

Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar Abroad
Brazil: Sustainability and the Environment, 2007

A [Pororoça](#) of Desire: Genesis, Colonization, Projection, Connection and Sustainability in the Brazilian Amazon

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Overview:

Frogs singing, moths disguised as owls—this project is not a static lesson plan that could be created without a life-changing trip to Brazil. It is a humble response and thank you to all the Fulbright-Hays staff in America and Brazil for the present of a trip to Brazil in the summer of 2007. Think of it more like a love letter written from/to the Amazon. It enacts the pedagogy I developed in [Teaching Multiwriting: Researching and Composing with Multiple Genres, Media, Disciplines and Cultures](#), which lets teachers ask their students to connect personal and academic passions. Some of the Writing/Thinking assignments are from that book, and others are created expressly for this exploration. Most importantly, it's about helping each other discover questions we care enough about to live, rather than mining answers to questions someone else has asked.

This is hypertext, with many supplemental hot links that branch out like the many tributaries of the Amazon: the content becomes the form. Follow the river as it goes up/down, in/out, back/forth, over/under—all toward confluence of a syncretic, associative consciousness of either/and, that will help us move away from being children of the apocalypse. I have chosen to embed other genres in a long narrative poem because it can often more easily hold multiple meanings, and it moves right along, like the current of the Amazon.

I have chosen the irony of making the behemoth Amazon a microcosm of our trip, where we focused upon sustainability and environment all over the country, partly to study the indigenous peoples we did not often meet, but also because this region connects Brazil with much of the rest of South America and the world. I begin before Conquest, when we all had more in common in the Petri dish of earth before we discovered our beautiful but divisive differences.

The world has always leaked, ensuring the complexity of the Conquest of Brazil, and this means that we move back and forth in time/place. It may seem like some chronological order is implied, but it is not the only or centralizing metaphor of this river that rushes to the sea to become clouds that rain back upon the jungle. Because we so often can only see what we bring with us as projection, I try to assign us the tasks of re-inventing our way in and out of the tense present by both giving into the confabulation of imagination and using projective verse to temper or displace projection.

Finally, I try to model ways of writing and thinking our way toward collaboration and confluence, offering the personal, but keeping the intimate as my own treasure. After using the meeting of the waters as miscegenation and mixing of colonization and re/un-settlement slowly undone, I offer the pororoça (that wave that occurs when the Atlantic slams into the Amazon) as the Brazilian surfers riding that wave as signifying upon the European intrusion into Brazil.

I hope, as you skim the surface of, or dive into, this project, that you'll recover what Edith Cobb calls the "[ecology of the imagination](#)"—all that is child-like without being childish. My deepening love of Brazilian music is the glue and nectar of this project, and Tom Jobim's "Waters of March" lead us along on the Amazon, reminding us of that stream of consciousness we all share. I hope that, together, we can learn, in [Phil Cousineau](#)'s words, to "make secular travel sacred" and can experience what [Alain De Botton](#) calls the "art of travel."

Hyperlinks may go down, and I may build a larger version of this on a new website = things change!
Welcome, compadres, to my world, such as it is, this moment. Grab a paddle or raise a sail—let's go!:

Part 1: Gênese/Começo

Writing/Thinking Assignments:

- The Autobiography of a Question: Part A and B
- An Oceanic Feeling of Belonging
- Retrieving a Retreating World
- Imagining a Past, or None

“It is a tremendous act of violence to begin anything. I am not able to begin. I simply skip what should be the beginning.”

Rainer Maria Rilke

This is not
a beginning; rather
it's where you find
yourself, *in media res*—coyote
was going there
is the way stories
happen to be...

Your suitcase includes
your mind, packed with ideas
that may be invisible
until examined.

Life and travel are
not about answers
as much as questions
we care about enough
to live and revise.

The German poet [Rainer Maria Rilke](#)—who believed that poetry was a serious genre, and that its goal was to make us change our lives—said, “Live your questions now, and perhaps even without knowing it, you will live along some distant day into your answers.” Poet William Stafford revised this goal, saying we must revise our lives. His well-known poem, “[Traveling Through the Dark](#)” is the way all venturing out meets with surprising moments where logos, pathos and ethos—thought, feeling and right action—meet on a desolate road at night. This [zero prime](#) role for poetry is why I now use it as a nest for embedding other genres. However much we will immerse ourselves in Brazil—sometimes even to transcend from t/here—another historical consciousness emerges or is implied: one whose revolutions are the whirling circle seeking balance and change at the same time, like handing out medical supplies while riding a unicycle down a bumpy road.

Knowing even the colonization of Brazil by Europe, and the suffering of African slaves, can Rilke's [words below](#) help us set out partly to [un-chop the trees](#) and un-make the chains?:

“Out of infinite longings rise
finite deeds like weak fountains,
falling back just in time and trembling.
And yet, what otherwise [remains silent](#),
our happy energies—show themselves
in these dancing tears.”

So first you must find
a question, discover
its autobiography

and take it along
to transform in Brazil.

You will be looking
through your question
for a topic you want
to know more about
but for which you need
not be an expert.

To see how theory
can lead you along
or to find form
inside content
go [here](#) first.

Writing/Thinking Assignment: The Autobiography of a Question—Part A
Excerpt from *Teaching Multiwriting* (p. 49):

To pursue research subjects as questions, it helps to see your life as a mystery that is open to interesting new explorations or well-known insistences. Here you are asked to see yourself as a mystery and trace a question of importance to you.

1. Find “official” documentation. Our culture generates many kinds of texts and documents about each of us. Some of these are written by us. For example, you may have already used a resume to help in a job search or filled out an application to get a credit card, to work abroad, or to join a club or organization. Others write some texts about us, like the credit card you finally received in the mail, which shows that someone wants you to spend money! The bill from your college or university implies another idea of where that money should go and who you are. The state authors your driver’s license with information you provide. Your high school yearbook may include a “blurb” about you written by the staff: “a quiet, steady friend.” Collect at least two examples of such texts about you.
2. Use these texts as invitations to narrative by telling a story about yourself that the official documentation may miss or mask. For instance, no one looking at your fishing license would be able to guess that you almost accidentally caught a dolphin or nearly drowned in heavy river currents. Perhaps the entry under your name in the phone book leads you to reflect on the house where you used to live and to tell a story showing why it haunts you. Write at least one story in response to each of the official documents.
3. Now look at the stories together. Is there anything that connects them—a personality trait, behavioral pattern, way of viewing the world, personal philosophy, or alter ego? What is the “hidden” you like? Does the public know or understand you? How have you been misunderstood? Have you even misunderstood yourself? Talk to classmates in a small group about these questions, as well as the connections you see and those they do.
4. If you are generating some interesting thoughts, go on to step five. If you aren’t satisfied, you may want to try steps one or two again. We all have various official documents, and many stories, so you should be able to try multiple routes. Remember, too, that this assignment is an experiment, so you may find that, in the end, no pattern emerges among your stories; or you may find one that is quite unexpected or seems wrong.
5. Now try the next step in seeing yourself as a mystery: instead of looking for conclusions in what you have written and discussed, look for interesting questions. What do you want to know more about regarding yourself and your life? What parts of you don’t you understand? What aspects of your life or ways of living would seem alien to many other people? What things about you seem the most interesting to the people in your group, or to your friends? List at least three questions you have about yourself.

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Autobiography of a Question—Part B

6. Next, reconsider the relationship between you and the world. Certainly there is more to it than a series of official documents suggest. What in the world do you feel passionate about? What about the world troubles you? What questions do you have that you would like answered? What work do you see yourself doing in the world? What have you already begun?
7. Try for one more imaginative leap: as you think about the person you are, think of the person you want to be. What experiences do you crave? What hasn't happened so far that you would enjoy? What, besides wealth, power, or even family, would signal success to you? What kind of relationship do you want with the world and the others in it? What sort of world do you want to live in? Try to think beyond the cliché of "world peace," imagining actual steps people could take toward a more equitable world. What is needed, for instance, to make this happen?
8. After a few days, look back on the results of this exercise, make adjustments, and decide on a way to present a part of your life to the class. You don't have to be too revealing. What would you like others to know? Present a part of your findings in an interesting way, such as a story you tell about an unusual experience, a postcard you send to the class from your better world, responses from a survey filled by family and friends about you, a humorous list of the minor disasters you have to wade through each day, or a motto or slogan for living that you are thinking of adopting. Be prepared to talk about the reasons for presenting what you have chosen.
9. Alternatively, you may want to work as a class on a collaborative but personal project. For instance, a class might create a personal philosophy message board to mount in a public space where others readily add to its collection of short statements on how to live or questions designed to help people become more philosophical.
10. Now you should be better prepared to make a more formal product. In an essay of at least three pages, trace a single question as it has made its way through your life and into the world. You may think, for instance, of how your interest in the body started long ago as you played that goofy game Operation or showed your friends that you were double jointed for humorous effect. Perhaps now this interest shows up in your declared biology major or in your habitual viewing of *CSI: Miami*. Conversely, a new question may have recently arisen in you, such as why people are homeless near your prosperous campus, or whether the world's economy can run on something other than fossil fuel. Write the history of the question in your life and explain why it interests you. Be sure to say what you plan to do next to continue your exploration of this question.

I want you to tell me
what Brazil is, so we must go

back, before words, or the sound
of birds, to gas, swirling—[a beginning](#).

Earth was
forming, a molten dream, the rule
of gravity. This is science, holding
hands with history, half afraid
of everything
that has been
[lost, found and forgotten](#).

Here's how you will
get in the mood
to stand still, in the torpor
that is the Amazon:

Let's say you will live to be 85. At 365 days a year x 24 hours a day x 60 minutes an hour x 60 seconds a minute, you would only reach approximately 2 1/2 billion seconds. And I want you to imagine celebrating the earth's birthday, counting each second of its four+ billion years—a second lifetime, waiting, that counts.

That's the patience it took
to make Brazil. But first there was
[Gondwanaland](#)—what would be
Africa and South America
spooned against each other
like lovers. No dissension, declension—
tectonic plates scraping, islands
of life, floating.

Remember this communion, listening
for the first stirrings
of samba-de-matuto,
when *le difference* later occurs,
and the sails of history are set
against all we have in common:

the elements, before periodic charting
that clay of our own beginning
on the bank of a stream, at the edge
of a meadow, the iron ore of distant stars
flowing in our blood—red on every continent...

lightning in our veins, tributaries
and emissaries of a rainy season, the

[Águas de Março](#)

Everywhere we look, the caesura of history—the way
it is continual, gaps between [the teeth](#)
[of the mother of the forest, naked](#)
[at last](#), when life is continuous. So [now](#)
is a leap, always was a leap of faith—home
first of [culpability](#) and compression.

In *The Art of Travel*, [Alain De Botton](#) explains this difference between the continuous clutter of actual life and travel and the brief contentment that can occur when our anticipations and senses come together in one of the continual nodes of coalescence when he writes:

“It seems that unlike the continuous, enduring contentment that we anticipate, our actual happiness with, and in, a place must be a brief and, at least to the conscious mind, apparently haphazard phenomenon: an interval in which we achieve receptivity to the world around us, in which positive thoughts of past and future coagulate and anxieties are allayed. The condition rarely endures for longer than ten minutes. New patterns of anxiety inevitably form on the horizon of consciousness, like the weather fronts that mass themselves every few days off the western coasts of Ireland. The past victory ceases to seem so impressive,

the future acquires complications and the beautiful view becomes as invisible as anything which is always around.” (21)

Writing/Thinking Assignment: An Oceanic Feeling of Belonging

Sigmund Freud called these brief, inexplicable moments of feeling at one with the world, sometimes even euphoric, the “oceanic feeling.” Make a list of any such moments you’ve had in the past, whether the travel was a walk through the park or something far from home. Then choose one and write about it for awhile. Put it away for a few days, for incubation, then take this written egg out and hatch it: where can you imagine having such a moment in Brazil? Write a predictive piece where your anticipations are met, however briefly. How will this, in turn, help you find those aspects of Brazil you’re interested in?

Follow me, step into my footprints
where [others have walked](#), ahead
of me, toward headwaters.

*É pau, é pedra,
é o fim do caminho
É um resto de toco,
é um pouco sozinho*

*A stick, a stone,
It's the end of the road,
It's the rest of a stump,
It's a little alone*

And in these timely moments
of timelessness, cosmogeny arose
in stories of how “we” came
to be in separate groups.

*É um caco de vidro,
é a vida, é o sol
É a noite, é a morte,
é um laço, é o anzol*

*It's a sliver of glass,
It is life, it's the sun,
It is night, it is death,
It's a trap, it's a gun*

On the other side
of the bowl of the Caribbean,
Carlos Fuentes says from Mexico:

"Travel is the original movement of literature. Words are the origin of myth; myth is the first name of home, forebears, and tombs. The word of movement tears us from the *hearth* [my italics]. Its name is epic, and it throws us into the arms of the world, of the different, of the voyage. During this trip from mythic hearth to epic strangeness, we discover our tragic fissure. We then return to the land of the origin, there to tell our tale and renew our dialogue with the myth of the origin, asking it to have pity on us."

[Carlos Fuentes](#), in *A New Time for Mexico*, chap. 3: "Indian Mexico"

Imagined through a creativity
that loses track of time, myths of origin
are free of beginnings, immune to endings,
ready to re-member a dynamic stasis,
like the water that evaporates
en route to the condensation
of its destiny, merely represented,
curling into words, the circle's implication:

[hearth](#)
heart
earth
hear
ear
earth

heart
hearth

*É peroba do campo,
é o nó da Madeira
Caingá, candeia,
é o Matita Pereira*

*The oak when it blooms,
A fox in the brush,
A knot in the wood,
The song of a thrush*

Robert Carneiro, at the [National Center for Science Education](http://www.nationalcenterforscienceeducation.org), says:

“The Warao of the Orinoco delta, on the other hand, believe men first lived in a skyworld where the only animals were birds. Then one day a hunter shot a bird with such force that his arrow pierced the ground of the skyworld and continued to the earth below. Peering through the hole and seeing a rich land beneath them, teeming with all manner of game, the hunter attached a long cotton rope to a tree and lowered himself to earth. There he was ultimately joined by his fellows, who finally decided to abandon the skyworld and settle permanently on earth. The Karaja of central Brazil reverse the process. Their ancestors, they say, once dwelt in an underworld until one day one of them climbed up a hole in the ground and out onto the surface of the earth, where his fellow tribesmen later followed and where they eventually settled.”

So whether we descend with birds
or dig our way up like the worms
they eat, we meet here
upon the fragile surface
of the earth, which may have once been
only as strong as a lilly pad:



The Amazon near Manaus

photo by Mark Shadle, 2007

The cosmogeny of these myths
can be engaged to the cosmology
of (pre-)science—the lust
of induction. We want to know

where we have been, as well as
where we are going. We arrange
the world around us as if we were
putting on a cape.

The poet, [W.S. Merwin](#), says:

“Tell me what you see [passing](#),
and I’ll tell you who you are.”

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Retrieving a Retreating World

Before you head to Amazon to save the rain forest, what’s something passing in your world at home that you mourn? Is it all the tall elm trees that used to line the streets of your town that are now gone, victims of Dutch Elm Disease? Is it the whooping cranes, whose migration no longer follows a fly-way over your ranch because your family drained the wetlands they relied upon? Is it a kind of food you can no longer find? Make a list of things gone, then free-write about one of them, recalling in detail what you liked and, therefore, miss.

So we look backward
to those who were
once looking ahead,
toward us, that we might exist.

What does it mean
that we know they lived
with a language
now extinct?

Like Xipináwa, spoken
in the Southern Amazonas.
Or the [Piranha](#) tribe, whose language
is like birdsong, with no embedding,
and therefore no past or future.

Through it all we look up
at the face of every daily cliff and climb:

*É madeira de vento,
tombo da ribanceira
É o mistério profundo,
é o queira ou não queira*

*The wood of the wind,
A cliff, a fall,
A scratch, a lump,
It is nothing at all*

[Ethnologue, the Languages of Brazil](#), lists languages
still squirming, and those that sleep
in the forest, compost for ferns.

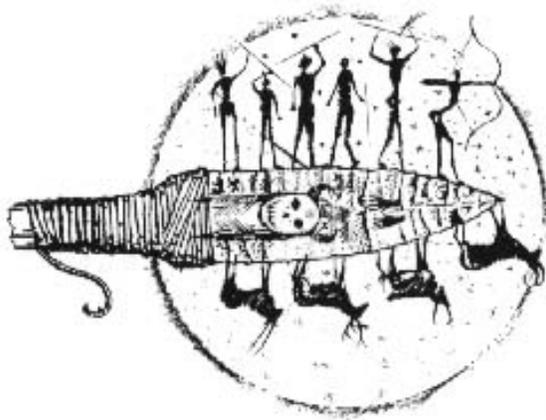
Do the frogs miss
their names, on the tip

of those forgotten tongues?

Is their [call](#)
a response to
lost wor(l)ds?

Take a moment
to inhabit this confabulation
of the past, where imagination
stands in for memory.

Here's a poem, published in *Oregon East*, where I tried to do this to inspire you; the sketch is by artist Tom Dimond:



“Movement overcomes cold.
Stillness overcomes heat.
Stillness and tranquility set things
in order in the universe.”

Tao Te Ching (Chapter 45)

Still...Life

by mark shadle

the deer trembles
and the alder arrow
quivers sympathetically
behind the hunter's back
to kill his hunger

this affinity of wood and bone
is what is
forgotten

bowing to the arch
that sent it, adorned
with the feathered wings
of small birds
at the butt, the slender wound
is drawn and begins to fly
toward the wood, dowsing forests
in its path, a bone tip yearning
for a heart, a whirling
photo/synthesis, a vortex
of stored energy

hunting has become
nothing more than a game
of fetch that wolves
refuse to play

freed from the vertigo
of standing up
the arrow whistles deeper into the fog
of a cold dawn, elongates
a return to the horizontal
in its flight toward stasis
that is death
only for the immediacy of the deer
that looks up just in time
to receive the rush of silence

to act

is not enough

the living tree cannot betray
the deer
until the friction of seared flesh
closes on the shaft of sunlight
streaming along the bank
into the deer standing
still, inside the warm blood of memories

to believe in an act

is too much

racked in antlers
an anthem of limbs
branching back down to the moment
when the buck stood
inside the shade of the tree's aspirations

to feel the act
is the broken bone

already the man had chipped
at the shattered leg bone of another stag
getting things straight, following
the deer's meanderings
as they became the arrow
in his head, hands
holding the fate
of a connectedness so much greater
than the deer or tree or man

i walk toward you with
knowing your powers
not to mend hearts
but to accept silence
as if it were tranquility

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Imagining a Past, or None

Let your fantasy reveal your bias. Write a poem like mine above or a short piece in which you imagine what life was like for early or contemporary forest dwellers. Then read about current tribes in the Amazon, as in the *New Yorker* article hyperlinked above under "Piranha," and revise your piece to better reflect the negotiation we call the "real."

Part Two: Colonization as Projection/Projeção

Writing/Thinking Assignments:

- Drawing Your World
- Projective Verse Vs. Metaphorical Projections
- Muddy Water: A Tolerated Margin of Mess

South America is not beneath America, even on the map, but lives beneath the soil of every metaphor. While we're trying to use our imaginations to discover and complete history, we are also admitting that this creativity can become confabulation. The worst of colonization is the projection of ideas and beliefs upon a culture unprepared for them. Early paintings in America showed Native Americans dressed in riding gear and jodhpurs. In Bolivia, Spaniards took native brides or lovers who were not allowed to call them husbands, but rather "uncle." Because of the pain of miscegenation, this "El Tio" became a wedding of local fears and the Christian [Devil](#). A "blended family" based upon slavery began with the projection of the European ideal upon the least-ideal conditions in the New World. How do we begin to unravel the complexity of this intermarriage?

Like that Sixth Book
of the Bible, [The Joshua Project](#)
charts contact between
the myths and languages
of indigenous people
and invaders
becoming/revising religion.

Out of a population of 191, 670, 000 people, Brazil lists 290 people groups, including 62 still "unreached." To see a very specific map of language groups, visit the [Ethnologue site](#). The University of Texas Map Collection shows this collision and collusion a bit:

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

[Enlarge Photo](#) (scroll down to U of Texas Map Collection)

What will we find, when we
connect these dots, outline
what we do have, [the lie](#)
[of maps](#), each showing
the reclining earth
on a different [dais](#), on
different days. Some are even

oddly [imaginary](#).

P.D.A. Harvey, in *The History of Topographical Maps: Symbols, Pictures and Surveys*, discusses the long history of mapping as it traveled from symbols and cave art through to pictures and, finally, satellite surveys. We have forgotten, if we ever knew, how to read early (not “primitive”) maps. At one point he discusses the map—cross-strokes marking the number of villages on each tributary, drawn in the sand—drawn by an old man of the SUYÁ tribe for Karl von den Steinen, on an expedition to the Xingu River in central Brazil in 1884. He explains why the abstractions of this map might be, paradoxically simultaneously, easier for us to read and harder to understand:

“[Curiously](#) enough, because our own topographical maps have moved away from pictures to a system of conventional signs that are often non-pictorial, these primitive maps, on which everything is shown by abstract symbols, may seem to us more familiar, more recognizable as maps, even more sophisticated, than the pictorial maps of the second phase. But this is to judge from superficial appearances that are a mere accident of historical development; in concept the symbol-maps lie far further from the topographical maps of today.” (14)

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Drawing Your World

In his book for adolescents, *Man in Nature*, geographer [Carl Sauer](#) poses a deceptively simple assignment that you may want to try. “Most people don’t live where you do.” Draw a picture based upon this statement and see what it reveals.

Our lives are
[periplums](#), maps made
while moving. We are
following the drift of
continents and conquistadores

toward our questions, roiling
even now in the [vortex](#)
of [rapids](#) of choice just ahead:
BE ALERT!

What happens
when we map
[the illusions](#)
[we see](#), then enact
a world built of chimera?

[Candace Slater](#), in *Entangled Edens: Visions of the Amazon*, says:

“What I offer is not a literary or environmental history so much as an Amazon-centered [poetics](#)—by which I mean a systematic examination of words and images that can help us better understand such seemingly [unpoetic concerns](#) as deforestation and species preservations. How U.S. lawmakers vote on a foreign aid bill that will affect Amazonian countries depends much on whether they think of the region as a [Green Hell](#) or a Green Cathedral. A region billed as ‘the world’s lungs’—and, increasingly, its ‘toxin-removing kidneys’—is bound to trigger different reactions than a place that appears as its heart, its brain, or its solar plexus. Is the Amazon a primeval garden from which we should help exclude all or certain people in order to preserve it? Is it a source of cancer cures on which we must get patents? A jungle to be developed, or plundered for its natural resources, or cleared for agriculture? If we can identify the true source of our own desire for an unspoiled natural paradise, we may find ourselves more able to see the rich variety not just of

life forms, but also of human experience, that exists within the Amazon. And in seeing this variety, we can respond in a less uniform and therefore more effective manner to a host of different people, plants, and animals. We can also better resist the tendency to dehumanize and metaphorically erase whole populations that do not share our particular environmental concerns or who voice them in very different ways.” (8)

*É um peixe, é um gesto,
é uma prata brilhando
É a luz da manhã,
é o tijolo chegando*

*A truckload of bricks
in the soft morning light,
[The shot of a gun](#)
in the dead of the night*

Myth-Symbol Studies—A Mini-Essay & Extension of Slater’s Remarks:

“Don’t it always seem to go / that you don’t know what you got ‘til it’s gone.
They paved paradise / and put up a parkin’ lot.”

Joni Mitchell, “Big Yellow Taxi”

In the Mid-20th Century, American Studies still sought to define a “national character” or identity. This was partly a backward look at the greedy colonization of the New World, where European ideas like Rousseau’s “noble savage” were projected upon the indigenous peoples of North America. Henry Nash-Smith’s *The Virgin Land* and Annette Kolodny’s *The Lay of the Land* looked at references of land as virgin in literature and culture, and Leo Marx further tracked the [rape](#) of the American landscape with technology in *The Machine in the Garden*. Richard Slotkin’s *Regeneration Through Violence* used folk materials rather than highbrow literature to chart the boost the American economy got through continually extended warfare and brutality, and Wendell Berry’s *The Unsettling of America* explained the paradox of the European “settlers” home-coming as the destruction of Native-American cultures. R.W.B. Lewis’ *The American Adam* was an allusion to starting over, perhaps as Ralph Emerson’s American Scholar, and the Cult of the Individual was part of the rags-to-riches open road of anyone brave enough to start over again with the restless tinkering of a Yankee peddler.

Slater’s remarks above show the dangers of this intellectual history of dangerous metaphors of [utopia/dystopia](#). The avalanche that can be charted to Henry Adams’ *The Education of Henry Adams* is literally the end of the Adams family and the switch from the symbol of the static and comforting medieval Madonna or Biblical Adam in Eden to the dynamo of technology—the way Mark Twain’s craftsman of the present would defeat the wizard of the past in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*. Read a parallel rant, “God Rides a Harley in the Land of the Free, by Ian Johnson [here](#).

*É a lenha, é o dia,
é o fim da picada
É a garrafa de cana,
o estilhaço na Estrada*

*A mile, a must,
A thrust, a bump,
It's a [girl](#), it's a rhyme,
It's a cold, it's the mumps*

The mighty dams of America and now the overwhelming [Three Gorges Dam](#) in China point toward controversial [new dams in Brazil](#), where, as in China, multi-ethnic groups with too little power will be displaced by the water they once floated upon, but which now will make the electric-city far away. Only in the film *The Emerald Forest* can the frogs really defeat this push toward energy and bring down the dams, which supply 75% of Brazil’s power. Are either the “[dam busters](#)” or the [Government](#) to be trusted? How are questions concerning economic viability to be weighed with the displacement of indigenous groups and changes in the wildly complicated eco-system of the Amazon basin?

In “[Toward a History of Brazil’s ‘Cordial Racism’: Race Beyond Liberalism](#),” Brian Owensby at the University of Virginia explains the changing matrix of matters of race and class against political ideal when he says:

“As anyone who has tried knows, the central problem in thinking about race in Brazil is how to. The almost quantum-theory-like indeterminacy of the ways Brazilians of different skin colors interact has exercised imaginations for decades, from fin-de-siècle scientific racists, to the eugenists of the 1920s, to interwar

modernists who promoted the idea of racial democracy, to the Brazilian and later North American revisionists of the 1950s and beyond. The complexities of Brazilian race have not always been in the forefront of these debates. For much of the period up to the 1970s, scholars focused on debunking Brazil's vaunted myth of racial democracy—the national ideology claiming Brazil to be free of racial prejudice (Costa 1985). The effort was roundly successful. From this literature, we learned not only how wide a gap there has been between the ideal of racial democracy and the reality of racial and color prejudice in Brazil, but also the role elites have played in manipulating the myth to defuse racial and other social tensions (Hanchard 1994). Recently, some scholars have suggested that it is high time to look beyond the debunking agenda and take up once again the complexities of the Brazilian situation. Anthropologists have led the way, seeking to reveal “the range of contemporary understandings” of racial democracy and to explain something of its persistence as a tangible “dream” in the face of ongoing discrimination and prejudice in everyday Brazilian life (Sheriff 2001:8).”

How might we turn
projection around
the corner of its
enforced fantasies?:

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Projective Verse Vs. Metaphorical Projections

Have you ever talked about the jungle as “wilderness” or the beach as “paradise?” Have you ever read about Brazil as “the sleeping giant” or the Amazon as the “Garden of Eden?” Write about your “imagined,” “real” (not “dream”) trip to the Amazon. Try not to call it an “expedition,” and purposely try not to include the gigantic anaconda.

The poet Charles Olson was famous for his three volumes of poetry, *The Maximus Poems*, where he heroically tried to cut through these historical layers of metaphor and plunder to make sense of his home town of Gloucester, Massachusetts. His method was “[projective verse](#),” where he tried to find appropriate forms inside the content of his verse, and where every perception led directly to the next.

Write about an aspect of the Brazilian rainforest intently enough to look for the forms inside your content, and let each expression discover the next. Then go back and revise our the stereotypes and clichés and dangerous historical metaphors. When you're done your piece should be richer than the empty Corona TV beer commercials, which feature no local inhabitants except the sterilized and constant ocean to highlight the El Dorado of the golden bottle of beer. [Struggle](#), as Olson did, toward this.

Can a quest be
something more
than getting through
the day without
weeping?

In Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil, Nancy Scheper-Hughes re-aligns ethnography along the congruent axes of myth, history, journalism, political science and sociology through invocation of banquet—another metaphor where the Jungian individuation might take place inside community—when she writes:

“Like all modern ethnographies, this one may be read at various, sometimes ‘mutually interfering’ levels (Clifford 1988b: 117): as a book of voyage and discovery, as amoral reflection on a human society forced to the margins, as a political text (or as a Christian passion play) that indicts a political economic order that

reproduces sickness and death at its very base. Finally, it may be read as a quest story, a search for a communal grail and for a roundtable here envisioned as a great Bakhtinian banquet where everyone can find a place at the table and share in the feasting.” (30)

*É o projeto da casa,
é o corpo na cama
É o carro enguiçado,
é a lama, é a lama*

*The plan of the house,
The body in bed,
And the car that got stuck,
It's the mud, it's the mud*



Caiman in Mud

photo courtesy of Lisa Schrenk

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Muddy Water: [A Tolerated Margin of Mess](#)

Like the exus of Afro-Brazilian religion, the Winnebago Trickster violates taboos in order to form a society at the center of culture from the margins. This is what Barbara Babcock describes as “A Tolerated Margin of Mess.” How well do you tolerate complexity? Start with a list of things that constitute a “mess” in your life. As you look at the list, does a pattern emerge? Write an open essay, which may include photos of the mess, explaining how and why you are willing to tolerate this chaos, and how you are able to accomplish useful change in spite of, or because of, this mess.

Part 3: Feeling the Current: Sustainability as Connectivity/Conexidade

Writing/Thinking Assignments:

- Writing an Immersive Consciousness
- Down/Under as Descendentalism

Are “natural resources” enough to ensure life? Isn’t “sustainability” a matter of connectivity? Don’t we feed ourselves only by understanding the animal or plant that gives itself for our use? This information, which anthropologist [Clifford Geertz](#) calls “local knowledge,” meets the lore of outsiders in cultural encounters with the “other.” In “[Arts of the Contact Zone](#),” which can be found in Bartholomae and Petrovsky’s *Ways of Reading*, Mary Louise Pratt reminds us that understanding always moves—like footsteps across the world’s landbridges—in both directions. Incan scribes signified upon their captors, keeping the records of conquest. What does a map of this overlap look like? How do you picture it?

Even a poem, these words
can be a map in the making.

In *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*, Peter Turchi explains this notion of mapping as rhetorical contract between writer and reader:

“Perhaps the ultimate blank is the space between reader and writer—or, more accurately, the space between the story we create and send out into the world and the story each reader perceives. The work leaves our hands; after the reader reads, it leaves hers. She returns our book to the shelf newly aware of what had been blank space, emptiness, a previously unremarkable desert in her [imaginative landscape](#). With our invisible pencil, we have added a line to her chart of the world.” (71)

In his poem, “January First,” translated by Elizabeth Bishop, Mexican poet [Octavio Paz](#) reaffirms such a notion almost literally when he says:

“Tomorrow
we shall have to think up signs,
sketch a landscape, fabricate a plan
on the double page
of day and paper.
Tomorrow, we shall have to invent,
once more,
the reality of this world.”

<i>É o vento ventando,</i>	<i>It's the wind blowing free,</i>
<i>é o fim da ladeira</i>	<i>It's the end of the slope,</i>
<i>É a viga, é o vão,</i>	<i>It's a beam, it's a void,</i>
<i>festa da cumeeira</i>	<i>It's a hunch, it's a hope</i>

Is it enough, travelers
that we let our names
fall away, like threadbare clothes,
let go the tyranny of “I,” the victim
of “me,” always conquered?

How can we see
what it’s like to take
what [Francis Ponge](#)
calls “the voice of things”—these
people, plants and animals

that are (not only) Brazil?

Tom Jobim's lyrics and other
musicians continue
to respond to place, the role
of weather/whether—[listen](#):

*É a chuva chovendo,
é conversa ribeira
Das águas de março,
é o fim da canseira*

*And the river bank talks
of the waters of March,
It's the end of the strain,
The joy in your heart*

Here's a poem where
I've tried to imagine
being a seed-pod, fallen
on hard times and ground, a coin
stuck in the bank
of the Amazon, wiggling free:

sea bean

by mark shadle

"I know a little bit about a lot of things,
but I don't know enough about you."

Diana Kraul (jazz singer)

dropping

a sea bean floats
brown hide seeking
dark center, where seeds wait

it closes
against the powerful waves
of sand that smooth its skin

intention remains
enfolded in the surrender
to all weather

ballooning tubers of kelp
seals, jellyfish and sharks
all move against this pod

yet it is unharmed
by the controlling forces
it both resists and offers itself to

sitting on my computer in oregon
it carries the living memory
of red parrots and great green trees

it feels the stem weaken
in the swaying of the tree
surrendered to gravity, then

drops into the remembered footprints of jaguars
passes between gates of coral
the hands of lovers

like the sea bean i still wait, wondering when
to fully open, rough lips parting
choosing the light only when i can no longer resist

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Writing an Immersive Consciousness

After reading the poem above, write something where you imagine being a part of Brazil and moving along, perhaps part of a group, an idea or even the weather. Will you be a storm, a frog captured for a zoo or even something abstract, like the equator?

Even a dam(n)ed river
like the [Amazon](#) knows
the ebb and flow
of [flood](#), where waters
rise as much as 35 feet
in the rainy season.

Higher ground
means stepping down...

*É o pé, é o chão,
é a marcha estradeira
Passarinho na mão,
pedra de atiradeira*

*The foot, the ground,
The flesh and the bone,
The beat of the road,
A slingshot's stone*

sometimes into a boat:
[rafts](#), houseboats, canoes:



that carry the fruits
of the forest to market:



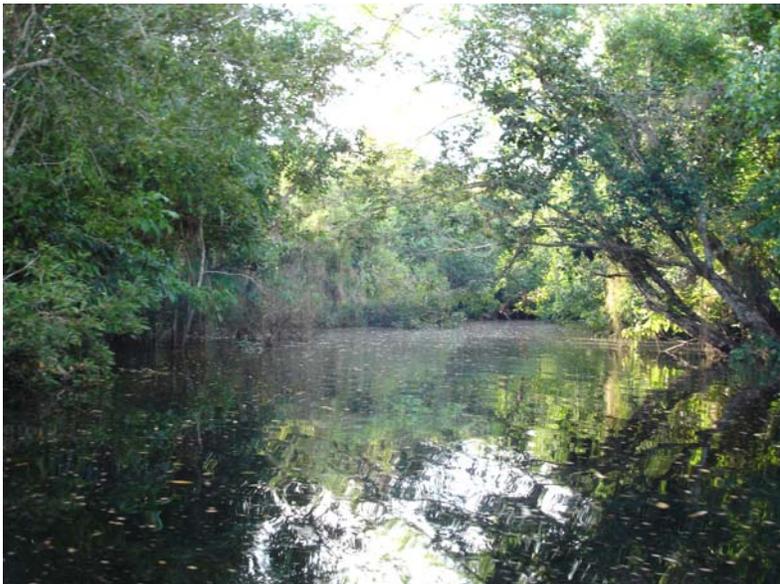
Manaus, Amazon

photos by Mark Shadle, 2007

through the flooded forests:

*É uma ave no céu,
é uma ave no chão
É um regato, é uma fonte,
é um pedaço de pão*

*A fish, a flash,
A silvery glow,
A fight, a bet,
The range of a bow*



Silves Island, Amazon

photo by Mark Shadle

and emerging waterways,
more trails through the
green world, nets full
of stories and fish:



Manaus, Amazon

photo by Mark Shadle

rivers of people and ambitions
converge, meld, collide—paddle wheelers

taxis, even tugs guiding barges:



Near Manaus, Amazon

photo by Mark Shadle

All this water following
the fall-line mercilessly
spreads out, becomes

South America:



The porous borders
of the Amazon
make it a [nexus](#)
between countries
where people move
without much restriction.

“If each of my words were a drop of water, you would see through them and glimpse what I feel: gratitude, acknowledgement.”

Octavio Paz, Nobel Lecture

Moving out, the river
slows and goes down,
millions of droplets
eating stone, caves
the entrance to
the glistening underworld.

*É o fundo do poço,
é o fim do caminho
No rosto o desgosto,
é um pouco sozinho*

*The bed of the well,
The end of the line,
The dismay in the face,
It's a loss, it's a find*

Enter the soft white bed
of limestone, upside-down
cathedral of [bats](#)
who stole back the black

of night, through its mouth:



*É um estrepe, é um prego,
é uma conta, é um conto
É uma ponta, é um ponto,
é um pingo pingando*

*A [spear](#), a spike,
A point, a nail,
A drip, a drop,
The end of the tale*

Architect, photographer and spelunker [Clayton Ferreira Lino](#), former Vice-President of the SOS Atlantic Forest Foundation and President of the Brazilian Society of Speleology, reminds us that Brazil has over 2000 documented caves, many of them enormous and beautiful, housing rock art and a wealth of flora and fauna. He lists 50 key tourist caves.

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Down/Under as Descendentalism

What memories do you have of being underground? Have you visited a cave? Tried digging a hole to China? Dug a trench for pipes or lived in one during a war? Been down a mine? Lived in a finished basement? Crawled down inside a buried temple? Snorkeled into an underwater cavern? Make a list of such descents and write about one in a dark room with only a candle to see your pen and paper or computer screen. How has descent changed you?

Stuck, like frogs in mud
we immerse ourselves
in the [history of this river](#)
and [the river of history](#)—all
whose lives ride, change
and transcend water.

Part 4: Confluence/Confluência—Meeting of the Waters

Writing/Thinking Assignments:

- Identity Through Crisis
- Roaming in Mind: Daydream as Research

A million rivulets trickle
into something that wants to be
too big, the Amazon that
masquerades as entropy,
[riding giants](#), flowing
into [chaos](#).

But chaos can include
[suspensions](#), as when
the Rio Negro, opaque
with tannins, flows
up against the muddy
brown Solimões.

The meeting of the waters
is not exactly a handshake.
It takes fifty miles to lose their
identities and names downstream:



Manaus: Meeting of Waters photo by Mark Shadle

*É um passo, é uma ponte,
é um sapo, é uma rã
É um resto de mato,
na luz da manhã*

*Afloat, adrift,
A flight, a wing,
A hawk, a quail,
The promise of spring*

This gathering of energy
[attracts celebrity](#), mixes
stories and heritages,
exchanges molecules.

Candace Slater, in *Entangled Edens*, explains the illusion of this first great confluence:

“Seen from a small boat, the single river formed by different-colored tributaries looks like a pair of intertwining ribbons. One can easily trail a hand along their sinuous seam. [From the air](#), however, the encounter appears more spectacular and convoluted. The strands explode into a mass of shining tendrils—living bands of color that twist about each other before briefly looping back upon themselves.” (20)

Interlocked fingers
of water hold hands,
tattooed with tiny fish
promise to flood
and transform all that is
stagnant or brackish:

*São as águas de março
fechando o verão
É a promessa de vida
no teu coração*

*And the riverbank talks
of the waters of March,
It's the promise of life
It's the [joy](#) in your heart*

Water, the [mirror of heaven](#),
shows us not only our reflection,
but how to reflect upon
this entwinement of self/world,
[as if it were DNA](#).

Barbara Browning welcomes the reader to her *Infectious Rhythm: Metaphors of [Contagion](#) and the Spread of African Culture* in this very personal description of how her life in the slave market square, [Pelourinho](#), in Salvador de Bahia can become transformation and invocation:

“The book begins—and ends—in Pelourinho, because I know this scene so well. I’ve walked through this square hundreds of times—partied there, danced, sweated, kissed, came to understand the subtle and not so subtle complications of intimacy across national, racial, ethnic, and class lines, tried desperately to get beyond them, thought I would die of love, took ‘risks,’ watched my beloved dying, took tests, answered demographic questionnaires, tried desperately to make sense of this, finally saw a male god dance the sense of it through a woman’s body, and understood my own intensely intimate connection to the African principle which animated that dance. May it animate this.” (16)

Just as Browning takes on these metaphoric transformations through the senses and dance, writers make the transformation with words seem equally difficult. Argentinian writer [Jorge Luis Borges](#) writes:

“He understood that the task of molding the incoherent and dizzying stuff that dreams are made of is the most difficult work a man can undertake, even if he fathom all the enigmas of the higher and lower spheres—much more difficult than weaving a rope of sand or minting coins of the faceless wind.”

*É uma cobra, é um pau,
é João, é José
É um espinho na mão,
é um corte no pé*

*A stick, a stone,
It's the end of the road
It's the rest of a [stump](#),
It's a little alone*

Beneath the water
ancient mahogany trees
sleep, waiting for
[salvage](#) and renewal.

Writing/Thinking Assignment: Identity Through Crisis

Reading the words of Browning and Borges above, we recall that, just when we feel we are having an “identity crisis,” we can discover the dreams that occur or remain as we experience crisis and chaos. Are these our true identity? Make a list of moments when life seemed overwhelmingly stressful, challenging or dangerous, whether it was swimming a freezing Arctic river when you fell out of your boat, declaring bankruptcy or facing your fear of living alone in an apartment for a year. Write about one of these moments when you used the force of chaos to re-invent yourself or a dream held fondly. What part of Brazilian life or history might this remembrance and writing lead you toward? Below is a sample of this assignment from my trip to Brazil.

Mini-Autobiography: Baptized at Breakfast

Overwhelmed, exhausted and full of anticipation, I left my Ipod with 20,000 tunes, including bossa nova, choro, African drumming, fado, blues, jazz and flamenco on the plane as I arrived in Sao Paolo with the Fulbright group. The next day it led me, alone, to a mom-and-pop record shop in Sao Paolo, where the staff tolerated my pitiful Portuguese and brought in a dozen, passionate people from the neighborhood to help me buy dozens of CDs of Brazilian bossa nova, choro, samba, jazz, blues and more. They were musical missionaries, and I was ready for further conversion. We listened and danced together around the store, and the Jack Black clone in a Slayer t-shirt put on some heavy metal and we did air guitar together in the aisles.

Several days later, still underslept and over-thought/wrought, I slouched to breakfast on top of the fancy hotel in Rio De Janeiro. My full plate in one hand, a large bowl of café au lait in the other, I stepped out onto the roof-top patio and had my first look at the beach at Ipanema, where all that sacred bossa nova had been played and where a heavy surf was singing. I slowly made my way past a table of Brazilian and French businessmen, in their designer suits, toward my group. Suddenly, I was under water, and trying to swim toward a surface and air. I emerged in slow motion, a giant, dripping sasquatch looking at the remains of my breakfast on their suits, and at my fellow travelers, stunned by swamp thang. As I sloshed through my apologies toward the elevator, a Texan and his wife behind me slipped on my slime trail.

In the elevator, I realized I had my expensive digital camera in my pants. It was as broken as my ego. But the African pantheon of gods were preparing me for the [Candomblé](#) ceremony I would attend in Salvador, where Ipods, tape recorders and cameras were not allowed. That evening—the exus appearing to please the vibrating old drums and communal singing—is engraved in my psyche forever. My experience also helped me understand the paradox of Manaus, a city once prosperous through the rubber trade, now the center of electronics in Brazil, feeding upon electricity generated by dams on the Amazon.

When his/her-tory becomes
a present—the my-story/stery
of every [encantado](#)
walking beside us
we send out for more roots...

<i>É um passo, é uma ponte,</i>	<i>A snake, a stick,</i>
<i>é um sapo, é uma rã</i>	<i>It is John, it is Joe,</i>
<i>É um belo horizonte,</i>	<i>It's a thorn in your hand</i>
<i>é uma febre terçã</i>	<i>and a cut in your toe</i>

Candace Slater further explains her stance in *Entangled Edens* when she says:

“‘[Entanglements](#)’ often have distinctly negative connotations. (One ‘tangles’ with a drunk, the IRS, a skunk.) And yet the enormous power of the world’s largest river is a result of a series of confluences—of entanglements that find expression in one of the Amazon’s original names, Maranhão (or Marañón), meaning ‘jumble’ or ‘confusion.’ If a seeming infinity of smaller rivers, creeks, and seasonal ‘meanders’ did not pour into a single, mazelike network, there would be no meeting of the waters—and, indeed, no Amazon.” (22)

So diversity (diverse-city)
must not be confused
with chaos. Even the [flag](#)
for Marañón represents
racial fusion and syncretism.

Rather than the predictable
[Fibonacci Sequence](#) of trees
branching predictably
toward the light, there is

the equal biomass beneath
the river and its banks
that can offer a way to
avoid being colonized

by the entropy and the greed
of [nouns](#), whether explorers
or priests. It simply responds
to nutrients, its rhizomes
seeking growth, moving
without the sedation
of the sedentary.

This is the process and theory of “nomadology” proposed by De Leuze and Gattari in [1000 Plateaus: Schizophrenia and Capitalism](#). Here’s an interpretive synopsis of what’s relevant from a fittingly less-than-official [blog](#):

“Nomadism is not just a life-style choice, however. Deleuze and Guattari...see nomadology as an alternative approach to understanding the history of civilization. Traditionally, history has been written from the point of view of the sedentary, from which has grown all the apparatus of the State, including ‘state philosophy,’ ...the official version of how to live and die. Nomadology—in contrast —multiplies narratives; creating an uninterrupted flow of deterritorialization which establishes a line of flight away from territories, grand designs and monolithic institutions. Needless to say, this is not something which is achieved once and for all, there is always another and another deterritorialization ahead.

Thus nomadism must be thought of not as an outcome but as a process, as a line of flight which continually resists the sedentary, the single fixed perspective. Again recall that Foucault...spoke of the body completely imprinted with history— that is, the forces of the social. Nomadology sets itself in opposition to this inscription: nomad subjectivity is one free to roam, untrammelled by the territorializations of power, and free to resist. As such, a commitment to deterritorialization and the nomad is intrinsically political, always on the side of freedom, choice and becoming, always opposed to power, territory and the fixing of identity.”

*São as águas de março
fechando o verão
É a promessa de vida
no teu coração*

*A point, a grain,
A bee, a bite,
A blink, a buzzard,
A sudden stroke of night*

In the Amazon, some nomads have won [legal battles](#) in order to cross the land they traditionally moved across. But is this what we sometimes call “open country” or “open range?” [Secret Writing Thinking Assignment (imagine it’s written in lemon juice as invisible ink): Write an essay of definition on the word “open”]

Some trees fall close to home, mock
the wooden boats carrying timber,
become a culture of nurseries:



Silves Island

Every day old growth
forests bow before the saws
whining for money.

[Factoids:](#)

The Amazon is 6,868 km long (the distance from New York to Berlin). It has 15% of all the fresh water in the world, absorbs 1.5 billion tons of CO₂ a year. The Amazon has:

- 30% of of the world’s biodiversity
- 50,000 plant species
- 5,000 tree species (vs. 650 in North America)
- 10,000 insect species
- 3,000 fish species
- 353 mammal species (57 are endangered)
- 20,000,000 people (how many endangered?)

Only Russia, Canada, China and America (including Alaska) are bigger than Brazil. The Mississippi River discharges only about a tenth of the water in the Amazon. The world’s largest wetlands in the Patanal are bigger than the state of Nebraska.



Writing/Thinking Assignment: Roaming the Mind—Daydream as Research

(excerpt from *Teaching Multiwriting*)

While we cannot always travel in a physical sense, we can roam through memory and imagination. United States Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas writes in his book of memory and the outdoors, *Of Men and Mountains*, of daydreaming while listening to a predictable argument during a court case. He imagined himself fishing the riffles and pools of the Klickitat River in the state of Washington, near where he had grown up, and landing a large trout, after trying a series of flies. This fantasy allowed Douglas to escape the captivity of his current circumstances of being trapped on the bench, and journey more freely. Many people have dreamed of returning to a home long left behind, while others have imagined places that are important to them, even when they have never been there. Think, for instance, of the generations of immigrants who dreamed of America, while their descendants, and the children of slaves, often wonder what it would be like to return to the lands of their ancestry. Sometimes, too, the place of a trauma, tragedy or failure can continue to haunt us, shadowing our daily lives.

Where does your mind go when it roams?

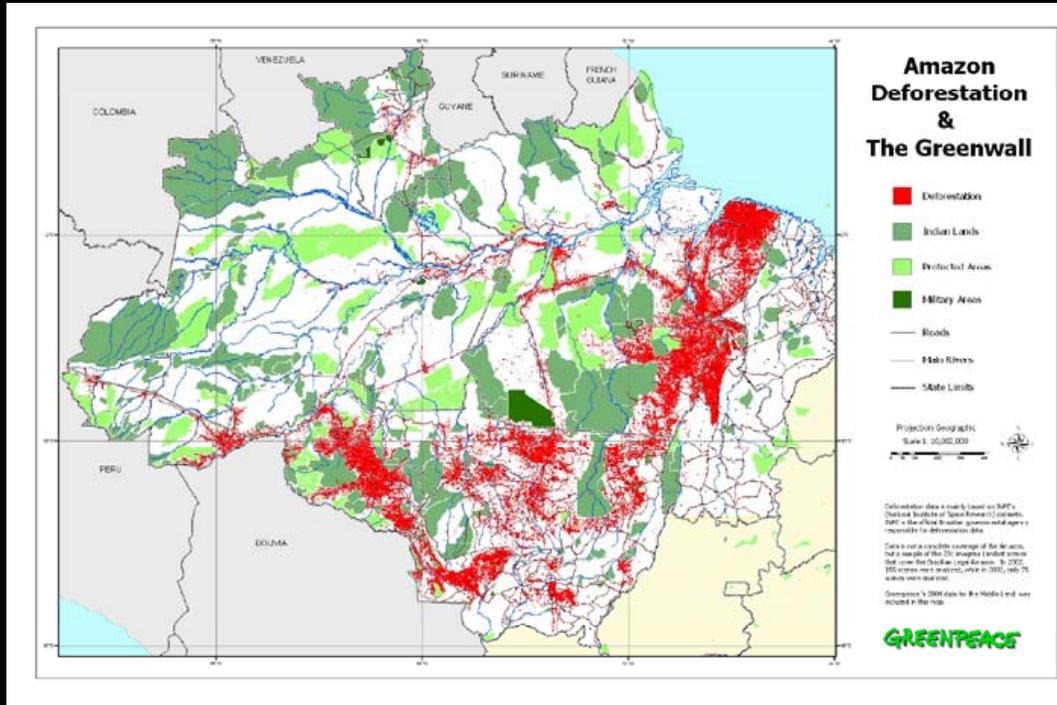
1. Make a list of about three places, then “draw” each, by using descriptive words, or making an image with a pencil, paints or some other method.
2. Next, consider each place as open to further learning and research. For instance, Justice Douglas learned the Klickitat by repeatedly exploring it and contrasting it with the other rivers he knew. He also loved to learn about rivers from others, especially his boyhood friends and older people who knew more. How would you go about learning more? Make a list of questions you would like to explore and write a plan for finding out the answers. Are there questions on your list that cannot be answered?
3. Finally, write a short essay of a page or two for your classmates that describes one of the places you have chosen and explains why your mind roams to it. Did you learn anything new about yourself or the place?
4. You and your classmates may want to research and discuss the term “symbolic landscape” as it relates to the places you are thinking about. Given our discussion above of the way a landscape can become mythic, how can you apply what you have learned about roaming in your mind to a place in Brazil that seems of symbolic importance to

In 1970 only 1% of the Amazon was deforested; in 2004, an area 16 times the size of Switzerland was deforested.



Yet when the poachers
sleep, a [green peace](#), lianas
made of people form
an imperfect circle:

Greenpeace Strategy: Build a Network of Protected Areas and Areas for Sustainable Use



Precious woods are felled with care, selectively removed and certified:



Planned and chiseled by Reuben and his children these woods are tuned to sing, an education in Manaus from hands to brain, thinking with music:



Manaus

photos by Mark Shadle, 2007

If the meeting of waters
is the white, brown, black
of miscegenation and/or
intermarriage, two fish
swimming like pisces

in the opposite directions
of economic viability
and preservation, dams
and open water—flood
and drought, the whole
globe warming to connection...

Tonight I'm remembering
my trip, long ago, to
the Ganges, and the way
it came back to me
in a poem at Christmas
as I made eggnog
in a large bowl, convection
currents becoming
a confluence of memory:

Christmas in Benares

"come into my kitchen..." traditional blues lyric

Late afternoon—bright sun through cold glass
winter's twilight in the warm kitchen

Pouring dark rum into the crystal bowl of eggnog
currents of convection surface

until I am shrinking, far away
into the old boat of memory

Square yellow sail, weathered
on the brown glassy expanse—

evening on the Ganges in Benares
Hopeful corpses wrapped by an orange sun

burning ghats the horizon of the bank
Suddenly a roiling vortex

erupts, bumps the boat
Sacred cow, a bloated white stone

floats in the current
refusing gravity, singing rebirth

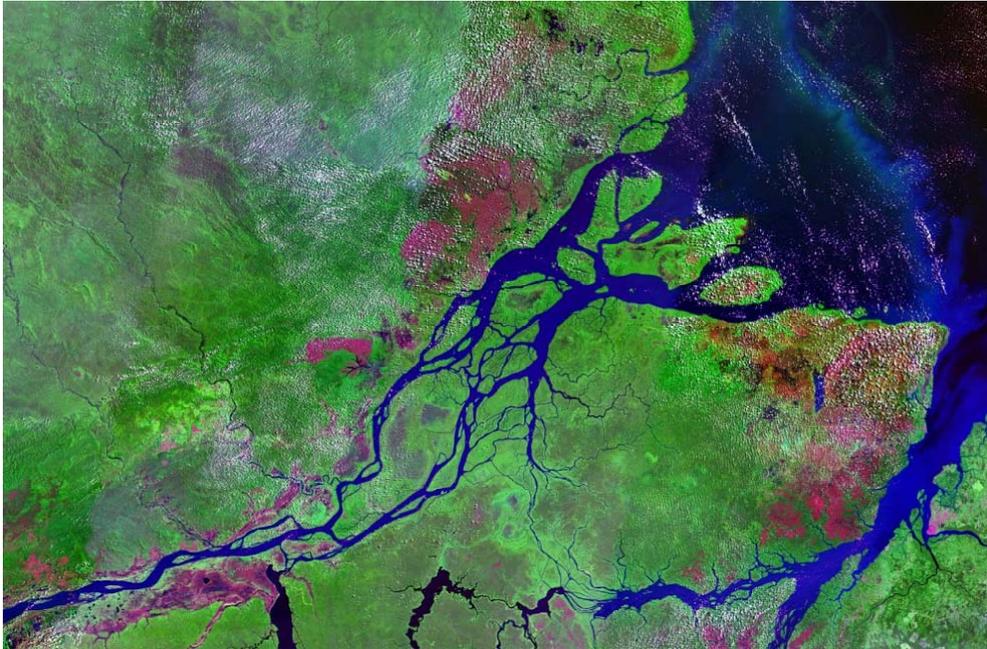
Now, imagining the
tidal bore of the Atlantic
colliding with the Amazon,
perhaps a symbol of
European Conquest
of Brazil, I wave to those surfers,
crazy-brave enough ride
that destruction like capoeiristas
falling on hard wood, diving
into the green pollution of
the bay in Salvador, climbing
up the pier all smiles...

I am becoming that pororooca
of desire, greenman
listening to my elders, like
Brazilian poet Manuel Bandeira,
who said:

"Be like a river that flows
Silent in the middle of the night
Not fearing the dark of the night,
Reflecting any star that is in the sky.
And if the sky fills with clouds,
Clouds are water, like the river, so
Reflect..."

Um abraço, [Amazon](#)

Mark Shadle
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December, 2007



Mouth of Amazon from space