

RESEARCH CENTER
EAST-WEST CENTER
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CULTURE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING NEWSLETTER

EAST-WEST CENTER

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Culture Learning Institute

June 1, 1974

A novel approach to culture learning

By John Walsh

Several of us in the Culture Learning Institute, from a number of different cultures, are currently engaged in an activity that has as one of its objectives the co-authoring of a book, *Culture learning through literature*. Each of the participants in the activity joins in a regular weekly seminar and a number of the participants have agreed to be responsible for the writing of a specific chapter that will bear his or her name when the book is published. Since we openly discuss the drafts in the seminar this activity has become for all of us a good object lesson in the excitement and the frustration, the strengths and the weaknesses, the give and take of cooperative intercultural learning.

This paper will explore the thinking behind the activity rather than assess its progress to this point. One of the early decisions we made was to confine our study of culture learning through literature to certain selected novels, although we suspect that the same basic methodology might apply to other literary forms as well. For example, drama, poetry, the short story, and the motion picture might be equally as good as the novel as sources of culture learning.

It has been our assumption from the beginning that the study of certain of its novels is one of the several ways in which some of the essential qualities or characteristics of a culture can be learned. Simply put, we felt that to come to understand and appreciate the

literature—oral and written—of a culture is to realize more fully what the underlying meanings and values of that culture are. In initiating this activity we were not thinking of ourselves as literary critics or as sociologists of literature, but rather we sensed that we might be doing something new and interestingly interdisciplinary for which there is as yet no name. The novel, it appeared to us, might be a deep and rich mine of culture learning if we could discover the appropriate ways for getting at it. We considered first the possibility of asking each of the novels we selected a specified set of questions; next we thought we would simply read the novels and in a sense let them, each in its own way, reveal what it would of the culture out of which it arose; next some of us read the novels looking for central symbols, key concepts that the personages in the novel accepted or rejected, and implicit or explicit value statements. Variations of these approaches and others as well are likely to be found in the finished chapters. Our hope is that these chapters will incorporate some of the imagination, immediacy, passion, and integration of the writer's self with his subject matter that will serve to make of the whole activity a warmly self-actualizing humanistic enterprise rather than a coldly analytic one.

Somewhat disparaging

Against the background of the long-standing discussion in academic circles of whether the humanistic mode or the scientific mode is more valid, more realistic, and more productive in culture learning, the use of the word *humanistic* in the above sentence

might appear somewhat disparaging to those social sciences that also devote themselves in whole or in part to culture learning. It is not so intended. It is meant only to suggest that all culture learning, in whatever form or mode, may turn out to be as much a matter of feeling, attitude, and emotion as of intellect. Lionel Trilling goes so far as to say that the study of a culture is inevitably emotionally moving and that, "... indeed, without this sympathy and admiration a culture is a closed book to the student, for the scientific attitude requisite for the study of cultures is based on a very lively subjectivity."¹

This issue of the *Newsletter* spotlights the Culture Learning Institute's participants and projects in the *thought and expression in culture learning* thematic subdivision. The other three areas of interest to the Institute are *cultures in contact*; *language in culture*, and *cultural identity*.

In the broader context Michael Polanyi in his book *Personal knowledge* is very convincing that the concept of scientific objectivity in the study of social issues is largely a myth. No investigator, he points out, can come to the study of any aspect of the human and social predicament without his background of ideas and values and he can not avoid using these personal constructs even in identifying the issue, to say nothing of studying it and proposing solutions to it. The point here is that both the so-called humanist and the so-called social scientist must come to the question of culture
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Dr. John Walsh, Culture Learning Institute research associate, is coordinator of the thought and expression in culture learning thematic subdivision.

'Halfway Road' is milestone for CLI grantee

Honolulu theatre-goers were once again given a glimpse of Malaysian theatre when Kumu Kahua, a University theatre group which encourages the production of locally written plays, presented Ghulam Sarwar's two-act play "Halfway Road, Penang" on April 20-27.

Sarwar is an East-West Center Culture Learning Institute grantee from Malaysia working towards a Ph.D. in Drama and Theatre. He also assisted in the March production of the classical Sanskrit drama, "The Vision of Vasavadatta," and translated and directed last summer's Malaysian music-drama production, "The Spell of the Giantess."

Multiracial situation

"Halfway Road, Penang" deals with a multi-racial situation in the Malaysian society. Set in Sarwar's home town, Penang, the play presents some of the social, cultural, political and religious conflicts that beset Malaysian society and that are not unlike the conflicts found in Hawaii or in any other multi-racial society.

In "Halfway Road," the leading characters, Rosnah and Krishnamoorthy who belong to the Malay and Indian ethnic groups respectively, face opposition from their families when they decide to marry each other. Krishnamoorthy, who is born and brought up in modern Malaysia, "where all races live side-by-side," is unable to understand his father's divided loyalties (to India and to Malaysia) and his parents' horror when he announces that he's going to give up his Hinduism to become a Muslim so that he can marry Rosnah.

Mr. Bruce Palmore, director Emeritus of the Fiji Museum, in Suva, and 1972-73 senior fellow in the Culture Learning Institute, passed away in April in Auckland, New Zealand. He was coordinator of CLI's Museum Management Project.



No greater sin

To his parents there can be no greater sin than for Krishna to give up his superior Brahmin status to marry a mere waitress from another religion and another race. The events of May 1969 when racial conflicts came to the forefront in Malaysia still linger in their minds, and there is the fear that Krishna's involvement will lead to more trouble for the family. The marriage, however, fails for Krishnamoorthy, despite his claims is subconsciously still attached to his old ancestral religion. He is unable to support Rosnah and is not willing to tolerate his mother-in-law. Rosnah decides to leave him, his attempts to win her back fail, and he's left at the end of the play without a sense of direction. His *karma* has overcome him.

"Halfway Road, Penang" raises several important issues: conflict between generations; traditional attitudes towards various races and towards various occupations; the question of inter-marriage in a multi-racial society; questions related to religions and religious practices; cross-cultural conflicts arising; ignorance of other cultures and lack of attempts to understand other cultures; the social conditions of the average Malaysian woman in a society

whose marriage and divorce laws are lax and where divorce often leads women into situations where prostitution becomes tempting.

"Halfway Road, Penang" is Ghulam Sarwar's first full-length play. He has in addition written one one-act piece and has recently completed work on another full-length play, a surrealistic piece entitled "Suvarna-Padma (The Golden Lotus)." Sarwar is also a prolific poet, and has been editor of "Contact," the newspaper of the East-West Center Students' Association. □

News Notes

Dr. Jean Marie Ackermann, 1971-72 Institute fellow, has established a Department of Transcultural Training at Language House, a division of Telemedia, Inc. The purpose of the department is to enable corporations to better prepare their staffs in language, thought and action patterns of the overseas countries in which they will be working. Programs will include both general and culture-specific segments, and will be conducted prior to and during the overseas assignment.

Dr. Ackermann received her Ph.D. in intercultural communication in 1972 from Claremont Graduate School. □



CLI Participants from Australia, Philippines, Japan, Rep. of China, and American Samoa

CLI completes weekly seminar series

On April 30, the Culture Learning Institute completed a series of 23 weekly seminars with a presentation by the director, Dr. Verner C. Bickley, on "Translation errors that have affected history." The seminars, coordinated by CLI research associate Dr. Richard Brislin, were held on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. from September, 1973,

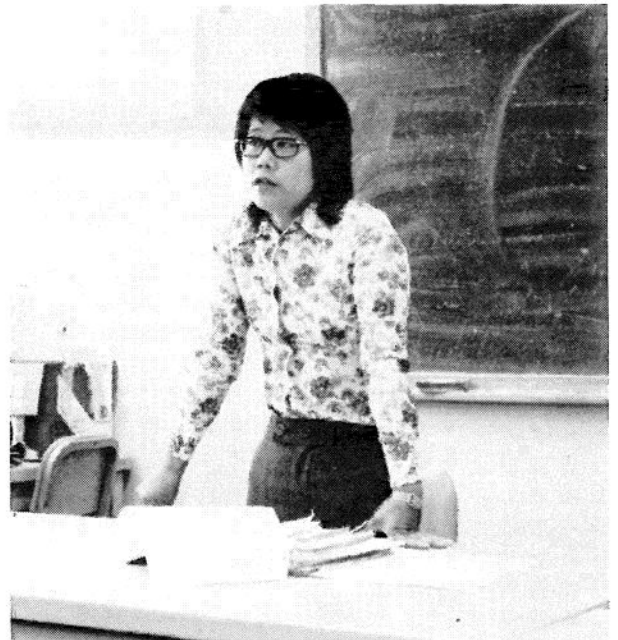
to April, 1974.

The series' purpose was to provide an opportunity for degree-seeking students, professional development participants, staff members, and visiting senior fellows to share ideas related to one or more of the institute's four subdivisions: *cultures in contact*; *cultural identity*; *language in culture*; and

thought and expression in culture learning. Topics for the seminar included analyses of cross-cultural misunderstanding, bilingual education, music as communication, second-language learning, preschool education in Australia, and the role of the museum in the Pacific. □



Verner C. Bickley, CLI Director



Junko Tanaka, Ph.D. candidate in psychology

Culture learning . . .

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learning as human beings. Both may have something important to say and both would be immodest and ungenerous in laying claim to the bigger and better truth.

As mentioned, we have started with the assumption that literature can and should be one of the important channels or sources of culture learning. But we are constantly re-examining even this assumption and in so doing two main questions concerning it have arisen.

Its own integrity

The first of these has to do with the author's intention and with the nature of the novel as a work of art with its own reasons for being and its own integrity. The novelist, it is said, has no intention of writing a social commentary or documentary; he intends nothing more or less than to tell a story in the most artistic way possible and his skills as a novelist do not necessarily include those of penetrating cultural or societal observation. Is it not then unfair to the novelist for the reader or the culture learner to interpret the whole or parts of the novel in ways that the author himself might not be conscious of or in ways with which he might disagree if he could be questioned? Further, since a novel has its own beauty and integrity and is nothing more than it purports to be, is not there danger of doing violence to the novel as novel if one studies it for what it might reveal of the culture? And this even though the novel is inevitably a product of the culture out of which it arises?

In at least partial response to this question some of us have taken the position that once he has finished his creative work, the author's intention in creating it ceases to be of primary importance. Not all novels are good sources of culture learning by any means but those that are say something important about the culture whatever the author's original intention may have been. Except for such copyright laws as may prevail, the completed novel passes into the public domain to impress its readers as it may. Novelists, like most people, probably have a number of intentions and motivations in doing what they do in

the way they do it, and, like most writers, novelists sometimes write better than they know.

The point might be argued that a particular novel could be replete with culture learning potential, that is, with themes, values and attitudes toward them, ways of conflict resolution, sources of inner strength, the workings of fate, and the like, without the author's ever having consciously adverted to that fact. Whether a novel is a source of culture learning for a given reader or student depends as much on the capacities of the reader, particularly his perceptions and sensitivities, as it does on the intentions of the author. The novel becomes the *means by which* one learns something more of the culture in much the same way as any teacher or book is the means by which one learns in any other field. And like other means of learning, the novel has its advantages and its disadvantages, its main advantage probably being its power to absorb the reader and to evoke his emotional as well as his intellectual response.

If not exclusively

To seek out what a given novel might teach us about a given culture neither enhances nor diminishes the novel as novel; it may or may not add to our enjoyment and appreciation of the novel. Literary criticism is one thing and culture learning through literature is something quite different. The literary critic is necessarily, if not exclusively, concerned with the artistic merit of the work. It is he who judges the novel according to what he deems to be the proper canons of this literary art form; it is he who seeks to stay within the formalities and the possibilities of the novel itself in determining its quality. But the culture learner, as such, is not primarily interested in the novel as a work of art. Though he may like or dislike, enjoy or not enjoy, the novel as a human being, he is looking for something else when he approaches a novel as a student of culture or a culture learner. He does no injury to the novel when he seeks to discover whether and in what ways the novel helps him to comprehend more deeply that structure of ways of seeing, feeling, believing, and doing that is the essence or the abiding spirit of a culture. So wide is the difference between literary criticism and culture

learning through literature that some of the lesser novels may well be better sources of culture learning than some of the greater novels.

The second of the main questions regarding the assumption that the novel can and should be a rich source of culture learning is how the thoughts and emotions of individual people in particular circumstances—such as those found in a novel . . . give us sufficient grounds for making generalizations about a culture. Culture learning, after all, aims at an understanding of the patterns or structure of the culture as a whole rather than at the understanding of this or that person. The equally important opposite version of this question is whether the novel is concerned with culture differences at all since it tends to deal with those meanings and values that are common to most, if not all, human beings and are therefore considered to be universal.

This question led us to take another look at the nature of literature, again specifically the novel, and at the concept of generalization in culture learning. Our discussion of these and closely related matters in the seminar with people of different culture backgrounds contributing their viewpoints has in itself been a valuable experience in culture learning.

One of the reasons, it seems to me, that literature (again specifically the novel) is so endlessly fascinating lies precisely in the fact that at the same time it concentrates or focuses on the life and problems of individual persons it inescapably locates these persons both in a definite cultural milieu and in the broad context of their common humanity. Thus, for example, in coming to know Dr. Zhivago, created and presented to us as a person by Boris Pasternak, we also come to know more about Russian culture—since Zhivago as well as Pasternak himself are parts of, and products of, that culture—and more of what all human beings share profoundly in common. Every self, every person, lives both in and beyond his culture. If I may quote Lionel Trilling once again for he has seen this point with exceptional clarity! "The function of literature, through all its mutations, has been to make us aware of the particularity of selves, and the high authority of the self in its quarrel with its society and its culture. Litera-

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Culture learning . . .

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ture is in that sense subversive."² The persons who write novels and the people they create in their novels are shaped by their culture even to the remotest parts of their mind and being, including those parts of their psyche in which are formed their concepts about and their attitudes toward their fellow human beings everywhere. Culture learning, through literature and in all other ways, takes its high importance from the fact that culture mediates between the self and all other selves in the world.

To what extent is it possible to generalize about a culture on the basis of what one comes to know about it through its literature? The answer to this question is crucial to culture learning through literature since the basic reason for all culture learning is the learner's increasing ability to make ever more general, accurate, and powerful statements about the culture he seeks to learn. It probably goes without saying that the more deeply and widely one has read in a culture's literature the better position he is in to make firm, forceful, and helpful generalizations based on his reading. (This is not to deny that the close reading of one novel particularly pregnant with culture insights might not be more fruitful than the reading of many novels less appropriate for culture learning purposes.) It should also go without saying that in fact one hardly ever generalizes about a culture on the basis only of what he has read in its literature. It could well be questioned whether in fact one ordinarily gains his original impressions about a culture from its literature or whether it is not most often the case that he finds his vague views, hunches and guesses about the culture deepened and corroborated, challenged and modified, sharpened and expanded in the insights he gains from the study of its literature.

Considered such points

In our discussion of the problems and nature of generalization in culture learning through literature we have considered such points as the following:

1. Some novelists will occasionally, either in a descriptive passage or in the

words of one of the characters in the novel, make an explicit generalization about the culture in which the story takes place. As he would with any other generalization, the culture learner accepts it, rejects it, or qualifies it. If he considers it to be valid, he will make it part of his own thinking and writing about the culture.

2. The fact that certain personages in a novel hold to a set of ideas, values, traditions, or aspirations does not in itself indicate whether all, most, many, or even some other people of the culture in which the story is situated share in them. The concept of culture is itself an abstraction and people are

members of cultures in varying ways and with varying degrees of intensity and commitment. Consequently, there does not appear to be any way of knowing for sure how fully a given person, real or fictitious, can be said to be typical or representative of the culture. On the other hand a novel is not likely to be widely read, discussed, and studied in a culture over a period of time unless it says something of significance about the culture which the readers can recognize as authentic and with which they can identify, negatively or positively. It would seem to follow that statements about the

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In search of a Chinese Solzhenitsyn

By Steven F. Sagi

Steven Sagi is a CLI grantee from the United States, working towards a Ph.D. degree in history. He is one of ten graduate students in various disciplines working in CLI's "Literature and Culture Learning" activity, coordinated by Dr. John Walsh, research associate. Here he describes his essay which will form one chapter of the proposed Culture learning through literature volume.

This study will focus on the novel's place in its cultural setting on mainland China. Admittedly, there have been few, if any, works of great prose literature to emerge during the past 25 years in the People's Republic. Whereas other forms of literary expression, notably theater and opera, have flourished as vehicles for socio-political comment, the novel to all outward appearances underwent a long hibernation. Post-1949 efforts all seem to uniformly feature wooden characterization, childishly simplistic style, and thoroughly predictable dialectic plots. Compared to the masterpieces of a Pasternak or a Solzhenitsyn, also produced in a Communist cultural environment, the Chinese output disappears with its sterility.

Yet somehow an active literary criticism continues, often vituperative in tone. An endless succession of writers undergoes the cycle of disgrace and rehabilitation, while as a whole

the entire profession itself experiences vicissitudes of stringency and then relaxed controls. Considering the high level of activity, it is apparent that foreign observers of the Chinese intellectual scene have largely missed something.

In our essay we shall overlook the mediocre technical quality of recent Chinese fiction and attempt to understand the literature on its own terms. We intend to review several episodes of literary fashion, and study the purge campaigns against selected dissenters through a quarter century. Such individuals include Yü P'ing-po, Hu Feng, Ting Ling, and others. Central to the inquiry will be questions of culture learning and cultural persistence. To what extent have professional writers "learned" the new culture of socialism? In what degree does their work reflect singularly Chinese, as opposed to Chinese Communist values? How has the novel served to portray undercurrents in the ongoing struggle between China's competing political lines? What indeed are the true motives of contemporary Chinese literary craftsmen?

The poor quality of a literature ought not function as a bar to our examining how a culture expresses itself through that genre. It is our feeling that by casting some light on the above topics we may gain insight into how the developing Chinese society is reflected through the medium of the novel. □

Twenty Aboriginal dancers visit East-West

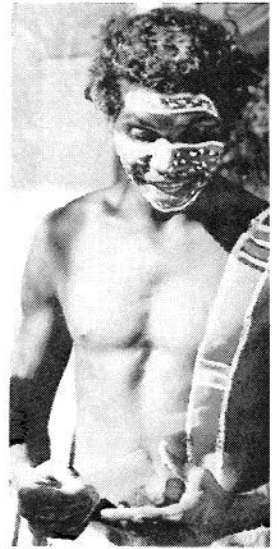
A group of twenty Aboriginal dancers from Australia's remote Northern Territory opened a week-long program in Hawaii with a performance April 25 in the exotic setting of the Japanese Garden at the East-West Center. The performance was sponsored by the Culture Learning Institute as part of its *cultural identity* theme, and was attended by more than 1000 spectators from the Center and the outside community.

Making their first appearance in the United States, the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation dancers draw on ancient tribal lore to portray stories and legends which range from the sacred to the comic. Dances were performed to

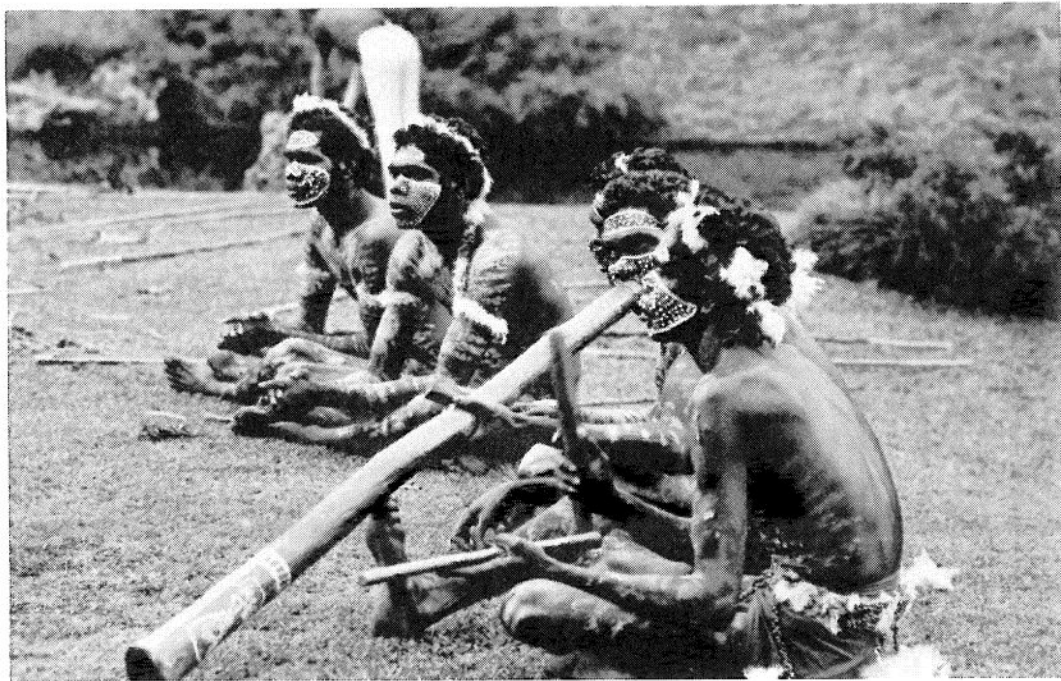
the accompaniment of the didjeridu, a trumpet like instrument carved from the branch of a tree.

The dance troupe—recruited from the Yirrikala, Millingimbi, and Bamyili cultural areas of Arnhem Land—came to Hawaii as the culmination of a tour sponsored by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs in the South Pacific.

On April 26, Mr. Lance Bennett, director of the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation gave a lecture-demonstration dealing with the arts and social aspects of Aboriginal life. That afternoon in the CLI garden, the performers demonstrated singing, spear-making, bark-painting, and body-painting.



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Photos by Arnold Kishi



**East-West Culture Learning Institute
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Project _____

Information Form

Project Date _____

(Miss) _____
 Name (Mrs.) _____ Male _____ Married _____
 (Mr.) _____ Female _____ Single _____

Country of Citizenship _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____ Place of Birth _____

Home Address: _____ U.S. Social Security No. (if you have one) _____

Name of person to notify in case of accident or illness: _____

Title of your present position: _____ Cable Address: _____

Name of your immediate supervisor: _____ Date position assumed: _____

Agency/Business Address: _____

Additional Work Experience: (begin with most recent employment)

Date	Position/Duties	Agency	City/State

Education: (begin with most recent and include short-term technical or professional training)

Institution Attended	Major Subject	Dates	Degree/Certificate

Important: Attach a 1-2 page description of your present duties and responsibilities and how participation in the program will help you in carrying out these duties and responsibilities upon your return.

Signature of Applicant

Date

EAST-WEST CULTURE LEARNING INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES

CULTURAL CENTERS PROGRAM

Museum Management, Archives Management, Ethnomusicology

September 1, 1974 – February 28, 1975

PURPOSE:

The East-West Culture Learning Institute announces the second phase of the Cultural Centers Program to be held at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, September 1, 1974 – February 28, 1975. Organized as part of the project Symbolic Processes in Cultural Identity within the Institute subdivision *cultural identity*, the program is intended to provide participants from Asia, the Pacific, and the United States with opportunities to exchange knowledge and ideas and to learn new skills necessary for the organization of small museums and archives which will house collections of historical documents and records, recordings of oral literature, archives of indigenous music and song texts and collections of artifacts.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

The program will include seminars, workshops, lectures and individual tutorials. It will consider, in particular, issues relating to identity and social change and the relationship between these issues and the following activities: (1) archives systems, classification, cataloging, oral traditions, conservation and restoration; (2) the documenting of songs and dances, the rationale of ethnomusicological studies and examination of the sociological and artistic bases of a broad range of the world's music/dance cultures; (3) the role of museums in cultural conservation, museum organization, operation and techniques, with emphasis on safekeeping, safe handling and preservation of museum materials.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Applications will be considered from candidates who are: (1) either active professionals already working in museums, archives or libraries, or who are familiar with and, preferably able to perform, their own traditional music, song and dances; (2) not presently engaged in the above but who wish to develop expertise in museum management, archive management or ethnomusicology and who will be considered for appointments to positions related to these areas by their institutions or governments; (3) selected by their institutions or appropriate governmental agencies; (4) from the United States or from countries in Asia and the Pacific and are citizens of the countries they represent; (5) fluent in English, which will be the medium of communication.

GRANT PROVISIONS:

East-West Center

In addition to educational costs, CLI will provide the participants in this project with free housing accommodations at the East-West Center dormitory (on a double occupancy basis) and \$240 per month stipend to cover meals and incidentals for the duration of the project. Health Insurance costs will also be met.

Non-East-West Center

Participants in the project or their governments and institutions will be responsible for the provision of a round-trip economy airfare for their candidates from their home country to Honolulu and return; for maintaining their candidates on salary while they are away during the project period; and for the provision of 10 per cent of the total project cost for each participant, a total of \$339.00.

HOW TO APPLY:

Participants, through their institutions or governmental agencies, should complete the application form enclosed, and airmail to:

The Director
East-West Culture Learning Institute
1777 East-West Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Application forms must be submitted by June 30, 1974. Awards will be announced by July 31, 1974.

THE EAST-WEST CENTER is a national education institution established in Hawaii by the United States Congress in 1960. Formally known as "The Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West," the federally-funded Center is administered in cooperation with the University of Hawaii. Its mandated goal is "to promote better relations between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific through cooperative study, training, and research."

Each year about 1,500 men and women from the United States and some 40 countries and territories of Asia and the Pacific area work and study together with a multi-national East-West Center staff in programs dealing with problems of mutual East-West concern. They include students, mainly at the post-graduate level; Senior Fellows and Fellows with expertise in research and/or practical experience in government and business administration; professional study and training participants in non-degree programs at the teaching and management levels; and authorities in various fields meeting in international conferences and seminars.

A fundamental aim of all East-West Center programs is to foster understanding and mutual respect among people from differing cultures working together in seeking solutions to common problems. The Center draws on the resources of U.S. mainland universities, and Asian/Pacific educational governmental institutions as well as organizations in the multicultural State of Hawaii.

Participants are supported by federal scholarships and grants, supplements in some fields by contributions from Asian/Pacific governments and private foundations.

Center programs are conducted by the East-West Communication Institute, the East-West Culture Learning Institute, the East-West Food Institute, the East-West Population Institute, and the East-West Technology and Development Institute. Open Grants are awarded to provide scope for educational and research innovation, including humanities and the arts.

The writing of biography by Pacific historians

By Gavan Daws

Read the *World catalogue of theses on the Pacific Islands*,¹ more than a thousand titles now. Go through the annual bibliography in the authoritative *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*. Or read, cover to cover, the equally authoritative *Journal of Pacific History*. This fact emerges: historians of the Pacific have not interested themselves much in the writing of biography.

Then read what actually has been published in the way of Pacific biography, and another fact emerges: the body of work that exists, limited in extent as it is, shows considerable variety of approach and a wide range of accomplishment, but not one of the biographers could be regarded as psychoanalytically well informed.

Equestrian statues

What biographical writing there is, is very often about white men we might label Victorian. Now, the Victorian assertion generally was that reason was in control of emotion. Rational thought was the masterful rider, whose project was the control of the dark passions, the powerful horse that he rode. What historians in the Pacific field have produced—twentieth-century biographies of nineteenth-century figures—appears, then, pretty much as a set of equestrian statues. In other words, we have usually been content to do public biographies of public figures, civic art, substantial, worthy, very presentable, at the same time very outward. These are works about men who thought they were in control of themselves, works *written also* as exercises in control, restraint, decorum. To put it another way, in the Victorian era, when there was literally a great expansion in the area of conscious human control, there was

Dr. Gavan Daws, professor of history at the University of Hawaii, is a senior fellow working in the Culture Learning Institute's thought and express in culture learning and cultural identity subdivisions.

also somehow a related contraction in what could be openly acknowledged about human behavior. Stern men publicly in charge of things hid their private faces behind whiskers. Biographers in the Pacific field have been content to record the fact that their subjects grew whiskers.

It turns out on closer inspection that this is how we have been tacitly guided and encouraged to do our work. We do not have much in the way of formal pronouncements about what Pacific history should be like. What we do have is remarkably generous in conception, but nowhere is there a suggestion that psychoanalytically informed biography, or psycho-history generally, is part of our mandate.

Indigenous forces

The inaugural address of James Davidson,² first professor of Pacific history at the Australian National University, world center of the field, tells us that the Pacific historian will find himself in multi-cultural situations, that he must take account of indigenous forces at work, that he must learn the techniques of fieldwork as well as those of research among manuscript and published source materials. He will be—in Davidson's later phrase—very often the participant as historian, needing personal experience as well as learning to carry him through. H.E. Maude, one of the most eminent practitioners of Pacific history, rich in experience and learning, tells us³ that we can draw on the findings of ecologists, ethnobotanists, navigational experts, linguists, physical and cultural anthropologists, archeologists, and pre-historians. He says, along with Davidson, that we must learn to be ethno-historians, or, better, culture-historians. One other Pacific historian with a professorial chair, G.M. Denig, tells us⁴ what we can and cannot expect Pacific ethnohistorical materials to show us. Here and there we come across a suggestion that an individual may be disproportionately influential in the characteristically small-scale societies of the Pacific islands. Nowhere is there a suggestion

that public powers exercised by an individual might have a private component of passion and pain. Thus there is nothing more than a tacit invitation to do biography, and certainly no invitation to do psycho-history of any kind.

It is surely not the case that Pacific historians are short of potential biographical subjects. As a sourcebook, Patrick O'Reilly's *Tahitiens*⁵ could keep a graduate school going for decades by itself. And it seems to me that, beyond offering mere availability of subjects in great numbers, the Pacific islands make a particularly good point of origin for psycho-analytically-oriented biographical writing.

It is well understood among ecologists that in island settings, an introduced plant or animal, restrained enough in its continental ecological niche at home, often tends to expand in its new habitat, assuming a kind of disproportionate eccentric command of the situation, just because it is not under its customary restraints. Something of the same sort is true, or may well be true, of the transplanted continental Westerner who finds his way, or even *thinks* his way, to the islands.

Historial transactions

On this general theme, some relevant things have been said by the Dutch historian Henri Baudet, talking about Europe and non-Europe and the historical transactions between them. He is talking at the same time, in code, so to speak, about horse and rider, about relations between the conscious and the unconscious in Western behavior and thought. "A marked dualism," he says, "does appear to be the first fact to strike an observer of the European's attitude to the world outside. Two relations, separate but indivisible, are always present in the European consciousness. One is in the realm of political life in its broadest sense, in the atmosphere of concrete relations with concrete non-European countries, people, and worlds. That is the relationship which freely employs political, military, socio-economic, and sometimes missionary terminology . . . The other relationship has reigned in

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Pacific bio . . .

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the minds of men. Its domain is that of the imagination, of all sorts of images of non-Western peoples and worlds which have flourished in our culture-images not derived from observation, experience and perceptible reality but from a psychological urge. That urge creates its own realities which are totally different from the political realities of the first category. But they are in no way subordinate in either strength or clarity since they have always possessed the absolute reality value so characteristic of the rule of myth."⁶

Missionary exploitation

In this second sense, the Pacific islands, and especially Polynesia, have historically been the ultimate non-Europe. Consideration of the first of Baudet's two non-Europes, the one involved in political, military, socio-economic, and to a certain extent missionary exploitation, has in general dominated the pens of those who have recorded Western expansion. But consideration of the second non-Europe is essential if we are to understand Western civilization as it imposed itself on the Pacific islands in the persons of individual Westerners.

Yet the writing of Pacific history, and especially biography, has proceeded as a late, controlled version of imperialism: Pacific historians have, in a sense, colonized their subject matter, defusing it by subjecting it to the same concrete-reality-principle controls that expansive Europe imposed on non-Europe in the first of Baudet's formulations, mastering historical materials about the Pacific as imperialists mastered non-European nature. The second of Baudet's non-European worlds still awaits intelligent, psychoanalytically informed, exploration. □

¹Compiled by Diane Dickson and Carol Dossor, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1970.

²Revised and published as "Problems of Pacific history," *Journal of Pacific History*, 1, 1966, pp. 5-22.

³H.E. Maude, "Pacific history—past, present and future," *Journal of Pacific History*, VI, 1971, pp. 3-24.

⁴Gregory Dening, "Ethnohistory in Polynesia: the value of ethnohistorical evidence," *Journal of Pacific History*, I, 1966, pp. 23-42.

⁵O'Reilly and Raoul Teissier, *Tahitiens: répertoire bio-bibliographique de la Polynésie française*. Société des Océanistes, Paris, 1962.

⁶Henri Baudet, *Paradise on earth: some thoughts on European images of non-European man*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1965.

Culture learning . . .

(Continued from page 5)

culture, drawn from its literature, are at some level of generality both possible and legitimate.

3. It is ordinarily the case that novelists say what they have to say about the culture, not explicitly but by implication and indirection, by symbol and metaphor, by dramatic illustration. These very techniques will sometimes be helpful to the culture learner in getting at meaningful generalizations about the culture. If a certain major symbol, for example, evokes a certain kind of a response on the part of one of the personages in the novel, it can fairly safely be assumed either that it would evoke a similar response from other people in the same culture or that the people of that culture would understand why the response in the novel is idiosyncratic and not characteristic of the general culture.

4. The kinds of generalizations about a culture that have their origins in the analysis and study of the novels of a culture are usually not advanced as statements of demonstrated or demonstrable fact. They are best thought of as possible insights, illuminations, or explanations, some of which may

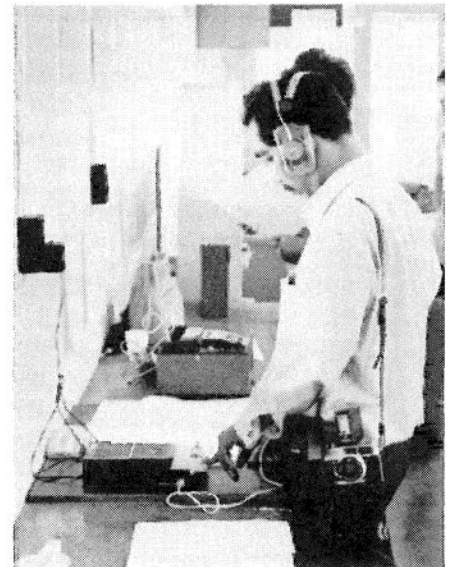
not be open to any kind of scientific verification. They result more from intuition, empathetic attitudes, con-natural knowledge, and poetic feeling than from exact and prolonged field study and observation. They tend, according to the French expression, to be in the realm of the *esprit de finesse* rather than that of the *esprit de geometrie*.

In his letter of May 16, 1967 to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers Alexander Solzhenitsyn stated: "Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that does not transmit the pains and fears of that society, that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers—such literature does not deserve the name literature; it is only a facade." Using its genuine literature as our source, we hope in this activity to come to a better understanding of that breath, namely, the vital spirit or energizing force, that animates a society or culture. We seek to discover what its writers regard as its pains and fears; we would like to know, among other things, what they perceive to be the moral and social dangers threatening the culture and what they propose in order to avoid these dangers. Our thought is that this kind of study may help enable us to "see other people as they see themselves" which is one of the primary objectives of all culture learning. □

¹Lionel Trilling. *Beyond culture*. New York: Viking Press 1968. P. 106.

²*Ibid.* P. 103.

Participant in Materials Development Project tests audio equipment for language teaching at Hawaii Community College, Hilo. A field trip in April to observe English language programs in Neighbor Islands schools was part of the Bilingual Education and Foreign/Second Language Materials Development projects.





University of Hawaii students perform classical Sanskrit drama entitled "The Vision of Vasavadatta" under the direction of Culture Learning Institute senior fellow Shanta Gandhi, March 15-24, 1974. In conjunction with the Kennedy Theatre production, the "International Conference on Sanskrit Drama in Performance" was held at the East-West Center. Photo by Francis Haar.

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