

## The Path of the Initiate: In Search of the Holy Grail or is it the Golden Fleece?

JAN JAGODZINSKI

This was an irreverent/irrelevant staged performance wherein a schizophrenic Voice was presented through a dialogue that answered itself as it moved from one side of a table to the other, speaking at itself, sometimes to itself. The audience was physically separated from the performer in a classical fashion: stage and audience. One end represented the Voice of personal memories as an initiate into conference life; the other end represented the jaded view of a Voice who bitterly questions the entire ritual. A tie was put on and taken off as the performer moved from one side of the table to its opposite. To represent the physical event as an image the page has been divided into two columns and the dialogue into two sections. The two columns represent Voices in opposition; the left column being that of the initiate, the right column being that of a cynical critical voice. The two sections are referred to as the *Drawing of the Body* and *Drawing of the Mind*. The *Drawing of the Body* both literally and figuratively questions the way members of any discipline are seduced into meeting together at a central site/sight/cite, while *Drawing of the Mind* speaks literally and figuratively to the ideological conscription/inscription which takes place as pilgrims are seduced by their own 'lack' into hearing the experts expound their theories and reproduce the legitimated reality.

The following is a fictional performance. Where I have used real names or what seem to be physical descriptions of real people, it is purely done in the interest of fiction. The account represented herein has been rewritten. Where then is the original?

### Drawing in of the Body: The Site/Sight/Cite

**Preamble:** I always wanted to go to a National. As a graduate student I could never afford the luxury. Costs were outrageous and even my schemes of driving to New York, or Chicago seemed ridiculous. Many years of study had given me a repertoire of names and voices but there never were

**Preamble:** One must always ask about the body's drawing, the lure and the mysticism surrounding any sight/site/cite. In former times the Oracle at Delphi provided the male pilgrim the center towards which he could seek and find the truth. The road to the grand Mosque in Mecca,

many faces to go with them. In the past I had always been fascinated and bewildered how discordant my projected image of the person was with the actual physical being. Personalities, strong voices constituted the field. Each year art educators would meet to Pow Wow and like the listener who hears the thunder of distant drums, I wanted to come in a little closer to gape at the scene/seen of that 'primal' orchestration. US cities have always provided a certain fascination for me, perhaps through hype or perhaps by hearing others who had gone to such Pow Wows, big cities, seats of a State's industrial power, were a real drawing card. And Spring seemed such a perfect time; a time to get away from it all and turn a conference into a holiday after a long winter of hard work.

The attraction to the NAEA was furthered for me by the location of my first conference site - New York. New York offered me a chance to "lap up" culture. All those museums, art galleries and New York lofts; all those opportunities to take in the intellectual life of a great city, all those opportunities to visit bookstores, not to mention a chance to listen to Larry Rivers "speak." As I reflect, six years ago it was MOMA that was the attraction; today in Los Angeles it is MOCA. Six years ago it was Larry Rivers and this year it's the opportunity to see the Hockney's retrospective.

Each new conference site offered me a whole smorgasboard of tours to galleries, artist studios, architectural oddities. Each hotel, a labyrinth of exploration to find cheap, reasonable good food.

the path which led to the sacred circle at Stonehenge, Augustine's journey to the gates of Hell, the perilous voyage of the Argonauts who sailed in quest of the Golden Fleece, even the yellow brick road which led to the Land of Oz - the pilgrims journey was always fraught with danger, mystery and daring. The body was always drawn by a lack and a desire: to find the answers to the great unknown, to discover the origin of things, to find a cure, experience a miracle, to come away blessed and immersed into a participation of the greater Good or simply to escape the rigors of everyday life. The search for the Holy Grail has been a persistent male phantasy/fantasy. Its discovery not only meant untold power and mastery, the possession of transcendental signifiers which give life meaning and direction, but it was also a myth of paradise and the Garden of Eden. The Grails recovery meant the restoration of a time abounding in damsels, food and plenty. Without some form of Grail worship our journeys become aimless wandering. Throughout our lives we are compelled to wonder from one spire to the next in search of holy figures, the Masters who counsel us. They show "the way" for the initiate so that s/he too can find Nirvana.

These trips, which were meant to be arduous, most certainly painful, have become our escape attempts. What took months, sometimes years to accomplish is done in several hours by plane. The body no longer experiences the journey. Like a television channel, we quickly change



RENAISSANCE CENTER

Detroit, Michigan  
John Portman and Ass.

sets. Holy days have become holidays; what were once refuges have become resorts. What were once hostels which gave alms and food to pilgrims have become multinational chain hotels where we are wine and stuffed. What was once a sign of penance has become folly. All that was sacred sits gleefully in profanity. The holy figures and the places of their birth or death, sights/sites/cites of their Holy sepulchre have been replaced by a circuitry of 'white' hotels; the holy figures replaced by Mr. and Mrs. Art Education. And like the Crusades, which diverted the pilgrims to secondary sites of martyrdom and visitation of relics in order to buy souvenirs as proof that they had been there, we too wear our badges, purchase our paraphernalia to suggest an equal claim.

So what is this sight/site/cite which promises to center us? How does it create the desire so that one becomes confirmed by the *Brotherhood* of higher art educators? What makes *you* wear your badge so proudly? The pilgrim sites have typically been The Westin Chain of Hotels, Philip Johnson's monuments to capitalism or sites like Portman's Renaissance Center in Detroit. As the site/sight/cite changes from New York, Boston, New Orleans, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, Washington, the hotels begin to lose their memorability. The journey becomes strangely the same. Day merges into night and by the time the week is over you are completely exhausted.

A particularly obnoxious complex was Detroit's Renaissance Center, a misnomer if I had ever heard one. The 'city within a city' circular design caused so much disorientation that, at times I didn't know where the exit was. Some stores I never saw again and as for the swimming pool, it was so windy that few dared to dip. Especially irritating were the guards who walked around at night signalling each other through their walkie-talkies. Apparently there was so much crime in the 'city' at night that it took over 300 guards to patrol it.

### Drawing in of the Mind: Slogans, Experts, Business

**Slogans:** The opportunity to hear many papers, to take back with me possible projects that I might carry out with my class (I had signed up for an experience institute), the chance to see what was the latest in technological innovations and updated materials, perhaps, above all, to meet and talk with fellow art educators, these were the most important tasks for me. To find out what other art educators thought, perhaps talk to some of those writers I admired and gain a better understanding of what should be done. In New York I met up with members of the *Salon des refusés*, members of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education. Their name was so long that I still have to look it up each time I write it down. As for the slogans: hermeneutics and critical theory appeared often.

It is difficult *not* to see these pilgrim sites/sights/cites as phallax symbols that rise above the horizon line, dominating the landscape, puffed up by the countless hours of labour and worship by the faithful. These are centers of gravity where those in the hinterland are painfully reminded of their place in the hierarchy which lies somewhere in between their local sphere of influence and the real power which disseminates the "knowledge" through the official arms of its journals, organizational networks and so on.

**The Slogans:** It is difficult, if not an impossible task to envision the conference from the eyes of an initiate, once jaded - always jaded. After six years of continued pilgrimage it is difficult not to become a cynic and not to see the national convention as a perpetuation of the illusion of centrality - order - and the belief all is well despite the incredible decline of art in our schools. It seems that every convention has its central slogans, the oxymoron of coherent jamboree of orchestration wherein all of us can come and go back to our separate hovels feeling that we have been baptized, dipped into the Ganges, blessed into a sacred mission— to spread "ART" to the Philistines. The badges are worn with pride. One year it's "YOU GOT TO HAVE ART," another it is "ART IS WORK", and today it's "BACK TO THE FUTURE!"



**Experience Institutes:** Presenting my first paper was not like anything that I had imagined it would be. I had spent many, many hours preparing and rehearsing the script. I was armed with as many possible replies which were to be thrown at me. I was "blessed" with an 8:00 AM slot, the first day of the conference. I think 3 people showed. What was I to do? I shelved my prepared 'speech' and turned the session into a discussion period. I have no clue how long it lasted but I left in disappointment. Where were the hoards? Why had I spent all that time preparing for such a short encounter? Why weren't more people interested in social theory?

Finding where the sessions were to be held was, at times, a frustrating task. I kept looking at the hotel's floor maps included in the conference program, but they seemed of little help when a session was to begin in a few minutes. Often I would stop in the middle of a corridor, or sit by a handy couch to flip to the map and try to find the room again. I couldn't stop somebody and ask them where such and such a room was since most of the conference goers seemed equally lost—looking for their sessions. I remember dutifully finding the room I was to present in and memorizing the route so that I would not be late. Recently I have noticed that conference organizers have been placing signs outside the rooms as to what times and what sessions will be held. That has been a real blessing.

**Experts:** Looking through the conference program was an experience by itself. Hundreds upon hundreds

**Experience institutes:** The images are of cluttered "doings," makings and hands on experience, the very *stuff* that 'makes' the art curriculum. All done in a matter of several hours in the hopes that the experience of the lesson can travel anywhere to any place on the globe, to be repeated as a "successful" art lesson. It is the art educators ultimate lure. Pithy titles attract teachers: Paper Caper, A is for Alligator, Junk Genius, Twining, Instant Photography, Recycled Paper and Collage. Should I stay cynical and recall all those studies about the hidden curriculum? School art, instant art, instant culture, and the structure of schooling simply depress me, or should I nod my head and realize that as an art teacher I hungered for projects to do with students and that experiencing these institutes I could *stuff* my pockets full with *stuff* to do? I am bewildered even today as what to really do. If I fail to "arm" my student teachers with "stuff," they will surely fail in the system. If I uncover and inoculate them with "resistance theories" then they become depressed. Production for production's sake, art for art's sake, the speed of artistic consumption and production must continually be fed with new innovative projects which cost little but have a big impact. One year there was even a taxidermy institute where participants actually *stuffed* fish and fowl. Little cost and a big impact, or should I say smell. This is all part of the search for the Holy Grail that may be taken home and practiced in the classroom.

**Experts:** The great speakers are placed on a long line like the hundreds of self portraits one sees of

of sessions - or so it seemed to me. Dutifully I carried the program around wherever I went. When the session turned out too boring, or dull or just plain "stupid," I would religiously flip through the days events hoping to find something that would spark me through its title. The names of the presenters meant little. Most of the names I knew appeared in either the general or super sessions. Going to super sessions was quite confusing. I sat there, along with the rest of the hoard in a semi-darkened ballroom. In the distance there were several small figures who spoke over microphones. Again disembodied voices with no faces. General sessions turned to be of two sorts: either somebody was getting an award, whom I had no clue about, or a panel was discussing a topic. These latter sessions were more insightful but the audience didn't get a word in edgewise and these sessions usually went on longer than scheduled.

**Big Business and Superstars:** I recall going from one booth to the next in the exhibitors section which was real hard to find. So many companies, so many new products, so many new books, so many new materials. I sort of walked from one booth to the next, scanning at some, flipping through books at another, fascinated sometimes by the freebies and the new video art, no different than the nineteenth century *flâneur* caught up by the window displays of consumerist dreams. I think I came out with a handful of business calling cards, several art books and new products I was going to tell my students about. I was surprised over the number of parties sponsored by companies and by state universi-

the monarchy in any national gallery. Former heads of state, their place immortalized, fixed by the portrait's likeness (so we would like to believe). Rather than the royal regalia art educators now appear in suits and ties, stylish dresses. These are measures of their respectability. Rather than gilded frames, they now appear in the conference program in boxes, bold dark lines surround them to let the initiate know that these are "s(t)uper sessions." Mr. and Ms. Art Education have not only replaced the Holy Men, but have become the Kings and Queens and the royal art family. A Ms. M.W. is pictured in the conference program wearing pearls and we are told that she is a respected collector. Come On!

**Big Business and Superstars:** One can't help seeing the promulgation of the artistic super-star like Larry Rivers, Christo, and the *David Hockney Night* - One can't help seeing the corporate sponsorship - **IN BOLD CAP PRINT** being as important as the artist. One can't help but hear how the Getty is supporting the Museum educators. "One Enchanted Evening" includes an elegant reception sponsored by Binney & Smith. Dress is Black, Tie is optional. An opportunity to get More Holy Grail. It is extremely difficult not to see the technologies of power represented by the commercial exhibitors. Its more important to wear your badge so that you are able to get in to see these displays than to hear your fellow colleagues

ties to attract graduate students. Such parties allowed for cordial and relaxed conversation. You can imagine my surprise to find out food and drink were free, that people wandered from one party to the next and that there were unusual rituals associated with this debauchery like riding up and down elevators, greeting fellow colleagues and exchanging State pins. Coming from Canada, one year the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design sponsored a party aided by Moose Beer Brewing Co.

*Shamans:* I have to admit I still do not know the entire organization of the NAEA organization, even after 6 pilgrimages. Sometimes I feel that I am living as a parasite in one small corner of the hotel in a huge convention site which, if I had not found a small group of compatible thinking people might have trapped me within its walls. I have heard of people not leaving the confines of their hotel to explore the host city in fear of being 'rolled.' Many will take the packaged tours where safety in number seems to be the order of the day and then there are always a few horror stories in circulation where real tragedy has struck which simply reconfirms the sense of playing it safe and seeing the 'tourist' sites.

*Shamans:* The Getty

It did not take too long to identify who were considered to be the major players in the NAEA organization. They were the legendary 'leaders' who had established centers of art educational research: Barkan, Lowenfeld, Feldman, Eisner, Beittel, Smith, Lanier. These men had set the tone of the

speech. Guards perpetually control the entrance ways as if someone illicit from the street will come in and get their 20% discount. I mean, really! The power of such companies as Crayola and Grumbacher and the myriad of tools and techniques which they promote, rather than freeing up the teacher's time make her more busy. These companies help create a false desire that art may be reduced to a skill or technique, MORE HOLY GRAIL that will make the art classroom more manageable and fashionable.

*Shaman(s):* "As a child living amongst the Kwakiutl people I once saw a shaman chant and dance about the bed of a dying woman. I read the account by Levi-Strauss':

'That the mythology of the shaman does not correspond to an objective reality does not matter. The sick woman believes in the myth and belongs to a society which believes in it. The tutelary spirits and malevolent spirits, the supernatural monsters and magical animals, are all part of a coherent system on which the native conception of the universe is founded. The sick woman accepts the mythical beings, or more accurately she has never questioned their existence. What she does not accept are the incoherent and arbitrary pains, which the shaman, calling upon the myth, will re-integrate within a whole where everything is meaningful.'

What the shaman does, according to Levi-Strauss is "provide the sick woman with a language, by means of which inexpressive physical states can be immediately expressed. And it is the transition to this verbal expression - at the same time making it possible to undergo in an or-

discourse. The bulk of articles in the two journals of the NAEA were represented by the forceful rhetoric of, by and large, this older generation of art educators. They had spawned a new generation of students who continued their rhetoric. Vincent Lanier had been consistent in presenting a social and critical questioning of art education. Beittel had found an 'alternative path' and had begun to introduce hermeneutics in the established discourse. Eisner's particular genius lay in capturing the market in claiming connoisseurship and qualitative research and Smith had successfully founded the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. I was ready to listen to their counsel.

*Closing:* As for the faces, it has taken many years to match the faces with the Voices. Slowly a general schema has evolved, hidden interests have been revealed. For me what has emerged is the complexity of the contradictions which we all live by and the struggle for ownership for the discourse on art education. The Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education has provided me a small plot, a toe hold from which to enter into that discourse in order to at least question it.

dered and intelligible form a real experience that would otherwise be chaotic and inexpressible — which induces the release of a physiological process, that is, the reorganization, in a favorable direction, of the process to which the sick woman is subjected.

What is the myth of the NAEA conference and who are its shamans? Who cures the "sick woman" in the illusion of the spiritual birth of "Back to the Future?" How do we make the sick woman well again by exposing the shaman?

*Closing:* Like Bank Conferences which are often held in exotic places, there is always entertainment provided for the 'wives' (there are few women Bank presidents; can you imagine entertainment for husbands?) - hula dancing, exercise classes, shopping sprees, beauty care. A wife can always find something. And so it is with us — we can always find "something" at the National!

# A S T O P A C T I O N Tour of the NAEA Shrine

ELLEDA KATAN

## IT BEGINS:

Sounds (taped) of music voices coming & going coughing  
footsteps chairs scraping louder, **louder**, **LOUDER** and  
then:

## S T O P

!!**Speaker** enters, dressed somberly, a cowl about the neck.  
A long glance at each member of the audience, then:

!!**Speaker** speaks: "We gather together  
to speak fine arts blessing.  
We name them.  
We date them.  
We make their slide known."

a l o n g silence: then !!**Speaker**

- (1) lifts up a flute and plays a low-note vibrato,
- (2) slowly squirts GLADE over the heads of the audience, and
- (3) steps to one side as a slide of

•the **Mona Lisa** •

is projected on the screen.  
The GLADE slowly settles,  
the droplets glistening in the projector light,  
the shadows speckling the cheeks,  
the chest,  
the landscape of -

•the **Mona Lisa** •



!!**Speaker**, gazing at

• the **Mona Lisa** •

speaks :

"It is true, isn't it? this wondrous feeling ....  
when we let go of the thousand small choices,  
the endless hellos, the angst of self image  
when we let go of the Convention itself ....  
and give ourselves over to 'PURE SEEING'  
when we just l o o k at the image of

• the **Mona Lisa** • "

!!**Speaker** plays another low vibrato on the flute

"We are here."

exultant, eyes on screen, on  
• the **Mona Lisa** •



"Once again,  
we are here !"

**BUT THEN,**  
from the audience

a gruff Voice : "Here, yeah. But where the hell is here ?"

"Why. . . In the same place, of course !"

Voice : "What do you mean, the same place. Last year, you were in Boston.  
This year, you're in LA. What's 'the same place' about that ?"

"The cities aren't the same It's the city within a city that counts and the city within a city that is the same. Here, only small things change.  
Atrium, no atrium Elevators, in doors or out Windows that open, or don't  
Room with a view, or not... ..but, then, you must know about that !"



Voice : "Yeah? Well I don't know about that! This in my first national and I find it a bit weird. Don't misunderstand. I've done a lot of conferences. I've even organized a few — but always at the local level."

Voice is standing now  
swaying about  
his body blocking the image of

• the Mona Lisa •

Voice : "Those are certainly different from this. Those we hold in a high school, a community college, a local museum. Those, you get to talk with the people that run the place. You see their exhibitions, their facilities. You learn about the community, the budget, the resources, the problems — the whole thing. Not like this!"

"Yes. Well, this is quite another ...."

Voice interrupts : "And then, you know, it's just for a day! You drive there with the other teachers, figure out the best route together, talk things over on the way."

"Yes. Well, let me ...."

Voice clearly upset : "And then too you pretty much know the presenters. After all, they're from the region. You can always check out what they say against what they do. Here! Good heavens, I've never seen so many people I don't know and that I'll never see again. I mean how am I supposed to know if they are telling the truth?"



"Yes. . . well . . . You are right about one thing : You have entered another world, the world of the city within a city. You've left behind the world of domestic details and parochial variation. You are now in an alternative reality, (excuse me sir.... but could you please sit down.... thank you) a reality which debates universal truths, which draws its passion from the intrinsic values of:

• the Mona Lisa •  
musical flourish

from balance  
from dynamic tension  
from harmony  
from the pure act of seeing

musical flourish  
musical flourish  
musical flourish  
sustained music

a pause

"But perhaps I can help you see the difference. I do a

# STOP ACTION TOUR

about the place, one that has been very well received, if I do say so myself. We would leave this slide — very briefly — of • the Mona Lisa • and view others slides of the walls and spaces of our city-in-a-city and let them tell all.

"Yes ?

Good!

First, let me help you feel more at home, I'll start with the hotel.

As you probably know it in your own home town, as it still remains in small corners of large cities — the hotel as building within a city.

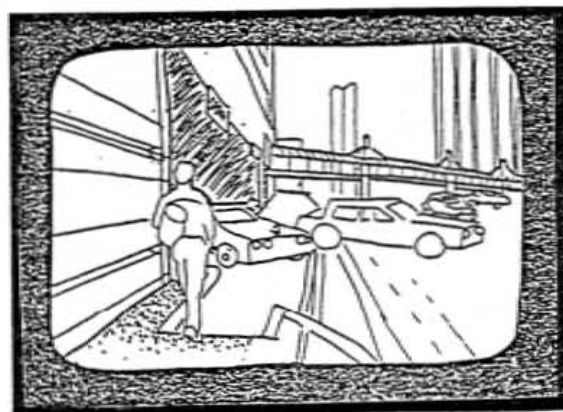
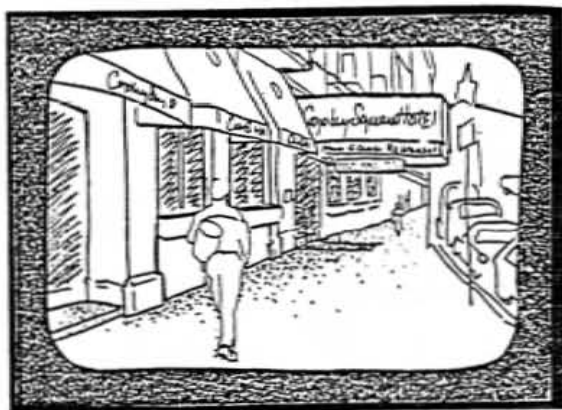
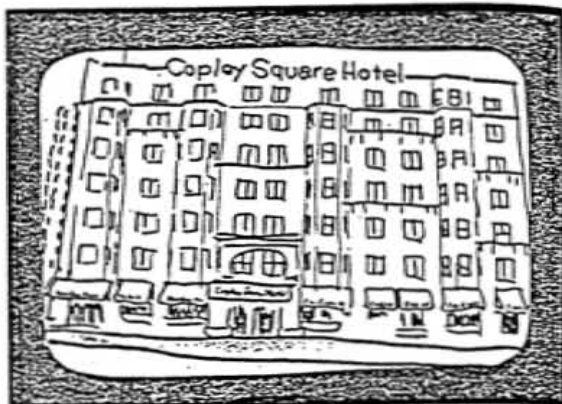


These were hotels for single travelers and local functions, in the center of town or near the railway station. Upright, practical, staunch, symmetrical, familiar within the skyline, like good citizens serving a clearly stated need.

We met one of them at the Boston Convention. Across one street from the Marriot & the NAEA. It was the Copley Plaza: small, compact, square; with an Entrance leading straight to check in and the stairs, an awning reaching from curbside to threshold, a doorman in ready attendance; with sidewalk Windows framing the lounge, the bar, the breakfast nook to passersby; with a roof top Sign that reads in the night sky like a "Hello, my name is . . ." label. We perhaps noticed it most as reflections on the green glass reaches of the Marriot where the corniced brick frame of the Copley Plaza was turned into squiggles and shards.

The Marriot, on the other hand, is quite another story. Less the good citizen. More an amorphous congestion of forces.

And what forces!  
Look here how it sucks in the street  
Spits out the highway  
Dissolves a sidewalk  
Draws in a sidewalk and sends it out  
skywalking over the streets.  
Different, no?

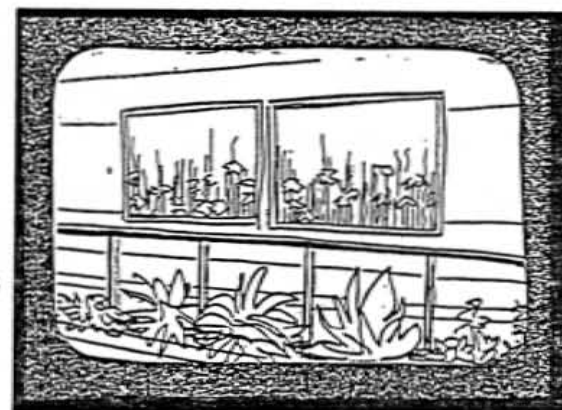
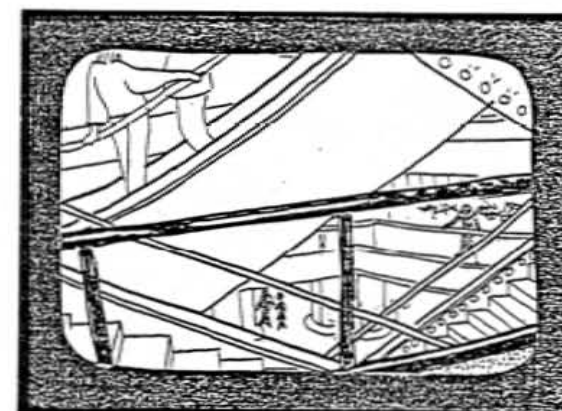
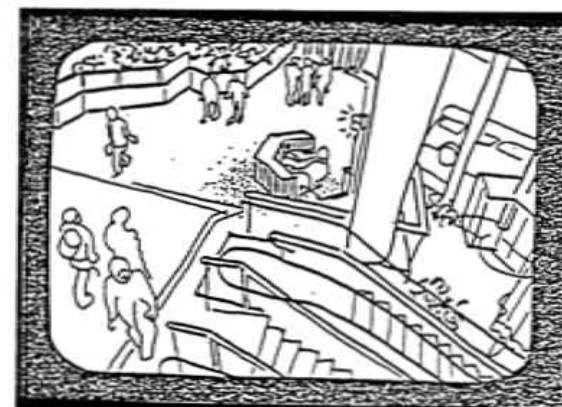


And once inside the skin of the Marriot You're not really inside at all. There's a MotherNature tenderer, greener than all outdoors, blooming agelessly and *There's* traffic, through revolving doors, up escalators, cross ramps, going all directions, no place to stop. Instead of a desk clerk, a traffic clerk to maintain the flow, not to still it.

And once through this web of mobility, these clover leafs at people scale.....you finally arrive . . . some place?

Not at all.  
Now there's an interlocked webbing of cocktail bars and sushi counterscave terraces and eating alcoves souvenir shops and fashion emporiums travel bureaus and adult toy stores.

pockets of activity  
cantilevered or sunken in trel-  
lised and veiled  
scattered about  
visible and re-visible  
glimpsed around aerial escalators  
through penetrated walls and open  
webbed sculptures  
surfaces? they are reflective or  
transparent,  
fractured with pattern or colorless  
dissolved ambiguous  
lights? they are moving, blink-  
ing, multiple, scattered, reflected  
and re-reflected



Everywhere, there is a constant seduction, enticements, visible but out of reach, demanding full energy simply to arrive, draining all energy from issues of choice.

And then in each function area, themes are picked up and repeated in two- and three-dimensional forms which themselves glint, gleam, reflect, gentle concentrations within the overall texture moments of consolidation that only briefly if at all stop the eye...

Voice: "Hey, hey, hey. Just a minute. Just a minute. What do you mean 'gentle concentrations.' What you're talking about there is ART. You're looking at art there. At paintings and at sculpture!"

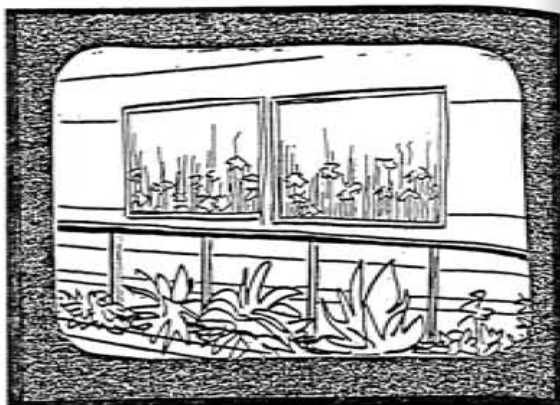
"Those images? No. Not at all. Those are decor, nothing more. This...."

the slide of a 'gentle concentration' (a large floral painting) clicks off, and with a flourish of recorder music,

•the **Mona Lisa** •  
appears on the screen

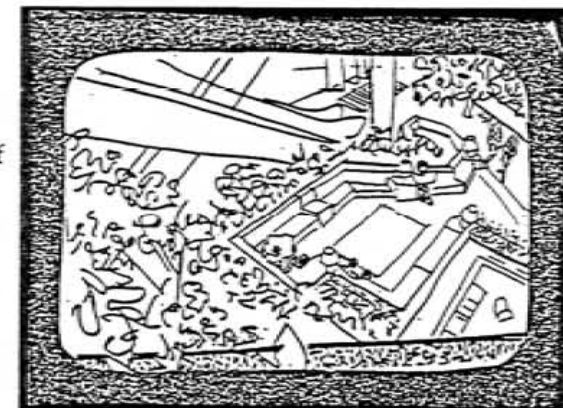
".... This is ART."

Voice: "The other isn't ART? Those flower paintings? Why they look just like the work of Annie Heartfelt our home town artist, ... and she sells her work to Hallmark. But you say that that's not ART. Boy, what you learn at a National!



No, no ART  
real ART, is on slides, in museums.  
But to return...  
through all these lights, surfaces, motions, spaces  
among the seductions of food, drink, clothes, gimmicks, ..... at  
the other reach of  
the magical maze of complexities.  
through all of this, one is at last there,  
At last and finally  
arrived  
at openness stillness singleness  
You are now at the Atrium.

Ah-h-h! The Atrium,  
It reaches down to the lower levels of service  
into the nether regions of arrival  
& departure,  
of meeting & waiting,  
of storage & delivery  
and reaches upwards to the  
higher levels of aspiration,  
and towards a grid locked vista of  
moon, sun, stars, and sky.  
The glass box elevator traces the  
vertical  
to the horizontal of the rotating  
sky lounge,  
the two framing a Dali-esque  
four-D transparent cross  
The vital spine to the whole  
complex  
moving endlessly, whether empty or full  
Within the hugely expensive  
utterly open  
core."



Voice: "Yeah. Well. That's all very dramatic.  
It kinda blows your mind.  
But I've gotta problem.  
I didn't come here to eat chic and buy Fifth Avenue.  
I came to learn how to do my job better  
I came to make sense, if you know what I mean.  
Did I make a mistake in coming at all?"

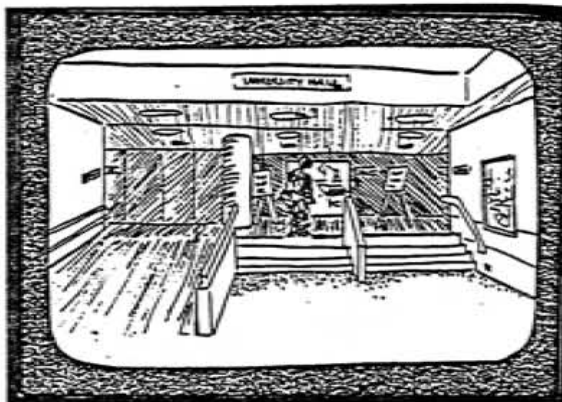


"No. No. All of that happens in back."

Voice: "In back?"

"Yes, yes. Here I'll show you.  
The meeting rooms.  
You need a map to find them.  
Once there, no problem.  
They are in a row  
On a hall."

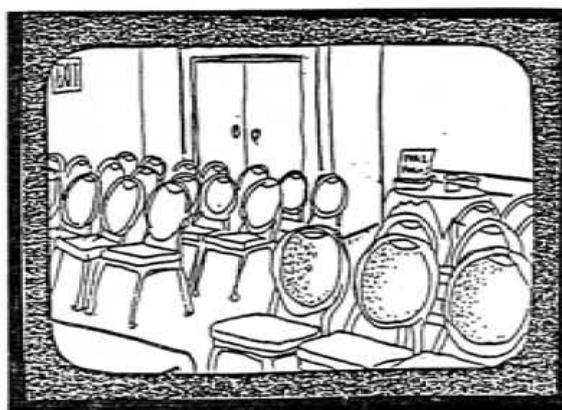
Voice: "Whew, what a  
change of scene.  
Is this still the same building?"



"Yes, yes.  
This is the area for issues of the mind and of theory of the communica-  
tion of one intellect with another."

Voice: "I guess that I saw one of those spaces when I got lost this morning  
small boxes, fluorescent lights, no windows;  
rug animated, audience silent;  
chairs like a marching band, people isolated."

"Yes. Well.  
It is in these spaces that one  
gets to hear  
the cutting edge of  
art education research;  
the programs of excellence  
from all across the states;  
about how the American  
people are being awakened to  
cultural literacy,  
. . . nay, to Civilization itself."



Voice: "Back in those little box rooms?"

"Yes, yes.  
That is where one touches the pulse of the profession.  
That is where one learns  
about Art in the lives of our children  
about Art as a vision of the future."

Voice: Well maybe that works for you  
with your art limited to objects on slides and in museums.  
My kids and my teachers  
We live with the art that you call decoration  
We camp out in a nature that goes brown in winter  
We hang up our artwork in the school cafeteria.

I'm not sure about this city within a city,  
this empty atrium surrounded by food, drink, shops.  
It seems to me that those dark rooms without air  
and reached only by maps  
are a kind of black box therapy  
to sustain you in a space that  
you are hard put to make sense of"

"No, no, no. That is not all that there is in the back.  
For a practical man like yourself,  
there are the Experience Institutes  
and the Commercial Displays.  
They are just a bit further down the stairs and a bit further  
along the halls.  
Take a look at your map."

Voice: "On my map, those spaces look like  
basement storage:  
No color, no air, no music, no fountains, no vistas.  
Have I flown a thousand miles,  
and paid out a 1/2 thousand dollars  
to work out in a warehouse?"

"Well, we're concerned merely with questions of  
materials & techniques of,  
well, you know, of "hands-on"  
so why more?  
And I'm told that there are over a hundred displays and a  
wide range of new tricks for the classroom.  
I am certain that for you, it would prove splendid.  
You might prefer to go there right now?"

Voice : "No, no. You don't understand.  
 My problems aren't solved  
 by new tricks with materials  
 or new research about learning.  
 My problems are with the world around me,  
 with being allowed to do  
 what I already know how to do well,  
 with helping my kids make sense of  
 and feel hopeful within that world,  
 with gaining the resources to offer them good choices.

These aren't the problems of a city in a city  
 They belong to the real city outside.  
 I'm trying to teach my kids  
 to protect sidewalks for pedestrians,  
 to keep technology and commerce in their right place.  
 I'm trying to work with my town  
 to have fountains and music for everyone,  
 not just so that specialists  
 can see their own image in a million reflections."

"Certainly, you are taking the wrong approach.  
 You should just stop your questioning and BELIEVE.  
 It's like a visit to any shrine. The reason for going inside

Is that you BELIEVE."

• the **Mona Lisa** • reappears  
 only this time, there is no music  
 just a dead silence



Voice : It's just . . . I don't know . . .  
 It seems to me that all you've got of the Mona  
 is your slide  
 You lost the rest of her way back  
 Back when you went into all of those little rooms  
 without air or light  
 for analysis and how-to  
 Back when you shot skyward in glass elevators,  
 head empty  
 bank account overdrawn.  
 Back when a teacher's association placed  
 a national convention and a DC building  
 over the grounded reality of regional dialogue.

How in a dark room reached only by maps  
 can anything happen that really matters ?  
 How do you answer questions like,  
 like with the Mona  
 for instance,  
 I  
 don't see  
 how you would ever  
 explain her smile,  
 the smile  
 of  
 the Mona Lisa.

Voice is talking more and more to himself standing,  
 absentmindedly, disturbed his body blocks out once  
 again the image of Mona as he leaves

!! **Speaker** unsettled  
 sprays a final sweep of GLADE.

**Alas!**  
 the nozzle is pointed the wrong way  
 cough cough cough cough (untaped)

cough cough

: and  
**IT ENDS**

cough

cough

cough

cough

cough

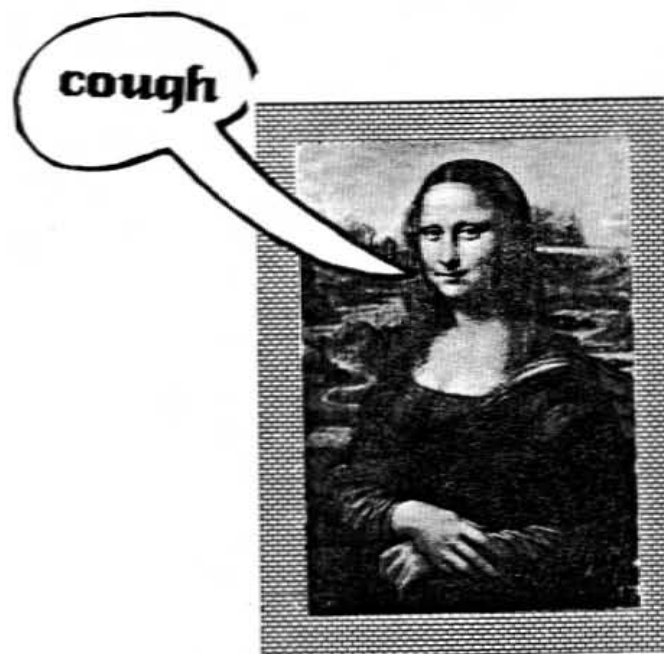
cough

cough

cough

cough

cough



## Self-Reflections in Organizations: An Outsider Remarks on Looking at Culture and Lore from the Inside

MICHAEL OWEN JONES

*As apparent from the title of my remarks, I am an outsider to this organization. I teach folklore courses at UCLA, which is one of five institutions in North America offering both the M.A. and the Ph.D. degrees in the study of folklore. I have been asked to speak in this session, in part because I give courses on folk art and aesthetics, fieldwork, and organizational culture and symbolism. As an outsider, as a researcher of organizational culture, and as the final speaker in this session, it seems to be my role to suggest a larger framework of study to which this mini-convention relates. That framework is the rapidly growing field that examines symbolic behavior and culture in organizations.*

### Professional Associations as Culture-Bearing Milieux

Like other human communities, organizations have their rites, rituals, and ceremonies. Even as we speak, a field of study is rapidly developing to research these traditions. Some of the books are Deal and Kennedy's *Corporate Culture: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*; *Organizational Symbolism*, edited by Pondy et al.; Schein's *Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Dynamic View*; *Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture*, edited by Kilmann and Associates; *Organizational Culture*, edited by Frost et al.; and Sathe's *Culture and Related Corporate Realities*.

For the most part, investigations of organizational culture or symbolism focus on business enterprises rather than not-for-profit service organizations. In the U.S. there are thousands of associations like the NAEA, however, with millions of members. These trade and professional associations represent a mind-boggling array of occupations, hobbies, and special interest groups (Samuelson, 1989).

For example, although I am not a member of the National Art Education Association, I am, I've recently come to realize, a member of nearly two dozen other organizations similar to NAEA. They range from the American Folklore Society to the Popular Culture Association. I am also a member of various regional and local scholarly organizations.

Like the NAEA, the majority of these associations have annual meetings. Many are in the spring - historically a time for rites of renewal. This