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Locating the Gap between Grace and Terror: Performative Research and Spectral Images of (and on) the Road

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Abstract: Marking the site of death on the road with a shrine is an increasingly popular, global practice, one that has become particularly unsettling in the US where they are illegal but the practice continues to proliferate, regardless of institutional attempts to halt or regulate them. Indeed, a polyphony of voices express diverse opinions about the politics—and poetics—of the practice. Utilizing (and querying) the capabilities of a web-based forum such as this one, this performance ethnography takes one particular form of popular discourse and practice—the cybershrine "road tour"—as a model to performatively engage roadside shrines on the road and in cyberspace. In this essay I include flashes of insight and poetic treatments of my field notes, as well as embed into the written text maps, photographs, "hot-links" to cybershrines, and transcriptions and translations of my own tape recorded voice as I document—and struggle to come to terms with—these sites. These visual, aural, and imaginative images offer an alternate point of view to conventional representations of shrines in an attempt to ethically engage the suffering of singular and collective "others" in the places and spaces where life and death, living memory and selective forgetting, and everyday life and ideology converge and insist upon having a conversation with us.

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> "And what forms of displacement, closely associated with women's lives, do *not* count as proper "travel"? Visiting? Pilgrimage?" (James CLIFFORD, 1992, p.105).
>
> "... plastic garbage bags that time cannot decay, and here I still am, standing, with this little wild bouquet" (Leonard COHEN, 1992).

1. Postures and Peripheral Vision

On September 11, 2001, at 1:27 in the afternoon, I flee the television screen and the repeated images of New York City's World Trade Center collapsing in on itself, clouds of crushed gray-green concrete billowing. I fly to school to be with *my people,* and drive by the "Lonesome on Burbank" shrine site. Sometime between the day before and this day, two tiny US flags have been added to the very top of the large white-painted wood cross. The flapping of the fabric catches my attention. The shrine site will remain for another six months—the tiny flags flapping, fading—and then the whole thing will disappear approximately one year from its first appearance. An anniversary? On September 11, 2001, the shrine points me (sends me spinning) in other directions. [1]

On Friday, September 14, 2001, this "National Day of Prayer and Remembrance," I flee (once again) the repetition of televised images: clouds clouds clouds of crushed concrete, passenger planes crashing crashing crashing into the side of a building, firestorms blooming billowing belching smoke and debris, photos plastered everywhere of people people people people people people people people people *missing* in the rubble, and every place, every *where*, becoming a shrine—flowers, candles, notes, stuffed animals, flags flags flags flags flags growing, mounding, spreading out in New York, in Washington DC, all across the United States, and around the (Western) world. People build a place to visit, *need* something to *do*—still not sure what to make of it all[1]. Travel writer Gene SLOAN's (2001) article "Attack Site is Top Draw, to City's Dismay" won't appear in *USA Today*, dateline New York, for several weeks. [2]

On Friday, September 14, 2001, I drive to Montgomery, Alabama to meet *my love*, who says to take care, to take my time. However, time has ceased to follow an everyday pattern—I have no everyday care nor time to take in this blessed gap, this liminal state of *bewilderment* and *wonder*. I drive the radio down the road, am accompanied by the live coverage on National Public Radio of the ritual enacted at the National Cathedral in Washington DC. [3]

On Friday, September 14, 2001, (myths of) the sacred and the secular meet as the procession advances, closes the gap (in meaning, in time), as national leaders, both religious and elected, follow a shining steel cross, the US flag, and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" ("Mine eyes have seen the Glory of the coming

1 See JONES, ZAGACKI and LEWIS (2007) for a discussion of the visual rhetoric of missing person posters and liminal space.

of the Lord, His Truth is marching on") out the Cathedral doors and into the World. Immediately following—the iconography shining in the sun, flapping in the breeze, and reverberating in the air—George W. Bush, President of the United States, crosses the threshold between church and state and names the transition from one state of affairs to another, from a "National Day of Prayer and Remembrance" to one of "National Solidarity and Remembrance"; with the pounding of chests (of fists on the podium) the drums of war begin to beat—the consequences of the conjunction of these myths (soon to be) made manifest in sacrifice—the cultural fictions of the separation of Church and State collide, collapse, and mobilize. *Now* I am terrified. [4]

My personal investment in, and the privileges made possible by, what Stephen HARTNETT (2002) will later call the "cultural fictions" of freedom and liberty (of the road—*my road*), of education (*my education*), of national identity (*my identity*), are IN MY FACE. I am, in some measure, responsible to, and for, the infrastructure of the USA on which I am motoring, to the subjects who have passed this way before, with, and after me and to whose deaths (whose passage) is marked, unmarked, and erased, and to other (oil producing) nations on which I depend and to whom I am indeed deeply indebted. I make these connections, have this epiphany, but keep silent (for a time). I clutch. I seize. I choke on the clouds of cement and shining steel, my ears bleed with the sound of fluttering flags and Battle Hymn(s), my heart bangs a Saidian contrapunctal beat (SAID, 1994) against the pounding of fists and the beating of drums. [5]

Driving the radio down the road on Friday, September 14, 2001, I am ostensibly keeping track of roadside shrines on the interstate highways from Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Montgomery, Alabama. However, the singular shrines escape even my peripheral vision. I know they are there, but I cannot see them, so intent am I on my roiling guts, my visceral reaction to the rhetoric of war and this social drama in which I play a part. I choke (down), bleed (from), beat (against) my impotent rage, scream *NO!* to no one—the roar of the wind rushing by my open car window sucks my voice away. [6]

It will be a year before Robert LOWELL's poem "For the Union Dead" (1964) helps me *out*, frees me from the images on my television set, from my frozen, crouched, neutralized position, and from the choking terror that seeped from my car radio and down my throat. It will be even longer before I map and document the location of roadside shrines on this soon-to-be-familiar series of routes between Louisiana and Alabama, and beyond to Georgia. However, on this trip to Montgomery, Alabama, my love and I do visit the Civil Rights Memorial, and through the water rolling down the black granite, touch the names of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other murdered civil rights workers engraved there. We seek reflection, perhaps communion. We find Montgomery virtually abandoned on this particular weekend. Men in uniform, weapons slung over their shoulders, keep us company. Here, I borrow from Civil Rights Memorial designer Maya LIN, who offers "This is not a monument to suffering; it is a memorial to hope" (in CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL). [7]

2. Touring Roadside Shrines in Vernacular, Institutional, and Academic Cyberspace

Marking the site of death on the road with a shrine[2] is an increasingly popular, global practice, one that has become particularly unsettling in the US where they are illegal but the practice continues to proliferate, regardless of institutional attempts to halt or regulate them. Indeed, a polyphony of voices express diverse opinions about the politics—and poetics—of the practice. Utilizing (and querying) the capabilities of a web-based forum such as this one, this performance ethnography takes one particular form of popular discourse and practice—the cybershrine "road tour"—as a model to performatively engage roadside shrines on the road and in cyberspace. Working with/in the performative gap[3] between mediated and direct experience of road signs, shrines, and other markers of death, I include what DENZIN refers to as autoethnographic "epiphanies" (1997, p.221), ranging from flashes of insight taken from the margins of my field notes to poetic treatments of the same, as well as embed into the written text maps, photographs, "hot-links" to cyber-shrines, and my own tape-recorded "spectral voice"[4] as I struggle to come to terms with these sites. These visual, aural, and imaginative images offer an alternate point of view to conventional representations of shrines in an attempt to ethically "conjure" what haunts us (GORDON, 1997, p.204)—the suffering of singular and collective "others"—in the places and spaces where life and death, living memory and selective forgetting,

2 For purposes of this study, and as noted in my previous essay (KENNERLY, 2002), the term "roadside shrine" refers to material artifacts that mark the site of unexpected, violent death, placed by individuals on the side of public roads to mark the death of a loved one. These sites are sometimes the place where a person actually died, however, this is not always the case. Sometimes a roadside shrine marks the place where a loved one was last "alive, regardless of the place of clinical death" (EVERETT, 2000, pp.96-97). Other roadside shrines mark the place where the body of a loved one was found after being murdered elsewhere (SONENSHINE, 1994; MATTHEW, 1995). Furthermore, although the terms "roadside shrine," "roadside memorial," "roadside marker," and "roadside cross" are used, often interchangeably, by scholars (e.g., EVERETT, 2002; GRIDER, 2001, 2002, 2006; HANEY, LEIMER & LOWREY, 1997), and journalists (e.g., DeMILLO, 2000; GALLETTA, 2000; McCARTHY, 1997) to describe the sites, I use the terms "shrine," "roadside shrine," and "shrine-building" because of their performative connotations. Miles RICHARDSON (2001) discusses performances at similar sites as embodied material practices that invite future interaction and are relatively unfinalized, which suggests that the terms "memorial" and "memorialization" connote a less open-ended and more prescriptive process. I use the term "cross" to describe the general shape of specific objects. I also include the specific details of cross construction, one of which is height, which I have categorized here for greater readability—ranging from tiny (under twelve inches tall), to medium (two and a half to three feet tall), to very large (over five feet tall).

3 GOULD (1995), in his discussion of J.L. AUSTIN's analysis of the illocutionary force of an utterance, advances that there is often an "illocutionary suspense" or "perlocutionary delay" between the utterance and the "uptake" (the successful achievement of effect of the utterance). This "gap" is performative because of its tension-filled potential (pp.30-31). I offer that this "gap" is the space where meaning-making takes place, that which I attempt to make evident here—and which I am also exploring as a moment of grace to which hope clings immediately following a horrendous event when one (we, I) can't quite make sense of it (all).

4 GUNN (2004), in his discussion of spectres, uses the example of the recorded voices of the Nine-eleven dead who made telephone and cell phone calls to their loved ones before dying in the World Trade Center Buildings or in the flight that crashed in a field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania. These voices, captured on tape and released to, and played by, the media are disembodied, are "spectral," are haunting (us) (p.91). Whereas GUNN's focus is on the voices of the dead as examples of "the muffled scream of a body wants not only to survive, but, to (be a-) live" (p.110), my focus is on the temporarily disembodied voice(s) of the living that are sucked away in the vacuum of terror, marginalized, silenced, or ignored. Special thanks to Ruth Laurion BOWMAN (2007) for helping me articulate this distinction.

and everyday life and ideology converge and insist upon having a conversation with us. [8]

Extensive secondary research[5] indicates that print and electronic news coverage of shrine-building activities at the site of high profile shrines and on the side of the road contribute to conversation about the practice. Newspaper writers began to speculate about the relationship between high-profile sites of public tragedy and roadside shrines in the US soon after the April 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. OTTO (1995) writes that "The chain-link fence around the bomb site looks like one of those roadside shrines that spring up where death has taken a soul unprepared" (1F). Shrine-building activities also seem to have converged with, and perhaps propelled, the emergence of the Internet as a key player in the cultural performance of shrines and shrine-building. According to NAPOLI (2000), in response to the death of Princess Diana, people participated in "Diana" shrine sites not only in literal and televised public space but in the creation of virtual "Web shrines," which NAPOLI calls "a milestone event in Net history":

> "After all, many point to August 31, 1997, and the days immediately after that as a pivotal point in the development of the World Wide Web. Millions of people [approximately 12.5 million on America Online alone] shared their grief by posting to online bulletin boards and even building Web shrines to the Princess, and hundreds of those are still [in 2000] maintained" (2000, n.p.). [9]

While reporters tend to adopt a curious and/or reverent tone toward shrines and shrine-building, the emergence of web-based shrines draw a wider range of reader/audience interpretation and interaction. NAPOLI (2000) for example notes that several hundred web sites "exploited the Princess' name for commercial purposes—including one that redirects users to a porn site" (n.p.). Indeed, web activity was also a prominent—and problematic—feature of the events surrounding the Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado in the US. The interactive website dedicated to the event was posted on the Internet the next day by a Columbine student (RYAN, 1999), and was later removed due to "abuse" (BIGLEY, 2004). EMERY (1999) offered a commentary on urban legends and folklore and a series of "Littleton [web] chain letters," which ranged in degrees of sincerity from "genuine" to "hoax" (n.p.). Other Columbine-related web activity also garnered national attention. A series of newspaper articles focused on the "dark side" of the "Net" began the day after the shootings when an ASSOCIATED PRESS (1999) (AP) story in *USA Today*, ran under the headline "Harris' Web Page Had Disturbing Imagery" (Eric Harris was one of the gunmen), and MILLER and THOMAS's (1999) follow-up story entitled "Shooting Shows Net's

5 I analyzed 190 newspaper articles concerned with various aspects of roadside shrines first published in print between January 1993 and May 2007. These articles were located with the help of periodic visits to LexisNexis, Proquest, and Google.com search engines, and several individuals who sent me actual printed texts. 176 articles were published in the US and thirteen articles were published in international newspapers about shrines in other nations. Other secondary sources include fifty-six web sites, eight television shows, one televised public service announcement, six stories on (US) National Public Radio, and a wealth of scholarship related to roadside shrines and key aspects of shrine-building.

Darker Corridors" where dangerous people lurk in a "place where hate groups can share intentions and ideology" (n.p.). [10]

The Internet is also a popular discursive site about roadside shrines, with sites ranging from cybershrines for a specific person to photo-essays to online roadside shrine tour books, ranging in approach and tone from documentary to satire, from commercialization of roadside shrines to diatribes about shrine-building. Indeed, while roadside shrines are not a feature of most print road travel and tourism guides, encounters with these sites are becoming an inevitable part of road tourism. For guided tours, visit McCLURE's (2003) *Southern New Mexico* online travel newsletter, and ZIHRENA's (2001) tour and narrated "pilgrimage of sorts" of "drive-by shrines" in Mexico (n.p.). For examples of web-based photo-essays of roadside shrines, visit BACCUS (1998); and SAMPSON (1998). To read poems and hear a song about roadside shrines, also visit SAMPSON (1998). For a satirical cultural critique of both the performance of ethnography and the cultural performance of roadside shrines, visit CURLESS (2005). Visit CARTER (1999) for a cyber-diatribe arguing against the practice of marking the site of death on the road. For your very own shrine-building art kit, visit WILSON (2000), or for a ready-made[6], see ROADSIDEMARKERS.COM. [11]

One area of academic study closely linked to roadside shrines is the recent cross-disciplinary interest in the contemporary vernacular practices of shrine-building at sites of public tragedy[7]. While these studies focus primarily on large-scale, high profile shrines and mention roadside shrines in passing, sometimes as an afterthought[8], there is a growing interest in the humanities specifically about the practice of marking the site of death on the road[9]. Framing and cross-cutting

6 I use the term ready-made to call to the fore an on-going argument about art, aesthetics, and rights (rites) of display. Ready-made is a term associated with the avant-garde movement in the early twentieth century whose members questioned what constitutes art, who determines what is and is not art, and to whom art belongs: to bring these questions into public dialogue ordinary everyday objects were exhibited to protest elitist institutionally sanctioned art. Marcel DuCHAMP's *Fountain*—an ordinary urinal—exhibited in New York in 1917, is perhaps the most famous and "notorious" example (GOLDBERG, 1988). A similar public dialogue about roadside shrines exists: hand-made and/or home-made roadside shrines are sometimes refereed to as "folk art" by some (ARELLANO, 1986; JULIAN, 2000), and by others as "eyesores" (LANG, 1998), "visual pollution" (JULIAN, 2000), and "pious forms of littering" (YALENZIAN, 1998)—the possibility of purchasing a ready-made cross (a commercial item) adds yet another dimension to this conversation about roadside shrines, aesthetics, and rights (rites) of display or exhibition.

7 Contemporary scholarship link shrine-building at sites of death on the road to shrine-building at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and at high-profile sites of death such as the school shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado (US), and in Dublane (Scotland), and at sites around the world in response to the deaths of a celebrities such as John Kennedy Jr. and Princess Diana, and in response to the deaths related to the attacks on the US World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 that went down in a field in Pennsylvania. This scholarship serves to initiate and support various aspects of the present discussion. For example, sociologists HANEY, LEIMER and LOWREY (1997) point toward the possibilities of shrine-building as political action; rhetorical scholars JORGENSEN-EARP and LANZILOTTI (1998) historicize various practices at shrine sites; folklorist Sylvia GRIDER (2001, 2002, 2006) engages the celebratory potential of vernacular ingenuity; and architect Harriet SENIE (1999, 2003) examines the relationship between shrine-building, cemetery practices, and public monuments.

8 JORGENSEN-EARP and LANZILOTTI (1998) tag roadside shrines to the end of their article.

9 See KENNERLY (2002) for a comprehensive review of scholars writing about the practice of marking the site of death on the road in the US. For additional scholarship conducted about shrines in the US, see ARELLANO (1986), ANAYA, ARELLANO and CHAVEZ (1995), OWENS

these studies as national discourse and practice in the US are McCARTHY's (1997) nation-wide survey of roadside shrines and institutional attempts to curtail them, RABINOWITZ's (1999) interrogation of the political ramifications of placing what he refers to as baroque-style Catholic shrines on the public thoroughfare across the largely Protestant US landscape, and my own study of the vernacular and institutional rhetoric of roadside shrines in the US (KENNERLY, 2002). Indeed, if the above treatises are any indication, the practice of marking the site of death on the road has become increasingly popular and politically volatile all across the US, even as scholars struggle to keep apace with the complexities of these cultural performances[10]. [12]

It is the aim of this article to be instructive—to provide a brief introduction to a range of research and writing methods available to scholars interested in performative research and writing in general, and to be generative—to open the way for you, the reader/audience, to make your own sense of roadside shrines, shrine-building[11], other death-related rituals, and the contexts in which these shrines and rituals are encountered. [13]

This work is an extension of my previous work (KENNERLY, 2002), wherein I briefly describe roadside shrines in the US, explore the private use of the public right-of-way and institutional attempts to regulate roadside shrines in the US. I concluded with a provisional interpretation of shrine-building as resistant cultural performances of protest and warning (KENNERLY, 2002). [14]

In this essay I take a second look, offer another perspective to the data collection and documentation process itself as performance, as I return to the road and return to specific sites intent on stopping for a *visit.* I take up JORGENSEN-EARP and LANZILOTTI's (1998) call to explore culture differences (and similarities), of/at roadside shrines based on race, ethnicity, and religion, and my own previous assertion that the side of the road is a battlefield that reveals a deep "ideological struggle regarding the infrastructure of the US, of which the road is materially and symbolically key" (KENNERLY, 2002, p.252)[12]. I continue to combine "critical

(2006), REID and REID (2001). For additional scholarship about roadside shrines located in Australia, see CLARK and FRANZMANN (2002), in New Zealand, see HARTIG and DUNN (1998), in the Netherlands see STENGS (2003), and in Mexico see WEIR (2002).

10 FUOSS' (1998) agonistic framework is helpful in exploring how roadside shrines perform in the current cultural milieu. FUOSS assumes that cultural performances "make things happen" that would otherwise not have occurred, that they either work to undermine or further "entrench" hegemonic forces, and that they operate in multiple spheres, including textual, spatial, and conceptual ones (pp.98-99). FUOSS (1997) also advances that the interpretive power of these interdependent spheres include multiple axes of effectivity including race, class and gender, and that a cultural performance may function hegemonically along one axis and resistantly along another or ambiguously along any single axis.

11 The term "shrine-building" refers to the practice of leaving objects at or near the site of death (KENNERLY, 2002).

12 While I reported previously that "[r]eligious artifacts [placed at the sites] are ... common; rosaries, crucifixes, holy cards, and statues of ... saints" (KENNERLY, 2002, pp.235-36), further research indicates that this is an overstatement. It is more accurate to report that these types of objects *sometimes* appear. Artifacts do often surround a Latin cross, one in which the horizontal arms are shorter than the vertical, but this is not to be confused with the crucifix, a Latin cross with the figure of a crucified Christ. The inclusion of a crucifix is rare. It must also be noted that no symbol can uncritically be associated with religiosity. Indeed, the Latin cross is used for

theory, ethnographic methods, and performative writing" in an attempt to "tease out a performative space on the page [and in cyberspace] that evokes the sometimes audacious and often poetic stance that cultural performances of and at roadside shrines so often take" (KENNERLY, 2002, p.229). [15]

3. Method: Sustained Inquiry and Going Under, Engaging the Embodied Text

During the later years of my decade-long fieldwork I began to interact with roadside shrines *in situ*, on the side of the road, as *some kind* of ritual space. This move was called for in that others writing about shrines and shrine-building behavior in both the contemporary popular and academic press discussed the practices at the sites specifically as a mourning ritual.[13] In that this study attempts to unsettle taken-for-granted meanings of the sites, the *a priori* interpretive frame of mourning was at least temporarily suspended—the type and function of ritual was left open. [16]

Intent on meeting and understanding these sites on their own terms, and wishing to make apparent my own, perhaps unconscious, frames of interpretation, I take behavioral and imaginative cues from the sites themselves. I viscerally, sensually, and imaginatively step into the ritual space of selected sites that *called* to me, as I seek the "vortice"[14], the ritual threshold or gateway into the unknown and/or the unstoried—that which has been written out of, or is sitting underneath, other accounts of roadside shrines. These visits and interpretive frames are contexted in what was then the material and socio-cultural contemporary moment in the hopes of performing what Gregory ULMER (1994) would call my own narratively visible poesis of cultural invention, in FOLCH-SERRA's (1990) narratively visible landscape. [17]

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various purposes, ranging from the decorative arts to political protests. For example, Tasha, sporting a cross entwined with a leafy vine tattooed on her wrist, told me that she and her friends all had a similar tattooed image "because it's pretty." I have also encountered political groups that use the cross in protest of various social practices and policies. For example, white crosses have been used since 1984 by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) as an official symbol to mark sites of alcohol related death because the cross "calls attention to death" (EVERETT, 2002, pp.111-112). At Louisiana State University during the anniversary week of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, hundreds of small white crosses are placed on the parade grounds by anti-abortion groups to protest that decision. In Santa Barbara, California, every Sunday since the US invaded Iraq in 2003, a growing number of small white crosses "to honor our fallen sons and daughters" have been erected on the public beach by Town Hall Activists and Veterans for Peace to protest the war (VETERANS FOR PEACE, 2004). To be forthcoming, it is this last group whose efforts I most admire and with whom I deeply identify.

13 See KENNERLY (2002) for a discussion of scholarship that deploys ritual theory to interpret shrine-building as a mourning ritual and the limitations of this *a priori* generalization. Also see BELL (1997) who notes that in contemporary scholarship, "the positive and integrative aspects of ritual action are so taken for granted that no effort is made to substantiate them" (p.258), that often ritual is "overly romanticized" (p.258), and finally that this tendency may result in "a blindness to how contemporary ritual practices are a part and parcel of the modern world" (p.259).

14 According to ROACH (1998), these sites are "nodal points in a network of common but deeply problematic enunciation—gestures, expressions, protocols, manners, habits, and attitudes—whereby a culture remembers and reinvents not only its most public relationships, but also its most intimate ones" (pp.50-51).

In order to maintain the relatively constant attention to my own meaning-making practices, throughout my field and archival research process I simultaneously employ and query various experimental methods. My field work crisscrosses the United States, documenting the physical location of roadside shrines over time. While the current article draws primarily from my survey conducted in the southern region of the US, primary field documentation for this project, unlike any other study of roadside shrines in the US, extends the geographic survey to multiple regions of the US, including the New England, Mid-Atlantic, Southern, Midwestern, Southwestern and Rocky Mountain regions. See below for maps from two different perspectives of the entire survey area covered between the years 1992 to 2004[15].

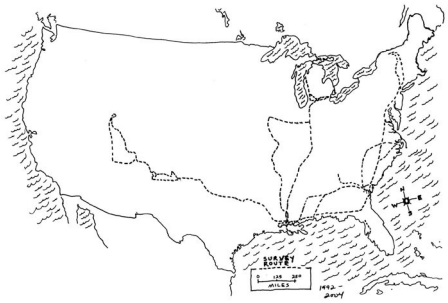

Figure 1: National perspective: United States survey routes, 1992-2004

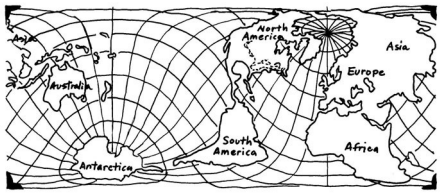

Figure 2: Global perspective: North American survey routes, 1992-2004 [18]

My study also resonates with James CLIFFORD's (1992) call for ethnographers to seek out, observe, and participate in zones of contact where folks from various cultures meet in transit[16]. However, my itinerary is fine-tuned by HASTRUP and OLWIG (1997) who assert that, while many scholars are struggling to write within and about the "postmodern condition" and foreground displacement, "the people we are studying are creating material and imagined places which may or may not correlate to places called 'home' or 'away'" (p.i). [19]

15 This survey covered 6,356 one way miles, and mapped the specific locations of 335 individual shrines at 241 shrine sites. The only region not traveled by car was the Pacific Coast.

16 The following is a complete accounting of the interviews conducted for this study, only a fraction of which appear in the current article. Primary research includes a total of sixty-four ethnographic interviews, ranging from casual conversations to formal taped and transcribed interviews. Formal interviews were conducted with scholars and journalists writing about roadside shrines, government representatives from five different states, road emergency workers in three states, and a death-trade professional in Louisiana. The names of public officials and those with whom I conducted formal interviews have not been changed. The names of private citizens have been changed to protect their identity.

My "travelogue" field documentation practices are grounded in EMERSON, FRETZ and SHAW's (1995) multi-level interpretive practice of writing field notes which encourage ethnographers to trouble—on paper—the notion of "pure" (objective) in-field description, to account for the translation process of turning field notes into an ethnographic account, and to make apparent the construction of the published text. While in-field, and in concert with EMERSON et al. (1995), I take advantage of art historian David PROWN's (1988) process of sensual engagement with material artifacts in order to make apparent unconscious biases. However, whereas PROWN (1988) advocates that the researcher overcome these biases in service to an impossible objectivity, I offer that PROWN's (1988) method is useful to critical cultural field studies and performance ethnographers not to overcome but to engage a critical subjectivity and thus make apparent individual and socially constructed frames of interpretation. In order to further account for my embodied practices, during my ritual revisits to specific shrine sites—and during the staged performance of my research—I also take instruction from experimental theater practitioner Jerzy GROTOWSKI (1997) regarding the illuminating power of repetitive ritual action[17]. I do so, however, *not* in order to move toward a Grotowski-esque universal understanding of some essentially human experience, but toward what Elspeth PROBYN (1996) calls an exploration of singularity as a negotiated performance of complex belongings; Grotowski-esque exercises help identify what some of those belongings might be. This negotiation via the repetition of ritual at specific sites, and ritually revisiting certain sites, was conducted and is re-presented here in order to disrupt notions of the generalizable Other. My archival work crosses paths with Joseph ROACH's (1996) monumental "genealogy of performance" project, a method of research and writing that identifies and traces, through the cultural performance of vernacular, institutional, and aesthetic artifacts, the transcontinental history of interconnected sites of social behavior in the US, not in search of origins but rather to engage the multiple perspectives that make the writing of certain histories possible[18]. [20]

The in-field experiment of sustained inquiry was an attempt to query, and unsettle, notions of what social ritual is purported to recuperate, contain, and resolve—the messy business of life and death. I seek to forestall, at least temporarily, the potentially destructive force of the kind of repetition that advances an overwhelming, numbing, sameness (RIMMON-KENAN in BRONFEN, 1993, p.104), in favor of one that privileges difference. Furthermore, through the representation of my sustained inquiry, and through performance of repeated encounters with different shrines, I attempt to enact difference *differently*[19]. This Brechtian defamiliarization[20] hopes to keep open the gateway, or threshold, of

17 For an extended explanation of GROTOWSKI's rehearsal techniques in relationship to Brechtian theatre practices, see MITTER (2000).

18 My genealogical excursions are tempered by POLLOCK's (1998) call to explore the gaps in "official" histories that are "fertile with the possibility of both reviewing and revising history" (pp.4-5).

19 Enacting difference *differently* is stimulated by what PHELAN (1993) calls "the failure of the signifier [the shrines on the side of the road] to convey meaning exactly (p.13).

20 This writing method is akin to Brechtian theater practices (BRECHT, 1964) that attempt to critically engage an audience using techniques of defamiliarization that represent cultural texts

meaning, and works to enact and query the generative possibilities of death-related and other-related rituals. [21]

The construction of this article, similar to my previous work, is inspired by Roland BARTHES' *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1978), which shows us "how to articulate the private, public, and learned spheres of culture" (ULMER, 1989, p.118). The embracing—and disrupting—figure that guides this construction is that of "an interrupted journey," a phrase used to describe a specific funereal practice which has its own complex history (ARELLANO, 1986, p.42)[21], is used broadly and in varying social contexts in a struggle to attribute meaning to contemporary shrines[22] and is employed to trouble contemporary values and policies regarding the practice of marking the site of death on the road in the US[23]. This journey attempts to work through the particulars of the research material—is often interrupted with my own performative moments of meaning-making—rather than merely repeat them[24], a process likened to the writing practice of Walter BENJAMIN's "constellation of ideas" regarding death and writing and BENJAMIN's "absence of an uninterrupted purposeful structure" (in SCHLEIFER, 1993, pp.314-315). My performative writing process (practice, ritual) is particularly evident in the poetry that erupts on the page when I have written myself into exquisite moments of tension and stillness—moments of ecstasy that exceed description, time, and space and yet are grounded in the material world[25]. [22]

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and artifacts in order to "refunction" them (BOWMAN, 2000, p.362). See BOWMAN (2000) and KENNERLY (2002) for exemplars. Also see BOWMAN and BOWMAN (2002) for a discussion of *mystoriography*, a performance-based research and writing practice that "exploits a property of performance art that tends to be under represented in much scholarly writing: its ability to "delight and entertain" a reader/audience (p.165). This performative essay IS a mystoriography.

21 See KENNERLY (2002) for an "historiography" of marking the site of death on the road (pp.240-244). Also see ARELLANO (1986), who employed the phrase "the mark of an interrupted journey" (p.42) to describe the specific practice of pall bearers who, between the church and the graveyard, put down the heavy coffin to catch their breath—to rest—a time used by the entire entourage of mourners to grieve not only for the deceased person in the coffin, but for all who had been taken by death: at each place where the coffin *rested*, and where pallbearers and mourners *took a rest,* a *descanso*—a cross made of sticks lashed together, or "X" made of stones—was placed on the ground to mark the spot as a *resting place*. ARELLANO (1986) writes that sites of violent and/or unexpected death were *also* marked with a *descanso*, marking a place where the literal and ritual journey of the deceased was interrupted: not only did the person not reach their geographic destination, but often met their death without a Catholic's benefit of the last rite of passage into heaven. A roadside *descanso*, therefore, marks a place of possibility and hope in that the deceased *might one day* rest in peace.

22 BARRERA (1991), MINUTAGLIO (1996), SONENSHINE (1994).

23 GONZALES and RODRIGUEZ (1998) strategically use the phrase "interrupted journey" to politicize the phrase both as a rhetorical figure and as a living practice, citing ARELLANO's use of the term and then describing the deaths of illegal Mexican immigrants trying to cross the border into the US, protesting that there is no place to honor those dead, no marker for their interrupted journey.

24 For an explication of making apparent to the reader one's process of working through one's research material, see OLIVER (2001) and PHELAN (1993). This working-through often entails making evident the failure of the researcher to hold the stand point or perspective required of methodologies employed, which also functions, then, 1) as a critique of that methodology and 2) as a generative gap or gateway to a possibly unforeseen relationship with the subject.

25 In this description of my writing process—and in the poems themselves—I am directly drawing from, am inspired by, and continue to be in conversation with John BERGER's *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (1991).

This performative essay situates the documentation process as performance, as ritualized interaction. During my investigation of roadside shrines, I demonstrate my failed attempt to hold the observer stance and, as the data collection process continues, I demonstrate my failed attempt to maintain the split position of participant-observer as well. As the investigation of ritual progresses, and as the images evoked during the investigation gather force, I become enmeshed in the cultural performance(s) of and on the side of the road, become enmeshed in the material and ideological struggle(s) that frame and mobilize these performances, what POLLOCK (2006) might call "going *under*" (p.327)[26]. I conclude by resisting resolution, enact a resistance to the process of ritual reintegration, call attention to and interrogate rituals of and at roadside shrines and other rites of passage as well as methods of data collection, transcription, interpretation, and performance —the disciplinary rituals of ethnography in/as performance. [23]

My study in pursuit of roadside shrines *as* performance by *means of* performance affords the opportunity to engage current and historically situated material and textual practices in a responsive, inventive manner. This is a particularly useful process when conducting an ethnography of the culture in which one lives—a practice in which "the embodied researcher is the instrument," and in which critical theory unveils the political stakes that anchor cultural practice (CONQUERGOOD, 1991, p.180). Following CONQUERGOOD (1991), I include my own attempts to come to terms with roadside shrines—what ULMER calls *chi* or "eureka" moments (1994, p.7), and what DENZIN refers to as "epiphanies" (1997, p.221)—strategically placed in the text to make evident my own individual and culturally driven frames of interpretation. Throughout my investigation I have created drawings, paintings, and photographs, constructed several miniature models of shrines and a full-scale roadside shrine installation, and have strategically placed my creations on the stage during several public performances of this research. Now here, I have staged a selection of these creations throughout the text so that they can perform for you as we take this (interrupted) journey, this roadside shrine tour in cyberspace. [24]

Whereas most representations of roadside shrines are what Roland BARTHES might call "portrait-photographs" which are a "closed field of forces" (1981, p.13), I have, following BERGER and MOHR (1982)[27], chosen images that perform differently, ones that (hopefully) remain open, are metonymic, or at least offer an unusual or previously unrepresented perspective in an attempt to, following

26 POLLOCK (2006) refers to the process I am calling enmeshment as "going *under*" (p.327), a process which "folds back on the researcher-subject, catching her in [...] processes of transformation," and once undone and "charged" by the knowledge produced there, asks "what are we going to do about it?" (p.328)

27 BERGER and MOHR (1982) write that "The photographic narrative form places it before the task of memory [...] not concerned with events as facts—such as is always claimed for photography; [but] with their assimilation, their gathering and their transformation into experience" (p.287). Taking instruction from the authors I have placed certain photographs within the text to enact how it is that one memory (of an image) triggers another memory which thus restores each photograph to "a living context [...] of experience" (1982, pp.288-289). This performance of memory and meaning-making is the functional foundation of a mystory (BOWMAN & BOWMAN, 2002).

SONTAGE (2003), ethically engage[28] the textual and visual images of the suffering of singular and collective "others."

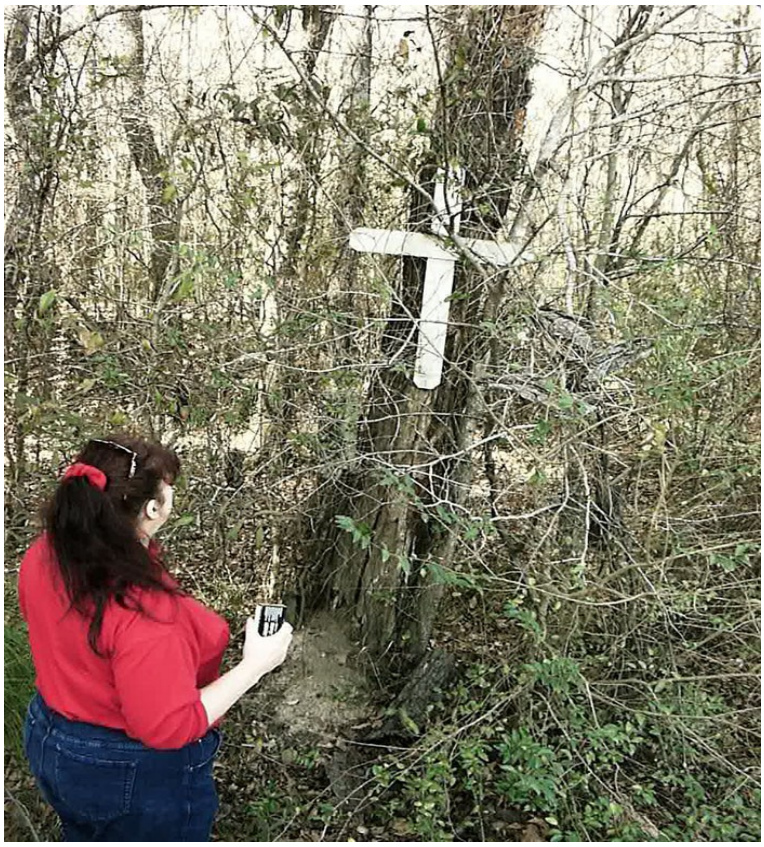


Figure 3: LA-42: Winter Only in Tree: With camera, 2002 (Photo courtesy of Timothy BERLA) [25]

4. Postulance: Remembering Failure: World Trade Center to "Matthew's Cross," September 22, 2001

On September 22, 2001, grappling with the immediate and seemingly imminent repercussions generated by the events of September 14, and needing something to *do*, I revisit my Louisiana back road route (once again), seeking *something*, hoping for that vital "hit" of that *something else*. Five months later in February of 2002, with the help of Tim BERLA, a friend who traveled from my "home" state of Michigan to visit me during Mardi Gras week, my multiple postures of surveyor,

28 See CHVASTA (2005), and FENSKE (2004) for an in-depth discussion especially pertinent to this article in terms of a perceived dialectic between embodied performance and cyberspace. Also see FENSKE (2004) for an explication of ethics, performance, and the "aesthetic of the unfinished" (p.1), and performance practices that seek to open a conversation with/in form and with the reader/audience. FENSKE (2004) concludes:

> "Ethical performance practices, moreover, invite the audience to respond in multiple ways. They open up a space for dialogic interaction both within form and between form and audience. The question of dialogue is more than simply a type of engagement, however: it is an ethical prerequisite. In order for a practice to resist the reconstruction and mobilization of a dialectic that prescribes a value relations between corporeality and virtuality, it must produce a dialogue with/in form. [...] In terms of performance practice, then, it should again be the issues of possibility, movement, and change that guide aesthetic acts rather than generic form, position, and stasis" (p.17).

tourist, guide, and pilgrim rolled (on) together while I conducted a Louisiana back roads tour of roadside shrines. My friend, with some direction from me, took several digital photographs—souvenirs of our trip[29], several of which appear here. [26]

4.1 Private property and rituals of rebuke

On September 22, 2001, I search (once again) for "Matthew's Cross" on my back road route between Baton Rouge and Mandeville, Louisiana[30]. "Winter Only in Tree," the weathered cross in the tree on LA-42, is so entwined with vines and layers of memory that the shrine, although presently hidden from view, is present, nearly indistinguishable from the tangle that support and protect it. Later, laid bare by some seasonal trigger, the site will take me by surprise, again (and again) (see Figure 3). [27]

Further down the road, I pass by the "Galvez Sentinel" shrine and then a little further, the "Bayview Curve" shrine, which by February 2002 will be paved over with asphalt, a driveway wending its way into the woods. Rounding yet another curve in the road, I pass by the "Mariners' Shrine" site, there, in the tree, in the water: the gaping hole in the boat where it hit the tree has grown wider—time and weather have stripped the paint from the two crosses attached to the tree, the broken teeth of the wood hull rots away. In February 2002, a carcass marks the place where I stand.

Figure 4: LA-42 Mariners' Shrine, 2002 (Photo courtesy of Timothy BERLA)

29 See BOWMAN (2006) for a discussion—and performance—of "tourist performances [that] resemble a research method of simulation and experiment suggested by Walter Benjamin, among others" (p.123).

30 In an earlier report (KENNERLY, 2002), I perform on the page my previous attempt to flee a mediated tragedy—the shootings of school children in the US at Columbine High School in Colorado, and describe Matthew's cross as found in May 1999, June 2000, and August 2001—the August date was incorrect and should have read September 2001.

Figure 5: LA-42 Mariners' Shrine Carcass, 2002 [28]

On September 22, 2001, traveling three miles farther east on LA-42 on a relatively straight stretch of pavement, is a "new" (previously undocumented) shrine. I park the car and approach the site. The tall grass is parted from the edge of the road to the site, what could be the trail of some four-legged animal attempting to cross the road[31] or a biped's path to the site. I follow the path in the grass across the ditch. I encounter no animals. The trail leads me to an oval clearing of mowed grass, face-to-face with a large wood cross made of four-by-four inch lumber. The cross is painted white, is nearly my own height, is of human proportion: the skeletal remains of an upright figure, arms outstretched at hard right angles to the vertical body. The stance keeps a certain balance, maintains a perpendicular and parallel relationship to the horizontal (curvilinear) earth. Still facing the shrine, my back to the road, I assume this position, physically mirror the thing on the side of the road. How hard could it be to maintain this equilibrium, this stance, in an upright living body? What mysteries, following GROTOWSKI (2002), may reveal themselves as the "force of gravity" pushes me "toward an interior ripening which expresses itself through a willingness to break through barriers" (p.192), exposing hidden assumptions that are in sync with the modern world yet out-of kilter with my "deepest calling" (p.188)? [29]

I place my feet firmly together, tightly clasp my thighs and knees together, stomach muscles contracted, gluteus down, spine elongated, chin up, jaw relaxed, shoulders rolled to the back, the chest open (inhale, exhale and open), arms extended (inhale, exhale and extend) out to the sides. I have done this before. Here, at this cross, my imagination doubles—am I here? or elsewhere in the metaworld of my own past? The position is familiar, comfortable at first—except for the lower half of my body. Soon enough (so soon?), holding this lock-kneed, thighs pressed together, feet pointing forward stance is excruciatingly painful. I have also done THIS before, my imagination triples? This Latin cross position (the "center" of which is located where the vertical and horizontal pieces meet about two-thirds up between the ground and the top of the cross), brings the center of gravity in the human body, the center of energy, up to the chest, the heart: an open gushing center? Soon enough (so soon?) the performance (of sacrifice? of martyrdom? of ...) of this open gushing glut of I-don't-know-what is … [30]

31 See CLIFTON (1992), UNITED STATES, Dept. of Trans. (2003).

I remember, again. This immovable position, the center of energy in the chest, blocks energy from moving though the entire body. Locked knees—with closed thighs and pelvis—closes off *chi*, the center of energy and gravity in ones' body (*my body)*, the center of both give and take. *Chi* maintains balance but always already positions the body to *move*. I imagine myself diagonally crossing the worn wooden floor—one, two, three, and *four*—springing powerfully into the air, see myself in the wall of mirrors, see the up-turned face of my teacher looking up at me—mirroring for each other surprise, awe, a glowing pleasure[32]. [31]

This stance, locked knees with closed thighs and pelvis, *this* mirror, is not vital, not *for* me. I open my eyes. Traffic rushes by. An occasional visitor mows the grass, picks up trash. Flesh falls away. The skeleton just wants to fall down. [32]

I fall to my knees, face the base of the cross, face a coffee can submerged in the ground. For alms? alms for the poor? A carnival of images parade through my mind:

> A blind crippled beggar wrapped in dirty blankets;
> A war veteran with no legs on a rolling cart;
> A veteran street performer tap dancing in a doorway;
> A tin can on the curb, a few coins in the bottom.
>
> Dark wood and stained glass windows;
> The Stations of the Cross;
> A plate passing through the pews, put in your dues,
> Your alms, in the collection plate.
>
> Be embarrassed at the heavy clank,
> The sound of coins not paper,
> Let the plate go by.
> Put coins in the can. [33]

No. This coffee can is not for collection, not a place for visitors to offer a coin, a stone, a flower, a gob of spit or drop of sweat to say "I hope this helps" or "Please" or "Thank you" or "I was here." This can is filled with cement, permanently fixing the feet of the cross in stone. This cross is not meant to fall down. One day, however, the cement will crumble, become sand and grit and dust. [34]

I collapse, chest and face in the grass, smelling, breathing glorious dirt, my arms outstretched, hands clutching, crushing blades of grass. Having fallen down, have I failed? Or am I now some sort of supplicant, passing through the threshold into elsewhere, an initiate? Certainly a postulant, a petitioner, a probationary candidate. [35]

32 I "took" (to) ballet as a child, returned as an adult for several years to the Detroit Community School of Music and Dance, and again imaginatively at this site of death—the embodied memory of the discipline activated a saving grace. See HAMERA (2005) for a discussion of the ballet studio as a "homeplace" that is "performatively produced" (p.93).

Now what? When is this visit over? When am I dismissed? Who will dismiss me? And to where? I crawl to edge of the path, stand with difficulty, turn my back to the site, and walk away. Behind me, the grass in front of the cross is deeply matted, torn up in places: I have left an impression, but do not take this into account for some time. I wonder if it will ever be possible to "accomplish" this act on the page. Here, now, I fling GROTOWSKI's (1997) warning to the wind and offer myself as an aesthetic object in an act of mere illustration in order to resist a totalizing experience—risk taking a step back to regard my creative consciousness at work in order to question this (these) rituals and to interrogate the rhetoric of this particular site. [36]

What is it that makes me so intensely interested in this life-sized wooden cross, feel called by it and willing to engage it, and yet feel so "foreign" to it, and so reluctant to touch it? How is it that, in acknowledging its presence by way of attempting to socially interact with it, I feel I have violated some code, feel as if I am "trespassing" by being in the shrine's space? Beyond recognizing that it is not *for* me, have I also been rebuked? Yet again, how is it that I feel as if I have adhered to yet another code—a code partially embedded in the first—by not actually touching the shrine itself: I did not feel *called* to touch it. [37]

I remember that I am in a primarily Catholic region of southeast Louisiana, and that this region is surrounded by an otherwise largely Protestant nation (RABINOWITZ, 1999): because the cross is "plain," i.e. without an inscription and with minimal "adornment" (and so neatly trim), am I pragmatically picking up what LOZANO (2004) calls an Anglo American Protestant code that guarantees the "cultural right to be 'left alone,' ... in a private niche, a personal bubble, even when being in a public place" (p.277)? Perhaps the groomed ground surrounding the cross was a "no trespassing" zone—like a mowed lawn on private property? I have, perhaps, misread the rules of interaction. I may have also broken through the portiere, the veil of grace that shields the sites from the hard look, have perhaps begun to make visible the codes that make possible the officially sanctioned (Anglo-American Protestant) policy of "look the other way" (KENNERLY, 2002)[33]. I continue to pass by the site and mark the changes in my field journal, but I do not cross the ditch again, path in the grass or no: I leave the fourth wall intact[34]. [38]

4.2 Ritual performance of doubt, reciprocity, recognition

On September 22, 2001, I am relieved to be back in the car—secure in my own protective (air conditioned, bug-free, out-of-the-sun) bubble—and drive on. Just a

33 By federal law, roadside shrines are illegal on interstate highways and by state law in most states in the US, however officials usually allow the shrines to stand undisturbed (KENNERLY, 2002). Further research indicates that shrines that are graced with the "look the other way policy' are simple white crosses that are relatively unadorned whereas more elaborate shrines are labeled as kitsch or trash, sometimes elicit complaints, and are removed.

34 The maintenance of the invisible wall between the audience and the action on stage is a key convention of representational theater, facilitating the "willing suspension of disbelief," a phrase first coined by COLERIGE and taken to mean that "one must willingly suspend one's skepticism [which] also implies that the reader [audience] is in control and is not merely a passive recipient of the supernatural content" (SHA in SAFIRE, 2007, n.p.).

few miles east of Springfield on LA-22, I encounter another "new" shrine. Standing again on the edge of the road, I see no path, no mowed area around the assemblage of stuff on the ground and in the trees. I walk deliberately, diagonally, from the street to the site through the tall grass. [39]

I see screwed into a tree two hand-made signs, one above the other. The twelve-inch square plywood sign, inscribed in black hand-painted script, reads (pleads? commands?) "O Lord Receive My Soul." Above this is a larger gray metal sign; scratched into the metal is something I cannot read (an empty sign?). Wired to another tree is a white-painted wood cross whose inscription is partially covered by a huge red velvet bow: "... NOT FORGOTTEN." This partiality draws me in, draws me to my knees. I read "ANDREA PRICE" and "3/82—6/01." A small brown-toned plastic-covered image of a long-haired, white robed, olive-skinned Jesus is wedged between the cross and the bow: a holy card the like of which I have not seen since my days trolling the Catholic Store with my milk money, searching for pretty pictures of Mary to trade in the parking lot during recess. Jesus' head and shoulders are at a 3/4 turn, his gaze directed at something up the road, beyond the frame. The bottom of the vertical cross-piece is carved into a point, pointing down, suspended over the roots of the tree. [40]

I run my hands over the blades of grass around the base of the tree looking for a hole in the ground, thinking that perhaps the cross was moved from the ground to the tree. No hole. Perhaps the ground was too hard, or too knurled with roots, to pierce the ground, to mark the desired spot. My hands caress the roots of the tree, find the trunk. The signs and the cross partially cover a large gash in the trunk of the tree. I reach my hand into the wound, my fingers come away tipped with black and amber sap. I do not doubt that sometime during the month of June, 2001, Andrea Price was in the vehicle that created these wounds. I believe that it was here that Andrea Price met the circumstances of her death. I pull the sap from my fingers, roll it in a ball, and leave it at the base of the shrine: an offering. [41]

On this trip to Andrea Price's shrine, still caught up in a complex of codes, I do not push aside the red velvet bow to read the hidden inscription. Five months later, I will: my friend catches me paradoxically unaware.

Figure 6: LA 42: Andrea Price "Gone But ...," 2002 (Photo courtesy of Timothy BERLA) [42]

On September 22, 2001, kneeling at the base of Andrea Price's shrine, I receive a gift, an exchange of offering for insight: when I stand up, I see that my knees have left a deep impression in the dirt, have left rounded, flattened places in the grass. Later, while archiving these images, a phrase from my days as a Girl Scout drifts through my mind—something about "leaving only footprints?" (EIGHT BASIC SKILLS, n.d.)—or maybe something more recent, a phrase inscribed into memory from treks to various protected wildlife areas and the signs along the trails, "Take only memories, leave only footprints" (LEYDEN & LEYDEN, n.d.), or was it "Take only *photographs*, leave only footprints" (ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING GROUP, 1997)? [43]

In a flash I realize that this "leave no trace" philosophy and "sight-seeing" mandate has guided much of my previous behavior at the shrines, has framed my reluctance to touch or disturb the sites in any way—as if the side of the road is some natural environment, as if these places are some "thing" occurring in nature. I have known differently for some time, indeed shrine-builders have said otherwise, refuse to accept death on the road as a "natural" consequence of

driving[35], so the Code of the Conscientious Ecotourist does not apply. But it took this direct experience with this particular shrine, and the process of archiving and transcription, to reveal and break my own ritualized pattern and the ideology supporting it. [44]

An alternative perspective, on the ground in direct relationship with certain specific sites, allows me to "see" and "receive" differently, to give and take *something*: a reciprocity that makes it impossible for me to *leave no trace*. The Girl Scout Code loosens its hold, loses its force. My own Latin Catholic upbringing, which I had firmly disavowed so long ago, informs not only my embodied performance of doubt, but my interpretation of roadside shrines as ambiguous (both private and public), and my attraction to and ability to, perhaps, read some sites and the ritual codes embedded in them better than—or differently than—others. I felt completely comfortable with my curiosity about Andrea's site, and feel as though I read the rules of engagement well: I did not feel rebuked, but gifted. Have I picked up what LOZANO would call a norm in/as social ritual of public interaction, picking up what LOZANO explains is, in Latin American culture, the impossibility of being "left alone" when one is in public because the body is not "private property" but is regulated by contextualized rules of interaction—"an expressive and sensual region open to scrutiny, disciplining, sanction, of the community" (2004, p.277)? The discipline learned as a Catholic school girl, memories embedded in flesh of the rituals of the Latin Mass—before the changes brought about by Vatican II—certainly contributed in part to my attraction to and interaction with Andrea's site—all of which must be accounted for in my eventual interpretation of this and other sites similar to it. [45]

4.3 Alternate openings

On September 22, 2001, I turn around, exhausted, and let the shrines slide by in my peripheral vision. No longer seeking "Matthew's Cross," his shrine catches me by surprise: I catch a glimpse of it in the passenger side mirror, behind the guardrail on the north side of the road. The pretty plants that had grown around the cross, the vines entwined and climbing the base that I had so enjoyed drawing in the spring of 1999, are dead.

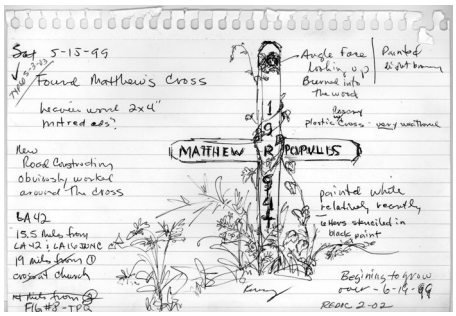


Figure 7: LA 42: Matthew's Cross, field notes, 1999

35 In my previous essay, based on shrine builder's testimony, I advance that roadside shrines are, at least in part, resistant performances of protest against road conditions and warning to other drivers to take care (KENNERLY, 2002).

Figure 8: LA 42: Matthew's Cross, 2002 [46]

Beer cans and fast food wrappers are strewn around the cross and down the embankment toward the river. The once-blue rosary is a study in decay: the plastic beads are yellowing, the blackened rotting string ready(ing) to break. The cherub head burned into the wood at the top of the vertical cross-piece maintains a watchful eye. I find the site interesting, but feel slightly disappointed. I turn my back to the site and half sit on the edge of the steel guardrail. [47]

The angel's stare burns two holes in the back of my skull, opens my eyes. There, directly across from Matthew's shrine, is yet another "new," previously undocumented shrine. The large grapevine wreath is decorated with ribbon and roses. Tucked into the wreath is a very small wood cross: "6/1/1992"—"3-13-2001"—"JONATHON PURYLE." The occasional vehicle crossing the bridge passes between the guardrails—now obscuring, now revealing—the shrine, the ribbons flutter in its wake. [48]

Matthew's angel stares, burns two holes in the back of my skull, opens my ears. Growing and fading sounds (the whine of an engine, the hum of tires on pavement, the belch of exhaust), interrupt the sound of children screaming with laughter ("Hey Butthead" and "You Goofball! Stop it!"), playing in the river, passing at a diagonal under the bridge, fading away. I imagine two boys (and maybe a girl) floating down the river in giant black inner tubes—giant truck tire inner tubes. Have I stumbled upon *chi* in the external world? The "Jonathon Puryle" shrine assemblage is wired to the guardrail facing the road. The shrine's direct address to passers-by may make "Matthew" *(my Matthew)* easier to find. [49]

4.4 Weathering, difference

Some stuff "weathers" better than others.
Some stuff *means* to "weather."
Take, for instance,
The shell of an armadillo or turtle,
The bones, feathers, fur of some delicate other,
The skull atop the skeletal remains of some biped.
The hard white bones hold flesh and sinew,
Organs and rivers of blood,
In various, pose-able positions.

Some stuff, the little detailed stuff,
Weathers differently.
Take, for instance,
The irreplaceable particulars.
Rain-washed and sun-soaked,
They are washed away or left to rot, rust, or dry up and blow away.
Weathering difference differently,
Leaving what, where?
A cross guarded by steel
Accumulating
Companions, images, sounds.
A cross planted in cement
Resisting
Gravity, removal, redemption.
A cross nailed to a tree
Weathering

Sap seeps from the wound.
The tree attempts to heal itself.

Traffic, people rush-on-by
Moving, meaning. [50]

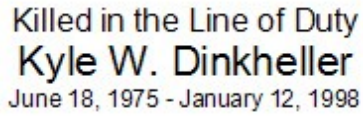
5. Transitions and Thresholds: Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Statesboro, Georgia, March 2001—April 2003

On my first road trip from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to Statesboro, Georgia, in March of 2001, I noted evidence of animals trying to cross the road (both domestic and wild), and (as you might suspect) roadside shrines. During this time I began to experiment with various techniques of visual documentation, some of those images are represented here. Later, inspired by the spectral voices of, on, and passing underneath the road at Matthew's Cross in Louisiana, I began to experiment with vocal/aural documentation, some of which is embedded in this text. In February of 2003 there happened to be sitting in the passenger seat, along with my road maps and field journals, a small hand-held tape recorder.

After leaving a particularly unsettling scene, I decided to tape record rather than write my field notes. I narrated my "shrine-spotting" and "ritual visitation" activities during an entire fifteen-hundred mile, week-long round trip from Statesboro to Baton Rouge, bits and pieces of various levels of transcription also make an appearance later in this article. [51]

5.1 Posterns: Statesboro, Georgia to Montgomery, Alabama, October 14, 2001

On Sunday, October 14, 2001, traveling west on Interstate 16, I *see* no roadside shrines. However, later on April 7, 2002, I will spot a shrine (which I think has been there all along). There, facing the piney woods, located on the wide grassy ditch, is what I have come to call the "In the Line of Duty" shrine. The tall heavy iron cross is painted white and topped with a decorative finial. At the base of the cross is a "garden" of faded fabric flowers: a red (Christmas?) poinsettia and a white (Easter?) lily in a green cone with lavender curly ribbon. Wired to the fence is a brass plaque etched in black: [52]



Above the plaque, attached to the fence post with a pipe-cleaner, is a small US flag. On June 11, 2003, the finial top of the cross will be broken off (vandalized?), gone. A wide area around the site will be mowed and new, living, blooming plants will be planted in the ground around the base of the cross. The brass plaque will be nearly impossible to read, the flag in tatters. Wedged between the fence pole and the flag will be a business card, "Clayton County Sheriff, Deputy Patrick McClellan." In the margins of my field notes are hasty scribbles about dragonflies fluttering around the site as I visit.

Figure 9: GA Whipple Crossing: Killed in the Line of Duty, business card, 2002 [53]

On Sunday, October 14, 2001, the GA-96 and Old Hawkinsville Road intersection, once marked by a single white cross, now sports a new traffic light and two new crosses on the northwest corner. By January 2002, both crosses will be gone. Traveling fifteen miles west the two-lane road passes over a major Interstate Highway, then crosses through a complex of fast food restaurants, hotel/motels, and service stations, the type of which have cropped up since the construction of the interstate system began (LEWIS, 1997)[36]. Just east of the complex, at the bottom of a dip in the road, is a tiny plastic lattice cross above a corrugated metal culvert. In 2003, when the road construction crew widens this stretch of road, the "Tiny in Culvert" shrine will be gone. [54]

36 LEWIS (1997) writes that the US interstate system, begun in 1956 and completed in 1991, reordered the landscape as well as the lives of all US citizens: "envisioned and designed by white men," the interstate "chopped up and destroyed" the city neighborhoods "of African-Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities ... [and] small towns not on the main thoroughfare have dwindled, some have disappeared completely," all replaced by "easy-access malls" and nationally-owned fast food and overnight lodging establishments (pp.x-xiii).

Traveling a few miles farther west, at a "T" intersection with an unmarked two-lane road, are four white crosses lined up in a row, facing the intersection. The crosses are surrounded by a red and white "Stop" sign, a black and brass historic marker, and a huge black and yellow two-way arrow flanked by two black and yellow striped "Danger" signs. [55]

In spite of (or perhaps to spite) the cautionary directives, I park the car and step around the road signs and see yet another sign nailed to a tree. Two red arrows on a white background point in the same direction, directing me toward the shrines and elsewhere, well beyond this site[37]. Approaching the sign, I read: "This Way to the Corn Maze."

Figure 10: GA-96: This way to the corn maze, 2001 [56]

The four crosses are planted on the embankment of the wide, grassy ditch near a utility pole. Their white paint is peeling, and at the base of each cross is a fabric and plastic bouquet of once-yellow daisies, faded to a bluish (almost white) light gray. Each cross is inscribed in a language I think I cannot read. [57]

On October 14, 2001, I kneel in front of each cross, taking note of the inscriptions which have been driven into the wood with a pointed instrument (a Philips-head screwdriver?); a series of star-shaped indents have pierced through the painted surface. This detail, the immediacy of these tiny wounds do not perform a punctum as BARTHES (1981) would have it[38], nor do I have what DENZIN (1997) would call a eureka or epiphanic moment. These tiny wounds keep me intensely focused here, right here. I crouch behind the crosses facing the road, trying to see from "their" point of view.

37 In the Fall of 2001, a local informant tells me it was "four Mexicans who got killed all at the same time … a pick-up crash … they used to live around here, but they moved … They used to work for the big peach farmer near here." My informant also said that there used to be a lot of them (roadside shrines) all up and down the road, but she didn't know where they (the crosses, the workers) had gone.

38 BARTHES (1981) writes that the *punctum* is the element in, or framing of, an image that propels the viewer to imagine the world beyond the frame.

Figure 11: GA 96: Migrant Worker Shrine, their point of view [58]

The inscriptions, having migrated from each cross to a yellow pad of paper (which rode around in my passenger seat for another two years and a thousand miles), to my typed-up and translated field notes (which live on my hard drive, on disk, and on a page in a binder for another year), are represented here, beginning yet another staging, another ritual, another journey, another translation. [59]

INRI
Serado
Fallecio EL 1ro DeMarzo Del 94
Desca
nseen
Paz

INRI
Lula
Fallecio EL 1ro DeMarzo
Del 94
Desca
nseen
Pas

INRI
J Luis
Castro
Juares
ala edud de 18 Anos
Fallecio el dig 1 de Mar Del 9
Recue
rda de
su her
manoy
amigo
descan

INRI
Davidia
Fallec EL 1ro Mar Del 94
Desca
nseen
Paz

On Davidia's cross, the paint has so peeled away that I cannot make out the inscription with my eyes, but must read it some other way: an indented, reverse Braille? I reach out for the cross, run my fingers along the surface. More paint falls away: a gentle wind picks up, scatters the chips. A ladybug lands on my fingers. Later, with the help of a Spanish/English dictionary, and *my love* (who had four years of Spanish in high school), my field notes are translated:

> *Fallecido* / deceased
>
> *Fallecio EL 110 De Marzo Del 94* / Deceased on 1 March 1994
>
> *Fallecio el dig 1 de Mar Del 94* / Deceased on the first of March 1994
>
> *Desca nseen Paz* / Rest in Peace
> The longer inscription on Cross #3:
> *ala edud de 18 Anos* / at the age of 18 Years
> *Recuerda de su her man oy amigo* / Remembered by his brother and friend [60]

I will remember you, too. I promise. [61]

On April 7, 2002, I stop for another visit. J. Luis's cross has toppled over, an "X" shape in relation to the earth, *chi* in relationship with time and gravity? [62]

In February 2003 I stop at the "Migrant Worker" shines, intent on paying my respect. A layering of signs mark and re-mark *other* times, *many* places (a brother's death and a brother's return): new living plants have been placed in the ground between each of the crosses, two more plants are situated farther down stage, closer to the road, and the bright yellow mums I remember from the year before survived the winter and are budding, they will bloom again. In front of J. Luis' toppled cross, sharing the same (widened) hole in the ground, is another new cross, taller than the rest.

Figure 12: GA-96: Migrant Worker Shrine: *Chi* in time and gravity, place and memory, 2003 [63]

A candle is centered in front of the four crosses and seems to mark the threshold of the ritual space I desire to enter. The red wax candle—the kind of "saint" candle I have seen in grocery stores in Louisiana and Georgia—has been previously lit, the sides of the tall glass are streaked with soot, darkened around the rim. The image of—is it Mother Mary?—on the glass faces me, sees me. What to do? I light the candle. I cross the threshold. However, once "inside" the space, I become disoriented. Several yards to the east and just behind the row of crosses, tossed in front of the utility pole, are the faded fabric flowers that once graced each cross and a stack of relatively new empty black plastic plant containers. I am no longer sure where "center" is, no longer certain where the shines (the ritual space/stage) begins or ends. Later, I buy a "saint" candle of my own and situate it in my (ritualized) writing space, both of which (the candle, the writing space) shift from time to time.

Figure 13: Photo: Shrine-building, shifting space, 2004

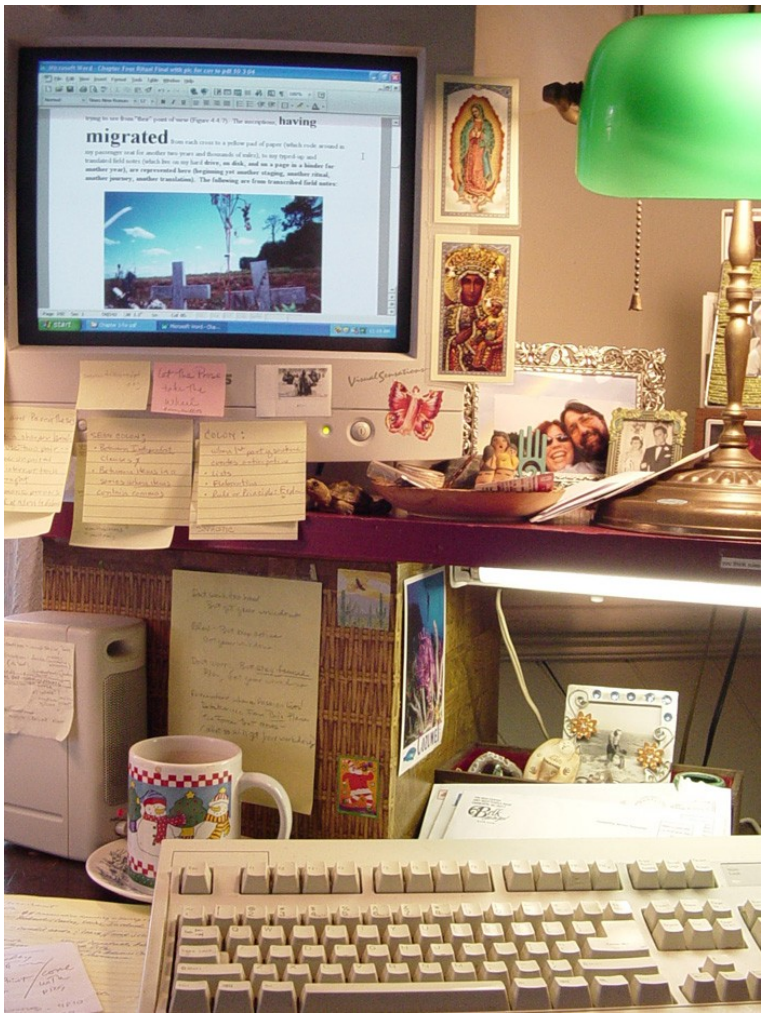


Figure 14: Shrine-building, migrating meaning, 2004 [64]

In February of 2003, I will encounter a new shrine site, what I will soon call the "Surveyor Shrine," just east of the "Migrant Workers" shrine site. On that road trip in February, after leaving the scene of the "Surveyor Shrine" I decide to tape record, rather than write down, the details of my visit. The following is an abbreviated transcript of the beginning of that vocal / aural experiment.

> Monday, February 24, on my way to Baton Rouge from Statesboro ... some new crosses that I want to document (pause, deep sigh, pause) *Jeeze* (pause) well (pause) I stopped at the Mexican Shrines, the four crosses that are migrant workers ... Just as I was pulling away from there, not even a half mile later, saw a big cross on side of the road and turned around and went back. There were little tiny orange flags all over, placed in the ground, [and] orange marks on ... the pavement, and it just looked so *odd* (pause) it looked *recent* (pause) A great big piece of rubber there from a big tire, I thought it might be from the accident. I went up to the cross, took pictures. [On the cross is a] big wide ribbon, professionally done, red ribbon with gold cursive lettering, said "February 4th." Roses and white satin ribbon and lace [at the center]. A ripped shirt off to the side. And as I was coming back down into the ditch I almost stumbled upon—screamed and got away from it—an Honest-to-God rearview mirror, broken and cracked, which I went back and took pictures of, with me reflected in there (nervous laugh, snort, snort). [stop].
>
> I went to that same party store, the Fort [Valley] Party Store. [The clerk] told me it was a surveyor that got hit by a car. ... she [the clerk] told me her name was [Ronnie], then she told me that there were three [Ronnies] that worked there—earlier I had talked to another [Ronnie]. I just thought that was pretty creepy (pause) [stop]. [65]

What I don't describe on tape are additional details that did "make it" into later write-ups, details that were "captured" in photographs and other meaning-making attempts:

> The original surveyor shrine "scene" (I think "scene of the crime," feel like a crime-scene photographer) was spread out—from *behind* the cross at the tree-line, through the grassy ditch, and all the way *into* the road—in an area approximately twenty to twenty-five feet wide. Slightly behind the cross was a Styrofoam food container, to the east, or stage left, was a tattered blue and creamy-gray plaid shirt. In front of the cross there was a pair of white rubber/latex gloves turned slightly inside-out as if someone had pulled them from their hands and flung them away (coroner or EMT medical equipment?), broken glass and bits and pieces of black plastic (car parts?), a shattered side/rearview mirror (which scared me when I came upon it and saw myself —I shrieked and backed away from it like it was a snake-in-the-grass (a portent?). There was also a wide scattering of tiny orange surveyor flags (placed there in tribute by other members of the survey crew?), and several orange markings (arrows, numbers) on the pavement (police or forensics team marking the scene of the incident?)

Figure 15: Surveyor Shrine: Staging, revenants, 2003 [66]

Two months later, in April of 2003, the original Styrofoam "florist" cross will still be there. Next to it planted in the ground will be a new tall wood cross, painted white, inscribed in large black stenciled letters "PRESTON MONTALVO," on the horizontal and "FEB 4 03" on the vertical. The tiny flags, broken glass and black bits of car parts, the shattered mirror, the rubber tire strip, the rubber gloves, and the Styrofoam food container will be gone. The ripped shirt, moved to hang on a nearby bush, and the marks on the pavement will remain.

Figure 16: GA 96: Surveyor Shrine: Road markings, 2003 [67]

I encountered the surveyor team mapping the two-lane road in preparation for the construction of the four-lane divided highway just a few miles west of where their comrade had died. A few miles farther west, the road crew, the heavy equipment,

and the road construction is moving east toward the surveyors, toward the shrines. Now, I am really lost: I can no longer figure out where "ritual space" or "ritual time," and my place in it, begins or ends[39].

Figure 17: GA 96: Robinson Paving crew: *Chi* on the move? 2003 [68]

In the fall of 2006 on our way to Louisiana for a performance festival, I point out sites important to my research to a group of Georgia Southern University students. The road construction complete, I scan the roadside for the Migrant Workers and the Surveyor Shrines. They are there, but much more difficult to see across four lanes of fast traffic and a grassy median. Snuggled against the remaining tree line, they seem relegated to the margin. [69]

5.2 Recycling Memory: Baton Rouge and beyond, February 26, 2003

In February 2003, revisiting roadside shrines near Louisiana State University (LSU) and Baton Rouge, I am directed to a new site. The "LSU Cyclist Shrine" on River Road is across from the LSU Dump: one dirty white running shoe is tied by its laces to the wood post of the barbed wire fence. The fence separates the road from the grass-covered, cattle-grazing levee. Tangled in the wire is a yellow and purple, LSU cheerleader-type pompom. In the ditch at the base of the post, surrounded by tin corrugated garden edging, is a tiny white cross covered with dirty fabric roses and faded plastic yellow flowers. The man who works at the dump says two student bicyclists were killed there by a drunk driver in July 2002.

39 BOWMAN (2000) writes of, and performs on the page, the art of becoming lost—a process wherein the once familiar becomes strange—a critical transition into the unknown, ripe with the possibility of seeing and experiencing something anew.

Figure 18: LA River Road: LSU Bikers' Shrine: Share the road, 2003 [70]

Crouched in the wet, narrow ditch investigating the "LA River Road: LSU Bikers Shrine," I will see markings on the pavement that remind me of similar pavement markings at the "Surveyor Shrine" in Georgia on GA-96, just down the road from the "Migrant Workers" shrine.

Figure 19: LA River Road: LSU Biker's Shrine: Road marks, 2003 [71]

Crouching there I will recall my interview with Chaz in 2002, a student from LSU who built a roadside shrine in his home town just east of New Orleans, Louisiana, at the site where his best friend was killed in a car crash. The day after his friend was killed, he volunteered to accompany his police officer-father to the site—it was his father's job to mark the dynamics of the incident on the pavement. That is when *Chaz* got the idea to build the shrine for his boyhood friend. [72]

In a flash, I recall a photograph in a North Carolina newspaper—the coroner crouches on the pavement, hovers over a cross he has painted on the pavement at the scene of a fatal car crash (WHITACRE, 2001). The coroner poses for the photographer, is quoted as saying he advocates that mourners, rather than erect a shrine on the side of the road, apply for permission to paint their own cross on the pavement—the caveat—"once it's worn off, it cannot be replaced" (WHAT SOME OTHER STATES DO, 2002, p.A8). [73]

I will later come to understand these signs, these markings, these various places and times, as a broad web of singularly negotiated social ritual space in which I have been playing a part all along, whether or not I "stop by" for a visit. Even as I drive by the sites—marked with a "roadside shrine" or not—and roll along the pavement, I am rolling over (and helping to erase) the dynamics of the incident marked on the pavement, *chi* wearing thin to the point of disappearance. [74]

5.3 Amazing graces and the "run up" to war: Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Statesboro, Georgia, March 10, 2003

On, Sunday March 10, 2003, on a return trip from Baton Rouge to Statesboro, I take I-12 to I-55 to Meridian, Mississippi, and then travel the old US-80 through Mississippi and Alabama, part of which has been designated the "Civil Rights Movement National Historic Trail" between Selma and Montgomery. [75]

On that day in March, 2003, I further my experiment in field documentation by orally recording all that caught my attention: mileage on the trip odometer, time of day, shrine sites, and more. In sum, I left at 8:15 in the morning on a bright clear day, drove 12 hours and 627 miles between Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Statesboro, Georgia, arriving well after dark. [76]

Along the way I saw 48 crosses, 6 of which—all located on the same 29 mile stretch of road on Alabama US 80—were "new" in the last week. [77]

I also saw 8 wreathes on wire stands, one fresh and one fabricated bouquet of flowers, and a wide assortment of particulars seemingly apart from the shrine sites but intimately and ultimately interconnected: 18+ domestic and wild animal carcasses (a dead dog on his back, legs in the airs as if still running, a mangled raccoon, another small raccoon dead, a smeared possum, a splatter of pink, orange, and red goo—*by whose grace does this gore remain?)*, one non-fatal truck wreck, three historic signs—one with a vehicle pull-off, balloons in the ditch, beads in trees, US flags and bows of various hues and sizes tied to trees and utility poles, graffiti ("Trust Jesus" in blue, "Ku Klux Klan" in red—*by whose grace does* this *graffiti remain?)*, hubcaps, a kitchen appliance and a school desk/chair combo in the median, an abandoned schools bus, a burned-out car, abandoned gas stations, motels, and roadside "attractions," several tiny graveyards, and white plastic bags hung up (caught up) in trees. [78]

I saw black (in Louisiana) and orange (in Mississippi) "official" trash bags lined up in neat rows, state workers (men, prisoners) dressed in orange jump suites pick-

ing up and stuffing "trash" into those "official" bags and leaving roadside shrines (and the carcasses of dead animals) in place. I also spotted bird nests, crows and turkey vultures "pickin' at somethin' dead," white cranes fishing in the ditches, a mother pig and her tiny pink babies running along the ditch, and a little black dog trotting along the side of the freeway "sure hope he makes it home ..." [79]

Later, listening to my own strange but oddly familiar (spectral) voice, I can also hear the wind rushing by the window, the hummmmm of my own tires on the pavement, and the voices coming from the car radio ... I only stop once.

> Mile 360: US-80 still four-lane divided. Rural. Big white rock in the middle of nowhere. Stop. A farm house way back behind the rock, a field across the [road], a small building, a flag, a sign for fire trucks, and only woods farther down the road ... *Rock is obviously a monument or memorial of some kind*; pull off spot, railroad ties surrounding a grassy mound, perennials planted around. And this big white piece of granite [inscribed in brass]:
>
> "Five miles north of this spot was TALISI visited by DeSoto, Sept 18, 1540
> This stone erected by the
> National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Alabama, 1936."
>
> [US-80 was once part of the Euro-explorer's trail to Talisi, the "last capitol of the Creek Nation" (HERITAGE, n.d.), was later part of the road to the only Confederate Armory to survive the Civil War (53rd ALABAMA CAVALRY, 2000), and now is part of the National Historic Civil Rights Trail.]

Figure 20: Photo: AL US-80: Historic route: Historic Rock, 2003

> Mile 361: Leonard COHEN's "Democracy is Coming" [marks my day]
>
> Mile 380: Top of hill on side of road. Fenced-in area, a big stone, a funereal wreath on private property. Blue road sign: "Historic Route"
>
> ...
>
> Mile 490: Just west of Columbia River Bridge, after crossing into Georgia and Eastern Standard time: Another shrine, familiar, a tiny white cross in the median, plastic flowers, flanked by metal guardrails. Then another new white cross in median facing on-coming traffic going the other way. . .
>
> ... *loud radio [a movie review]*
>
> ... t***hey're making fun? of movies from Iran, Iraq, and Korea ...***
>
> ... *smeared possum in the road, black birds ... waitin' to pounce*
>
> ... *another big, dead, smished, something in the middle of the lane—*
>
> ... *NPR's "Car Talk" on the radio.* [80]

On that day, I find myself once again in Peach County, Georgia. As I pass the "Survey Worker" shrine on GA-96, the host on a call-in show on NPR out of Macon questions a psychiatrist about the psychological effects of terror alerts on the general public. The respondent talks about how we, as citizens of the United States, have gotten used to knowing that terrorism has the potential to happen, and that we cannot prepare for it. The psychiatrist likens it to how we have learned to manage getting in our cars without being anxious, knowing that an accident could happen any time—that we take it for granted to the point of forgetting. The talk show went on a little bit more about that, talking about terror and the "Run Up to War," as I drive my radio down the road. [81]

I wonder if I have sufficiently scrambled *that* Code. [82]

I pass the "Migrant Worker" shrine. I pass the place where the "Tiny Cross in Culvert" shrine used to be. I get on I-16 south and pass the "Killed in the Line of Duty" shrine, which—I trust—is still there. I make it to Statesboro with energy to spare. [83]

I find myself asking, where is the gap between grace and terror? I write: [84]

5.4 Resisting postulation: The Union dead

September 14, 2001

(with all due respect to Robert LOWELL)

Driving the radio down the road
A Yankee in the New South spotting roadside shrines
    Little plots of death and grief and little lonely crosses
    Little plots of life and love and things that people leave there
On my way to meet my lover in MLK's Montgomery
We'll visit *that* memorial
    That lonely round table of rolling righteous water
Place our hand in the stream, our fingers on the wall
Laugh at our need to connect in this way
Cry for our contemporary national calamity.

Driving the radio down the road
NPR at the National Cathedral
    Battle Hymn of the Republic (for which it stands)
    Shining steel cross (for which it wields)
    Processional (for which it mobilizes)

People people people people people people people people people people people
People people people people people people people people people people people
People people people people people people people people people people people
    Pictures plastered on the walls
Some still dying, dying now for a cause
Transformed (collapsed) into a single sacrificial body
    Swallowed up in the yawning black hole, a parking lot
    Swallowed up in the grinding maw of war, a memorial.

Driving the radio down the road
Spotting roadside shrines
Complicit in this savage servility
Pull over and puke
    A bubble splats on the pavement
    The coroner paints a cross
    It's your turn to drive

Figure 21: Photo: Erase me [85]

Acknowledgments

This work, with the help of all who I have encountered along the way, is a partial attempt to negotiate my singular, popular cultural, and academic relationships with these various and interconnected experiences, group memberships, the host of ghosts (memories) present in the car, the editors who helped fashion this current form, and with you, dear reader. Ultimately, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to shrine-builders everywhere. I could not have traveled so far without you. This work is dedicated to you (all).

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