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Re-locating rural Portugal: Narrative clues to community and culture

Hill, Diana Louise Lourenço, Ph.D.

Rice University, 1994

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RICE UNIVERSITY

RE-LOCATING RURAL PORTUGAL:
NARRATIVE CLUES TO COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

by

Diana Louise Lourenço Hill

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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Abstract

RE-LOCATING RURAL PORTUGAL: NARRATIVE CLUES TO COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

by Diana Louise Lourenço Hill

This dissertation describes the multiple ways in which the Portuguese place named Cavaleiro can be construed as a community in terms of local subjectivities, the social positioning which occurs in relation to broader cultural and political-economic processes and finally anthropologically. It focuses on everyday narratives as a communicative matrix through which we can recognize culture and in doing so foregrounds the mundane experience of the Cavaleirence. While European countries worry about losing their cultural autonomy I chose deliberately to look at the most minute details of situated knowledges and to listen to the generative power of everyday discourses.

Chapter one focuses on the event of the dance which suggests itself as community, despite its meaning being both as ephemeral and visceral as the experience of the dance itself. In the second chapter, gossip is a narrative event which processually constructs the "truth" of community through the continual speculation on what is real, legitimate and worthy of attention. Chapter three focuses on the ways objects of material culture serve as reference points for social identity and reach beyond their value within economic exchange as agents in the shaping of local geography.

All three chapters and approaches described here question the means and content of material and cultural exchange. Narrative is conceived as cultural work which produces a range of assets, including community itself. Community
is shown to be the product of narrative devices which differentiate the individual and the group, the local and foreign, the relevant and irrelevant. These differences are never rigidly codified. The continuity of narrative facilitates but also constrain on-going negotiations which respond to changing circumstances, material cultural and passions.

By way of conclusion, the fourth chapter elaborates on the traditions of scholarly inquiry which staged the questions I asked and informed my interpretations and strategy of writing. The chapter focuses on the work in anthropology and British Cultural Studies which led me to choose narrative and discourse as the focus for a study of culture and on some of the key terms of "New Ethnography."
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The people of Cavaleiro are the source and inspiration for this work. They matched my anthropological imagination with a resoundingly local one. To all the people of Cavaleiro who tolerated my presence and who befriended me I am much obliged. They not only provided me with the material for my dissertation and partook in my project most graciously, but they also made me welcome and invited me to share in their lives. I am grateful for their generosity of spirit, cooperation and aid on all counts. There will always be a special place in my heart for those first kind and brave souls who welcomed and guided a stranger with nothing to offer but her appreciative nods, grins and giggles.

This work is filled with stories about bits and pieces of Cavaleirence lives. But more accurately, as I hope the Cavaleirence would be the first to point out, they are, in fact, stories of, narratives of, what people say about their own and other people's lives. They do not represent the truth, the whole story or the complete picture. While I have changed the names and altered some of the details of peoples lives it is always possible that they will recognize aspects of themselves or others in these stories. I sincerely hope I have not offended
anyone and I make no assertions as to the truth of these stories in reflecting the private lives of individuals. The versions I present here are another addition to the endless process of discussion and negotiation which is the life of the community. This dissertation is my understanding of these processes not a definitive account.

In Portugal I would also like to thank fellow anthropologists Anna Toivola Cámara Leme and Miguel Vale Almeida who are involved in ongoing fieldwork in the Alentejo region and with whom I shared friendship, many excellent dinners and work. I also want to thank Simão and Iris for letting me keep their mother up to all hours of the night talking and for allowing me to sleep in their extra bed. I appreciate João Pina Cabral, Raul Iturra and all of the faculty and graduate students at I.S.C.T.E., Nova, and I.C.S. for including me in their seminars, and taking the time to talk with me about my project. João Pina Cabral was most generous with his time and resources. My gratitude goes to the other graduate student members of our Fieldwork Study Group for sharing their fieldwork thoughts and experiences with me and for giving me feedback about mine.

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INTRODUCTION:

RETROSPECTIVES

I. NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND MODES OF EXCHANGE

This dissertation describes multiple ways in which the Portuguese place called Cavaleiro can be construed as a community. The material presented aims to show how subjectivity in Cavaleiro is constructed and how everyday social positioning occurs within broader cultural and political-economic processes. Three different approaches are explored to show the multiplicity of sites and means by which subjectivity and community conjoin. The first chapter focuses on the event of a dance showing how the physical space shared by the community proves a forum for negotiating the configurations which will lace it together, while also generating the fissures which open it to links with broader geographies. The second chapter continues a focus on the simultaneous operation of cohesive and divisive forces through explicit focus on discourse. Gossip is presented as a narrative event which processually constructs the "truth" of community through continual speculation on what is real, legitimate and worthy of attention. The third chapter focuses on material culture and the ways objects serve as reference points for social identity and reach beyond their real value within economic exchange to help shape the local geography.

Focusing the first chapter on the baile, the dance, provides an opportunity to question the character of events as they operate in the constitution of
community. Following anthropological questions about the various functions of ritual, focus on an event provokes interrogation as to how these events are circumscribed. I look at the baile as an event rather than a ritual practice to lay greater emphasis on its ad hoc character rather than its enduring forms; international phenomena, such as labor migration and music styles can intermingle with local conditions and traditions to create the specificity of the bailes in time, place and experience. It also suggests that the atmosphere of bailes is as influenced by the personalities of the organizers and their position in the community as by considerations for the formal traditions of the baile. The baile is not a neatly bounded event. The commonality of its meaning is countered by all of the specificity of experience. Its shared space is splintered between its locus in discourse and dispersion between several sites and points of reference.

While the shared event of the baile suggests itself as a likely instance in which to try to locate community, looking at the multifaceted experiences of the baile (from dancing, drinking and cavorting to organizing, gossiping and sex), and the multiple interpretations given it by its participants (and abstainers), suggests that any moment of recognizable community is highly negotiated, ephemeral, contested. What is, in fact, community in the event of the baile, is the experience of it and the variety of narratives it elicits in the sharing of experience. I am not suggesting that it is a moment of communitas because, in listening to the discourse surrounding and intersecting the baile, it is obvious how contested and negotiated the experience of it is. In choosing the most global expression of Cavaleirence identity, I emphasize how slippery a notion that is. The baile, like many other events and conversations in Cavaleiro, is an opportunity for participants to negotiate sexual identity, and generational proprieties and take part in the process of identifying with and differentiating oneself from "the community," or as the Cavaleirence say, "este gente," these people.
Close attention to both the conversation and patterns of interaction at the *baile* provides opportunity for commentary on the ways mundane occurrences engage with the traditionally codified standards of behavior and with the continual influx of outside influences, be it youth from the next town, foreign anthropologists or Brazilian soap operas. On the night of the *baile*, social identities are overtly negotiated among participants, against a backdrop of an encompassing shared event which gives way to the constant sway of the music and multiple desires of its participants.

Focusing the second chapter on discourse itself involves an attempt to stage discourse as an event, not unlike the *baile*. Topics of gossip create a shared social space by providing shared reference points for commentary. Gossip is an event in which all participate, but only at the expense of having one's own private meanings mediated by the judgments of others, and against a backdrop of traditional expectations. To participate in gossip is considered reprehensible yet non-participation is equally anti-social. This double-bind demands strategies of resistance, even if the goal is to neither participate in or be the subject of gossip's work. When one's neighbor is "fishing for information," privacy is not a possibility since silence speaks as loudly as words. Narrative devices are a means of resistance, providing advantage in the continual negotiation which proves that while truth is malleable, it nonetheless binds, defining community by positioning its members on a social grid laden with conflicting passions for individualism and collectivity.

Gossip about cuckoldry is a particularly passionate forum for these conflicts. Acts of cuckoldry are acts of disloyalty most literally occurring in the form of intimate infidelity. But cuckoldry also operates as a metaphor for the vulnerability of all social relationships and the tension between freedom and containment which community ties must mediate. As a subject of gossip,
cuckoldry implicitly carries debates about moral behavior, asserts the possibility of a cunning defense of individualism and dislodges myths of communal harmony. Talk about cuckoldry produces community via sharing a topic but it also ensures a certain alienation by undermining the very possibility of community.

In gossip, as with the baile, community members are continually repositioned, rearranging the social map upon which events like the baile, cuckoldry and gossip itself are experienced. The discourse of gossip thus provides a layer to all other community events, providing both "ritual integration," and markers of rebellion. Gossip is the connecting web, the thread which tangles people and places, words and objects.

Chapter two is about the semiology of consuming talk; chapter three continues reflection on the exchange process in an attempt to track the ways objects themselves engage conversation and contribute to the making of community identity. From the most mundane to fanciful, objects connect people across several worlds and geographies. The objects set people in specific types of relationships with each other and the world around them. Again, this is largely recognizable through the thread of possible discourses it elicits. For both anthropologists and Cavaleirence, focus on artifacts of material culture often provides a forum for commentary on the contexts in which they are embedded. Objects mediated my experience of daily life in Cavaleiro just as they did for the Cavaleirence. Like many of the other facets of everyday life, objects are a type of encounter, a site for conversation, and a meaning-laden realm of experience which connect people to each other and various wider contexts. I have tried to convey some of the meaning of the everyday through the specificity of details which imbue it both with the particularity of meaning and context and with its expansive qualities. I chose four different objects to write about in this chapter.
One example I include is the occasion of viewing a hope-chest. In fondling a silverware set, the anthropologist and interlocutor are tracing how a fork can travel the span of the fashion consumer industry to speak volumes about women's relations with their female relatives and peers as well as setting in motion relationships between consumption, gender and the institution of marriage.

The motorbikes which drive the passion of most young men in Cavaliero mean more than the roaming they allow, the money they require and the endless conversations they inspire. Motorbikes also tell about the social value of mobility, the impact of local employment patterns and opportunities and the resources required for participation in a changing political-economy. In much the same way that hope-chests have gender specific implications for women's connections to consumerism and by extension their sense of place locally and in the world, so motorbikes are quite explicitly a vehicle of male initiation with implicit messages for mastering the skills necessary for leisure and work and for a peculiar way of freeing and tying young men to village life. The combination of recent developments in local and national labor practices, and motorbike culture gives young men the possibility to choose to participate and stay "part of" Cavaliero by allowing them the mental and physical space to roam. (Women often turn inward and complain of nervous conditions and feeling trapped). Young men express significant pleasure at being able to come and go, of being able to explore spaces and life experiences outside of their immediate surrounding while also participating "at home" (the town government is made up of thirteen or so young men and several women all under twentyfive for example). The motorbikes trace a road through the tricky terrain of autonomy and attachment, of individualism and commitment. They pass through the domain of family relations (worried moms and grumbling dads), of gender
(definitions of manhood and the pursuit of women), social geography (a sense of place and movement), and various histories (of local and global economies, of physical geographies, of technologies, and of generations).

Cows likewise structure the geography and landscape. They do so, not only with respect to their owners and caretakers; their reach pervades Cavaleiro. Cows are a very important marker of local economy and factor profoundly in family life, daily conversation and activities. Cow-care structures a sense of time not only through daily rituals and pace but the requirements of enduring commitments and duty. This phenomenon echoes family ties while cows also are a source of generational conflict. Cow care also traces the ties of family and Cavaleiro to local and national history as well as to the state and the European Common Market. Cows actively tell about local economy and landscape, generational ties and differences, and the structuring of time.

Linguisa, which is a homemade sausage using the meat of the pig raised a few meters away from the house, ties people to the specificity of place, as an expression of certain values: family, sentiment, hard honest work and country living (as emblematic of Cavaleiro as Beaudelaire’s Swan of Paris). Also Linguisa is inscribed by relationships of friendship, family, especially the role of mothers, and of reciprocity amongst neighbors. Linguisa is not only the prized item in a parallel economy of barter and labor sharing, it has symbolic value as a marker for place and sentiment. That combination makes linguisa the food of nostalgia. Local appreciation for linguisa tells an intricate tale of both the visceral sensuousness of one’s home and community and of its inevitably ephemeral character—felt in the greasy napkins and residual taste of garlic it leaves behind and the shared labor and celebration the delicacy implies.

As with an event like the baile, and the intrigue of cuckoldry, certain objects command the passion of full participation. Objects are a presence, they
are embedded in the local while embodying relationships which cross traditions, geographies and generations. Objects may inspire passionate interest in so far as they actively engage people in relationships and pursuits. But more than that, objects in their most mundane manifestations define daily life. The objects are as alive as a motorbike with a full tank of gas, a satin sheet awaiting a wedding night, a gift of *linguisa*, and one's cows chomping through the landscape. Objects live in the community in culturally specific and generative ways. They are surrounded not only by narratives and the construction of meaning, but by changing uses and accompanying practices.

All three chapters and approaches described here question the means and content of material and cultural exchange. Narrative is conceived as cultural work which produces a range of assets, including community itself. Community is not the origin of exchange but the product of narrative devices which differentiate the individual and the group, the local and foreign, the relevant and irrelevant. These differences are never rigidly codified. The continuity of narrative ensures an on-going negotiation that responds to changing circumstance, material culture and passions.

In the making of community, cultural critique emerges simultaneously with cultural definition through a generative process that merges memory, current perceptions and visions of the future good. Exchange fails to bind community, as functionalism once hoped, but forever puts it in abeyance, as a possibility to be created. Thus, at its broadest, this dissertation questions the ways which indigenous cultural theory interacts with various anthropological discourses, particularly those which have emerged to construct the "New Ethnography."

The ethnographic data here pursues these questions through attention to
the rhetorical devices which shape Cavaleirence attempts to participate in their specific context as it is continually transformed by wider processes. Narrative is approached as both an object and means of study, embedding anthropological inquiry itself in the process of local capital production. Subjectivity is approached as a negotiated phenomena visible in moments which bring together often contradictory pulls of established "culture," changing economic structures and generational specificity. Culture is not understood as a static phenomena available for capture and analysis, but as a productive process in which anthropology shares attempts to both codify and resist the claims of community.

The form I have chosen for this dissertation seeks to merge these ethnographic and theoretical concerns. Throughout the dissertation, there is an overt attempt to stay close to "the data" through close empirical detail. The strategy of writing, seeks to disclose the significance and specificity of detail without suggesting a total representation. Footnotes offer commentary on the ways through which data was acquired, its relevance in reference to other ethnographic material, and the history of anthropological inquiry. Such commentary seeks to situate the ethnographic data and thus highlight its partiality and context specificity.

By way of conclusion, the fourth chapter elaborates on the traditions of scholarly inquiry which staged the questions asked in Cavaleiro, my understanding of responses and my strategy of writing. The chapter focuses on the work in anthropology and British Cultural Studies which led me to choose narrative and discourse as the focus for a study of culture and on some of the key terms of "New Ethnography." The chapter also explores some of the permutations of what constitutes context, the local and the mundane. It also explores considerations of form and content in anthropological representations.
II. STAGING THE QUESTIONS

When I wrote my dissertation proposal I was intending to study the effects of Portugal's 1974 April Revolution on the lives of individuals and their narratives. After learning some Portuguese and selecting a field site, I moved to Cavaleiro and began listening. I listened and listened because I wanted to see where the April Revolution fit into local discourse. I did not ask questions about it because I wanted to hear where it came up naturally in conversation, polemic, debate, or life stories. I listened and listened. I listened to a lot of conversation, polemic, debate, and the fragmented life history narratives that people offered. The was no mention of the revolution. It came up occasionally, casually but was never a source of a conversation that developed. As an event it was recognized, of course, but it did not stand out except for the two or three people who had been involved in union organizing. Politics was a topic most people shied away from. Like most of the country, after the rise and fall of some twenty governments, they were disenfranchised, disappointed, busy getting on with life. When I was in Cavaleiro the national government was at last steady and the standard of living on the rise. One man told me how everyone had to vote after the coup in 1974. He had voted communist. It was the only time he voted. He knew in his heart that it was the only true and just form of government but he nevertheless saw the chaos it caused and how it always failed. He was a communist at heart though he knew that the Social Democrats were better for the country and better for him. So his heart, he told me, would no longer let him vote.

When people talked about politicians it was only to reiterate that they were incompetent, self-interested, corrupt, Mafia. A knowing tsk and shaking head greeted most news stories. There was one man who liked to talk politics
but it was his habit to always make a joke about it. Otherwise people would start to get nervous and impatient. I once heard two men get into a fight at the bar which amounted to them screaming, "You Communist!", "You Fascist!" The comments of those sitting around deflected any political import of the exchange: "Looks more like two big foolish drunks!" and "Oh, that's drunk talk."

Young people told me that there were three topics not to talk about unless you didn't mind that someone was going to start banging their fist on the table. They were politics, religion and soccer. Heated conversations about soccer did occur, but in the end everyone was joined by their common love of the game. Religion I never heard discussed—it was mentioned or a statement made about it, but it was never discussed. Politics, it seems, was a topic that for the particular period I was there, did not find expression in any kind of systematic articulation. The Revolution even less so.

I knew that I could have continued with the project only by explicitly eliciting responses to questions concerning the revolution. I might have thought to follow the history of the local agricultural cooperative, or to explore the founding of the Cavaleiro Social Center and Sports and Culture Club. But by that time I had spent a lot of time listening and had learned that there were some other topics clearly more interesting to the Cavaleirencce. I had wanted my project to be informed "from the ground up," so to speak, and I had assumed, after having read a good deal of work on Portugal, along with some pertinent theory, that I was choosing a topic which would naturally present itself. If I were to sustain my commitment to an ethnography driven by data rather than theory I would have to abandon the topic.

Faced with the empirical reality of my fieldsite and my ethnographic approach, what started out as a proposal for the study of political expression in everyday speech became, perhaps predictably for one's first ethnography, much
about the ethnographic process and the nature of the phenomena ethnographies still address, namely small-scale, face-to-face communities.

In popular political discourse and the media, community is frequently being invoked as the natural seat from which harmonious or, at least, just politics should and can emerge. Community is supposed to be able to do everything, from overseeing school boards to informing ethnic and national policy. My work in Cavaleiro points out that even the most seemingly natural community, linguistically, racially, and culturally homogeneous, does not in fact generate or instill any natural consensus. In this "natural community" I had to search hard to understand where the lines of community could be drawn. I, in fact, had to draw them and create them out of the physicality of shared time and space inscribed on the body and in memory, and in moments of communication which were as much about dissent as consensus. Community is not described in the landscape or statistics, it is truely as ephemeral as the possible discourses that create and surround it.

My work suggests that "natural communities" do not necessarily generate consensus or the mechanisms for political response. Where overt formal political structures or mechanisms for decision making and conflict resolution are not in place, communities should not be expected to do what states with their vast bureaucracies, have not achieved.

In the case of Cavaleiro, the rich political activity of Portugal's 1974 April Revolution has left little trace in local modes of expression. In fact the continual balancing act between feisty individualism and dogged conformism, as well as the specifics of local history, have worked well to ensure that formal politics do not enter the local public arena. In this way, my ethnographic concern with community has answered my initial empirical curiousity about the presence of developing political discourse.
I want to turn now to questions of form and content which have engaged me in other projects, notably on art and anthropology. The experience of fieldwork coupled with the "writing up" experience, put these questions into sharp relief. In fieldwork, the means by which I got to understand things conditioned what I came to know in very obvious ways and called into question the value of pursuing certain other methods. Most fundamentally it made me question the interpenetration of what it was I was "looking at" and what I was "looking for."

Through the experience of planting myself suddenly and arbitrarily in a place where I knew no one, where the purpose of my presence mystified the residents and myself alike, and where my understanding of the language was far from perfect, the question which kept posing itself to me was, "Where am I?" "I'm doing field work in a small village," offered the comfort of familiarity of form, at least, and being by the ocean certainly helped orient me. But theoretically, and in reality, I began to tackle the question of how one knows a place, what a place is and by extension, what is a community or a culture?

I had no detailed map of the region. Despite having traveled all over Europe and the United States since the age of 15, I got lost. Once away from the coast, there were paths and trails and roads leading and ending all over the place. Mostly they lead from pastures to homes and roads. Some homesteads were inhabited. Others were in ruins. There was no easily available census to tell me the population, no set of facts, figures or written history that I knew of to set out for me some parameters of scale, history, placement. Instead, what I had were conversations, engaged in over days, nights and seasons, and the visceral experience of so much during the passage of that time.

I was struck by how hard it was to get a sense of place, history, community, and what was "going on." While the anthropological and cultural
theory I had been drawn to postulated this, the actual process of discovery and then the subsequent continued experience of "being there" pointed toward the variability, the importance of moments, and of the generative power of speech, daily practice, and objects. It especially suggested that community is something continually constructed and contested, something variable and changing and something that could only be pointed to, but never pinned down.

Even after I had tried to master the roads, count the houses, figure out how people made a living, the therapeutic virtue of such activity soon fell subject to the recognition that the information thus acquired did very little to enhance my understanding of the meaning of the relationships of these people to each other (and to me), to this place, and the points at which they tied into a larger set of relations and places. It is too strong, perhaps, to say that the information did not have value, but I realized how misleading it might be to use it to construct a tidy product, "Cavaleiro: Land of X, Y and Z." When I thought to discover the population of Cavaleiro I began putting the question to various residents. Most shrugged, and when I persuaded them to make a guess the numbers varied hugely. There were quite a few houses spread out over the country side and I was not sure exactly which ones were still within what could be called Cavaleiro. I knew that some of the houses were in one township while the remainder were in another. For certain bureaucratic purposes Cavaleiro was talked about as a single entity, for many others it was not. There was the irrigation zone, the urbanization zone, a utilities zone (those slated for utilities along straight lines which cut across field, pasture, roads and joined several hamlets).

Every homestead, creek, and dip, had a name. Some were descriptive, or historic (the beach cove called the "Entrance of Pigs" named after a shipwreck stranded its cargo of pigs there), or bear the name of some past resident (some names seemed completely arbitrary, or at least no one remembered how they got
their names—for instance, the curve called the "Sardine Fry"). The name Cavaleiro, for locals referred only to a small nucleus of homes, stores, the cafes and school. They only used it to refer to the whole area when they were talking to strangers from outside the region and even then they tended to refer to it in conjunction with the geographic name for the lighthouse site, Cape Sardão.

The surest population count, I was told, was held by the principle township. It was the book of voters and everyone over eighteen was registered in it. Getting that list turned out to be impossible, or requiring more bureaucratic muscle than I could muster at the time. After much flexing, letters of introduction etc., my request was repeatedly denied. Then I was told to come back one final time. The secretary handed me what could have been a raffle ticket, a square of paper about two by two with a number written on it. The list of names it corresponded to was confidential.

The suspicious mind of the township president and secretary echoed my own doubts. Why did I want to know? What was it going to tell me? What was I going to do with that number and all those names? Who was I to be asking these favors? And why, if none of the Cavaleirenc care or knew, should I? There were no public meetings which involved "Cavaleiro." There were no dances, fairs or celebrations which did not also involve neighbors, friends and family which might actually live across a voting, township or school-district boundary that separated homesteads in Cavaleiro from those in Almograve. Rivers with few bridges make neighbors "as the crow flies" worlds apart while marriages between far flung families can make for compadres e comadres, co-mothers and fathers or in-laws, closer than one's fellow villagers. Perceptions of scale, size and geography were informed by a persons age, life history, experience, gender. The number written on that piece of paper was, of course, irrelevant.
George Marcus notes that:

The mark of experimental, critical work is its resistance to this too-easy assimilation of the phenomenon of interest by given analytic, ready-made concepts. Such resistance is manifested in a work's messy, many-"sited"ness, its contingent openness as to the boundaries of the object of study (which emerge in the space of the work, whose connections by juxtaposition are themselves the argument), its concern with position, and its derivation/negotiation of its analytic framework from indigenous discourse, from mappings within the sites in which the object of study is defined and among which it circulates. (1993: 567)

"Messy texts" come about as they confront, "the remarkable space/time compression that defines the conditions of peoples and culture globally," as, "they wrestle with the loss of a credible holism," (giving a whole which "emerges from the research process itself" rather than "evoking totality"), and "insist on an open-endedness, an incompleteness, and an uncertainty about how to draw a text/analysis to a close," (marking a concern with "an ethics of dialogue and partial knowledge") (1992: 567). What I hope to offer, then, is a "messy text"—one which aims to stay as open as the visceral tides of daily life pulled as it is in the cross currents of local and global processes and pushed by its own forces.
CHAPTER ONE:
DANCING COMMUNITIES

FRONTISPICE

The Baile, the dance is the event of Cavaleiro it is also an important moment of the invent--the inventing, of Cavaleiro. What is Cavaleiro? It is not a town because it has no church. It is officially called a lugar, a place. It is intersected by the boundaries of two townships. Its social center, the Centro is a large hall with a kindergarten and a medical post as well as a cafe and baile house. The Social Center and the locally elected commission that runs it, report directly to the district government which is in neither township. What is Cavaleiro? A collection of houses and fields and cliffs and cafes and roads and the people and animals that live in and use these spaces? There are a variety of ways to describe and to know this place. It exists in the multiplicity of places and circumstances; it is ever emergent; it is always falling away. Cavaleiro is invented in physical space, in the far reaching narratives of the Cavaleirence.

Community. Where is it located? In the houses? On the streets, in the elections, in the people, between the people and families, in the describing of the people by surrounding towns, tourists, the local radio and anthropologists? Is it found in the shared work, in the shared celebrations, in the cafes? Is the community, rather than located, generative, and played out in the bailes--in their spirit, residues and surrounding narratives.

Hey, you Baile, you are the embodiment of community: you are half the
population gathered together along with family and friends from neighboring towns. You are for socializing, for dancing and drinking. You are for the young--for keeping us young. You are common, in common, you are local, you bring the extra-local to you in music and dances and people and fashion and money and government. You are communal--"tenos baile? Sabado?", are we having a baile Saturday?

The community of Cavaleiro is sustained by it's eventing and inventing. What is the baile made up of, what is community made up of? What are the contemporary baile's ingredients? What is the recipe for a baile, (a good one or bad one) for a young woman, for a forty-year old bachelor, for José Pequeno, for Maria de Fatima?

*One large room with a stage or raised platform, *A bar or separate room which sells beer, soft drinks, sandwiches, *A musician with accordion and/or synthesizer, preferably an attractive young women who plays and sings well or a man with a good voice and an up-to-date repertoire, *Someone selling tickets, someone taking tickets, *Lots of motorbikes around the entrance, *Lots of cars parked all over the place, *Lots of young women, *Lots of young men, *Just enough people from somewhere else to keep it interesting, *Enough new clothes and bare skin to give off a festive air, *Enough space for the mothers and married ladies to sit down, but not enough for all the girls, *People in the mood to dance, *People in the mood to drink and buy each other drinks, *Enough stuff to make good conversation out of, *Someone fainting; is she pregnant? Is she is taking too many tranquilizers? Are the fits she used to have as a child going to start coming back? Did you see how everyone craned their necks and blocked the way so they couldn't get through with
a glass of water? *Someone getting caught with hay or leaves on their clothing; Oh, God look at that! Hey, Zé it's a little late to be putting the cows away or was it a bull? *Women getting drunk; and why not, we're here to have fun aren't we? *A bet getting lost and won; if she dances with you first I'll pay for a case of beer. If she dances with me, on the otherhand, you can fork over 900$00 for the case, *A practical joke getting played; dancing behind a couple during a slow dance, Luis puts his hands on the neck of the women Victor is dancing with. She begins to answer the caress until she realizes that the hand is not Vitor's. The two boys burst out laughing while she blushes and the other women rolls their eyes, *Getting to dance with someone dreamy, *Listening and dancing to songs that have so far only been on the radio, *Having a pass-the-broom-and-switch-partners dance at the end, *Sitting in front of your door watching the stars before you collapse into bed.

Other versions:

After working all day, the mother doesn't want to have to stay at the baile until four in the morning, sitting for hours on end on a skinny bench in a girdle and tight shoes. Depending on her mood or manner she may dance some and talk some and be (or at least appear) appropriately concerned with her daughter's or daughter's boyfriend's behavior. She may also fall asleep with her chin on her chest, getting very uncomfortable before summoning a friend to venture off to the stinky bathroom, exchanging loaded glances with her husband on the way past the bar, and later leave with her children, and a neighbor or her mother or mother-in-law.

The Tocadora, baile musician hopes everyone dances from the start. She hopes the atmosphere is good, that the room is set up so that the boys don't
stand and smoke right under the stage, she hopes it's not too hot and that the electricity is well grounded. She hopes a friend will be there to play an intermission so she can have a break and she hopes that they will throw in another few thousand escudos for her effort and offer her another contract.

Everyone's there for something to happen. Just being there is already a happening. Will they hear or see something juicy; something that tastes good in the mouth, that makes for spicy conversation? Will they spend an enjoyable night in the company of friends, family, other warm bodies? Will they be entertained, distracted from a daily grind, find the solution to a problem in an inadvertent remark of a fellow at the bar? Make a date, make a scene, catch an eye, learn a step.

Get a hangover,
Get stopped by the police for the muffler or papers or drinking or no helmet.

You live in a place of six hundred people and six public places. You work all the time, all the time except when you're at the baile or asleep. You go to the baile just because it's there, just because it happens. It's always the same old thing: a crowded room, a lot of noise, people dancing, lots of drinking. Maybe a fight if you stay till the very end, maybe you'll catch up on the latest. It's always the same, you go because it's happening, because everyone is going, everyone is going to be there.

What is the baile made of? It's visceral, sexy and sensual. It is the heat of bodies, dancing, music, sweating, drinking. It's heady in its communal (but not 'unal'--oneall) witnessing, playing out of, negotiation, creation, enactment of sexual identity. At the baile, sexuality at the boundaries of the individual, familial, social and communal is drawn-up and made to stand-in for these
realms. There are tensions, of course, and one of their most obvious manifestations is the foreshadowing of the *velhas*, old ladies and *as pessoas*, the people who talk, that will, might, and are imagined to talk, tease, gossip, insinuate and invent. Between what is done and what is said, a whole realm of creative possibilities waits to be teased out, or perhaps, danced, drunk and flirted out at the *baile*.
The Baile

Tonight, leaning on the bar in the Centro with some of Cavaleiro's young men, the talk is of festive flirts and scandalous escapades. Tonight at the baile [the dance] we are dressed up, keyed up, tipsy even tilting, lazily amused by so much summer in the air--abandoned to more mundane evenings is motorcycle and farm talk. Out of the corner of my eye I see Raul shaking out his helmet flattened hair as he makes his way in. Riberiño is saying that I have to teach him some "beach english" because from where he works during the week building a casino down south, they have a view of the beach and "Wow, with a little beach english a guy could go far! Man, last week, it's enough to make a guy flip, I was working--if you can call it that--with this guy from Sonega they call Caricas. We were pulling bolts and the supervisor comes along, the guy is a big loser, he tells us to go get some re-bar from the other sight. It's like a kilometer--he wants us to walk over and drive the fork back. That should take an hour right? but we both know they moved the re-bar this morning to right behind the tool shed. We don't say anything--ZUTTTT we're at the beach! Caricas walks up to this foreigner doing "toptudo" [top everything meaning, however, top-less] He's all dirty and shit from working, sits right down next to her, Mr. Relaxed himself and starts using his beach english--blah blah blah. Shit!!!--"Yeah, and you're standing there looking at your boots!"--"A mountain hick from Sonega talking her up??!!"--"Riberiño, you had better go learn english on some other beach--I never do toptudo"--"No, really Diana, I'm not fussy"--"Get, this. He's not fussy!!! Diana, I bet he'd even take lessons down under the shrub trees by the light house!!!--"Don't tell me he still needs a lesson finding the way there??!!"--"Yeah, I need 'em too, me too!"--"Oh, Raul how's it going?"--"Riberinho here was
just talking about you. No offense--seems your english lessons with Diana are private!"--Raul has stepped up close, "Hey, Hey what's this? He wishes! Go to your own beach if you want to learn english!!" He puffs up his chest to poke fun at Riberinho and joke with the others in an imitation of a bull (or a prize turkey, I can't decide which). "This time I'll let it pass," Raul winks at me and everyone is having a good laugh. I'm grinning stupidly in amusement, relief and dread horror.

The *baile* is the place and event where, whether you want it to be or not, whether you know it or not, your sexuality, your sexual identity is opened up to discussion, review, speculation, negotiation, and sampling.

*Temos Baile? Quem Toca?* Are we having a Dance? Who's Playing?

Friday night Rosa tells me to go to bed early because there is *baile* tomorrow and I'll no doubt wear myself out dancing. Instead I hang around the *Centro* until closing with the members of the commission and a few other friends. Manuela and Beta (who concession the *Centro* as a cafe from the commission for 10% of their stock receipts), are sweeping up and breaking down the coffee machine and locking up all of their liquor. The *bailes* are run by the commission or the sports and culture club. This time it's the commission's turn so Moinho, its "director", has a get-things-done stride as he takes care of some bills with Manuela and Beta. He is joking all the while and giving me advice on winning the coin game we are playing for the next round of drinks. Beta tells us to go get the warm beer out of the hall way--she isn't serving us any of her and Manuela's keg. Tuberão changes out the keg, I win the round of *moeda* which means I don't have to pay, but Moinho is insisting that I pay for him because he gave me the hot tip. Luisa, Monica and Ana come in, "Oh, decided to honor us with your presence?"--"The senhoras have come to work?"--"Yeah, we're going to lift the
pool table while you drink beer!"--"Did the ladies have to go fill up the gas tank in Milfontes and check out the disco?"--"No. For your information the ladies came over to get me at home because I had to stay with my Grandpa. He has to take his medicine and my Mom's at my aunt's...so, don't give me flack"--"Anyway, last time, who showed up after one o'clock drunker than a river?!"--"Not my fault Xico was having a birthday and buying everyone drinks."--"Did you see him last night? His hang over was bigger than him. Paulo didn't look much different. Expensive hang-over you get from The Hen House. Those four "ladies" make a good living off of those two cabrões (billy goats, cuckold) alone."

Working, talking, drinking, making out a schedule of who works where, when, for tomorrow's baile. Ana doesn't want to have to fry the bifana sandwiches (thin pork steaks with garlic and mustard) so she will sell tickets for the late shift. That's the "lazy job" because tickets are only sold until about one or one thirty. Beer and bifanas go until five! Tuberão and Ricardo are discussing the merits of working the bar (and drinking) first and then dancing during the later shift. Moinho teases João, "The little lady of your choice isn't going to be there. Her family is in Brejão at a cousin's wedding"--"Well, then I definitely want the first shift--get to the women when they're already warmed up"--"Yeah, that's just what she said she'd be doing at the wedding--warming up..."--"Ohhh, João! Isn't the groom your cousin too? Better get yourself a suit and invite yourself to that wedding"--"Humm! Me? Are you kidding?" I'm filling the refrigerators with beers and Raul keeps bugging me to pass him a cold one. I know later everyone will have one so I shoo him away. The bailes haven't been doing so well lately and if the thirteen commission members start drinking the night before, several cases will disappear. Being that what they get for being part of the commission is a few beers and bifanas and free entrance to Cavaleiro's bailes which they work
anyway, there is a temptation to indulge. The commission was trying to instill a policy of restraint because some of the members were abusar, abusing, too much: giving too many beers away. One member was seen paying himself for the hours of work. Another fed himself eight bifanas in a fit of bravado and gluttony. Now they sell drink tickets to customers, keep track of how many beers the working commission members consume (five beers or two shots of hard liquor) and how many bifanas or sandwiches they eat (soon no one wanted to fry the bifanas so they only serve sliced sausage sandwiches).

To deal with the abuses, the commission had a meeting one night in the Centro. Moinho showed them the books and the "hole" that was getting bigger all the time. The money the commission makes is supposed to be used to make improvements in the Centro or in case of an emergency situation involving an elderly or sick person or an unfortunate family. Originally, it was also to be used to have a measure of independence from the district government: they were supposed to be able to fix their own packed gravel roads (winter-mud/summer-dust) and make community improvements. At the meeting the one who had supposedly been paying himself quit the comissão and Carolina joined. She is a little older, very competent and interested. Her job is to take care of the drink ticket sales and Moinho to work the door to make sure everyone has paid admission. The commission had been getting flack especially from previous commission members, for not having made any contributions to the Centro. Current members point out that several items that were in the Centro had in fact not been paid in full when they took over and they, therefore, had inherited a debt. However, it was true that there finally was insufficient money to pay for beer for the bailes. Some of the more concerned members of the commission called this meeting. I was sitting on the sidelines and while I couldn't follow everything and felt a little awkward being there, I noticed that the people who
called the meeting refused to "run" it. They sat back and interjected factual statements: "The beer we sold at the last baile was worth 65,000$, the tocadora got 27,000$, the door was 30,000$, we gave the football club their cut and paid the coffee machine repair. After paying the beer we have 2,000$ and it should be 3,200$..." (these numbers are not the actual figures). The meeting dissolved into small groups with everyone denouncing abuses and rolling their eyes in frustration at everyone talking over each other. A conversation about selling drink tickets starts and is proposed as the only thing to do. A lot of the meeting is actually directed, to the degree that it is directed at all, by the two women present. They are usually very quiet, but perhaps since none of the "abuses" were suspected of them and they are not as involved in the crosscutting friendships of the male members, they seem to be the only ones able to keep the threads of the meeting from becoming a knot.

The pool table gets moved, the bar is set up, the floor swept. We drink a beer. Monica protests and has a coke. We lock up, the girls drive home, the guys hang around their motorbikes and several start to do "Rally"--revving up the motor, popping wheelies, and spinning out pivot turns. Most self-respecting young men have deafening illegal mufflers (which also means that all interested young women, friends and annoyed parents recognize each of them as they come and go and it also means that they have an extensive stock of evading-the-police stories). Some start to leave so as not to be there when sleepy neighbors open their doors. Raul and Victor joke about going to get one of those expensive hen house hangovers. I walk home, wondering if they will, and if Victor is as addicted to "those ladies" as they say, and wondering if Maria knew about it.

She is fifteen to his twenty one. He is her first really serious boyfriend. I can't believe she knows. Who would tell her? I wouldn't be surprised if her
father knew or had even run into him there. As far as I know, the only women who know are me, Ana and Monica, and none of us would say. Ana and Monica don't socialize much with Maria; she is a bit younger and under the wing of her parents while Monica has a car and a great deal of independence. Neither of them would want to involve themselves in something that would have such unpleasant reverberations, and neither would I. Ana and Monica don't often talk of the things they know from their brothers and the commission. It seems to be part of an adult rite of passage to have to find out some dirt on your lover and then to have to hash out if it's true or just bocas or conversa, mouthing off or talking to talk. Maria is left to stumble across it.

From Paris to Lisbon
the Portuguese emigrant
goes saying to his wife
I'm getting happier and happier
Here we are again
If only we could stay
If only things were good enough to stay
If we only knew conditions would improve
I wouldn't return to Paris.
I wouldn't leave my country.
Oh how I've missed the bailes and festivals and
All the friends one day I had to leave behind
Because out there friendships are strained
And the pleasures few for those who have worked so much
Going there coming back going back
We're stuck without knowing what to think
But at least we can dance our dances:
the Corradinha, the Marcha and Melhão
And that at least will do our hearts some good...
(song lyrics Dino Meira, Adeus Paris Até Lisboa)

Saturday until noon Bernardo and Fransalina’s stores are packed full. Everyone is talking, catching up and predicting the skill or lack thereof of the tocadora, who tonight will be a young woman who will stand on stage from nine thirty until four in the morning playing the accordion or a synthesizer organ. "Ohhh the one last time, what was her name? She couldn’t sing any better than my dog--than me--and that’s about the same!...Yeah she could play and the guys like her cause she’s built but every time she opened her mouth I wanted to run away"--"that Ribereiro, he just sees a pretty girl and he has to ask her to play in Cavaleiro--never mind if she even has an accordion. That's not the kind of "music" he's interested in anyway!". I'm surprised that Maria de Conceição knows of Ribeirinho's reputation with the tocadoras. The commission teases him because he doesn't have any luck or conversa, conversation/talk, with women..."If it wasn't his job to hire musicians he probably wouldn't ever talk to any girls outside of Cavaleiro".

Commentaries on personality are general topics of discussion which seem to be widely disseminated. A daughter may share in conversation with her mother and aunts, Riberinho's reputation, however, she may conceal the details (how, where, when, with who) of specific events. The dating/mating intricacies of the young is a topic energetically pursued. Elena is getting it now, "So, Elena, last time there was all those slow dances with Fernado Valas' boy, what's his name? Pedro, that's right. You make such a handsome pair, both tall and he dances so well, not like that other one you used to dance with, the one from
Malavado. Ohh, he was always stepping on everyone."--"He was very nice though, sweet always apologized. Not like some of these boys, they just dance like they own the place! Really, it's not done--you have to look out." (Now she is making a dig at me because last time my partner stepped on her feet several times in a row and grinned when she got annoyed with him). "Yeah, tonight we will all shake our behinds a little and anyone who doesn't like it can just sit on it."--"Rosa!!"--"Oh, bailes are for the young and I'm too old.--"Bailes are for everyone--did you see Tia Maria João with Farapo? I almost fell off my chair. She must be 70, I swear, and they were doing great out there da di da opa...[she grabs the woman next to her and spins her around]."

I'm buying some juice and eggs and bread because I suspect that after the Baile I will have some company, as I did after the last baile when Ricardo, whose parents have an empty house next door to mine, jumped the wall, sailed into my kitchen, and unceremoniously yelled "Hey, Diana! Get up--you got any bread?--come over and have breakfast with us--bring your radio--I'll take the ice overcome on, hurry up." Not wanting to tarnish my reputation as "the best foreigner to ever appear in these parts" and "friend ready for anything" and because I'm both curious, ("Oh, this is fieldwork") and I love being invited, I go. It's five o'clock in the morning. I get dressed, collect some stuff, and fumble over the wall to find Ricardo, Zé, Vitor, Tuberão, Ana, Vanda and João drinking Bailey's Irish Cream and Teachers whiskey with ice (acquired from Ricardo's father's reserves). Ana and João are ripping apart left-over rolls from the baile, and Victor is stuffing obscenely large pieces of sausage into his mouth. Zé is laughing and snorting in appreciation. Ricardo is telling Vitor how gross he is and laughing all the more. I'm not sure I'm ready for this; it's painfully reminiscent of high school, and I'm particularly self-conscious with Ana and Vanda around.
I got to know the boys much sooner and better than the girls when I first came to Cavaleiro. The boys were more accessible. They hung out in the cafes and the Centro; they invited me to go with them to other bailes; they asked me to dance; taught me card and coin games; they initiated conversation with me; and more generally, tolerated me hanging out with them with out contributing much to conversation. By contrast, the young women seemed to be wary and shy. I didn't often see them and with them I was obliged to talk a lot more which in the beginning I wasn't very good at. I don't know Vanda--she's from another town and Ana has always been very aloof. Their presence alters the playful bantering that typically characterized my interactions with the boys; the atmosphere now becomes charged with negotiations of sexual possibilities.

As this night degenerated into the half-light of dawn I finally learned why Ana and her friends remained so cool toward me. It became clear that I had waltzed into town and started dancing with her partner unknowingly. We both knew, however, that he was in another town with his namorada, girlfriend, and that he and I were just a andar, walking together, which suited me fine since I did not want the entanglements of namorar, steady romance. It did not, however suit her fine which her cutting remarks made perfectly clear to me. She, I now understood, did really want to be his namorada and had done so since she was fifteen or so. He had been her only boyfriend now after six years. She proudly announced that she had only cheated on him a few times; "I've only put cornos, horns, on him four times." My jaw dropped. She obviously considered the relationship to be of another order, since to be in a position to put cornos on him (make a cuckold of him) meant that she considered herself spoken for, even if he did not. What is so significant about her revelation of infidelity is precisely that it is through this very infidelity (cornos) that to be namorados is marked, since cornos expresses just this sort of proprietary claim. The poignancy of this claim
is not lost on us since his womanizing is common knowledge.

Vanda had announced several times that all men were *cabrões* in the sense of being both cuckolds and bastards. She did so with a wistful conviction that led us all to believe she had just broken up with her boyfriend. Ricardo gets busy playfully pulling her out of her chair and Ana’s brother joins in. Soon there is a pile of bodies on the floor. Tuberão is trying to convince me to go buy cigarettes at one of the stores that gets bread delivered at about that hour, "Yeah, right! I’m just going to walk down the street to Maria Fatima’s in my clothes from last night and say ‘Look, the boys sent me to buy some cigarettes and you don’t mind if it’s on credit cause they spent all their money getting drunk?’" He agreed that it didn’t sound too good and feeling awkward about the whole situation I made my good-byes and was about to leave when I saw my loose tongued neighbor feeding his chickens at first light. I snuck around to the front and had to climb in my bedroom window.

Madalena I’m crazy for youuuu
Madalena you’re everything to meeee
one look at you and me who never writes is now writing poetryyyy
Madalena to be your love just for one day I would give everything
for you Madalenaaaaaa
Madalena I’m crazy for youuuu...

(song lyrics Jose Malhoa)

Elena and I walk out of the store together after half an hour of trying to get Bernardo to add up our totals. He can’t finish with one customer without another interrupting, or his wife needing him, or the conversation getting to good to not join in...We exchange raised eyebrows. "Maria de Conceicão doesn’t
have hair on her tongue does she?!"--"We'll have to give them lots to talk about tonight"--"Yeah, we should switch partners just to confuse them"--"Good idea that would keep'um busy."

*Bailes* get everyone excited (though some are more sanguine about them than others, and some even refuse to go). The *bailes* are full of people and dancing, noise and *movimento*. Life in a very little town can get monotonous; the *baile*, however, is always an event in and of itself, and the forum in which "something happens." Everyone is dressed up; everyone is ready for something to happen, to see it happen or to make it happen. To me it is the event that makes Cavaleiro feel like a village and not just some scattered houses and families. It makes me feel "part of" something recognizable and it gives to the idea "Cavaleiro" something tangible.

I love the dancing and that I'm learning to do something (anything!) to make fieldwork seem a little less ambiguous. I've learned to move glued to another body: moving in unison when you get it right, not stepping on any toes, not having to be led. Dancing with the right partner, eyes closed, a close perfume, warm breath in the corner of your neck--this is the event. But then there is the moment of crisis: someone who wants to hold you just a little too tight, who wears out your arm trying to press away, someone you don't know well enough for that closeness, and because you know that everyone knows you don't know him that well, you imagine them watching you with their measuring crotch-to-crotch-vision at work. I'm just learning to hold my frame and not have to follow by sitting on someone's leg, and therefore, how to dance with women as well. While several of my partners will be disappointed with this new development, Maria will now tell me I'm getting more Portuguese (behaving properly), and prettier (dressing properly), all the time. In the same breath, she will tell me, while gesturing graphically, to go dance with her son, who is short
but has it where it counts!

I want to try to tango again tonight--its my latest conquest. I hope Mario will come because he and I can do a great tango with a wonderful falling-off-your-ankles dip in that moment when the music swoops. It's hypnotic and very sexy. This is not Argentina; the Portuguese dance the Tango with a touch of tongue-in-cheek. It is a little bit of a show-case for the better dancers. Since Cavaleirence women are usually more practiced dancers than the men, tangos are often danced by couples of middle-aged ladies. I know that when a tango starts, if Mario is there, I can just catch his eye, raise my eyebrows, he'll tilt his chin in the direction of the dance floor and we will worm our separate ways through the crowd. He'll wipe his palms on his pants in jest, "The Lady wishes to dance?" and it's dipdipdipdip tadadada. I'm so enthusiastic about the bailes which is why I have so much fun and people respond to me so nicely...I know the appeal will wear off at some point. I joke that that is when my field work will be over.

Oh, my little corner by the Sea
If I leave this place I'll want to come back right away
With the moon lit nights and the sun drenched days
I don't know if I'll go or if I'll stay
But if I leave I'm coming back right away
My little corner by the sea

(song lyrics Dino Meira, Meu Cantinho a Beira Mar)

Having bought the provisions in anticipation of tonight's festivities, I find Rena scaling fish in the yard. "Yuck, my favorite thing to do! You buy them from Gaivota? What are they, sea bream?"
"So, where was the outing this time?"

"Went to go visit with Ruth and we went riding. God, my butt is so sore. I'm not going to be able to sit down tonight--guess I'll just have to dance a lot."

"Bet you won't have any trouble lying down though."

"Rena!!!"

"Well, I'm not going to dance any. I'm not going. I'm sick of bailes. I can't be bothered."

"Rena, please--do let me get you a cane! You have to come. It's going to be good and Sandra Silva is playing."

"Is that good for anything? She plays all this stuff you can't dance to--ever since she got married her music aged twenty years. Really! It's not that she plays badly, she could just choose better stuff."

"Yeah, but you don't like the way anyone plays unless it's Marco Paulo--'Joana Joanaaaa meu amorrr'. Come! Oh, come--just for a while, if its no good you're not exactly far from home, and what are you going to do, sit home? And what about Manuel?"

"Oh, him, he's a good one for bailes stands at the bar with the guys he works with all week, leaves me sitting at a table with Nela, and dances one musica, song/dance, with me...that's also why I don't feel like going. I know he is going to make me mad. I'm getting old, really, I used to like bailes so much. I really liked them. I would be one of the first there with my girlfriends. For a while, right after those really mini miniskirts were in, it became the fashion to wear these really long skirts almost to the floor. We used to dance barefoot under those skirts twirling for two days. Bailes weren't like now, they were always two days. They were much better. Maybe there weren't so many of them. My friends and I would always open the baile and dance every song. Manuel knew that I always liked to dance the faster musicas and I was always playing and
joking with everyone. Sometimes he'd even get mad 'cause I'd be dancing with him and joking with my girlfriend. God, used to be that the boys wanted to dance so much not like these limp things now. I used to have to hide behind my mother, there would be a line in front of each girl by the fifth note of a song. Sometimes I would see Manuel causally standing way back by the bar waiting! Waiting for what!? So that's the way it is? I'd go dance with someone else..."

"Toma! Take-that!...So you should come tonight and do the same."

"Right! I'd rather we just stayed home and I really don't feel like washing my hair and figuring out what to wear..."

"I'm going to go wash mine right now while the sun is still out. I'm all dusty from the dunes and smell of horse perfume. Oh my butt."

"Yeah, just tell Tía Dalia⁴ and company: 'Can't sit down, been riding too much stallion lately!'"

"Well you may be riding more than me--look who's home."

Okay, what to wear? Is this a field work baile or is this one for me, or as usual a bit of both? Shall I be a little foreign and set the Tías to rolling their eyes by wearing my black jeans and a sloppy shirt. Perhaps I'll wear my short skirt and sophisticated blouse and be a Portuguese "Senohra" type, or the short skirt, scoop neck tee and big earrings. On the occasion that I wore my regular jeans to the Baile, Rena was quite upset with me. I got the feeling I was letting her and Cavaleiro down. On other occasions when her son showed up at a baile without going home and changing and bathing she would send him home with an earful about vergonha shame. He knew better, she insisted, and was just making her look bad by acting as if he didn't know how to behave. Girls do wear jeans and pants to bailes, but always freshly cleaned and ironed which mine were not.
Rosa and the Tias hate it when I wear big oversized shirts, or all black: "Who died?"--"Are you pregnant?"--"What is that shirt? You have to show yourself. That's shirt enough for three!"--"Did you see how nice she looked that time she wore that skirt with the red stripe and the red boots? Oh you looked so nice that night"--"The guy you were dancing with, the one with the mustache. He was over here by the post, I was watching him. He kept telling his friend 'I'm going to dance with her tonight; I'm going to dance with her,' and his friend was so short--I thought it was so funny because he couldn't say anything. He was just shaking his head and looking at the ceiling."--"When they are too short it doesn't have any grace. I like to see you dance with someone with stature! Ohh, like with Caplinha's boy--I know you like that--you make such a pair...."

I both love and dread these conversations. It's when I find out how I am doing in the eyes of "the establishment." However, it is also when I have to subject my private life, my body, my hair, and my habits to public scrutiny. At the bailes I always go and say hello to the Tias, but seldom stay very long. I don't always want to answer all the questions and so early in the baile I can't sit still. I want to dance and I want to see what else is going on. Conversation with the Tias is often suspended for long stretches while we watch the dance floor looking for some conversation to make: how someone is dancing, who someone is dancing with, humorous interactions, how somebody looks in that outfit. Sitting on the noisy narrow benches with the women, when conversation turned to specific people and events with which I was often unfamiliar, my ability to participate was limited.

In contrast, conversation with groups of men at the bar or clusters of the young crowd were easier. While the men also discussed people and events and had a commentary on how I looked, who I danced with, etc., talk would often turn to more generic topics; money, the strong dollar and the weak escudo; cars,
work, motorbikes, fishing and even cows. These exchanges were easier for me to participate in.

Anyway, the benches are usually full by the time I get to the baile and I didn't have my mother to hold my place for me as most Cavaleirense single women do. It took me a while to recognize that much of my interactions at the bailes were colored by the fact that I put myself in "male space." Being restless and fidgety, I liked to stand up and move around and did so without a female companion or steady boyfriend (which made for much speculation that I must be looking for one). Women usually stayed sitting or standing around the benches. They would also move around the room, but usually not to socialize. They would go in small groups to the bathroom, and to the bar to get drinks to take back to their seats. Later in the evening couples may move into the corner by the fire place.

The benches are so narrow that to sit modestly in a short skirt requires more contortion than is comfortable for more than a momentary rest between songs. When I sit on the benches with "the girls" I know my modesty will be preserved because Moinho and Ricardo will invariably come rest one arm on one knee to balance themselves as they squat down to "shoot the breeze". Thereby "legs" are protected from an over enthusiastic gaze from one side of the room or an over critical one from the other. However, I'm not the only one who has knocked Ricardo off balance a few times "accidentally" as I re-crossed my legs in order to maintain appearances of propriety. I watched the other girls for cues: some at times letting them hang there interminably, at others, calling the boys' attention to it, "What is this? Do I look like the furniture?" There would be much teasing and exaggerated apologizes and the boys would move their arm or get off of the girl's lap. The crowded benches made a perfect excuse for four-lap-deep-pile-ups.
Later the girls would talk about who "abused" touching and familiarity rights. Some young men were given more leeway than others irrespective of familial ties. Their license had more to do with their personalities and attentions to matters of appearances than to relationships with specific girls. Moinho is allowed to engage in much more joking and touching than Ricardo because Moinho "doesn't abuse," "it's his style," "he always does it and doesn't mean anything by it," and "since he doesn't dance, poor thing, he has to get to the girls some other way." The older women add, "he makes off the cuff remarks, but he is good when it comes to working and he gets things done round here while the others don't bother themselves." While some of the girls think he exaggerates sometimes they tolerate it.

Ricardo's case seems to be in debate. He doesn't have Moinho's "all-around-good-guy" status. He is younger, less established and is seen as often acting too familiar without license. He had recently danced with some married ladies who were adamant (one with the encouragement of her hawk-eyed husband) that Ricardo had acted badly (rubbing his thumb along her back or asking another to dance too many dances in a row). They told me, with the understanding that I should pass it on, that he was out of line and needed a lesson in manners; he was on his way to getting a reputation for failing to be "of confidence." Amongst the younger women, opinion was more divided. Amongst his closest friends were the town's womanizers: he was an awkward apprentice lacking in an appreciation of the finer points of the art. The social and sexual rules of etiquette were not always clear cut and my understanding of them remains in flux. Since my status vis a vis these codes was just as variant as my knowledge of them, I found myself slipping from one group of friends to another, from benches, to bar, to dance floor, to the wall, to the girls, to the bathroom, to the dance floor, to the cafe, to the couple's corner...
So it's my short skirt, flat shoes so I can dance, and an off the shoulder white "peasant shirt" (the Marshall Fields' version rather than the tight faded floral print polyester smocks "the peasants" wear for work or the fancy fashionable ones they dance in). Dancing can shake off a week's anxiety about how all of this will add up to a dissertation. So tonight I'm not "working"; I'm not going to get the history of the slow dance, or when the synthesizer started being used, or when the young men stopped singing "squares", or where all these songs come from. The history, the elements of the baile, don't seem to make more sense of it than the dancing of it, the talking, drinking, standing around for hours of it. I'm not even going to worry about what the velhas, might have to say, those old ladies whose sharp tongues are the terror and scorn of the town--as mythical and legendary as they are real. Like most everyone who participates in daily life here, I often worry about those tongues and what nasty things they may be saying about me. I worry about it, perhaps more than other young women (but with less consequence), because I don't have a my mother here to worry about it for me (which in turn does mean that while she can't defend me with her own good character, I don't have to worry about disgracing her if I suffer from some innuendo). The old adage "sticks and stones my break my bones but words will never hurt me" seems of limited utility here.

At first I recognized the velhas a la Foster (1967) as social control incarnate5. They were not personally significant to me until I started to lose my "non-person" status, as foreigner just passing through, a person without references. Later, like many young people, I became frustrated by the velhas since it was they who were regularly invoked as the reason for not being able to do any manner of things, such as turning down the lights for slow dances, a common practice in many surrounding towns. They were especially the reason given for young couples who at school, in a near by town, could practically have
sex on the park benches but in their own town could not even walk together alone from home to the cafe ⁶. The velhas also constrained activities of young people out together outside of Cavaleiro such as visiting bailes or the mobile discotheque in other towns though the pressure was experienced differentially⁷.

The sharp tongues of the velhas were also given as the reason for the demise of the once popular, now defunct Rancho Folklorico, folk dance troop. All lamented that it had been forced to end. "Some people aren't happy till they have destroyed something good just because they can," was the refrain I most often heard from those involved. I asked Beta if not doing what made her happy simply because of what half a dozen old women might say, was worth the sacrifice. We talked about them and wondered if the velhas were used as a scapegoat, like saying, "My mom won't let me", when in fact it's you who doesn't really want to go, or is afraid to ask. Indeed, Beta and others would often say, "What do I care about the velhas? Let them talk, they don't know the half of it!" So she recognized herself in my question but answered me with a nice inversion, "You know they are getting much better than they used to be. Before you couldn't even talk to a boy with out setting them off. I remember once..." On the one hand, she tries to disempower the velhas by ignoring them, on the other, she admits she can only do this by virtue of their "getting better".

I worry about the velhas too because I wonder how getting a "bad" reputation may effect my interactions with people, make me feel uncomfortable and unwelcome as well as make my fieldwork more difficult. "Bad" reputations come in a variety of guises. The worst, I came to realize, is of being a snob, of not interacting with people and of being false. Everyone tells me how nice and friendly I am and that I talk to everyone in Cavaleiro and even the out-of-towners at bailes, and praise me for not being vain or false. This positive reading gives me some room to dance and talk with anybody without being considered
do povo, of the people, "a loose woman", or a husband stealer.

It seems that I can talk to young men and the older married men but talking with married men of my age is not considered appropriate. How is this negotiated? How am I to know? It is, of course, not an idea unfamiliar to me nor to those young married men who subsequently don't approach me as readily as others. Some Portuguese city folk and anthropologists had warned me of this possible transgression, though Tia Dora told me repeatedly in those first bailes when I started dancing, "Everyone is fine here, you can dance with everyone. Here everyone is friends, you can dance with your friends, it doesn't matter if they're married...friends dance together even if they're married. You don't have to worry, no one will take it the wrong way," but she said it all so many times and so emphatically in so many ways that I realized that certain things weren't fine. If I had been just passing through like tourists sometimes do, it might have been fine, but I wasn't. Later in my stay, I often danced with both husband and wife of the couples I became friendly with. Once, while I was helping prepare for a wedding, several women told me to make sure I danced with their husbands later in the evening; "You like to dance, you just ask him. He always wants to dance but my feet always hurt after so much standing around, so you just ask him."

I started to go to bailes almost immediately after I got to Cavaleiro, so I didn't even know who was married to whom, or even who was married. Couples were not often together in public alone; they were usually with other family and friends and not necessarily paired.

At first I didn't think any of the men were married. They didn't "act" married in my eyes; most of the men seemed always to be in the cafes or the Centro or at bailes in Cavaleiro and other towns. When were they ever home? (To exaggerate slightly, they were home when it rained, while they were doing farm
work, for family pig slaughters, for dinner and to sleep). In fact, there were many men who spent most of their time around the home but by virtue of this I, of course, was not aware of them until later. It often came as a shock to me "He's married? They have how many kids? The oldest already goes to school in Odemira?" I often knew both husband and wife without realizing that they were married. I saw the women in the morning when the mail was called out, when the bread, fish or fruit truck came, sitting on one of the benches talking or when the gypsies brought clothes and household goods to sell. I also went to work or visit with them at home or during the agricultural campaigns (day labor--picking asparagus, strawberries, tomatoes, rice, lettuce or pollinating flowers for seed). They also go to the cafes, Centro, and bailes but less often spending hours on end as many men did.

At the bailes, I often would get the kids to point out to me who their parents were. My house was across from the school and since I had given them free access during recess, I knew many of them before I knew the parents, and the parents often knew of me through the children. Oh, the intimate details they knew because their children had made it their mission to memorize the entire contents of my house, all of my personal habits and all of my mispronounced Portuguese! The parents were usually, face to face, very discreet about the information, but occasionally I would get a hint as to what was getting passed along, as when Paula tugged on her mother's sleeve, interrupting our conversation, to say, "Mom, she's wearing the earrings I was telling you about, the ones in the pretty box by her bed. Aren't they fixe (something like cool)."

The cafes are fuller when there are bailes, with men who don't drink beer (since that is what the baile serves), foursomes who come to cool off and show their independence, people who want to visit before facing a crowded dance floor, young men killing time waiting for the baile to fill up or a friend to show
up to tell him if a certain young lady is there. Or, like me are there for a strong coffee to keep up with the long night ahead and to find some company to wander over to the baile with. (I came to learn that being alone, other then when forced to be, was considered strange, anti-social, a pity, or a clear admission, at least fair game for speculation/gossip, that you'd just come from some tryst).

I buy my ticket from Ricardo at the little window by the stage. Women pay 150$00 (about a dollar), single men pay 300$00 to 400$00 and married men nothing. Married men or old bachelors are encouraged to contribute something at the door—the box with the ticket stubs gets jiggled as they enter, most shrug their shoulders and give a little smile. One afternoon in the Centro talking with some women it came up that married men and not the women should be charged. They assumed that the handful of heavy drinkers, many of them separated from their wives, would be disinclined to spend money on admission rather than alcohol thus they would no longer come in and bother everyone, smooch drinks, blurt out obscenities, and end up fighting with each other. Their presence was a vergona, a shame.

There is lots of hustle and bustle by the door as young men and adolescent boys try to talk their way in for free because admission is expensive, especially since when the weather is good the young men often go to more than one baile in one night. (Each baile is about the price of six or seven beers, two bifana sandwiches or two packs of cigarettes). Zé, João, and Pedro told me that they liked to haggle at the door in other towns because "it's already a habit"—"it's a game"—"you get to know who you are dealing with that way"—"they know we run this so they hope they'll get in here." Riberinho said they did it "because they are jerks," at which they pointed out that with Daddy's money they could also afford to be "Senhors", Mr. (Senhor, the term usually reserved for married men, being short for Senhor Cabrão, Mr. Cuckold!). When a group is at a baile from
another town they often ask each other how much the other had to pay, or how
they snuck in or how they got that girl to agree to buying a "married" ticket for
the two of them. Boys don't pay until they start to drink beer and begin to pair
up in the "wall" of young men along the dance floor. I didn't know it was
officially at fourteen that they have to pay until one night while standing by the
door a baby faced young man entered and when asked for a ticket sheepishly
replied, "I don't have to pay yet; I'm only thirteen," (though he was already
almost six feet tall).

Moinho clears the way for me to get in. Taking my ticket, he makes a
standard remark about whether there was any perfume left in the bottle. I rib
him a little; "Well, I knew you and I were going to dance so much I thought I'd
need it". Since he doesn't dance anything but slow dances and doesn't have the
nerve to ask me, he lets my remark slide, and asks me to get him a beer.

The baile is a good healthy size when I get there, but not at its peak. There
are still five or so couples of little kids making their way round the floor. I often
wish I could be so bold or have a partner so well matched; five year olds who are
learning to dance and to speak Portuguese seem so much more graceful than me,
the bumbling giant. Little girls or little girls and boys pair up and shove their
way out onto the floor. Some of them are quite proficient dancers, others just
muster their way through; one pushes one way, the other follows or doesn't, toes
get stepped on or don't. Intermittently they giggle, correct each other, start over,
give up, or go back to dancing around the floor staring dreamily into space as if
in a trance...shuffle, shuffle, turn, oopps, turn shuffle, shuffle...

Zézinho is ten but looks about six and has some learning disabilities. He
is, however, a wonderful dancer and loves to sing. The little girls often won't
dance with him and the girls his age definitely won't. When he sees me come in
he makes a bee line for me, "Diana! Diana! Don't forget you said we would dance a music tonight"--"O.K. Zinho. Nice sweater. Aren't you hot? I'm going to get Moinho a beer and then we can dance." I love Zézinho's appreciation for the music and dancing. I do, however, find it while amusing also quite painful to dance a whole ten minute song with someone three foot six who turns himself sideways and arm fully extended walks back and forth across the dance floor in a perpetual tango strut.

"DIANAAAAA..." here comes a big group hug from little girl group leader Sofia, and her six year old company. They always greet me and show me their dresses and tell me important things--"My mother bought me these socks last week-end when we went to visit my aunt and I wanted to wear them but I had to wait for the baile because my mother didn't want to have to wash them again." (Not surprising, since only a handful of households have washing machines, and women spend many hours of work to present a clean house and family.)

The music starts and it's a waltz: "Oh, Zinho, we can't dance this, I don't know how." Most of the young men don't either, so the waltz is the dance par excellence for older couples and stout matrons. A couple of young girls are also out on the dance floor doing Whirling Dervish imitations. We sit and chat about school, and Zézinho's favorite song from the new telenovela, soap opera. Sofia and he sing it for me in a screechy duet over the waltzing accordion music. We are all caught giggling as the music ends before their rendition of "I'm forever yours" is over. The next song is a marcha, the easiest of the dances.

Peas are good
and beans are fine
Portuguese stew is tasty
but my favorite dish is Bacalhau [cod fish and slang for vagina]
Maria Maria won't you let me into the kitchen
to smell your bacalhau

When Maria makes it it's so sweet
when she stirs the pot
you better turn up the heat

Sausages from the high country
tripe from o Porto
Portuguese stew is tasty
but my favorite dish is your Bacalhau...

Dancing with Zézinho I sense a mix of appreciative nods ("isn't that nice that she dances with poor Zezinho") and bemused glances ("why would any grown women with juizo, sense, goof around out there with a ten year old?"). That's okay, as far as I can tell and am told, they all have very contradictory ideas about me. On the one hand I'm educated, or, I "have studies," as they say, and I'm an American (a rich "Dallas" Texan, despite all my declarations to the contrary), and I'm a city person. However, I do not act like what the stereotypical Doutora, Ph.D.8. I had decided that I wouldn't take advantage of my possible titles because I wasn't sure what the advantages would be other than setting myself "up" and apart only to be talked "down." Instead people would say to me in the store full of people. "And who would think she is a doctor? Just looking you can't tell and she talks to everyone. Couldn't you teach here in Portugal? You just stay now. You don't even look as estrangeira, foreign as you used to." My foreignness and my being a Doutora were of the same order.
On the one hand I was praised for not acting the Doutora, on the other, however, people in Cavaleiro occasionally encouraged me to be more Doutora like. For instance, when they introduced me to the Lisboeta family renting their "spare" house (while they moved into the old shed in the back...), they would say, "This is our Doutora Americana here with a grant." The women also liked to see me dress in a more sophisticated style when I was going to Lisbon to the university, but always insisted that I show my legs with shorter skirts at bailes. If I didn't they would shake their heads, "Diana, what is this? This is a shame. It's very elegant, but what about your legs?" (Long lines constitute elegance; turning down a slice of cake invites the question "Oh, you want to maintain elegance"). They wanted me to be elegant, foreign and Doutora, yet my favorable reception was in large part due to the fact that I did not assume the privileges or pretensions of rank, (Doutora), the aloofness of elegance or the unaccountability or a foreigner.

Another source of negotiation and confusion was my marital status and what form of address it required. They knew that I had been married which made me a senhora but that I was dancing with young men and not married made me a menina (miss/young lady). To be educated, living alone, and acting as an independent adult was consistent with a senhora, but to be socializing with the single crowd, to be childless, and be without a proper household, I was a menina. Adding to the confusion was the fact that my age was typically taken to be twentythree instead of the more accurate twentyeight or twentynine.

In portuguese forms of address, only your close friends and peers call you by just your first name or nick name. Others would say, for instance, "how is the lady Maria today?" Therefore, my ambiguous status had to be constantly confronted in the choice between referring to me as menina or senhora. People usually got around it by saying, "How is the Miss Diana, I don't know if it's Miss
or Mrs/Lady." I would respond that it was miss/lady or lady/miss or just Diana would be fine. I wasn't willing to give up the respect and independence implied by Senora, nor the freedom and possibilities of being a Menina. When meeting people who didn't already know of me it was often "You're American? Are you here alone? Is it Miss or Mrs." By not insisting on one or the other I gave my share of mixed messages, so it wasn't surprising that they thought or said contradictory things about me, much stemming from my behavior at bailes which was apparently the most confusing to many.

Don't you marry, don't you marry
don't you marry you young ladies
Ai, better to stay the way you are
Don't stop being a Miss
While you're courting
life is sweet
But when you get yourself caught married
better not to dwell on sweet memories

Oh all you single girls
listen well to your parents
Watch out for those games
don't you know men are all the same.

Don't you marry
Stay just the way you are....

(song lyrics Linda Da Sousa, Não Te Casas)
After dancing with Zézinho, talking to all the little girls and making a round of hello's to the women I'm most friendly with, I squirm my way over ("excuse me, excuse me"--"go right ahead, right this way") to the bar for a water. "Water?" asks João. "Are you not feeling well? Tie one on last night? Don't you know you'll get frogs in your belly that way?" These are the standard comments young men make to each other when they aren't drinking beer.  

I make my way over to the door to chat with Moinho and the people coming in, as well as to get a little air. The heat generated by so many people and so much dancing can make it a sweaty affair. Moinho and I are standing behind what I call "the wall", a human mass of young men who are crowding the dance floor in an attempt to break up pairs of young women dancing together so as to dance with them (this means that the boys have to pair up in such a way that both girls will be willing to split up). Once when I was dancing with Teresa, the man who was trying to woo her came to split us up. He came alone, an act Teresa considered to be in such bad form that she not only insisted on finishing the dance with me she, moreover, refused to dance with him the rest of the evening. She later cited this brash act as one of the reasons she wouldn't want to go out with him.

The wall is also the point from which the boys make contact with the girls sitting on the benches along the wall on the other side of the room and from where they can get a good view of who is dancing and how well, badly, close, etc.. They are close enough to the dancers to jostle them, to make comments, and to get their toes stepped on. The tocadora will inevitably ask "Would the boys standing on the dance floor move back and make room for the dancers?" which they were always reluctant to do, even though there was an empty space behind them. The dancing is where the action is and they almost aggressively want to mark their presence, even if not dancing by being in the front line. The women
dancing are often annoyed by the formation of the wall (but the younger women less so) because it cramps the dance floor and because the boys en masse can get more unruly than they would venture to be individually.

Now that there is a wall the baile is in full swing. The dance floor is crowded with a mix of young and older couples and a few brave children who mercilessly get trodden on, bumped into, and accidentally knocked on the head with increasing regularity as the night goes on. The children often start the songs, which can be quite long, while the other couples eye each other and wait so as not to be the first on the floor. When it gets too crowded the children busy themselves filling coke bottles in the bathroom, chasing each other around, playing outside, and eventually filling their mother's and grandmother's laps with their sleepy bodies.

The wall blocks one of the two entrances to the dance floor, which means that the women usually have to push through it to get to the bathroom or outside. The boys press together to make the passage difficult, and then sweep aside ceremoniously. The women then have to push through the men leaning against the bar. These are mostly married men, and by late in the evening, some quite drunk. The young women in pairs or groups worm their way through the crush.

Some of the "Senhoras," proper women, complain that the Centro should be rebuilt so that they wouldn't have to pass through that gauntlet. Others accuse these women of being "Senhoras of their noses," acting prissy and getting old and fat, and afraid of their husbands getting so close to all those young girls! The girls giggle their way through, heads down; the young women show good-natured reserve in excusing themselves, but fiercely stare down, or sharply shove, anyone who should let a hand go astray. There is also lots of greeting of friends and family along the way.
Standing behind the wall, Moinho and I speculate on Pedro and João's chances on cutting in on Elena and Rosa which they are trying desperately to do. They hiss at them energetically but discreetly, gesturing at themselves and pointing. The girls confer with each other, and leave the boys waiting until they come round the floor again. As they come around the boys are out on the dance floor with a self-confidence which could have awarded them a definite snub, but this time does not. There is a moment's shuffle to make sure they are paired up correctly. Pedro winks at Moinho with whom he conspires since Elena is Moinho's neighbor and Pedro is from another town. Pedro and Moinho work together and Moinho has recently passed some notes for them (I only know this because Moinho left his jacket in the cafe once and when I brought it to him he was much relieved that it hadn't fallen into other hands and showed me the note in his pocket).

I'm standing behind the wall, Moinho and I are talking but now I'd like to dance. The lights are bright, the music is loud, the language is brash, and the air is pungent with beer, sweat, and tobacco, but not every aspect of the baile is without subtlety. Making pairs may be the most imperceptible and fundamental aspect of the baile. It took me a very long time to see and understand how the dancers coupled into pairs and how they ended up on the dance floor together, beyond the most obvious technique of splitting up pairs of dancing girls. The other obvious way pairs were made was when a group standing around talking gets inspired by a good song, someone sings a line, another does a little step, "shall we?", and they are off.

Since I was most often standing up talking, I danced with men who were around the bar and not part of the wall. Often, someone I knew would come and tell me "See that guy in the red shirt? He's my cousin and he wants to dance with
you. He dances well, really, go on--he's my cousin." (I discovered that more often than not they weren't cousins, but there being cousins, was supposed to make me more inclined to dance with one of them.)

I did not, however, see this type of invitation being extended to many of the other women. Instead, I noticed that a girl, would suddenly, but casually, stand up and walk half-way across the dance floor where she would be met by her male partner. I always missed the sign between them, as if the dance were prearranged. I came to realize there was, indeed, much unspecified foreknowledge about who might dance with whom. When I asked those around me how a pair had just agreed to dance, they looked at me surprised, and answered, "He made a sign to her." The sign was in the eyes but I was blind to it. I saw the boys clustered in the wall, talking and laughing, and sometimes standing quietly back, looking across the dance floor. I didn't see the women actively looking around the room or even at specific boys.

As my dancing improved and I stopped having to look at everyone's feet, I saw that eye contact was often established while dancing: a boy at the wall or behind it would watch a girl dancing, and being sensitive about these things, she would notice and have time to consider. If she wanted to dance the next *musica* with him, all she had to do was look in his direction. I was always looking around the room, not with the intention of finding a dance partner but because I was curious about what was going on. When I caught someone's eye, I looked away. I didn't know that if I looked a second longer he would probably make a small gesture to me. If I responded in the slightest we would meet on the dance floor, if not no one would know he had even asked me. The timing eluded me.

I was able to piece together these techniques only after much watching and overt "clues", as when, a man came up to me late in a *baila*, and asked what I
had against him that I refused to dance with him. I told him that he had never asked me to dance; he insisted that he had asked me four times. I walked away thinking he was just drunk, but later realized that, indeed, we had made direct eye contact several times during the evening. At the time, I had not recognized those "exchanges" as invitations to dance but rather as, at best coincidences, and, at worst, annoying. The women often have vergonha, they are embarrassed, to do anything alone, such as go to the washroom. I on the other hand, have vergonha when it comes to spotting a dance partner. I find it easier to ask a partner if he wants to dance. Developing the eye to catch a partner from across the room, of not hesitating an instant, and of being sure he is looking at you rather than your neighbor, is a complicated skill, which requires, among other things, a great deal of knowledge about one's potential partners.

So now that the baile is underway and everyone is starting to warm up, the tocadora decides to play a very popular lambada. It is the number one song on the local, as well as national, radio. It is also the theme song from the prime time Brazilian soap opera which has an unprecedented viewing audience. The soap opera is called Sassaricando which means something like, to be dancing, flirting with life, having a fling, fooling around, winking, skipping. The soap opera has several theme songs which everyone has been humming and foot tapping for the last two months: little kids on buses, the guy behind the counter at the cafe, the women who sells me cheese. Sassaricando is not only on the air, its in the air--"Hey, Diana, want to Sassarico with me?"--"As long as its on the dance floor, Ricardo!"

The lambada (lambada means a slap or a hit) is a new dance here. While the girls seemed to have learned it first and the boys are reluctant to make fools of themselves on the dance floor, some boys are brave or just can't stand to watch
the wildly provocative things their girlfriends are doing together. Ricardo and I push our way through the wall. One of Ricardo's friends gives him a slap on the back of the neck, a greeting which makes me cringe not only because of its military origins but because it obviously hurts and has to be returned. We fumble for a second getting on the right beat and foot, and off we go. Ricardo is a good dancer and works on it so I enjoy dancing with him. The lambada is actually quite simple, but very fast and gets more interesting depending on how adventurous a couple wants to get. We try out new steps and turns together and joke around some. He likes to look good, and I've noticed that he watches me closely on the dance floor and only asks me to dance the dances I'm better at.

When I look at you
I can not control myself
I can't hold on to this desire
I'm running to your love.
Your eyes are love
Your way is pleasure
Everyone wants to taste
the flavor that you are.

(song lyric Nando Cordel, Doido P'ra Te Amar)

The dance floor is very full and with such an energetic dance with so many turns it's impossible not to bump into other couples, step on other peoples toes, get knocked out of rhythm quite regularly. The lambada is so new and provocative, it is danced mostly by young couples which gives the dance floor a special mood with lots of extra joking and friendly jostling with each other. There is also plenty of showing off, especially in front of the wall. The lambada
is incredibly aerobic, and when the tocadora strings two together sweat is dripping, tongues are hanging out, and some are on to that euphoric runners high. Ricardo and I have hit a second wind and discovered a front-sideways-front turn pattern that has us in a furious lock which compels us round and round. Unfortunately I can feel that it is inadvertently making my skirt inch its way up with every turn. I lower my arm to pull it down just as the music ends, and we shuffle off the floor panting. Now that all the young people are up and dancing, the tocadora begins a slow.

Slow dances are very, very slow, weight shifts from one buttock cheek to the other shift, shift, shuffle, shift, shift, shuffle....It's the highlight of the evening for the singles (and for gossip mongers). Married couples rarely dance slows after the first years of marriage. Some women friend in their early thirties complain that their husbands "have vergonha (shame, embarrassment), when it come to dancing a slow, but none at all when it comes to propping up the bar as if it would fall over without them!" These women would like to slow dance, and point out that in some other town married couples do, "Like my cousin in Fataca, she married this goofy shy guy from the mountains. He's so shy he didn't say more than two words to the in-laws for the first years they were married, but get him at a baile he'll dance all night long. If it's a slow, fine, he goes at it with my cousin like they were still kids courting!"

The occasional slow song comes a little later in the evening as the temperature rises. Midnight; shift, shift, shuffle. A girl can dance with a variety of partners but it's the slow that counts. If she doesn't dance it with him, he's not number one. If she only dances one slow with him, he's not sure. If he dances most or all of the slows with her his arms may start to relax around her waist and she may clasp her hands behind his neck....shift, shift, shuffle. All of the couples
are bundled together in a mass as close as possible; everyone wants to be on the inside and shielded from the view of "the Mothers" and the Velhas. At really big bailes where they lower the lights the inside couples will be kissing and slipping a hand under the back of a shirt in search of skin. Cavaleiro slows are not so steamy most of the time: the lights stay up and the velhas are all too present. (Six months later, Moinho installs colored lights and a dimmer.) Shift, shift, shuffle. Namorados boyfriend, girlfriend, are chatting or whispering. Marcus is winking at his buddies who are making lewd gestures: "Is it hard yet?" Maria caught Teo doing that once and walked off the dance floor which, as she recounts it, he almost never forgave her for. Even his friends came over to tell her she shouldn't have embarrassed Teo and that she shouldn't have taken it badly because they were just playing. She told them good and loud that the next time they wanted to play they could play together, but the next time Teo wanted to dance he had to decide if it was with her or them. Teo's crowd was from another town and, she told me and Laura later, she knew that, playfully, they would push her to see how she and how the Cavaleiro crowd would respond. I had heard stories that some years back there had often been fights and scuffles between crowds from certain towns that didn't get along, often stemming from bad feeling about some of their soccer games and "a couple of bad eggs who liked to make trouble, smoke pot, come here to break bottles we have to pay for. They can stay where they came from to do that. We were just helping them to the door."

Shift, shift, shuffle...."Diana, aren't you going to dance this slow?" --"It's too slow and guys are too short!" --"What about Moinho over there? he's tall" --"He doesn't want to dance with me" --"Hey, Moinho, Moinho put down that ticket box! The American says, 'That cuckold never dances with me'" --"I did not, Zé!" --"Get your butt over here and dance with her!". Moinho nods to me, I nod to the
dance floor and we wiggle our way in with a little fanfare from the cheering section. I'm a little hesitant about dancing with him because we always flirt so much. He's obviously a little nervous, even more than usual. Shift, shift, shuffle, shuffle "Oh, sorry"--"Oh, no it was me"...shift, shift, shuffle. The guy I usually dance slows with isn't here tonight. I feel as if I were cheating on him, even though I know he's at the Baile in the town of his steady girlfriend, uhgg....But a slow is always a slow...Moinho knows it too. The tocadora is singing, "heart of a papelão--on the street you pass me by--today you say hello--tomorrow I never know--tell me, tell me to who are you true my papelão heart". "What does that mean? What is that word?"--"It means lots of things: cardboard or butterfly, flighty."--"No wonder I didn't understand." He is very shy now that we are this close, and he doesn't look at me or relax his raised shoulders. Instead, we joke with the couple next to us, "Now don't you fall asleep! Your 'mother-in-law' has her eyes wide open." Shift, shift, shuffle. Long last note and suddenly, like a small explosion or fire drill, all the couples are half-way across the dance floor back to their respective spots across the room. I join a long snake line of girls on their way to the bathroom for a conference, giggle, pee, cigarette, fashion consultation...

We all burst through the bathroom door like a stumbling freight train in a fit of giggles. The bathroom walls are cool white tiles we press against to get around the sinks to shut the door and muffle the music. Claudia gestures wildly at the cigarette smoke that's rapidly raising from behind the stall, "Oh, girls at least come smoke out here, we won't look but God, do I have to pee!"--"Who's in there anyway?"--"Hehe it's us!"--"Oh, that's a help"--"I know. It's Manuelinha from Longeira!". Elena begins fussing in the mirror in an exaggerated imitation of a beauty queen, Fatima joins her and then they fix each other's hair and smooth down a hem, roll a cuff. "Yeah, yeah, you both look great you vain
fusspots!"—"Hey, some us have to pee, you in there!! I had to pee the whole eternal slow. I kept thinking God what if he just squeezes me a little tighter and I polish his shoes for all to see!!"—"AIEE, Maria! And maybe you could have gotten some on Rita's shoes and done us all a favor...Her and her beady eyes!"—"Yeah, I noticed her staring like that. Does she like Fernando or hate you?"—"Both. Well, she only stops talking to me for two days every time I dance with him. But I've known him forever; our mothers were friends from when she used to live in Fataca and they would often come visit. I've always danced with him, and anyway it's too stupid. He can't stand her because she is so jealous and she makes everyone think there is something between them and there isn't. When we were dancing he even said, 'What does that lunatic want, staring like that?'"—"How embarrassing, what a shame"—"She's crazy. Must be the illness of the town...". (This was a message to me about Ana, but I didn't get it until the next day thinking about how the bailé went). "Silvia, turn around, look, you have a tail!" (her shirt had become untucked in the back)—"What!?"—"I'd rather a tail than horns!"

With this we are spit out of the bathroom in the same fit of giggles we entered in. I'm last in line and get sidetracked by guys at the bar who want to buy me a beer. "Hey, Americana, come have a beer? Riberinho is paying." I stay to talk with them and watch the girls work their way back to the dance floor where Claudia and Elena instantly start to dance, and just as quickly are split up by Pedro and a friend who seems quite eager to dance with Claudia. She doesn't show if she likes it or not. They look past each other as they dance. He is a "frame dancer"—he keeps his partner quite far away, does intricate foot work and sweeping turns. They look very formal and serious, but I notice Claudia is putting some extra polish in her turns, flipping her hair just a little. Maybe she is interested, or interested in his being interested. I remind myself to notice how
their evening progresses: if he asks her again, how soon, how often, will she accept, will he try again if she says no, will there be another slow. It will be something to talk about tomorrow in the Sunday afternoon wandering between the cafes' post-baile conferences. These observations that inevitably follow the bailes are, the young swear, the raison d'être of the velhas, but in fact the velhas' commentaries bear striking resemblance to their own.

The same information, it seems, has very different connotations and consequences depending on how, where, and when it is uttered, but most importantly depending on who utters it\textsuperscript{10}. Especially when the young talk, they classify certain types of information that would be bad if it fell into the hands (or out of the mouths) of as pessoas, the people who talk, or, even worse, the velhas. Pessoas may talk, but when the velhas get wind of any "gossip," they ask questions: "So, when's the wedding? When do we get to eat cake?" or, "He's good for you," or "She is too tall for you, but she is an only child with all that land. A good, nice girl."--"Hey, who was that your cousin Bela was dancing with last night?"--"I've heard they are going steady, he even goes to the house."--"Goes to the house? Why? These days girls get too serious too fast."--"We used to dance around a lot more. Now they get just one and want to do everything with him and then they're stuck." The velhas are seen as the ones who turn information into gossip. They may go as far as to ask these questions to one's parents, which is considered very embarrassing and annoying since the velhas might in the process uncover something they wished to keep quiet. For married people, however, pessoas are seen as the ones responsible for creating gossip, and worse, inventing things which can be hurtful and disruptive to individuals and couples. The older women, the so-called velhas, that I talked with, were often more liberal and free spirited than both the young who so feared them and the pessoas who told me that they were "just backward."
Standing at the bar, conversation has fizzled out and we are watching the dancing and commenting on what we see. Riberinho gets on a roll about work and women and "beach english." I notice Raul coming in. The baile in the other town must not have been very good, or it's later than I think. As soon as he walks in I'm aware of Suiça watching us and commenting to his buddy while gesturing with his eyes to Raul. I'd like to hide under the table, or stare Suiça down, but I don't have the nerve, so I turn my back on him and the door. Raul is my slow dance partner, a notorious womanizer and heart breaker, he has an easy charm, the fastest motorbike and a physical stature which win him a certain respect from some and the distinct disdain of others. My dancing with him and riding with him on his motor bike to bailes in nearby towns had caused much talk and speculation (not to mention provoking icy stares from his mother). Raul joins the conversation at the tail end of a story which ends with a joking proposition that I do what foreign women are notorious for doing with young Portuguese men--"you know they come here for sea, sun and sex." "Beach english" is the secret ingredient which, it is held, will overcome any obstacles between them and foreign women. Riberinho's request that I teach him beach english ends with a joke about my just going with him to the lighthouse, which is where couples go to have sex under the shrub trees along the cliffs above the ocean. One of the boys suggests that Riberinho may be out of line, and Raul "jokingly" steps in to lay claim to me. I am amused, relieved, horrified. I'm standing between two groups as the conversation splits--which group do I join? and what will my choice be taken to mean?

I am amused because of all the layers of theatricality on all sides, and because it's somehow comical to be in a situation where my understanding and control are so obviously and conveniently out of my hands. Relieved, because being spoken for, I wouldn't have to speak for myself so often--the message
would precede me (word travels very fast here), and I hoped my sexuality would be accounted for—the propositions fewer, less urgent, the speculation less audible and tangible. I was horrified because, being spoken for, I was surrendering control in the impression management of my persona; I had let myself be spoken for by someone who might not be seen as appropriate for me, who might earn me (at least in my guilty imagination) a harsh judgment by the people of Cavaleiro. Horrified, too, because I sense Moinho watching everything with an eagle eye for detail.

Interestingly, by laying claim to me, Raul made himself vulnerable to my putting cornos on him. I could now make him a cuckold, which also suggested both that he trusted that I wouldn't, which subsequently changed my sexual identity, and that any man who wanted to make him a cuckold might have to lock horns with him, which also changed people's perceptions of me and thus the dynamic of my interactions.

Being spoken for was an easy out in any provocative flirt, I hoped. I didn't like being asked and teased and prompted. It is awkward when you see your role (due largely to my "ethnographic persona") as being that of one who agrees, acquiesces, is a good sport, one who doesn't make waves or ruffle feathers through any direct confrontation. If the request were any other made with such insistence, the answer would probably have been yes. But these were, I thought, straightforward preludes to sex, and not looking for sexual company I looked to worm my way out of these "confrontations" as graciously as possible. Had I more close girlfriends in the beginning, I would have seen and understood that flirting and "coming on" talk is standard talk, conversation, verbal play, spicy and piquant and satisfying in and of itself. The play of call and response was complete, though there was, of course, always a smoldering hope that a tryst down by the lighthouse might follow.
CHAPTER TWO:
CUCKOLDRY AND CUNNING: TRADITIONS OF GOSSIP

On the horizon, another paradigm is emerging: that of the relevance of a theory based on the perceptions and subjectivity of the subject, accepting waverings of meaning and perceiving communication as a dialogic process where truth, no longer unique, emerges from intersubjectivity. Against the empire of structure and the idea of permanance is ranged the status of the insignificant, the anonymous, the ephemeral, the trivial event, the instantaneous. Against the hero of theory, of production, of history is ranged the status of the man without qualities.

Michele and Armand Mattelart
The Carnival of Images

I. PASSION AND LANGUAGE

The *baile* was the event which ticked through my stay like a cuckoo clock announcing itself, "This is Cavaleiro," and disappearing again. The non-event of Cavaleiro during my stay was Pedro and Patricia's "non-wedding". In contrast to the tangible recognition of "Cavaleiro" in the *baile*, the non-wedding was exemplary of the power of talk to form the communicative shape of the community beyond any event. Talk becomes, in fact, an event, perhaps the most important event, that happens in and happens to Cavaleiro. In the case of Pedro and Patricia's non-wedding there were of course certain events: Patricia ran away ten days before her wedding to live with another man. Pedro was jilted. Both events had enormous impact on their lives and those of their families. Beyond the expense to people who had already bought clothes to wear and presents to
bring the major impact for Cavaleiro\textsuperscript{11} was the huge amounts of conversation "the wedding that never was" generated.

Local events and extra local ones, as well as a myriad of quotidian activities, such as work, cards, and relationships find their meanings in the conversations and silences they generate. This is not to suggest that they do not generate private meanings for those who's lives are touched by them but that the "private" meanings are heavily mediated by such things as narrative conventions\textsuperscript{12}. What these "ways" and "mediations" are, is a form of cultural work as in Freudian "dream work." The personal/public categorization is problematic in that the two "spheres" are mutually generative but not always a perfect fit. Cultural work is happening within and across each sphere not just between them. Certain kinds of stories may be most easily related using narrative conventions which may not always match the persons experience of that event. Cultural work doesn't just take place in the translation/mediation between personal/public but also in the negotiation of speech. The construction, adoption, recognition of other narrative strategies is a central locus of cultural change. I will be focusing on the public expression of meaning through the discourse of cuckoldry.

What kind of talk did the non-wedding of Pedro and Patricia generate? The wedding that didn't happen and the running away with another man which did, not only generated talk but it had precedents, acted on the past, shaped the present, moved through accumulations, knew a moment of climax and was exhausted by closures (ranging from morals to boredom with the topic after all of its issues/details had been explored). The story isn't over of course, each new event in the lives of Pedro and Patricia and their families are reviewed in light of this past. The "non-wedding" and the suspicions surrounding it are called forth
by any new case of parents being more interested in courting than the couples
themselves, or of being too pushy about marriage or of young couples getting too
serious too fast for too long, and of course, every new possibility for young
cuckoldry evokes their names.

Writing about speech, about how something is talked about, in this case
the non-wedding, requires editorial decisions of significant proportions. I could
write about it the way I remember hearing the bits and pieces. I could then
decide how much description and context would be required to fill in some
amount of background. But how would I (re)present all of the voices and convey
how you (I) might want to weigh them in your (my) interpretation which, of
course, could never reproduce the (my) participation and witnessing of the
hammering out of the story between voices. Another strategy could be to
reconstruct "what happened", (fait accompli) by piecing together the fragments so
as to arrange all of the cause and effect sequences at my disposal into a
coherently bounded argument cum narrative. Or, finally, I could analyze "the
significance" of the story without recounting it (wouldn't that be stingy? Like
Castor, a young man in Cavaleiro who would get three quarters through a story
but then insist he couldn't finish it because he didn't want to name names only to
give it away with clumsy clues after everyone had lost interest and moved on to
another conversation).

Writing about this kind of communicative multi-voiced interaction
somewhere between myth, history and memory, I am reminded of Peter Brooks',
Reading For The Plot (1985), in which he points out similar issues faced by Freud
in the "writing up" of his case studies. Each writing strategy sets up an
interpretive frame. Invoking Freud here I summon two other interpretive guises
which suggest the ways in which stories, narratives, conversations can be about,
1) the extraction of a moral, a lesson, a cure and 2) sets of relations between various real, intended, imagined and implied speakers and audiences.

DECEMBER 5, 1991

This morning I went to Albertino’s store to say hello, and to thank him for the use of the phone. He was very sweet, "We do what we can for those we can. For some though, it never seems to be enough." The, "You’re welcome," was for me, the innuendo was for the fussy customer who had just left. We all raised our eyebrows. Josefinca, Albertino’s wife, was there too. Since there were no more customers, I used the quiet moment to ask where the symbol and the gesture for cornos, cuckoldry, came from and if their parents had used it too. Albertino thought about it a second and mused, "Well, everyone knows that the only way to get rid of the horns of a cow or ram or any such animals is to cut them off, so, I don’t know why they would use the expression because with men it is the women that puts horns on him." (Domestic animals often have their horns dulled, wrapped or removed to make them easier to handle and so that they don’t harm themselves in their stalls). The natural order seems to be reversed: if we stretch the metaphor, we could say that the man domesticates (removes the horns) of the women by making her monogamous—by marrying her. She puts horns on him (exposes his "animalness") by undomesticating herself, i.e., by going outside of matrimony for sex.

Josefinca and Albertino agreed that contemporarily cornos jokes and expressions surround anything having to do with bulls even though the expletive for cornos is cabrão, billy goat. This may be a result of the current prevalence of cattle in the local economy. The fact that cattle are the most commonly perceived measure of wealth might add another dimension to the
cornos banter. Albertino added, "That kind of women is a cabra, [it means a she goat but is also used, closely to the English use of bitch, slut or loose woman] so her mate has to be Cabrão." I was trying to ascertain if all of the talk about cornos which I heard all through my stay was new, old, or periodic. Josafina and Albertino remembered (imitating the tone of their parents' colorful swearing me amid much laughing) their parents and grandparents also using the term and gesture liberally and it being a frequent topic of conversation and joking.

Praia came in about this point and joined the conversation. I asked if cornos and infidelity happened more to men or women. Albertino assured me that it was natural for men to have adulterous relationships. I asked why and Albertino volunteered that it was, "Because men have more freedom, more freedom to move around and because they drink. Women do it too but less. You see it sometimes but mostly it is men." After bantering about the power of alcohol and the discretion the "freedom to move around" allowed, I noted that while, even women who were never actually involved with other men might easily get a bad name, that men, even when involved, were less likely to get a bad name for cheating on their wives. There is a saying, "Women get the fame, men the glory." Albertino assured me, "Oh, but there are women who do really put horns on their husbands and they do it so well!"

Praia added that, "These days women are starting to have as much freedom as men and that's no good." He added that that was going to be the reason for, "The Deluge," for "The Destruction." "It might even happen in our life time," he conjectured. "Puts too much strain on the family. The women was born to clean, and cook, take care of the house and the children and the home. The man works to bring things to the home and she works in it." "That is what she was born for?" I ask. "That was what she was born for but it isn't now. Now things are different." Albertino and Josefina look doubtful but got distracted by
several young women coming in\textsuperscript{13}. Praia laments included that everything was going to hell and getting worse, that war was everywhere, politics were in shambles. Since we had got on to politics, I asked him if the 25 Abril Revolution had also been a bad thing, if it had made everything worse? "No, revolutions are always good. Before this Portugal was 'uma miseria autentica ', an authentic misery, now it's much better. Not good by a long shot, but before this wasn't anything." He went on about how bad Portuguese leaders have always been, how it is never the fault of "the People" but of bad leaders. He commented on how behind Portugal was as compared to the other European nations. He lamented the loss of the badly managed overseas territories, all the way back to Brazil. Brazil, "the ungrateful, unfaithful wife," he called her! We had gone from bad women to the deluge, from the vergonha, shame, of not having a leader who could keep the house in order, to the diminished status of Portugal at the hands of the fickle wife who wanted self rule. The circle was complete: he left as his wife called him in for lunch.

At that moment a man pulled up in a new car. His black binder and his polished politeness announced that he was a viajante, a traveling sales man, albeit an unusually well dressed one. He asked if he was at the establishment of Albertino Ferreira Almeada. Josefina told him that he was. Suddenly, Albertino had taken great interest in checking over the bread list, making the man stand there dumbly for a long awkward silence before looking up, "What can I do for you?" The man explained that the ice cream and frozen foods distributor for his company had changed, a new man would be coming soon and did the store need anything in the meanwhile. Albertino said no and that some other man was selling it to him. "Who? When? How could this be?" the sales man barked at him surprised, annoyed and obviously wanting an answer.
I found his demeanor distressing. This very well dressed man no one had ever seen before was putting an end to our lively conversation with the flash of his pinky ring and his request for information. He asked Albertino blunt questions with a proprietary tone. To my delight, Albertino didn't answer him. After more than a year in Cavaleiro, when it came to asking questions I still reserved them preciously, knowing that they would be balanced by plenty of reciprocal conversation and subjecting myself to endless, "When are you going to come back for good? When are you getting married? Why are you so tall? Is it cold in your country now? How can you stand to study for so many years?...."

Josefina, not wanting to be too rude to a stranger, encouraged her husband to act more interested in the man, "Well, can't you tell him who it was?" The man sensing he had been too abrupt, now added, "I'm sure he buys from one of our concessions and then sells to you, which, of course, he can do, I'm just curious." I'm imagined the source of his curiosity and annoyance were the "exclusive" rights he must have just promised this new distributor. Albertino and Josefina begin to confer: "It was a young guy rather than a man, he wore a black jacket, the leather-like ones, he came last Thursday." The young guy in the black jacket, we can be certain, was not a company man, rather, he was making his rounds selling anything and everything he could get his hands on, one half-dozen at a time as need be.

The district manager left wishing us all a good day. I'm sure that Albertino could have come up with a name, a bill, a phone number for the man in question from inside the very drawer his hand was resting on. Like so many other interactions it reminded me that information was something to be judiciously passed along in a complex process of negotiation. The conversation I was having with them about cornos had to be preceded by much confiança, trustworthiness, otherwise my direct but abstracted questions would have been
responded to, like other foreign languages, with a smile and a nod. It was like the joke I heard told several times in Cavaleiro: in Portuguese, especially as spoken in the Alentejo, "ver o macho " (turn the mule) sounds close to "very much", so, when the tourists taking pictures of the man standing by his mule cart, uttered "Thank you VERY MUCH", the man turned the mule and cart around. In appreciation the tourists repeated it several times. The man, after having turned the cart in every imaginable direction, got impatient with their "Thank you VERY MUCH", and handed the bewildered tourists the mule's reins, saying, "You VER O MACHO, (turn the mule) yourselves. I have better things to do!" The joke pokes fun at the Alentejano who tries to engage with things outside of his comprehension and the danger of engaging in speech which does not follow local reciprocal prescriptions.

Conversation is perhaps the most important social exchange in Cavaleiro. Not speaking to someone is the worst insult, the harshest marker of social distance and disapproval. To say that two people aren't speaking is a clear indication of significant rift between them. The rift can begin by one side not saying hello in a very obvious manner and not explaining the behavior. The other party then also refuses to speak. After young men or women who had been friends, come to blows or have had a serious disagreement, they often don't speak to each other for up to a year and then resume friendly relations. Overly stressful family relationships, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law, are sometimes marked by very restricted speech, limited to simple greetings. In contrast, I was told that I could be trusted as a good person rather than a non-person, Dotora (Doctor is a much abused indication of privilege not necessarily education) or foreigner, because I talked to everyone (if at times to inadequate selectivity)\textsuperscript{14}.

Speaking, in its social conversational form, is an exchange. In Cavaleiro,
its most popular form is conversation. Requests or demands for information outside of the loose conventions of conversation, especially when made by a stranger, require an effort to make the exchange reciprocal or call into play questions of authority. In the exchange with Albertino, Josefinia and the salesman, the salesman evoked his authority through markers of class: dress, demeanor, manner of speech, and style of address. Class distinction is vividly marked in Portugal, especially in the rural areas of Alentejo which were essentially feudal until twenty years ago. Albertino's response was in keeping with a long tradition of suspicion of authority and a refusal to cooperate with it. Corruption, dictatorship and fifty years of an active secret police may have been instrumental in this attitude. Josefinia's response was in keeping with another tradition of fear and respect for authority which explains her wanting to respond (a code of hospitality may also come in here since the man was essentially in her home/establishment). Together, Albertino and Josefinia, settled on a strategy which reconciled the two traditions. By using their cunning they managed to act as if they were cooperating with the man but in fact gave him useless information and played dumb about it.

After lunch Liona, Henrique and I were chatting over a coffee and I brought up cornos (again). I asked Liona if she knew where the expression cornos came from. Laughing at my question, she quickly answered, "A loose women is called a she goat. Her man is a billy goat." We talked about the possibility of the gesture for cornos being the same as that for the devil as it is in other parts of Europe. They agreed that in the end adultery was a thing of the devil but didn't think that the two were related. "The cornos sign isn't the devil because it is the man who wears the cornos and not the women who did the
devilish thing!" Henrique explained. They both remembered older people talking plenty about cornos and cabrão. Talking, swearing and joking with cornos was not something new.

Unlike Praia, who had told me that in his house he had never heard such things, Liona thinks that actually cuckoldry happened much more regularly antigament in the old days. She explained that there were no whorehouses then, people were juntos, together, rather than church-married, and that there was much misery and poverty. "Women would be with one man and then another. Like Maria, she has children from three marriages, and Graca had a husband and a lover for years. Otilha will tell you, when her husband isn't around, who the father of her daughter really is....Now people seem to be getting married and staying together more. He may stray a little but it's not like before. Before, those with land would marry seriously. The rest did the best they could. A woman often lived with a man not cause she liked him but because with so much miseria, there was hunger and mouths to feed no matter who the father was, a man in the house gave the women a little more security. It was more frequent for a couple to live together but love someone else when they could."

We talked about the possibility of all the joking and swearing about cornos as being a cover for a touchy subject. We talked about how men often greeted each other with "Oh, Cabrão". Henrique pointed out that you didn't call a man cabrão who really was. One didn't joke with him because "your cornos might get dented" (he might punch you up side the head). Liona agreed, laughing. She added that it was then a dead give-away if you didn't call him cabrão so he might beat you up anyway for implying such a thing.

The conversation moved into story as they reminded each other of the guy who really was cabrão but his wife was such a floozy he just called himself cabrão. The man and his wife used to get drunk and beat each other up. She
would chase him around and hit him with what ever she could find. He would leave for a couple of days, show up in Cavaleiro with a black eye, get falling down drunk and call himself "*un pobre cabrão* " [a poor cuckold].

**CONTENT OF GOSSIP**

I went with Dora to a nearby town so she could meet with a man about getting a job. While we waited for the man, we went to a cafe where Dora knew a woman who worked in the kitchen. We had some fried pork and garlic sandwiches and in a light-hearted mood the three of us started to tell each other the *novidades*, the latest news. We were gossiping and we knew it. Dora and the cook repeated various times that, "This is just for fun. No one can tell anyone how to run their lives. Everyone runs their life the way they see fit and I don't have anything to do with it. This is just for fun. Anyway, you should hear the things they are saying about me these days...." We giggled and raised eyebrows at every turn. Dora left me at the cafe while she went to the interview. Despite the playful banter, in these reports we were confirming or warning each other about what kinds of thing could be gossip. Examples:

- A woman from a nearby town was causing a lot of talk because she had been caught in the act with a local school teacher. The teacher was a much younger black man from Lisbon who had been boarding with them. The husband got suspicious because the wife was always inventing things she had to go do and stayed away too long. The husband caught them together in the teacher's room. They ran off to Lisbon.
- There was a young girl who was being mistreated by her husband. He was drinking again. Her brother took her in but then caught her in the act with another man and sent her back to her husband.
• The baker was caught with her helper but no believes it.
• A cafe owner caught her husband with one of the employees doing it in the bathroom! She kicked them both out but the employee is saying she is pregnant. The wife says it's a lie and they say the wife is still sleeping with her husband but wouldn't let him come home.
• Patricia ran away with another man ten days before her wedding. Was she with her married sister or was she really at the home of the family of the man she has been seen riding around with? Did she run away because she was scared her father would force her to marry or act like a brute if she didn't?
• A local boy got messed up on drugs last week and wrecked his wives' car by running it into the side of the church. The wife had to tell her parents she did it because he didn't have a license and her parents had told her they would take the car back if he drove it.
• The cook told us that someone had come in looking for her. The bartender, being flip, responded, "Oh, she ran off with some guy." She was out back washing. When she got to the market, less than an hour later, they were surprised to see her, saying, "Oh, we heard you had run off with the DeSilva delivery man!" They had already invented who the man would be. Some kept talking about it even though they saw her that day and had seen her everyday. When had she run off? She reminded us again, "You can't get upset by these tongues that are just as bad as ours. See how it goes? I work here everyday from eight in the morning until nine at night. I go home and fix dinner for my two daughters and my mother and wash the dishes and the clothes and I still have time to run away with delivery men! Let them talk if they think they know what they are talking about."

Gossiping about news is often filled with humor and irony especially when the topics are nothing anyone is asserting as "The Truth." Potential conflict
and dispute is often avoided in conversation with the agreement that truth is malleable: there isn't A Truth. Without having to call anyone a liar or question their authority to speak, one can say that while something can be true, its meaning is open. Conversation takes place along a negotiable ridge of truth, meaning and interpretation.

Conversation is also always as much about how word gets around as it is about what gets around. People like to talk about how people invent gossip. When repeating gossip in this way what is highlighted is the harmlessness and the naughtiness of engaging in gossip rather than the content but notice that the content, which can be potentially very disruptive to individual lives, is passed along none-the-less.

Gossip, no matter how unfounded, takes on a social space and time in the form of talk and thus takes on a reality of its own. It is its own kind of event: passed and shared, modified and interpreted. It is true in that it exists; it is real. Fortunately, most Cavaleirence know not to confuse that reality with Truth or truth with action. Initially, the gossip made me anxious because I was afraid its reality would force something to "happen". But usually it didn't. The talk eventually dissipated into so many sound waves and lingering memories waiting to be recalled. The personal consequences of gossip were experienced in a different realm, not equivalent to the social nature of talk shared.

Florbela's Suspected Cuckoldry

A note was slipped under the door of Florbela's parents-in-laws. It was little more than illiterate scrawl on a scrap of dirty paper the size of a pack of cigarettes. She and I were on our way to the Centro when we ran into her husband and brother-in-law on the street packing up his car. Her husband said
to his brother with a snort of a laugh, "Show her the thing, show it to her." The brother gave him a warning look, "Just you forget about that crap. It isn't anything." She and I went on our way. She, with a very serious look noted, "There is some shit going on. I don't know what it is but there has already been some bocas [mouths, mouthing off]." We had arrived at the Centro so the explanation had to be postponed.

Monday afternoon on my way home I stopped by Florbela's for a visit. We went through the events of the week-end, the mysterious rotten oranges that were all over the street for example. Sensing her nervousness I asked "So, what was that all about yesterday?" "I'll show you." It was a note reading "Your daughter-in-law is friends with Mr. Almo and the Americana too I know because I saw." At first we laugh, how stupid, how absurd, look how bad the writing,

--"Friends? What, is that a crime?"

--"Friends means, you know what!"

--"I know but I hate that. When Tia Violeta used to ask me, 'So, do you like my Carlos?' and I would say, 'No, we are friends, that's all. I like to have lots of friends.' Her mouth fell open so wide you could have put a cabbage in there. Luis explained 'No no, not That kind of friend!'"

--"Oh, Diana this is really shit. The last thing I need is this kind of problem. My husband is very sensitive about what other people say and think, and his parents! I knew something was up because the other day when I went to go pick up my bread when I was almost at the door I heard my mother-in-law saying something about her son deserved better. When I walked in all conversation stopped and I knew, here comes another round of troubles."

--"But your husband didn't seem to be taking it too seriously yesterday. He was laughing when he told his brother to show it to you."

--"He doesn't show it much but he is very jealous. And his father knows that.
Why didn’t he just throw it away? Why did he have to show him? First I heard that conversation in the store, then when my husband came home he had already been to see his parents and he was really short with me but I thought maybe it was just work problems but then just as we are going to sleep he says, 'Tell Mr. Almo to find a new place for his band saw our garage is not the proper place.' I knew it had to be something like that. He doesn’t care about the garage. Someone had to fill his head with monkey lies. This town, it’s always the same. People like to see others suffer. They like to ruin other peoples lives. What did I ever do to them? I can’t even be friends with anyone. God, once they even said I was having an affair with a man I had never even talked to. He started showing up around here. I had seen him once at the cafe. Next thing I know everyone is saying that we are having an affair. It got so bad the man went up to my husband one day and said, 'Look, they say that your wife and I are having an affair. I’m not sure I even know who your wife is and I don’t want any trouble so I’m just saying this so you know that someone wants to make trouble for you and your wife but it isn’t me.' He said it right to him. There have been so many of these rumors you wouldn’t believe it. I think that one was started by who ever the women was that he was really coming to town to see. That way no one would look in her direction."

"But who do you think left this note? And why? Someone who can barely write and thinks it’s fine to spy on people...and what about me? I’m his "friend" too?.

As we talked further the mood got bleaker. It wasn’t that she couldn’t have cheated on her husband (though it would have been extremely difficult to do it discreetly), the truth was that she didn’t want that. Her romantic aspirations all revolved around a husband that would be fun and loving and caring and passionate. She didn’t want to have a lover, she didn’t want to put *cornos* on him and she surely didn’t want to have to suffer the injustice of being
falsely accused (though it did allow her to assume a posture of martyrdom.) She experienced his jealousy as extremely inhibiting and unfair on the one hand but a proof of his caring and her power over him on the other. In light of this gridlock she alternated between provoking his jealousy and upholding her trustworthiness. Many such subsequent conversation closed with her expressing her frustration, "Oh, if I were a man I **would** be the biggest 'Jack-about-town' ladies man this region had ever heard of!"

**TO CATCH A CUCKOLD**

What first caught my attention about *cornos* talk was the trouble people took to have something to add to the on going forum. The note-leaver mentioned above is one example. Another is Isora. She drove her car an extra three miles just to find out whose car was meeting the familiar motorcycle she had passed. When I asked her why she had done so, she told me it was because when the right occasion arose and certain people tried to say she was "the bad one" in town, she would have some ammunition. (But she had just told us the story in the spirit of showing us her cunning).

Conversations about *Cornos* were instrumental in my coming to perceive the value people placed on cunning in narrative strategy as well as deed. When people "show-off," it's not through their wealth, work or even talking about their skills or luck, (except in fishing). Rather they recount how they did something with words. For example, they might talk about how they understood an innuendo that no one else had which in turn led them to uncover some truth that had gone unnoticed by the others. They might tell of how they talked themselves out of a difficult situation or into some money or best of all, how they turned someone else's words of intended ridicule around so that that person
made a fool of themselves rather than deliver the intended insult.

These narrative acts of cunning are usually referred to as *esperto* being smart, or knowing how to look out for one's interests. I first became aware of their importance through their prevalence in *cornos* talk but they also underlay many other types of conversation. As a narrative strategy being *esperto* requires one to be careful about revealing any information to an interlocutor without getting something in return. "Fishing" for information is a favorite pastime. This means that one has to be careful about "traps", lies and tricks that an interlocutor may use. This can make conversation seem like picking through a mined field.

*Cornos* talk is especially apt to evoke feats of cunning because the cunning required to be involved in adultery is matched by the cunning required to catch a cuckold. Extramarital affairs, except in very unusual cases, are clandestine. Villagers not only notice, and often comment on, all of each others comings and goings, it is also very difficult to go anywhere in the region without running into someone who might notice or mention your presence to someone from your town. The issue of privacy is a sensitive one even for those not involved in adultery but especially for those who are. Talk about cuckoldry is, somewhat surprisingly, unmoralistic. It is instead peppered with admiration for the cleverness of those involved and those who get wind of it.

There is much joking and kidding aimed at marking that everyone is equally vulnerable to have *cornos* put on them. Emphasizing cunning, on the other hand, seems to be an attempt to ward off the possibility of *cornos* happening to them. The cunning used to catch a cuckold is displayed as if in a hope that in being so cunning you might be shielded from the experience yourself—as if you might be protected from the possibility of it happening to you.
AMELIA LIKES TO SING

--"When I was about five, even after that, I used to climb into a tree at my parent's house and I would sing to the corn. It was my audience, I sang and sang to it. I used to spend hours singing. When I worked at my job I sang all day long. If ever I didn't sing they asked me what was wrong--they asked me if I was pregnant. If a young woman didn't feel well they always said you were pregnant. I sang when I was pregnant all the same. It was after my child was born that I sometimes didn't sing. Lately weeks go by without a song. They used to say they didn't need a radio when I was working."

--"I remember when you got your sound system last year. You could hear it all the way to the beach, and you singing, too. It's true I haven't heard you sing lately, but we did sing in the car with your husband the other night. He even sang!"

--"That's cause he was drunk. He used to like it a lot when I sang. I don't have a good voice. It's not full or anything but I can make it sound like the song with the effects in the right place. I used to have much more voice, now it isn't anything."

Amelia likes to sing and if things were different she probably would have enjoyed being a tocadora dance musician. She keeps up with all the latest baile and Portuguese pop music. She doesn't like the heavy fados (Portuguese equivalent to the blues), and protests loudly should anyone want to sing or listen to cantigas, Alentejo folk songs. She doesn't like foreign music much because she can't understand the words. She likes a couple of slow foreign songs she knows from telenovelas, soap operas: "The one that goes, 'Yes, Yesss' and the one from the telenovela, "Under the moon." Oh, that was before you got here. That was such a good telenovela. It had really beautiful things in it. There was this really sweet guy, Bibo, who really liked this women but she was married to his friend
but she thought he was dead but the friend knew he was hiding and would come back. At first she doesn't like him but after she accepts that her husband is really dead she starts to like him. He is just crazy about her legs. One night she invites him over and keeps showing him more and more of her legs and he is just going crazy trying to be good but finally she starts kissing him and of course her husband who isn't really dead shows up. They had this song that was so pretty every time they showed him looking at her legs, "You can't imagine the love I feel for you, but I can imagine so well how beautiful it would be if you felt the same for me...." Amelia could sing the whole song for me and often did even when something else was playing on the radio which confused and impressed me.

Amelia's life is full of songs, they are like friends to her, they keep her company she told me. She can pull them out of her memory, she can just remember them or she can sing them, sometimes they just pop up as if out of nowhere other times she works hard to remember them. She sings most in the car when we are driving somewhere. I notice that she likes to sing when her husband is driving. She always tells me things about the songs: when she used to listen to them, who sang them best, who's imitations she found particularly grating, how difficult they were to sing. She told me if her husband or children liked the songs and how she knew. I liked it when she sang because it made her energetic and happy and the atmosphere festive. Songs almost always brought on warm story telling kinds of conversations which were poignant in detail and punctuated by the hills and valleys of love's circuitous meanderings.

Amelia likes to sing.

Her life seems filled with the haunting longing of those songs and their empty optimism, their pure eternal love their unadulterated passion. When her
husband finally did cheat on her and she found the photographs, where were the songs? When she spent days shaking with "nerves", when she was so impatient with her children they became quiet as church mice, when she replayed the scenes of betrayal over and over in her head? Where were the songs when she had nowhere to go, no one to confide in, no way to leave him and no way to stop loving him while she imagined him with "the other women"? And there were the photographs...she couldn't throw them away because they were her only proof and she couldn't keep them without looking at them. Amelia put all the pieces of the puzzle together, phone calls, credit card bills, missing nights...

In fact, there are plenty of songs about the sweet pain of love but they didn't seem to give her the same comfort as those which had promised her the joys of eternal passionate love and domestic bliss. Amelia is terribly unhappy. She crochets for days and days, months and months, years at a time now. She told me she just wants the time to pass. She isn't even waiting for the weekends anymore, she just wants, she doesn't know what she wants.

Her husband is a good provider and generous. Other women would like to have such a nice house, car, washing machine, so much free time. But most agree that they wouldn't want their husband to be so far away so often. And most agree that they wouldn't want so much time on their hands. Amelia used to be the hardest working women around. She had a job, she supported her husband and their child while he was in the army, they built their own home with the help of no one, she took the sheets down to the stream to wash them after she had made dinner, after she had worked her shift, after she had collected grasses for the rabbits. It was dark by the time she got there. She would sing.
CONTENT OF GOSSIP

--If her father weren't so stern she could have just called it off without having to run away.

--Pedro really liked some other girl but his mother didn't approve of her family. Didn't do her any good in the end to interfere with her son's life.

--What will her new in-laws think?

--All the guys knew for weeks she was with some other guy. A cabrão is always the last to know.

--You know, I was sure she looked different lately but I thought it was the wedding.

The non-wedding of Pedro and Patricia got everyone in town talking. What did they talk about? The village experienced a moment of intense gossip and took an unabashed pleasure in it. The atmosphere was festive. There was a topic to initiate conversation with anyone and everyone, something everyone could comment on, and pretty much agree on, a sense of social communion at sharing in the narrative event. Talking about any event is always the judgment of an event or anticipated event. Any number of situations or desires are met with the comment, "You can't do that. Do you know what they will say?" A Baile is good in the long run because it left one with a story to tell. If something isn't talked about, if it elicits no comment, conversation, or argument, its description and memory will always be, "Oh, that wasn't anything." Things that do elicit talk are remembered as much by the talk as the event, "Everyone said that it wasn't really her fault but later it changed and they said...."

Pedro and Patricia

While dancing to a slow song with Patricia at a Baile in Cavaleiro one night, Pedro fainted. He almost fell into the lap of some women sitting near by
but they pushed him away and he came to. In the bathroom Patricia rolled her
eyes saying she was glad it wasn't her or they would have said she was
pregnant. Instead of going back to the dance floor I stopped by the bar where
the guys were laughing and saying that Patricia must be too much for him and
that the in-laws must be watching too closely.

They didn't make Pedro suffer too much for having been jilted for another
man. He almost seemed relieved that the courtship and marriage were over.
The general consensus was that Patricia had acted badly by waiting so long to
leave Pedro but that their parents were largely to blame anyway. People said
that the parents had wanted their children to marry more than the young couple
had...she was too young to be cut off from her parents...what if she didn't get
along with this other boy now that she didn't have the support of her
family...better that she left Pedro now rather than really make him a *Cabrão*
later....

I saw Pedro the day after Patricia had run away. He was playing pool and
drinking beer in the *Centro*. I didn't say anything to him about it. No one else
seemed to either. Someone told me that he had cried when they first told him
what had happened but then declared it was for the best like this. There were
some jokes about it, but not to his face. When he had been with Patricia he
hadn't really talked to me. We started to say hello regularly and even to dance
occasionally.

It got talked about so much it got boring. After a while their wasn't any
new information to add, no new view point which hadn't been explored. Maria
Esmeralda was the one who told me. "You know what, we have a fugitive!"--"A
what?"--"Patricia, Mario's Patricia, she ran away with another man."--"What???
"--"Yes, can you believe. Her parents! Just imagine...really. Ten days before the
wedding they find a note on her pillow saying she has gone to live with the man
she loves and it isn't Pedro. Poor Pedro. Now all the guys who work with her are telling how they knew all along, how she and this guy used to go into these steaming hot green houses in the middle of the day... I heard them making a joke about it before and I asked my husband. He told me there were rumors about her and another man. --"Do you think Pedro knew anything about it?"-- "No, I don't think so."--"How strange! I thought they were the perfect little couple. I thought they were too young to be getting married but wow..."--"Yeah, I hate to say it, and I'm not the first to say it but it serves their parents right. They were courting each other more than their children were and they always cut up (speak badly of) everyone else."

Every new detail was explored during those few days; where the letter was found, what it said, what her dress had cost, that Pedro had burned his suit, what about the furniture? Who had told Pedro and his family, their reactions, their suspicions, what their futures held, why it had happened, what had been the history leading up to it....Every new detail was savored, negotiated, exchanged.

Finding, giving and interpreting meaning was blended in a process which was not only highly social and interactive but which also combined an urge toward consensus and another quite individual urge for the authority to speak.

CORNOS TALK

Being cunning is something the Cavaleirence boast of, it is something they like to show off. Cunning also translates into a rhetorical strategy of fishing for information, setting traps, being elusive and hearing between the lines. Cunning can be a duel where interlocutors challenge each other. The challenge comes in the form first of catching a cuckold, i.e., gleaning some information which one can say is evidence of cornos behavior (I know something you don't), and
second, the legitimacy of each speaker and utterance is opened for judgment (how do you know? what are your statements worth? are you someone who can speak of such things?). When something was said about cornos what was questioned first was not the likelihood of something being true based on the actors but on the credibility of the person who spoke of it. "Oh, I wouldn't believe anything he says. He's a stingy old man with nothing to do but invent stories to see if you will tell him anything..." The duel puts one person's judgment and word against the other. The authority to speak or to stop speech is highly contested and often sought after. Authority, cunning and judgment can be succinctly called into question by challenging the source of the speaker. Isora, didn't mince words when she got the chance to shoot down a baseless rumor and it's messenger.

"This conversation isn't anything! I heard Dolores tell Manuel that Santinha had been seen in Odemira even though she had told Dolores that she going to see her sister who lives in Milfontes. So why was she in Odemira??? I heard Manuel half an hour later telling it to Old Carneria. Both of them were completely tanked. When Manuel told it to Old Carnerão, Carnerão mixed up Santinha with her daughter who is old enough to do what she wants if it was her anyway. Well, Santinha waited for the bus right in front of my door, she knew that my mother isn't well so she offered to get medicine from Odemira if I needed it because she had an hour in Odemira before her bus to Milfontes. Now you tell be what Dolores is doing saying things to Manuel when everyone knows that you have to go to Odemira to get to Milfontes unless of course Santinha suddenly learned to read, won the lottery and got herself both a license and a car since yesterday! Now you tell me kind of conversation this is? It wasn't any conversation to begin with and now you are saying things about Santinha's daughter who could use a boyfriend anyway. You are better off just being quiet."

Cornos talk is not only an arena for individual cunning and contestation (identity construction) but also a joking matter, a source of proverbs, an inspiration to story tellers. As such, cornos talk can be self-aware, ironic and a
form of cultural critique. All of the talk about Pedro and Patricia generated a vague consensus, a moral if you will, that parents shouldn't interfere in their children's affairs and that acting in self interest (there was much talk about what the parents had to gain materially and in status by the two families coming together through the marriage) has a way costing you more in the long run.

The proverb that the incident elicited was, "A man without horns is like a garden without flowers." Gender roles in this case were mitigated by the age of those involved and by the fact that both parties had showed interest in other partners that their parents had prohibited them from perusing. Patricia was not judged as frivolous. Matters of the heart ultimately could not be dictated or repressed; she did what she had to but she should have acted sooner. Pedro was teased a little bit but as the proverb indicates every man is vulnerable, cornos is the price and maybe the trophy of sexual activity. The proverb also implies that women are fickle, so cornos are inevitable, a proof of manhood. Then again, proverbs, like jokes, establish their painful truth through inversions. The fatalist pathos that often finds expression in Portuguese song, poetry and ethos is here mocked as if in celebration. Portuguese love poetry and song from the troubadours forward is brimming with naturalist imagery where women are flowers and love a blooming garden.

Cornos talk is an engagement in the constitution of gender and personal identity. In that it can be critical and moralistic as well as opportunist, it is both consensual and divisive.

It is consensual in that it is a point of convergence, a topic around which everyone can gather. It provides a common interest, expresses a common vulnerability and elicits common morals to be learned. It is divisive in that for those implicated it is a gossipy invasion of privacy, hurtful slander, and taken as a sign of the ill will of others toward you and your family. Cornos talk can be
very effective in rearranging the social map. It can be the impetus for certain individuals or families to stop talking to one another. And as mentioned above it can be a narrative space in which people push off one another to define and distinguish themselves.

In the pleasure that people derived from having something juicy to talk about, they emphasized the theatricality of _cornos_ talk, the drama of it all. Like a refrain, people repeated over and over, "This is an authentic _telenovela_ , soap opera!" Not only was _cornos_ related to _telenovelas_ but, in turn, _telenovelas_ were referred to in terms borrowed from _cornos_ talk.

II. RHETORICAL STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL PROCESS

Brazilian _novelas_ are a mixture of a traditional popular narrative and modernity. It would seem that this mix defines well that part of our symbolic needs catered to by the cultural industries. They can appear as the time of pathos, of emotions, of family libido, in contrast to the elliptical, fragmented time that explodes in the video clip, for example, in the era of postmodernity. What is characteristic of the _novela_ is the broken narrative from the point of form with the structure of long duration. The fragmented rhythm corresponds to our visual immersion in the modern world of technology and satisfies the contemporary modalities of aesthetic perception. It is a combination of an aesthetic of rhythm and speed with an aesthetic of pathos.

Michele and Armand Mattelart
The Carnival of Images
The Telenovela

I am addressing the subject of telenovelas soap operas here because people talk about these soap operas in much the same way they do about cornos even when it is not the plot line of the novela. I am not suggesting that people see cornos where it is not (which they do often) but that they employ similar rhetorical strategies for both kind of talk. Although the subject matter of cornos and novela talk is integral to it, the similarities in rhetorical strategy suggests that the types of communication the subjects elicit are at least equally as important as the actual subject matter or content of the talk. As with every kind of communication, the medium and the message relate to each other in a specific configuration which is a significant component of the interpretation of its meaning. Form and content are equally important to meaning which is what makes the comparison of cornos and telenovela talk so compelling but complicated.

The source of cornos talks involves making public or semi-public things which are suppose to be secret. There is then a jockeying for control of that information. Television, on the contrary, is (suppose to be), transparent or democratic, an equal access medium. Everyone who watches is given the same information and sequence of events. The reality of how novelas are watched and talked about undermines that transparency. With cornos talk what was suppose to be secret is exposed; with novela talk what should be available is treated as if it could be secret. The same mechanisms of talk is applied to opposite kinds of sources.

The Brazilian novelas are different from the American soap operas in that there is not an infinite number of episodes. The Brazilian telenovela consists of a hundred to a hundred and fifty or so episodes. The number of episodes is published in the television guides when the novela begins and appears in the
opening frames each day. The *novela* has a beginning, a middle and an end as well as its particular conventions, rhetorical styles and format. Rather than explore these I want to focus on the talk about *telenovelas* not because of its *cornos* plot themes but for the rhetorical conventions which surrounds this talk in the community.

On my first day in Cavaleiro I was initiated in a daily ritual which lasted on and off through my stay. Camelia would call out her window for me and we would watch the Brazilian *telenovela* together while eating lunch. After lunch we would go to the Centro to have a coffee with some others who would have also just have finished watching the *novela*. Conversation often turned to the episode, to the story, to the night time *novela* and all the subjects that these references elicited.

The first time Camelia and I met I was standing in the little grocery store wondering what to buy to fill the very empty annex I had just rented. (The owner told me it had been built with the intention of renting it out to tourists but that the building permit registered it as a garage, "The motorist has to have a place to go to the bathroom and take a nap and even make a little something to eat, No?" That is what he reported having told the building inspector when he came round. "I guess so," was the inspector's reply. "I guess so, is right. We were classmates at school and I used to let him copy my homework so the inspector just smiled, 'I hope the motorist at least has a car when he comes'.") There is a man standing toward the back of the store. He has a large burlap bag in his hand and he looks as if he were waiting for a train. Camelia comes in with her young son and says good morning to everyone. She has seen me moving in next door. The store owner introduces me, "This is your new neighbor. She's an American."
Camelia nods to me, smiles and walks over to the man with the sack, "What do you have" she asks. He opens the sack for her to peek in. "Will you arrange it for me?" she asks. Walking toward the back door which was the court yard of the house, he pulls a huge white rabbit out of the bag by its hind legs. He drops the bag giving the swinging animal a quick hard karate chop on the back of the neck. He puts the rabbit down in the garden. Camelia's son, Luis gets some grass and puts it in the rabbits mouth. The man lights a cigarette, Camelia continues her shopping. Luis and I are looking at the rabbit. It suddenly starts to convulse making Luis giggle with glee, "Look, look its eating the grass, it's eating the grass!" The rabbit gets another whack and put on the scale. The man selling the rabbit asks Camelia if she knows what the going price is. She doesn't but from there everyone in the store starts to build an answer.

Camelia turns to me and tells me to come over for lunch in an hour or so. Then just as she is leaving she tells me to come a little bit before the telenovela starts so she can tell me who everyone is. Camelia called to me from her window a little while later, "Have you ever seen this before?" She stripped off the rabbit's fur like as if it were a wet sweater. I came over to where she was working and she started to tell me about the novela. Talking about novelas and watching them together turned out to be a good way of getting to know each other.

Camelia, like many of the women I met, contrarily to the men, did not want to have the typical initiatory conversation about "The strong American dollar". Telenovelas got us talking about personalities, ways of behaving in the world, about matters of the heart, different attitudes about romantic love and parenting, as well as discussing matters of style, how characters dressed, held themselves, decorated their homes, the cars they drove, the things they thought were important. As Carlos Monsivais (1975:45) suggests, maybe we were just talking about telenovelas because, "We owe everything to the melodrama. Its
massive catharsis and emotional discharge suitable for the general public organizes their understanding of reality. In the melodrama, the powerless and the heroic aspiration of a collectivity which has no public outlets are combined.  

Regardless if one is a casual or avid watcher, the novels are very much part of the daily conversation and life. Comments and conversation starts with the morning shopping or after lunch when those who work at home or come home for lunch, go for a coffee. After the news there is also an evening novela. Many families go to one of the cafes or the Centro after dinner for an espresso and to watch the novela. Others rush to watch it in the quiet of their own homes. Both men and women take interest in the novelas but when there is a football game on television the men insist on watching that amid loud protests from the women who then go off to watch it somewhere else or turn to playing cards.

Before exploring the specific dynamics of novela talk in Cavaleiro, I want to turn to the work of two French anthropologists who write on the consumption and production of Brazilian telenovelas. Their principle concern in, The Carnival of Images (Mattelart and Mattelart 1990), is with the questions which are posed by third world production and exportation of mass media to the first as well as third world. They trace a detailed history of the production of the telenovelas and the various relations between producers, politicians, authors, actors, the church and audience. For this alone it is an important work which explores uncharted waters of so much of media studies. For my purposes, however, I am interested in its formulation of the role of audience in the mass media equation as well as the role of mass media in local cultures.

Without deviating too much from my focus on the narratives which the
telenovela generate and the narratives used to talk about them, I would like to briefly mention some aspects of media studies theory which come to bear here. The Mattelarts repose the question, in what ways is mass-media, mass-culture, populism, popular culture, subversive or potentially so (in the Marxist sense)? In order to repose the question, they ask for the specifics of who controls the production of mass-media, what does mass media do, and what is the relationship of consumers and producers of popular culture?

The Mattelarts record the shift in which producers and consumers are not mutually exclusive categories. The focus in much current media studies is on receptors/consumers as the object of power rather than the "effects and manifestations" of power and the powerful. They register the ways in which consumers are also active producers of popular culture and mass-media. These consumers are in an unequal relationship of direct "power" to the producers but they are at least active or interactive in their relationship to the media. In the de Certeauian sense, consumers are subversive in how they are "colonized" by the media, in what they use it for, in how they interpret it, and ultimately in their whole-hearted acceptance of it: though they redefine it, they like it, they demand it, and do with it what they will.

One theoretical language for thinking about this is to see it as a shift from the emphasis on exchange value as the neo-classical economists and structuralists, did to use-value. The Mattelarts note:

The present change of outlook goes along with the enormous epistemological shift that has effected the perception of social movements and antagonisms. The Italian economist C. Marazzi rightly recalled in 1986 that 'every struggle, every attempt at struggle, over the last ten years or even longer, has consisted of a struggle for the re appropriation of use
value—the use value of time, space, of bodies, of social know-how—in short, the use value of life itself....Exchange value predetermines the relation between the subject and the object: an epiphenomenon, the subject can act only as an object of use. In this perspective, what counts is only the struggle against exchange value within the domain of circulation and production. The interest in approaches underlining the reappropriation of use value lies precisely in their attempt to escape from variants of functionalism (on the Left and Right) which have separated social contradictions and forms of subjectivity. (1990:68)

The rupture with exchange value perspectives is not unproblematic. There is the danger that the importance of power relations of production be negated by the celebration of the receptor/consumers "free" interpretation and engagement with mass media. The tension between production and consumption can be made to seem to disappear where consumers are free agents in the process. Studies which focus on the relationship of consumers and the media and their mutual and reciprocal construction of each other are also at risk of abandoning the idea of social determination all together. These largely ethnographic studies seek a new way of constructing the subject but perhaps too exclusively as the above suggests, however, the contribution of this approach is important:

Under the pretext of seeking a totalizing theory, traditional materialist perspective has too often normalized from the outset the complexity of the real, the singularities of lived experience. In this sense, the form taken by ethnomethodologists reveals more than a faint-hearted withdrawal. Does it not also express somewhere the pleasure, long denied by theoretical
policing, of dismantling the communication acts of everyday life in order to re-create the real? If ethnomethodologism is one of the new expressions of empiricism, if it serves to delegitimize other levels of analysis, it also attempts, in its ambiguity, to "feel its way" into a new research domain, a new way of approaching the subject. (Mattelart 1990:69)

Examining the role of the consumer presents another opportunity to consider the class nature of institutions of communication. The theories of Althusser and Bourdieu are questioned in new ways. When popular cultures are read as "active producers of meaning" the Bourdieuan credo, "Reproduction of the dominated, and distinction of the dominant" is stripped away. De Certeau goes far in showing the ways in which "the masses" have access to the symbolic and how they act on their present rather than serving, as Bourdieu suggests, as only "the marble on which history is inscribed"24 (Mattelart 1990:70). Concurrently changes in the conceptualization of popularism have come to the fore. The popular classes of Marxist analysis of industrialized societies as they were conceived have not been helpful for enlightening the situation in third world countries, and Latin and South America particularly. Empirical and theoretical shifts have meant recognizing the classless or cross-class nature of popular culture and the work of massification already achieved by mass culture.

Because of the emotional appeal of popular genres and the "emotional adhesion of audiences to television" what is being proposed is that, ideologies are more than structuring ideas. They are "also envisioned as materializing in ritual practice of consumption and in institutionalized forms of production of such as fiction genres." Television can then be read as a "contradictory space where meaning is negotiated and cultural hegemony created and re-created in a
play of mediations” (Mattelart 1990:149). What I am looking at in the narratives that surround *cornos* talk and *telenovelas* is such a mediation between the program, the viewer, and the culturally specific narratives which they produce in their intersection.

Before returning to the local culture with all of its global transactions, I want to include one final quote which speaks directly to what I am trying to establish in my listenings to everyday discourse.

For an exhibition of Brazilian television programs at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1985, the sociologist Michel Maffesoli wrote in the document of presentation: "Rather than always shouting 'alienation,' perhaps it would be better to see how, in faint dotted lines, through the intermediary of television sets, at a fixed time, a community is created....A new *deus lar*, television permits at once a family cult and a universal aggregation.” (Mattelart 1990:150)

Maffesoli’s observation parallels my own in terms of what watching and talking about the *telenovelas* meant in Cavaleiro. In a village which has a total population of about six hundred, half of which is spread over seven kilometers, almost three quarters of whom have televisions, in a country which then had two television stations one of which rerun the news at that hour, indeed there was very much the sense that a majority of the village was engaged in the disbursed but joint activity: watching the *novela*. That engaged watching, the moment of audience, was also one of communication and community.

The moment of audience becomes one of local culture and community in the transaction of narratives local and global. Not only do the *Cavaleirence* incorporate the *novelas* into their discursive practices, transforming and
localizing it in the process, they also use it to inform their discourse of *cornos*, among other topics, and thus globalize it. The *novelas* speak to a host of topics, the intimate ones being those most closely watched and examined. *Cornos* is, in fact, almost without exception included in any *novela* as one of the plot lines. The *novelas* play out the drama of *cornos* or everyone to scrutinize and comment on. It also allows them to see themselves in the world, delocalize themselves and localize the world.

Brazil, who was once part of their empire, where their national capital was once briefly located, has, they joke, become their colonizer. Portuguese television is predominantly Brazilian and of late, many good jobs in the culture producing industries in Lisbon have gone to Brazilians. In Cavaleiro they know that in Brazil they are the butt of jokes about hicks from a backwards repressive nation but in the *novelas* they see so much of their own culture and hear what they know is an accented Portuguese which echoes their 500 years of separation, they laugh in turn. This time it is not Portuguese ships but Brazilian airwaves that reunite the nations. The *Cavaleirenc* told me many times that the Brazilian *novelas* were seen around the world, "Even in Paris!" they told me (some vindication for years of cultural imperialism and a more recent history of discriminatory labor practices?). The *Cavaleirenc* also pointed out to me that while Brazilian manner and dress may be more liberal, they shared a concern for family, loyalty, love—"We are not so different, they are just more modern. People are people and we are all Latins!" The *novelas* that were first aired in Portugal and still favorites to recall, were historical and rural and so the "similarities" were cemented and now the "differences" not essential.

Of the American mini-series and soaps, only one "North and South," about the civil war, inspired the same kind of enthusiasm. Dallas (after the initial glee of seeing what had happened to the cowboys) and others were considered
boring and without grace. The Brazilian _novelas_, on the other hand, were coopted: they saw some of themselves on the global airwaves and found ways of making it their own. In the _novela_ talk I recognized its localization through the forms they chose to talk about it but in the _cornos_ talk I also recognized the momentum and weight it combed from the _novela's_ very presence.

Community through _telenovelas_. It seems unlikely given what one assumes a community, especially a topographical one, is suppose to be or provide. Community de-essentialized in 20th century late modernism, even in a quaint homogeneous rural town in the "third world nation of Europe," may be more exactly understood as these kinds of created moments of layered communication. In Cavaleiro, as I have suggested, the moment of audience makes for an arena, not only of shared activity and situatedness but of sociability (having something to talk about), divisiveness (creating hierarchies of knowledge and knower through that talk), and for negotiating values (everything from norms and morals--how the characters do or should behave, to styles of consumption and even language--what to make of Brazilian speech and idiom).

When I first got to Cavaleiro the _novela_ was particularly fanciful and _telenovelas_ were among the twenty most common initiary topics of group conversation I heard in Cavaleiro during my stay. In women's conversations _novelas_ were in the top ten list. _Novela_ talk was prolific but, in its cafe or group form, at first did not seem very striking. It addressed who had watched at lunch or the night before, what had happened, what the consequences of any event were likely to be. Talking about the what they thought the characters should do (that usually heated the conversation up), what other situations or _novelas_ reminded it them of. They discussed if the _novela_ was any good, and if it was
better of worse then they had expected or than some earlier novela they had 
liked better. People also discussed what the "Maria" (a combination T.V. guide, 
Women's Day and People magazine), had to say about the characters, the 
announced plot developments or hints of them, and the lives of the actors. In 
one-on-one conversations it could often lead to a conversation about feelings or 
how one would have behaved in a similar situation.

What came to my attention in listening to novela talk and what makes it 
significant in this exploration of cornos talk is the corollaries in their shared 
details of form, rather than specific content. In this way both are involved in the 
hierachization and negotiation of knowledge. In the most basic exchange about 
what had happened in the last episodes, the several people present were doing 
more than the kind of benign consensus building of weather talk. They engaged 
in a subtle finding out of who knew what and what there was to know. Because 
people watch the novelas often in noisy cafes where they can easily be distracted 
by other conversations, the coffee grinder, or the children tearing around the 
place, catching everything that goes on in the novela isn't a given. Discussing the 
obvious therefore has its reasons but it was often the case that they used the 
novala to engage in another favorite activity.

Why are people testing and teasing each other to find out what the other 
knows? First, so they can more fully participate in the viewing and discussing of 
the novela. Secondly, since a person's conversa [conversation, speech, talk] and 
cunning are essential in local judgment of character, this kind of novela talk 
serves to build or assert one's identity. And likewise, one engages in it to find 
out about what kind of person one is talking with, i.e., one who shares 
information willingly, one who is knowledgeable about things, one who doesn't 
lie or invent when they don't know, someone with a like minded opinion on 
things, which leads us into a third discursive space. Lastly, people exchange
information with a telling tone in their voice, with a giggle or a tsk, with a side remark and a selective memory with creates an arena of interpretation and contestation. Here, not only the normative tensions between fierce individualism and conforming moralism are expressed but a range of other discourses are suggested and interpreted and haphazardly coexist. These three arenas of speech, involve the essential dynamic which I want to call community.

Using the example of *novela* talk I am suggesting how both it and *cornos* talk can be heard in at least three tones: talk as sociable activity and participation as opposed to silence, talk as a means of personal identity construction, and talk as a form of community.

Talk and Silence

The Alentejo landscape is vast and scarcely populated. The district of Odemira, where Cavaleiro is situated, is Portugal’s largest and least populated. The people of the Alentejo identify strongly with their region. They attribute much of their behavior to it rather than to a national identity. Much of the Alentejo was owned by absentee landowners with large properties and worked by day laborers who lived in small villages. The coastal region around Cavaleiro is mostly scattered farms and clusters of households as well as small villages and towns. Many of the places which appear on the geological and military maps consist of only an old house and a crumbling jumble of out buildings rather than a hamlet as one would expect. Most people live and work in agriculture and often spend hours alone or with one other person out on the land.

Silence is ample along with sun, wind and dust. More and more young people are working in construction jobs, agro-businesses and restaurants but the older people remember and recount the hours and hours they spent alone with a flock of turkey or herd of pig to shepherd. These jobs often started when they
were seven or eight and lasted five years or more. Shepherds and fishermen still experience long periods of solitude. Mechanized farming and emulation of bourgeois living have isolated people as have the decreasing frequency and existence of some important cooperative tasks such as corn husking and parallel tasks such as washing clothes in the stream. There is also very little organized entertainment beyond the bailes and the pool tables.

Talking is by far the main source of entertainment and social engagement. As I have noted earlier, not speaking is considered a social affront. Many cafe conversations start with a complaint, "So, don't you say hello? Do I owe you something?" to which the reply is, "You must just be hard of hearing. I said, 'Good-morning' right as I came in. They heard me." The other people present then agree or not and whoever had made the complaint usually concedes that they had been busy talking or were just testing to see if they could get you to pay their drink. (In cafe society, paying for each other's drinks is probably really the most important area of daily sociability).

The silence and solitude of the landscape and work are contrasted and countered by the expected prattle of sociability especially between non-family members. There is a repertoire of topics of conversation people feel free to jump in on which is fully exploited. Some seventy-eight percent of the rural population over forty years old is illiterate with a higher percentage being women. The traditions of an oral culture are in abundance. One of them is the passing on and remembering of information through repetition, as well as giving weight and importance to something by repeating it. Another habit seems to be spinning out a story or piece of news as much as possible to give everyone a chance to participate as well as to have any story take up as much time and social space as possible giving the story's telling a presence to match the original event. I also found that when conversation died things were often repeated finally just
to ward off silence and with the hope of sparking or kindling some other conversation.

Conversation is a precious commodity and so people who don't watch the *novelas* will engage just as eagerly in *novela* talk. While people welcome an opportunity to share in conversation, they may add, "Yes, I saw that episode but I don't usually watch the *novelas,*" as if to mark themselves off, distinguish themselves. The tactic usually backfires because it brings a rain of, "Oh, well, I don't usually watch it because sometimes I don't get in on time and then my sister tells me what happened," or "I only watch when I can, I mean who has time?" All of these refrains as if to deflect the guilty pleasure or proclaim that they too are different, not one of those addicted masses sweeping the country, (despite what the reality of their viewing habits might be). The *Cavaleirenc,* take this, like so many other opportunities to share their distinctiveness in a moment of sociability.

Talk as personal identity.

I have noted earlier a kind of public weightlessness to *cornos* talk—that it doesn't usually amount to a collective acting out (other than tongue lashing)—I didn't witness or hear about public ostracism, flight or stonings *a la* Zorba the Greek: Patricia did come back and make peace with her family. On the other hand, I have recounted a few of the effects gossip can have on persons and family dynamics. Another way *cornos* talk can be weighty is in how people use it to judge each others character. People judge each other and guide their own personalities by their *conversa,* conversation/social talk, *esperiteza,* cunning/cleverness, and narrative style.

Different kinds of talk have different weight in the measurement of a person. Being *bem falant,* well spoken, means someone who says hello, good
afternoon and makes small talk with everyone. This person is considered sociable, polite, "well educated." This is a prerequisite for most other exchanges and judgments. Anyone who doesn't say hello etc. is considered antipatico, mean and unsociable. If misbehavior is attributed to such a person it doesn't receive much contestation from the general public. On the other hand if misbehavior is reported by someone who does "speak well," people are apt to question the validity of the claim and at least remark on the unfortunate, unsettling difference between speech and other aspects of deed and personality (reality and appearance).

As people go down the ranking list of personality traits, conversa is a central category. I have already noted how people strive to show their cunning through cornos talk and even use innocuous telenovela talk to find out about who they are speaking with.

Cornos as Community:

Since I have already alluded above to the ways in which community is experienced in the moment of audience and narrative of the novela, I will switch back to cornos to finish this discussion. Cornos touches everyone because although it refers to marital infidelity, it is a central metaphor extended to express the character and vulnerability of all relationships.

Cornos talk suggests a common realm for possible conversation. It is an arena that all may participate in or be the target of. Cornos teasing starts with child's play and doesn't spare bachelors or widows. In any situation in which a third party posits there is an attraction or the possibility of one between any two people but one doesn't show interest or shows interest in someone else, a tease or comment is likely to occur. When people tease single persons in this way they also do it as a match making suggestion, letting someone know that they should
or could be interested in the suggested other. For instance, there was a shy bachelor in his late thirties who everyone thought was or should have been interested in a single woman about his age. A typical tease directed at him would be, "Hey, you better go break it up. She's putting horns on you with that other guy she's talking to and you're just standing here watching as usual!"

Everyone wanted to see him make a move but it had been years of him watching her and she not noticing him despite his timid overtures. (It was common knowledge that he had a life long crush on her. It wasn't clear to me if they were really interested in each other or even just him in her or that in being the same age, single for no apparent reason and well matched in stature, that common wisdom had it that they should be interested in each other). Being single in Cavaleiro during the "family age", like being childless, is considered a pity. Even more so in their cases because people also speculated that they weren't and perhaps, especially in her case, had never been, sexually active. The message was both about family and individual sexuality.

Corns is a conversation that includes everyone. For beyond sexual infidelity it addresses the possibility for betrayal implicit in every type of interaction, "real" and/or "narrative." The Cavaleirence have a variety of ways of expressing a noticeable anxiety about the trustworthiness of others, especially non-family members. I was often told to be careful about who I trusted and stories of betrayal were sure to follow or a solemn look proclaiming, "I know. It happens every time!" I was surprised when people confessed to revealing to me things they wouldn't tell others. When I asked if they didn't speak of such things with their close friends they generally tsk'd saying, "Oh, no. You can't tell things like that--everyone would be talking by now." Family, which is ideally held up as a supportive haven guarding against the sharp tongues of "others" does not always live up to its promise. In fact, family is also often cited as the strictest
realm of enforced conformity aimed at keeping those tongues at bay. Family conflicts are therefore, especially painful.

Cornos is the vulnerability of the family at its most tender spot: the couple, the coming together of two families to forge the kind of trust that can be extended only to ones intimate family. Before marriage young couples go to great jealous lengths to test each others commitment but the process of checking up on each other and jealous suspicion continues in their marriages. Cornos and its threat are among the most poignant reminders of both the family's and individuals' vulnerability. Cornos touches the sensitive nerve of loyalty, trustworthiness and insider/outsider markers which extend from couples to friends to the relationship of the individual and society.

Everyone can participate and help define the malleable parameters of cornos discourse. It is always being invented reinvented, tested, attempted, challenged, contested and butted up against other discourses, other towns, other cultures and other cultural forms such as the telenovelas. Cornos talk makes community through its creative power to make meaning shared by the moment of its makers as novelas do by their shared audience.

THE CONTENT OF GOSSIP

The normative aspects of cornos talk are in its moral overtones, its lessons community values. Yet here I should qualify: while cornos gossip does have its "function" in the "community" it is as David Gilmore argues in his study of a Spanish village (1987), a processual one. The process of gossip is the working out of what community is between its members, not strictly the maintenance of its boundaries. Gossip is processual and I would add, generative. It is another form of cultural work which at its joking best is playful, and at its slandering
worst is aggressive and mean spirited. Before returning to this point and the specifics of Cavaleiro, I will turn to Gilmore’s discussion of gossip because it is helpful in pointing to some relevant issues.

Who gossips? The debate surrounding gossip has been centered on the question of who gossips—groups or individuals? Max Gluckman led the functionalist camp with the contention that, as Gilmore paraphrases it, "Gossip is a group-binding, boundary-maintaining mechanism: an informal device for social control (Gluckman 1963, 1968, Cutileiro 1971)" (1987:58). Durkeim’s collective mind was at work here. The transactionalists, in turn (Bailey, Paine, Hotchkiss, Cox...) were involved in micro-level studies from the perspective of methodological individualism. Gossip was thus information exchange integral to each individuals strategic rational effort, "to manipulate information for personal gain" (Bailey 1971). Moral unity is not at stake—the motivation is rational and calculating (Gilmore 198:58).

Gilmore shifts the argument from the question of who gossips to "How does individual behavior transmute to a collective action? How does person-to-person talk become a community phenomenon?" (1987:59). In order to answer those questions he explores what gossip is and decides that it "is a very wide range of language acts in which the unifying bridge is not the medium, but the unspoken message" (or perhaps the medium is the message). The intent of gossip is to "damage the subject." Most importantly for the central argument of Gilmore’s book, "gossip is verbal aggression" (1987:59). His argument is that the various forms of institutionalized aggression (including gossip) he found in the villages he studied, was actually an expression of the will to strive for the communal good. This aggression bonds the community in its struggle to recreate and maintain itself. It keeps individuals in line, thus celebrating the social while expressing the anti-social, all that is spite, envy, and of mean-spirit.
What interests me here is an underlying argument, that different acts of communication, gossip, ritualized slanderous carnival songs and the other behaviors he explores make up anything he can point to as "community." I want to add that, when fierce individualists, like the ones I found in Cavaleiro and he in Andalusia, gossip, what is at stake and in dispute is their ability to communicate, to carve out some common ground, fleeting as it may be, lasting perhaps only as long as that interaction (saying one thing to one person and something else to another depending on how the conversation is going is not unheard of and, in fact, is in itself the subject of much gossip).

Rather than, as Gilmore suggests, gossip being a form of aggression which gets harnessed as a social glue allowing the good of community to assert itself, I found that gossip may be a process of proclamation of the possibility of community where community is not a given and community good/the good of community, not easily swallowed by its residents. In fact, it is hotly contested. Gossip stings because one doesn't want to be slandered or thought badly of by ones neighbors. On the other hand, gossip also stings because it continually points to the impossibility of one ever being part of an integrated community, of relaxing in the good of community. All the residents, even the most infamous town gossips, complain that village life is tainted and tarnished by constant gossip. "You can't do anything in this town without them ruining it with their tongues," I was told repeatedly. Gossip is seen as the rude intrusion of the village into matters which are either private or something which should be a matter of personal choice rather than public scrutiny. This is a common refrain on the subject, "What will they think up next to gossip about?!" People are constantly amazed by what detail may make its way into the gossip mill but quickly note, "Oh, it's normal--everything is gossip to some people!" The ability to gossip and be gossiped about does bind people together at least for the
exchange of information and the involvement of the activity that belongs to the community.

Gossip is a shared activity, the hashing out of what is and isn't acceptable behavior but it is equally the shared acting out of the inability to ever be part of a "community", one which means belonging to a place of common values anyway. People recognize the double-bind that gossip puts them in. They consider it reprehensible behavior yet non-participation is equally anti-social. Gossip gives each a chance to have a voice and share in a voice simultaneously—it underlines the impossibility of harmony and the triumph of cacophony. The fierce individualist must recognize that the community requires that no voice raise above the others. Every cafe with it's blaring television obliges conversations to be held in either whispers or shouts.

In Cavaleiro, as in Fuemayor, Gilmore's principal field site, gossip is prevalent, daily, inescapable and can be weighty. I focus on *cornos* because it is the most piquant, spicy form of gossip. However, in Cavaleiro it does not seem to be as overbearing and the consequences as dire as Gilmore's description. In fact, I was often surprised by how well scandals and the scandalous were accepted. In the case of Pedro and Patricia's non-wedding, Pedro was engaged within a year and is now married. Patricia didn't return home for two months, she waited until the annual fair to come back for the first time and after that appeared as regularly as other young women living in other villages. When her new husband went to the army she went to live with her parents as her older sister had been allowed to do. There were frictions and families or individuals who stopped talking to each other but I saw no one completely ostracized. Even the worst, annoying and sometimes violent drunk was dealt with justly and the women with reputations for being, so to speak, sexually free agents, were very
much involved in village life. What is it that stems the tide of so many tongues? Perhaps it is the argumentative, participatory nature of Alentejano narrative and again that fierce individualism which demands the right to challenge and contest (and dampens any urge that might exist for collective action).

During my first months in Portugal when I was struggling to learn the language, I often confused statements with questions. There was an inflection that made the simplest declarative statement beg for a response. Making everything a possible question elicits the constant participation of the interlocutor. A negotiation, a, "Don't you think?" is always implied and responded to. I was amazed at how much talk could be generated from the simplest exchange--everyone had a story to add, an opinion, a question or just took to splitting hairs. If all else failed, simply repeating what the other person had just said kept open the possibility for conversation. In gossip this phenomenon is amplified.

This type of participation includes a large dose of contestation and room for disagreement. I want to focus on two different aspects especially relevant to the discussion of cornos gossip. Gossip is talking maliciously or injuriously about an absent party. There is a tone that signals it, it has markers, like, "It's not that I have anything to say about it, everyone is free but...." In addition to tone and form, gossip also has to have a certain content. Both form and content has to be recognized by those talking and those being talked about for it to stand as gossip.

One of the ways that young people in the village like to distinguish themselves from older villagers and make a reputation for themselves as cunning, is to refuse to recognize gossip when they are invited or expected to participate. Refusing to participate is different from this form of subversion. Paulinha came over to where Moinho, Olinda and I where sitting in the cafe and
recounted triumphantly giggling, "I was just waiting to buy some fruit and they
were going on about someone getting picked up for late night motorbike rides. I
just nodded, 'yes, of course, sure,' as if it were the weather they were talking
about. Maria Zé was staring at me and turning red making this horrible face!" In
a more serious tone, Paulihna also realized that she was risking scorn herself for
not treating the conversation as gossip and scandal for it could be construed as
her condoning the behavior of the couple in question just for starters.

Protesting the content of gossip takes several ritualized, rhetorical forms.
The often repeated, "Faz ela bem ", s/he does well or s/he is doing the right thing,
is a defiant response in such a circumstance. A "corner" conversation (gossip)
had begun about Maria who had used her brother to chase her drunken husband
away from the house for good in a physical confrontation. One of the women
who had been going along with the conversation, suddenly piped up, "Faz ela
bem ! What do we know? She is doing right. Life is short and each one has to live
it the best they can. Each one knows for themselves. And anyway, he is a big
pain in the ass. I'm sure I would have done worse a long time ago...." Everyone
nodded and responded in agreement adding like statements but were equally as
quick to modify, "But I don't think her mother-in-law should have had to go
through all those years and now....." If the, Ela faz bem , refrain is not enough to
derail a full blown character assassination it at least injects a strong dose of
egalitarianism: this could be any of us, maybe we don't know better, maybe they
are right in their actions and we wrong in our criticism. But those things are
never black and white which is exactly why, even in gossip, they are contested
along with the whole activity of gossiping itself.

Another way which gossip is subverted is by rendering it non-malicious
by not agreeing as to its slanderous nature. The is very similar to what Paulihna
did by acting like late night motorbike rides were no more reason for scandal
than the weather. Paulinha conveyed that it didn't change her opinion about the woman in question weather or not she rode off in the night. It wasn't slander because they weren't telling her anything she found could be used as slander. But in fact, she didn't waste any time in going over the details with us afterwards in the cafe. She hadn't wanted the women to think they could manipulate her, change her opinion about another young women.

Gossip can be changed back to talk by challenging the speaker rather than the subject, "What do you know?" or sarcastically, "And we know you would never do a thing like that." Gossip is quickly stemmed by shifting from the general realm to the specific, from, "Have you heard so and so is...." to, "Who said that? Where is this talk coming from?" In a small face to face community where the potential injury done by gossiping and the likelihood that the person being gossiped about is in your network or even family, makes people perhaps more careful about what they want to take responsibility for saying. Gossip only works if there is some collective anonymity about who is spreading it, "They are saying that...." sources must be protected, vagaries embellished, innuendo paramount. Once personal judgment calls come into play the free flow of high moral overtones and the wash of slander is diverted. Novela talk may be so popular because it allows for "gossip" free of interpersonal complications. When gossip is turned into an individual's attack of another it ceases to have the collective, protective gloss of a communal reprimand, reproachment, or a cathartic act of aggression expressing communal good. The rupture that gossip which is revealed as a personal attack could cause, is as strong as the binds gossip can form in the community.

I have suggested some of the ways in which gossip is highly contested while admitting its strong normative weight. Gilmore contends that gossip is processual in that it transforms individual aggression (the motivation for
character assassinations of others) into social solidarity. He contends that we know that community is good and that people desire it by witnessing how powerful gossip and its threat is in controlling peoples behavior. The fear of public scorn affirms peoples will to be part of a community with shared values, moors, traditions and guidelines of behavior. I am not sure there is any community or recognized communal good. I rarely heard pure spiteful uncontested gossip. It was always qualified with disclaimers, contestation, negotiations, personalization, irony and generalizations, "We all make mistakes." The good, the communal, the shared values were wrapped up in the moment of negotiation, the narrative process of communication itself. Those are the moments, the processes and interactions of a shared community, those moments which carve out a narrative common ground. Its content is transient and mutable--the will to communicate, however, is binding.
CHAPTER THREE:
MAPPING OBJECTS, EXCHANGING PASSIONS

Goods are both the creations and creators of the culturally constituted world.

Grant McCracken
Culture and Consumerism

Objects tend to condition their uses, and objects and uses together to condition the meanings that may be attached to them.

Simon Charsley
Wedding Cakes and Cultural History

I. COWS

I followed Luísa into the barn. Before my eyes adjusted to the dark interior I could feel the moist heat and smell the sweet sweaty pungent manure, the hay, feed and dust. Luísa slipped out of her shoes and into her rubber boots that were waiting patiently for her on a small rag she had placed there for that purpose. She had already filled the trough with hay, the stalls had a fresh bed of straw. She slipped around the trough to open a door along the back wall. The cows corralled outside came tumbling in pushing and shoving there way to their designated places. Sensing my strange presence, the cow who’s place I was standing in front of was too shy to step into place. Luísa, shutting the door, gives the cow a loud slap on the rump and cursed at her for being such a pathetic
coward. To make room for Lúfə on this side of the trough I have to step back against the wall falling into a bale of hay, a stack of folded feed bags, an old umbrella. Lúfə is moving very quickly now. She is hooking a rope around the base of the cows’ horns with a flash of well practiced body movements and knots. She speaks to her cows in warm low voice as round as their bellies. I feel like a giant angular intruder in this custom built world where the proportions are all width and girth. Lúfə is not even a head taller than the cows. Her stout features and strong hands are matched by the rust colored bovines with their sturdy legs, thick necks and deliberate movements. She moves around the cows and the barn with a purposefulness which is almost graceful in its casual exactness. The cows don’t know me and try to back away but Lúfə graciously takes hold of one for me, telling it to behave so I can stick out my hand to touch it. How do you pet a cow? Lúfə tells me to forget about touching the bull because, “You have to respect anything so stupid with so much strength.” Eluding to cuckolded husbands, she winks at me and makes a joke about, "animals with horns" all being equally stupid.

We stayed in the barn talking for a while. I asked my twenty questions which she answered as she cut straw into manageable pieces keeping pace with the gnashing cuds of the five cows, the bull and four calves. I can’t remember my questions or her replies but vividly the smell, the light, the sound of the cow bells and chewing, the low roof dripping with thick cobwebs, and most of all how incredibly competent and comfortable Lúfə seemed in that setting. And her shoes--how she slipped out of her rubber boots and into her white plastic low-heeled sandals. Having come to meet her cows, quite by accident I had seen her in the part of her world that made all of the other pieces of the puzzle fall into place. Listening to her talk to and about her cows, I heard her cadence slip comfortably into a talkativeness which I had not noticed before. Seeing her work
the cows I had seen her broad back relax into its natural contour. Her thick fingers cutting straw and tying thick rope were elegant so that I realized exactly how her daughter's new house didn't fit her. I had thought it was because it was her daughters house but there in the barn where she had been tending cows since she was twelve I understood that to be wrong and that cows were going to have to figure prominently in my understanding, not only of Luísa, but of Cavaleiro.

Large red-brown four legged mammals--most families had several which they could be seen walking here and there at various times of day and that could be heard munching and ringing everywhere in the landscape--that was what I thought cows were. It turns out that they were very much more integral to the landscape then that; their physical presence determined a certain sight, smell, rhythm, as well as generated certain possible conversations, lifestyles, infrastructures and relationships in Cavaleiro. Any cultural, social or physical rendering, discussion, or engagement with Cavaleiro would be deformed without mention of its cows. But not only its cows. In this chapter I will describe four of the objects which make up the landscape of Cavaleiro. I describe objects because material culture can be a narrative and descriptive vehicle which cuts across traditional ethnographic categories (economy, ritual, politics, etc.), mapping some of the paths a community travels in a variety of local and extra-local relations, histories, places. I also address objects because they are another site of presence, of involvements and narratives which motor certain social engagements and relationships.

Before I could catch myself, I blurted out to Luísa, "Oh, I like the boots. Don't take them off." She just seemed to make more sense to me in her boots. She looked at me quite surprised and laughing said, "Those are just for me and my cows, if I went to town like that they would say I was an old lady who
should stay at the homestead and not stink the place up!" And she believed it: that her boots would smell bad "in town\textsuperscript{27}" even though she rinsed them off everyday leaving them to sit carefully on their rag, and that people would say that. I responded, "Oh, they would just say you have some cows." But actually she was right. When women rush to the store between chores to pick up some missing ingredient for lunch, they often excuse their appearance (boots, head scarves under hats, ragged work dresses, mud, dust), and explain its circumstances to those present.

Cows do indeed smell and their manure more so. Most \textit{Cavaleirence} bring their cows inside the barn at least once and up to four times a day to eat and/or sleep. The barn has to be cleaned and the corral as well. Manure piles get quite large and it is hard to avoid the wind which carries its scent across the land and into peoples houses on occasion. Who "smells of cow" is not an uncommonly known or discussed fact. One of the worst offenders was a very polite eligible, though slightly older, bachelor who spent a lot of time in the cafes. If he was there in the afternoon when a group of ladies came for a coffee, they would give up their favorite table for one over by the open window and make jokes about how hot it was that they needed to sit by the drafty window. Most of the men, if too smelly, won't sit down at a table but drink standing at the bar and then go stand around outside to talk.

Older single and windowed women often told me they didn't want a man anymore because the old ones all smelled like a barn. These single men it seemed didn't change out of their shoes to work or fetch the cows and they didn't wash their clothes often enough so that even their houses (and their beds!) smelled like cows. Fininha, who had a habit of embarrassing anyone she could, teased the above bachelor one morning, "There must be something wrong with your luck. So good with cows and no wife! The young ladies don't have good
judgment. They get fooled by those sweet smelling boys with nothing to their names. A smelly old man like you with some cows could make them happier, huh?"

Because cleanliness can be complicated by lack of indoor plumbing, gas water heaters which always seem to be empty, endless manure piles and alternating muddy or dusty fields, taking care of cows makes socializing and even possibly marriage difficult for some. "Smelly cows" was the reason young women gave for staying in school and hoping for an office job and that young men gave for arguing with their fathers and going their own way. Strangely, pigs, which smell much worse, were not objected to but only joked about. Pigs are only for household consumption, they are usually taken care of by women, and they are not a measure of family wealth the way cows are. While young people object to living with and taking care of the cows, it is undoubtedly the money that those cows provide which will pay for their schooling, their weddings and their houses. Cows have an impact on the relations between generations, socializing and attitudes about money and wealth.

In the cafes, conversations about cows are endless. There are a number of men very actively involved in breeding, buying, selling and transporting cows. Anyone else with cows must also breed, feed, buy and sell them, so the exchanges are numerous and lively. The nucleus of this group are men but women also participate in these conversations if they happen to be in the cafe. Women are more likely, however, to carry on these conversations with neighbors and family at the store or as they go about their gardening.

Cow talk covers a multitude of subjects in a range of registers. Topics about cows include: the cost of everything from feed, to vaccinations, to assisted births, to butcher store prices, to renting pasture land. The economics of small scale cow breeding have to be closely figured. The equation for fattening a calf
might be: the months of good pasture and the price of the feed, the optimal weight/feed ratio which determines the best selling date and the fluctuating price of beef. For buying a breeding heifer or bull the concerns are with race purity, color, and health. The details and stories connected to each of these aspects seem inexhaustible and are host to a whole other range of conversations about judging others performances, and savvy.

Stories of buying and selling, like the cornos stories, are tales of cunning and feats of skillful oratory peppered with fateful admissions of dumb-luck. Other topics include information about new laws, diseases, requirements for transit visas, vet stories, good and bad feed, best pasture and tractor rentals, changing the bells in summer and winter, techniques for stopping horn bleed, for whining calves, and much much more. (Across the room, the young men, not to be outdone by their fathers, are talking motorbike tricks of the trade). Not only is the physical presence of the cows very much part of the landscape via their bodies, bells, fences, smell, and barns but they also figure weightily in the local discourse which makes their presence all the more relevant.

In addition, cows require a certain amount of attention. These cows live on small parcels of land which must be supplemented with feed and often water. When the summer afternoons are very hot and shade scarce, the cows rest indoors out of the way of stinging flies. The cows are lead back and forth from pasture to barns at least once a day, usually twice. In many households men are the primary cow care takers but the evening feeding, especially in winter when it gets dark early, falls on the women. In between preparing the evening meal women fetch the cows, lead them to drink, put them inside the barn and feed them. They also use this time to feed the chicken, collect eggs, grass for rabbits and look after the pigs. When there is a young bull in the group and the pasture is far away from the barn some women and men prefer not to go to fetch the
cows alone. If there are several young calves which are not easily corralled, a
second person, usually a family member which can be a young child, is always
called on to help or at least a trained dog is taken along. People are often
excusing themselves from any activity to go take care of the cows. I never heard
anyone ever protest or suggest they do it later as they often did if the task was
any other. Cow care was local clock work.

Neighbors know the time by the sound of familiar bells, "Oh, look how
late it has gotten! Here comes Esmerelda with his cows and I haven't even
thought about dinner." Cow caring sets village and personal rhythm, structuring
the days and seasons. One thing that having cows means is that it is very
difficult for married couples and families to go together for extended (even just
all day and evening) outings. One women told me, "I don't know why we spent
so much money on a car we can't go anywhere anyway. I still didn't get to go to
the fair in Portimão this year. By the time you get there and park and start to
look around you have to turn around and get the cows." Cows are given the
type of unselfish consistent care that would usually only be inspired by the bond
of love and family. These kinds of dutiful, interminable relationships between
owners and their livestock, (even though the particular cows change their
presence is constant) are bound to be very influential as to how many of the
residence interpret the nature of a variety of other relationships and the meaning
of them (duty, family, ownership, geography, life style aspirations to name a few
areas which might be touched).

Cognitive models and musings are usually called upon in the
contemplation of the relationship of language to the brain and their projection
into culture. It also seems to be the case that the objects with which we live and
which we are involved in manipulating, also influence cognitive maps with
structuring principles. The kinds of relationships we enter into with these
objects has cognitive and psychological resonances in our cultural sounding-chambers. The practices surrounding the objects of material culture, in this case the care, talk, and socialization around cows, hope-chests, motorbikes and certain foods, mold and inform much daily activity and combine with each other in culturally generative and specific ways.

Grant McCracken, in his book, *Culture and Consumerism* (1990), explores the ways modern mentality has largely been influences by our ever changing and purposefully changeable culture of consumption. While cows are not what we usually think of as the consumer items of choice, McCracken's work suggests the fundamentalness of the objects or material culture we live with for defining our social and cultural worlds. I think my description of the cows and all of the interactions they involve people in and all of the parts of life that they touch, adds to McCracken's work on consumer culture because it points out how deeply cultural our relation to objects can be, even without most of the mysterious trimmings of modern consumerism. McCracken points his work to the "modern developed world," Cavaleiro suggests the uneven ways in which consumerism can be adopted and made to co-inhabit in a cultural world it does not wholly possess.

When I commented on what tight schedules the cows required, the overwhelming response was, "Oh, this is nothing. You should have been here around the time the agricultural coop got us all to buy dairy cows! Now that is a prison! You have to milk them at the same time twice a day everyday no matter what. In the winter when its cold, in the morning washing the utters and milking them when all you want is to be in bed...That was bad. But then the coop stopped paying us for the milk. We were lucky that they stiffed us once very early on. My husband got very mad and sold the cows right away. We still got a good price...." The French rust colored Limousines that dot the landscape
replace the black and white Dutch milk cows which made a brief appearance around 1974 when the coop was buying milk, and replaced the Charrolais which a farmers experimented with before that. There is one large dairy farmer left only because he finally found another buyer for his milk. Two or three households have one dairy cow whose extra milk they sell to neighbors. Cheap subsidized ultra pasteurized milk which needs no refrigeration has transformed these dairy cows into luxury for those who like the taste.

The dairy cows replaced the previously available race which simply bore the name of their province, Alentejo. These days they call the Alentejo cows, which resemble dark red-brown Texan long-horns, "the old race." Conservationists are trying to preserve the Alentejo stock because they are a hearty strain which require very little feed or care. They can stand the intense heat and survive in the poor, harsh conditions of the alentejo plans. The Cavaleirence, whose land falls under the irrigation system, find the Limousines more profitable because of their greater weight and the fact that the limousines meat fetches a higher price at the slaughter houses. "Around here, Alentejo cows are a last resort for someone probably too poor to have cows," was how it was explained to me, (Alentejana cows are still a familiar sight at the markets where people from the mountains come to sell). The imported Limousines that co-inhabit the landscape with the Cavaleirence are grazing bits of family, local and national history embodied.

Caring for cows has changed by virtue of the change in breeds and now again with the availability of simple inexpensive mobile electric fences. Where there were once shepherds and cowboys there are now fences. For some this means more time to socialize for others more time to work on other ventures, such as sweet potatoes. Limousine cows are said to be more docile than the old breed, easier to fence and lead to pasture. Fences have always come up and
down and the new electric ones all the more so. Some popular paths are made impractical by the fences. Navigating the local terrain well (using short cuts rather than the few roads) requires knowing who is fencing their land for pasture or at least where the car battery which charges the fences is placed so that they can shut it off while they climb over.

Along with changing how one navigates the landscape, these Limousine cows have also changed the nature of the landscape in another important way. They are the means by which quite a few houses have been built and enlarged, the reason for new white washed sheds and even a number of garages (not only because they provide the money for the car but people are scared that the cows will damage the car by rubbing on it). Cows are a measure of wealth. The profit from selling a calf or fattening a bull is about $550 to $1,000. Usually cows are bred and the young sold after a few months and some are kept and fattened—as much as four times a day, and sold for meat. Some are kept for further breeding if they show promise and are also taught to work with a plough for planting and digging up sweet potatoes. The money which is not turned back into the business is what "saves the farmer." Cow money, I was told, is what allows the Cavaleirence the luxury of subsistence farming. With ever smaller plots of land and a knowledge of a limited number of not very lucrative crops, raising cows and growing sweet potatoes are seen as the only viable alternatives to day labor or selling the land to foreigners and Lisboettas (summer homes from people from Lisbon).

Most households grow fruits and vegetable for their own consumption. They grow cabbages and corn to feed the chickens, pigs and cows and to pay for the price of the irrigation water (selling the corn flour pays the water it takes to grow the corn and cabbage in summer, the corn stalks go to the animals). Cash has to come from selling cows and potatoes, from wages—either from one full
time worker or some combination of part-time and seasonal work amongst several family members. Everyone knows the going price of cows, the purity of the race and the quantity of cows in any given house hold. Bluntly put, the older women in the village were giving me some sound advise one afternoon, it went something like this: "You look good together, anyone can see you like each other and his parents are rich. Did you see how many cows they have? and for what? For their son. He is a good catch and with all those cows you will be well set up!" (The young man in question did wage work an agricultural business while his parents farmed and breed six or seven quality cows on their own land with their own bull). Once when he was telling me about the enlargement of their house from a low four room house to one with a bathroom, attached kitchen, living room and accessible attic space (which required a whole new roof), I asked him how his parents had the money, "My father sold some cows and a bull," was the response. "He had a bull he had bought from some hick up in the hills. He fattened up really nice but the other guy had the last laugh. My father knew we were going to have to make a really big lunch and dinner for all the people who came to help put up the new roof, so he brought some of the meat back from the slaughter house. It was the toughest, chewiest stew, you could have put it in a sling shot to kill birds with!"

His family is considered to be hard working and doing well, especially because his father took advantage of the confusion around the time of the 1974 Revolution to buy cows that were being sold cheaply in a panic by larger farmers who were scared their holdings were going to be seized for agricultural cooperatives. Until then he had not had his own cows but having worked as a boy for one of the wealthier families, he was very knowledgeable about livestock (originally he had herded pigs and turkeys as many young boys did and later cows). The background of any family's cows is enlightening as to a range of
changes in local and national social, economic and political relationships as well as being imbued with cultural values. In contrast to this family, another is considered poor, or more exactly, to have poor judgment, because they sold some land to make similar improvements on their home and then again to buy a car. In fact, this second family had considerably more land than the first and the car was used for the husbands business but the perception was that land should be used for breeding cows which then are the best form of exchange. Land has certain qualities and values which makes it inappropriate for direct consumer exchange.

In review: cows are a presence, they not only dot the landscape they figure prominently in local conversation, in relations between the generations, in what family can mean, they set a certain rhythm to days and seasons and they influence local mentality by the nature of care they require. There is also an infrastructure of cow breeding, sale, transportation, (men often go with their cows and the intermediary buyer to the large slaughter houses near Sétubal, where they witness the slaughter, the weighing in and meet the man who buys most of the meat south of Lisbon and redistributes it to butchers around the country) and slaughter, that extends from family relationships, to the district government to national history. Finally, the cows are very influential in the local (and regional) economy and dictate many of its particularities (how fast you can save over how much time with how much security--how much you can spend at once in one year). Beyond these influences I have chosen to write about these cows because of the weight of their presence as objects--a local passion.

If I showed you a photograph of Cavaleiro it would be worth something more than 1000 words. As McCracken has suggested, objects are not equivalent
to words or a language. They do not express themselves in the same way or express the same things. If I showed you a photograph you could see not only the faces, the texture of skin, the expression, the body language, those things which seem to express our universal humanness but often do the opposite, you might make more sense of the scene by noticing the clothes they are wearing, the cut of jean, the fabric of the shirts, the watch, the soda bottle on the table, the John Deere tractor in the background, the mop in the plastic bucket against the wall or the lack of all these objects. The objects with which people live, and their attitude toward them as one gleams from a photograph might go much further in demonstrating a cultural setting, and cementing the uniqueness and sameness of culture and people. Even the fact that the photograph, in itself, has a presence as an object might help cement an "understanding" in a way all my words can not (but a book that can be tucked under your arm could--reification not only through writing but by objectifying--a book which fits into our code of objects).

McCranken writes about the fundamental importance of consumer culture in shaping our world. He uses as an example that "sub-cultures", such as punks par excellence, undermine their own subversive aims by expressing them exactly in the ever changing object code which in fact, all groups use to "subvert", or arrange some particular meaning for themselves. By expressing themselves through the object code "sub-cultures" engage in a cultural activity which has such radical changes built into its cultural and historic tradition. Objects have an important place in our cultural tradition, in our understanding of culture and society so to write about a culture without attention to its objects renders our understanding of it less convincing no matter the material tradition of the culture described. I am thus describing certain objects of Cavaleiro's material culture to satisfy one arena of our cultural understanding often overlooked in ethnographic accounts (or else rendered in some unintelligible way--ritual objects, or as
artificially separate categories, economy, etc...), and to get at the specific ways object live and are lived with in Cavaleiro because it is a cultural–meaning giving, activity which helps us to understand better how objects function in culture as well as how certain relationships revolve around objects.

II. HOPE-CHESTS

The consumer goods on which the consumer lavishes time, attention, and income are charged with cultural meaning. Consumers use the meaning of consumer goods to express cultural categories and principles, cultivate ideals, create and sustain lifestyles, construct notions of self, and create (and survive) social change. Consumption is thoroughly cultural in character. The reciprocal truth is, of course, that in Western developed societies culture is profoundly connected to and dependent on consumption. Without consumer goods, modern, developed societies would lose key instruments for the reproduction, representation, and manipulation of their culture.

Grant McCracken
Culture and Consumption

**Viewing the Hope-chest.**

Fragment of a conversation between me (D.), A. and her mother, M., from a tape transcript with notes in parentheses.

D: You started putting your hope-chest together when you were fifteen. That wasn't so long ago to already have so many things.
A: Well, I'm seventeen already.
M: Yes, she has a lot of things.
D: If you only get married at twenty, imagine how much stuff you will have!
A: Oh, no, no (Laughing)
M: No, you see, when she more or less has everything she needs, she will stop.
D: Yes. Do you also have kitchen things?
M: We have everything. We'll show you that too.
D: Did you also have a hope-chest? (M. had just come home and was joining the conversation).
M: Yes, I did. I did, but I married younger than her I was 19 (sic?) when I married and I worked for myself. (No help from her mother?)
D: But she works for you. (A. hadn't gone to school since she was fourteen so that she could take care of five or six cows while her parents worked wage jobs. A few months after the interview M. lost her job and A. found one while her mother tended the cows and large, kitchen garden and sweet potatoes).
M: Yes, but the cow is hers.
D: Oh, it is? (and the other cows?)
M: Yes, she works for me but I buy her all these things and when she wants money I give her money.
(I didn't want to talk more about it since I felt very strongly, rightly or wrongly, that A. would have been better off in school.)
D: I get the impression that hope-chests are bigger than they used to be.
M: Yes, that's right. Well, they didn't have all these things in my day. We would buy the material and make our own sheets and like that. Now its all much better, more beautiful.
D: But I like the hand-made things. I also find them beautiful.

(The part of the tape transcript presented here covers the exclusively store bought part of A.'s hope-chest. Earlier we had seen the trunk which contained many hand-made crocheted and lace doilies, tablecloths and}
bedspreads. Hand-made items are made by the young women if she has an inclination or are gifts from her mother or other female relatives. Some of the women are also very skilled knitters and make many baby clothes and blankets.)

M: It's for those who really know how, those who are good at those things.
A: What is in this box?
M: Oh, I think this towel is so pretty.
D: I like white on white too.
M: Yes, and these days I like white to sleep in. I like white. A., Who gave you these? Oh, I remember it was your god-mother or was it the blue ones?
(We are packing things up, laughing and trying to make everything fit back into the large wood trunk.)
A: Let's go into my mothers room. There is another trunk-full in there.
D: There can't be more?!
M: Go turn on the light. In this box are lots of little things--for decoration.
A: These go like this. I really like these little Chinese vases. Aren't they cute? I really like lots of little things.
D: Yeah. Do you also collect them a few at a time?
M: You know how it is, these things are presents, they give a little thing
A: You know it was my friends, one would bring one thing and another something else. Look at this. My god-mother gave it to me.
M: Matching in big and little.
D: Oh, those should come in handy (pot holders).

(As we had in the other room, we unpacked and looked at everything. We commented on the things: what we liked, what it was good for, what other kinds we had seen, where it came from. We also chatted about other things and there was an ongoing conversation comparing marriage there with the
U.S.: A. and I were joking and laughing a lot. Her Mother, M., was more serious. She kept leaving the room and popping back in with different objects and often changed the conversation. I sensed that she was trying to get certain things across to me as she tried to image the "real" reason for my visit and the tape recorder. I had always been more friendly with A. than her mother. One reason was that her mother worked full-time and she was very reserved so we had never found an occasion to chat or visit casually. I knew that she had some particular reasons for being sensitive about being judged or gossiped about. Since she knew I talked with a lot of people in the community, she seemed to want to make sure I understood her generosity toward her daughter. She was genuinely enthusiastic about the hope-chest and obviously involved in its growth. She switched between referring to the hope-chest as, "her's" or "it's" (an animate object with a life of its own—"It has everything except...") and she referred to buying things as "I" and "we.")

A: This is all that is left to see (pulling out a big case of flat ware).

M: 180 pieces.

D: Wow, oh, my God! So you can have a lot of parties.

A: Look at these pusher things.

D: I like the weight of the knives: nice and heavy.

A: I like lighter ones.

M: At her grandmothers are the dishes for her.

A: Hey, what about my little cups that my grandma gave me?

M: Those are in the kitchen. (She goes to get them).

D: This set has everything: knives and forks for cake and fish and these for serving...

A: (giggling) I don't know. This is for fish, this one?

D: No, this is fish and this is
A: For taking things out of the pots. And this? Taking out what?
D: Peas?
A: Peas? Mom, what is this for?
M: Who knows?
A: You see....

(This conversation helped cement my relationship with A. My being ten years F's senior and the fact that I often went out with a group of young men which included her boyfriend while she could not, and the other obvious structural barriers between us, were considerably reversed in this conversation because in the marriage arena I lagged significantly behind her. I had no hope-chest, no female support system and not a very good chance of a proper wedding. Our positions slid towards together. Moreover, in this conversation we were united by the objects we were caressing. She fondled a pile of nick-knacks while I was lusting after the beautifully hand embroidered sheets and lace table clothes. Although our tastes differed, the collection of objects in itself united us. The individual objects were not as important as the collection as a whole because it was embodied with the affection, cooperation and promise of all the women contributing to it and was itself one of the prizes of womanhood. The hope-chest was part of the living dream of marriage. It was a great thing: a highly prized tribute to the value of hard work. It is not just the promise of a great thing to be (home, marriage, motherhood). The wedding itself and the marriage were not the raison d'être of the hope-chest, in fact it almost seemed the opposite. The hope-chest ties women to the institution of marriage with a particularly strong tangible, material bond. The will to marry and the will to buy and own goods (female goods) are closely tied.)

(Even after marriage women keep their hope-chests alive. The chest itself
is often in the front entry of the home and the women continues to store many of her things in there. One women who had been married for many years once took my visit as an opportunity to air out her hope-chest. She took every thing out. She showed me each sheet, towel and doily. She had added her weeding dress and the baptismal gowns of her children. Some of the things had never been used, others used and put back and she had bought new things over the years she had added to the hope-chest. She had lent the table clothes out several times for weddings. When I asked her why she didn't use the things, she winked and answered, "Why spoil them on my husband?" She told me she had bought darker more functional things for their daily use. She said she had enough washing to do already with out worrying about "her" things. Her delight in going through her hope-chest was obvious. I asked her if it was her treasure chest. She winked at me again, "and no one else can touch it!"

M: This here (she comes back into the room with a plate) is the dish set that is at here grandmas. Sixty plates with the whole combination. The man, this month will bring me the coffee and tea service--60,000$ escudos.

D: Hummm everything.

M: All that left is for her to get married.

D: Don't say that too many times! (She has a serious relationship with a young man of 23).

A: Oh, what a horror. (She doth protest too much?)

D: You don't want to?

A: I'm only 17. I'm still young. (Three of her friends, one 16 and two 18 had just recently married).

M: No, that is right, she is only 17.

D: You have time. Choose well (carefully).
A: Choose well so I don't make a mistake.
M: And now she has this kind (real Tupperware! There is also Avon sold here).
D: Oh, yeah. Those are great. They are more expensive but the other ones get ruined instantly.
M: That's right.
A: There are more in the other room my mother went to get.
D: Are these for everyday or for special occasions? (the flatware)
A: Only sometimes, no, but I'm going to use this. I'll keep it put away until I marry. The only forks I have are these. (Most meals are eaten only with forks and spoons).
M: No, you know what it is? I would like to buy her silverware.
A: Like Nela, hers are silver (plate) aren't they? Hers are really nice. I saw them when the bishop came.
M: These for day to day and the silver for those times
D: Yes, but isn't that a lot of expense just for those times?
A: That's right but
M: Well, all that still needs to be bought is another set of stem ware.
D: Your mother treats you fine.
A: Of course. And you see I don't have any brothers or sisters.
M: Some stem wear was already at my mothers when we moved from there but the man (her husband) left them there when we moved.
D: These are for butter. (We are fiddling with the flat ware throughout the conversation).
A: And these?
D: For meat.
A: This is for sauce.
D: Umhum.
M: Diana, will marry here and buy her hope-chest here!
D&A: Ohhhh laughing
M: Don't you want to get married here?
D: Maybe, but buying a complete hope-chest?!
A: Little by little.
M: People say you are going to marry here.
D: People know more than I do. If I knew, I don't have secrets but I don't know.
A: People know more than ourselves...and what they don't know they invent.
D: Yeah. Like I said I'm not a secretive person. If I knew I would say.
M: That's right. You don't know if it's yes.
D: I don't say yes or no. Until the day who knows?
M: I'm like that too.
A: Of course (laughing).
D: Until we arrive at the church!
M: This wasn't expensive. It cost 24,000 esc. last year.

(When women talk about their hope-chests they never mention their fathers or male relatives. Purchases are made by mothers and are considered gifts from mothers. In fact, the purchases seem to be paid for by the women with special money they put aside. Some of the money may come from the fathers but it is never mentioned in the context of the hope-chest. Rather "my parents" or "my father" is used when talking about who paid for the wedding, furniture or the house.)

(Women in Cavaleiro, work, with very few exceptions, as agricultural day wage workers. The work is rarely year-round and the pay at best minimum wage (about $280 take home monthly). Her money and her daughters, if she is working, may largely be spent on purchases for the hope-chest during at least five years. Grandmothers and relatives who work exclusively on their own
land contribute with handy-craft (some of them also sell these items to vendors for obscenely low prices--one women showed me a magnificent bedspread she had just finish for which she was paid $200. It had taken approximately all of her "free-time" for a year).

A: These are some big forks!

D: I don't know how you chose, I'm terrible at choosing and knowing you just buy it once makes it worse. (I was wondering about A.'s connection to these objects. It seemed that it was more important to buy all the kinds of things necessary than worry about the quality or distinctiveness of any object).

A: My mother, my mother was the one who chose it. I got home one day and

M: You know this isn't chosen. They come out, they follow

A: The fashion.

M: That's right. They have various names. This one is Dom José. They all have names.

D: Yes, but you have to pick the pattern you want?

M: No. This pattern I bought because it was the latest.

A: Following the fashion, you understand?

M: It was the latest one the man (ambulant salesman) brought with him, this Dom José.

A: Of the dishes it's Vista Alegre (a well known porcelain company)--the latest fashion that Vista Alegre came out with now. I'll show you at my Grandmother's.

M: That dish I showed you before, she is going to have the whole dinner and coffee and tea set. The man is going to bring it all, the latest fashion to come out.

A: That came out. But the other one (an earlier style) was prettier--It's not because its the latest--but from Vista Alegre it happens that I liked the earlier one a lot. But I like this one too, and I choose it, it was pretty.
M: But the last one he had was Dom José--I wasn't going to buy the older model was I? and also it was only this one or the other. (The dishes and flat wear get confused here but the idea is the same. I really wondered if it was "the latest" or the one that the salesman happened to have at that moment. I felt they were very disadvantaged in their consumer strategies but again it struck me that the distinctiveness, taste, style of the objects was secondary to the practice of buying and developing consumer strategies. An important part of A.'s rite of passage to womanhood was buying and acquiring objects. Ironically, though her mother insisted she have "the latest" fashion, A. would probably not start using them for several years to come. In that sense the hope-chest seems again to be more important in the present than as a future wife.)

D: There (in the States) you have to go buy them in a store with so many right next to each other and a person has to choose, "Oh, I like this but oh, this one too."

A: Yeah, that is too confusing. Here it's simpler, one or the other. I like it.

D: Its very nice. Look, your going to have to have lots of parties and invite lots of people.

A: And if you are still here I will invite you too.

D: Good, good.

A: Jeez, so many different serving things. (The flat ware had captured our imagination. It was fancy, brand new and shining in a dizzy baroque pattern. Not only was it glamorous, all neatly arranged in its red velour case, but it conjured up and celebrated all that was to be the best of home: lots of family enjoying a big meal together, with plenty of everything).

D: I think my mother would like it if I had a hope-chest. (I know I would have, I think to myself, sitting there surrounded by mounds of treasures which can be enjoyed just like this, a late-afternoon material orgy or as the multiples of a
"home", a piece of purpose and dream). My sisters didn't.
A: They just married first and bought everything.
M: Well, what do they, what is to put in their houses, how do they build a house?
D: Often couples rent an apartment.
A: And they buy little by little.
D: And the houses are already made. They have to buy one, not build one....(I explain down payments and paying off a mortgage and that couples sometimes start with hand-me-downs and second hand until they can afford better).
A.&M.: Oh, here no, here no! (They seemed very skeptical about my description. I wanted to defend my parents but I think they would still have found it hard to imagine parents not setting their children up with the necessities of life—a house included— at marriage.)
D: Here people wait until they have everything.
M: Well, some do and some don't. For example if A. was to marry now I would buy her the rest of what is missing from her hope-chest. The rest I would buy with the money, 400,000$ or 500,000$ esc. ($3,000-$4,000 dollars, about M.'s salary for a year) as was called for. Yes, and the groom, if he could, would build the house. If I had the money I would give the money to buy the bedroom furniture, the bed, those things they needed most and them they would go about buying the rest when they could.
D: You'd buy the rest at one time. (She is imagining one possible variant of the marriage. Depending on the circumstances the families of the bride and groom try to contribute as much as they possibly can. If one has land to offer, the other might try to provide money for the house and split the furnishings. Often the couple moves in with one set of parents until they can afford to build their own. This arrangement is not usually preceded by a wedding, just a "joining" (the couple gets her things and in the morning one mother finds her daughter
missing while the other finds her son sharing his bed with a young women she may not even know.)

M: All at once. If she marries when she is twenty or so then it would cost more so we try to buy things now.

(We start to talk about a couple that recently had gotten married after being engaged about seven or eight years while they waited to build a nice well stocked house. We discussed the merits and draw backs of waiting to marry for material reasons.)

In this conversation A. and her mother are showing me the contents of A.'s hope-chest. Such showings are not uncommon when friends or relatives from other towns come to visit. The display also serves as the back drop for talking about certain subjects we might not have broached otherwise. I visited with several young women with the purpose of seeing their hope-chests which they call simply, "my trunk" or "my chest". Most friends show each other the pieces they collect as they go along. They know quite a bit about each others hope-chests. They often go in small groups with their mothers to the fairs and buy things, so they participate in each others purchases and often buy the same things. Many of the objects in their hope-chests are gifts from each other. There are a limited number of ambulant vendors that come to them to sell things like silverware, dishes, sheet sets, and fancy towels. The vendors often comment on who in the neighborhood has bought what. These hope-chests involve young women in quite a bit of consumer activity and handy-craft.

Since the revolution of 1974 and more recently, with Portugal's entrance into the EEC, an explosion in the availability of consumer goods has taken place. Hope-chest purchases come from the few stores in the surrounding towns, the
ambulant vendors and most often various monthly and annual fairs. Commonly, the availability of transportation limited consumerism as much as did money. (Before cars and buses people walked and rode to these fairs making them a several day affair and a chance for women to show off their hand woven and richly embroidered donkey throws). Fairs now mean special buses and the possibility of getting a ride with other relatives (as do funerals).

It is not the case that consumer goods are completely new and that their impact has not been felt up until now. What has changed recently is the scale and speed of newly available products. More products are now within a price range most families and individuals can afford or more aptly have decided they can afford. Loosening the purse strings has been a cultural and generational tug of war. In the almost ten years since I first went to Portugal (1985) there has a very noticeable change not only in the sheer number and types of goods available but in the merchandising and advertising. In 1985 many of the ads were what we would consider very crude and they concentrated on educating the public on what a product was, how to use it and why you needed it.

Currently the majority of ads are highly symbolic and assume a lot of knowledge about the object code. The symbolic education about goods is far from complete. It is, of course, always changing because that is its nature, but, in Cavaleiro at least, it does not seem sure that all of the ground rules have been interpreted in the manner originally intended. The object code and its meanings have been adopted in novel specific and often truncated ways.

These days more and more families are buying cars and new week-end excursions may take them to big super stores to buy VCR's, washing machines and even groceries. (There used to be week-end excursions on buses to go shopping in Spain but now that Spanish currency is stronger than the Portuguese the trend has been reversed. Those excursions used to take large groups from
the village and would combine tourism, fun--the trips often coincided with
carnival, and consumerism.)

In Odemira, where most women go to shop for things not available in
Cavaleiro, where they go to take care of bureaucratic and medical matters (often
requiring several visits to resolve), the number of shops selling predominantly
household goods has doubled in the last ten years. Electrical appliances have
particularly flooded the market. These items are new hope-chest and wedding
favorites. For weddings and special occasions, the young women especially, are
not satisfied with the selection in Odemira. They do buy things there but they
like to shop around first.

Shopping expeditions to buy wedding clothes and presents are festive
occasions. Small groups find a willing car owner and set off in a wide circuit
going from town to town until everyone has bought something to wear. Rather
than going to Lisbon with its abundance of stores, they like to stay, "in the
region" going to every little town with a store or two and to one of the smaller
cities. It is a peculiar map they draw, distinguishing between towns with, "only
old stuff" (not worth a stop), or "where my cousin works in the cafe" (worth a
stop) and increasingly where, "we saw that really nice mixer Camila bought."
This map also reflects a general sentiment that the coastal region is better than
the interior. (I was quite surprised to find how much the interior capital did
have to offer when I finally went there. Villagers had had me believing it might
not). Searching out ever more, better, different, clothes and gifts has expended
most women's geography. Purchasing becomes a reason to travel to places they
would not normally have ventured.

While clothes and gifts are often bought on these excursions different
consumer expectations come into play. For instance, when buying an appliance
or furniture most people are nervous about buying from strangers. A washing
machine may be cheaper at a super store but as a neighbor told me while her's was being installed, "I'd rather buy here in Odemira from this store where they know me. They deliver and install it and if anything goes wrong they know me. In fact, his (the store owner) sister is married to my direct cousin (children of uncles and aunts rather than more distant or second generation cousins). And anyway, you go to one of those super stores and you could buy the wrong thing."

When I asked people why they didn't go to Lisbon or the southern capital city, Faro, they expressed anxiety about getting lost, not knowing how to behave and being cheated. The maps each drew (some expanding and others ever more limited) depended not only the goods they were looking for, but their general comfort level with new situations and things, "too old" or "too modern" (youth avoiding the former, older persons the latter), and the consumer strategies they practice. Some of the women surprised me by requesting to go to a relatively busy city over a quieter one until they explained that they could go to the busier one because a niece had once worked there in a cafe where they had visited her. They didn't know where the cafe was or how to get there but they had been to the city before and knew there were some nice places and people.

Consumer practices very much influenced these personal maps. For instance, in distinguishing a town which youth wanted to go to because it was more "modern", they could point to the difference between towns by the presence of a solitary boutique with a fashionable window display and a young sales person. The rest of the town was identical to the other: four cafes, two grocery stores, a household goods store, houses, gardens, streets etc.. The presence of that one store was enough to make the whole town have a desirable aura. Ironically, when I participated on these shopping ventures I noticed that more purchases actually took place in the relatively old fashioned type stores
than in the boutiques. The old fashion ones often did have a cache of party
dresses in the back and sales people who didn't intimidate them. They told me
that the clothes and boutiques themselves were about the same in price but too
elegant (rather than pretty as they preferred). The boutiques required a
shopping style they were not completely comfortable with. They were not used
to walking into a store just to look and participate in the type of free-floating
desire those kinds of places were supposed to inspire. It didn't help that the
sales women often followed them around the store and expected them to
verbalize exactly what they wanted. When they did go into the more old fashion
stores which had a wide selection of everything from house-coats to party
dresses, they asked for what they wanted and usually purchased an item if it fit
that general description even if they weren't completely happy with it; "It's close
enough."

Before moving on to another object I want to use this hope-chest material
to comment on several aspects of consumer culture which McCracken in the
chapter, "Meaning Manufacture and Movement in the World of Goods" (1990:71-
90). The chapter deals with the meanings carried by goods and finds them,
"enormously more various and complex then the Veblian attention to status was
capable of recognizing". Building on the original ideas of Veblen, McCracken
suggests that,

Meaning resides in three locations: the culturally constituted world, the
consumer good, and the individual consumer. It [the chapter] has
identified advertising, the fashion system, and consumer rituals as the
means by which meaning is drawn out of and transferred between these
locations. Advertising and the fashion system move meaning from the
culturally constituted world to consumer goods, while consumer rituals move meaning from the consumer good to the consumer. This is the trajectory of the movement of cultural meaning in modern, developed societies. (1990:89)

Because I use the viewing of the hope-chest as the center piece for this section I was particularly interested in what McCracken had to say about consumer rituals. He identifies exchange rituals, possession rituals, grooming rituals and divestment rituals. Possession rituals comes closest to describing what A., M., and I were involved in but I want to point out some of the specifics of the case which raise other questions.

McCracken describes possession rituals as those activities consumers engage in involving new objects, "cleaning, discussing, comparing, reflecting, showing off, and even photographing." He continues, "This process of claiming is not the simple assertion of territoriality through ownership. It is also an attempt to draw from the object the qualities that it had been given by the marketing forces of the world."

According to McCracken and others much of what is gleamed from consumer goods is about status hierarchies, distinctiveness and self-definition. He states,

The act of personalizing is, in effect, an attempt to transfer meaning from the individual's own world to the newly obtained good. The new context in this case is the individual's complement of consumer goods, which has now assumed personal meanings as well as public ones. Indeed, it is perhaps chiefly in this way that an anonymous possession--manifestly the creation of a distant impersonal process of mass manufacture--is turned
into a possession that belongs to someone and speaks for him or her. It is, perhaps, in this manner that individuals create a personal "world of goods" which reflect their own experience and concepts of self and world. The meaning that advertising transfers to goods is the meaning of the collectivity. The meaning these personal gestures transfer to the goods is the meaning of the collectivity as this meaning has been inflected by the particular experience of the individual consumer. (1990:85-86)

The personal nature of assigning and extracting meaning from goods is questionable given what seems to be on the part of the *Cavaliere* a limited interest in the meanings of goods, or their style. People what to own things they find pretty (colorful, I was told because black mourning clothes are the place for sadness), cool or useful and cheap. When I talked to them about the objects in their hope-chests, homes and stores I found that interpretation of what goods were "about" differed wildly. Judgments based on one type of X being better than another was very rare on any other criteria than price. Shades of meaning and affinity were not expressed. I was often struck by the fact that people bought the same goods as others without any apprehension about trying to be different. Young women often bought the same outfits and wore them together. There is real pressure amongst the *Cavaliere* to try not to act better than anyone else. There is also a strong fear of ridicule. These two factors and often limited choices undermine the distinctiveness and individuality factors McCracken speaks so strongly about. There is one women in town who is often teased (but not to her face) because there are several stories about how angry she gets when ever she learns that someone had purchased something for their home that she also had. She even reportedly tried to return something because she found out someone else had it. Returning or exchanging merchandise is almost
unheard of. She was thought to be vain and silly in this way.

Another collective component of Cavaleirence consumption is the strength of gift giving. Many of the items people own are gifts. In that way they are inscribed in collectivity of sorts but not exactly the one McCracken refers to above. The advertising, fashion system and cultural producers collectivity that imbues goods with meanings that individuals are then supposed to extract is mediated somewhat in this case. It is not just that they may "lack" some of the necessary information, it is that they interpret it differently. There is the filter of community, of fitting in, of not offending others or sticking out too much, there is also the fact that the process of consuming seems to be receiving more attention than the goods themselves. That, "the self is built through consumption [and that] consumption expresses the self" (Campbell 1983:288), does not capture the moment. Cavaleirence of different ages, exposure, ideas, fit differently into the consumption world not just vis a vis some evolutionary trajectory but because of some cultural specifics which at present, anyway, influence the process in other ways.

III. MOTORBIKES

Problematizing the spatial:
A break with the trope of community in realist ethnography. The concept of community in the classic sense of shared values, shared identity, and thus shared culture has been mapped literally onto locality to define one basic frame of reference orienting ethnography. The connotations of solidity and homogeneity attaching to the notion of community, whether concentrated in a locale or dispersed, has been replaced in the framework of modernity by the idea that the situated production of identity--of a
person, of a group, or even a whole society--does not depend alone, or even always primarily, on the observable, concentrated activities within a particular locale or a diaspora. The identity of anyone or any group is produced simultaneously in many different locales of activity by many different agents for many different purposes....For a modernist approach to identity in ethnography, it is this process of dispersed identity in many different places of differing character that must be grasped. Of course, such a requirement presents new and some very difficult problems of research method and textual representation in ethnography, but to capture the formation of identity (multiple identities, really) at a particular moment in the biography of a person or the history of a group of people through the configuration of very differing sites or locales of activity recognizes both the powerful integrating (rationalizing) drives of the state and economy in modernity, along with the constant technological innovations to power these drives, and the resulting dispersals of the subject--person or group--in multiple overlapping fragments of identity that are also characteristic of modernity (see Marcus, 1989)....Cultural difference or diversity arises here not from some local struggle for identity, but is a function of a complex process among all the sites in which the identity of someone or a group anywhere is defined in simultaneity.

George E. Marcus
Past, Present and Emergent Identities: Requirements for Ethnographies of Late 20th Century Modernity Worldwide

Motorbikes make maps

While young women save their first money until the next fair to spend on sets of sheets and towels for their hope-chests, young men spend their first money on baile entrances and bumper cars but save their first money for several years to buy their first motorbike. Motorbikes are a prominent feature in the daily lives and aspirations of young men, as well as a vehicle toward establishing their manhood and status as adults. It also involves them in specific relations to consumer processes which influence not only their configuration of gender but also their "place in the world" via a geographic scoping and scaling. Tracing the
various aspects of motorbike culture, if you will, maps out relations, spaces and identities as well as suggests something about the presence and ways of objects and consumerism.

Motorbikes are probably the most significant feature of young single men's lives. They save for years to buy one, they talk about them frequently and at length, they spend a great deal of time riding and repairing them, they also spend the money they make on the habits which the motorbikes allow them (namely roaming, "wasting gas" as their mothers constantly remind them, and going to dances and discotheques and dating in the surrounding region). Following these motorbikes maps out the space of daily practice which would be hard to perceive using other vehicles available to the anthropologist.

Maps like photos

I could draw you a map of Cavaleiro: a regional one with an inset of the hamlet with each house, road and stream. It might serve as a visual aid attesting to the fact that the place exists and merits a map as does any other geographic site. It might stand in as a physical object to represent Cavaleiro's actual presence--an object to help grasp its objectness. A map might also be used as part of an argument about the physical cause and socio-cultural effect.

Maps of identities of young men:

What they become and where they have to go

When a young man goes to buy his first motorbike it is usually from a nearby town. He goes with his father of a group of friends, he puts down the money, maybe his parents pay a part, he listens to a lecture on how to break in the motor, a subject he has already discussed at length with his friends. He puts on his helmet and tears off as if desperate to get out of site of the garage and his
father. He pushes the motorbike as hard as it will go up the curves leaving Odemira, he lets it coast down around Malavado and then lays it out on the stretch of eucalyptus to see how fast it will go. When he gets to Cavaleiro his friends come out to have a look. Long discussions ensue. He buys drinks for them all as people usually do when any good fortune befalls them (another birthday, passing the drivers license, opening a business, slaughtering a particularly prize bull).

Most guys start riding motorbikes at about eleven. They ride their mothers or sister’s motorbikes. They try out the old one Grandpa has in the garage. They can’t legally take them on the road so they take them in the packed dirt roads and congregate out near the lighthouse where they spend hours nosily zooming up and down a cross-county course along the sea cliffs. By the time they get a motorbike license, their own helmet and bike, they are already very proficient riders and navigators. They have already started going to other bailes and towns albeit on the back of a friends motorbike or else using an old family hand-me-down motorbike. Often these bikes aren’t legal either because insurance has lapsed or because of their state of disrepair. Stories of evading police and inventing cross country routes to other towns start early.

Old hand-me-down motorbikes don’t usually survive the beating they take in the dunes and on the back roads and anyway, young men want their own new motorbikes if for no other reason than to keep up with their friends in both senses. Young men usually go out in groups of four to ten and they ride in a group racing and passing each other all the way. They do so not only for fun but also because if anything should happen (running out of gas, breakdowns, accidents, police, or other travelers) no one is stranded in the middle of the country side. A motorbike of one’s own is the particular site of desire of young men. It is a desire they almost unanimously make a reality. Young women and
other working women may also have motorbikes but they are not surrounded by
the same energy and mystic. Women usually buy cheaper and slower women's
models. Unlike the men they use the bikes primarily during the weekdays to go
to and from work and for chores. Young men on the other hand use them at
night to go to the cafe and on the week-ends for recreation.

For the group of young men now ages thirty-five to fifteen, the story of
their first motorbike might be as follows. (For the group just "coming of age" the
story may be somewhat different as various aspects of the landscape change,
especially the increase in mandatory schooling from sixth grade to ninth and a
rack down on child labor practices.)

Zé left school after sixth grade, he was fourteen. His parents wanted him
to continue his schooling but he says he had already gotten interested in
vadiagem, a combination of hanging-out and roaming. He wanted to have his
own money to do so. He went to work with his father doing tractor service and
other agricultural ventures. His father split their earnings 50% for each. Zé had
already begun to practice riding his father's motorbike. In fact he took it out into
the dunes and countryside as much possible. His friends were a little older and
had their own bikes and a few had cars. He was already going out with these
friends to surrounding towns. He says of the years between fourteen and sixteen
he didn't manage to save very much but just enough to keep his father from
complaining too much. When he turned sixteen he went and got a motorbike
license and started to ask his father for his savings so that he could buy his own
motorbike. Since Zé scouted jobs for them on his father's motorbike and because
it was typical for young men to have their own motorbikes, his father finally
agreed. Zé's earnings were not enough but his parents had invested the yearly
child bonuses the government gave them in cows for Zé. Zé sold one of the cows
and bought his bike with half and a calf with the other. After that he said he spent most of his money on gas and entertainment.

Zé decided to give construction a try. The first time he only lasted two weeks, the second time for nine months. In between he tried some restaurant work, some house building, and a variety of agricultural wage jobs. The second time he left construction because he didn't like the lifestyle and because he had learned enough of a trade to be able to make more money closer to home. When he was eighteen he took a driver instruction course and got his license. He decided he wanted a car and started to save. When I asked him why he wanted a car he told me that every one wants a car after they get their license (not a small investment in and of itself--it is very expensive and takes months), "There is so many things you can do with a car you can't with a motorbike (with this we all had a laugh). Cough, cough...You know what I mean. It's different and it means you don't have to stay home all winter."

Any young man who doesn't start on these forays by sixteen is labeled a mama's boy or a santinho, a little saint. Being able to "take to the road" and master all skills involved in the physical riding (started in the dunes and perfected on cement) and the many activities that it involves them in are essential to their "manhood." Working and playing hard are paramount and the motorbike is tied up with both. Most young men have to work hard to get their motorbike and then seek wage employment to maintain it and upgrade its carburetors. They need to pay for insurance, ever improved helmets, gas (a tank full on a good night), the drinking and eating money, the clothes, the baile entrance fees and if they start to date more seriously they will buy small presents, usually charms and gold or silver chains. Wedding presents, occasional movies and prostitutes are other expenses young men may incur. These young men do not usually contribute to the family income where they
sleep on week-ends, leave their laundry to be done, and eat. They do occasionally help with special (and usually festive group) agricultural tasks, pig slaughters and sweet potato harvest, or putting up a roof. They do, however, take care of all of their own expenses. This is significant as land holdings get smaller and smaller and cash from agriculture as hard to secure as always. If there are younger children in the family young men are especially pushed to be independent and often to make gifts of clothes or toys to their siblings. As one father explained it to me, "My son wanted to borrow money to go out this weekend, actually he asked his mother but I came in just then. I told him, 'no way!' He has his own job and saved and saved for his motorbike. Now he doesn't even have enough for all the roaming he wants to do. If we start giving him a thousand escudos [about $7.00] here and there every time he asks when he goes to get married we would have the shame of having nothing to give him. But he still a moço young and single."

Watching the dynamics of these house-holds it appeared that a mother and father would take care of the agricultural tasks maybe joined by one of their single siblings or an elderly parent while their children would study or work for wages. The parents preferred to work the land and save to give their sons or daughters money for a house to build on a corner of it and be able to continue to work it after the child married although it was understood that each child had equal inheritance rights. Ownership of the land is implied from birth. As the parcels have gotten smaller parents encourage the boys to roam and the girls to study because it means wage work will support the children and they can continue to support themselves through agriculture and make a significant contribution to the children’s well-being usually supplying the land and/or some of the money to build a house. Parents often expressed both that there wasn’t enough for their children to do on the farm to warrant full time attention and the
anxiety that one day the children would inherit the land and not even know what to do with it.

Zé did tell me that one of the draw backs with family agricultural work and one of his reasons for a switching to wage work (even within agriculture) was that family money was inconsistent (as well as the conflicts inevitable with one's father about how to do things). When a crop was harvested he might get his share but he never knew how much it would be and the temptation would always be to spend big for a while and then run out of money and sit home while his friends went out or have to borrow from a friend which he never liked to do. He had several women that he visited with in different towns so suddenly not having gas money was not something he wanted to face. His friend, who often rode with him, teased him that if he ran out of gas money the women would suspect him of foul play because gas money to any one of the towns wouldn't have been so difficult to arrange—not having it to go to all three would spell trouble (it doesn't mean that she may not also be getting visitors from three different towns). If it seems that the young women were investing a lot money and work into their hope-chests and future marriage, the men also term their roaming as "doing everything you have to do before you get married so that you won't do it after." They too are preparing for their future marriages.

Rogério stayed in high school until he was twenty. His parents and the community considers it an act of generosity and sacrifice. His father was a tradesman and his mother and father worked the farm, his brother was ten years younger than he. During the summers he worked with his father and helped at home. He used an old motorbike they had to go out with and often rode on the back of a friend's bike since his was so old and slow, as well as, illegal. When he quit school after tenth grade (he repeated several grades), he did a short
construction stint and then started working as a carpenter in the region. He got his own motorbike as some as he could. He souped it up and started "making up for lost time!" He has an impressive stock of accident scars and tales of police evasions (both from drunken driving). To make up for the cash lean school years he loves to eat in restaurants and drink heavily. For a while he was spending considerable money on prostitutes. He is a big man and likes to impress his friends with his ability to do heavy work, fight when need be and eat. After about five years of this he decided he would try to change his ways. He admitted that all of that was too expensive and now that he had a fiancee he had better start thinking about other things. Going to school past the required age is considered by most of his peers (but changing now) as somewhat suspect. It is something for sissies, city boys and rich (soft) guys. His adopting a trade rather than trying for a clerks job and all his hearty roaming could have been designed to dispel any doubts about his character (others said that is over bearing mother was responsible for his reckless behavior).

For Rogério, going to work and getting his own motorbike were what he calls his crazy days, his independent days, the days he, "Began to appreciate [also has the meaning to see, take in and taste] the region and her life" (grinning, he emphasized the feminine article so that we would get his pun). All of the bits of speech in this section on motorbike is not from interviews but rather comes from riding around with these young men and listening to the cafe talk which continually narrates these events and memories and enshrines them clearly as "the good old days" or "these are the days!" Each young man has a one-up story about the craziest time, the wildest thing they had done.

The last time I was in Cavaleiro for a wedding in February of 1993, many of the young men I had first known in 1989 were now getting married, or had fiancées and the group nossa malta our crowd, was not as "united" as it had been.
On Sunday night, as the wedding was winding down, we sat in a cafe and the reminiscences were of many of the evenings I had participated in. Now, I learned of some details I hadn't caught at the time. Hearing it all told as the stories of the crazy days we all used to have together did make it seem grande. Affirming for each other how things had changed Rogerio got pensive while the others started to talk about soccer. He leaned over to me since I wasn't paying too much attention to soccer either and said, "You know my motorbike is a bucket of rust now. Every time I ride it the muffler falls off. I just used it to come to town and half the time I get a ride home with my neighbor. The beer is as good in this town as any other anyway." Barriga over heard us and added, "And not just the beer either!" He was referring to Rogério's fiancée who turned out, after all that roaming, to be a Cavaleirenc woman.

Barriga dropped out of school after fourth grade. He stayed home and helped his parents on their farm. At sixteen he got his own motorbike from money he had earned there. He quickly started to explore the region and started to need more money than he could ask his father for on a regular basis so he got a construction job. He has worked construction jobs now off and on for the last seven years. He has been fired and rehired several times as well as quit and gone back. When I knew him he would show up in the cafes occasionally on Mondays and when we asked him why he wasn't at the construction site (usually a several hours away), he would laugh and tell us how he had gone out on Sunday night and not woken in time to get a ride. When the crew was working on the pavilion in Seville for the 1993 World's Fair the ride left at three-thirty in the morning and took two van loads of men away for at least two weeks and often a month at a time.
In the 1960s Cavaleiro was designated as a hamlet which would receive irrigation canals as well as paved roads and a modicum of electricity. Men were hired to do road and canal construction. Women, several years later were hired to do massive tree and shrub plantings (some of the young men joked about their mothers planting those famous trees and shrubs around the lighthouse, "Thanks Mom! If she only knew!"). Those construction jobs, partly designed to keep men from fleeing to Paris where the Portuguese are largely credited with having built the massive concrete living complexes which surround the city, completely transformed the physical and social fabric of Cavaleiro and the region. It stands as the then and now, before and after, reference point of local history.

With these early construction jobs, young men, some whom owned property and others who did not, had worked primarily as day laborers, herders and shepherds for the bigger farms. Without irrigation the growing season was very short and uncertain. Eking out a living was difficult even for those with land. These men were often paid with room (in the barn) and board but little else. With the construction jobs they quickly found themselves with more cash than their previous employer who subsequently found it very difficult to get anyone to work the land or herd for them. (I learned some of this history from a report done about Cavaleiro, (MS.: 1972), by a social science student for the department of irrigation of the ministry of agriculture. His name is José Fernando De Figueiro Pereira and he was gracious enough to lend me a copy when I went to visit him at the social security claims office in the provincial capital where he now works.)

Men who had land but had never had enough money to farm it could now do so, others who had no land now had an opportunity to get out of a situation which very much resembled indentured servitude and hopes to eventually buy land. By the time the road and canal construction was finished, many houses
had been built, more land was under cultivation, better pasturage was available so cows could be owned on smaller lots, new crops, such as rice, were introduced to the area, there were paved road between them and surrounding towns as well as the county seat. Several stores and cafes appeared. The standard of living for most people has steadily increased since that period. Older people often told me, "This is luxury now, if someone doesn't work it is because they don't want to. These days people don't go hungry like we did or eat porridge three meals a day and then chickpeas until you could die from the sight of them....Then this place was real misery." A man who had worked building the road remembered it a little differently. He told us of the low wages and the ways they had of cheating you. Working from sun up to sun down and they insisted you be there on rainy days just in case it stopped raining but wouldn't pay you. And he told about how hard it was to keep the farm going under those conditions. Despite the fundamental changes he did not consider giving up farming and going into construction work. The wages were just to make the improvements he needed so that he and his wife could farm their own place. "I think I bought a cow. I had never had my own before then," he recounted.

For the group of young men I have been writing about (many of them sons of the above mentioned men), the first major construction jobs they held were luxury villas (a Club Med village and a British vacation club with a golf course in a place where local farmers and residents suffer water shortages regularly), hotels and a casino all on the southern coast known as the Algarve. When a local man became a sub-contractor for a big construction company responsible for building a major mining operation almost all of the young men participated. That job lasted for about five years. The sub-contractor and his partner also continued sending men to the Algarve for another casino complex.
After that there was work in Seville, and building a major bridge in the north of the country. Last I heard they were back in the Algarve building condominiums.

Their specialty is building the forms for pouring concrete foundations, pillars and floors. The young men have to work through the ranks and pay scale. They start out as, what they call, servants. They do all the mixing, fetching and grunt work the carpenters and masons can dish up. Some move up to become apprentices or carpenters or masons themselves. Many quit before that happens. Some have gone to work for other sub-contractors from near by towns at the same sites.

I went to visit two of the sites, eat and rode there and back with them. A small group collected outside of the home of the sub-contractor, Raposa. It was quarter to five and still dark. Someone knocked on the window to make sure he was up. Everyone had their bag of clothes for the week and some also brought some food and extra cigarettes. Raposa, laughed when he saw me, "So, you really meant it this time?" He insisted I sit up front with him. Everyone else sits on the benches and instantly assumes a slump-and-sleep-posture. It took us about 35 minutes to get out of the region because we had to drive down a number of back roads to go pick-up some of the men in several towns. We met up with the other van and started a two hour journey at break-neck speed. Ten sleeping men and me wide eyed with white knuckles. The two vans stopped at a cafe about half an hour from the construction site. Everyone stumbled out for a smoke, coffee, and sandwich. Jokes about hangovers and the women who must have worn them out began. Raposa put on a tape and the men talked and stared out the windows until we arrived. We went to the barracks first so they could drop off their clothes and to pick up some of the men who got their on their own or stayed the week-end.

Raposa had several African workers who lived at the compound and did
as many extra hours as possible. They lived in their own barracks with other Africans were as all of the rest of Raposa's men stayed together. He told me everyone was happier that way and that they liked to talk their own language. Women are not usually allowed inside the compound but Raposa explained I would just be there for a little while with him.

The compound was a messy jumble of long wooded huts, a cafeteria building, muddy paths leading to some showers. Behind all of this was a lot with various construction vehicles and materials. All of this was fenced in. On two sides was country side and on the other an apartment building and the road. The insides of the huts were as bare and dirty as you can imagine. The floor boards were warped and creaky, you could see light through the walls. Each had a bed platform with a thin foam mattress and a little closet. I felt embarrasses about going in. They laughed and said things like, "Isn't this a beautiful shit?!" "You should see it when it had been raining and everything is just mud and the wind comes through." "This is better than in the mines. At least we have three pool tables and better food."

The compound houses about two hundred men. Later I visited the mine site. They were right; the conditions there were worse. They were fifteen minutes from the mines in a valley town of two dozen houses. It was freezing in the winter and sweltering in the summer and they were as they put it, "In the middle of nowhere." The cafeterias were similar to the barracks and the food consisted mostly of fried potatoes and mystery meats. Bean stew was another frequent dish. Despite how they all complained about the food, Riberinho had the scar of a fork imprint in this hand left there by his dinning companion for having tried to steal an extra pork chop off the other's plate....

As long as I am in this vein I will also mention that they work in unnecessarily hazardous conditions, they are under insured and under paid.
They work by the hour, with no contracts or conditions. With labor so cheap and manufactured goods still so expensive, they often do physical labor of the most brutal type rather than use simple machinery. I saw one young man in the blazing sun, throwing buckets of cement as fast as his assistant could fill them, from the ground to where his partner standing ten feet up was catching them and passing them to the masons.

The crews work together but they also work side by side with other crews from all over the country. They often socialize in groups with these other men. Many are the stories of all night escapades to discotheques full of foreign tourists, bars, beaches and bordellos. These stories often reveal both their pleasure at mastering new environments and their anxiety about being made out as hicks. They often compare their skills to those of other groups of men. The other kinds of stories that they repeated often in the cafes back home, were about the practical jokes they played on each other designed usually to save themselves work and make a fool out of someone else. The jokes involved sending initiates to go get tools that didn't exist or getting them to carry all the gear with some plausible excuse while they went to smoke a cigarette or hiding someone's shoes. One elaborate prank involved unscrewing everyone's bed so they as they came in and lied down the bed would collapse. Sharing and surviving the construction life made for an cagey camaraderie amongst them. They learned both to depend on each other as well as always be suspicious and alert and to be as bold as the next to take advantage of any situation.

The young men don't save any money at these jobs largely because of their outings and their week-end motor bike roamings back home as well as the cafeteria meals and lodgings which are taken out of their earnings. By the last week of the month there is a lot of bumming for cigarettes and attempts to get an advance. There are family men, not to mention Raposa and his partner, who
make more money than the servants and are more frugal. Their money is an important source of family income. Many of the young men, however, quit these construction jobs after a year or two with no savings to show for it. They said there was easier work closer to home where they could sleep in their own bed. They might not make so much but their parents would feed them better and they would probably manage to save.

The north of Portugal experienced a massive wave of immigration in the sixties and seventies to construction sites and factories in France. Some of the middle-aged men had gone briefly and one older man still lives there but comes back every summer. The numbers are not anything close to other regions and even contemporarily few young men were very enthusiastic about the possibility of emigration. There was a call for workers to go to Canada but after the initial excitement about the high salaries they began to guess, "It's certain to be worse than construction here. Oil rigs out in the woods. Too cold. The money always sounds good but after air fare and everything else you probably wouldn't come home with more than frost bite!" Without having to go abroad they had understood the dynamics of "living like a dog and in the end for what?" They preferred to slowly make their way in life staying along their beautiful coast. "This is the worst place to work and the best place to live," they would say of home. With their motor bikes they could find amusement, especially in the summer when the beach towns fill up with Portuguese and foreign tourists, but enjoy what they called, uma vida sosugada, a peaceful life. Even though they sometimes commented that there wasn't enough entertainment, I never heard anyone pine for city life. Their motor bikes, like their jobs away from home, made it possible for them to develop a sense of multiple geographies they could be part of while staying strongly attached to home and its value in shaping their particular maps.
IV. LINGUISA

When 'system' begins to be imagined more rigorously, the kind of mistake which founds metaphysics is made. To identify the 'food system', or any other similar systems at whatever level, is to move to something of more apparent moment than de facto interconnections, to discover what seems to be a new level of reality. It suggests at least a coherence within a more extensive set of interconnections, and the existence of principles on which this coherence is based. It suggests boundaries, so that one such system can relate to another and perhaps be compared with it. It suggests something which exists and even has power, whether or not those who are represented as being within its power are aware of it (e.g. Douglas 1975:273).

Simon Charsley
Wedding Cakes and Cultural History

Linguisa is what you hide
In your shirt as you creep out the door
Now that your friends are waiting
Guests at your table
Useless to hide our delight
Insisting, we call to Maria for two more bottles of vine
Satisfied and praising the long nights of winter
Ah, it is worth the rain, and all the beer we plied you with for courage!

Manuela might have found this scribbled on the edge of a greasy paper table cloth in the Centro. The table is now littered with empty platters, bread
crusts, a clay roaster and the bottle of firewater used to cook with. There are water glasses with unfinished gulps of wine and four empty bottles, tilting espresso cups and little balloon cups lately filled with whiskey, almond liquor or local brandy and covering the table like crumpled butterflies, a hundred little greasy napkins smeared tell-tale orange translucent.

Riberinho had finally brought a very large linguisa after his friends had been urging him for about two hours while they all played cards, pool, and stood around drinking and talking. "I can't go. My old lady counts them!" "Well, you were the one bragging about how well they came out. As long as you are going to brag we want to taste the proof." After about fifteen minutes of pool, Zé blurted out, "Go on. What are you waiting for man? Go get one!" Riberiho turned on his heels, grabbed his coat and made for his motor bike leaving all his friends chuckling, and taunting, "Don't let her catch you. A rolling pin up side the head must hurt" (Rolling pins are suposed to be women's weapon of choice).

Riberinho came back about half an hour later. He walked right up to the bar where his friends gathered. "Manuela, set the table for six. And could you wash this?" Amid whistles of admiration, he pulled a huge linguisa from under his coat. "I dropped it on the road. It slipped out of the bag and I had to turn around to find it. I almost ran over it!" There was much laughter, joking and teasing. So the mood continued until midnight when Manuela turned us out into the soggy night.

No family ever has enough Linguisas to get them through the winter. Toward the tale end of the rainy season when the mushrooms appear, linguisas are appreciated especially for a dish containing those two ingredients and scrambled eggs. But Linguisas are celebrated any winter evening whenever and however they are consumed. They are always a treat and the stuff pure nostalgia
is made of. Relatives who have moved to the city reminisce actively about them and finally when they receive a *linguisa* or two as a gift, (wrapped in brown paper and a neat plastic bag handed from mother to son just before they leave) they are teary eyed and promise to come back very soon. I once heard the grandchild who lived on the farm let out an audible moan as the precious cargo was handed over, which earned her a hard tug on the arm from her mother, "Gulosa!" [which strangely enough means, sweet tooth, like the French, gourmand].

"You can't buy them" or so it is said of *linguisas*. In fact you can, but any women, man or child for that matter, will tell you, "Não prestam i" they are no good. Women often compare notes about their experience of trying to buy *linguisa* from the butcher stores or a women in the market. "My husband almost spit it out! 'Don't waste your money,' he told me. 'For a bad *linguisa* I'd rather porridge!' I had a good laugh. He hates porridge." I often heard tell how city people didn't know from good country *linguisa*, "But how could they? Poor things! They think that store bought stuff has any taste. I don't understand." "Its not the kind of thing you can make to sell," I was told. I didn't understand until I tried to make some.

*Linguisa* is something you want to have on hand in case your favorite cousin shows up for a visit bringing something for the baby the way she always does. Or in case you have to call on a favor, the young man who came and drilled the holes in the cement walls and put up all the curtain rods and the clock. I got a *linguisa* once for tutoring a student. All that night I kept thinking, "Oh, please pass your exam so I don't feel like I have to give it back!" João got one when he drove to Beja to get a walker for Rosa's mother. After spending the morning replacing some irrigation tubes which had burst, five of us sat down on a crisp February afternoon to, not one but two fine *linguisas*. Vitor had spotted
them hanging over the fire when he went to find some pliers. As we worked we spent the next hour fighting about who would ask the owner when he came back. (His wife was at her daughters house.) Celina and I had come along for the ride but the one hour favor was turning into an all morning affair; we were not going to ask. Finally, Ricardo said, "I have no shame. Watch this." As the owner approached us, Ricardo yelled, "Hey, this is hungry work and these two ladies are volunteering to make a fire. I hear your home made wine is almost as good as your spicy linguisas!" The owner walked up shaking his head and laughing, "Well, you certainly have no shame but I wouldn't either letting you leave here hungry. But listen ladies only take them from this end of the chimney. The other side belongs to my wife. I'll catch hell if any of those are missing! Only from this side or I'll send her after you!" NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A WOMEN PROTECTING HER FINE CURED PORK SAUSAGES!

I'm not surprised she counts them--the recipe goes something like this:

* Pick a date when the weather is cool and the moon is neither full or new.

* Call on about five branches of your family--making sure they are those who will work as much as eat and will call on you in return so you won't feel indebted or have to give them too much meat for their help--unless they are favorites you want to invite anyway. For example,

- You, your husband, your grown son and young daughter,
- Your sister, her husband, their two little ones,
- Your brother-in-law, his wife, their grown son and daughter with her husband and infant,
- Your elderly aunt and uncle.

* The men will spend some four or five hours slaughtering the pig and removing its entrails and carcass.
The women will serve them breakfast and snacks through-out--fresh made small cakes and shots of fire water. The women will make lunch, bring the men the things they need like numerous clean buckets, string, vinegar. One women will need to stir and spice the blood for blood sausage, another to cook the fat for lard. Two women will need to start to unravel the intestines and cut out the membrane which binds them. They must work quickly and not nick the tripe. They will separate the stomach and bladder. Once they have done that several other women will come help empty the intestines and pour water through them as they are turned carefully inside out until clean. (The expression used to describe a skinny person is that they could be used for turning tripe inside out.) There is usually plenty of joking, riddles, and unmerciless teasing of young women about sex and marriage by the older married ones.

The meat has to "cool", as they say. So the men will spend the afternoon drinking, watching the soccer game on TV, going off to the cafes. They return in time for a huge dinner of prime cuts.

The next day everyone who can comes back. The meat must be cut into small pieced and bagged to put in the freezer. Everyone has a knife and is busy cleaning, sorting and bagging meat. The fattier pieces are put aside for linguisas which has to get chopped into quarter size pieces.

Everyone busy cutting the linguisa meat in their laps over a clay vat, wants to know how the hostess likes it, the size, how much fat etc.

The elderly aunt is preparing food again. She had killed, plucked and cleaned several chicken now stewing in a big pot with lots of potatoes. Some of the young men are grilling up tender strips of loin and remembering occasionally to bring in plates for everyone else. The cutting and bagging and cleaning goes on all day.

As the vats of linguisa meat fill up two women are sitting on miniature
chairs peeling and chopping a hundred or so cloves of garlic. The garlic is mixed with salt, red pepper paste, paprika, a touch of hot pepper. The proportions are by eye. The paste is mixed with the meat and left for three or four days when three or four women will come back to help. They will bring their own funnels and pins, if they have them, and a callused thumb. The tripe will have been cut, soaked and some store bought cow tripe will be on hand in case the other turns out to have holes or be insufficient.

*So now we mix the meat one last time and start to stuff the meat through the funnel into the casings. The meat has to be pushed down with just the right amount of force so as to fill them generously but not burst them. They have to be pricked to get the bubbles out and tied in a loop. They do often burst, which is occasion for cursing bad luck and starting over. This is another long day of work. It is done sitting down usually inside and by women. It is an occasion for long talks, good gossip, lots of joking and eating some more of those cakes. The linguisas are strung up on long poles over the kitchen fire place. Most houses have an old fire place in what was once the house but now the shed. If that is the case they hang the linguisas there and light a gentle fire beneath them which must burn during ten to fourteen days. Since they are cured many people just leave them hanging there for storage.

No wonder she counts them! Linguisas are a women's work, her special magic and a powerful ingredient to her families happiness. The linguisas are sometimes her only source of barter and one more important in local economy than cash. The linguisa embodies sentiment and the success of the family. She may scold her son for stealing one but she is happy he shares it with his friends. She reprimands him, however, that she went to get one to offer her neighbor for all her help, to find that only the smallest were left! After all, she feeds the pig
and cares for it, she calls on her relatives to help with the slaughter, knowing that they will call on her, she prepares her house for their visit, bakes bread and cakes the day before. She knows that all that work is worth this icon of good country living, she knows that hard work of a country woman can be desirable and delicious. Pity is the woman who can not make her own linguisas.

Linguisa travels the realm of sentiment and weaves itself into place right alongside "home." Although versions of linguisa exist all over the country and now commercially, local family linguisa can not be replicated, not in taste, not in the act of sitting down to enjoy it with family and friends. Linguisa is part of the of the home condition, a sense of place and belonging, an ideal akin to a mothers eternal unconditional love praised, sung and expected. As I said, it is the stuff of which pure nostalgia and some very good sausages are made. The linguisa is a taste of hard work and family networks, with a dash of resistance to consumerism, wrapped a sense of place.

V. CONCLUSION

Every enterprise is culturally informed, meaning that it is formulated in relation to values and understanding as they are drawn from their past experience by those involved. It has then to be carried out in a world of practical possibilities and constraints grounded in factors over which those concerned have no control. It is necessarily the outcome of such interactions which shapes culture, in a continuing process, as well as altering the practical possibilities and constraints for future action in tiny or occasionally substantial ways. The understanding of change over time is therefore not something extra, a desirable bonus to add to synchronic study; it is essential if the nature of human culture is not to be grossly misunderstood.

Simon Charsley
Wedding Cakes
Why do I write about objects? I write about objects because they cross the traditional categories that anthropology often uses to describe social and cultural life. In so doing, objects can get at some of the specificity of the cross-cutting discourses, traditions, relationships which make up cultural meaning. Objects are hugely important to our experience of our own culture and therefore, exploring their meaning cross-culturally is a helpful heuristic for understanding our similarities and differences as well as furthering our understanding of how objects function in socio-cultural life.

What do objects do in Cavaleiro? How are they part of the community? Objects are generative of certain practices and uses as well as relationships and narratives. They trace the specificity's of local geographies and histories. They inscribe people in larger frames of reference.

Each of the four objects I have described here trace the multiple maps of community. Care for cows structures social space and relations through notions of cleanliness. It also structures local time and the physical landscape while having an impact on perceptions of duty, responsibility, and life long commitments, especially where family is concerned. Cows also figure pervasively in local discourse and narrative. It is a conversation both men and women join in on as do young and old (if only to voice dissent in the case of some of the young). The cows are like a living history of the changes which have taken place in the last thirty years at the local, national and international level. They are certainly a living economy the shade of who's hide can determine a families wealth.

Hope-chests are an important factor in the relationship between young women and their mothers. Mothers pride themselves on their hard work in providing for their daughters and link themselves to the community through the
identity which hard-working-generous-mother implies. The hope-chest points to some of the ways in which consumerism can connect people. Viewing the hope-chest brings A. and I closer as well as her mother. The gift exchange involved in building a hope-chest is another example of the connections it can encourage between women and its importance in a women's economy of exchange. The hope-chest is a marker of womanhood and which partially defines women vis-à-vis their specific relationship to objects and consumption. In so doing it also marks women's relationship to marriage differently from men's and from women of different generations.

Cavaleirence consumer strategies trace specific maps to the world around them. The hope-chest suggests some of the different ways this happens for women, i.e., the physical displacement it encourages and the connections with the fashion industry/consumer culture it inspires. The specificity's of Cavaleirence consumptive patterns suggest a kind of communal rather than individual expression which in turn suggests the ways in which cultural traditions interface with mass consumer culture in unique and specific (while always changing) ways.

Motorbikes, are for young men, a thread of their identity which strings together various geographies, life-worlds and activities. Their motorbikes are markers of manhood, work, camaraderie, social mobility, and bravado. Motorbikes set in motion histories of labor and patterns of consumerism. They define age groups and generations differentiating them on the basis of mastery of skill and attitudes toward roaming, work and spending money. Motorbikes are important factors in young men's sense of place and ironically attachment to it. By widening their horizons in terms of work and leisure young men find that their motorbikes give them the freedom to stay attached to their homes.

Linguisa is a celebration of family and friends, of country living and
reciprocity. *Linguisa* is women's work and family pride. It is one of the ties that people have to the physical place which is Cavaleiro and to the reality as well as the idea, the nostalgia of community. *Linguisa* is the Cavaleirence "Mom and apple pie" equivalent.
CONCLUSIONS:

ONCE UPON A THEORY

In "forgetting" the collective inquiry in which he is inscribed, in isolating the object of his discourse from its historical genesis, an "author" in effect denies his real situation. He creates the fiction of a place of his own (une place propre). In spite of the contradictory ideologies that may accompany it, the setting aside of the subject-object relation or of the discourse-object relation is the abstraction that generates an illusion of "authorship." It removes the traces of belonging to a network--traces that always compromise the author's rights. It camouflages the conditions of the production of discourse and its object. For this negated genealogy is substituted a drama combining the simulacrum of an object with the simulacrum of an author. A discourse can maintain a certain scientific character, however, by making explicit the rules and conditions of its production, and first of all the relations out of which it arises. Every particular study is a many-faceted mirror (others reappear everywhere in this space) reflecting the exchanges, readings, and confrontations that form the conditions of its possibility, but it is a broken and an amorphic mirror (others are fragmented and altered by it).

Michel de Certeau
Theories and the Art of Practice

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an index of key terms which have informed the conception of this project and its execution. In fact, this chapter was drafted prior to and during the earliest stages of fieldwork. Certain ideas turned out not to be as key as I had suspected and others grew in importance. I have therefore changed the chapter somewhat. I include it here as a conclusion of sorts because it points
back to the path taken. It is a reminder of the directions which I saw as open to me from the outset.

Since this work has been as much about its "approach" as the empirical matters it addresses, it seems only fair to conclude with the project's precepts. The empirical concerns I have touched on are on going and open to continual permutations, therefore, making "conclusions" about them would be misleading as to their nature. Because their nature is anything but conclusive, I conclude this project with some of my anthropological prejudices. My prejudices are, as Gadamer suggests, that which make my interpretations possible.

Theory is better "told" as its own story with its proper rhetorical strategy and integrity unencumbered by (and unencumbering) other texts. Theory and narrative are always included in each other but making reference to one from within the other takes the harmonizing of an a capello artist more skilled than myself so, in this chapter, theory is its own kind of story. It is a story which "reads" itself into the rest of the chapters. It is also a story which positions me in the larger anthropological discourse. The chapter is somewhat disjointed because I am drawing on a wide range of approaches to the study of culture without framing them into an "argument" (though it isn't hard to imagine along which lines it could be constructed); rather I make explicit here my reading of a certain body of theories, ideas and schools of thought. I am positioning myself through these readings but I leave the rest of the text open as to how I use these readings to help me "read" through other possible texts, as well as Cavaleirence narratives, and life worlds. As Katie Stewart suggests in an article I will explore in this chapter, our "theoretical" approach to any given material should be "contaminated" by that material. I present here some of the ideas which inform my thinking about my ethnographic material so that you may engage in your own participatory, contaminated reading of it much in the way that any
Cavaleirence would expect you to find your own way around to interpreting local narratives and events. Angelina put it well when telling me about some suspected cuckoldry, "I don't know if it's true or just a monkey someone put in his head," (in English we might say, "a bug in his ear"). So this chapter serves as a suggestion from which to tease out some meaning. Pieces are put side by side in much the same way gossip is collected: always contradictory, never a simple truth or consistent tableau. It is a proposal for an approach to the study of culture (an eclectic borrowing of heuristic devices) rather than an exegesis of specific content.

Coming out of the study of anthropology's self-reflection and crisis of representation, I look at multiple theories of culture and try to underscore how this multiplicity is echoed by the nature of the empirical material considered. The British Cultural Studies movement is very helpful here because while they share much of anthropology's notions of culture, the contemporary nature of their material along with their political agenda suggests fresh approaches and possibilities. In presenting British Cultural Studies in section two of this chapter, I explore their conception of culture and subsequently given that particular history what kinds of works followed. I, of course, focus on those topics which are echoed in the new directions in anthropology which interested me for this project.

Section three chronicles some of the introductory texts which herald, "the new ethnography" and the establishment of certain themes of interest appropriate to anthropology's new directions. It is in the spirit of Raymond Williams', Key Words:

I began to see this as a problem of vocabulary, in two senses: the available and developing meanings of known words, which needed to be set down;
and the explicit but as often implicit connections that people were making, in what seemed to me, again and again, particular formulations of meaning—ways not only of discussing but at another level of seeing many of our central experiences. What I had to then was not only collect examples, and look up or revise particular records of use, but to analyze, as far as I could, some of the issues and problems that were inside the vocabulary, whether in singular words or habitual groupings. I called these Keywords in two connected senses: they are significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought. (Williams 1983:15)

I close with a look at the work of Luisa Passerini on fascism and Italian oral history. I include Passerini’s work because of the attention she pays to the ethnographic and discursive detail which make up the relationship of the everyday to broader cultural phenomenon. Her combination of issues raised by Cultural Studies and the ethnographic scope of her project exemplifies the type of work which I would want to be included in the “new ethnography.” In final conclusion I end with some thoughts on the relevance of place and choice of my field site.

The Telling

Before turning to Cultural Studies and the New Ethnography I am including here a short look at a piece by Paul Ricoeur. In the context of modern Western Europe the concept of culture usually speaks of the past while it speaks of the subtle differences in ethos, ideas, values that separate and connect social and cultural groups at the national and local levels. I contend that the manifestation of cultural meanings have their articulation in a spectrum of
narratives ranging from the everyday to the formal and when considered in combination constitute a cultural discourse. One possible cultural conjunction is to link "what is meant" with "what is done" (R. Rosaldo 1987). One place where we can see them converge is in "the telling"--i.e., narratives in their contexts constitute social action, (Cultural Studies and anthropology also converge nicely here). The "Telling as social action" combines an interest in the study of discourse, narrative and genre construction (Ricoeur, White, Tyler, Tedlock, Clifford, Marcus, Fischer, Boon) with an epistemological attention to ethnography as social action (Rabinow, Crapanzano, Assad, Said, ). Ricoeur's work on discourse is fundamental in explicating the idea of "the telling" and its possible role in the social sciences.

The Anthropologizing of Discourse and Hermeneutics

Paul Ricoeur's article, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as Text" (1971), suggests a basis for considering discourse, interpretation and textualization as legitimate models for the social sciences. When representation could not meet previous expectations, interpretative and symbolic anthropology moved in this direction rather than abandoning the ethnographic project.

In Ricoeur's construction discourse and narrative can carry their full weight along with ritual and other overt symbolic behavior. To do so the concept of discourse comes to bridge the difference between written and spoken expression so that both can be considered "text" and thus be given to hermeneutic interpretations. As such the focus of study for the social sciences is Auslegung--interpretation, exegesis, rather than Verstehen--understanding, comprehension (1971:73). I am not convinced that written and spoken language can or should be "bridged" via interpretation--rather, interpretation evokes
processes similar to those which occur in speaking. Moreover, I would add here that the distinction between Ausleng and Verstehen is problematic. Obviously the two can not be mutually exclusive. Auslegung is Verstehen once removed—the context of understanding becomes that of the text and the reading rather than the subject of study. It is the relation between interpretation and understanding (and the intercourse of discourses that implies) that, in fact, is better suited for subject of the social sciences than either one or the other.

Following Ricoeur’s formulation, narrative can be considered discourse because the salient distinction is not between oral verses written expression but between discourse and language. Discourse distinguishes itself from language by the following traits: 1) a "language system is virtual and outside of time....discourse is always realized temporally and in a present;" 2) discourse refers back to the speaker/author and is thus self-referential where as language itself does not; 3) discourse "refers to a world which it claims to describe, to express, or to represent. It is in discourse that the symbolic function of language is actualized;" and, 4) whereas language is "the condition of communication," discourse is the world in which the messages are exchanged and thus creates not only itself but an 'other', an interlocutor (1971:75). This definition of language and discourse is especially attractive to anthropology as it maps onto contemporary definitions of what culture can come to mean—an arena of/for communication, not only between members but between them and investigators each creating their particular "self" and "other".

To further encapsulate written and spoken discourse in language, he looks at the anatomy of how the speech act is inscribed. Although each is different and both lose and gain certain aspects in translation, action can be fixed and objectified with inscription. It can, however, have its meaningfulness revived through interpretation (1971:77). This objectification and restoration of meaning
of action is a process parallel to that of inscribing of the speech event. Both are possible because there is a "detachment of the meaning of the action from the event of the action" (1971:81). The anatomy of speech/action is matched to that of action structure/writing.

The action of interpretation becomes another layer of viable and recognizable social action, action or behavior and meaning (on multiple levels) are parallel rather than hierarchized one over the other.

In the same way that a text is detached from its author, an action is detached from its agent and develops consequences of its own. This autonomization of human action constitutes the social dimension of action. (1971:83)

While I find Ricoeur's definition of discourse and his focus on interpretation useful, I find the textualization of social life and speech problematic. One of the lines of critique of the textual approach is that, when taken to its extreme, it leaves us with a "dis-embodied" text, which many in the current anthropological language, seek to "re-embodied" in its new context through the "act" of interpretation. This desire to "reactivate" the text points toward the uncomfortable split between thought and action addressed in the political/epistemological dimensions of the crisis of representation. As noted by the number of recent studies, including this one, a concern with reactivation/interpretations leads to or lends itself well to a focus on discourse, oral traditions and especially narrative.
II. CULTURAL STUDIES

Conceptualizing Culture in Post-War Britain

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies represents a collective of scholars and activists (concerned with being both), who have worked toward telling or sharing in the telling of stories they believe to be not only true but previously repressed. Most of there work has focused on urban popular culture, British working class culture, and mass media studies.

Cultural Studies has contributed to an epistemological analysis of history which is echoed in the work of historian Hyden White (while they claim different descendants and motivations). They suggest, as does White, that the discourse of History is a literary genre which constitutes its proper subject. As a story telling--a narrative amongst many such possible narratives, the discourse of History opens itself to other types of historical constructions. Through the use of oral sources they seek a more socially conscious history, one which requires a democratization of the historical process itself. They explore the possibilities of finding a place for history to grow and thrive as "popular memory" removed from the constraints imposed by the academy and other institutions of "dominant memory". Popular memory, they hope, continually "struggles to the light". To help it along, they have involved themselves in numerous community oral history projects especially concerning working class experience, the experiences of women, and adult education. In this forum they hope to foster a synthesis of theory and praxis through which history is "democratized," consciousness raising, a socialistic endeavor.

Cultural Studies, as it was conceived of in the 1950s, took as its point of departure a "culturalist" framework inspired by Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1957) and Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958), and a
reworking of Marxist theory representative of E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968). Subsequently, in the 1970s, the Centre for Contemporary Studies (CCCS) (University of Birmingham), under the direction of Stuart Hall, combined a "structuralist" approach to culture with a general interest in the relationship of culture and society. CCCS scholars often engage the work of Althusser and Gramsci on ideology and hegemony and also look to the post-structuralists.

According to Chambers, British Cultural Studies arose, on the one hand, form a growing interest on the part of the Institute of Contemporary Arts and the Independent Group in the visual arts, as well as in architecture, design, and pop art. (Pop Art here was a term coined by Alloway to refer to design and products of Popular Culture and not painting as it was later known.) This group, though not literary based was sophisticated in that discourse as well as in its appreciation for consumer oriented popular culture. Coming from a more literary perspective, Williams and Hoggart were reactivating the "culture debate" in light of post World War II conditions. They recognized that *Culture* was a considerable force (as it had also been in the 1790s-1860s) due to the rapid changes in industry, democracy, and class relations and that a new look at culture (both as popular culture and as the practices in society which responded to its gross conditions) was now required. The "culture debate" approach (a literary critical method--a "close" sensitive "reading," pioneered by F. R. Leavis and Scrutiny Magazine in the 1930s) is in the 1950s was applied to a living culture. They recognized that "the whole realm of contemporary culture was subject to complex social and economic conditions. The study of culture could no longer be reduced to an aesthetic or moral question but involved in a 'whole way of life', a complex, lived-in 'structure of feeling' (R. Williams)" (Chambers 1986:203).
Williams' project was to "analyze the concept of 'culture' and to give an account of its historical formation" (Chambers 1986: 203). Hoggart challenges the work on 'mass culture' based on high/low culture distinctions by writing from within working class culture. Thompson, working within the Marxist tradition, offers to break the mold of English Marxist historiography with its focus on technological evolutionism, reductive economism, and organizational determinism. Rather, he foregrounds the questions of culture, agency, consciousness, and experience (cf Hall 1986). He connects "social being" to "social consciousness" through "cultural dynamics"--"cultural making." His project was a study of "the whole way of struggle."

In the initial stages, Cultural Studies had several types of definitions of culture with a common emphasis on the experiential (as an authenticating position in any cultural analysis) and the democratization and socialization of the concept of culture itself (with history taking a major role). In Williams' Long Revolution, he "relates 'culture' to the sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences....(culture is) a general social process: the giving and taking of meanings, and the slow development of 'common' meanings--a common culture: 'culture,' in this sense, is 'ordinary'" (Hall 1986:35). Theory of culture (read: ideas and social practices) is, to quote Williams, "the relationship between elements in a whole way of life." Such a familiar definition of culture makes Cultural Studies quite amiable to anthropological attentions.

Ideology and Language

In one important Cultural Studies formulation, culture is a struggle over language. The centrality of narrative and the power implicit in language enactments (style and history being two of the languages considered), are
rendered explicit. Here again, in view of the such arguments, I would suggest
that "struggle", like "resistance", has to be used carefully. Antagonisms,
oppositionals and war metaphors can be an over reading, a flat politicizing of
phenomena which may be better understood using concepts like Stewart's
"contamination" and such reinterpretations of working class experience as
Carolyn Kay Steedman's (1986). One of many examples, Steedman's analysis of a
working class Conservatives by way of a politics of envy goes far in critiquing
the Marxist paradigm and suggesting that scholars may be creating the "hyper-
real" underclass of struggling subjects which may not correspond to the lived
experience of those very real subjects (cf Alcida Ramos on the creation of the
"hyper-real" Amazonian Indians by funding agencies regardless of the reality
and aspirations of the Indians themselves).

Steedman's critique of certain Marxist contentions is not out of keeping
with Cultural Studies debates on the subject. Their conception of culture as "a
common form of human activity: sensuous human praxis, the activity through
which men and women make history" (Hall 1986:39) gets away from the
base/superstructure formulations of the role of culture in society. Social being
and consciousness are not held as separate and distinct poles. Before considering
further the questions of ideology and hegemony evoked in the Marxist debate,
the structuralist paradigm must surface.

Structuralism offered another significant break with classical Marxism's
base/superstructure configuration in its ahistoric, synchronic stress. Structuralism treats mode of production as being structured like a language—a
selective combination of invariant elements creating a "system." The "culturalists"
merged the linguistic emphasis of structuralism with their own "cultural
semiotics". It was a "reading" of culture as a "political struggle over language"
and a "reading" of the languages of popular culture, literature, fashion, and
design, that showed signs of resistance through which they could then "trace in their syntax an ideology of struggle" (Chambers 1986:207). (This was especially the approach used to study male youth subcultures.)

There were many lines of divergence between the culturalist and structuralist paradigms, such as:

the conception of "men" as bearers of the structures that speak and place them, rather than as active agents in the making of their own history; the emphasis on a structural rather than a historic "logic"; the preoccupation with the constitution--in "theory"--of a non-ideological, scientific discourse; and hence the privileging of conceptual work and of Theory as guaranteed; the recasting of history as the march of structures...the structuralist 'machine'. (Hall 1986:43)

Differences, stemming in part, from variant conceptions of agency and history are among the most important.

Culturalists and structuralists were also counterposed around the concept of experience. For the culturalists, experience is the ground:

the terrain of 'the lived'--where consciousness and conditions intersected, structuralism insisted that 'experience' could not, by definition, be the ground of anything, since one could only 'live' and experience one's conditions in and through the categories, classifications, and frameworks of the culture. (Hall 1986:42)

In keeping with this position, culturalists resist structuralism's tendency to downgrade the role of and possibility for "conscious struggle and organization"
in the analysis of history and ideology.

Gramsci and Althusser have been drawn on extensively to inform this debate, with some important consequences. Althusser's work made uneasy bedfellows of a Saussurean linguistic attention to inherent structures and a Marxist concern with determination. Althusser was "suspicious of the reductivist notion that one set of human activities or 'practices' could be collapsed into, or even related to, another" (Collin et al 1986:4). Althusser's version of Marxism and Structuralism points toward a way of establishing theoretically the specificity of cultural and economic practices without one having to be absorbed by the other. The concepts of a relative autonomy of practices and a reworking of Marx's "unity-in-difference," and "complex unity" (1857 introduction to Grundive in Hall 1986:44) which Althusser used in analyzing the internal organization of discrete practices within the framework provided by other practices (a notion very much present in post-Althusserian work such as Foucault's), opened the way for the study of the specific articulations of different practices and a conceptualization of them within the "ensemble" they make up. Subsequently, articulation becomes a key term for Cultural Studies. Articulation helps to bridge the culturalist and structuralist paradigms:

It both acknowledges the constitutive role play by (ideological) discourses in the shaping of (historical) subjectivities and at the same time it insists that there is somewhere outside discourse (a world where groups and classes differentiated by conflicting interests, cultures, goals, aspirations; by the positions they occupy in various hierarchies are working in and on dynamic (i.e., changing) power structures)--a world which has in turn to
be linked with, shaped, acted upon, struggled over, intervened in: changed. (Hebdige 1988:205)

Discourse and the Subject

Before turning back to the idea of an "engaged" discourse, note that the analysis of discourse such as in the work of Hirst and "Screen," a film theory journal, fully exploited Althusser's break with determinism in another direction. In the introduction to a collection of essays from the journal "Media, Culture, and Society," the editors point out that "it could be argued that the determination of ideology by material life was replaced by the determination of ideology by mental life" (Collins et al 1986:4). Particularly effective in feminist studies of the visual representation of sexuality is CCCS', combination of Althusser and Lacan in looking at the unconscious nature of ideology as paralleling the construction of the subject and ideology in language. This approach has had currency in anthropology as well (although "ideology" is generally read as "culture"--the work of Crapanzano on the self is most explicit example). Discourse and the subject then become the terms and concepts around which this branch of Cultural Studies (and Anthropology) is recentered. Culturalism critiqued early "hyper-structuralism's process without a subject," but rather than center a "unified subject (collective or individual) of consciousness," discourse theory with its linguistic, Freudian, and Lacanian tenets "restores the decentered subject, the contradictory subject, as a set of positions in language and knowledge, from which culture can be enunciated" (Hall 1986:46).

Gramsci also addresses the complex links between structure and superstructure, conditions and consciousness, culture, language and ideology. He provides us,
with a set of more refined terms through which to link the largely 'unconscious' and given cultural categories of 'common sense' with the formation of more active and organic ideologies, which have the capacity to intervene in the ground of common sense and popular traditions and, through such interventions, to organize masses of men and women. (Hall 1986:45)

Gramsci's work is very helpful in making connections between cultural forms and political articulations. Although he used the terminology of classical Marxism and a set of modernist concepts, his work has been carried into the post-modern debate (S. Hall, E. Laclau, C. Mouffe, D. Hebdige). Gramsci's model is interesting because it looks for a "logic attuned to the living textures of popular culture, to the ebb and flow of popular debate" (Hebdige 1988:203). Gramsci's logic is "sensuous" and "strategic." (Qualities picked up by de Certeau as well). The Gramscian approach requires,

us to negotiate and engage with the multiple axes of both power and popular culture and to acknowledge the ways in which these two axes are 'mutually articulated' through a range of populist discourses which center by and large precisely on those pre-Post-erous modern categories: the 'nation', 'roots', the 'national past', 'heritage', the 'rights of the individual' (variously) 'to life and liberty', 'to own property', 'to expect a better future for his or her children', the right 'to be an individual': the 'right to choose'. (Hebdige 1988:203)

In this rendering of the Cultural Studies agenda, the process by which power is imposed and morally legitimated must be understood not in the
abstract debate on ideology but used to,

contest that authority and leadership by offering arguments that capture the popular imagination, that engage directly with the issues, problems, anxieties, dreams and hopes of the real...[that] take the popular (and hence the populous) seriously and that engage directly with it on its own terms, and in its own language. (Hebdige 1988:204)

While in anthropology discourse and narrative approaches do not seem to be waving the battle flags so high, Stewart and others have also pointed out that "discourse is productive" and similarly the problem is then "to take discursive productions seriously--not only, or primarily, our own but our subjects'--and to trace how they mean and what meaning effects they produce"; the task then, "is not to understand the identities (and external causes) of 'things' but to understand the operations by which such identities are ascribed, or contested, or even unintentionally produced as side-effects (see Taussig 1987)" (1991:5).

Although my focus is predominately on narrative in its various forms, I realize that it leaves open vast territories of the unsaid/unspeakable and covers only thinly other kinds of understanding and meaning. Culture Studies and Popular Culture studies offer an understanding of how music, "youth culture", and media form a special language which accompanies local narrative. They focus on the ways these forms of popular culture are constructed, absorbed, used, discarded, and on what the relationship between production and reception may be on the local or larger scale. These studies combine objects, images, and words as well as social actors in the kind of active "speaking" which I find challenging for this project.
Given the case of rural Portugal, Cultural Studies is not the most obvious source of inspiration. It does, however, point in useful directions for understanding the complex relations between multiple cultural forms and practices: traditional, popular, political, consumer, imported, and local, in combination with various oral registers and narratives.

III. THE NEW ETHNOGRAPHY

Introduction

Following the development of ethnographic reflection which has culminated in what has been best termed "the crisis of representation" (Marcus and Fischer 1986), and combining it with an interest in critical theory and hermeneutics on the one hand and structuralism and semiotics on the other, as well as "the process of decolonization and the politics of knowledge that goes with it" (Borofsky 1987:xvii), anthropology is presently engaged in reviewing its foundations as well as exploring alternative futures. The challenge of this project is framed within the larger question posed by the rethinking of anthropology, that of how to look at and represent culture. "Look at" and "represent" become problematic terms in a far reaching debate over the status and conditions of knowledge in a contemporary context no longer amenable to those which saw Enlightenment philosophy, politics, science and reason rise to their pinnacle. There is a sense that the hegemony of certain ideas must be denounced--either because the ideas are 1) inherently flawed on some transcendental trajectory; 2) that the conditions which produced those ideas and saw them flourish have changed significantly enough to render them invalid or irrelevant; 3) that interested ideological misrepresentations of those ideas are carried forward by power structures not inherent to those ideas.
With the self-reflection of the discipline in all its epistemological and political dimensions, anthropology's capacity and function as a cultural critique for those at home (rather than solely an exegesis of those far away) has also been rendered explicit. Followthroughs have included more fieldwork at "home," the study of popular culture in Europe and America, and ethnographies of post-colonial nations by indigenous scholars. These kinds of studies have required new methodologies, and new insights into culture, with literature, aesthetics, and native hermeneutic activities being among the topics to be considered. As the idea of a fragmented, constructed, renewing and processual vision of both social reality and the texts we produce about them gains momentum, discourse, narrative and text become suitable vehicles for the study of culture. As Michelle Rosaldo frames it, culture, rather than consisting of a collection of artifacts and rituals, is made up of "associative chains and images that suggest what can be linked up with what: we come to know it through collective stories that suggest the nature of coherence, probability, and sense within the actor's world" (1984:140).

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In proposing this project, I have waltzed anxiously, spinning what is relevant, interesting, mundane, what is context, audience, ethnography, round and round. I have found Baudelaire's injunction, "you have no right to despise the present", as well as Kant's and de Certeau's pragmatics and practice of everyday life to be well traced in the sweeps of my sawdust footprints. In, "Beyond Ethnography: Anthropology as Nominalism" (1988), Paul Rabinow's introduction to the Cultural Anthropology issue showcasing the work of the Berkeley anthropology department, he suggests in an optimistic tone, that
anthropology may be more enduring than our critiques of it. In support of this contention he turns to Foucault's expositions of Kant's Pragmatics—the concrete universals in their diverse forms which make up the study of Anthropology. To answer the question "What is Man" the transcendental of philosophy is coupled with the "complementary analysis of concrete forms Kant calls 'play', der spielen, the domain where freedom and nature, the universal and particular, are inextricably interconnected" (1988:356). The "universal habitation of men [sic?] in the world" forms the "popular dimension" which makes up the study of anthropology. Regardless of the form which this study (and the critique of it) takes, being always like its subject, "always already historical and cultural", we are reassured that there is place for our recognition of daily life, of culture, as "l'ecole du monde" (school of/for the world) (1988:356).

Rabinow goes on to point out that through the course of our intellectual history we have been left with a humanistic outlook which boarders on nihilism "as long as no-thing is valued except the process of humanism itself" and more over we "are left with ethnographies with no-thing to teach except residual bourgeois pieties" (1988:359, 360). What then is anthropology to write "about"?

Somewhat ironically perhaps, Rabinow chooses to write about key actors in the ultimate bourgeois scenario: "Nominalism: Reason and Society". He sets out to demonstrate what an "Anthropology of Reason and Society" could look like. "Reason" and "Society", he proclaims, are, after all, terms which connote a "historically locatable social relation, an action in the world—a set of practices"(1988:360) and therefore should not be confined to the realm of philosophy. He closes with "Baudelaire's ironic injunction, 'you have no right to despise the present'"(1988:362). It seems to serve both as the critique Rabinow draws from the material he has just presented and as challenge he puts forth for a "new ethnography", a "new Anthropological mode of inquiry" which will be
the "History of the Present" (1988:362). This new writing calls for "self-reflective critical awareness", and thus sustained historical, ethnographic, and sociological research.

What does Rabinow have to say, to learn, to teach? One, that there is a common sense notion, a pragmatics, which admits the possibility of a world where the everyday activity of cultures is a valuable source of understanding the human project. Two, that there are anthropology graduate students doing interesting work and getting published. Three, that we are in the "new" phase which requires "new" research and writing. Four, that this new is pragmatically embedded in the present (even if the subject matter is historical) implicitly and explicitly making it relevant, i.e., giving it something to "say." Between Rabinow's somewhat neutral 'understanding the human project' and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies admittedly political formulation as 'historians of the present' in this project I try to listen for and represent the voices of interpretive play in everyday narrative.

Key Words

It is the age of ordinary folks, when meaning is worked out through mutually determining, multi-leveled labyrinths of malleable desire. Desire takes many poses, as the masters of distinction between appearance and reality, continuity transformability--the Indian philosophers, the modernist "Germans" (Freud, Nietzsche), and the postmodernist French (Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Lecan, Derrida)--have taught us: desire as emotion; as projection, repression, displacement; as contestation and politics; as expansion of reason, consciousness, control; and of the play between intended speech and supplementary meanings conveyed.

M. M. J. Fischer

In the current language of a "new mode of anthropological inquiry," a "new ethnography" (Rabinow 1988) is expressed the desire for discourse which is
"embodied" and "embedded", with which one "interacts," "engages" and "dialogues," a knowing, communication and meaning which is "local" and "partial" and which recognizes its sensual nature--be it in the form of visual metaphors (Tyler), vocal "upoversoundings" (Feld), or the mutuality of eros (Harrison). This reactivation and embodiment is a recontextualization of the text around "subjects": the original/native/other, author(s) and reader(s). As Rosaldo points out, ethnographers' sets of rules and recorded traits are always unsatisfying because they can never show "how and why a people's deeds make psychological sense because the sense of action ultimately depends upon one's embeddedness within a particular sociocultural milieu" (1984:140 emphasis mine).

The Self and Subject

The Subject, as reflected (subjected) in the play of power "on the ground" in particular discursive formulations, has become an important current in contemporary anthropology as well as in other disciplines, cultural studies and history especially and for certain political movements (see Hebdige 1988). Post-1968, Hebdige writes,

feminism, molecular and micro politics, the autonomy movement, the counterculture, the politics of sexuality, the politics of utterance...grew out of the cracks, the gaps and silences in the old radical articulations. Given their provenance on the 'otherside', as it were, of the enounce [the We of the vanguard] it is hardly surprising that the new politics was more or less centrally concerned with the issues of subjectivity itself. (1988:188)
The subject is then challenged linguistically, psychologically, and socially. The subject is the "I" as in:

classical rhetoric and grammar, the subject of the sentence, the "I" as in "I did it my way", "I changed the world", etc., the mythical "I" implying as it does the self conscious, self present Cartesian subject capable of intentional, transparent communication and unmediated action on the world. On the other hand, there is the "subjected subject": "subject" as in subject of the crown, subjugated, owned by some higher power. In the gap between these two meanings we became subjects of ideology, subject to the Law of Father in the Althusserian and LeCanius senses respectively: apparently free agents and yet at the same time subject to an authority which was at once symbolic and imaginary--not "really" there but thoroughly real in its effects. (1988:189)

Along this vein, Michel Rosaldo in her above mentioned article, "Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling" (1984), weaves together cultural theory with "mind, self and emotion". She brings together the "subject" with interpretation, cultural theory and embodiment: "Through "interpretation," cultural meanings are transformed. And through "embodiment," collective symbols acquire the power, tension, relevance, and sense of emerging from our individuated histories" (1984:141). She continues:

Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by stories that we both enact and tell. They are structured by our forms of understanding....what distinguishes thought from affect....is fundamentally a sense of the engagement of the actor's
self. Emotions are thoughts somehow felt in flushes, pluses....They are embodied thoughts, thoughts speed up with the apprehension that "I am involved"....Emotions are about the ways in which the social world is one in which we are involved. (1984:143)

Narrative accounts are culturally marked in their performance, rhetoric and content but however "conditioned," they are also expressions, acting's out, and negotiations of self. The self, the "understanding of (a) reflective actor," Rosaldo argues, is shaped by society through cultural terms thus marking us as "not individuals first but social persons" (1984:151). The articulations of the self are thus doubly culture bound--in form and content.41

Rosaldo's observations on the self echo the concerns expressed above: cultural, interpretive, linguistically based, turning toward the embodied and concerned with particular meanings. In a perhaps somewhat inverted move, she uses the self to talk about socio-cultural specificity focusing on the group rather than the individual. The "cultural" she addresses is a communicative interpretive one, in which individuals with "embodied thoughts" (emotions), blur our theoretical divisions (cultural/individual, ideational/affective), and our cultural oppositions (thought/feeling, mind/body, rational/irrational, controlled/uncontrolled, culture/nature, truth/value, male/female) (cf Lutz & White 1986:430)42.

Narrative and Contamination

Narrative is the fluid base of communication within and between communities, it is the bridge between people as well as discourses. What people say about their world, about themselves, about themselves in the world, both in response to my questions and presence, and spontaneously, are the lines of
access to a culture--"a twisted 'talky' fabric where things and domains are woven together" (Stewart 1988:6). Suspending for a moment the question/problem of writing, if I want to have something to say, understanding what saying is about seems an appropriate endeavor.

Kathleen Stewart's paper, "Narrative Voice in "Appalachia" and "America", given at the AAA meetings in 1986, is exemplary of the "new mode of anthropological inquiry": her theoretical and empirical material is explicitly complimentary, the content of her work influences its form which serves to embed and embody it in a context relevant local(e). She uses the "Appalachian" interpretive, creative power of narrative and storytelling, it's capacity to "make something of" and to "do something with" words, to critique the attempts at closure imposed on narrative in the "American" and anthropological context. She follows the "Appalachian" example of interpretive, relational narrative to embed and embody the "American" narrative. In so doing she uses one discourse to critique the other. The narratives are put into an imagined dialogues which weave and unravel each other through contrast and comparison: the American separates and encloses the interpretive and the narrative, where as the Appalachian joins them "at the hip." The Appalachian exposes its built-in contrastings to (and thus openings to) the American (an Appalachian re-membering, re-appropriation of objects and events making a world which speaks back as opposed to the silent American world) where as the American creates static poles of symbolic "transcendence and redemption (or freedom and return)" limiting itself to a back and forth trajectory between the two (1986:2).

In Appalachia, Stewart finds storytelling to be an act of interpretation, a link between the distance of having been there and now saying it/telling it, "the dynamic between what is seen and what is said about it" (1986:11). Stories
transform "any **distinction** between objective and subjective views, or between fact and fantasy into a **relation** between event and interpretation. And finally everything is then open to comment" (1986:9). Further more, "To narrate is to place oneself in an event and a scene--to make an interpretive space--and to relate something to someone: to make an interpretive space that is relational and in which meanings have direct social referents" (1988:227). The focus is not on symbolic metanarratives; linear movement is interrupted and subverted by "an excess of meaning [which] breaks the frame."43.

The fixity of the role of speaker and listener is also subverted. The authority of the authors voice is contested, intertextual, contingent and relational. It is not the "mimetic representation" (Tyler 1971, 1984) but words as action, as kinetic. Because of the narrative techniques--diversions almost--a poetics which makes summarized meanings and plots harder to find, stories become about "the meaning of creating interpretations by relating events to others" (1986:5). The listener/audience enters into dialogue with the story and storyteller thus entering the interpretive process by both adding to the story and by their very particular listening: an attitude between immersion in the story and the distance of knowing it is being created and produced.

Like listening, culture itself "rests in a suspended disbelief", is a critical interpretive act and frame rather than a set of delimited practices. How then does, or could, the ethnographer, cultural eavesdropper par excellence, listen, interpret, speak? Stewart suggests that as anthropologists and "Americans" we have been most comfortable speaking from a distance, thinking for ourselves, stepping back to get perspective from even our own abstract list of values. And thus, as anthropologists we miss speaking subjects since we ourselves only have a place from where to "speak" (write) when removed from the context of production. We are also visited by a more romantic voice which recounts our
experience as participants in an almost lost world (of our nostalgic imagination). It is also a world of our telling, a shift in perspective and voice—upclose and intimate—but no less totalizing than that of distance.

In experimental ethnographies there has been a shift from structural perspectives to the view of culture as a "happy mess" and a shift away from "representation" to "giving voice". Stewart suggests that "The point is not whether we should silence the other's voice or make it louder but how to develop our own voice to interpret what is happening and to address our own experience as well as the other's" (1986:23). Looking at "others", we see ourselves as well but we "say" nothing. If we were to say like Appalachians, we would be like them, "people placed in time and space who create 'ways with words' in order to say something about what they 'see' or hear and more fully and less neatly, to make something of 'what happened' to them both in the narrated event and in the narrative event as it was related" (1986:23). Suspending the unitary text and the transcendental ego "we might go on learning to speak self-consciously and freely in a double voice" (1986:23).

In a more recent article, On the Politics of Cultural Theory: A Case for "Contaminated" Cultural Critique (1991), Stewart proposes a "contaminated" theory which "can only 'grasp' its 'object' by following along in its wake, tracing its interpretive moves and their actual effects" (1991:1). She looks to the textual approaches of deconstruction because it "gives pause to consider how meanings are produced in and through cultural forms rather than glance past them to external determination" (1991:3). Anthropology and history, on the other hand, "constructs encompassing categories to 'explain' by referent to 'content' or 'cause'" (1991:3). A contaminated approach would "re-energize the performative, rhetorical and epistemological nature of 'things'" (1991:2).
Traditional "objects" such as "social facts" or "social structures" or a mappable set of cultural beliefs called "world view" are treated as produced effects....The task, then, is not to understand the identities (and external causes) of "things" but to understand the operations by which such identities are ascribed, or contested, or even unintentionally produced as side-effects. (1991:5)

Things here include narrative conventions, speech gendres and cultural 'voices'. She uses verbal expression to inform her contaminated approach because narrative "has a two-fold direction; it is directed both toward the referential object of speech and toward anothers discourse, toward someone else's speech (Bakhtin 1984)" (1991:17). The form of discourse is especially important because it produces the 'effects' which ultimately act as the sites of meaning, a context as revealing as its more explicit content.

It is not a superficial attention to form that rushes to discover the cause of explication but an immersion in form in which the elements that produce meaning become known in the act of using them, manipulating them, and repositioning them in another version. The storyteller has to be placed outside the story and yet also outside it, constructing it; its interpretive mode is from the doubled, haunting epistemology of speaking from within the object spoken of. Contaminated. (1991:22)

The meaning of talk, she suggests,

can be traced in the history of the discourses he is speaking in and through, the situations of their use, their social functions, their poetics,
their semiotics and their politics. Discursive forms...are 'objectivated' cultural forms which people can manipulate, negotiate, and recognize as forms. A local discourse, then, carries a history of accrued meaningfulness and signifies particular social contexts and thematic contents. (1991:11)

Stewart activates the realm of speech and discourse by reading "speech and action as signs of relationality through close poetic attention to the meaning of form" (1991:13). She does, however, explicate the mis-communications of an Appalachian man and a vista worker by pointing out the different historic and political sources of their different speech styles which leads them to talk past each other. Stewart uses her privileged knowledge to form a more complete interpretation. This approach resembles the de-contaminated measures she critiques. Her analysis comes closer to the contaminated engagement she promotes where she finds people "doing" with words as operating subjects, where people "make something of things" in the mediation of forms of discourse, where they, in fact, understand and experience "acts as stories and stories as acts." The integrity of this approach lies in the fact that this kind of maneuver is inherent to Appalachian talk. What one does with words and how they position subjects is built into the form and practice of Appalachian discourse and subsequently in Stewart's "contaminated approach." As de Certeau suggests, stories "constitute an act which they intend to mean" (1984:80).

The story does not express a practice. It does not limit itself to telling about a movement. It makes it. One understands it, then, if one enters into this movement oneself. (1984:81)
Other discursive practices, may, we are left to suppose, require imagining other appropriate companion interpretive moves. What might it be for the discourse of cuckoldry and my examination of it? Setting traps and telling lies?

Cultural Theory and Discourse: Back to Language and Context

"Radical" cultural theories derive much inspiration from an interest in discourse: Phyllis Chock and June Wyman edit the collection, Discourse and the Social Life of Meaning (1986), which is representative of discourse studies at the moment of their inscription (in the process of course losing some of their disruptive, "on the edge" quality). At the center of radical cultural theories which take "meaning to shape and reproduce social forces, forms and contradictions" (Chock and Wyman 1986:7) is a radical critique of language and the placing of the discourse as the "principle avenue to social meaning"(1986:8).

The discourse of Post-Modern Anthropology and the desire to "engage social meanings in indigenous discourse" form the two parts of the collection. The Post-Modern discourse of anthropology represented here by the work of Stephen Tyler and Ivan Stoller carries out a linguistic, epistemological critique which has as it's apex: "Language intimates--falsely--that forms exist outside content" and thus also reifies speech. Being that anthropological studies are grounded in narrative, speech acts and cultural discourses, this critique of language is far reaching. It goes as far as "the subject/object distinctions upon which rests both mechanistic conceptions of societies and the language used to render them" (1986:9) i.e., our indigenous "linguistic" models, from the foundations of our rational, scientific thought to the tropes, metaphors and genres that we use to express everything from the mundane to the aesthetic. The point being that anthropology acquired with language a series of ideological encumbrances it would do better to shed. These ideological encumbrances
separate and reify what should be the "mutuality of speech, writing and thought" (1986:9). Mutuality, Stoller implies, should not be hidden by tendencies to reduce diversity behind unity, to collapse language behind appearances. The "disembodied methodological voice" of anthropological writing stems from the privileging of these concretizations.

While much more can be written about the deconstruction of the anthropological genre and the subtleties of Post-Modern anthropology, this collection, like the other introductory articles I site here, interests me especially in addressing the future of anthropology inquiry; as the editors point out, "Both writers (Tyler and Stoller) challenge us to reestablish the unity of the word and the world, the primacy of social meanings in ethnography--to practice a truly cultural analysis" (1986:20).

Chock and Wyman suggest that in order to bring writing closer to speech (rather than abandon writing completely) we may "treat discourse as texts 'written' by a culture, and the analyst as a reader or translator of these texts (cf. Marcus and Cushman 1982:43-44)" (1986:11). This direction closely resembles Ricoeur's argument though adapted to the problematics of ethnographic experience, study and writing. Ethnographic realism and the authority vested in the ethnographer/author is transformed into that of the interpreter, translator, reader or chronicler of a multi-vocal world (Clifford 1983). But reaching further, according to Tyler, much of what is to be "filled in", interpreted is the "unsaid." The said and unsaid mutually constitute each other and are both actively present in speech but mis/un/dis/represented in writing. Chock and Wyman therefore, prescribe, that "context, the unsaid, is then filled in by describing, in varying degrees of thickness, the parts of the unsaid that are taken to contribute to meaning of discourse-as-text" (1986:11).

As one of the ways of rendering discourse as text viable in this
problematic of representation, Chock and Goldstein "focus on intertextuality as an interpretative devise, moving back and forth between sets of texts to fill in the unsaid with accounts of what each suggests of the others"(1986:11). Other 'techniques' used by the authors in the volume include Peacock's casting of the ethnographic report "in the frames afforded by native discourses"; Stephens employs the visual to "locate and reproduce social meanings" as it is locally employed; Tyler gives us thought pictures. In all the articles there is a focus on specific or local discourses affecting each other: for example, how western discourse shapes the ethnographic discourse and definitions of the "other" (Perin and Herzfeld), or how discourses of identity and change affect local cultural genesis (Peacock, Goldstein, Anderson and Chock). Through the idea of social life as discourse interpreted through cultural analysis, (the nitty gritty, the variable methodology, and the ad hoc theoretical tool kit used in these studies) an attempt is made to "unify the saying and the showing--meaning and social life--in analyses of socially created meanings and meaning-created social forms" (1986:20).

Their focus on "particular meaning" and on "the local" in conjunction with the attempt at "intertextuality", and (if I may invent an awkward term) "interdiscoursuality" (sets of texts and discourses interpreted, played off each other, referencing each other), sets up two further questions which ultimately get back to highlighting the particularity of meaning, the specificity of local and, ironically, the ambiguity of context. Does intertextuality/discoursuality function in the same way the said and the unsaid do in conversation, narrative and social life? Probably not. The question can be somewhat bracketed, left suspended or simply construed as irrelevant if given that, rather than represent culture by translating experience, (made up of the multiple fragmented realities, narratives and "presences"), via overlaid written imperatives, the multiple discourses and
interpretation "evoke" (rather than function or represent) the kind of creative play and struggle that runs through the communicative matrix of culture.

The second question refers to the selection of texts or discourses which taken together make up the intertextuality and come to be understood as "context". Attempting to "fill in" or show the unsaid, of course, transforms it and with each new context/audience substitutes certain unsaid for others. Context comes to suggest the unspeakable lurking beyond the infinite unsaid. While the unsaid are a necessary part of every act of meaning and the understanding of every act, the unspeakable points to something like time and being (or the already famous "Time and Being") not translatable through intertextuality. Perhaps a philosophical question but also a practical one which gets repeated and addressed as that elusive substance "context". It appears as those opening pages of so many ethnographies, the "being there" descriptions which function like the aerial sweeps so popular in the opening credits of movies--the local color, the bird's eye view focusing in and perching on the appropriate limb in front of the door which will open to introduce us to the protagonists...(cf Marie Louise Pratt 1988). But what is relevant as "context"?--history, cross roads in the global village, mode of production, scenery, the unspoken, the unspeakable45?

Returning to the idea that in considering/interpreting sets of texts/discourses we approximate local conditions of production or reception of meaning, an important question, for me, remains as to the selection of these discourses (taken together as "context")--what are or what is the nature of the connections between various discourses--how connected or autonomous are these discourses, islands in the stream, rings in a spiral, strangers in the night? And what is the relevance (and for whom) of what they have to say to each other; for example the ethnographic discourse to the local one(s), several local ones to similar discourses of another local or past to present46?
Practice and Pragmatics

Power and Resistance Revised

In addition to lending an ear to narrative I turn my attention here to the presences which mark the lived experiences of certain irreducibles with their often built-in resistances to and search for immoralizations. The events, gossip and objects I focus on are not only the site of narratives, they are also passionate lived in presences. They engage people in an immediacy of participation. I have looked for mundane, everyday expressions of these presences: for the minutia which connects people and place to their particular meanings. I have found the practice and pragmatics of the everyday to be largely embedded in everyday narratives. I take the practice of those narratives to mark the presence of Cavaleirence social action. In the work of Cultural Studies as well as de Certeau and others (Limon for instance), "resistances" are taken to mark the presence of actors on their world. Popular culture and creative consumerism are two other phenomenon which have been explicated as areas of pragmatics, presence and resistance. Their formulations, I suggest, are not unproblematic.

Michel de Certeau, in his book, The Practice of Everyday Life (1984) explores the possible "tactics" and "strategies" that people use in their active participation in popular and consumer culture. Consumers, he suggests, "produce", "make" and "do" rather than passively surrender to mass culture (the second half of the chapter on gossip which addresses local uses of the Brazilian soap operas speaks to this point). The practices of the everyday are interventions in "the system" (the locus of creativity in "creative consumerism"). These practices, usages, procedures and even formal structures when they are tactical, are the "seizing of an opportunity", getting on and over from within; when they are strategic, on the other hand, they are "the force-relationship which becomes
possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a
scientific institution) can be isolated from an 'environment'' (1984:xix). Politics,
economics and scientific rationality are examples of strategic models. The
strategy wants to impose its own proper place in the system, whereas the tactic
struggles from within it.

De Certeau, like many of the other theorists I have mentioned here,
Ricoeur and Stewart in particular, use the markings of narrative to sketch out a
structures of practice. He takes the idea of the speech act and extends it to
"culture as a whole on the basis of the resemblance between ('enunciative')
procedures which articulate actions in both the field of language and the
network of social practices" (1984:19). Rather than using language only as a
"model", I would want to reinsert an ethnographic attention to everyday speech
in the actual "living out" of these practices.

Everyday practice, like the use of language, is based on the problematics
of enunciation.

Enunciation presupposes: (1) a realization of the linguistic system
through a speech act that actualizes some of its potential (language is real
only in the act of speaking); (2) an appropriation of language by the
speaker who uses it; (3) the postulation of an interlocutor (real of fictive)
and the constitution of a real contract or allocation (one speaks to
someone); (4) the establishment of a present through the act of the "I" who
speaks, and conjointly, since "the present is properly the source of time,"
the organization of temporality (the present creates a before and an after)
and the existence of a "now" which is the presence of the world. (1984:33)

The speech-act considered in its full enunciative elements (realizing,
appropriating, being inscribed in relations, being situated in time, taken together
to create "context") is both a "use of language and an operation performed on it" (1984:33). De Certeau suggests that this model can be applied to "non-linguistic
operations by taking as our hypothesis that all of these uses concern
consumption" (1984:33).

One can appreciate de Certeau's fine attention to the meanings and
significances of everyday practices such as the "trickery" involved in driving
with great speed and cunning or in "la perruque", (the revindicating will to spend
work time and resources for non-work ends). Problematic however, in this and
other studies I have drawn on, is the perhaps facile conceptualization of "the
system" to which all of these practices "resist" and "subvert" and which thus
always construable as "political". De Certeau calls consumer resistances,
"antidisciplines" which penetrate the "totality"; tactics are the weak making use
of the strong (1984:xvii). Is the "inventing" of meaning in the cultural arena
always necessarily critical/critique in the formal sense and political in
implication?

I fear that to over employ the language of resistance, like the language of
terror is a misleading dilution of the specificity of those realities where they
occur. If subversion and resistance comes to describe meaning created,
understood or interpreted by everyone other than advertising copy editors and
political speech writers and if meaning itself has to be understood always in
terms of mutually exclusive producers and consumers albeit with some cross-
overs along the way, then the language of "resistance" becomes only an
optimistic metaphor for cheering on of the under-dog. This model itself is not
subversive because it recalls the hierarchy of repression it hopes to escape. In
addition, these everyday practices are heralded as "creative" and "the art of
making", invoking notions of "high/low" culture distinctions. Elevating "low
culture" by making explicit how it uses processes similar to the high does not escape the high/low hierarchy either (pop art and popular culture become "legitimate" because they imply resistance/critique as high art is supposed to?)

It would seem to be that the strength of his analysis and much of cultural studies would be to suggest that power and meaning have are not locatable outside of their uses and that "the system", even in the most totalizing and terrifying forms is never seamless. It seems more appropriate to look at all of the simultaneous, and often contradictory, meanings which are mutually constitutional and referential that make up our life worlds rather than privileging Derrian gaps (gaps in what?), resistances (to what?) or spaces (outside of what?).

Power has very real ways of making its presence heard, felt, understood and acted upon. Kant can be interpreted to have suggested that the "realization" of a concept based not on experience but "an idea of reason" such as the state, is always an act of terror. Discourse analysis and semiotics with its interest in object/subject positioning and constituting tries to "resist" theory by focusing on subject formation which is always grounded in the specifics of time, space and experience rather than the fetishized ideas of Reason that theory has privileged. I am hesitant to conceptualize "everyday" cultural practice as a form of "resistance" because of its implications for a concept of power. Rather than just ignoring power as some accuse the postmodern theorists of doing or clumsily carrying it over from previous incarnations as these critiques are apt to do, it seems that power needs to be reconceptualized (or deconceptualized) both as an idea and a process in relationship to lived experience (and the ethnographic project).
Lila Abu-Lughod, in her article, The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women (1990), makes a similar observation. She notes that recent works which focus on "resistance" have a tendency to romanticize resistance, to read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated. By reading resistance in this way, we collapse distinctions between forms of resistance and foreclose certain questions about the workings of power. (1990:42)

The interest in resistance, she argues, expresses a "growing dissatisfaction with previous ways we have understood power," and most interestingly, "recognizes and theorizes the importance of ideological practice in power and resistance and works to undermine distinctions between symbolic and instrumental, behavioral and ideological, and cultural, social, political processes" (1990:41).

Abu-Lughod suggests shifting perspectives so as to "use resistance as a diagnostic of power." This requires moving "away from abstract theories of power toward methodological strategies of power in particular situations" (1990:42). She moves in this direction so that the ethnographic specifics of forms of resistance can tell us about the kinds of power encountered in a given context.

To look at "resistances," especially in their local contexts, not as "designed" or attempts to over throw "the system," but as the tracings of the complicated and complex "workings of social power," we then allow resistance to teach us about the "interworkings of historically changing structures of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990:53). Moreover, and more particularly related to my interests in
writing about Cavaleiro, Abu-Lughod, uses her ethnographic material to point out the ways in which "intersecting and often conflicting structures of power work together these days in communities that are gradually becoming more tied to multiple and often non-local systems" (1990:42). The multiplicity of these systems of power means that "resisting at one level may catch people up at other levels" (1990:53). This "catching people up" reminds us that resistance and freedom do not come as a matching pair (Paul Willis', Learning to Labor, is by now a classic example of this).

IV. LOOSE ENDS AND CONCLUSIONS
An Example in Closing: Oral History and Cultural Critique

I would like to close this chapter with a brief look at the work of an Italian oral historian which exemplifies a type of work which offers, if you consider this chapter as proposing a problem or challenge, one possible solution--a very provocative and interesting one at that. In the work of Luisa Passerini, in particular, Fascism in Popular Memory (1987), we see a very effective combination of close attention to ethnographic detail and a keen sensitivity to the nature of oral material. She draws on narratives ranging from mundane everyday speech to explicit "life histories" in a way which suggests the political nature of her subject matter and the work itself, without ever losing sight of the connection between the construction of self in its cultural manifestations which include and shape the experience of formal politics. For this reason I find her work an interesting combination of Ricoeur and White on the one hand and Paul Thompson and the Popular memory group on the other. Passerini is an indigenous scholar who "dialogues" well between cultural discourses (cf. Fischer's article, Post Modern Arts of Memory (1987). Her work also seems to
lead in the direction of the "saying" of Tyler and Stewart and the "pragmatics" Rabinow finds in Kant and Foucault and is highlighted by de Certeau.

Passerini's study of working class memory and the oral expressions of the experience of fascism draws on an extensive body of interviews. While she only uses those she has conducted herself as examples, she has well over a hundred life histories and group discussions to draw from. The research was done in conjunction with a project sponsored by the ministry of education, a local museum and several cultural associations—it seems to have been built up around local cooperation and support. The book is divided into three parts: 1, oral sources and the analysis of cultural identities—memories of the self: autobiography and self-representation; 2, oral sources and the history of grass-roots cultural forms—fascism and the symbolic order in everyday life; and 3, oral sources and the history of the events of everyday life. Passerini groups different types of stories or aspects of oral expression such as laughter, silences, and dramaticality, and different themes clustered around the memory of life in the period under fascism. She quotes extensively from life histories for examples and surrounds them with historical, cultural and psychological analysis appropriate to their form and content. Her analysis of oral sources as oral sources is political and cultural as well as factual in nature. As the Popular Memory Group has noted the important aspects of her work include:

pursuit of the structuring principles of memory and forgetfulness, her concern with representation, ideology and subconscious desires, her focus on 'subjectivity' as 'the area of symbolic activity which includes cognition, cultural and psychological aspects', and her understanding of subjectivity as a ground of political struggle. (1982:216)
Passerini does not relegate oral sources to the "alternative ghetto" of oral history. In listening to oral sources, she brings to light the discrepancies they point to in the interpretive categories of the social sciences—history in particular. In her work, she emphasizes that more often than provide factual statements as to "what really happened," oral sources "answer" with the "irrelevant or inconsistent," with "silences or jokes:" silences and self-censorship are "evidence of a scar, a violent annihilation of many years in human lives and memories, a profound wound in daily experience" (Passerini 1980:9). Oral sources refuse to answer certain kinds of questions: "seemingly loquacious, they finally prove to be reticent or enigmatic; like the Sphinx they force us to reformulate problems and challenge current habits of thought" (Passerini 1980:5).

In particular she sees her work as challenging the "subjective," which comes "to include cultural and psychological activities—of an individual and a collective range—which can be embodied in language and behavior as well as expressed in more 'spiritual' forms, such as speculative thought" (Passerini 1980:4). Through this opening up of subjectivity she reexamines the relationship between class-consciousness, culture, and ideology. The question of consensus to fascism is her wedge—or her empirical focus. Her question: "How, and how much, can constraint be exerted in the sphere of subjectivity?...What makes the oppressed internalize the acceptance of their dependence in both a cultural and a psychological sense, to the point when oppression itself is praised and preferred to any struggle for change?" (1980:5)

The idea of "oppressed" and "dependence" are, here, directly referential to a political struggle for change. Her formulation resembles that of the Frankfurt School's concerning the influences of mass consumer culture. CCCS have critiqued the Frankfurt School for its rigidity, for its failure to appropriately answer the question of subjectivity and participation. Gabriele Krautzner,
reflecting on why Cultural Studies has not developed in her native Germany, contends that in holding too tightly to Frankfurt School critical theory they have ignored "the theoretical possibility of contradiction and conflict between processes of cultural production and consumption" (1989:245). Passerini, however, uses subjectivity to contradict an oversimplified conception of the working classes as either "without a party, only capable of economic demands, being thus not capable of true subjectivity nor conscious political action, or that by the simple act of protesting, the working class is immediately political, and hence has no need of subjectivity" (1980:7).

In looking at subjectivity and politics her metaphors and themes often center on seduction and coercion. She turns to the work of Wilhelm Riech as he addresses "the ambivalence of the masses' needs, their real needs connected with latent potentialities on the one hand, and the historically conditioned, passive psychocultural structure on the other" (1980:7). Oral sources help us to hear the conflict or negotiation between these simultaneously functioning codes and forms. They are themselves cultural forms and a testimony to changes of these forms over time.

As well as dealing with working class culture and fascism, her work has a lot to say about gender, subjectivity, memory, and narrative. I want to close with a brief review of some of her insights into the narrative process which find resonance in my project because they "speak" to the discursiveness of culture. Some of Passerini's salient observations include the following examples: The self and narratives of the self in various forms go beyond memory and psychology for their exegesis. They require a cultural analysis at the level of discourse and narrative traditions. These narratives have an audience, a social and cultural dimension different than formalized literary memoirs and autobiography: "The
personal memory combines with the collective memory, and individual mythology turns into a tradition shared by a family, a circle friends or a political group" (1987:19). Passerini also points to the play between narrative forms and the real life struggles of the narrators. Testimonies rather than just revealing behavior patterns "reveal the tensions between forms of behavior and mental representations expressed in particular narrative guises" (1987:31).

The choice of a narrative stereotype does not immediately express a psychological identity, but a cultural acceptance of commonplace notions about oneself, some more widespread in society than others, depending on various factors, like gender. The subjects realize that there are two levels, that is, that their story does not entirely tally with real life. But precisely because they are telling a story, they resort knowingly to the stereotypes which story-telling in their culture requires. (1987:60)

When narrative forms shape the ability to express actions and behavior as well as meaning they become very important markers in the study of culture. Narrative forms are also connected to other forms of popular culture, in the case of Italy they include, theater, mime, puppeteering and song. Representations can also be double-sided in that they combine cultural forms, for example working class older forms of popular comic culture with high working class skilled and politicized modes of expression (a multi-level arena Abu-Laghod would suggest that is bound to "catch people up"). These accounts always connect past and present on both the personal and social level. As noted, stories of self are told to an audience: family, friends, relations, interviewers, blood and political affiliates, and these audiences often chip in, reinforce and point the way. As such the stories while they recount the past offer an occasion "for reinforcing a collective
identity" (of individuals and groups) in the present (1987:21).

Lastly, careful attention to these narratives suggest that oral cultural forms do not progress in a unilineal evolution toward written forms, rather, "oral self-representations maintain their contemporary feeling precisely because of the traces of mythological thought and magic...they adhere to the psychic and cultural reality 'of the ego', and contribute to making conscious its specifically historical determinants" (1987:63). Narratives are seen here to closely follow both the processes of history and the self.

Passerini's work is powerful partly because of the heady subject matter and partly because of the compellingness brought forth from her oral sources. The work also responds carefully to any facile notions of "resistance" or the "system." I present her work as an example in closing because I draw much inspiration from it. She listens to her interlocutors in the most profound sense.

Conclusions: Staging the Questions

When asked why I chose Portugal to do fieldwork, I have to admit that I find it interesting for its very unexoticness, for the very obviousness of its gross conditions (more exactly their expression in self-proclamation and by international agreement): small "underdeveloped" nation, struggling to modernize saddled with the conservative mores of a largely subsistence farming community (the figures often sited in the news were, 23% as opposed to the average of 6% for the leading European nations). Portugal, until recently, was the exporter of cheap labor to the rest of Europe. Now the common market comes into Portugal to set up businesses at less expense then they would incur elsewhere still largely based on cheap labor costs. Post-WWII Portugal has only received much international attention for its decolonization struggles and its national revolution and the international tourism which followed (recently it is
also receiving attention as the newest EEC member with the fastest growing GNP⁴⁹.

What attracted me to the study of "Portuguese culture" was the challenge presented in finding something "to say", "to understand" about a culture which is undergoing the "thinning out" which western mass consumer culture is supposed to inflict on its victims⁵⁰. The thinning out may be no more than a change in rhetorical devises, which, where once there was depth and layers (hierarchy, something essential and something sublime), now there are multiple surfaces. If the world has become flat again--ripples, waves and tidepools, having claimed to have discovered the world's roundness perhaps Portugal is a fitting place to rediscover it (Hebdige 1988).

The various aspects of the process of "cultural thinning" (something like going bald, being left exposed, heading toward decadence and decline) has been documented in many accounts. I knew that in coming to Portugal I did not want to reproduce a study of, the "decay of traditions", the "comodification of rituals", "the effects of modern agricultural techniques" and the "demands of the world market". All of those aspects exist in contemporary Portugal, studies of them, however, are tinged with nostalgic undertones--nostalgic for everything from authentic, pure culture, to the certitudes assured by historical materialism and other such rationalist models hoping to explain everything from the evolution of great and little tradition (Radcliff Brown, Robert Redfield), to limited good (George Foster) to the green revolution (as well as works such as S. Wallerstein and Eric Wolf). As Stewart points out such formulations are "examples of modernist interpretation which constructs dramatic metanarratives of History through an anguished dialectic of alienation and progress, freedom, and despair, and through depth models which bracket "inner" and "outer" selves, latent and manifest content, surface forms and deep meaning" (1986:1).
Portugal seems to be a country which requires coming to terms with the mundane since it does not offer the obvious gloss and sheen of complicated ritual, or convoluted kinship or unsuspected patterns of cognition. On the contrary Portugal seems, given certain models, quite understandable, explainable, predictable. But this does not mean that there isn't an exotic account to be rendered of Portugal or an interesting one. I face the contradiction I have created--wanting to uncover the false hierarchy of interesting and mundane by showing how the mundane can be interesting.

Stewart suggests that it may be a question of voice. She notes that the attempt to speak in a realist voice is a nostalgic quest to penetrate "subjective surfaces" and that as an a American leaving home to find herself I "transcend" given constraints in the play of my idioms: freedom and Progress. On the other hand, I also search for the narrative voice, another nostalgic quest, this one for a "home that is always already lost, to redeem the unity that has been lost to 'freedom'" (Stewart 1986:2). Attending to the mundane as the realist or looking from a distance, renders the mundane inoffensive rather than imbuing it with the possibilities to function as a tool in creating and understanding anti-romantic, anti-nostalgic texts (as well as understanding romance and nostalgia in their contexts).

So while I adhere to the unromantic (realist), "you have no right to despise the present," I will try not to swing too far in this direction so as not to celebrate local conditions which locals themselves do not celebrate or that I would not celebrate if found "in my backyard" (Enzensberger 1989). What attracts me to the mundane is that perhaps in searching its depths and finding "nothing to say, nothing to teach or learn" as Rabinow fears, a new place from where to speak will be opened up--from "nothing", everything is possible, an open arena, where having "something to say" comes from a new kind of speaking.
Following up on Stewart's lead, I hope to hear/understand/interpret more than the interrupted murmurs of a "double voice" muffled by the curtains which divide actions and words, thought and politics, pragmatics and ideals. In its cross cultural perspective anthropology has always been attracted to a "double voice". Admitting that we speak more of and to ourselves than the "other" (cultural critique), it seems we must reconsider our inter/cross cultural perspective: if we have no implicit interest in a dialogue with the "other" (liberal humanism/cultural relativism/pluralistic politics?) other than to have something to say about ourselves, does anthropology become a purely epistemological, philosophical, methodological proposition conforming to ideas of distance, comparison, and contrast? For the moment anthropology seems suspended between "dialogue" and "theory"--it's own narrative a lopsided kind of talk employing a vast sophisticated web of references, projections and critical language, allowing us, in the end to tell the story of Sissy Miller painting her room whorehouse red and Clownie's truck breaking down (see Stewart 1988).

Fischer suggests that the challenge of contemporary ethnography is "to revitalize theory grown otiose, by returning to the richness of descriptive data, to the life-worlds, out of which theory must be constructed" (1989:3). In the spirit of dialogue:

(1) as anthropologists we should be interested in the changes of meaning through different historical and cultural horizons; (2) we should build our definitional tools not from single traditions/horizons....Rather than always imposing our metaphors, we should extend the metaphors of other traditions and see what sort of bifocal critical purchase that gives us. (1988:13)
By focusing on narratives as the communicative matrix which connects people to each other, to places and events and the objects in their lives, I have tried to say something about the "saying" and "telling." Paying attention to those narrative clues lead me to an understanding of community which is based in narrative itself and the intersections of possible shared discourses. It points to how the "local" is constructed locally through the negotiation of vastly different discourses available to participants wherever they may encounter them and bring them to bear in local discourse. In this case the concept of "context" and the "mundane" remain as anthropologically relative and locally relevant as always.

Toward Ethnography

The suggestions I have collected for my project are "toward" the local, particular, engaged, embedded, embodied, partial; they adopt narrative, self and interpretation to get to/at inter/intra cultural discourse and dialogue. Anthropology has become self-reflective, hermeneutic, interpretive, and focuses on those aspects of social life which foster this approach. On the one hand, the changes in ethnographic study have been informed by the nature of particular realities ethnographers (and their 'subjects') encounter; on the other, by the changes taking place in the academy. Anthropology's dialogue with other fields, with post-modernism, with its own epistemology and ancestors has given it a new texture, language, and fluidity, different tools and perspectives. The theoretical (but anti-theory-bound) finesse of the new ethnography often reflects that dialogue much more faithfully and enthusiastically than the inter cultural one we purport to engage in. We are all learning how to speak, in double voices, with intentions of possible ethical action, in reflective shades, in interpretive
narratives, but old habits die hard and so speaking is still supposed to produce something to say (content/data). We move "toward" dialogue and ethnography but our examples of "toward" point to the fact that speaking, dialogue, narrative is a way of being in the world as is anthropology itself. I am, of course, writing "from the field" where being theory rich seems outshined by the pragmatics, but where, none the less, dialogue and work are how one occupies ones time (be they anthropologist or fisherman), where everyday discourse happens everyday and interpretation is everyone's business.
ENDNOTES

1 The descriptive aspects of this chapter are a composite of the bailes of the first summer I spent in Cavaleiro.

2 I did not "see" the young women as much as the men at first because: 1, I didn't know them, they did not greet me in a way which opened up conversation; 2, They often were employed out of town and did not return home for lunch and a coffee as the boys with motorcycles did. Even the girls with motorcycles preferred to bring their lunch and eat it in the company of the other women. 3, When they were not at work or school, they tended to stay home more than the young men. They had house, home and farm work to do, and they often had the company of their mothers and other friends and relatives. 4, They were more reluctant to spend their money on food, drink and games that being in the cafes or Centro implied, than were the men. 5, They were less willing to go to town alone, other than to do shopping, and so the young women, when they couldn't find company, were more likely to spend time socializing at home or in the homes of friends, neighbors, or cousins.

3 I use "to me," but it is not only to me. I am caught in the enthusiasm of the Cavaleirensse. The baile is an optimistic event which is supposed to encourage the spontaneous and playful (coded, of course, within set parameters). The Cavaleirensse taught me what the bailes were and how to enjoy them: they taught me and encouraged me to dance, they shared countless stories of the bailes with me. They taught me the music: what to listen to, when the best radio shows were, etc... I even felt that some of the older women lived vicariously through my experience: they told me of each boy I should dance with, revealing in the process which one they fancied, and always the conversations ended with, "It's good, isn't it? That's what life is for--enjoy it before you get to be an old woman like me!" I use, "to me," here and throughout this chapter (both explicitly and implicitly) because my positioning in this account is important for at least these three reasons: 1, the baile is very visceral. To describe it without introducing an experiential element would be very difficult. The baile can not be summoned up solely using narrative accounts of them, precisely because its visceral qualities lie in those cracks in narrative we usually attribute to tone, gesture and the like. I have chosen to write about the baile, using the I, rather than a distanced perspective of it to highlight the personal and social aspects of the event. The I, points to the sub-events or particulars which make up the baile. 2, Because my social and sexual identity were especially negotiated and called into question in
the context of the baile I take the opportunity to use my own case as an example of these processes. It also seems an appropriate juncture to self-reflectively include myself in the fieldwork account. Because I am concerned with the inventing of Cavaleiro through the event (used in the broadest sense) of the baile, it seems only forthcoming to use my own experience to demonstrate how this inventing is done.

4 Tia and Tio, Aunt and Uncle is contemporarily used in Cavaleiro to refer to people you are friendly with of your parents’ generation, unless they have a strong nickname, which is used instead.

5 I will discuss Foster and other traditional theories of peasant social structure in another chapter.

6 Couples courting in public parks are a common sight and have been the subject of several newspaper articles and commentaries as post 25 de Abril (the date celebrating the Portuguese Revolution) behavior and evidence of housing shortages.

7 There were three single women in their twenties who went out regularly. Two of them had cars, the third rode in the car of her brother. One of the girls was considered "good": she helped her parents and neighbors, she was soft spoken and she didn't do anything to dar nas vistas, get in people's line of vision. The other was very independent, worked, helped at home some but was less well seen. She had a sharper tongue and was suspected of any number of things, but mostly of having casual boyfriends. The third, was considered by most to be on her way to becoming a tragedy. She had a good job and often helped people in the village but her relationship with her mother was known to be very bad. Her father had died several years before, leaving the family in disarray. She had been unlucky in love and it was thought to have damaged her juizo, sense, judgment. There was another young woman who was completely independent. She had her own home and car as well as a good job. Her case was exceptional not only because of her personality and financial security but because her independent adulthood was also the product of a long-standing and well established relationship with a married man. The women who was thought to have less juizo often stayed for long stretches with her aunt in another town. The other three were good friends and often did things together. They were aware of the velhas and their various reputations. Each had their own interpretations, too long and detailed to go into here. It is interesting to note that
these women were from four of the wealthier Cavaleiro families, all four had access to a car, and three of their fathers were no longer alive.

8 Any university student is likely to be called and call themselves, when convenient, Doutora. Traditionally Portuguese academics only got their doctoral degrees very late in life as the culmination of a life’s work. The privileges of rank do not depend on the completion of the degree, as is common practice in the US. The other title frequently used is Engenheiro, engineer. Anyone in a high scale vaguely technical position is called Mr./Ms. Engineer So-and-So: the agronomist who reviews loan applications at the agro bank, Senora Engenheira Elizabet; the high school drop out from an influential family in Lisbon who works as a vigilante park ranger is called Engenheiro Bruno (he does protest to the cafe owner occasionally, when drunk, “go call someone else engenheiro”). Being a Doutora could open formal doors for me when and if I needed it (which only happened twice, when I went to introduce myself to the district governor and when I gave a deposition to the police about some lenses stolen out of the van of some German journalists by a boy from Cavaleiro).

9 Women don’t often openly drink at bailes unless there is also food or they are tucked away in the “lovers’ corner” out of sight of Moms, relatives and friends of the family. Women can get quite tipsy with wine at meals and the after dinner Port Wine or liquors, but don’t often publicly “get drunk.” Rui commented one Sunday, “Did you see how drunk Clara got last night? She is going to ruin herself. It looks really bad on a woman. A guy can get really drunk and it isn’t great, but on a woman it’s worse. Who wants to go steady with that?” Weddings and baptisms seem to be exceptions, especially for young women. In anticipation of an upcoming wedding, conversation in the women’s washroom is peppered with exclamations of “Saturday we’ll get drunk and make a wedding to remember!” At more than one wedding I saw boyfriends offering up whiskey and sneaking wine into girlfriends’ fruit salad amid much winking and joking.

10 I use utter, here, with the full narrative body which Baktin intends.

11 It is difficult not to use conventions like, "for Cavaleiro" to refer to the impact of the non-wedding, even though I would like to problematize the conception of place/community, of what it can collectively represent or react to (thus “for Cavaleiro”). I did not want to reify it but am limited by certain linguistic constraints. In this chapter, Cavaleiro, is not its events but its conversations, its actual and possible discourse.
12 See chapter four on the work of Luisa Passerini, especially her discussion of interpretations of personal discourses referring to life experiences under fascism (1987).

13 Praia's educated city views are often at odds with his kin but they usually took pains to find a round about way of letting him know. In this case Albertino and Josefina exchanged knowing glances with each other and then me. They knew, as I did, that rural women always worked in and out of the home and when single, women often went to harvest rice or work as domestics far from home. Presently in Cavaleiro, of the twenty or so single women not in school all but three had jobs besides farm and fishing duties at home. Three had gone as far as Switzerland to work in hotels and restaurants, others worked in Lisbon and the Algarve and many worked local agricultural or cafe jobs.

14 I lacked the proper judgment for discerning who could and couldn't legitimately speak on a given subject which was why people allowed me to talk to everyone even though they didn't think certain people had proper "Conversation" so that I therefore shouldn't have been speaking to them; what they seemed to appreciate was my democratic manner of giving everyone an equal chance, not my judgment.

15 Later, I was told by a colleague that in gothic literature the gesture of cornos was not the sign for the devil but the evil eye. That makes more sense since the evil eye would imply that someone was coveting your wife or husband, that someone wanted what you had and therefore the spouse was the victim of the evil eye.

16 Antigament, in the old days, or, antes, before, usually refers to any period before the late 1950s early 1960s when a series of public works where initiated in the area which completely changed the physical, economic and social landscape of the town.

17 People use cornos synonymously with head. For example, "A horn must be trying to push through," or "My horns are hurting" rather than saying, "I have a headache" and "I chipped my horns on that low doorway again," meaning, "I bumped my head." To smash someone's "horns" means to beat them up.
18 What has been abstracted here is something like the plot line of the gossip. What has been omitted are the interactive aspects of the exchange as well as a long complicated process for identifying the involved parties. Whole genealogies may have to be reviewed or other linkages established.

19 Black Africans are not common in the area. People are curious about them in the special way they are about all strangers. There are several works on post-revolution (1974) African returnees and their "integration" into Portuguese society (see Hoefgen 1985 and Wojno 1982 and their bibliographic references).

20 The bus driver who had introduced me to a woman in the village had told her I was an anthropologist who wanted to study the storks on the cliffs (anthropology must have sounded like zoology. Since the storks nest on the cliffs rather than chimneys or telephone poles as is usual they are a local oddity and the man assumed that they must be the topic of my study). She then told Fransico, my new landlord, that I was there to do a treatment with the good sea air on the cliffs (she figured a doctoramento, doctorate, meant a doctor had sent me). For the first few weeks people keep asking me how I felt and telling me in concerned tones not to worry that the air was very good in Cavaleiro and would help calm my mind. It was a little disconcerting. I imagined as I was trying to explain what I was really doing there that they were thinking, "Poor thing, she had a nervous breakdown and now she doesn't want us to know."


22 Novelas appear not only in conversation but their sound tracks and songs. Brazilian idioms and some say morality, mannerisms, dress and dance styles also make their way into local culture via local and national radio, tocadoras and imitation. Several people in town had as nicknames characters from novelas with personality or physical traits which matched. The names stuck after the novelas were long over and sometimes changed with each novela. For instance there is a man in town with a reputation for being very stingy. He was nicknamed after an early novela character with the same fault. Since then there have been three or four novelas with such character and the man is referred to any of these characters interchangeably.

23 During the two years I was in Cavaleiro the number of novelas on the air
went from three (an afternoon, evening, and week-end) to six or seven which seems to have greatly reduced the fervor of conversation about them.

24 I find de Certeau's work useful in understanding the ways in which the popular and everyday culture affords participation across class lines but problematic in its reading of all those activities as "resistance" and "struggle" against a hegemonic techno-capitalist or socialist government media empire. Resistance may be too nostalgic of a connotation, wishful thinking if you will, given the haphazard cross-overs between cultural traditions, contradictions in the same cultural tradition, gender and class. In Cavaleiro the value of cunning finds a new outlet in conversations about soap operas. It does create an area for participating in popular/mass culture but to mark it as resistance in the local community would be presumptuous since a long cultural tradition of cunning marks a history of familialism (having to protect against all manner of outsiders), fierce individualism, historical isolationism in international policy and culture, and antagonism over concurrent respect and distrust for any authority or institution. All of these cultural institutions and a strong historic tradition in popular culture have insured that cunning be a highly valued motif of "Portuguese Culture" and a class leveler in Portuguese society.

25 Young couples become very attached and demand 100% loyalty. Once they are engaged they are very affectionate which some of the young women complained was more of a possessive display on the part of their fiancés than a measure of their feelings. These couple relationship mark a kind of intimacy and confidence that friendships and family can lack. The public affection and striving for romance is relatively new in the community. Many attribute it to the influence of the telenovela and the Brazilianization of Portuguese mores. Henri Lafont (1985) also notes the change in French youth relationships from "old fashion" single sex gangs to the expression of the "naturalness" of youth and the necessity of "expressiveness." Expressing sexuality becomes the natural prerogative of youth and a vast change in the expected relationships of married couples. As we saw in the case of the young women with the jealous husband her romantic aspirations for the couple were a source of great unhappiness for her because her husband, besides being jealous did not conceptualize of marriage as romance and love. His sphere of interest was a single sex community of men which required he be a husband and father for status reasons. When I talked to men who cheated on their wives either with long term mistresses and/or quick affairs or prostitutes most of them did not have emotional, psychological or even physical complaints about their wives. Rather
they noted that their wives were the mothers of their children, their family, and they would never leave them. They attributed their infidelity to the nature of men's sexuality, their way in the world, their cunning bravado....Women in their thirties saw things much differently. Older couples, which had bonded with the idea that marriage was necessary and an obligation were delighted if they got on well with their spouses but did not expect it. They looked to their children and more extended family relations and single sex sphere of activity for fulfillment rather than the couple. Of the men in their thirties whose wives have romantic aspirations most do not correspond those feelings rather, "respect" is as close as they come. Interestingly, they consider themselves more "modern" and sophisticated then their wives: they travel through the country, they know how to behave outside town, they go to disco's and participate in work groups and sports which expose them to "modern" Portugal, as they call it. They consider their wives to be for the most part simple, unrefined, and "old fashioned." The wives reciprocate the feelings because their husbands "don't know how to treat a lady," are more interested in old fashion male bonding, and, as always "can't do anything for themselves!" While I am not focusing on gender roles in this chapter on cornos it is, of course, the debate and negotiation always going on in cornos talk. The adventures and pick-up talk men gleam from discos is brought to bare against traditional views of cornos as well as the types of aspirations and discourses women bring from telenovelas, popular culture and their experiences in the world. Women are not as sheltered as the men often like to make them out to be.

26 Fifty years of dictatorship supported by local spies, secret police and elitist class privileges followed by more recent failed socialism and agricultural cooperatives as well as local difficulties in running the towns social and sports clubs may also be acting as powerful reminders of the futility and danger of collective action. In addition, there are few models or formal means of organization available to the Cavaleirenc: the church functions only minimally, having political power and being mafioso are synonymous in local parlance, the military into which young men are conscripted does not offer any model they would like to emulate, family is only good for those who are family.... A political and social culture for collective action exist only along certain very prescribed lines. Civil consciousness as post Salazar governments have tried to present to the Portuguese is heavily mediated and circumscribed by local idiom.

27 One of the cultural and historic changes that seems to be taking place in Cavaleiro is the gradual marking of different kinds of space. The most obvious is
the "Urbanization Plan" which the district government set up to preserve agricultural land as just that and force people to build in a central location with easy access to electricity, a sewer system, roads, etc.... The distinction is now being made between center and periphery, town and countryside. And increasingly children are building houses in Cavaleiro and working in service or construction, while their parents stay on the land. Even on the homesteads there has been a shift from the old one room houses with just a wall between the family and their animals. Various people told me about the introduction of the hallway into local homes. A mason who had been working in the Algarve building houses for foreigners made one in his house. People say it and liked the idea and soon most of the new or expanded homes had entrance ways and hall ways. Having a living room also became common. Homes were often expanded into what had been the barn and the barn was built as a free standing structure separated from the house. The living room is decorated with fancy plates, framed photographs, glasses, dolls, a few books, a TV and huge wall stand to hold it all. It is kept clean and pretty and is always ready for visitors. Town, cafes, living rooms and barns are part of an on going process of marking social spaces and appropriate behavior. Older people, especially women, often express some anxiety about this and use their age to express what kind of social spaces are appropriate for them, "Oh, I'm just an old woman and my boots are dirty, I'll wait here at the door." People always say, "With your license" as they enter the home of an other, "Please do me the favor and excuse the mess" is always the reply.

28 In 1992: A loaf of bread, 90¢; a quart of milk, 90¢; minimum wage, $300 a month; gas, $4.00 a gal ; Jeans, $15-50 ; bus fare to and from county seat, $1.80 ; chicken, $1.50 / lb ; beef, $6.00 / lb ; sardines, 50¢ / lb ; price paid by slaughter house for meat "off the carcass," $4.00 / lb; building a modest home on your own land, $35,000-$50,000.

29 Being "your own boss" is very valued in any type of work. Despite many of the disadvantages to farming the fact that one controls ones time (at least it is the land and animals which determine it rather than a "boss") gives farming considerable appeal and earns farmers a certain respect. Being a fisherman is considered all the more independent but it is perceived as almost more of a calling or vice than a livelihood despite the fact that it can be very lucrative.

30 Silverware (actually it was flatware) as symbolic of the good life is simultaneously ornamental, ideal and very real and functional. A. will use that
silverware everyday, though not all of it. The silverware more than anything reminded us that the whole activity of collecting and viewing the hope-chest was a piece of tradition that was special, out of the ordinary, an occasion, a ritual. Like the silverware, the hope-chest had at least, a double meaning. It was literal, the collecting of items for one's future household—a real economic contribution to marriage, and it was fanciful. The fancy of pretty things to brighten up a love, a modest house, a life and to put a new glow (a different slant) on an institution that was never perfect—marriage. As love and romance based on images largely inspired in/by the consumer world start to take hold (squeezing in with existing tragic love traditions in classical song and filial relations), marriage becomes symbolized and problematic in new ways.

In his book, Wedding Cakes and Cultural History (1992), Charsley writes that objects, their uses and the practices surrounding them become open to exotic seeming interpretation and "ritualization" when these objects are "marooned." Marooning exists when any one of an objects components (practice, form and use) and thus original context has changed. His example is as when the cake persists but the practice fades. This significantly changed the "meaning" of the cake—it is a marooned object, historical and mysterious. Any object or practice, becomes open to interpretation when deprived of its original context. It can take on and create new and future meaning inspiring further cultural change.

The hope-chest and its silverware are marooned to the extent that it does not have the same moorings it once did; it persists but has drifted into a new realm of meaning. Cultural change works through these maroonings in special ways when traditions are involved. Traditions that are of the occasional kind, Charsley contends, change more slowly that daily practices which are constantly changing in small increments. Traditions always refer to the past but are contingent in every society on the value placed on tradition itself and on a variety of ever changing circumstances. Cultural objects which have been marooned by tradition and change create a special space for cultural interpretation and involvement both indigenous and anthropological.

31 In discussing the 18th century, McCracken notes.

The consumer had to devote more time to the activity of purchase. More important, however, the consumer had to devote more time to consumer learning...Consumers now occupied a world filled with goods that carried messages. Increasingly they were surrounded by meaning-laden objects that could only be read by those who possessed the object-code. Of necessity they were becoming semioticians in a new medium, the masters of a new code. In sum, more and more social behavior was becoming consumption, and more and more of the individual was subsumed in the
role of consumer. (1990:20)
Despite the historicalness of the observation, it is an on going process and one
which is starting to take hold in specific forms for the Cavaleirence (like the hope-
chest display). One thing that is interesting to note is that activity of learning the
object code takes on new meaning and procedure as it is butted up against the
kind of learning/hiding and projection of self pervasive in the cornos discourse.

32 This emigration is part of a long history of such moves. Typically Brazil and
the African territories were the destinations of choice along with six month tours
on large fishing boats. France presented new opportunities as other options
closed. Leaving home for many years and the nostalgia that accompany the
experience are well entrenched in Portuguese culture.

33 Another food which is heavily tinged with nostalgia and appeals to tradition
is dry salt cod, bacalhau. Bacalhau is the Portuguese national dish. Any guide
book will tell you there are 352 ways to cook it. Every restaurant has at least one
bacalhau dish on the menu everyday. Looking through the index of one of the
"Traditional food of Portugal" cookbooks (now published in Portuguese, English,
German, and French) I counted forty-five main dishes made with bacalhau, the
same number for pork and nine recipes for beef and veal. My parents, however,
expressed much sympathy when they called on Christmas and heard that I had
been invited for a traditional Christmas dinner, boiled bacalhau and cauliflower.

What does it mean to be the national dish? A very common popular dish
which distinguishes Portuguese cuisine from other nations? The hamburger of
Lusitania, as Portugal was classically known. In the case of Portugal, bacalhau,
while still popular and common, today is akin to the hamburger in Moscow, a
luxury import. Historically, the Portuguese fished extensively in northern
Atlantic waters for bacalhau and whale. Portuguese boats would go out to sea for
six months at a time returning with mounds of dry salted cod. Bacalhau was a
cheap important food source to a poor country (regardless of ample gold
reserves) with little means of preserving foods, and little good land or pasture for
producing it. A greedy church and government did little to help the situation.
Nor did the landed rich or inheritance patterns. As international fishing rites
changed in the 1960s the Portuguese were no longer allowed to fish in the
northern waters for free. Bacalhau quite suddenly became an expensive import
while the taste for it and its place in the national cuisine remained.
Contemporarily, depending on the quality, bacalhau cost about ten to fifteen
dollars a kilo. This is more than most cuts of meat at the butcher and about the
same price as the best fresh fish and select sea food, such as the favorite local
barnacles, preceves, scraped from the rock during especially low tides. Households that I never saw eating meat from the butcher much less fancy sea food often ate bacalhau.

Bacalhau is not considered a luxury though its price certainly justifies it. Most of the Cavaleirense I knew, were very generous, hospitable, said "Thank God" for their luck. They would do what they could to throw a good wedding, celebration or baptism. They spent money on clothes and increasingly on their houses and furniture but they tried to live modestly, be frugal and considered themselves poor. They did things to save money that I recognized from my depression era grandparents (the phone for instance should only be used for sixty seconds, lest it burn a hole in your head). Water, electricity and gas were used very judiciously. Indoor heating despite cold wet winters and rheumatism and arthritis does not exist. Sending children to school after the obligatory years was cost prohibitive since they would no longer receive a government reduction for lunches, books and transportation. But bacalhau is not forsaken.

On the one hand, it is more economical than most beef, especially, because a little of the strong taste of bacalhau can go a long way. Beef is usually eaten as thin tough (by American standards) steaks served with fried potatoes. This requires more per person. Bacalhau once it has been soaked in several changes of water over a day or two expands to twice its original thickness. Beef is considered a luxury albeit a not very sought after one. Young men like to eat these steaks in restaurants with a fried egg and slice of ham covering it. But most women rarely cook it at home for several reasons. Most household have large deep freezes but not refrigerators--leftovers go to the animals, milk is ultrapasteurized in liter containers which require no refrigeration or right from the cow, eggs are usually available from one's own chickens and never refrigerated. Other foods, like bacalhau, are simply wrapped and put in a cool dark place. Deep freezes are almost always full of chicken and pork and ten loaves of bread and peas and tomatoes, squid, octopus and occasionally meat from the butcher. Meat from the butcher, especially thin beef and even favored pork steaks do not fair so well in the deep freeze and the thawing.

Locals say that steaks are better fresh. Without a refrigerator and the butcher being in Odemira or other towns as far away, fresh meat means eating it that day for the next meal. Most women rarely go to Odemira more than once every fifteen days. When they do buy meat from the butcher they always come home with stories of how expensive it was, how the butcher didn't give them the best cut, how they have different names for the cuts, and this always turns into a general conversation about butchers buying people's sick and old animals, or pigs which weren't neutered which makes the meat taste rancid, how one never
knows where the meat comes from and lately the most animated topic has been
that the beef was being imported from Spain (very old and deep seated
animosity finding new fuel as the Spanish economy forges ahead) and unlike
Portuguese beef, is filled with hormones.

There is frozen meat sold in Cavaleiro. It is either brightly packaged,
processed, expensive and mysterious or pried out of a long ago opened
cardboard box, covered with ice crystals and also mysterious. Customers often
dived into the deep freeze and retrieved something they would spend minutes
turning over and over to figure out what exactly it might be. This and the fact
that most women don't have as many tested recipes for these meats add to
bacalhau's continued popularity. The small size of the town, the fact that they can
not easily get the ingredients often called for in the recipes they collect from the
TV guide and the poor public transportation also support, "the national dish."

As mentioned above in reference to the linguisa and to other meats, the
Cavaleirencs don't trust or appreciate store bought meats. In fact they are very
particular about the ingredients they cook with. Bacalhau is carefully picked
over, there are long animated discussions about which of the five bakers which
deliver make the bread and how they always fall short of home made. Even the
chickens people raise to eat have a known genealogy--were they bought as chicks
at a fair or farm bred, or mixed. Which ones are best for grilling and which for
stew is also discussed and considered. If a watermelon isn't just right it is
discarded after just looking at it and never is it eaten after sitting around once it
has been cut open. Potatoes are appreciated hot and fresh cooked, reheating is
reported to makes them tough and inedible. There are a host of other such
preferences which tie good food with country living, home grown and home
care.

*Bacalhau a Braz*

Soak enough *bacalhau* per person.
Make sure to change the water four or five times.
Put the *bacalhau* is a pot covered with water and cook until done.
Rinse it. Pull it off the bone and shed into pieces.
Cut a yellow onion into long pieces and fry until limp in a lot of heavy (almost
green) olive oil.
Add the *bacalhau* cooking for a few minutes.
Also add a large bunch of chopped parsley.
Cut potatoes into match stick pieces. Fry and drain.
Crack two or three eggs per person and beat them well.
Add the eggs and fried potatoes to the onions, parsley and *bacalhau.*
Cook and stir until the eggs are just dry. Garnish with sprig of parsley and lots of small sharp black olives.

This is a winter favorite when eggs are plentiful. A light red or white wine washes it down nicely. Hearty slightly sour dough bread is a good compliment. Follow it with a strong coffee and a shot of fire water to help the digestion.

34 Especially in European histories, (Personal Communication) Anne-Marie Oliver Diaz. Also see popular histories such as The French, by T. Zeldin and The Europeans, The Italians etc..

35 Geertz and the influence of semiology on the one hand and symbolic, interpretive gender studies on the other, M. Rosaldo, S. Ortner, L. Lamphere, J. Collier, M. Strathern.

36 As compared to Tyler's "saying"-Ricoeur may fall short but by including interpretation (action of writing etc.) as another layer, as social action rather than representation, Ricoeur somewhat sidesteps the problem. However, as Tyler points out, it may be only comparable to attempts to represent dialogue as in the work of Dwyer and Tedlock—monologues parading as dialogue.

37 Hebdige's early work, Subculture (1979), for example, is about a "struggle to the light", a later collection of essays is called, Hiding in the Light (1986). Resistance and struggle are reexamined: for punk youth subcultures it had been a useful mode of analysis, but moving beyond this semiotic Marxist interpretation, Hebdige suggests that hegemony may be a "moving equilibrium" as slippery and shimmering as a mirage.

38 See Tyler, Stoller, Marcus and Fischer, Marcus and Clifford, K. Dwyer, Rabinow, Assad.

39 For example, Daniels, Perin, Hebride, Willis.

40 I have chosen this article for its suggestions "toward" an ethnographic approach not because it exhaustively covers the vast territory of psychological anthropology. Other important contributors in this vein include: G. H. Mead, M. Mauss, F. Boas, R. Benedict, M. Mead, J. Lecan, T. Maranhôa, V. Crapanzano, M. Fischer, J. Kirkpatrick, G. White, M. Bruner, V. Turner, V.
41  The cultural specificity of the self is Rosaldo's ethnographic material; she uses her psychological repertoire to recognize where Ilongot emotions differ (from her's/the West's) to make the following observations: 1, "emotions are not things but processes that are best understood with reference to the cultural scenarios and associations they evoke" (1989:142). 2, She "challenges a prevailing view that tells us to distinguish private 'selves' and social 'persons'"(1989:142). 3, Her comparative findings suggest that "selves and feelings shaped by culture may be understood in turn as the creation of particular sorts of polities"(1989:142).

42  It could be added here that Rosaldo's interpretive self is discursively constructed in Stewart's contaminated style--interpretation is used to understand a people which see the self as interpretive. Fischer also points towards the importance of the self as a major issue in ethnographic writing, "ethnographic writing and the ways in which a narrative individual locus is useful for staging the conflict and divergent strata that make up agents (be they individuals, discourses, social forces, manipulated desires, etc.)" (1989:1). The etc. could well be culture itself and the self it's last great bastion. In his article, "Ideology, Place, and People Without Culture" (1988), Renato Rosaldo insists that there is no such "people without culture". Rather we have invented a politics of culture, "us" against "them"--a "Postcultural Top" and "Precultural Bottom". We have a definition of all human conduct as being culturally mediated, therefore it should hold for the "us's" as well as the "them's". In that I resist the notion of "thin culture", as in mass consumer culture studies or a la Levy's Tahitians, I especially appreciate Rosaldo's spirit when he contends that we need a concept of culture which doesn't disappear, "wimp out", in the face of flux, heterogeneity, improvisation and which isn't scared off by the hard realities of modern/post-modern life. Moreover, the play of cultural practices, "could just be, more often than we usually like to think, criss-crossed by border zones, pockets, and eruptions, along with our supposedly transparent cultural selves, are as profoundly cultural as anything else" (1988:87).

43  Later Stewart writes about an excess of objects that match this excess of meaning. They are both ruins and re/degenerate memorials to meaning, experience and the nature of material objects.

44  Also see the work of M. M. J. Fischer.
I suspect much of field work is chasing after various configurations of being there, of context with their multiple fragmented interconnections. And what of writing? Is it also a being there and/or performance or immemorial? And what does this do to context? These questions recall others, such as, the "problem" of presence and performance which is only an epistemological/context problem if you're not there (presence?) but want to reproduce or represent it (performance?). However, if you are satisfied with being in it which is always being in its "wake" (as in boat/cross waves. cf. Stewart) everything being an "effect" rather than an essential "it," then the configuration/problem dissipates. Or should we consider presence and performance experiential phenomena on a different order or degree in a whole range of possibilities. Are they are in themselves "tactics" or stop gaps in some Derridian sense? I consider these questions in light of some of the irreducibles the baile and the wake of cornos. They are two different events, types of being there, which produce different "effects."

The question, why is their connection important? stems from a perhaps outdated but still present "modern" split between thought and action and an urge to connect--to find a mutuality, an evocation not only of forms--said/unsaid, meaning/representation and narrative/writing but also of something akin to the mutuality of thought and action, of critique (cultural criticism) and politics (provocation). But again is the contaminated speaker both an actor and speaker? Does cultural critique "count" as action or and speakers as actors? And isn't my interest in speakers rather than "action" (subliminal flashings of subversive action). These clumsy thoughts about action are invoked in the ethnographers/ies desire to "embody," "embed," "engage," as if the sheer Eros of embodying could unite mind and body, thought and action, experience and critique.

McCraken (1991) suggests a more porous system where all strata, from "culture makers" to consumers, effect each other and are reactive to each other. DeCerteau posits a more rigid non-responsive system which can only be acted against.

Also see R. Levy and M. Rosaldo on cultural explanations of affect and P. Chock on radical cultural theories of culture. Passarini's work supports theirs while not being as theoretically explicit or unified.

Stewart notes the same type of mythic simplicity in the contrast "America", 
"Appalachia". The myth of the European peasant especially the modernizing European peasant, like the Appalachian is either "too close to nature (anti-progress) or it is the world we have lost" (1986:1).

50  In the continual thinking and rethinking and living out of this project I have come up against the question of local/locale, the immediate and the personal, both through current anthropological and post-modernist debates and in my understanding of "context" in Cavaleiro. The question of "Local" begs the question of "Audience". In simple terms, to ponder the question "what is interesting to say here" requires the tag, to/for whom? and is not the same as what is interesting to say about Cavaleiro. To complicate or clarify things further what is interesting to "say/listen" (and to whom) is not necessarily interesting to "write/read" (and for whom).

My experience in Cavaleiro included much learning to speak and hear not only the language but what conversation is made of, what is talked about, (to whom, with whom, excluding whom), what tone and mood accompany what topic, what's funny, where the silences fall. I trespassed silences, asked questions which only put me outside conversation and committed all the blunders expected of foreigners, newcomers, ethnographers and other strangers. Is that a subject to be made explicit in writing? In writing it loses its interest because it is the dilemma of speaking. In writing it would become no more than a description of do's and don't. Poetry, literature, perhaps strive to exploit writing fully, plain style only contracts it as its awkward translator.

Thinking about the "interesting" I find myself rebelliously attracted by the "mundane"--does it exist like beauty in the eye of the beholder, as relative as E=mc2? The mundane of far-away-lands becomes the interesting of our studies. The mundane is bound up with idea of local/locale and in a broader sense with that of context. The local, the native, the "from here" subject, knows what of local context is relevant and interesting when, where and with whom--which conversations happen around the dinner table or at the cafe, what topics fall within the parameters of sociability and which will be met with the remark "This isn't anything to make conversation with," followed by a stubborn silence. S/he also knows what is too local, mundane, boring, the "same every day", that which isn't worth talking about. (It is the same mundane "the youth" want to escape--that desiring is what marks their talk as that of "the young.")
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