he succeeded in pulling some of the ambushed people out and hauling them back to safety, he would switch to another Humvee, each having been damaged extensively, and return to the fight. Five times he did this, and rescued 36 people, but when he finally reached his four closest friends, they had been killed.

On being told he was being awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism, he denied he was a hero since by the time he reached his mates they had died. This self-effacing country boy from Kentucky, now a construction worker back home, felt he did what others would have done, not something that was out of the ordinary. When President Obama phoned Dakota Meyer to advise him of the award, he asked the president to call him back when he was on his lunch break. Certainly, Meyer has more of a claim to being a hero than others now included in that term, but to him the political to-do that has been inserted around "heroism" or societal position - even of the president - has no real substance. But then, had he valued titles and rank more, he would never have disobeyed superior officers and set out against overwhelming odds to get to his friends. Meyer does not subscribe to the new edition of heroism.

Recognizing boundaries

Several boundaries in Mrs. Johnson's narrative that can be found to play a part within the lives of Sycamore Street residents have been discussed, including those of the value of sharing, financial status, age, work, time segmentation, memory, collective memory, and family cohesion. In each case, it is possible to note boundaries hardened through mechanisms that have become naturalized to the point of imperceptibility. Nevertheless, an interstitial vision, triggered by vigilance for the presence of the types of artifacts historically and continually contributing to the unquestioned credibility of a hardened boundary, can call attention to boundaries and their conditional and equivocal construction. Behind these constructions lie more complete understandings – usually concerning who stands to gain and who to lose by a boundary that has been established and built up to the degree of hardness. An additional factor to mine is who defines what a gain or a loss is, and what terms and qualities are preferenced in order to do so.

Many solidified boundaries do not affect people's lives more than perfunctorily, and can assist humans to judge what is safe, healthy, and wise in the ways they lead their lives. However, when boundaries that have been drawn to claim a set of circumstances or conditions as irrevocable, or impose on everyone the perspectives or experiences of the few, the results can be destructive: diversity and prowess in thinking and problem solving is lost, valuable models performing beneficial character traits such as courage, happiness and health disappear, other powerful or helpful contributions are effaced, and

their disappearances create false and misleading scenarios, affecting the temporal human trajectory and all it touches to our detriment.

Chapter 4

Miss Glenda Wins Again

Miss Glenda Suarez

The Narrative

G: “Those were some good peaches, and when they bloomed, they were the most beautiful raspberry-colored you ever could see, and it even had some white and pink on the same branch. And I miss it, you know what I mean, but I know Mother Nature needed it and took it. I was hurt, but now I’m very comfortable. I sit on my porch. I still got a big old chinaberry tree – I got two chinaberry trees, a redbud tree...and it’s just peaceful. I think it’s because there’s not that much traffic, so you’re really, to yourself it makes you wonder, you know, but it is a beautiful yard. A lot of my friends pass by, ‘Miss Glenda, how you doing?’ and I wave. That’s just me but you know, I been here over twenty-five years. Been in the community over fifty.

“This yard is the same. I can get up in the middle of the night and there’s no light and I can go to the same places. I don’t have to stub my toe, I just go. Now that big street light across the street – that bothers me. I don’t like that. I hate it. It hits my favorite window and it just wrecks my nerves. I like the darkness when I go to sleep.

“How do you like that birdbath? That birdbath’s been there over fifty years. This house here’s been here over sixty-five years. And I can sit there and a bird will come to the fence, and if that birdbath don’t have no water, they will all line up and looking through my window. I’ll get up and put some water in the birdbath and I’ll sit there, and

one at a time they'll bathe, jump out, bathe. And they do that year after year, going on five, ten, fifteen, twenty, going on about thirty years and they're still coming back. And that's when I know the weather's going to be beautiful. But yeah, the little chee-chee birds – the little brown ones – the red birds, mockingbirds...

“And those neighbors, they came over and chopped back that little tree there – it's coming back some, but it wasn't even on their property. It was in front of my house, and it hurt me so. They knew that I had a peace of mind that they didn't know. And they were envious.

“I'm going to buy a birdfeeder. But you used to have the most beautiful show of birds when you had that one there. You would have all kinds, like just beautiful red birds, pigeons, doves, even parrots – wild parrots – I mean I'd just sit there and say, ‘If I had a camera, I could send this to Animal Planet.’ They would all be waiting.

“And in the spring remember the sunflowers come up. You notice that? Every year that you did that, we had big old sunflowers.

“All the plants I have here were planted by Roger's biological grandmother and everything's been there for over sixty years, because I take care, I know how to water it. And when my son was a child, we had a peach tree there – not the one that got killed, there was another peach tree here. And when my son was little, his grandmother had passed away, and I was there, ‘Oh, my God.’ I didn't have no kids then, but I said, ‘Oh, I got this beautiful yard. Now I need some kids where they can play in the yard,’ you know what I mean, and that's when I was blessed to have a son. I was sitting on my front porch and I would see my son climb the tree. And when he would break a limb, he said,

‘Oh, Mother. I broke...’ And I said, ‘It’s all right. It’s just going to grow back.’ He was so hurt he didn’t want to get back in the tree and I said, ‘It’s all right. Get back on the tree,’ and he would get back on the tree, but I remember how he always was considerate about Mother Nature. Because you know how I was. Don’t cut the tree down. For what?

“And he loved the yard because he played you know kickball there, he played football, baseball, he played basketball right there, he had a little plastic ball like a little two inch ball when he was a baby – he did everything in the yard. I refused to let him out in the street in my neighborhood the way it is. I was very careful. I did not let him even step off the curb, because I got right around the corner there’s drugs, right around the other corner, prostitutes.

“Every inch of this yard belongs to me and I want every inch of it, I investigate every inch of it. My dogs love it. I pray just almost every night and I’m blessed I have a house. And I have dishes in the sink and laundry needing to be done, but it’s my house. And nobody can tell my dogs to SHOO! Nobody can tell my dogs to SHUT UP! Nobody can tell my dogs where to poopoo, and I scoop it up when I...GET...READY. The city don’t have nothing to do with it. And I mean that from my heart because those are my babies. When I have nobody, they lick my hand. When my body hurts, they keep me warm, so I go out there – it’s not just my yard, it’s Roger’s yard, it’s Brad’s yard, and it’s my four babies’ – Precious, Roxie, Mickey, and Thelma Louise.

“My yard is a safe haven, Baby. I’m going to tell you a story of why I say uh rest – uh, a safe haven. It’s because I know that before anybody come in my yard I got an

iron fence around my yard so you know they can't just walk up in the yard. And why I say 'safe haven' is because I had a dear friend I discussed with you over lunch that had HIV-AIDS. And he was a very good friend of mine. And his name was Ron Clement, he's a very dear friend of mine. If you looked him up in the computer you might could find him. He was a very good artist. He did paintings, a lot of paintings, and and and we became real close, and I told Ron, I said, 'Ron, you got a terminal illness,' and he said, 'Yeah.' 'And before you pass, what you want to be,' he told me 'A parakeet.' And he said, 'You know, when I pass your name's going to be on the top -' And I said, 'Ah, get out of here,' you know what I mean, 'don't worry about...' Well, then as soon as he passed, I got a phone call. And he said, 'I'm looking for Glenda Suarez.' I said, 'This is Glenda Suarez.' And he said, "Glenda, Ron Clement just passed away and your name was one of the first names in line. And he will be cremated, and he wanted you to have part of his remains.' I said, 'For - (laughs), I said, 'For what!' He said, 'I don't know but I'm reading the will and he wants you to have it. And he said all his paintings and all his furniture in his home belongs to you.' And I said, 'No, just take all the stuff and auction it off and give it to the AIDS Foundation.' Well, when I went to the memorial, he had a big memorial and it was at the Paramount Theater. And he gave me a little of his ashes. So when I came home, what'd I do? I broke the ashes and I put it around the birdbath. And there goes Ron right now. So, when I say 'rest haven,' that's my home and all my friends who want to come and rest there, or come visit, they feel so comfortable there, 'cause I make them comfortable." I don't never rush nobody. In case I don't feel good, and you come knocking, I will say, 'Ah, Baby, come another day.' BAM! I'm not going

to explain why I just don't feel well. I don't think I should. But any other time they come...and I've had some friends come sit here when I'm not even here. I like that, you know what I mean. And I know that nobody's going to take that from me. The only time it'll be taken from me is when death comes get me."

One day Ms. Glenda was arrested and taken to jail for having her medication in her hand in front of her house. I asked her about that:

G: "The police didn't come in my yard. No. No. No. But they made Roger stay there, they made my sister stay there, and they didn't call him by Roger, they called him by 'subject.' I was just...'Just take me. Why you got me out here,' you know. 'I don't even want to...' and they told Roger, 'Get your black ass up there,' after Roger tried to show them I was on medication, with the drugstore bottle. My prescription. He had gone in to get it. Which I was on medication. And I was on two months medication. But I was trying to help my niece, you know, and she had brought her daughter, and my niece don't live there, but she had a warrant for HER arrest, see. That's how, the police didn't come looking for me. They came looking for HER. And when she drove over you know by my mailbox, I went out, to get the groceries she bought. And he said, 'What is that you've got in your hand?' and I said, 'Well, I've got my narcotics.' And I was charged with possession of a controlled substance. Anyway, they just wanted to get a case and they got one.

And I was tired, Miss Audrey. I had fought for years. They had took my dignity. I was... Man! They took everything they could take from a human, through the court when they – I went from, I fought for for what I am for many years. (Ms. Glenda is

transsexual.) Many years. Many years I had to fight for what I was. There was nothing given to me, and I had to go like they took me – I went from a well-liked person, to, to a person – I hadn't had a ticket in 35 years. I ain't never been in trouble. I ain't never stole nothing. I never stole nothing, I ain't never hardly cuss at anybody. But if you and I go from a he to a she, from a her to a him, from all – I was just raped all over again. But you know what? I went as Glenda Suarez, and I thought – but I tell you this: on the record that at the time I got two years probation, Baby, when I left Judge Kennedy's office, they said, 'Miss Suarez,' when I left my probation officer, 'Glenda Suarez, you got another appointment February 6th' ... I fought like hell to get that. I was no longer 'him' and I was no longer a man. But I fought. 'Cause I wouldn't give it up. Because, you know, I know where I came from. And I know where I'm going.

“My yard is all wild. Because the birds coming in to eat the chinaberries, sometimes I throw bread. And then rice. The birds just come. But I take my yard winter or summer or spring. It's MY yard. But I don't like is when people move in the neighborhood and stare. Now, I can rest assured I've got some good neighbors. I love them. I got to the point where I was a prisoner in my own home. I wouldn't even go outside when Christie lived there. I'm talking about that situation. I wouldn't even go outside. I would go in the back. I don't like the back. I don't talk about the back where I've got chickens. I've got chickens, Honey. I'm talking about the back porch. I had to sit there, and I would just say, 'Oh, Lord, get this woman out of my life.' And then she was always flirting with Roger.”

A: “Where do you consider your home? Is it like to the curb?”

G: “No. Hell, no. I got arrested at the curb, Honey. I stay away from it. The only reason I go is to the mailbox. If the mailman could come in my yard, I wouldn’t even go there. And I do a lot of walking. But I don’t stop. ‘Cause I’m too scared now. I knew that at some time in my life I would have to go to jail, so I already had that premonition. That they were going to arrest me in front of my house. I didn’t know for what. But I knew, I had the premonition. They just couldn’t take me quick enough to book me. They were amazed like – I said, ‘Hurry up.’ To me, it was embarrassing. ‘This is not nothing. You’re going to end up being embarrassed.’ I coulda went to the next level, but oh, girl, I live here, I’m going to die here. And I don’t want them to come threatening, harassing me, ‘Drop the charges off or you going to jail.’ They could take me to jail just for walking. They assholes, that’s what they are. They need to take another few courses.

“My home is from my fence all the way to the back, way back. And back there I feel comfortable, I feel safe. And right there by the birdbath, I feel real safe. But when I open that gate, that’s not my home. That driveway’s not my home. That mailbox is not my home. But when I get in that fence, I know they can’t come in. Nobody can. Cause my dogs wouldn’t let them in anyway. You know.”

A: “Who are your neighbors?”

G: “My neighbors is the people that stay in front. Mr. Smith been there over sixty years, but he’s on this side, on my right. I don’t ever look at my right when I’m sitting outside. I always look toward the left. ‘Cause Mr. Smith cut my tree, and that asshole across from him...”

A: “So you don’t count like the next city block past Sycamore...”

G: “Oh, no, Honey. I don’t have no friends there. I mean they’re friends but they not friends that I would eat – I mean, I might make them a sandwich or something, but it’s hard to explain.”

A: “Where do you get most of your news and information? From the TV?”

G: “No.”

A: “Word of mouth?”

G: “Yeah. The weather, I get from the news. I have to. Because I’m a outside person, I stay outside. Miss Audrey, I get up at six o’clock in the morning, Honey. Warm up my house, open my curtain. It still be dark out there. But I know that my neighbors are not no peepin’ toms. So I know that I’m not going to have - I live in a drug-infested area, like you know. Most of my friends are drug addicts, crack heads. Oh, hell. I used to be one. But those are my friends. So I drink my coffee and about eight I hear the weather and say, ‘I’m ready.’ And I take off walking, Honey, from about seven in the morning ‘til about seven at night. I talk to this girl, ‘Miss Glenda, do you got \$2?’ I might have \$6, I give them \$2. ‘Cause I know that \$2 going to come back to me when I need it. ‘Miss Glenda, you have a cigarette?’ Roger mighta just bought me a pack of ciga- ‘Don’t be giving your cigarettes away. If they can smoke crack, they can buy – ‘Oh, Baby. You don’t understand. A drug addict is a terrible thing to waste.’ But anyway, that’s not the point. But uh, ‘Glenda, did you hear about so-and-so died?’ ‘Did you hear about so-and-so O.D.’d?’ That’s how I get my information. By my friends. From walking all around, I see different people. Now, I don’t hear something about the community as far as gardening, do we have another rose garden party – none of that. It’s

not about rose gardens. It's about how people are doing – MY friends are doing. And what big things are happening in their lives, big and little, and then if I want to look at the news – news to me is depressing. Always somebody robbing somebody. Always somebody killing a child. Always somebody abusing a wife. Always somebody using drugs. Hell, I do all that myself. I don't need to find out about nobody else.

But I gotta home, Honey. If I can dig up some dirt, I don't need to go to no Home Depot to buy no dirt. Roger liked to go to the graveyard when he was a grave digger. Roger used to be a grave digger, he's the one saw that peach tree. It was waaaaay in the bushes – Evergreen Cemetery right there on 12th Street and Airport. Roger had a special thing to do. He had to sit back and wait 'til people buried their loved ones, then he would cover it up. He looked up at that peach tree, and Roger say... it was about this little – no bigger than an infant. (Shows with her hands.) Roger went riding up with the bulldozer, picked that peach tree and brought it home and it's the best peaches. So I don't buy plants if I see something I like, if I know I would kill it, I leave it; if I know I can help it, I'm going to move it, and that's it. So that's how I got my peach tree. I kill anything I buy, Honey.

“City workers ain't authorized to come in my yard. But I had problems. Let me tell you a story. Me and Roger had got a new couch and Roger threw our old couch over the fence, which he was going to put in the back of the truck. So we got to looking at the furniture, we were excited looking at the new furniture. We hadn't had new furniture in twenty years. We wasn't able. Financially. But somebody gave us a couch. We sat in there - and a new chair - and we forgot about that couch. It must have been there about

two days. They took a picture, we got it in the mail, we saw a picture of the couch right there by the fence, we had to go to court. The judge wanted to charge us \$500 for that couch to be there. He said, 'Tell you what. I give you thirty days to move that couch.' We called the judge in two hours, that couch was moved. So we didn't end up paying a fine.

"But I see lots of furniture out waiting for the garbage, my friends say, 'How come they mess with you?' and I say 'Cause they think we dumb.' See, when they target you, they target you on the east side. And they gonna fuck with you and fuck with you 'til you lose your mind or you give it up."

A: "Why is that?"

G: "I don't know. This man rides around and – well, you know. Shit. And then they were messing with you about your bushes, weren't they? In front of your house. The shrubs. They were saying they were too high, they had to be cut down."

A: "OH, yeah, yeah, yeah."

G: "A couple years ago. Remember? You had all those, on the wild half of your yard, you let everything grow up high. I think it's beautiful that way, and it smells good and has its pretty flowers. That wildflower, I don't know what it is, that jumped the street and stuck around. It was almost all that, on the wild half. Tall, light grayish green leaves, light yellow flowers. And the leaves had the greatest smell, like a nice tea, when you brushed 'em. You cut it all down and took pictures. The front strip, between the tree and the curb – that was beautiful, with tons of the blue flowers and the little – what did you call them?"

A: “Which ones?”

G: “The ones that grow in that big patch right there in front.”

A: “Mexican sombreros.”

G: “Mexican sombreros and that light purple with the silver, and you know. It was a wild garden, and you did go along and cut off all the tops of the tall ones over 14 inches, I think it was – “

A: “Sixteen inches.”

G: “Sixteen inches, outside the fence. And a few inside. But when they grow, the ones I never saw before they grew wild in the field then jumped the street the next year, they grow to about this high, (holds hand about four feet high) remember? And you cut a hidden path to go a spot where you put you a bench, so you could sit in there and have - and nobody would see you, and you could just watch all the butterflies and everything.

“They was after you for a while, girl. Some people who work for the government, they think they can have the power of authority. They don’t know. But you know something? I’m going to tell you something. I’m going to tell you something.”

A: “Didn’t that irritate the hell out of you when they took that old light post out and put that new, stinky black-coated one in?”

G: “Oh, girl, that thing stunk up the neighborhood for months, and they did it in the goddamn summer time – 100’s –and that shit was melting. Yeah, and everything with all the flowers smelled like perfume, and then it smelled like tar. Still does!

“Let me tell you something. When I got arrested in front of my home, I was medicated on Xanax, I was medicated on my pain killer. I have a disease that I have to

live with for the rest of my life. City of Austin don't have to live with this disease. Miss Glenda Suarez do. OK? But when they told me that if I didn't cooperate – I said, 'Look. I'm going to tell you something, Mr. Officer. This drug that I'm taking is prescribed for me. I have anxiety.'

“And he said, ‘By the way, you don't want to be high: we're going to call Child Protective Services’ – my son was there. I says, ‘You want me to tell you that I got crack cocaine? I don't have crack cocaine.’

“‘She got crack cocaine, and y'all were together.’

“‘So then charge us. But I'm not going to tell you that I got the crack cocaine for her.’ It's just becau - in the state of Texas, if you do a crime with somebody, you be charged the same. ‘That's a mother-fuckin' lie. Let me tell you something.’

“‘If you don't tell me the truth, I'm going to call Child Protective Services.’

“‘Call Child Protective. He got custody. My husband do. That one that you say, keep his black ass on the porch. It goes to him. Take me to jail. Book me... Get... me... a... lawyer.’

“‘I'm going to call Child Protective Service.’ He was so deMANDing. Like he had authority, like he was the chief of police. ‘You ain't nobody.’

“And remember, when you were in that wreck on Manor, and I wanted a ride to go get some medication, you left 'cause I didn't have the money yet, and I was like, ‘I wish she'd brought me the money when she said she would – Adrienne – ‘cause I missed my chance at a ride.’ BAM! I heard something and I ran. Why did I run? I don't know

why I ran to the Tire Shop. I coulda run to the laundromat, but I ran to the Tire Shop.

There you was, truck tore up, poor – what was his name?”

A: “Wolly.”

G: “Poor Wolly was under the trailer, just shaking.

“I said, ‘Miss Audrey, give me the keys and let me take him.’

“You gave me the key, you trusted me in your house. I didn’t want – And I took him there, Baby, but there was one police officer was a asshole, remember? They didn’t want to take you home with the dog. One police officer. The white one. He didn’t want to put Wolly in the car.”

A: “They both were mean. There I was, sitting in my truck that had been totaled, shaken up, Wolly terrified from the air bags, and they were so mean. They could care less. And you know when it changed? When they asked me, ‘What do you do?’ And I said, ‘Well, I’m at UT.’ ‘Whatcha doing there?’ ‘I’m in graduate school.’ Oh. All of a sudden, they seemed to be more polite. I’m telling you. Right at that moment they turned –“

G: “They just thought you was a white girl on the east side trying to get drugs.”

A: “Probably.”

G: “I’m telling you. When you said you was going to college, to get your degree...”

A: “Yeah. They assume the worst on the east side.

“What do your friends think about all the white people moving in over here?”

G: “Most of my friends are very pissed. So many white girls moving in.”

A: “It’s what they can afford, mostly.”

G: “Most of my friends are black. The majority of my friends are white. And they hated me for that, for being friendly to all the whites. But like I told them, I said, ‘Well, why don’t you try to - those are very dear friends of mine.’

“Yeah, but they coming over here buying all these black – after my grandmother, my great-grandmother sweated, they come over here buy it for a little bit to nothing, they turn around and sell it for –‘

“Well, you should have paid the taxes, dumb ass!”

A: “What about the fact that the taxes are being hiked up a lot each year?”

G: “They mad at that. They went up from maybe \$1300 to \$3500. Lavonne’s friend I went to school with she’s the same age as me. Her mother passed away ten years ago. She bought her mother’s, she got her mother’s land. Tax was \$1200. She got her taxes for 2010 - \$3750! R.L., he 88 years old. (R.L. is Roger’s father.) You know R.L. pay \$200. R.L. Why’s R.L. pay \$200 for? He’s 88 years old! But I’m scared to investigate: they might make him pay more.

“But you know what, Honey? Let me tell you something. Forty years ago, Baby, I was a young child. I remember when U. T. first started raping the black people. I’m talking about the land they raped it – I call it rape because they took everything from the black people and they didn’t care. All that baseball field was nothing but black people – they took it. That’s what we called ‘Blackland.’ There used to be a church there. But they paid the church very well, very well – a million dollars. But the black people who lived around – 13, 14,000. But they were happy with that. They didn’t have no money to buy no rich lawyer from California to fight ‘em. They was just going to lose it anyway,

so they said, ‘Well, just give me the \$5000. I’ll go to a nursing home.’ But black people sweated, Miss Audrey. My husband’s grandmother mother sweated – I seen her.

Roger’s grandmother, he took me to her bed when she was dying and she said, ‘Baby,’ she said, ‘Before you let – ‘ she said, ‘I’m gonna let you know something.’

“Black woman. Short, black. Big bootie. Pretty black woman. Loved me with all her faith. She said, ‘I don’t want no white woman, no white people to have my land.’

“‘Oh, Momma, don’t talk like that.’

“But you know she had been done so bad. And I didn’t like for her - but she was done bad.

“You know how much my land is worth right now? \$175,000! You know who told me that? This guy, a friend of mine, (chuckles) real nice friend - he’s a real estater - and he looked it up on the computer. I got pissed at him. What you looking up my property for? He said it – anybody can do it, look it up. So then I cooled down. And he told me that in ten years it’ll be worth more, like a quarter million.”

A: “You think your yard expresses who you are?”

G: “No. My yard got its own expression. I think I got my own expression.

Everybody got their own expression. Really, if my yard expressed me, Honey, nobody’d want to leave my yard. My yard, it’s got its own its own value. I’ll never give it up, though. I never will.

“It gives me a lot of shade. It’s where I live, too. When it gets too hot inside, I go on outside. And I can do the same thing I’m doing in my house outside. The only thing I do is reminisce and just think. Or if someone comes by, I might lollygag. What I do

sitting in the living room in the wintertime, I can do that outside in the summer. The only thing is it's more beautiful out here. I can look up and see those bushes, and the wind hit my hair, and the wind feels cool 'cause it be 100 degrees. The shade. It's beautiful. And out here I can lollygag, you know, if someone comes by."

A: "What do you think about people who might judge someone based on what they've got, what the money value is of everything?"

G: "I don't even communicate with those people. I don't even communicate. Like that asshole on the corner? He looks at my yard like I'm the Green Acre. I got Green Acre all over his ass. But you know what? I'd rather let my shit grow and let it be free, and every time a leaf gets out of place, he cuts it. See, that man ain't happy, Miss Audrey. I am. And I can sit out there for days. And just drink two, three glasses of water, he walking up and down the street, picking that shit up – 'Leave that stuff alone, asshole.'

"And some think their house is more, worth more because it's close to downtown or UT, because they value everything in dollars and cents. Back to the asshole across the street. That asshole ain't no closer to downtown or UT. I think if we would dump a can of trash or shit right there, I think he'd have a nervous breakdown. Seriously. Girl, he keep his shit – and I told my husband, 'That man must be miserable.' I hate to see the inside – My house stinks. I got dishes of mine sitting for two, three days. I got clothes in the washing machine that probably be there a week. But that's my house.

"Because it's mine is what cuts everything else. But he don't got a life, Honey."

A: "What do you think is humans' place in nature?"

G: “You know what? We try to be above it, to control it. That’s bullshit. If I die, my chinaberry tree still going to grow. OK? Somebody will move in and put water in my birdbath. The birds are still going to come. So I like it to be - let freedom be freedom. Let them enjoy. I don’t want to be here with a stick or b-b gun and say, ‘I don’t want that bird in my birdbath,’ POW! Or, ‘Oh, that tree is too big, cut it, Roger.’ Let freedom be freedom, know what I mean? We got other shit going on. The light bill gotta be paid. Be in charge of nature? Let it go.”

A: “Do you think this country is still a free country?”

G: “Yes. We’re freer than most countries in the world, and we’re happier. And let me go back to that day when I was arrested: I knew I was free. I live in a - but those assholes wanted to change everything, the police. They made me feel like shit, called me a ‘he,’ a man, but I’ll tell you what. When I done with my two-year probation, and I see them again, I’m going to put up my hands and say, ‘’Scuse me but I’m not going to hit you...I won! Victory! I won! I am still Glenda and I’m still a she, Honey.’ And those goddamn fucking police officers can kiss my ass ‘cause they going to see me another fifty years. And every time I walk through the neighborhood, they pass by, they look, Miss Audrey, and I just shake my ass.”

A: “You’ve seen ‘em?”

G: “Yes! I see them all the time, and I wave to them over my cup of coffee. They don’t wave back, though, Honey. (Calls out to an invisible officer:) ‘You going to see this ass for the rest of your career.’”

Mother Nature

Miss Glenda counts on nature for respite. She savors the breeze on a hot summer day, experiences happiness and satisfaction from her yard's beauty. She describes how birds line up to wait for her to fill the birdbath, looking through her window. However, the concept of anthropomorphism is so far from her system of beliefs that when she scatters the ashes of a close friend around the birdbath, she envisions the opposite - his taking the form of a bird. Far from framing similarities between humans and non-human animals as the false ascription of human traits to Others, through her folk knowledge gained in part by investigating "every inch" of her property, she believes the anthropocentrism that favorably compares humans to everything else is a skewed and hubristic vision.

Miss Glenda's yard is a place that surrounds, nurtures, and protects her. The birds that visit her birdbath and include her and her yard in their lives are a source of pleasure. Her house is the oldest on the street, having been moved to the lot from its earlier location nearby. Behind the house she and her husband Roger share, separated by a narrow breezeway, is a smaller one, occupied by Roger's father, Mr. R. L. The backyard, left without tending so that it has become a small woods, seems large because it runs behind several adjacent properties, but in actual square footage it is similar to other Sycamore Street real estate. Miss Glenda spends much of her time in her yard, and values what she has and experiences, including the yard, to the degree that her cup is neither half full nor half empty, but completely full.

Miss Glenda has created a perspective that transcends boundaries. Her yard is fenced, as she describes, and her four dogs are protective of her, Roger, and their son Brad. However, the chain-link fence is low and could easily be jumped or entered through the gate, which remains unlocked; the dogs range in size from Mickey, as in Mouse - a small chihuahua - to an old part-husky, Precious, who, like Miss Glenda, is self-possessed and brave, but whose teeth are worn down and who weighs no more than thirty pounds. These dogs would probably lay down their lives for their people, but they present no impediment to anyone who really wishes to enter. Nevertheless, Miss Glenda feels secure and safe.

The trees Miss Glenda prizes are mostly what are labeled by City of Austin arborists and others “weed” or “trash” trees – a designation she scoffs at. To her, all trees are good since they fall within the realm of nature. Fast-growing "trash" trees can provide shade and fruit for birds more quickly than can highly-valued hardwoods. "Invasive species" also offer benefits.

Her home could appear to people as somewhat shabby, but for her it's fine because it's hers. Moreover, assessments of the value of things based on appearances or designations by wider society are unimportant. If they coincide with one's own opinion, that's good. If not, who cares?

Appearances

Similar to a number of people on Sycamore Street, Miss Glenda is missing teeth – in her case, all of them. She has but three pairs of shoes – one for warm weather, one for

cold, and one pair of dressy high heels. When she walks down the street, she strides with long, graceful steps, and to get someone's attention, she'll holler loudly from a distance. She wears bras sometimes, and she talks of her hot flashes and her "monthly." It would be difficult for her to hide her masculine birth if she wanted to, due to her six-foot height and leanness. Nevertheless, she leads her life as a feminine person, unembarrassed by who she is, participating in womanhood in whatever way she wishes. Miss Glenda is well-liked for many blocks around, and people always appear glad to see her, waving, tooting horns, and calling out to her in greeting: "Hey, Miss Glenda!" or stopping by her yard to lollygag.

Embarrassment on Sycamore Street is not caused by appearances. For example, limited budgets are understood, so in the winter little children walking down the street toward the school bus stop are liable to wear large coats that engulf them. Pants legs are rolled up if they're too long. As mentioned above, people are missing teeth; but that does not prevent them from smiling widely and unabashedly. There is an acceptance here of what might be considered in other parts of Austin detracting physical characteristics or flaws rather than playing them down, hiding them, or undergoing surgical excision as is done by residents elsewhere. This is similar to the singling out of noticeable features which could be looked at by some as flaws as the basis for nicknames which occurs in San Juan, Puerto Rico, among people of limited financial resources: while I managed a marina there in the 1970's, fishing mates and other dock workers were Gordito (Fatty,) Flaco (Skinny,) Colora'o (Red,) and Negrito (Blacky.) The names were not considered

pejorative but rather reflected acceptance of easily noted physical attributes. When I visited San Juan in 2008, young workers at the docks were sporting similar sobriquets.

Boundary? Where?

Miss Glenda has successfully conducted her life as a transsexual person in much the same way Mrs. Johnson lived her childhood in richness. Mrs. Johnson didn't know she was different - that she was "poor" - and Miss Glenda didn't and doesn't see herself as different from other people – at least no more than the manner in which we all diverge from each other. By Miss Glenda's wholehearted and unquestioned acceptance of herself and of the sense of her equality to others, she transcends the boundaries that attempt to dictate definitions of gender. Those boundaries do not exist for her in any way that effectively squelches her confidence in her sexuality and worthiness or impacts her quotidian life in a significant manner.

When Miss Glenda described to me her young romance with her husband Roger at Reagan High School, she told me he was a football player and she a cheerleader. Roger is a powerful man with a beatific smile and a body so large that his bass voice sounds like it comes from a church organ. He did play football at his high school although, when one considers the constraints of prevailing societal attitudes, it is doubtful that Miss Glenda was a member of the school's formal cheering squad because of the rigidity of that long-standing institution, school. Nevertheless, she is the kind of person who would have led cheers on her own from the stands.

Likewise, the perspective of Miss Glenda and others on Sycamore Street regarding her gender puts question to assumed standards of value. The scant possession of monetary wealth and goods rather than, for example, affectionate relationships or beauty as the defining element that determines poverty was discussed in the last chapter. In its narrow and slanted scope, it resembles the imposition of certain circumscribed definitions of gender on all bodies on the basis of their genitalia.

Gender

Many boundary-hardening materials are complicit in the gender regimentation. Demographic surveys and other forms give two choices: male or female. Birth certificates do, also, forever locking one into the sex of one's birth on a par with such seemingly irrefutable data as place, time, and parentage. Men's and women's clothing are in separate departments or stores. Pronouns rely on naming genders. Still, in other societies people who do not fit neatly into one or the other gender have been accepted, and in some cases considered to have exceptional insight or abilities. Reddy (2010) writes of the hijras in Hyderabad, India – people born with male genitals who reject their masculinity, acknowledge their femininity, and who struggle to occupy a position of respect as a third gender in the face of prejudice against their sexual ambiguity. Among the hijras are those who perform a valued ceremony of song and dance to bless the birth of a child (84). In *Two Spirits* (Nibley: 2010,) a film concerning the hate-crime murder of well-loved sixteen-year-old Navajo Fred Martinez, a portrait is presented of a person, born with a male body, who lives his life as both female and male. Navajo culture counts

four genders of people. The blurb describing the film, which appeared in June, 2011, on PBS, states: “all of us – regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or cultural heritage – benefit from being free to be our truest selves.” Other Native American and First Nation Canadian tribes also regard gender as more multi-faceted than just male and female. Oglala Sioux Russell Means says: “In my culture we have people who dress half-man, half-woman. Winkte, we call them in our language... If you are Winkte, that is an honorable term, and you are a special human being. And among my nation and all Plains people, we consider you a teacher of our children, and are proud of what and who you are.” (<http://www.angelfire.com/on/otherwise/native.html>)

The official and entrenched bifurcated structure of gender in our society has presented a rigid and officially sanctioned boundary that has excluded large numbers of citizens from enjoying a respectable status. Part of this boundary has crumbled: openly homosexual individuals now qualify as part of mainstream America although that battle is still being waged on some highly institutionalized fronts such as the family, church, and marriage.

Corporal Klinger on the hit television show M*A*S*H was a sympathetic portrayal of someone who might be a transsexual, but as his frequently reiterated goal was to leave Korea and return home, the possibility remained that his use of females’ clothes and makeup was a ruse he designed to disqualify him from the army.

Locally in Austin, a popular DJ on KMFA, the classical music station, is transsexual. There are some cracks appearing in gender boundaries. However, the overt presentation and discussion of transsexualism has eluded our society thus far in any

widespread way. Furthermore, the notion that there are many definitions of gender, and that individuals perform their personally-determined gender in many different ways depending on context and periods of their lives has only rarely been entertained.

Insanity

In the highly fetishized and influential sphere of medicine, transsexuals are still considered aberrations and are stigmatized in the way that is most debasing and destructive: through focus not on gender but on sanity. The cognicentrism that is considered preeminent in western society (Noll: 2009) constrains evaluations of people to such a degree that having a mental disorder or any perceived shortcoming related to the brain is among the most, if not the most, marginalizing states in our society. The standard reference handbook of psychiatrists, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, currently *Edition IV*, which is put out by the American Psychiatric Association includes transsexualism as a mental disorder (F64.0). Since psychiatrists are MDs, their designations carry with them the weight of deference afforded to an occupation and to credentials and titles that are supremely honored in our society. Western medicine and its purveyors have instituted a tightly restricted boundary that has been hardened by countless material qualifiers. Thick texts and reference books, expensive and exclusive schooling that is difficult to acquire – the list of boundary hardeners that posts doctors and their decrees in a superior position to others appears limitless. Whereas one can drop the honorific “doctor” for PhDs, no matter their years of experience or significant accomplishments, when addressing or alluding to MDs without

their title one commits an unthinkable breach of decorum. The Hippocratic oath with its classic Greek namesake suggests MDs' connection to millennia of medicinal practices on a lofty plane. The medical profession has access to pharmaceuticals unavailable to people for use unless permitted by doctors' prescriptions. Praxis, for the most part, is in clinics and hospitals on the walls of which hang their framed or laminated proofs of credentials. They deal with malignant microscopic organisms invisible to the layperson and labeled with Latin names indecipherable to most who hear or read them. The esoteria surrounding medical practitioners present a huge, ritualized edifice erected to create impregnable boundaries of status and license. This is science's solidity, but with the added reinforcement of threat since there is always the possibility that one may need a doctor and that doctor's knowledge some day.

There are psychologists, also, who have established a trade dealing with the workings of human minds. However, they are social scientists, and so not objects of the same amount of esteem generally accorded MDs, nor do they have access to all the pills, equipment, and other accoutrements. Psychiatrists, as MDs, stake claim to mastery of the mind because the mind is seated, according to MDs, in the brain - a vaunted physical component of the MD's *terroir*, the body.

The trend toward pathologization in medical doctors' latest move to expand their sway over people has been recognized and decried among psychologists. This can be seen in an article in London's *The Telegraph* of September 14, 2011. Written by health correspondent Martin Beckford about a national meeting of the British association of psychologists, it announces, "Children who are merely shy or sad are at risk of being

diagnosed with mental disorders and given powerful drugs, experts warn." New "guidelines are being developed in America" that will cause shyness among children to be regarded as illness - "social anxiety disorder" - that must be treated, and becoming withdrawn after suffering a bereavement to be mentally ill with a "depressive disorder." In addition, those children who talk back to adults can be diagnosed with "oppositional defiant disorder." As a result, more children will be treated with powerful, expensive, and life-altering drugs "with little or no understanding of what it will lead to."

Unfortunately, considering the low status of children as described in an earlier chapter, as well as the dearth of time and energy of many parents - particularly among those with the least economic and social capital - and the increased size of public school classes due to governmental budgeting, the alternative "ways of improving children's behaviour which typically involve time and energy from people" could well become of secondary use. The new version of the DSM-D, the psychiatrists' handbook which includes this expanded potential patient list, is expected to come out in 2014 (Beckford).

The idea that Miss Glenda – articulate, imaginative, intelligent, brave – is possessed of a “mental defect” because her self-definition does not conform to the parameters delineated by a specific sector of our culture seems to gainsay any notion of MD infallibility and prods us to recall that this misinterpretation of human behavior by physicians is nothing new. Hysterical women (Briggs, Micale), people of non-European descent, and those who did not behave or conform physically to metes of the phrenologists and physiognomists have fallen outside of medical depictions of “normal,”

since normalcy in this country is traditionally ascertained through comparison to a select sample of European males.

Foucault notes “the emergence or rather the institutional specification, the baptism as it were, of a new type of supervision – both knowledge and power – over disciplinary normalization.” This observation refers to the movement beginning to swell within prisons in the mid-19th century to correct prisoners, who are people either “undisciplined or dangerous,” into “normalcy.” He goes on to say, “the supervision of normality was firmly encased in a medicine or a psychiatry that provided it with a sort of ‘scientificity’: it was supported by a judicial apparatus which, directly or indirectly, gave it legal justification. Thus, in the shelter of these two considerable protectors, and, indeed, acting as a link between them, or a place of exchange, a carefully worked out technique for the supervision of norms has continued to develop right up to the present day” (1979:296-7.)

The notion that one is mentally adrift who would not wish to control him- or herself to conform to criteria formulated by people with authority in hegemonic society suggests either the assumption that society’s standards concerning an individual that over-rule that individual’s own non-injurious behaviors are uniformly wise and commendable or that control is fundamental and desirable in our world. However, when a person's way of living, comportment, and even thoughts are pathologized, he or she is swept over a boundary that separates the "mentally defective" from the "sane." This relocation is very fertile for MDs, placing under their authority increasing numbers of people. Currently, apparently, the relatively untapped segment of our population,

children, is being considered for larger-scale treatment. Diagnoses and medications result in money for doctors and for the pharmaceutical companies that rely on their prescriptions.

At the same time, this mentally ill/sane boundary which has been so assiduously constructed exempts people who operate on a larger, more affluent and influential scale. Consider the definition of someone suffering from an "antisocial personality disorder" according to the Mayo Clinic's staff:

"Antisocial personality disorder is a type of chronic mental illness in which a person's ways of thinking, perceiving situations and relating to others are abnormal — and destructive.

"People with antisocial personality disorder typically have no regard for right and wrong. They may often violate the law and the rights of others, landing in frequent trouble or conflict. They may lie, behave violently, and have drug and alcohol problems. And people with antisocial personality disorder may not be able to fulfill responsibilities to family, work or school."

When I read this to Miss Glenda, she said, "Humh. Sounds like politicians." It also sounds like today's most highly successful business executives of large corporations, and military leaders. Our news media reveal this time and again. The definition continues: "Antisocial personality disorder is sometimes known as sociopathic personality disorder. A sociopath is a particularly severe form of antisocial personality disorder" (<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/antisocial-personality-disorder/DS00829>.)

This and other poignant examples of societal inequity of regard are recognized as

such by people of Sycamore Street, and have assisted them in building a protective distrust that disallows a degree of vulnerability.

Invisibility

Gregory (1998) and Goode, who refers to the current “regime of disappearance” (2001:x), as well as Gallagher; Mangum, Mangum, and Sum; Ehrenreich; and Maskovsky have noted that people of limited economic capital are disappearing from the political and social radar. Housing affordable to those citizens with the lowest budgets is frequently concentrated in undesirable areas such as near airports or sewage treatment plants - spaces that are usually not seen by middle- and upper-class Americans. Recently, people in East Austin have been displaced from their modest homes by spiraling tax costs as the area is seen as more desirable due to its proximity to downtown.

Ehrenreich also describes people who fill certain low-ranked positions, such as maids, and who are “invisible.” Many people are paid “under the table” and remain “undocumented to the larger economy” (2001:93). Huge prison complexes, sited at a distance from cities and other areas of dense populations, have been constructed and filled, mostly with people of few or no resources (Bhavnani and Davis.)

Impoverished people are also disappearing in statistics. For example, the official unemployment rate only considers those who still draw unemployment compensation, and ignores those who have passed their eligibility for this help but have been unable to find work. Secombe points out that the success of welfare-to-work programs is measured by how many people leave welfare rather than how much their poverty is

reduced or whether or not they've found incomes. The use of such exclusionary numbers to derive statistics makes it difficult to learn the real dimensions of financial poverty.

However, on Sycamore Street invisibility is an advantage. Being deemed unimportant and powerless can allow a certain freedom of comportment. The self-policing in the area of appearances is minimal, as described above. Decorum's boundaries are also relaxed so that shouting for your kids to come home or to catch someone's attention is commonplace.

Arguments can be loud and public. Size, symbolic of power or superiority by intimidation, or at least intimating one's refusal to cede to another, is claimed in several ways. Volume of voice - size of sound - is one but there is also a verbal strategy of talking while one's adversary does, without pausing to listen, so that the person who outlasts the other by continuation of coherent speech seems to win a point. Size is also expanded physically by hand gestures, which include periodically jabbing a hand into the air for a second, or flashing fingernails. This latter strategy is used most effectively by females who have painted or decorated their nails, and have let them grow to a length in which they begin to curl down like talons.

Teenage boys continue to cruise in their large, old cars, with the volume of their radio turned high enough to engender vibrations in a person standing near enough. This fracturing of the peace can be annoying, but teenagers are not known for discretion.

There is some ease and comfort to living where people can talk to themselves, sing in their yards or as they walk down the street, wear ill-fitting shirts, and earn no stares or second looks. By ignoring the boundaries of privacy for oneself in a yard on

Sycamore Street, privacy expands through the means of others' obliviousness to your presence, being accustomed as they are to these sounds and sights of others. In a world where surveillance is expanding daily, this sense of *laissez-faire* concerning the exercise, intrinsic to decorum, of self-policing is refreshing and relaxing.

Reality or fantasy

A discussion concerning validity of a child's reality and memories from that childhood was introduced in Mrs. Johnson's chapter. Another element of the truth of reality is seen when adopting Miss Glenda's perspective, illustrated by her belief in the ability of her dogs and her fence to keep unwanted people from her yard. There is more than one way to assess a view. The couplet, "Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw mud, one saw stars," is illustrative of this. Both men referred to are in prison, but where they choose to focus presents symbolic opposites, indicative of outlooks worlds apart but equally available to either person.

Miss Glenda's dogs will stop some people from entering, and her fence also discourages trespassing. The question is, at what point is it realistic to expect intruders not to be able to get in. A pack of Rottweilers would deter more than would Precious and her friends, and an electrified fence would, also. Still, someone wanting to enter badly enough could find a way. Mrs. Johnson advises, "Do with what you have." Miss Glenda does with her dogs and her fence: she counts on them for protection and has not thought long about what could happen. Rather than burying her head in the sand, she is following a strategy that helps her have peace of mind within her circumstances.

The slide of "improvements"

In 2005, the City of Austin undertook a campaign to improve various sections of town, billed as being based on residents' preferences. Meetings were held in those areas, purportedly to get local input. For us in central East Austin, the suggested improvement entailed developing a "European-style" layout around strategic intersections of Manor Road that were increasing in traffic. Presentations by city planners were offered at a variety of places and times for those who lived within areas that would be impacted by the change.

Louise and I attended one of these in the evening, Louise - another Sycamore Street resident - supplying me with running commentary on how elegant this woman looked, how beautifully dressed and courteous that gentleman was, "almost like church." People, approximately 75% members of minorities, especially African American, milled around, murmuring to each other *sotto voce* before the call to order, inspecting the architectural renderings of facades of several different styles of buildings and color-coded maps displayed on easels. An engaging young man announced that these were the types of structures being considered to improve Manor Road in the higher-traffic areas.

The choices illustrated what had been meant by European style: there were shops with residences over them, dwellings of two or more stories, there were some with landscaping islands between sidewalk and street, and there were no front yards. We were asked to write below the renderings which ones we preferred, from first to third favorite. Most selections centered around how tall the landscaping should be and other relatively

unimportant features.

Louise hissed, “No lines for other ideas,” and I nodded glumly.

After a couple of weeks had passed, Louise decided to check with the city planning department to find out what had resulted. She described her adventure:

“It took me forever to find the right guy there, but I finally did. He said the plan for Manor Road’s been dropped! They’re going to leave it be like it is!”

“How come?” I asked.

“Well, he said that the neighborhoods had voted against it. That from the whole city, the only neighborhood associations that had voted against improvements were here, the um Blackland and the other one down by MLK, MLK and I guess near Airport. He asks me, ‘How come they voted against it?’ and I just said what came to mind, ‘We love our yards.’ He was real puzzled, though.”

The City had attempted to construct an artificial consensus by presenting limited options among the people who currently lived in the area it had hoped to change. However, in areas where people of limited financial resources live, there had been a large turnout at the meetings in order to view and perhaps act on the City's suggestions. As we politely shuffled around from easel to easel to examine the drawings, it became clear that our input was being solicited in a very minor way - especially since these "improvements" would directly impact us in a large-scale way to bring change to a milieu we were already comfortable in. We had begun to experience the destruction of beautiful and locally historic older wooden homes to be replaced by new buildings of the largest square footage that ordinances would allow. It was obvious profit margins rather than

appealing style were of paramount importance in those inelegant structures.

Furthermore, since approval was being sought by way of neighborhood associations, the City had a better chance to attain the adoption of the "improvements": the East Austin associations' members represent a more affluent and societally active segment than the average residents within those associations' areas. The attempt at reaching a consensus through non-representative designations was just another example of why not to trust elected officials and their representatives. As Marcus states in his narrative below, "Seeing is believing, but no hearsay. It'll get you in trouble. It's not even true."

Focusing on the stars

Miss Glenda's choice of focusing on the stars rather than the mud is a helpful one for anyone to make. On Sycamore Street there is grimness, there is loss, as in all human life, but experience with survival that includes more than just physical duration, in other times or circumstances of uncertainty, has taught lessons about resilience, particularly in this collection of homes where older people, with many years of experiences to draw on, are relatively numerous. Time and again, Miss Glenda has sought the hopeful and moved past the hurt. This is the fight she has conducted, and this is how she has overcome all threats. The same policy is also the *modus operandi* of others who live here. Perhaps it is what Dylan Thomas meant when he said, "I sang in my chains like the sea."

Chapter 5.
The Religious Enterprise
Cira and Romeo Illanes

At the other end of Sycamore from my home stands one of the few houses on the street with a garage. In the front yard La Virgin de Guadalupe reigns – hand-fashioned and shaggy-looking, but comforting with her thick-lipped smile. Robed in a gown the tempera blue of kindergarten art, she is sheltered by an arched white shell from which she effuses encouragement to passersby. A plexiglass window protects her from the stray leaves and dust. She is Romeo’s advertising mannequin.

The grassless yard is completely shaded by two rangy hackberries and kept immaculately swept up between the python roots. Recently, Romeo, who lives there with his wife Cira and their toddler daughter and infant son, converted the garage into a combination storage and show room. Most of the work Romeo did himself but sometimes, like for the dry-wall installation, he got help from his brother Larry who comes up from Mexico and once kept me pinned in the front yard for an hour with his original composition: an enthusiastic, non-stop, guitar-strummed and energetically vocalized serenade.

The heavily carved front door swings open when I’m just two steps into the yard, and Romeo, pallid, a bit pudgy, grins and beckons me in. Behind him stands Cira, small, sophisticated-looking and beautiful, shiny hair dipping gracefully over her brow as she cradles their little boy. She smiles a welcome.

The Narrative

Romeo: We're going to a trade show in November, for Christmas, in San Antonio.

A: Didn't you find that your cheapest prices were in Mexico, though, for things? Or are you going to display?

R: We're going to display. It's a conference. We've been doing conferences for several years already. I'm getting started in the casket business now.

A: Caskets? You're kidding! That sounds like a cool idea! Are you going to make them yourself or bring them in from Mexico?

R: Bring them in for now. Although right now we're selling rosaries to funeral homes. That might be kind of a conflict of interest. But I'm not going to let them know.

A: Why would that be a conflict of interest anyway?

R: Because we're competing with the funeral homes: we're selling the clients a cheap casket. So they're losing thousands of dollars.

A: Oh, so you don't want them to know 'cause then they won't buy your rosaries.

R: Right. That's one way that we're going to raise the money to do it, by selling rosaries to them. So we're going to use their money against them.

A: You guys work so hard. But that's how you're getting ahead.

R: Yep, that's exactly how.

A: I want to hear some of your latest adventures. I think I'm already hearing them. But what's been going on since the last time you and I talked?

R: We are doing really well: we set a limit on how much we spend. For example, I think it was maybe about a month or so ago, I came back from a conference and we sold several thousand dollars worth, and I poured a lot of money into the land that we're buying, and-

A: Why did you pour it into the land? Were you owing back payments or to get ahead?

R: No, to go forward, to get ahead. To lower the interest. I have a financial background. I have my securities license and sold mutual funds and all kinds of investments. Life insurance, also. Term. So I do have some kind of financial background, so I'm familiar with that. But that was before I started going into missionary work. But then, we came back, and that merchandise that came in, we had to pay for that, even though it came in late, I needed the merchandise for the conference. So we started with about \$300. So in about a week's time, that \$300 would be gone. So what I used to do, instead of waiting for the merchandise to come, I would call Mexico and order the stuff that I needed, but that could take three or four days to get it from La Reinososa - days that I'm not selling. So what I'm doing now...Like this week- we found out the hard way - because I sent some money for a special rosary for weddings, it's like two rosaries in one, so when a couple gets married, they're in the church, one ring goes around the man and the other goes around the woman. And so we sent the money off, and I was supposed to have gotten the merchandise Monday. But I didn't get it. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. That's five days. I put in about eight hours - I count the day before, though. I have to plan the day before. I can sell around \$400 each day, so that's \$2000 that I couldn't sell.

A: When you say you have to plan the day before, what do you have to plan? Your route?

R: I plan my route. Gather my merchandise. What I'm also doing is, we're showing the people samples, and I tell them, "If you pay now, I give you a 10% discount." So what I do is, with their money, I double or triple THEIR money instead of having to double or triple my money. See?

A: So when you go and get the caskets, you're going to get them from La Reinosá?

R: No, Monterrey.

A: That's what, seven hours away from here, right?

R: Eight, eight and a half. It's something very exciting. I've been kind of debating whether to get into that, or if I should stick with the other only, just a little bit more. If we do do it, the best time to do it would be November, December.

A: Why?

R: Actually, December or January. We should - that, the month of January will support the whole year.

A: In caskets?

R: In caskets. There's more people dying in January, because of the cold. So, we could sell at least a casket a day, in January.

A: Because of the cold? Are you sure that's the reason?

R: Um-hm. The cold weather. That's what we've learned from nurses, that's what we've learned from funeral directors...

A: People die of cold nowadays?

R: Not - not cold, but pneumonia, other reasons. Complications due to the cold weather.

There's two businesses I think are closing. They do not sell Mexican caskets. They buy American caskets. More expensive. A guy who buys them from Mexico just recently told me, "Man, it's getting better. We've done \$18,000 worth of business just recently."

A: That's his gross?

R: That's his gross. Net, we're talking about maybe \$14,000. \$13, 14,000.

A: There's that much of a mark-up? Like 450% or something like that mark-up?

R: That's right. Now, what I'm trying to do is set it up to bring them in one at a time to avoid paying so much expenses as far as duty, and so on.

A: Why one at a time?

R: Because you can do what's called an informal entry. And it's a lot less.

A: But what about your transportation?

R: Well, I was planning on shipping maybe half a dozen, a dozen or so to Larry's house just across the border. And from there cross one at a time.

A: They won't notice that?

R: The other side, if you bring it in like a van, they won't notice, they won't say anything. And if you bring it in a pick-up, they'll stop you and make you do a lot of paper work. But I want to get around that for now because we're starting with such low capital. But for now, there's this trade show. Next weekend they're having one in San Antonio, and I want to go, we're ready to go. I don't know if Ciri's going to go. I hope she goes, but because of the baby...

“But we do. We've got some angels. They're very popular at the Hallmark store. The one at the mall, they buy them from us. So the plan is to buy the materials ourselves, then hire somebody in Mexico to assemble them for us.

A: Meanwhile, what you're doing is making enough money to survive on?

R: Well, basically this week we decided that what we're going to do for now is we're just going to save about 25% of what we sell, 25% will go for our living expenses, and the rest will go back into the company. So our 25% is going to increase every week, because we're going to have more products to sell. And the more products we sell, maybe a month from now we won't be selling \$2000 a week, we'll be selling \$3000 a week.

A: That's gross. You mean 25% of the profit?

R: 25% of the gross.

A: But if you sold \$2000, you'd have \$500 in a week. But you don't need nearly that much for your living expenses right now, right?

R: No. But we'll get a little ahead with it.

A: Sounds like a bri-i-i-lliant plan.

R: The telephone I paid for two months. I didn't know she had paid one month already, so...the plan is for Ciri to take care of this, from this end, at least be here, because I'm going to be running to all the churches - to other Catholic churches - and be giving them samples of some of the merchandise we sell. Like this. It's from Mexico [City]. We've got some necklaces made by the Indians. They're very very popular.

A: (To Cira:) How are you managing with taking care of the kids?

C: I'm fine. Lots of work.

A: Are you getting any help?

C: No.

A: (At some necklaces Romeo's carefully unwrapping:) Oh, that's beautiful. Gorgeous.

R: You can have that.

A: Oh, really? Thank-you! Let me pay for it at least.

R: No, no. It really only cost pennies. But you're welcome.

A: And this is put together by Indians at Mexico City?

R: Uh-huh. The plan is to go to all the churches and give them all a sample. I'll sell to stores, too, but the churches can come here directly to buy the stuff. Then we'll get a - I'm going to go to all the other denominations, and give them a sample of some of these, too. God willing, the business will take off. When we finally - I know we're going to need to hire someone to help us with the kids.

C: It's hard for me to take care of the store and the baby, and Michelle.

A: I can imagine. Especially how active Michelle is. She'll be running the place one day.

R: The little boy is even more active.

A: Is he? For his age? Oh, my gosh. Wow, you have some very energetic kids, then.

Now let's see. Am I forgetting something to ask you? These are mostly things that you have had on hand, right, that you're going to sell?

R: Uh-huh.

A: So it'll all feel like profit in the sense that it's all been paid before.

R: Right. We don't borrow any money to buy stuff. We turn it around. We bought a lot in cash. Now what we're doing, we lowered our price. Yesterday, I went to Taylor just to sell one guy. He asked me for a lower price so I gave him a lower price. So actually, it came out about the same. He fell in love with the stuff and said, "Come more often. Come more often. You're going to do well with me." So, that's OK.

A: Which vehicle do you use to travel?

R: Well, the truck. It's in very good condition.

A: So that's good you don't have to worry about mechanical problems. Is it good on gas?

R: Fair. I have a report that I fill out every day. (Shows me an accounting book.) I have a little slot there for daily mileage, my expenses, what I sold, how much I bought it for, how much I sold it for, and we have an inventory that shows merchandise I bought on a cash basis and what I've sold and haven't purchased yet. So I keep track of all of that. Those who pay in advance and I haven't bought the things yet, I'm giving a 10% discount. I tell them that I'm giving them a 10% discount for the inconvenience that I didn't have the merchandise but for my end, I'm giving them the discount to get their money ahead.

A: You are an amazing salesman, Romeo. I always love talking with you and Ciri because there's always something new and exciting. I'll see you guys later.

Crossing through the yard

Romeo and Ciri's front yard emanates heavenly serenity. The tall trees cast down shade that's graveyard thick, but on the earth below there is not a leaf. Broom tracks etch

faint waves around Romeo's modestly covered Venus in a shell - her birth one of commerce with accidental hints of love.

It is into this yard that Romeo sees future customers pouring to convert their money into religious trinkets that will be his family's salvation. Perhaps the trees are dismissible as "weed trees," maybe the Virgin is a bit coarse of feature, but this yard is the vestibule of a shrine to the market. We enter through a door engraved and heavy, a cathedral portal. This is the way to a blessed life.

Getting ahead

Even starting with the small amount of capital resources a house on Sycamore Street suggests, Romeo has discovered a way to help his young family break into a world of greater financial security. He is dedicated to his mission of increasing his profits at the same time as providing comfort to people through selling them ecclesiastical symbols and aids. His efforts are ceaseless and his business plan forecasts big profits. If you keep costs down and sell a greater volume for a moderate price, you net more.

In Romeo's business, expenses are shaved way down. He buys goods cheaply in Mexico, avoids costly tariffs by using a closed van rather than a pick-up truck to convey caskets across the border, counts on the free service of his wife and brother to help with labor, and will no doubt teach his children by immersion the way to get ahead financially. He is planning way into the future – buying a beautiful piece of property on which he will build a house, and counting on his son to run the family business some day. He is making a tasty potage out of a stone soup.

Romeo and Cira are from Mexico originally. He has been closer to absolute monetary poverty than others on Sycamore, and being the perceptive person he is, knows for sure that any semblance of poverty is something he and his family must skirt widely.

Actions and words

One could view with cynicism the close integration manifested by Romeo of religion and money. Some facets of his narrative, especially, invite this, such as the appearance in Romeo's business plan of a spike in the casket business in the winter. Death becomes a business factor. This appears baldly in the enthusiastic words of a fellow casket seller: "Man, it's getting better. We've done \$18,000 worth of business just recently." The vision of Romeo's and Ciri's cherubic baby is juxtaposed to commercial wares: "I don't know if Ciri's going to go. I hope she goes, but because of the baby - But we do. We've got some angels. They're very popular at the Hallmark store." In fact, Romeo's whole project of utilizing religion for profit can seem hypocritical. However, it is a venture conforming to long traditions of formally organized religious bodies - in this case the Catholic Church - associated with worship of God. Romeo has taken the model of this very wealthy, immense entity and adapted it into a method to improve his family's prospects. He has believed in and absorbed his church's lessons, because in this day of hyper-communication, it is easy to view the church's fundamental tenets through its role-modeling as well as its performances of formal pedagogy. In a world where "Do as I say, not as I do" still seems to be a convincing instruction for many, as can be witnessed in

secular political leadership at all levels, Romeo has understood the modeled lessons based on actions rather than words.

The presence of a boundary that separates the reverence for and belief in organized religions and their teachings from the drive for profit has been ingrained in people across the hemisphere from an early age. Religious teachings make noble the lack of money and possessions. In such a way, donations to the church, the house of God, are acts of beneficence, surely to be rewarded in this or the next life. Humility is promoted (with material reward), so that personal rebellion is snuffed almost before it rises: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (*The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Matthew 5:5.)

At the same time, people can derive a sense of security, or assuage loneliness by finding acceptance in being a member of a church group, or benefit from ministrations of churches' programs. Spiritual belief is deeply engrained enough in many people of Sycamore Street that many with whom I spoke for this study included references to it. Mrs. Johnson acknowledges, "I'm 91. October 14, 1919. You know, the good Lord's been watching over me for a long time...I haven't been one to read the Bible from A to Z, but He's been looking out for me for a long time because I've had some narrow escapes." Miss Glenda feels a forgiving and wise Mother Nature in her yard and ties death with a cycle of life when she talks about her friend whose ashes she sprinkled at her birdbath. Donna, whose story is in a later chapter, sees her church as an entity that commands her loyalty because it's located in Clarksville - the neighborhood where her family roots lie - and because her ancestor was its first pastor. She beautifies it by planting there her

favorite vine, ivy. Her husband Marcus has a strict code of comportment that does not permit any cursing around him, but he is not a church-going person except on the seldom occasions Donna wants to go. Rosa feels reassurance and love from a God who reroutes a bus for her when she's at a low time in her life. These and others I spoke with do not, however, include church as being prominent in their lives.

There are three who do, however: Romeo, Marianna, and Lloyd. Marianna, originally from Guatemala, attends church every Sunday, and gains personal strength from her Spanish language Pentecostal church - especially the women's group that meets there. In day-to-day conversations, she is liable to speak of God, and does so with veneration.

Lloyd, on the other hand, seems to use speech about God in order to draw some power to himself by association. He attempts to explain his beliefs, but in doing so, mixes references and metaphors so that what results is a synthesis that demonstrates a number of differing religious perspectives:

"I work with judges...But see there's two laws: there's the law of heaven, and you got a law of the land. There's only one God, but you took a sworn oath, you saying In God We Trust. And I don't go with that eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. I go like Jesus says, Do unto others as you would like for them to do unto you."

Later, he adds, "But check this out. Check this out, though. There ain't no Christian Catholic. There's no such thing as a Christian Catholic. You're either Christian or you're Catholic. Catholics believe in Jesus, too, but there's no such thing as a Christian Catholic. It's Christianity if you believe in one God. But there are people that

believes in two gods. They work with the devil, and they work with God. See, some people got twisted minds. That's why you say... a lot of people don't know how to take Jesus into your heart. And you got two sides. You got the heart, and you got the devil, and some are in between. That's the ones that are atheists. Some people believe in uh, what you call uh evolution. There's such a thing as revolution. There's such a thing as revelation. It just depends on what your heart says. A lot of people don't have a heart. A lot of people got a mind but they don't have a heart. That's why you got evil people. That's what Osama bin Laden's all about. And they sure ain't going to Heaven... But it doesn't balance out. God sits on the right hand side, the devil's on the left hand side. Now you see how that works?"

It can be difficult to sort out what can appear to be conflicting doctrines within one religion. The boundary that seems to carve a gulf between holiness and monetary dealings has had a long existence (*The Qur'an*: Al Hashr 59: 7-9; *The Holy Bible*: Leviticus 25: 35-37) and is at work across the world. At the same time, however, commerce has played an integral role in religions, blatantly or surreptitiously, including in the same books deemed holy within religions that distance themselves elsewhere from valuing wealth. An upstanding person should grow his money (the masculine possessive adjective is used here, since its gender is used almost exclusively as a pronoun in the Catholic church and other established religions,) and should lead a life of prosperity. The fact that religious tenets are powerful enough to be able to meld teachings and stipulations of how to live that appear to be diametrically opposed and still maintain

credibility to their multitudes of believers is illustrated in the adoption by many of this righteousness/wealth divisional boundary.

Shiple (2009) writes about the charismatic churches that have surged to popularity in Ghana as they have around the world with mega churches and televangelists. In these, what Hackett (1999:523) terms "prosperity doctrines" preach that economic success can be gained through prayer. Many of the pastors maintain flamboyant life-styles and become embroiled in financial and sexual scandals that seem to damage their status little if at all (528).

A pecuniary purpose has been closely wrapped up in established religions even though their leaders are portrayed as godly. If Romeo does not display the amount of piety decorum dictates, the lack of religious-based humility need not translate into immorality though the church and religions as one of their primary functions define moral behavior.

As with other organized religious bodies, the Catholic Church - singled out here because it is Romeo's church - is routinely tasked with establishing and maintaining a credible system of beliefs based on invisible, sometimes contradictory or illogical components. As a result, they teach as facts assumptions about the supernatural world as well as humans' relationship to it. To be able to do so with authority, they must separate themselves via another boundary - one that excludes other forms of religion, spirituality, agnosticism, and atheism. In the introductory chapter, the boundary that was fashioned and hardened between polytheism and monotheism by proponents of the latter was discussed in a manner revealing the advantages of monotheism to its architects. Since

monotheism now represents the dogma of the most popular and extensively followed religions, other boundaries of technicalities have come to predominate such as those between monotheistic claimants to be the "true" religion, and who's going to Hell (or if there is a Hell) - and who to Heaven.

Morality and business

A principal role of churches and other organized religious bodies is that of determining and promoting the proper ways to behave in order to be pleasing to gods for the sake of humans' lives both before and after death. Often this is framed in terms of what is good and what is bad, but, as Miss Glenda has observed, frequently what may seem good for one can be bad for another. The exhortation, "Be good!" carries a sense of "Conform to the rules of society," but society's rules can be damaging, as history bears out repeatedly.

Many moral rules seem to be truces among people in order not to offend or hurt each other, and this set of social instructions can be beneficial. However, as we see with the life of Miss Glenda and with Rosa, described below, they become invasive when they enter into and condemn practices in private lives that affect nobody else, such as the recent entry of hoarding, defined in Wikipedia as "the selfish acquisition of possessions (and failure to use or discard them) in excess of socially normative amounts, even if the items are worthless, hazardous, or unsanitary," into the sphere of immorality and shame. The definition is replete with popular judgmental elements disguised as morality. Selfish, failure, excess, socially normative, worthless, hazardous, unsanitary are words that carry

a barb if applied to a person or the way a person lives. By depicting certain acts of the targeted person as immoral, however, the location of the speaker relative to the morality/immorality boundary can be seen to shift by those who believe judgmentalism is a moral short-coming.

Romeo does not consider his commercial enterprise as immoral or moral. Rather, he considers it a practical combination of a mission and a way to support his family.

"The greatest tragedy in mankind's entire history may be the hijacking of morality by religion." - Arthur C. Clarke

Natural and supernatural

Another huge and apparently solid boundary which inadvertently appears in Romeo's narrative is one that is prominent in modern western lives: that between the supernatural and the natural. Formalized religions have addressed this through differentiating between the monotheistic God plus a few concomitant lesser entities, such as angels and jinni, and others which appear in sanctified writings. Outside of this approved doctrine-based boundary, the supernatural world is often portrayed as cartoonish - endowing invisible beings with two, sometimes three, material dimensions more than they have - with ghosts and witches, deities, dead people and angels, channeled beings and spirits, devils, fairies, aliens, elves - the list goes on and on. Meanwhile, the existence of other aspects of the "supernatural," such as human healing

abilities that rely on assistance from an unknown source, are looked at with incredulity. Due to our species' anthropocentrism, the existence of the supernatural "world" is conceived as lying within human capabilities of understanding. In the real, natural world as seen through the learned gaze of hard science, what can be considered to actually exist is confined to everything we perceive and/or that science has perceived for us.

This distinction is imposed upon nature, and is based principally upon science's boundary hardening actions. The "scientific method" entails first establishing a hypothesis, then proving it by testing it. This creates a limiting bias since there is no way discovered so far to prove well enough for science's satisfaction the existence of immaterial beings or constructs. Scientists have learned of, named, and catalogued forces such as gravity as well as distant planets and tiny structures through responding behaviors of other material objects. Telescopes, microscopes, and other human-made gear assist them. Some people have tried to locate ghosts by recording temperatures in what are considered haunted places. By dealing with the probably permanently - to humans - invisible (as opposed to what can be made visible by our inventions of such things as lenses), such people are regarded with skepticism if not scorn by segments of the public, including those in scholastic disciplines and other facets of our society whose members are regarded as well-educated and sophisticated. Lukoff, Lu, and Turner (1998) note that for the first time in the psychiatrists' handbook, DSM, in edition IV, the belief in non-tangible beings was down-graded from a mental disorder to a condition - "The Religious or Spiritual Problem (v62.61.)" Lukoff, Turner, and Lu (1992) state: "...prior to this classification mystical/transpersonal experiences of the primordial tradition were viewed

as forms of psychosis." Whether called disorder or condition, this blanket condemnation to abnormality can be seen to include Miss Glenda's acknowledgement of at least the possibility that some of her artist friend was transferred to a bird after his death.

Likewise, it derides those large populations in the world that take comfort from the belief their ancestors and loved ones continue to exist after the demise of their corporeal bodies on Earth.

Noll (2009) traces altered states of consciousness - another disqualified mode of being unless overseen by a satisfactorily credentialized scientist - through the literature, and looks at the frequent characterization of shamans, who rely on assistance from unseen others, as schizophrenics. In 1940, Kroeber used a medical model to denigrate shamanic practices (444). However, as Noll notes, Oesterreich (1935) had already recognized their genuineness as separate from schizophrenia by using "rare nineteenth-century ethnographic accounts of North Asiatic shamans" (443.) Beyer, Klopfer, Brawer, Kawai (1964) as well as Beyer, Beyer, and Basehart (1973) studied shamans of the Mescalero Apaches; Handelman examined Henry Rupert, a renowned Washo shaman (1967), and Murphy the St. Lawrence Eskimos. Murphy (1964) as well as Peters (1982,) who focused on the Tamang of Nepal, emphasize the psycho-therapeutic aspects of shamanic techniques.

In his exhaustive review, which contains many others' work with shamans, Noll uncovers what he considers the most important differences between shamans and schizophrenics: 1.) the shaman can move into and out of his state of altered consciousness at will; 2.) the shaman can distinguish between which statements would be

acceptable and which not, within a society (449-453.) (I would argue that the latter would not necessarily be valid unless the shaman were a mainstream member of the society.) Perhaps these are good aids for discerning schizophrenia or shamanism, perhaps not: the definitions of schizophrenia continue to fall within psychiatrists' purview.

Taussig notes that it was Nietzsche "who complained that...when we explain the unknown we reduce it too quickly to the known" (2006:543.) The reliance in our society on manifestations to our perceptions of the material for validity is related to the categorization of the "hard" sciences as superior to other disciplines. However, to assume something does not exist because it cannot be measured, seen, or touched, and to relegate it to a realm outside of nature indicates basing knowledge and the whole sphere of reality on the false premise that if humans - better said scientists, who claim for themselves the farthest as well as most penetrating sight - generally cannot sense it, it does not exist in the natural world.

The boundary between natural and supernatural has been solidified largely inversely - based on the lack of existence of scientific evidence for the latter. This omits the use of logic (absence of evidence is not after all proof of absence) and ignores flaws in rationale: science has not explained everything, nor has it always explained correctly. However, since the fields of science have produced vast quantities of information, rituals, experts, and "proofs," the division between natural and supernatural is a hard boundary. As a result of the manufactured rift in nature, significant knowledge, such as that held by shamans, curanderos, and other healers without M.D. degrees comes to be regarded in

this society as counterfeit. This rejection includes the large numbers of local practitioners and experts of medicine commonly used for their skills in many forms throughout the world. At the same time, it leaves in limbo recorded and confirmed capabilities of non-human animals that are beyond knowledge of our perceptual understandings. If, on the other hand, people discern the double-sourced strategies (science and the church) that make the boundary hard, perhaps their regard of nature as well as their definition of what is possible - and what is - will be expanded. At any rate, the definition of what is not will weaken. Both natural and supernatural are socially constructed categories, but acknowledging that what is called the "supernatural" and thereby positioned outside of nature could actually be included in what is natural could diminish some of the power that science holds over our thinking, and could open the doors to new knowledge as well as validate the possible veracity of individuals' beliefs and theories, no matter those people's status.

Because of the impossibility of knowing what lies beyond our senses and science's investigations, the religious tenets Romeo, Marianna, Lloyd, and other residents of Sycamore Street subscribe to, whether they are accompanied by pomp and displays of wealth or not, or seem too simplistically literal or naive are as valid and potentially true as those of Pastafarians, Episcopalians, Jews, Muslims, Evangelical Baptists, or ascetes "who sweat and swelter in the sun, and mortify [their] lean flesh upon the rock."

(London:1915:67.)

Chapter 6. The Home Invasion

Rosa Morales

The Narrative

R: “I’ve always felt that my yard was a sort of protective area or buffer between me and the rest of the world. But that’s false, a false security. Because there are some people who will come to steal, which has happened here several times. And you feel so angry and helpless when they take something that you have because you liked it and because they sneaked into your space. And once there was a stalker.”

A: “A stalker? Oh, no! Tell me about that. It must have been terrifying.”

R: “It’s actually pretty funny because of how it came out. And I wasn’t really scared because I just thought of it as some guy trying to get, to come on to me or something, like so many guys do if you’re a single – don’t even have to be single - woman. Then I called my brother and was telling him about it on the phone and he said, ‘You have a stalker! You better be careful. Some of them can do crazy things!’ so then I was a bit worried.

“It started one morning when I was out watering my flowers along the walk in the front yard. I saw a guy walking by in the street, just walking slowly by and looking my way, so I waved at him because I try to be polite. Then all of a sudden, he’s behind me in my yard, on the little walk. I hadn’t even heard or seen him coming because I was busy. He must have come up my driveway and crossed my yard. And he’s right behind me and says, ‘You have nice flowers...and they smell... so... sweet,’ but it’s like he means I smell sweet because he’s sniffing near my neck and he’s saying it in a voice - a soft, flirty

voice. So I said, ‘Thanks. Excuse me,’ and I pulled the hose around so he had to step back, and I pulled it across the yard with me, watering as I went, but when I got near my front door, and he was still by the flowers, I turned off the nozzle and went inside like he wasn’t there. But inside, I locked the door fast.”

A: “What did he look like?”

R: “He was pretty big, stocky but not fat, a nice face, young, light skinned black guy. He was wearing a lumberjack jacket with red and black squares. So I guess he just left.

“A few days later, it was about eight in the evening, my dog starts to go crazy by my back door. You remember Rushmore, my big husky? And I’m wondering why he’s barking and growling like that and jumping up on the door. Maybe it was a raccoon or a possum. So I switched on the back porch-light, and the same guy steps out in front! [The door’s a side door that the walk leads to, and is about ten feet from the house’s front.] I see him because Rushmore leaves the door and runs to the front window, and the guy’s walking fast toward the street. He turns around toward me when he’s almost there, backing away, and Rushmore busts the glass out of the window trying to get at him. That guy was lucky I have bars on the window because Rushmore would have killed him. I still remember his face under the streetlight as he stopped and watched. So the next day, I fixed the window, and I thought, ‘That’s the last of him.’ But I was wrong.

“I had set up my tile wet-saw near the front door because I was tiling my bathroom. I was wearing goggles and my green rubber poncho with the hood pulled tight around my face over my hair because the water mixes with the sawdust and sprays back at you when you try to cut. You have to keep wiping off the goggles. So I was cutting,

and I looked up when I finished a tile, and he was there. My face was completely coated with thick reddish muddy-looking goo, just dripping with it, and I had on my goggles, and he took one look and walked away, and I never saw him since.”

A: “Did you call the police?”

R: “The police! I gave up on them because they say they’ll come but they don’t. It’s like it’s OK if people steal from you.”

A: “But maybe for something like that, like a stalker...”

R: “But he was gone. What could the police do anyway? I could just hear them.”

A: “Has anyone gotten into your home?”

R: "Yes. There was a kid and his friend who waited ‘til I was gone – this was after Rushmore died, of course - and they ripped my bedroom bars off the window, wood frame and all, and came in and stole both my TVs. The kid - Wenceslau - was living next-door with Lala, because he was her nephew who’d come up from Guatemala on his own, just fourteen, because his parents had left him when they came here. She got him into school, but he was doing poorly, so she asked if I could maybe help him some with his English homework. So he’d been in my house in the living room while I worked with him, and he complimented me on my wide-screen TV and kept looking toward it. That’s one reason I knew it was him. Nobody else even knew I had it. Also, there was a long electric cord in my yard, with the plants trampled down, leading right to the fence between my and Lala’s house.

“I called the police, and this time they did come – maybe because my house had actually been broken into and I said I knew who did it. So the police went next-door and

questioned him for quite a bit. The next day, I hear a knock on my door, and it's a woman, so I step out and she starts to shout at me and tell me in Spanish that I had no right to call the police on her son! How dare I? Could I prove it was Wenceslau who broke in?"

A: "The mother!"

R: "Uh-huh. Turns out she and Lala's brother live in a nearby apartment building!"

A: "That is so weird. Did Lala know she was here, in this country?"

R: "She knew, but she had just recently found out. So this woman starts toward me like she's going to hit me – she's much bigger than me – and I stepped back inside and said through the bars something like, 'The police know. Ask the police. They're the ones who have his fingerprints.' That night, the brother and the woman moved out of their apartment and took Wenceslau with them. Lala was so sorry about the burglary. She told me to tell that woman, if she bothered me again, that I was going to call Immigration, and she brought over a big old spare TV she had and set it up for me."

A: "What an awful experience."

R: "But even so, I don't consider that or the stalker the worst of the invaders. Do you have time? This is a long story."

A: "Absolutely."

R: "I have a lot of pain from rheumatoid arthritis." [I had noticed her warped and knotted fingers before, and wondered how she could do as much as she always seemed to be doing.] "I'd heard so much about marijuana, that it takes away pain, so I tried it. It was like magic: I mean, from the first time it was amazing. I could still feel the pain, but

it didn't hurt! It was just a sensation, like you can feel your watch on your arm but it doesn't bother you. So, I started smoking it almost every day, especially when I had heavy yard work, but that became expensive. For the good stuff, I mean, which is what works best. I found some seeds in one bag, so I thought I'd try to grow it. I knew there were books at the store where I got my pipe, a head shop, and I grew two plants. I bought a special light, fertilizer, and I grew them, then cut them down and used the dried buds. The leaves didn't do anything for me, and the buds themselves, I had to smoke quite a bit to get rid of all the pain, and they made me cough a lot.

"I went on line and ordered some seeds from The Netherlands. I picked out a name I liked - White Widow - and the information about them was that they were easy to grow and strong, had a strong effect. So, a few weeks later, I got this music CD from London in the mail - some CD I'd never heard of. I guessed maybe it had been sent by mistake, but it was addressed to the false name I'd ordered it with, so maybe they'd just forgotten to include the seeds. Before I threw it out, though, I decided I'd go over every square inch of it, of the wrapping, under the stamps, everything, 'cause I'd paid good money for them - about \$200! It was packed with this thin corrugated cardboard, and I found four seeds in one of the little bends, the little corrugations. That's how it all started."

A: "Huh. With four little plants..."

R: "Well, no. Actually with one. Three of them I had to dump, I couldn't use 'cause they were males. You have to learn how to tell them apart. The book shows. You don't want those males around 'cause they'll fertilize the females and you won't have the big,

good buds. I learned how to sex them from the book I got."

A: "So you still buy seeds from the same place?"

R: "No, I took cuttings from the female and rooted them. It wasn't hard. You can get this gel that has something in it that makes roots grow on a stem. It's fun. It's all in the book."

A: "Did you have to get the gel on line, too?"

R: (Shakes head.)

A: "So then you could keep taking cuttings from the females?"

R: "Which is easy because now they're all females since they were cloned from females."

A: "But don't they get stunted or anything? I mean, because of keeping on using different generations of the same plant?"

R: "I USED to keep taking them, and they didn't get stunted."

A: "Used to? What do you do now?"

R: "Well, now I have to buy it again, buy the buds. Sometimes it's really expensive, and it's sort of a bad situation because what if I bought some with other, harmful drugs in them. Or pesticides. Now, though, I have a guy I feel pretty sure of who gets it for me."

A: "Why'd you decide to do that instead of keep growing?"

R: "The police decided for me."

A: "Oh, no!"

R: "Uh-huh. I've got to tell you. It's unbelievable. I got a knock on my door one evening, and it was the police. They said, 'Open up.' I stepped outside to find out what

was going on.

"They said, 'We got a call of a domestic violence. Someone heard somebody screaming in this house.'

"I said, "There's some mistake. I mean, I'm here by myself. There's no domestic violence."

"Maybe you had your TV on too loud?' they said, but I said, 'No, I'm just listening to some music.'

"Then the one, the older one, says, 'Well, we've got to come in and check it out. We have to check out every domestic violence call.'

"I tell him, 'But I'd rather you don't come in. I have a little sick dog and she gets very upset at men, and I'm supposed to keep her calm.'

"But it was like talking to a wall. The main cop said, 'Sorry, ma'am, but we're going to go in if we have to break the door down.' I kid you not: his eyes were glittering like he was ready to break in my door, like he wanted to. It was sick. Later, I thought about that, and realized they look like a – like those pictures on TV of a hawk's eyes when it's ready to grab something. Then I asked for a search warrant, and the older one, the main one says, 'It's in the car. It's coming in right now. It'll be better for you if you cooperate.'

"I says, 'What if there's something, not domestic violence. Can you ignore that?'

"Yes, we were called for domestic violence.'

"Then I made him swear on his mother, and he did, so I let him in. Anyway, I didn't want my door broken. They took one quick look around inside and immediately

found my plants - from the smell as much as anything. A third cop came in, a lieutenant I think they said, and they started carrying my plants out and my dried buds I hadn't cured yet and my jar of cured ones. Everything. Plus the grow lights. And they made me sit on the couch while they did.

"I've got to say, they were nice, very nice, all in all."

A: "The buds?"

R: "No. They were nice, too. But I mean the cops. The older one really liked my house, with all the built-ins. He guessed it was built in the fifties, which it was. Then he looked at my photographs on the table and asked me, 'Your daughter?' at Jen's. He says, 'She looks like you.' He patted Cricket, who always likes company. He hung around a long time 'til his friend, I mean the other cop, popped his head in and told him they were finished and getting ready to go, and he says to me, 'When I leave here, I'll never see you again. Some detectives will come talk to you in about a month.'"

Rosa stops to reflect. "It was real strange, but I think we could have been friends."

A: I laughed. "I thought you despise cops."

R: "I do. He was different, though. They both were. All three, really."

A: "What about the domestic violence?"

R: "Oh. I found out more about that later. Want to hear it now?"

A: "Do you want to tell it now? Or what came next?"

R: "Might as well tell you later, when I tell that I already had a lawyer and was going to court and found out from him what that was about."

"So back to where I was. Uh, things seemed so normal for weeks that I almost forgot about what happened. Then one night - oh! it was my birthday, I was asleep and I heard this loud pounding on the door. It was the middle of the night, the early morning. I looked out my peephole and saw police and said, 'Who is it?' I know I'm telling you lots of details but..."

A: "No, no. Go on. I want to hear."

R: "So I opened the door and these two big young guys came in and told me I was under arrest, to get dressed." [She makes a face of disgust.] "Those were the bad ones. One took me back into my bedroom. I felt so shocked and faint I fell down, and he kept prodding me with the toe of his shoe and saying, 'Get up.' He started digging in my laundry! I said, 'Give me a moment. I feel sick.' In a little bit I felt like I could stand again, so I did. I got dressed. I think he turned his back so I could get dressed. I started to grab my purse but he said, 'Leave everything here. Just put your license in your pocket.' I did take my keys out to lock up, and Lala's number so I could get her to walk and feed Cricket if I didn't make it home."

A: "Did she have keys?"

R: "No. But I tossed mine under the rose bush. Then, uh, they told me to put my hands behind my back and they put on hand cuffs so tight they hurt. But they wouldn't loosen them. I told them I had rheumatoid arthritis. I had to get into their back seat - this white plastic bench seat molded to fit two asses, and I leaned forward as well as I could for my hands. I couldn't help thinking some old drunks had been there and peed in the seat." Rosa's eyes filled with tears.

"Let's stop," I said, but she said, "No, I want to tell this. I haven't told anyone about it, it's so shameful, but I want to. It's just hard to think about and remember everything.

"Anyway. I was glad then it was night, and I looked around and nobody was there to see me. So we went downtown and drove into this tunnel behind a building – it felt like I was entering the belly of the beast - and they took me out and they had me sit on a plastic chair in a little room where they were checking people in. They made me empty my pockets and take off my sweater and belt. Then I had to go sit on this long, hard bench in a big room on the female side. There's a female side and a male side. It was a very big room and it and all the halls and everywhere was gray, and hanging from the ceilings were all kinds of pipes and tubes and wires holding them, and it was like they were the roots sticking down below the ground, where we were – or maybe intestines. I was sitting there for hours, forever, it felt like. And there were two televisions up high in front - one on the men's side which worked well, and one on the women's side which was very foggy, and I couldn't even tell what the show was. And they would call, get a bunch of people together out of the room. They'd shuffle them off, and then, finally, this sort of attractive, sort of tough-looking, young black girl sat on my bench nearby. We started talking a little. Mainly, she talking about what had happened to her: it was domestic violence with her girlfriend, and she had called the police on her girlfriend but then they ended up arresting her. And so she was really mad about that, that they had arrested the wrong person. And I was sympathizing with her. We were just talking every now and then about...shit, just a way to break the heavy gloom." She gives a little laugh.

“They called my name and I had to go to get dressed in the striped uniform, this striped, one-size-fits-all, horizontal thick-black-and-white-striped uniform with a sort of a little V-neck so you knew where was the front ‘cause otherwise the front and back were identical. They give you some rubber sandals and the uniform and you go into a little like cubicle and change. And they gave you this new, woven, very stretchable, thin panties, what they called panties, and I said to the woman, 'It's funny you call these panties,' and she said, 'Yeah, even the men's are panties.'" [Laughs.] “Then you went to this window and you check in your clothes into this paper bag with your name, I think, on it. Unless it was a number. Maybe it was a number: I don't remember. 'Cause you didn't write it yourself. And then, uh, you had to turn in like your underwear and everything you wore.

“Oh, and at one time my name was called and I had to go to the back desk and get fingerprinted and photographed. I still have the photograph – mug shot - of me in black and white.”

She opens a file cabinet, withdraws a yellow folder. The picture is distorted, the face lengthened, the expression lifeless.

I tell her, “It’s almost impossible to recognize you. I wouldn’t know this is you.”

“I don’t recognize myself, either. One of my probation officers couldn’t even tell it was me from that photograph, the first time I went to see her. Anyway, I’d been thinking I’d wait ‘til morning so I wouldn’t wake Lala up when I called her, but now I didn’t have her number, so I asked at the back desk, the back desk in that waiting room, the desk where the police supervised everyone from behind and took your photo and

fingerprints, if there was any way I could get Lala's phone number out of my clothes bag. There was one nice man back there, nice cop, and he got the bag. He said, 'You're in luck. It wasn't put away yet.' Anyway, he let me dig around in my clothes, and I got out the phone number for Lala so I could try her in the morning. Then it slowly dawned on me after quite a while that maybe there would be some way I could get myself bailed out, because what do the people do that don't have anyone? So I asked them at the back and someone showed me a phone on the wall that I could use to call a bail bondsman. There were all these numbers posted for them, and some said beside them that they were available 24 hours, so I called several, but what I got was a 24-hour recording! (Laughs.)

"I did finally get through to somebody and he said, 'Well, what's your credit card number?' And I said, 'I don't have my credit card. They don't let you have credit cards in jail.' And he said, 'Well, I'm sorry, but I won't do it without a credit card number.' So I knew I was doomed to spend at least the night, and who knows how long 'til I could figure out the way to get out of this hole of a place - hopefully, to be able to call Lala to feed Cricket and the bird. That's the main thing I was worried about at that time.

"And then, finally, first that other girl, the black one who was there for domestic violence, she got taken away - before me. And later I got taken away.

"And the only other time I saw that woman was - she was in my same cellblock...no, was she? No, I didn't see her in my cellblock, I just saw her in this big meeting room thing in another cellblock that had windows to the outside. Oh that's right, she wasn't in my cellblock 'cause mine had no windows and I was saying to her, 'Gee, this is nice, you've got, at least got a window.' But anyway, at that point, that was the

point she started really being cold to me, acting toward me as though, like she hadn't seen me or anything, and she looked at me in this way like she'd never met me, and she was sitting with other black females. Anyway, so I saw it was quite segregated in there - self-segregated, by blacks - at this point, at least from what I saw.

“But, I finally, when I was told to go, uh, anyway, somehow I was put on the tail end of a string of men, and, uh, the order comes a little bit blurry to me at this point, but we were taken before the judge...no, that was the next day. OK. Anyway, I was taken up to, my cellblock was this triangular one, one-story, with this medieval-looking thick door on each cell, solid with a tiny little window at the top of 'em, and the only light in there was fluorescent ones buzzing and going on and off, and uh, not bright at all – very dull and depressing, and I could see that there were some tables that were completely, uh, they were round, scratched up and carved up tables and the benches around them were completely fastened to the floor and there was uh, so anyway, they led me to my cell in the corner, and I went in there, and it was so dark. It was really dark, and there was a light on. It was over the sink. There was a sink there, and it had a mirror...wait, did it have a mirror? I don't remember. Oh, yeah, a metal mirror, very hazy, fastened directly to the wall. There was a sink there, there was a water fountain, and there was this little - there wasn't any paper there for toilets - oh, yeah, there were some thin little napkins someone had put there, and there was a little, uh, toilet. Metal. That's right, it was a metal toilet. And there were I think three bunks. There was mine, the one I took, right by the door. I don't remember if I was assigned it or what. Oh. No, I wasn't. It was on the uh left wall. The bunks were just these plastic, molded slabs, with these very heavy

uh thick-plastic-covered mattresses. The mattresses were like, uh, they were blue, like an industrial blue, and uh, came to a little point - not point, but they were seamed along the sides, one seam all around the sides and the ends so they stuck out a little bit all around. And of course no pillows. And uh it was freezing cold in there. It was freezing cold in the whole place, in that whole wait and everything. There was a blanket on the mattress, so I put it over me. It was one of those uh really loosely woven, uh thermal blankets, and this thing was, uh, was so...un-thermal [laughs] that it had huge areas between the threads in some places. I mean it was sort of shredded, you might say, in places. So, I did my best to keep myself warm, huddled up, and then I was worried because I have to have something to support my neck or else I get a backache and a neck-ache, and it's a horrible feeling that just doesn't go away. So uh, in fact at home I have those kidney-bean-shaped pillows that one side can support your neck and then there's like uh a little concavity that your head can fit into. So I tried to make something like that by using my panties, taking my panties off and folding them up in such a way that they would provide something, at least provide something underneath my neck. And uh, so there I was. And I couldn't sleep. Because the light was just glaring into my eye - that little light that I thought was a very pale light. And I kept thinking, 'This is a nightmare and I'll wake up,' because it seemed like I was in hell. By then it was almost morning - I mean it WAS morning, the whole thing was morning - but this was just about the end of my so-called sleep time, when I figured out the way to turn off the light. [Laughs.] I had been too cold to get up from my little spot that was less cold and check around it. So, then I went back to bed. And it wasn't very long. Let's see, it was, it was still dead of night, I think it was

like four o'clock, I guess the woman, I think it was, maybe it was like four o'clock, there was a lot of rattling outside, and then they came in and said, 'Breakfast time!' and brought these little plain brown paper bags around room to room, and uh, when they unlocked my cell and gave me mine, I opened it up. I asked, 'What time is it?' and she said, 'It's about four.' Or maybe it was three. And so, I opened up the bag, and what they had in there was one of those little six-pack things of orange crackers, cheese crackers, with peanut butter, only these - I don't remember if these had peanut butter or not. They were some of those that I had never seen before - some off-brand, and then an off-brand of some uh Mexican cookies, I think they called them, six of these little sugary things in another plastic package, and then there was an orange that was pretty green still and a sandwich, or at least there was some plastic wrap with some meat inside of it that you were supposed to take out and put on your slices of bread. The bread was real dry, and it had, uh...but the thing was [she pauses for dramatic effect] the meat. I think there were four slices of bread, if I remember right. Maybe there were three. I don't know. But you were supposed to be able to have...I know there was more than one slice of this meat. But the meat was so scary. I don't know if it was partly because of the lighting. But that meat was so bad that it shone like a green color. It was like a grayish...gray, the main color of it was gray. And worse, it smelled strongly of chemicals, not food at all. So I couldn't eat that, and I didn't feel like eating an orange because it was going to be all juicy and sticky and everything, and anyway it was green, and there was no way to get clean, so I just bagged those back up and ate the cookies and the crackers. And that was my breakfast. And then, uh, a little later on... These are all out of sequence because I

can't remember the sequence of them. Everything's run together because it seemed like I was in another world, and it was too much to take in – especially when you're cold, didn't get much sleep, and are in a sort of state of shock and disbelief and it's hard to get your bearings. I kept thinking, 'This is what hell must be like.' I was in this half-state, not wide awake but not asleep.

“So, another thing that happened - oh, I came in - this big, fat cop came and he was collecting people that were to go before the judge, and I was the only girl, and it was Judge Perkins, though I didn't know him then. And they had somebody there that was a translator, too, for Spanish. But I didn't see that person. But she was quite good. 'Cause the way it was was a bunch of, a couple rows, maybe three rows of seats in a small room, and then up, way up high on this platform behind this short little wall thing was the judge and were his accomplices up there. [Laughs.] Anyway, and then the cop stood by the door at the end of the rows. So, uh, one by one the judge would call us and read us our charges, and then we'd have to answer from our seats, and that was all. They just wanted to tell us what the charges were. And it was pretty interesting because most of them were things like, uh, really piddley little things, but there was one guy in there that had knifed somebody. I think there was one other looked like a bad crime, but the others were like, nobody really got hurt, maybe it was like picked up on warrants for old parking tickets, there were all kinds of things like that, and most for marijuana possession, small amounts of marijuana. Anyway, I felt sort of close or sympathetic with all those guys. And uh, we started, there were like three - a couple of guys by me were starting to talk about football. And I like football. My brother even played for the Horns, did you know that?

Even though we're Mexican, Chicanos. And small, usually. And they were talking about the Horns, 'cause I think the Horns had just won a good game or something, so I started talking like, "Yeah, but did you see so-and-so – uh, Jordan Shipley - do this?" and we were talking about these different moves in the game that were pretty cool and I was digging these guys - I remember there were some really cool-looking black guys - they were, they were cooler-looking than both the white guys, though a white guy was the knifer and stuff, but he looked like something was weird - all calm, hair combed, preppy haircut, staring eyes. But anyway, the cop came over and said to me, 'Shhhh! You can't talk to them. There's no talking between males and females.' So I had to just shut up there while other guys, the other people got to talk, but anyway, interesting that they had that little rule, I mean. Why was that, that you couldn't talk between...it seemed to me that it would have...it was just a punishment thing. Because they coulda had a rule like no sexual talk or no jive talk or stuff like that. I don't know. Some other kind, some specific kind of talk that wasn't permitted. So anyway, when we all came out, we were all in a tight line, and they uh put me the last one in the line, so we went along to different places and different guys were dropped off in different cellblocks or whatever, and I think at one point there was still some of them left, but the fat cop put me in this cell in the reception room near the side, by a hallway, that big room I'd waited in when I first came in. It was maybe five feet by five feet, had glass on two out of four sides, and there was a shower in the back of it and a little bench back there and stuff, but I felt like I was in a fish bowl there, and uh he left me there what seemed like a long time, and I got tired of standing and sat on the low little edge of the shower. I did see the fat cop go by a

couple times, and I wondered if they'd forgotten me in my glass cage. And there was a bunch of graffiti in there, and there was one that said something I thought was really profound. It was a poem. I can't remember it now, but I thought I should memorize it because it was about not fighting against each other but rather taking your rage and fighting against the unfairness of the system, but it rhymed. I thought it was good advice. And I remember when I told it to my brother on the phone, he laughed. Maybe some of the intensity was missing since at that time I was sitting comfortably in my own home.

“Anyway, when I got back up to my cell, left off by that dude, the fat man - my cellblock, I should say - and I went through the entrance door and I didn't know what I was supposed to do then - they don't tell you anything about what's going on - actually, the cellblock was to the right through what looked to be a locked door and to the left about twenty feet away was this desk, and behind the desk was this big...really big and really tall blonde woman with long fringy bangs, and she had her hair done up in some kind of a knot in the back, and uh, so I came in, and I didn't know what to do so I wanted to go over and ask her as she sat behind the desk, I thought maybe that's what I was s'posed to do, and so I started to walk to the left, and she screamed and came running out, ran at me, but I was too tired to move away, and she said, ‘Get back! Get back! What do you think, you're just going to walk in here?’ or something like that and I said, ‘Well, I didn't know what to do. I was just going to ask you what to do.’ And she said, ‘I'll take you to your cell when I'm good and ready. You just stand there.’ Then she took me into the cellblock. I was so pissed, or I was...it was such an indignity to me that I said to her, ‘I'm a human being,’ and she said, ‘What's your point?’ and I said, ‘I'm not an animal.’

She said, 'Just get in there.' My other encounter with that guard was, and that was when I was walked back after having this meeting, this orientation kind of meeting because I came back later than the others due to talking with a counselor. I came in, and she, the big blonde guard, stood in that little passageway that you turn to the right and there's the cellblock, to the left and there's the long room with her desk. This little area, this little space separates them, and so she stood in there, leaning against the wall, and she had this brown paper bag and she was sort of swinging it back and forth and she said, 'You want this?' and I said, 'What is it?' and she said, 'It's your lunch. Want it?' And I said, 'Depends on if it's any good or not,' and she shouted, 'What?!' and I said, 'I don't want it unless it's got something you can eat in there. If it's like breakfast, no.' Then she shoved it at me so I took it and it was the same shit, except this time there was a mushy apple instead of an orange.

“So I couldn't eat that, but when I got into that room at that time, there was somebody else on the bunk across from mine. By the way, there were all these flimsy plastic cups around in the cell from earlier inmates, and there were all these wrappers and stuff, so you don't know if you could get some kind of fleas or bugs since it was obviously not clean. As a matter of fact, the woman in the cell next to mine wouldn't go into her cell because there was a nasty, discarded pair of these black-and-white striped jail pants in there. How disgusting!

“The woman who was now sharing my cell with me knew the ropes. She was white, pretty, quite young, tough in a way, but I don't know if I would have thought that about her if I hadn't seen her in jail. She told me about the crackers and cookies that the

girls, the females – if they don't want them, they pass them on to the next prisoners. They were hidden under the sticking out seams of the mattresses. She and I found several packs of cookies and crackers and she didn't want any, so I ate them all.

“I mentioned the orientation earlier. We were marched out of our cellblock, and I took my panties in my hand because I didn't know if we were coming back or what because I'd already been shuffled around to different places and I needed them for my neck in case I'd be spending another night. We were taken to the cellblock with the windows, where they held it, and it wasn't bad, really: lots of light 'cause they had two stories, both with windows, around this what I'd call an atrium except that doesn't seem to go with jail, and I sat on the bottom stair during the orientation. Like I said, that's where the black woman who'd been really friendly snubbed me. I have to say, I did see her one more time but I can't remember where. She was trying to make up to me that third time, being real friendly, but I snubbed her that time because I just didn't feel like being her buddy after the way she dissed me before.

“Anyway, at this orientation, there were some very interesting things going on. We all sat around while a guard spoke about shit that was basically basic shit and had already happened. It was also a place where I could see these interactions between this guard who had light brown hair in a buzz haircut and was pretty small and walked like she thought she was tough - arms away from her sides like her muscles were so big they forced them that way, and she had this thing between her and this one beautiful prisoner - long black hair, graceful - 'cause the guard knew her name, her last name, anyway, and shrieked it, and hollered at her for bringing her blanket with her, and just seemed to find

her a trouble-maker several times for what I thought was hardly any reason. She took her blanket away from her even though she said she was cold, so at some point, the prisoner went out - oh, that's right: these things happened before the meeting was really started, while we were all sitting there waiting. Anyway, the prisoner went out to a closet and got herself another blanket. She really had balls, didn't care about walking out of the meeting room, didn't care about raiding the closet, even though it seemed to be asking for trouble. She was sort of flirty to the guard. I can't put my finger on just what it was about how she reacted, but I thought it was flirty. There was this sexual thing between them, I don't know. But probably my imagination.

“At some point after the orientation talk started, I tried to ask a question about something that wasn't clear about bonds but the buzz-wearing guard said, ‘Shut up.’ I thought they'd give a time later to answer questions, but they never did. That guard with the buzz asked why I was carrying my panties and when I told her, she made a sound like I was dumb. Maybe I was pretty dumb: I don't know why I didn't put them back on. Oh, that's right: they didn't give us any time when they came to get us, so I just snatched them in case I'd need them for my neck if I spent another night there. Anyway, after the one guard who was leading the orientation stopped talking, a psychologist or social worker got up and said that if there were any people who needed their prescription drugs or who needed to talk with a counselor, they should come up and see her. She was young, dressed in civy clothes, had glasses and sort of long blonde hair, and I was all ready to dislike her because everybody else who was in there who was part of the workers and not a prisoner seemed to be very despicable, but I heard her ask one lady,

‘Why do you need anti-depressants?’ and the woman said, ‘Because of everything that's happening all around in the world. It gets to me,’ and the psychologist said, ‘Shit! Tell me about it!’ Anyway, she actually treated us all right and I felt great about meeting another human being who worked in there. She told me how to bail myself out on a bond under my own recognizance, and she also helped me make a phone call. (I had tried from the phone in the cell block to call Lala, but I lost my one free call I'd learned about by accident - I lost my free call because I didn't know I was connected - there was no beep or anything to let you know, so I waited, and a voice said, ‘Your call is finished.’ I found out later that Lala had actually spoken, said hello, but it was before my end was connected or cleared or something.) She, the psychologist, got me my booking number so I could call and charge it to my home number. Who would know you'd need it to be able to call? They don't tell you these things. Now, when I did get through, I just got Lala's recording, so I left her a message about where I was and where I'd tossed my keys. Anyway, after I finished meeting with the counselor, that's when I went back and the guard dangled the lunch sack in front of me like it was some kind of a precious treasure.

“You know, I don't even remember how it happened, but I did do the bond thing and it just cost me \$20, though how or when I paid it I don't know. There was an ATM machine there, but I didn't have an ATM card with me, but somehow, I was free. Maybe you didn't need your card.

“I felt weak and in a haze, and like I'd been in jail for days. I remember walking out of the building, just heading east for blocks until I found a bus stop for the Number 20. Then I asked some guy there if he could give me a quarter for the bus and he did.

My first time panhandling. You know, I felt like garbage – me, a teacher - like worthless, even though I didn't and still don't believe I did anything wrong. Yes, I broke the law, but it's a law that stops me from getting help I need. It's not a good law. It should never even be a law.

“I found out later that Lala had gotten my call, taken up her baby, and headed downtown to bail me out. She's my next-door neighbor, and we have become friends, or at least very friendly neighbors, but I'm very lucky with that. She said, ‘That's what you do. You help your neighbor out. You'd do the same for me.’ And she's right.

“You know, this whole thing was very bizarre and strange. Things happened that were sort of wonderful things in the middle of it. For example, to find a human there - that counselor - that was a really good thing. To see what it's like, and learn some of the little details like about the food stuck under the mattresses for each other and stuff, that was a – an interesting thing. That Lala actually took her baby and came to get me out. To sort of feel a bond with those guys while we waited to be read our charges, that was sort of cool. And I felt that same bond with the people who were fulfilling their probation requirements later with me at the Humane Society, and at the anti-drug classes.

“And you know, I had been given a page of instructions of what's next, and I had to go back downtown the next day to set up my payment schedule and get a folder – that yellow folder - with more information, give details of my income and expenses - sort of like for food stamps. Well here's the funny thing: I got on the bus, and it had to make a detour, a change of its stop - I don't know why. I never heard of any such thing before or after, but what it did was the bus stopped and let me off right in front of this place I was

supposed to go and hadn't been sure of where it was. It was a few blocks away from the usual bus route. So, I felt wonderful, because I felt like God was looking out for me, letting me know.

“It was such an ordeal, this whole thing. I don't know if I'm going to want to go into such detail about the rest, but I will say one thing: there was some good and there was some bad, and one of the bad parts of the experience was always money. You always had to pay money, money, money, lots of money. But the people who were at Pre-trial Services in the courthouse were sweet - really really nice.

“And the probation officers were really friendly and helpful, too, except for one. But she was way over-worked, and I liked her and wanted her to like me. I just met with her one time, though, and then I got shifted to another one to help lighten her load. But the time I did meet with her, she was a hard-ass. She told me to just listen and keep my pie hole shut, then she started going over procedures. I was unclear about something she'd said, so I started to ask, and she said, real stern, ‘What did I say about interruptions,’ and went on talking. When she finished, she said, “Any questions.” I had one, I don't remember now, but she asked if I knew where I was doing my probation, and I told her The Humane Society and she said, ‘Aaaah,’ in a sympathetic way like she really likes animals, and her face softened for just a second, and that's why I wanted her to like me. And when I sent her my next monthly money order for \$90, I put an animal stamp on it and an animal sticker with my address in the other corner.

"And like I was saying, I learned really well why there are so many blacks and latinos in jail. It's all down to money. Like some I talked to were there because of

driving, old tickets they couldn't pay 'cause they weren't working or they didn't make much. And one girl - nice, college girl - had a ticket for a broken tail-light she didn't have the money to fix, so now she had to find money for the tail-light plus money for the ticket or be in jail.

"The other thing was, I found out later at court, you were forced to plead guilty, and from then on you were treated like you really were."

"How could they force you?"

"Well, they'd threaten you with something. Like my case. Those cops that came to arrest me took some books I had on my shelf, really my daughter's from a class she took - a copy of the Quran, a reader about Karl Marx, and *The Prophet* - so later the prosecutor or whatever said if I didn't sign that I was guilty, they'd say I might be a terrorist. Then I'd have a real problem."

We finished then, but I asked Rosa if she'd mind telling the rest of her saga, concerning her probation and her court appearances, at another time. She agreed to do it, saying, "I'd like to. It's sort of a relief to tell someone about what happened."

A boundary of comprehension

Rosa's description of her arrest by the police and subsequent ordeal at jail illustrates the emotional trauma which the unexpected and unfamiliar can bring. She has been catapulted into a dramatic incident in which so much occurs that is difficult to assess and catalogue that she can no longer remember everything about it, such as the

sequence of events in the jailhouse. She crossed a boundary from self-possession to relative ungroundedness in a judicial system that relies on standards of human emotion that resemble the passion of an automaton. Too many facets of her experience are supercharged with emotion upon emotion. People sort through her personal laundry, hurt her physically with tight handcuffs, shout at her, lead her and order her around in a way, devoid of respect, that computes as inhuman treatment. In addition, the temporal aspect heightens the strangeness: she gets taken out of her home in the middle of night, waits for hours in a grim, cold room, is in an interior cell that obscures any natural light so that it is impossible to know what time it is, is given breakfast at an odd time, and has to interact with a hostile person to get her lunch - usually a marker of mid-day. What seems to her like several days is actually less than one.

This degree of situational disorientation, while not frequent, does occur enough within the American criminal justice system that it should be considered as a possible factor of performance, capable, because of the extraordinary circumstances, of destroying ordinary abilities. The effacing of the boundary between understanding and incomprehension can be powerful in emotion-fraught situations, yet the resulting trauma which often accompanies a prolonged period of strangeness or the occurrence or threat of violence is frequently ignored as a possible determinant of disorientation. Hyvarinen studies the effects of trauma on coherence, and notes: "Testimony of those who have survived can be marked by what is not there: coherence, structure, meaning, comprehensibility (2010:150.) This observation is supported by Andrews: "...the very act of rendering them into narrative form lends them a coherence which they do not have"

(2010:152.)

Recently, the case of the rape of a hotel maid by the head of the International Monetary Fund Dominique Strauss-Kahn was thrown out because the maid's testimony was "inconsistent " with her earlier statements. However, this inconsistency could have been expected: "The maid's brother says his sister did not stop sobbing when she called him to say she had been sexually assaulted by one of the world's most powerful men. Working at a cafe in Harlem, the man identifying himself as the alleged victim's brother recalled his 'good Muslim' sister crying inconsolably. 'She did not stop crying. I told her, 'don't hurt yourself'. I wanted to get a lawyer for her. I've never heard her like that before. She was completely devastated,' he said... In the drab residential district of the Bronx borough where the alleged victim lives, neighbours talk of a hard-working immigrant who keeps to herself. 'I know [her] since she moved here about six month [ago],' the alleged victim's building supervisor said. 'She is a nice girl, [a] hard-working woman and I saw her pretty much every day when she goes away to do this job and it is a nice family, her and her daughter, they live together.'" (*The Guardian*. London. May 16, 2011.)

Williksen (2008) describes the plight of Ada of sub-Saharan Africa, whose sister died after a crude female circumcision required of her when she was married off to a man by her uncle. When Ada accused her uncle of killing her sister, and when the sister's husband demanded his bridal money back from the uncle, he was furious at first and wanted to kill Ada, then agreed to give her in marriage to her dead sister's husband. The same kind of circumcision awaited Ada. In a long quest for survival which led to her traveling to her mother's village, her rescue by a hunter from execution, her stowing away

on boats until she reached Europe, and her being shuttled among European countries by rail and air as an asylum seeker, she found herself unable to recall what had happened during large blocks of time. Much of what she did remember, she could not put into chronological order of occurrence. Auge' (1995:125) calls this a blank, vast "non-place," a "trajectory not only through non-places, but through no man's land and spaces where no routines can be established." Williksen notes, "There is nothing left to attach remembrance to anymore," and adds, "part of her story had never been *lived*...it had simply been *suffered* through!" (126) Furthermore, the trauma lasts beyond the conclusion of the causal events - in the case of Ada, worry and anxiety at times ameliorated by wonder. Her life had changed from being "undifferentiated to being a daily act of attention." (Schutz: 1980:51 in Williksen: 131.)

In a written narrative, Lotte Steiner Haynes of a Viennese Jewish family recounts her memories of events beginning when she was a fifteen-year-old on March 8, 1938 - the date Hitler marched into Austria. Beginning immediately, "sinister" and "strange"(1-2) things began to take place at a rapid pace. Her father, as an attorney, knew what laws were being changed and how, so he and her mother began at once to make plans to send the children away first, then follow, hopefully. Meanwhile, many "scary" things were occurring, such as marches in the streets by singing, young people in brown uniforms, restrictions on the use of public transportation, parks, and attendance of public events, and an 8:00 curfew. She experienced Kristallnacht as horrible sounds of screaming and glass breaking coming from the area where most Jewish people lived, and remarks, "I don't think it's possible to describe the penetrating kind of horror that feels like every inch

of you is shaking." (4)

As she begins to describe preparations for leaving to England, her sentence structure, precise and accurate to that point, starts to demonstrate the effects of emotion as she drops articles and other adjectives: "Passport was issued with now famous red J and my new middle name - Sara. My father's middle name became Israel." She recalls, "I left Vienna in May 1939. The trip is somewhat of a blur. I vaguely remember a crowd of faces at the railway station..." and wonders at "an absolutely crazy situation brought on by Hitler's rules, laws, insanity, whatever you want to call it," in which her cousin, being half "non-Jew," was forced into the German military where he was killed in the first week of war in Poland, while her grandmother was killed in a concentration camp because she was Jewish.

Lotte recounts that as she adjusted to life in England with a family she came to love dearly, the war came to their doorstep. September 1, air raids began. She describes the preparations made in London suburbs, with complete blackouts, lookout groups for airplanes on bombing raids, government-issued air-raid shelters in every backyard, and wardens who dispersed ID tags and gas masks.

The visceral fear she had felt in Austria, however, is absent. Instead, she is amid people who have been able so far to retain possession of their strength. Gas masks had become "an outlet for artistic creativity as the boxes they were in were covered with cloth for protection, embroidered, closed with fancy buttons, etc." "The only thing that slowed us down on the way to the shelter once we heard the sirens go off was the quick preparation of a pot of tea to take along. By this time, I had become very fond of my

family, felt rather British." Part of a sentence is elided and the resulting fragment reveals her emotion. She continues to say, "There was such a drawing together of people, a need to rely on one another." (7)

Once when she was spending the weekend with another family, friends of her new family, they heard on the radio that some British troops were returning from the continent (the evacuation of Dunkirk, as it turns out) and were coming through the local railway station. She says, "The whole family piled into the car and drove to the station. The first train stopped it was filled with many very young tired, wounded soldiers." Again, her impeccable English escapes her via a run-on sentence and the omission of a comma in a series. The source of the emotion as she recalls an incident becomes clear as she describes what transpired: "Mr. Gummer [her weekend host] literally bought out the concession stand and we began passing everything out, talked with the boys, took down phone numbers and promised to call families. When the train rolled on we went back home and spent the night calling families all over England to assure them we had seen their boys and they were back in England." (8)

As the assault on London escalated into what would become known as "The London Blitz," people evacuated their children to rural England, and to the U.S. or Canada if it was possible. Paperwork for Lotte to join her parents, now in the USA, came through. She was to be on one of the children's transports from Liverpool to New York. This time, however, was different from her earlier exodus. Whereas before faces had been a blur at the railroad station when she had left Vienna, now poignant details are easily accessible. Her British family - the Smiths - and the Gummers went with her to

see her off. "Mr. Gummer got on the train with me, found the rather crowded compartment of adults where I had a seat assigned, where I would be traveling all night. Mr. Gummer found a porter, motioned for me to follow them. He had purchased a ticket for a private sleeping compartment. He didn't like the situation in that other compartment for me. This man, with a son in the RAF to worry about had the thoughtfulness and generosity to do this for me?"

Although Rosa of Sycamore Street had not experienced such dramatic events as the hotel maid, Ada, or Lotte did, she was thrust into a foreign scenario in a context that seems to define her as sub-human. Furthermore, having been hauled from her bed and given no time to clear her thoughts, she absorbs the coldness - physical and emotional - and strangeness that she is presented with rather than being able to frame it in a self-preserving fashion. Perhaps most relevant of all, however, is that, even though in current communications media as portrayed by such stand-ins for adequate role models as people on television crime shows - even though in these, people are expected to be able to find "closure" for a loved one's death by the capture or destruction of a suspect (his or her guilt apparently of secondary importance,) affect is experienced and expressed in different combinations of manners and degrees to different people. This varies hugely, depending on thoughts and backgrounds - particularly since emotions and their validity are addressed only tangentially in many institutions of the western world, and, additionally, the outward expression of passion has become increasingly rare. The physicality of strong emotions cannot be taught, while experiencing them, if negative, can be a motive to avoid them at all costs.

This suppression of emotions is paralleled around the globe. Among Torajas of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, grief felt at the loss of a loved one is closely related to heat and coolness, notes Wellenkamp. Intense emotion is accompanied by heat, which is harmful to health and can negatively impact sanity, eyes (by crying,) the heart, and other parts of the body. At funerals, expressing grief openly is encouraged, with copious weeping to offer a catharsis, but afterwards, "it is hoped that feelings of grief over the death have subsided" (1988:13.) Persistence of mourning is discouraged, and people are urged not to allow themselves to think about their loss in order to prevent neglecting other important things. On other occasions, such as leave-taking, feelings of grief are downplayed. Tamping down the heat of emotions to protect one's health is a frequent occurrence among other Indonesian and Pacific Island groups (Geertz 1961:134.)

Shepard discusses Matsigenka understandings of emotion after the person who had been his principal informant dies. He notes that excessive displays of emotion, especially grief, anger, and aggressive sexuality cause a vicious cycle of unhappiness, social disruption, illness, and even death (2008:203,) and points out the debate between social scientists who believe emotional categories are universal and those who trace cultural specificity. He aligns himself with the latter: "Although experienced viscerally and often assumed to be natural and universal, emotion shows a wide range of variation across cultures" (205.)

To Rosa, there were bright spots of her stay in jail, when she was able to recognize that people were communicating with her as human to human rather than as representative of the justice system to criminal or to an anonymous, worthless being of

some kind. The cop who got her neighbor's phone number for her, the other inmates in the small courtroom, the graffiti writer whose poem was in the glass cell, the young black woman in the reception room - at least at first - the counselor, and Lala the neighbor are all described with appreciation. They are respites from an institutionalized dehumanization and sense of abandonment by society. The fact that all who were in jail with her were supposedly innocent until proven guilty, added to her own treatment at the hands of the police, seemed to suggest that society condoned such treatment. The rights of other, deserving American citizens did not seem to apply to her any more.

In the article about Ada, what she remembers most clearly is people who treated her as an individual of value. She tells the author about the men who helped her get from one mode of transportation to the next, and the next, of the people who sheltered her or gave her assistance. Those kindnesses stood out for her, and helped her later to begin to recuperate emotionally and physically.

In Lotte's story, also, the people who become her family in Britain, as well as their friends, are able to dispel the sense of trauma she had had leaving her home and family. Reminders of one's humanity in a world that makes some kind of sense accompany a pot of tea that is taken into a bomb shelter and gas mask boxes that have been decorated. Extending herself to others, also, when Mr. Gummer took her and his family to the railroad station to meet and give treats and a dose of humanity to returning, battle-weary soldiers, followed by phone calls to their families, gives her the opportunity to verify the sense of feeling worthy from the other side. In Vienna, the horrifying events that were taking place were too close, too fracturing and destructive of meanings in her

life as it had been to that point, so that what she could recall when she left was a blur. In England, life could still retain an amount of normalcy. The potential trauma of a passage to America is overridden by Mr. Gummer as he makes sure she has special accommodations on the train to Liverpool, that she knows she is a human who is cared for and deserving of consideration.

Erecting a distancing boundary

As seen above in the case of Ada and in the narrative of Rosa, the existence of powerful feelings can disorient and make one forget much, including oneself. In the western world, there has been a decrease of acknowledgement of one's possessing sentiments that can indicate weakness of any sort. To the prosecutor, the hotel maid's fragile state after being raped cannot excuse the inconsistencies in her testimony. Vulnerability to feelings is not permitted or recognized even under extreme circumstances.

Such feelings as anger, however, do not seem to carry the same stigma as do those which indicate caring in a positive way. Anger does not leave one vulnerable to immediate pain in the same way that softness does. It is possible to wonder if humans in the "developed world" are becoming numbed because of a widespread state of trauma - constantly flooded as we are by continuous and extended information at breakneck speeds that focuses on war, death, betrayal, and other types of destruction. It is not illogical to imagine that humans become desensitized to feelings through experiencing or viewing, in person or on screens, the dehumanizing or devaluing treatment of some beings by others (Freyd:1998.) In fact, the NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health)

makes clear this possibility in its website discussion of Post-Traumatic Stress:

<http://nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/complete-index.shtml>. Perhaps the stemming of emotion is necessary for our survival.

As example of the disengagement expedited by language, "the environment" hardly carries the same sense as "nature," yet "nature" seems to be too loaded with sentiment now, while "the environment" (coupled with its stereotyping article) presents a more measured, abstracted, scientific, and therefore acceptable word. It evokes nothing of welcome cooling breezes, of appreciation for singing birds and roaring currents of water, nor does its destruction carry the same impact as that of nature.

Back to jail

Donna's brother Earl gives an inside view of what it means to stay longer than a night: "I was in jail four months. Let me tell you something. Incarceration is nothing that I want to be in. But you have to do what you have to do when you put yourself in a certain predicament. You have to weigh it out and that's the time that you take time and you think back to the days you were young to the times now. And then you say to yourself, 'Do you want to live your life coming back here over and over again?' And you married. Now your wife's all by herself, and she has to do with all these bills. You got a brand new car she's driving. She can't afford that car. She can barely afford the rent and and everything, and you done took all this from her, and she has to do it by herself. Very inconsiderate. And then when you get home, she's, 'I don't want you anymore 'cause you did me wrong.' I just can't stand it. I tell her like this, you know: 'I married

you for rich or poor, for worse or better, you know. I mean, it was the worst time of my life, now we're going to make it better. And keep struggling.'

"...Jail is another city. It's a city that's more like, you know you did wrong, and you know you have to pay the consequences of what you did. You don't want to be there, but they give you three meals a day. It's not the meals you want, they feed you like kids. I went in there, but I was stressed out. I was in the most stressful stage that you can ever imagine. I tried to make things happen for me, tried to make myself happy, but when I went to sleep at night, the stress came back again. I mean, this went on for months. I was worrying about my family. Worrying about is this bill taken care of. My wife's very independent, and she's not going to let me know things, and stuff. And so I have to read it on her face."

When I asked Earl about the guards in jail, he had had a different experience from Rosa's: "Being that they found out that my mother-in-law died and stuff like that, they treated me with the utmost respect. You got a lot of - one thing about jail, you got people that come in there with their heart, you got people that come in there because it's a paycheck, and you got some people that come in there 'cause they been mistreated, you know, as a child, and now that they got all these "mean" people in there, that they think's mean, they treat you like convicts, you know what I'm saying. But all in all, you gotta go home – you gotta stay here 24/7 'til you get released, then you gotta go home and deal with the world. And the world is very much worse out there than it is in here.

"And then you know, I'm the kind of guy that I can't – I work outside. I always have me a job. I'm not the kind of guy that I will lay up on somebody, I will not work. I love work.

"And then when I go to jail, I'm always a trustee. See, I been in prison. I been to prison. I was one of the top rank prisoners. I mean, it was an outside facility: I could walk around any time I wanted to. Only time I had to – only thing I had to do was follow the rules and they when the horn blows, that means they checking checking uh head count. So when the horn blows, you just stop wherever you at, let them count, count you, and then, you can carry on what you're doing. There's always a guard in the area where you're at."

When I asked Earl if prison was worse than jail, he answered: "Ah, man. Prison was like – prison was the best thing that could ever happen to a person, uh, when they know that they going down. 'Cause, it's like – jail, you're too close to home. So if you're too close to home, you're getting homesick, you want to be out, you want to get out. But if you're in prison, you know you ain't getting out 'til they get ready to let you out and you ain't at home."

For Earl, being inside jail was far worse than being in prison, because in jail he thinks about and worries about home and problems his family might be having due to him, whereas prison, separated from home by geographical distance, facilitates his construction of a metaphorical boundary which is hard enough to give him a sense of peace.

Chapter 7

The Benefit

Marcus and Donna Foreman

The Narrative

M: You can camp out overnight, and fish. It's real nice up there.

D: Yeah, it's pretty, real nice. They got baseball, soccer...

M: Hyde Park Methodist. Right up there. Lot a people don't know about that fishing hole. But the ones that do go, they're all kinds of people.

A: How do you find a way to get to know other people – other people that might be different, like say, they might be of Arab descent, might be rich, might be mean...

M: Yeah, I can talk to a lot of them. (D chuckles.)

M: Bunch of 'em. But here's what I always say: give someone the benefit of the doubt.

Unless you see them doing something bad, give them the benefit.

D: Always.

M: Cause some time you think someone's thinking bad of you or doesn't like you but they're just thinking about something completely different.

A: Some people that came up in my yard, some ladies from the Jehovah's Witness went to my house today-

D: They came to my house. I don't talk with 'em. I had went to the church with my sister-in-law, and it was all right, but I didn't like it because I ain't much-

J: You don't know much about it.

D: And I didn't know nothing about it because I have a church out there in west Austin, called Freedom home, that's the church I go to. So I don't know nothing about them other-

A: Oh, over there near Clarksville?

M&D: You know it?

A: Well, your brother told me that your family was from there, Clarksville. I didn't even know that you guys were brother and sister. That's pretty cool that you have family like that close by. And he's your good friend, right? (to J.)

M: Yeah, brother-in-law. I got a sister stay over here on Maple (the next street over.)

A: How would you describe your yard?

M: Well. It's pretty well neat, you know. Keep it cut, 'n keep it clean and everything. Like I gotta do – clean some of that junk back there I don't need, my fishin' stuff I get rid of, all of that.

D: I'm trying to plant me some ivry stuff back there. I go to the church and put me some in. I got one right here in a pot. Got most of 'em in a pot. That's how I grow 'em. I used to have it on the fence and the ground growin'. I'm crazy about it. I'm tellin' you, I'm crazy about ivry.

M: I was looking at them white flowers. It's the first time I've seen them come out. (Points across the street at the cloud of rain lilies that always emerge the day after rain.)

M: I'm thinkin' bout makin' me a little garden by the fence there, just come out just so far. I like greens, tomatoes, green beans, and maybe some squash. I ain't too tickled 'bout eatin' squash, but maybe -

D: Um-mm. I don't like squash. I don't eat it. I don't like – I like cucumbers and tomatoes and uh greens.

M: Just 'bout same thing I like.

D: I can't eat nothing spicy. I don't like it. I can't eat nothing with cheese.

M: I can. I love cheese.

D: I don't even drink milk. I just don't like it.

M: Keeps your bones strong.

D: Mm-hmm. I just don't like it.

A: What do you call your home? When you come through this door? When you get to your driveway, when you get to the neighborhood –

M&D: The neighborhood.

D: (Laughs.) Yep, my home.

A: Because you've lived in this area for so lo- No, you haven't. You're from over there, though.

D: No, I'm from over here. 'Cause I stayed with my mom.

M: Yeah, she stayed with her momma. She stayed there, and they passed, and it was just the house. Right over on Maple. So we been up in this area for about ooo-eee, I'd say about 30 years.

A: What do you think about all the changes that you've seen?

M: Well. Just strange. (D laughs.)

D: Better since they closed Dos Arboles. But they going to open it up. They going to put the old folks there.

M: Older people.

D: Older people.

M: But when it was open, there's so many drugs and things there. Too many young folks over there in Section 8, that didn't appreciate it, didn't know how to go about, living, you know. Living, you know - bring these people in, bring these other folks in...you don't do it like that. Nobody's teaching folks those things any more. I've tried talk to them, they look at me crazy: 'Man, you don't know what you talkin' about, you stay out of MY business.' 'No problem, bro.' Actin' dumb. Young kids, acting dumb.

D: Mmmm-hmmm.

M: Too many. It sure ain't a good change. I'm glad they closed it down, tell you the truth. It's much more peaceful around here.

D: Yeah it is.

M: That's what I'm sayin' was wrong with this neighborhood. These drug houses up here. They closed the main one, but there's still one up there on uh Oak. Oak Street. We've still got 'em around.

D: We've still got 'em 'round.

M: Certain time of the night, I don't even get out. When I'm here, I watch her (gestures toward Mariana's apartment on other side of duplex) and you. I watch the whole neighborhood.

One day there was this dude, he just kept walkin up and down, walkin up and down. He looked over here, I said, "What you lookin' for?" I said, "What are you tryin'

to do?” ‘Ah, nothin’.’ I said, “You need to get on about your business, man.’ Tall and slender, got his hair slicked way back.

D: I know you been seein’ him, tall, black – he real real real real dark.

M: I told him, ‘I don’t want to see you in the yard.’

D: Mariana, she was comin’ home, someone was looking through her mailbox, going through her mailbox.

M: And we had just come in and closed the door. She had drove up and he was going through her mail.

D: Yeah. It was a woman. She say it was a woman. A Spanish woman. I said, “Whaat? We just closed our door right now.”

M: Like I say, we at home, we watch everything.

D: I look at everything. When we get dark, I still look around.

A: You guys have a beautiful view out here, don’t you?

D: Oh, yeah. I can see everything. (Chuckles.)

M: What gets me, too, is like...these cars pull up, down by the end of the street, you know, and they be smoking.

A: Weed?

M: Weed, everything. Yeah. I go to those guys, “I’m gonna call the law on you.” We found a needle right there-

D: Some guy found a needle up the street up there. He stay up the street up here, but him and his girlfriend or wife was trying to bicycle, so he came back and he seen it, so he

called the police. It was used. He was afraid a kid might stick it in his arm and give him a disease.

M: Give him a disease. And then this creek here? They always in this creek. Right up under that bridge. I seen them come down, I was runnin' up, trying to run 'em off, they look at...'You don't know what you talkin' about, Man. You better get out before I jump ON you.' I said, 'I wish you would put your hands on me.'

A: How many are there?

M: There's about five or six of 'em.

D: 'Bout five of 'em.

M: And now you walk there you see all kinds of stuff that really not supposed to be IN the creek. Period. Clothes, everything. This is pitiful, man. It wasn't like that when I was really comin' up. I love creeks. But with trash, I don't like that.

A: Have there been more Mexicans or Mexican Americans move in here the last few years? Latinos?

M: Mmm, yes.

D: Um-hmm.

A: And I know there's a lot of whites moving into East Austin.

M: And some people come in here and build new houses, big ones, and some of us can't afford that. That's why they're just pushing everybody back, you know, out.

D: There goes what's her name. Lisa. She's nice. She do it right here [collects cans:] she gets them from the landlord.

M: Like before I really got to know her, and I didn't know you had told her to come in there, I said, 'What are you doing?' In your yard. And she said - I asked her like, [lowers pitch and increases volume] 'What're you doin' over there? What you doin' over there? 'Cause this is my neighbor's yard. She said she come to get the cans. I said OK.

D: She come to get the cans.

A: You feel secure here?

M: I ask my landlord, 'You feel secure here? I'm going to watch you all the time, you know. Ain't nobody going to bother you.' She says, 'I'm OK, I'm fine.'

A: She's a really nice person.

M: She's real sweet. She's real sweet.

D: Yeah she is.

M: I look out for her. Like I told her, 'Ever need anything done around the house, let me know.' Just like this tree is falling. Right here. 'You want me to get this thing cut, tied up, I will do it. Just let me know.'

A: She's a hard hard worker. She works too hard.

D: Yes, oh yes.

M: You know all that rain, she was going to work in all that rain, way up there on 620.

A: Now she takes her little girl with her, to try to work with the girl and everything, too.

D: I thought she was in daycare.

A: She was. But she didn't want to be in daycare anymore. So poor Mariana's taking her with her now, and doin' that.

M: Sometimes she leaves early in the morning and she comes home after dark. Then she still cleans up around the house. I said, 'You got a lot of energy.' (Laughs.)

D: Um-hmm.

A: Where do you socialize or have a party? Would it be like the front yard, the backyard...

M: Probably mostly right there. (Points through window to carport.)

D: The front.

M: I got a barbecue out in the back, but there's no room. People come around me, I got to send 'em back in. There, they be in my way.

A: I heard some good music coming from there the other day.

M: You did? (Chuckles.)

A: That was my music. I've got a bunch of 45's. Gene Chandler, Chuck Jackson, like "Any Day Now."

M: Ooooooh.

D: Mmm-hmmm.

A: That was one of the best songs ever written, in my opinion. Then that other guy sang it afterwards and he just like - 'Come on. Don't even -'

M: He don't even sing like the original. I've got some Chuck Willis, Chuck Berry. All of 'em. I had a great big box of them. Ooooooh. I let 'em come an' use 'em, they were never returned. Never returned.

A: I had tons of albums, classics, like the original "Up on the Roof" album. The Drifters.

M: Oh, MAN.

D: MMMM. You had all of that kind of music?

A: Yeah, I did. That's what I grew up with. That's my favorite music, still is. But it's hard to find some of that now.

M: Yes, it is.

D: Yes.

A: So. Where's your neighborhood start?

M: My neighborhood starts –

D: Where my brother's at?

M: No. Oak St. That corner with Sycamore, and comes all the way to the end, past Mariana's house.

A: And the circle, too? (A tiny cul-de-sac off Sycamore.)

M: Yes.

D: Yes. Yeah.

A: What do you think about nature? Do you like seeing a lot of...

M: Plants, trees. Birds. I love seein' birds. We've got a lot of em, too. And butterflies, the big yellow ones.

D: I been trying to catch one of the big yellow ones. With my net. I'll catch one one of these days. I'll put 'em in a, in a thing.

M: They'll die. Can't keep 'em.

D: Mmm, they're some pretty butterflies. I thought they turned to, what's that?

Caterpillars.

M: It's the other way around. Caterpillars turn into butterflies.

D: Ooh. OK.

A: I had a bunch of those yellow ones grow in my yard, on a rue plant. They laid their eggs there. But they don't just hatch out big. They go through a lot of different stages. I didn't even know that, how many. And they all look really different from each other. So you don't even really – like I thought I saw a big thing of bird poop. Well, that was one of their later stages before they become a caterpillar. [D laughs.]

M: Like a cocoon or something.

A: Yeah. Well, no, 'cause that comes after the caterpillar and this was before. It was just a big – looked like bird poop. [D laughs.] I can't describe it a better way.

Let's see. Would you want to have more community things, like if we all had a like a barbecue up in the circle, and everybody on the street came?

M: Yeah. Something like that would really be good, 'cause we all need to join together.

D: Yeah.

M: Her brother was talking about that. He said, 'Do you think that would work?' and I said maybe, maybe not. Depends.

A: We already've got enough people. I think it would be good 'cause right here we've got four, five people.

M: It would be good, 'cause when we stayed in Clarksville, they used to do it all the time.

D: Yeah, they used to do it all the time.

M: EVerybody.

D: Yep.

M: I'd like to have a barbecue 'cause EVerybody comes, EVerybody enjoys themself. I mean, EVerybody. It puts you in such a good frame.

A: I think it would be fun to have some sport out there, too, like volleyball or something. Long as people didn't get mad at each other.

M: Yes.

D: Yeah.

M: I don't think they would. For what? It's just a game. That's the point. Why get mad? Just like, I play dominoes, you know. I lose all the time, but like I told – it's just a game. I don't get mad about it. 'Fine. You won. You beat me.' Why get mad?

A: And your brother was talking about, maybe have two kegs of beer, and then when they were done, no more.

M: No more beer. I've been - I haven't had any alcohol in six years, seven years. My birthday came last Wednesday. And I had about five beers, and I got drunk. I hadn't drunk in a long time. But I'm not going to start drinking again. Oh, no. Oh, no.

D: He did it for Wednesday, his birthday. That's all.

A: Where do you get most of your news?

D: The radio.

M: Yeah. The TV.

D: TV.

M: But mostly the news is just hearsay. Seeing is believing, but no hearsay. It'll get you in trouble. It's not even true.

A: How much do you value your privacy? Is privacy important to you?

M: Yeah. (D. shakes her head.)

A: Not too much, Donna?

D: No.

A: What about if someone comes into your yard that's not invited?

M: I'll ask 'em to leave.

D: We'll ask 'em to leave. Yep.

A: What do you think about the city government - the city council and stuff like that?

M: They need to get their act together. They're more interested in spending money on a racetrack than on schools and everything. Some people say, 'I think they're doing the best-', no, they ain't. School, kids. That's what we got to change. What about the kids' future? Clarksville, now. They got it together. They tried to tear down some old buildings, but the community didn't let them do it. But on the east side, there's not enough protection from stuff like that.

D: My grandfather, his house is still standing in Clarksville.

A: What do you think about the war on terror?

(D laughs.)

M: It's outrageous. It's just outrageous.

A: In what way?

J: Well, tell you the truth, it shoulda never been war in the first place. That twin towers thing, that was a set-up deal. Then we go over there. Those people never did nothing to us. Bush started it. It was crazy. They wanted to take what they wanted. That's what started the whole thing. They wanted the oil. Those people didn't do it. That's why they

retaliate. The United States started it. Lot of people say they didn't, I say they did. Now, they killed this other man [bin Laden], but like I say, it's not over with.

D: It's not over.

A: What do you think about Barack Obama?

M: I think he's done pretty good. I hope he gets elected again. He didn't get us out of the middle east yet.

A: I voted for him, but I'm disappointed in him. He said he'd close Guantanamo down in Cuba, bring the troops home. But he hasn't. And then when the banks were going down, he bailed them out. And they all got big bonuses after he did that.

M: Yeah. What was that? And OK'ing more oil wells in the Gulf. For what? They don't need to look for more oil out there. It's just a money thing. Like right now. If he was to resign, he don't have to worry about nothin' for the rest of his life. But we do.

D: Let me ask you a question. You know they fixing to cut down the trees right here, (points to the field) don't you? They going to make apartments.

A: They can't. It's in a flood zone.

D: That's what I heard.

A: They are trying to change the area from a flood zone.

M: They can't do that.

D: They shouldn't because this creek – it's going to mess up –

A: They call them "improvements." They say it'll be OK. Yeah, it'll be OK for them: they won't get the flood waters in there, but more will come back over here. And Louise took a bunch of signed letters against it from here – she said you weren't home or she'd

have asked you – and filed them. But then a couple weeks ago, I got this notice that if they do this and this change, they'll be able to get their permits.

M&D: Wha'?

M: The wall they want is going to push the water back this way. It's like they built out there on 969, going toward Johnny Morris. And they had to move all the folks out of them. They was just crackin' up. Just whole ground was just about caving in. They had to give the people new homes. That was just 'bout four years ago.

A: I love my little house. I don't want another home.

M: I like this neighborhood. It reminds me of the way I grew up. I grew up over on Sabine Street. I was born and raised on Sabine. The house is gone now, though. It was right by Brackenridge. Before they built this up here, there were houses all over.

Downtown, there's been a BIG change. I don't even like to go downtown no more. And just being on 6th Street, I don't like it any more. Too much trouble down there for me.

D: For me, too.

M: And if you go down there, you better be ready to fight. If they don't kill you, they lucky. I do not like downtown after dark.

A: Do you think the police come down too hard on people?

M: I sure do. And instead of the police being here to help us, they're here to bully us. Like if you walk around after dark, they going to stop you. And don't go in your pocket.

You go in your pocket, you going to get killed, you going to get shot. They'll kill you.

And that new chief, he's from Dallas, isn't he? No, Los Angeles. He wanted to move to Dallas. He wants to go to Dallas.

And half the time they find these murderers, they got the wrong people anyway. A lot of innocent people have been killed, and they still are.

And Perry. He's dishonest, too. I heard he burned his own mansion. They never found the "person who did it." He wanted to go to that mansion in the country where we pay \$10,000 a month. And that Dewhurst, we gotta get rid of him, too. He's another one.

M: We used to go down to Town Lake and stay there all night when we were kids. All night. And we'd cook out there. Catch fish, fry 'em up. I miss those days. I miss them. I wish people would try it.

D: Remember that one huge one? It was a record. It would have been a record.

M: Yeah, but it got away. Threw the hook. But a lot of things have changed. I think it's partly 'cause of the increase in population. They come every day. And people talk about closing the border down, but it seems like they don't really care. And I don't speak Spanish. And a lot of them around here, they look at you crazy if you try to talk. Thing about it is, they can kill you and run back down to Mexico.

They beat an old guy to death right on that corner up on Manor. They beat him to death. Robbed him, killed him.

D: Right up there on the corner. You know, where they got those flowers there. And then you know somebody ran over this man right here, started right here by the bridge. He was dragged and killed. They caught him, though. But they didn't catch the ones that beat the old man.

M: When it gets dark, seems like they all come out. And they're watching to see how they can get away with something.

M: Stevie Ray Vaughan, now that man could play. And when I first heard him, I said, "That man is black." And when I saw him, I said, "No, that man is white." He sounded like a black person. He played like a black person. Guitar. Like B.B. King.

D: He's still living. B. B. King.

M: Why do so many people, doing well, they get on drugs?

A: Maybe all the stress. Some of 'em get prescriptions from their doctors. Like Michael Jackson.

M: To tell the truth, Michael Jackson never had a childhood. None of the Jackson kids did. They never did what we did when we was coming up, I'll put it like that. I don't think he wanted to have sex with a child, I think he wanted to BE a child. He's well missed, though, I'll tell you that. Well missed.

D: A lotta people misses him. Some didn't give him the benefit of the doubt, though.

M: Now there's a man, good man, that should have got the benefit of the doubt.

Closeness and (a little) space

Donna and Marcus have been together for twenty-seven years, and have a relationship that is unusually close. Perhaps part of the reason for that is the mutual appreciation and respect for each other. Donna verbally seconds Marcus's statements with continual sounds or phrases of agreement that function to encourage him. Her

opinion is more substantial than an echo, however, as they both throw in occasional remarks which indicate that current events and other, more personal topics are discussed between them and that their interpersonal communication flows easily. On some subjects, such as foods they like, their opinions diverge and Donna's differences with Marcus are stated no less adamantly than her agreements. This sign of her independence serves to strengthen her support of Marcus since it is by choice she does back him rather than due to any other motive.

Donna is a person of solid alliance and allegiance. From the beginning of the couple's narrative, this is apparent. Sycamore Street is her street, the neighborhood is hers. When it comes to attending church, which she and Marcus do infrequently, she remains loyal to one in the area of her family's recent ancestors - one prior and therefore more meritorious of loyalty: Clarksville. Even the plants are special at that church. Perhaps this can be explained by the words of her brother Earl who also lives on Sycamore Street:

"My family used to live in Clarksville. My ancestors, my great great great grandfather is is Clark, Mr. Clark. Plantation owner gave him that land out in Clarksville, and uh, he divided it between his siblings. And my grandfather, he had got I think it was about ten acres – back then they called them acres: you know - lots, and stuff like that. So uh, he had ten lots and he got into gambling and pretty much gambled some of it away. He was able to keep two. Then, uh, my great great grandfather was the first preacher at Sweet Water Baptist Church, right across from where I grew up and stuff like that. So it's got a lot of whatcha call, a lot of history behind it.

"The remaining lots – we don't have them any more, but uh, it was 1722 and it was supposed to be a homestead, but the siblings and the grand kids, they was bickering hard about it, so they decided to finally sign after taxes done grew up on it and uh raised up on it and we had to sell it for \$450,000. It's been about two three years ago."

Like Donna is to him, Marcus is a loyal partner to her, too. If he believes she says something he has learned differently, such as part of butterflies' life cycles, he voices his opinion in such a way that Donna does not feel she has been corrected. (I have heard her do the same in a role reversal of agreement/disagreement with him.) When it comes to allegiance to home, he also considers Sycamore Street his. Where Donna is loyal, Marcus is protective. His nearest neighbors are all females, and he (with Donna's help and support) keeps an eye out for others' activities which might present a threat to any of them.

At the same time, they espouse a generous philosophy: give people the benefit of the doubt. By using this as a strategy when dealing with other people, they find it easy to get along with "all kinds of people" if they go fishing. When it comes to President Obama, Marcus and Donna do indicate their loyalty, but admit he has made mistakes. They believe he needs a chance to complete what he has started, and they give him the benefit of the doubt that he will. The other time they mention the benefit of the doubt is in reference to Michael Jackson, who was pilloried by the press as a sexual pervert after he was sued for acts of child molestation - an accusation that was never substantiated and could easily be understood as a grab for some of Jackson's wealth. Perhaps this rejection of Jackson in the United States (he continued to be idolized in Europe) is due to our

Puritanically based narrowly defined parameters of sexual normalcy, which cast the sharing of a bed as inherently sexual.

The benefit of the doubt: a frame to cross boundaries

By espousing giving the benefit of the doubt, Marcus and Donna supply a useful tool to anthropologists and others who wish to cross boundaries. Furthermore, it is a generous but at the same time corrective strategy, for as Mattingly says, cross-cultural interpretations are liable to be based on viewing actions and their motives in a negative light (2008: 136.)

In her article, "familiar stranger" stories attribute behaviors to stereotypes. She describes what occurs when an African American mother she knows brings a child to a succession of emergency rooms but is brushed away since her daughter's symptoms are difficult to perceive. When the mother does try to put her foot down, the doctor retreats to an office and shuts the door. Later, the little girl dies of brain cancer. Both the mother and the doctors have relied on scripts such as: "If I demand help, I'm seen as a trouble maker," and, "The doctor is afraid of me or angry and won't listen"; "People bring in non-emergency cases all the time," and "She's poor, unmarried, a bad mother, and unable to collaborate properly with health professionals." These are sense-making narratives but based on flat, limited knowledge and lack of understanding. Rather than rely on the misreadings which do inevitably occur across cultural and other boundaries, an approach which incorporates the benefit of the doubt through the use of re-positioned frames as a practical methodology could be more successful.

For Goffman, who borrows the word from Bateson, a frame is the complete context of an individual at a particular time whether it is consciously or unconsciously known. This can be adapted by imagining a specific scenario which can account differently for a person's behavior. In other words, it is accomplished by shifting frames, as though seen through a camera, by selecting and focusing on a story which is possible and renders stereotypes as no more so. By opting for a more generous explicatory narrative for a person's motivation, a pre-boundary stance that relies on actual possibilities can be achieved.

The benefit of the doubt, as Marcus makes clear, does not mean one should ignore signs or possibilities that could jeopardize something that is valued. He states one should give the benefit, "...unless you see them doing something bad." As he describes the kids who meet down in the creek under the bridge, it is clear he has made up his mind about the character of their intentions. He describes how he ran at them once as they were sliding down the creek bank, and how they verbally challenged him to physical conflict and he tossed the challenge back to them. Perhaps at some time he did see these kids use drugs or throw trash. We can give him the benefit of the doubt and either accept that he did, accept that he had some way of knowing, or just accept that there is another explanation, such as that his pet cat was recently run over or his bones were feeling creaky.

"Be open minded, but not so open minded that your brains fall out." - Groucho Marx

The slide of "neighborhood": examples

The Bad Neighborhood

One night five years ago, a person was stabbed at a house on Sycamore Street in the process of some drug dealings. Louise lives midway between me and the drug house, which has since closed. She walked down to the edge of her yard to see what was going on. Later, she described the occurrences to me:

“There were lots of police. I asked one, ‘Why don’t you just clean out that house? You know what they do. It’s been that way for years.’ He looks at me and says, ‘It’s a bad neighborhood.’” Louise pauses, looking amazed and disgusted. “I told him, ‘No worse than yours.’”

I exclaimed, “Bad neighborhood...!!” wondering in what sense.

Louise turned around and pointed house to house, demonstrating how she’d responded. “I said, ‘Do you know your neighbors where you live? Can you name them? I can name all my neighbors here, up and down the street. Can you?’”

I asked, “What did he say?”

“Nothing.”

There are several remarks to be made concerning this narrative. First, the epithet “bad neighborhood” cannot be understood by itself. What do “bad” and “neighborhood” mean? Are the houses less valuable, is there more crime, are the yards too weedy, are the owners in some way deficient? Louise responded first to the sense of estrangement and distance a “bad” neighborhood means to her; that is one devoid of a personally-supportive or -involved grouping of residents of closely-located houses, whereas the

policeman was most likely condemning a less specific area as somehow below standards of propriety and legality. Without further explication by him, it is impossible to know. However, since Louise felt she understood what he was trying to say, she spoke in terms that apparently did not connect to his and left them both missing the mark in communicating, solidifying the cultural boundary between them. Second, the police probably do have the power to improve conditions in the neighborhood by closing down the drug house – they’ve intervened for less cause, such as for hoarding - but the one with whom Louise spoke dismissed this possibility by claiming a condition for the neighborhood that apparently removes it from being qualified to or capable of receiving help. Third, the “neighborhood” the policeman referred to was probably of a different scale from what we who live here consider our neighborhood. The City has broken its terrain into much larger “neighborhoods,” with exact boundaries that appear on municipal maps, but these have none of the traditional traits of neighborhoods. The sections officially called “neighborhoods” would more truthfully be named sections or something akin to that rather than endowed with a term that connotes a greater degree of cohesion and relationships among inhabitants. In a similar sleight of tongue to re-labeling houses to be homes whether vacant or not (a marketing tactic of realtors which I first noticed as a broker’s advertising consultant beginning in the early 1970’s,) the change assigns certain appealing characteristics, in order to sidestep impersonality, to places where people might choose to live. The creation of artificial boundaries between the city’s so-called neighborhoods illustrates the use of a type of dissembling which bends the truth by co-opting a word that holds desired connotations. These boundaries inform many people

who don't stop to question the basis of their construction, perhaps due to the fact that other Americans are accustomed to ascribing to the local government a benevolence which is not so quickly accepted by people who have experienced less than fair treatment by the governing authorities. Now a neighborhood in Austin is not a collection of households or buildings in a nebulous area of a flexible size with exact boundaries negotiable by each individual. Although still used in this informal sense at times among some people, the meaning of neighborhood has officially been replaced due to both the greater frequency of appearance and usage of the exactly circumscribed, specific designation, such as the Windsor Park Neighborhood with its concomitant Association, and because of the tendency in western society of the amorphous giving way to the determined.

The definition of the word "neighbor" has shifted in the official lexicon in a similar way to the word "neighborhood." No longer connected to Mr. Rogers's implied meaning behind the request, "Won't you be my neighbor?" of something more than physical proximity of address, the new version has been imposed upon the people of Austin, replacing personal choice with governmental political mapping as the deciding factor in who ones neighbor is.

The Neighborhood Association

When I moved to Sycamore Street twelve years ago, there were only two other white people, a couple, living here and they moved out three years later, explaining to me that it was "getting too rough." Besides one Mexican American and myself, all

Sycamore residents then were African American. Around the same time the two white women moved away, I went to several meetings of the Oak Park Neighborhood Association, which includes Sycamore Street in its fold. Each time, about fifteen to twenty people attended, but only two or three were African Americans and the others were white. One African American who was always present gave me his business card: he was a general contractor, networking.

At the meetings, the most vigorous action being undertaken was an attempt to alter ordinances so that people in our area could not park in their yards except in their driveways, and all vehicles parked in the street had to be mobile. Along Sycamore Street, there were three houses which had cars parked in the front yards. Although I agreed with the Association that they looked ugly, I protested against removing them because I knew the stories behind the aesthetic blight: two belonged to people who relied on their own mechanical ability to keep their cars running, and one of those had an old Cadillac he tinkered on on the weekends while the other had two Chevys from which he pirated parts for the repairs of his third car. In the third offending yard, the owner's son's station wagon was there for when he got out of prison. He had wanted it to be as near the house as possible so nobody would steal anything from it or damage it while he was gone. The Association members lobbying for these and other similarly-parked vehicles' removal had expressed concern over a potential decline in property values, but the primary complaint they voiced was over appearances. Car carcasses on the yard are a fairly common occurrence in a neighborhood where the vehicles' placement there presents a practical solution in the face of limited options.

Teenager Marcel glanced along our street for examples when I asked if they detract from the neighborhood. He was surprised at my question.

“Detract? Nah. It’s smart. Where else they going to keep them?”

To my next question, “You don’t think they look bad?” he responded with, “I guess I’m used to them. My daddy always had his old car when I was coming up, and so did Lyle’s dad. [Lyle’s mother still lives on Sycamore.] They don’t bother me none. Not at all. We hid in his dad's Olds when we was playing.” He chuckles at the memory.

The last week of April, 2011, I found a four-page newsletter slipped into my screen door. Produced by the Alliance for African-American Health in Central Texas, AAAHCT, it is Issue One in the offering of a project with ambition: “the launch of our first community health newsletter...part of our efforts to reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes, particularly among the African American residents, in Central Texas.” The stated mission is “to empower African Americans living in the Central Texas counties of Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson...As our pilot project, we have chosen to focus on the 78723 zip code [that of Sycamore Street] in Travis County. This zip code historically has had a higher number of African American residents...[and is among the zip codes with] higher rates of death from preventable illnesses...”

The drawing of ZIP code boundaries was done years ago by the federal government as a practical aid for sorting and delivering mail. Even though some ZIP's now imply a certain kind of setting to real estate agents, they are, or were, largely impersonally based.

If we accept the data cited by the AAAHCT, which appears plausible, the Oak Park Neighborhood Association placed the valuation of the aesthetics of the white residents in 78723 over those of a large body of long-time residents, and attempted to impose them officially. Evidently, the Association has achieved some success in that goal. Corky and Mike, roommates who live near me, require two cars for their separate jobs and activities but have a single car's width garage and driveway in their rented home. What with Mike's owning a newer car meriting more protection from the elements, they decided to use the garage for it, while Corky, who telecommutes from home most of the time, parks his car on the street.

Corky describes the dismay he felt when a policeman gave him a ticket and told him he couldn't park longer than 24 hours in one spot: "I explained our situation to him, but he just shook his head and repeated the same thing. Now, I have to move it each day. I'm afraid he'll come by and think it's in the same place and give me another ticket, so I try to park at a variety of places in front of the house."

Chapter 8

The Prize

Robert Washington

The Narrative

“Well, my yard isn’t all that. But I guess I like all this around because it’s things I’ll probably use when I fix something. And lots of times I have to go buy at Home Depot, but this here is mostly left over from some job. And that door, some lady gave it to me. I’m going to put it on the front, 'cause the stain glass.

“BUT. And then my daddy used his driveway for his work, for what he might need to – he fixed every kind of thing for people. So he had an old washing machine, a car transmission, lots of wood... He could do just about anything.

(Laughs and waves his hand at the pile on the ground beside the house.) “I ain’t as bad as my daddy now. This stuff is for plumbing. I’m mostly a plumber. They’s times I need wood, you know, when it’s gone rotten under a leak. So, and my family used to live in a real old house, down there by uh Webberville. So I learned how to fix, too. ‘Cause the toilet wouldn’t work, or either a stair was broke. And then, sometimes I’d go with my father.

“But this, all this uh PVC and pipe I used to keep it on the driveway, but that’s where I keep my truck. And that truck right there is my favorite thing I own. See all this here 3/8ths? It’s for a job I’m finishing tomorrow over on Maple Street. I done work for her before. She’s real nice. And I get everything together in my yard so everything’s,

‘cause a lot of people, they don’t like it when you might spill a little cement. You want to keep the customers happy. And then it helps to know what you’ve got in case you don’t have to buy.

“So you could say my yard is real useful to me. It’s my office. (Laughs.) Or my storage, I guess. My storage. And my warehouse. And I keep my ladders here because they won’t rust. I gotta lock them, though.”

A: “I see you out here every Sunday washing your truck. It sure is beautiful. So shiny. I mean, you have that big TV and your sound system, and a lot of people would like that the most, especially when you-all barbecue and then watch the games. But I can definitely see why your truck's your favorite thing.”

R: “Well, I’ll tell you a true story. I had me a uh one of those hatchbacks, they call them, hatchback Pinto. ‘Cause someone gave it to me. You know, for pay for some job. And I had to fix it all the time, and the pipes and all, and the ladder, they’d have to – I’d have to fold down the seat – the front seat - and rest them on it, see. And then they’d stick out the back and it was a pain. I learned the hard way you had to put a flag, a red flag. If something sticks out past three feet, you have to put a flag.”

A: “Why didn’t you tie them on top?”

R: “I lost me a good ladder like that – slid off, and by the time I went around the block, ‘cause it was a one-way street, by the time I got back, it was gone. I guess I didn’t tie it right or forgot to tie it down. And I’d rather be sure.

“So I hear this ad on the radio for a new truck, brand new truck, all full of food and stuff in the back. And at that time – and it was right around Christmas – there was

hardly any work. No money coming in. So, and my son, he'd have to ride to school bent over under that seat, pipes and ladder on top, times his momma had me keep him.

“And this ad says, ‘Win a brand new truck full of groceries by guessing how much it costs.’ So, next time I went to the grocery store, I said I wanted to guess, and the check-out lady gave me this uh coupon. I asked her could I have more, so then she gave me maybe three more.

“But then, all I was doing was sitting home worrying ‘cause work had stopped. And you know, at that time I had me a regular job, part-time, for Carson Plumbing. But they had to let me go 'cause of no work. So I said, ‘I’m going to win me that truck.’ But the first thing was how I could get more of the coupons. I call the radio station and the lady there says, ‘You can make your own, so long as it’s on a postcard. But every one’s got to say, uh, your name, uh, the name of the radio station, of the Randall’s grocery, and of the dealership giving the truck. And your phone number and address. And then your amount, of course – your guess.

“So then, Will tells me a postcard is this certain size, and stiff, you know. [Will lived on Sycamore until recently and was a postman.] Then I thought, ‘Oh, Lord. What if they have to go through the mail!’ That’s a lot of stamps, and stamps are getting expensive and all for the CHANCE that maybe I’ll win the truck. And you know that never happens. So, I called the radio station again, and they said I could turn it in in person. Whew, I was – so I went ahead.

“On the news they showed the truck, with the back covered with plastic over this pile, and I mean pile, of groceries. And it was a Jimmy [GMC.] So then I had no earthly

idea how much it would be, so I called the dealership and asked how much they go for. The man who answered says, ‘That particular model in the contest goes for \$21, 500.’ And I think he made a mistake because why would they tell. Or he was trying to trick me. But the good thing is, he told me what it was – what size engine, what model, manual transmission, everything – A/C. So next I call another Jimmy dealer and ask the price with all those uh features. And sure enough, close to \$21,500.

“And I’m thinking, this truck was meant for me. (Ticks off on his fingers.) Lots of time on my hands, don’t have to use their form long as it’s a postcard, don’t have to mail them, I know more or less the price. Unless someone else does the same thing or hits the amount by dumb luck, I can win.

“So I went to Walgreen’s and bought me a bunch of index cards. First, though, I went to see the truck on display in one of the Randall’s. And I could see that the stuff inside was mostly stuff like a case of paper towels, case of toilet paper, case of canned corn – stuff pretty cheap. And I figured by how much a bag of groceries would usually cost me if I was buying that kind of stuff – the paper bags – and by how many bags would fit in that truck. Just to ballpark it. So then, I sat down at home and tried out, wrote some, to see how long it would take me. I could see I couldn’t write one for every amount in the range I had figured. So I wrote one for every ten cents. Like \$20,000.00, \$20,000.10, \$20,000.20, \$20,000.30. And on every one I had to write my name, the names, all that. I was counting the groceries as being pretty low in value.

“And then I was over at the Airport Bar, one of my friends said he saw them on TV when they started the contest, and he saw them load a bunch of steaks and all into it.

But that friend has a tendency to, you know, exaggerate. But then I asked him, ‘How could they? Steaks go bad,’ but he says, ‘Well, they had these plastic ones just to show.’ So I went home and added to my range of how many to do just in case he really did. But I didn’t believe it because they’d put the good things where everyone could see them. But just in case they were trying to be tricky, I had to do more.

“So I sat there and filled out card after card after card, all the time believing you can’t just sit there and win a truck like this. How can that be? But there was nothing better to do. ‘Sides, it was like it was meant for me, like God was helping me, or fate. All the breaks were coming my way, the way even the salesman told me the price and what was in it. It was hard, though. It was hard. To think, ‘Too good to be true,’ and then keep on going, keep on writing. I think that was the hardest part of all, knowing these things just don’t happen, then steady keeping at it anyway. Because what if someone hit it right just by luck? Or what if someone did do one every cent or every five cent, and got his family to help?

“Finally, the last day of the contest was here, and I kept writing, even more than where I had figured it had – the value had to be. I had kept all the postcards in order in a box, and I took the box over to the radio station and turned them in. And the lady was real nice.

“Then I waited – I think like three or four days. And then, I got a call. And I had won. And my girlfriend at the time snapped my picture when I got the news. Here. I’ll show you. (Goes inside and comes back out with a large framed picture of himself, phone to ear, huge smile splitting his face.)

“I had to go to a Randall’s where they’d give me the key and take my picture and all. So I took Marvin (his son) and there was a man, I think a DJ from the station, who had a mike and asked me some questions about myself and what I would do, and then he turned to Marvin and says, ‘What do you think about this new truck?’ And Marvin says, Marvin says, ‘I think it’s great, ‘cause now I won’t have to ride to school any more with the ladder on my back.’ (Laughs.) And I guess Marvin’s mother never heard that.”

A: “That is amazing! It WAS meant for you.”

R: “Yep. So I took it to get a bed-liner put in the back first thing soon as I could get the money together. And – but that evening, there was a big Christmas party at Carson’s. They had moved everything to the side, back in the warehouse and had these big sheets of plywood on some saw horses, and these huge trays, uh, platters – aluminum foil ones – three with turkeys, a ton of hamburgers and hot dogs with buns and relish and all, a ham or two, lots of potato salad – everything. And beer, of course. Oh, and cakes, fancy cakes, and Jello, and pies, and cans of whip cream. You know. And John Carson, he had some Jack Daniel, and poured me some with Coke on a cup of ice. So, I had brought Marvin and his neighbor friend. They rode in the back ‘cause we’d unloaded everything. There was a nice plastic, clear plastic cover, made special, and a frame, so they wanted to sit in the back. And they were having too much fun. Course, so was I, mainly ‘cause it was perfect for me. There was even a tape deck and CD player, and which the Pinto didn’t have. And all.

“And when I walked into Carson’s, some people shouted, ‘Hey! Look who –’ and everyone cheered. And they had heard it on the radio, that I had won. We all went back out to see it. That was a – the best Christmas I ever had. Plus the best thing I ever got.

“It’s been a good truck for me. So whenever I look out my window, I can see my truck, whenever I’m working on stuff in the yard, I can look up and see my truck. So – and when I go to do some work for somebody, they see my truck and they say, ‘He’s got that good truck. He must be good at his work.’ You know, to get paid so much to be able to buy it.”

A: “Did your business get better?”

R: “Yeah it got better. And I felt more confident when I went to bid or to see about a job. And it was easier to collect the money.”

A: “What about all the groceries inside?”

R: “I kept the paper towels, but the rest - there was diapers and stuff - I took Marvin and we went down to my ma’s church over there on uh – there on Martin Luther King. It was a little cold, but it was sunny. And it being Sunday and all, I got the deacon when church let out and we drove around and gave it all away. Like for Christmas.”

The boundary between possible and impossible

Robert applied a boundary-crossing technique that resulted in changing his life. In a reflection of the importance of cars and trucks to people of Sycamore Street, he won a prize that signifies more than just a conveyance. The presence of a vehicle adds material substance to its owner, and represents a possession of some financial value. If

nothing else, it is scrap, or holds a needed water pump. By his having won a new truck - which he could never have afforded from pay for work - through using creativity and persistence based on gut feelings, it is more than a random prize: he earned it.

He knew intellectually that somehow, trying to win that truck was a hopeless cause. However, when he followed his gut instinct and broke down the requirements that he would have to meet to have a chance, he realized that if he correctly estimated a range of value, if he could physically cover that range with his entries, and if nobody else did the same thing, not only was winning the truck possible, it was probable. It just took persistent, time-consuming work. He flipped the "impossible" boundary over and found in its shadow a beautiful truck.

The brain and the gut

The tendency to value conscious cognition of the human brain above almost everything else is evident and has been touched on in Miss Glenda's chapter. However, humans' brains are not the only source of knowledge within our bodies.

"We all have had gut feelings. And we know what it is to feel something in our gut," says Mark Hyman, M.D. (2009.) "In Japan, the gut is viewed as the seat of the mind and soul...Your gut has a mind of its own" (2009:194.) He notes Dr. Michael Gershon terms the gut "the second brain" (199) and extols it: "the gut is a source of great intelligence..." (195) and is the only other organ besides the brain that has its own nervous system. Furthermore, it produces 95% of the serotonin in our bodies, plus has every kind of neurotransmitter the brain has. Hyman also observes, "The gut brain

actually comes from the same embryonic tissue as the 'brain' brain" (199.)

In an interview with Robert MacNeil on PBS, pediatric neurologist and Harvard Medical School faculty member Martha Herbert explains some of what she has learned as she pursues understanding the factors and conditions implicated in the presence of autism in children. She notes that the gut has an important role, though most doctors conceive of autism as a "devastating, lifelong, inborn brain error." This misunderstanding, she claims, is due to their being unaware of advances in this field unless they specialize in autism. Herbert advocates looking at the human organism "as an integrated whole with underlying, genetic gene expression and metabolism patterns that don't know organ boundaries. The brain and the immune system and the gut are intimately related. The cells in those systems have common features" (2011:12) Evidently, the object of humans' special attention and veneration - the brain - is separated from its inferior neighbors by another boundary mistakenly seen as hard.

In ancient times, "gut" stood for the main internal organs, which were felt to be the seat of various emotions. Many Greeks regarded the gut as the center of strong passions. The Hebrews saw it as the location of softer affections, especially positive ones. Related in its origin to "bowels," the gut/bowels came to be translated frequently as the "heart." (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=gut>)

The gut has found its way into contemporary usage as courage - "no guts, no glory," "intestinal fortitude" - as well as the physiological location of certain feelings and understandings. This suggests the close relationship that can exist between the material and metaphorical. Throughout human history, embodied knowledge in particular has

sprung to metaphorical life, until the original grounding in the material - as in the case of heart, tongue, gut, and others - is sometimes forgotten.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Because of a skepticism born from a long history of mainstream society's broken or fizzled out promises, and because of lives in which less inherently valuable features have been selectively pruned away to ensure the continuance of what really matters, a type of wisdom has emerged which can be heard in the words of the residents of Sycamore Street. The living narratives told by Sycamore Street consultants demonstrate boundaries they meet and how they respond to them to achieve workable, satisfying lives. Hard boundaries, constructed by elements harder than steel or stone, have been agglomerated in the service of power for those desiring it, and venerated by those who regard them as though they are immutable. Through the alchemy of papers, titles, rituals, books, tools, rankings, instruments, demeanors, secrets, and money, many boundaries have solidified to the degree that their structures are impossible to defy. Except that, as Robert Washington figured out when he won his truck, many actions that are seen as impossible are not only possible but probable if one follows a good plan. Or as Miss Glenda knows, repressive boundaries don't pertain to her because she chooses to see the stars rather than the mud. Or Mrs. Johnson who spreads her plentiful riches through the art of sharing. By finding the chinks in boundaries which have been normalized in society to apparent solidity or inexorableness, individuals on Sycamore Street have found successful strategies they have tailored to their needs but which are also applicable within multiple contexts. In so doing, not only have they provided themselves with methods for

crossing or otherwise disposing of unwanted or oppressive boundaries, but they also provide an armature for other people to do the same.

Numerous boundaries, of a wide scope of dimensions and features, have been pried out of the matrix of human society and addressed in this dissertation. Seen through the discerning framework of hardness or softness, or through translation across fault lines of culture-community differences, the misdirection and misunderstanding they can engender comes into view, and presents the knowledge that perhaps what has restrained us need not do so any longer.

Within consultants' living narratives, practical methods are uncovered to both spy boundaries and to disarm them. Perhaps the most revolutionary of these "secrets of life" are to eschew monetarily-based valuing of richness and poverty; to make do with what you have; to give the benefit of the doubt, including to yourself, by shifting focus to a generous and plausible frame; and to understand that some things thought impossible not only are possible, but probable if one has a comprehensive plan and the willingness to expend some effort if necessary. Each of these insights signals a new direction, a creative genesis of thought, that can be adopted by other people to their advantage as they conduct their lives.

This dissertation hopes to expand understandings of boundaries by revealing the shakiness of the construction of some of the largest, particularly in instances of power relations. In addition, my continued search for ways to cross boundaries, founded on a desire to communicate with others and so at least begin to understand other ways of knowing things, has succeeded in this study in several concrete ways. The consultants

presented here offer practical strategies for boundary crossing they themselves use, and illustrate their implementation by their own words. Through those words and my observations about them, I hope to have enlarged comprehension of what shapes boundaries can take and different ways they can function to inhibit or assist human abilities.

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