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asks Ms. Weber to lie down and takes off the gauze. Along the upper edge of the areola is a deep cut, stitched together loosely so that the skin puckers between the threads. The edge of the wound appears black and not quite closed. I am less aware now of her breasts than of her wound.

Dr. English holds her right shoulder while he stoops to look at the incision. Then he feels around it with the thumbs and fingertips of both hands. I notice that she lies with her arms pressed along her sides and her eyes on the ceiling and wonder how painful the examination is. He says that the only thing they would be worried about now would be if this thing got infected but that's not likely at this stage. The smell of the room is compounded of disinfectant, sweat, and a sour smell—the wound? Or is it a sour taste at the back of my throat? He holds the skin over the wound with his left fingertip and clips the stitches with scissors in his right hand, bent over her reclining body. I flinch at each clip. He warns her that this may pinch a little bit but she catches her breath with pain. He seems surprised.)

Dr. E: Is it hurting?
Ms. W: Yes.
Dr. E: Still a little tender down there.
Ms. W: O.K.

Well I can see why you feel it’s tender. It does look like you have some infection there.

((Dr. English decides to clean out the wound with swabs dipped in iodine. He sets supplies out on a cloth laid across her lap. He puts on gloves and pinches together the edges of the wound with two fingers of each hand. As her discomfort mounts, I become aware that the edges of my vision are going black and I feel dizzy and queasy. Dr. English balances his left middle finger next to the incision, which gapes a bit, and inserts sterile scissors into it to hold it open. Then he takes a swab in his right hand and probes the wound deeply, bringing out blackish matter and pus. I am aware in my own body of the roughness of the lips of the wound, its tender inner parts, and the depth to which he plunges the swab.))

SUBJECTIVITY

Subjective discourse is embodied discourse; it issues from the body. The access I have to my own body provides the point of insertion for a perceiver in the realm of events. That realm then adumbrates itself around me as its centrality. So centering the self decenters the Other. My body becomes the medium through which intelligence is conducted to the reader.

The anchorage of perception in the body sustains an impression of subjectivity by narrowing awareness to its lodgment in the ethnographer’s cranium, just behind the eyes. A deprivileged observer is constituted a participating character. Subjectivity shifts suspicion from my relationship as writer to what is written to my relationship as ethnographer to what has happened. Subjective discourse is open to the suspicion that distortion has been introduced into the ethnographic account through the way the ethnographer interprets the native: the issue of subjectivity. In subjective writing, perspective on what happens is internal from within the body of a character who happens to be myself. This is the perspective known in literary theory as the *internal view* or *narrator-as-character* (Rimmon-Kenan 1984). Events are passed through the body of the perceiver so that the account of them is not reflective but experiential. An intervening sensibility is given priority. The perceiver is positioned in the realm of events at eye level in a bodily lodgment whose orientation and mobility are determined at the caprice of its animator. This perceiver has a single viewpoint with a narrow focal range so that the realm of events is a matter of partial appearances: obstructions, interpositions, inaccessibilities, and concealments.

Perspective

Space discloses itself to and for the perceiver from within the realm of events. The internal perspective is extended to the perceiver’s limited knowledge, emotional engagement, and commensurability with the Other. Temporal perspective likewise unfolds from within the realm of events, spinning out over the course of the scene, not as a rhythm established by the flow of events but as a fluctuation contained or shaped by the perceiver’s experience of them. Time is felt time, or durée (Schutz 1973, 253), the sense of time of the perceiver. Epistemological perspective is confined not only to the horizons of the scene but also to the body of the
seer. The scene appears stripped of prior and subsequent knowledge. What is known is keyed to and contained by the scene, disclosing itself unevenly over the course of it, so that epistemology is a matter of partial knowledge. The emotional perspective on the scene is engaged rather than detached. The perceiver experiences flushes of feeling in response to the events that transpire. These are indicated by evaluative language about inner states. Emotions are suffered by the self, not attributed to the Other. The ideological perspective on the scene is the character’s, not the writer’s. Judgments about the nature of reality are judgments by a perceiver implicated in that reality so that her view has an ideological idiosyncrasy.

Voice

From the internal perspective, the scene is recounted by a narrator who has participated in it. Voice is therefore intradiegetic and homodiegetic. This is indicated by such marks of enunciation as first-person pronouns (I, me, myself) and laminator verbs (felt, saw, supposed) (Goffman 1974, 505). This is the voice called in literary theory the first-person narrator or personal narrator. Such a narrator is perceptible in the text, indeed insisted upon textually. The perceptibility of the narrator keeps the text from pretending to transparency to another realm by insisting on an intervening sensibility. In subjective discourse, perspective and voice are so connected that the intradiegetic voice issues from the body of a character. The intersection of seer and speaker in the body puts the narrator on a level with the characters. Voice is akin to native voices; perspective is peculiar to the body of the perceiver. On these grounds, the narrator can appear unreliable since, as Rimmon-Kenan points out, “The main sources of unreliability are the narrator’s limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme” (1984, 100). Embodiment ties limited knowledge to subjectivity.

Authenticity

Subjective discourse abandons claims of transcendent authority in favor of immanent authenticity. The ethnographer speaks in her own voice from inside her own body. Bodily presence lends ethnographic discourse authenticity, the authenticity of experience. The ethnographer-as-character warrants her discourse by enunciating presence, George Marcus and Dick Cushman describe the gesture of authentication, which they mistakenly elide with authority.

In fact what gives the ethnographer authority and the text a pervasive sense of concrete reality is the writer’s claim to represent a world as only who has known it first-hand can, which thus forges an intimate link between ethnographic writing and fieldwork. Ethnographic description is by no means the straightforward, unproblematic task it is thought to be in the social sciences, but a complex effect, achieved through writing and dependent upon the strategic choice and construction of available detail (1982, 29, also Clifford 1983, 130)

Authority and authenticity are antithetical. Authority arises either out of the writer’s remoteness from the scene she describes or her detachment in the scene she observes; authenticity arises from her investment in description and observation. The cleavage between the two is the result not of lodging a self in or out of the realm of events but of lodging a self in or out of a body. Being in a body, either external to the realm of events (the writer’s body) or internal to it (the body of a character) lends the discourse authenticity but impairs its authority; disembodiment enhances authority but abandons authenticity. A discourse is characteristically either authoritative in virtue of appearing impersonal and reliable or authentic in virtue of appearing personal and unreliable. Authoritative texts glean authenticity from brief interpolated subjective passages. The effect of such textual juxtapositions can be in question. Morroco Berger observes with respect to its use in the novel, “The intruding author is now widely held to make the entire relationship between author and reader less credible, yet at the beginning of the novel such interruptions of the narrative were thought to enhance credibility by suggesting that the author could personally attest to the truth of his story” (1977, 174). The thrust of subjective discourse is not to tell what I have seen but that I have seen. I, the narrator, am embodied in the realm of events.

Modalities of Perception

I materialize in a realm which impresses itself on my own person. My senses become aspects or modes of apprehension of its properties. Tactile apprehensions (as well as olfactory and gustatory ones) require physical
proximity. Auditory and visual perceptions can draw progressively away from their subject. Modalities of perception can be ranged on a continuum from proximate to remote: taste, smell, touch, hearing, seeing. In subjective discourse, remote apprehensions give way to proximate perceptions. The visible and the audible are transfixed by the sensible. Vision loses its primacy. Ascendancy has been given instead to senses which are culturally deprivileged as modes of apprehension. Apprehension through touch, taste, or smell is supposed already to be contaminated by interpretation. Even hearing is tinged in this respect. Only the privileged sense, vision, is taken to be inherently free of the bias of the observer, even though here, too, observation is filtered through the body. What D. A. Miller calls “a rigourously enforced separation in the subject between psyche and soma,” which ensures that “what the body suffers, the mind needn’t think” is effaced (1986, 108). Discourse becomes sensational, figuratively as well as literally, and hence suspect.

SENSATIONAL DISCOURSE

The discourse of sensation focuses the subjective account on the affinity between the body of the ethnographer and the body of the patient. Both apprehend events in the realm of medicine experientially. Objective accounts, by contrast, focus on the affinity between the discourse of the writer and the discourse of the physician, both of whom are taken to apprehend events analytically. The ethnographer’s bodily affinity with the patient makes the narrative voice implicitly analogous to the voice of the lifeworld and estranges it from the voice of medicine. The difficulties the physician has in the examination are elided in favor of the difficulties of the patient. In an inversion of the objective discourse in which the physician’s apprehension of the lump supersedes the patient’s experience of the bruise, here the patient’s experience of pain obscures the physician’s experience of puzzlement. Because ethnographer and native are characters in the same realm, meaning is not overheard, caught by an invisible perceiver, but constituted corporeally among characters of whom the ethnographer is one. In so doing, Miller suggests, meanings disappear into sensations. “Bodies ‘naturalize’ meanings in which the narrative implicates them . . . Incarnate in the body, [meanings] no longer seem part of a cultural, historical process of signification but instead dissolve into an inarticulate, merely palpable self-evidence” (1980, 108). What is represented in subjective discourse is the act of interpretation. This convergence of the perspective and voice of the ethnographer with the perspective and voice of the patient provides a path of access to the Other. The opposition of transparent percipient and opaque object vanishes. Self and Other become jointly transparent to the realm of events. Both bodies are suffused with sensation. They disclose signs of presence in the flesh.

The Category of Other

As the ethnographer’s body solidifies and the patient’s body attenuates, they become permeable. Body boundaries are blurred. Sensations proper to one affect both. The physician cleans the patient’s wound; the ethnographer winces. One body takes the impression of what the Other expresses. The interiority of the Other is attested to and expressed by the self. By this device, the mind/body problem is dissolved. The properties of mentality and physicality are distributed over two persons so that sensation is not a private phenomenon but a public discourse. But the distribution of properties is differential: the body of the Other exudes intelligence which is incorporated into the body of the self. Nausea, as Jean-Paul Sartre observed, is the ultimate mark of the Other on the body of the self (1964, 314–315). So the intimacy achieved by this device is with the wrong body. The patient twitches, flushes, sweats, modulates with feeling which is absorbed into the sensibilities of the ethnographer. Feeling is communicated by contagion. What is inscribed on the Other can be read off the self. Access to the Other is again problematic, not because the Other is estranged as an object but because the Other is engulfed as a subject.

As bodies become transparent, the text becomes opaque. Inscription, the imprint of the Other on the body of the self, becomes dialogism, the imprint of the Other on the voice of the self. The ethnographer intrudes not only on the realm of events but also in the dialogue itself. Dialogue takes the form of free indirect discourse, the literary convention in which the narrator’s voice becomes entangled with the character’s (Rimmon-Kenan 1984, 110–116). Narrative voice is itself dialogic. This entanglement of voices extends subjectivity to the Other. But the Other is confounded with the self.
Embodiment

If the intent of embodiment is to sustain subjective discourse, its effect is to reify the body. Reenactment of the body becomes problematic for subjective discourse just as its evanescence is for objective discourse. In subjective discourse the ethnographer’s body accrues visibility, audibility, sensibility. Intrusion into the realm of events is now bodily intrusion. The ethnographer is palpably present to the ethnographic occasion and co-present with body of the Other. Indeed, the body of the ethnographer is so sutured to the Other and the world that it can be neither altogether disentangled from them nor altogether infused into them.

Alignment and Complicity

Subjective discourse invites the reader to align with the ethnographer in the realm of events. The attempt is not to bring the Other here, as specimen, but to take you there, as accomplice. I make you myself. The attraction of such an alignment is participation in the modalities of experience. “Our reading bodies [become] theaters of neurasthenia” (Miller 1986, 107). But that is also its flaw. An invitation to experience meets the bodily skepticism of the reader about the ethnographer’s experience. The reader is tempted to test her own sensibilities and intelligence against the ethnographer’s. In the realistic convention, the narratee accepts the narrator’s perspective and voice, but unreliability can cause the reader to sequester the narrative perspective and voice. If objectivity is a discourse of estrangement from the native, subjectivity is a discourse of engagement with the native but an engagement which risks instead estranging the reader.

Estrangement from the reader splits subjective writings off from the objective discourse in which they are inserted. Subjective texts become enclaves of a different order enclosed in scholarly discourse, either in the form of subjective passages within an objective text or of subjective texts within an objective discourse. Objectivity becomes the province of the reader who uses the stance to view, critique, eschew, and estrange the ethnographer’s discourse. Narrative voice is heard as a native voice, immediate, unreflective, naïve, stuff for analysis, not of it. Authenticity endangers authority. Subjective writing risks professional repute. I (along with the Other) become the interpreted, you the interpreter.

Subjective Discourse

Subjective discourse, too, disclaims its own fictionalization, not by absenting its narrator but by impersoning her. But my embodiment is as much a fictionalization in subjective writing as my disembodiment was in realistic writing. I reconstitute a realm in which I materialize some past incarnation of myself as a person. In doing so, I make myself a character, as much as, and in much the same way as, I make the Others characters. But I am no longer identical with the self I conjure up. I have fabricated my body along with my discourse (Goffman 1974, 520). Being out of body, as in the objective convention, or being in a past body, as in the subjective one, are equally fictionalizations. A body is merely dematerialized in one and materialized in the other.

One solution for ethnographic writing is not to abandon fictive conventions in order to clear the enterprise of suspicion but openly to engage in fictive modes of inquiry in order to arrive at its center: access to the Other. Neither objective nor subjective discourse ensures access to the Other. Objective discourse forfeits its claim on account of disembodiment of the self: the Other is represented as pure exteriority. Subjective discourse forfeits its claim on account of decentering the Other: the Other is incorporated as pure interiority. Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes:

The perceiving mind is an incarnated mind. I have tried, first of all, to re-establish the roots of the mind in its body and in its world, going against doctrines which treat perception as a simple result of the action of external things on our body as well as against those which insist on the autonomy of consciousness. These philosophies forget—in favor of a pure exteriority or of a pure interiority—the insertion of the mind in corporeality, the ambiguous relation which we entertain with our body and, correlative, with perceived things . . . And it is equally clear that one does not account for the facts by superimposing a pure contemplative consciousness on a thinglike body. (1964, 3–4)

I propose a third discourse which moves among the perspectives and voices of Others over the course of the description to create an impression of what might be called intersubjectivity. Shifts in perspective and voice are legitimated by embodiment: the ethnographer’s awareness of the
insertion of herself in her body provides grounds for access to the experience of other selves in other bodies.

**SCENE 3**

((Dry), smooth, warm fingertips rest lightly behind my left shoulder as, facing me, Dr. Eden examines with his left hand my right breast and underarm. Though not actually off balance, his touch on my shoulder, counterposing the pressure on my chest, creates a balance turning on the axis of my spine as I sit. The initial shoulder-tip alludes to and foreshadows its counterposed pressure. By virtue of his holding a balance between these two thrusts, of thereby creating in me a sense of being in balance, but one dependent on his balancing me, I entrust my balance to him. Almost, he sets me off balance in order to sustain my balance himself, to reposition the locus of balance in him. Entrusting my body to him then informs the other kind of trust intended in this relationship, my reliance on his expertise.

The kinetic awareness recurrently created and sustained over this phase of the examination by the repositioning of his fingers on my breast or chest accompanied by a slight compensatory shift of the fingers on my back, my awareness of myself as held, suspended, balanced, or inserted in space, is enhanced by the absence of eye contact. He gazes over my right shoulder, head lifted, eyes unfocused, even, sometimes, closed, evidencing that here it is his hands, not his eyes, that receive intelligence. I gaze in a like abstraction over his right shoulder, but manage, on account of his more extensive absorption, to glance occasionally at his face without making eye contact. Thus the circuitry established between us, the kinesthetics of two bodies in space, their slight inclination together and balancing in respect of each other, these pathways of communication, become dominant, central to the occasion.

This sense of our bodily co-presence is so accomplished that brief releases leave me a little at sea, off-balance, temporarily afloat. Then, Dr. Eden places his left hand behind my right shoulder before continuing the examination of my left breast with his right hand, this positioning of his left hand thus serving to warn me and set my balance for the upcoming leaning of his right hand. If, at the outset, I balanced myself on the edge of the examination table and was put off balance, puzzled a bit, by the first touch of his fingers on my shoulder, now, when left alone I experience my body as a little off-balance and wait to come into balance with respect to his. The touch on the back counterbalances and thus prefigures the subsequent touch on the front.

I am aware initially of the precise texture of Ms. Fielding's skin, fine, smooth, and faintly resistant, mounted flexibly over the curved bands of the ribs, then, at the upper outer corner of her right breast, the thin edge of an expanding plane of intermediary tissue, slightly granular, shifting under my hand over its bony understructure. Under the soft papery texture of the areola and the node of the nipple, the granular tissue thins. I shift my left hand behind her shoulder and feel the distribution of tissue under my right hand against the skeleton. The substance of her body between my hands has a variation of textures which I palpate, delicately with the tips of my fingers, deeply with the pads of my hands. Here the body delivers its intelligence to me kinaesthetically. I shift my bold to the other shoulder and begin to mold the tissue from the hollow just under the collar bone to the upper outer edge of the breast, round the outer rim, and across the body of the breast, then to the inner rim where the skin thins and tightens down across the breast bone.

From Dr. Eden's perspective, the pivot of energy is centered on the balls of his feet and his hip joints, from which he inclines forward and back to draw their two bodies into a dynamic balance. He experiences Ms. Fielding's breasts and chest not so much as a surface whose contours are to be described by his fingertips but rather as a solid, a shape whose pliabilities and resistances are felt as a thickness or density of the entity between his hands, felt as substance and volume rather than surface, something more akin to sculpture than cartography.

Dr. Eden does not use much cover patter, the magician's trick
for directing attention strategically away from what his hands are doing. Nor does he allude to what is at hand. But his touch of her shoulder comes to operate metacommunicatively to create the expectation of a next move, one of a narrow class of possible next moves. The examination of the chest is sequential to the examination of the back so that his touch on Mrs. Fielding's shoulder, though puzzling in its import when initiated from the front, is not surprising. Her body is already accustomed to being touched there. Indeed, the examination of the back, neutralized even more by the intervention of a stethoscope, precedes and modulates to the examination of the front, thus creating a context of neutrality for that touchier matter. Doctor and patient are not so much touching each other as in touch.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY

In intersubjective writing, a realm of events is disclosed from the perspectives of its inhabitants, whose voices are audible and whose bodies are palpable. The Other is rendered a self. In consequence, relationships between perceiver and perceived, narrator and narratee, ethnographer and native, writer and reader, are transformed. The perceiver sees from other bodies, the narrator speaks in other voices, but they are ours, we are in them. The question at issue becomes what can scrupulously be said from the perspective of the Other, in the voice of the Other.

Perspective

Perspective in intersubjective writing is internal to the realm of events and from either within or without the bodies of characters. From within, space adumbrates around the body of the character as its centrality, time takes its rhythms from the body, and knowledge discloses itself to and in respect of the body. Emotion, though focalized from within the body, retains an external perspective, as if the characters reflected on rather than underwent the experience of their own bodies. Ideology, likewise focalized from within the body, also suggests an external perspective. It puts forward the sort of thing the body is rather than the character's idiosyncratic notion of it. This sense of the body is slightly differently focalized by each character. The patient feels as if her body were all surface. She is aware of variations in texture, pressure, sensitivity. The physician feels through the surface to the understructures, as if, on the contrary, the body were all form. But both senses are rooted in a conception of the body as a malleable substance transmitting intelligence to and from the body of the Other.

Spatio-temporal perspective shifts in the scene from a locus within the body of one or the other character to a locus without the bodies of characters but inside the realm of events. From there a third perceiver, disembodied, hovers without the bodies of characters but still receives intelligence through them. Space wraps itself around the characters, taking then along bodily, and time unfolds to their body rhythms. But knowledge, emotion, and ideology, though focalized from within the body, retain an extension, detachment, and objectivity which transcend the body. Indeed, it is the epistemological, emotional, and ideological perspective of the disembodied observer which the characters seem to have appropriated.

The shift of spatial perspectives among embodied and disembodied perceivers presents multiple footholds in the realm of events. For each perceiver, time moves sequentially through the events of the scene but from the perspective of the scene as a whole, time moves back over the same sequence from different perspectives. What is climactic in the other scenes is recursive here. In the first scene, the climax is located from without the body, the disclosure of the tumor; in the second, it is located from within the body, the access of nausea. The structure of climax is part of what holds the reader's interest in the scene: suspense spins out retrospectively from the climax to its preliminaries. The third scene unfolds and refolds spacetimes to produce a laminated description of the body and its surround from within and without. Despite its lack of theatricality, the third description, too, seduces us, I would argue, by its involvement of the body. Its structure can also be subsumed under a sexual metaphor, but a feminist one of diffuse stimulation rather than a masculinist one of focal climax. Knowledge is embodied knowledge.

The impression of intersubjectivity in this passage is heightened by loci in the bodies of Others and by shifts of perspective among recipients but it can be achieved from one locus in one body by attention to
inscription: the imprint of the Other on the body. Such writing constitutes the body the medium through which intelligence of the Other is conducted.

Voice

The narrating voice is rendered a voice of the self issuing from within or without the body. From within the body, the voice belongs to a character who participates in the realm of events and so is intradigetic and homodiegetic. The narrator is perceptible in the text in marks of enunciation: personal pronouns (I) and laminator verbs (aware, look, feel, expect). Yet the narrator does not seem to be unreliable. The body interposes, here, a sensory apparatus rather than a sensational apprehension. In this capacity, it takes the imprint of the other.

Behind, beside, beneath the voices of characters another voice is hidden, the disembodied voice of a narrator who articulates, imperceptibly and reliably, events in which the narrator does not participate. This voice is technically extradigetic, speaking from beyond the realm of events, but it becomes entangled with the intradigetic voices of characters so that it is difficult to decipher who speaks for or as whom. The result is technically free indirect discourse of the sort known as indirect interior monologue (Rimmon-Kenan 1984, 114). Not only are the voices of the characters audible in the voice of the narrator from without but also that narrator’s voice reflects theirs. Who is it that reflects on balance, on texture, on kinesthetics? The physician? The patient? The ethnographer? If the disembodied voice is dialogized, the embodied voices are authorized. The shift of voices between embodied and disembodied narrators produces the pattern of what Marcus and Cushman (1982, 43), following James Clifford (1983, 140–142), call “dispersed authority.”

The impression of intersubjectivity is enhanced in this passage by multiple voices and shifting among narrators but it can be achieved in one voice by attention to dialogism, the imprint of the Other on the voice of the self. Such writing constitutes the voice the medium through which intelligence of the Other is articulated. Inscription and dialogism are the marks of intersubjective writing. Inscription, the imprint of the Other on the body, matches dialogism, the imprint of the Other on the voice. Writing the body of the Other, then, invites multilocality just as writing the voice of the Other invites multivocality.

Authority and Authenticity

The complex of holds in intersubjective writing yields an admixture of authority and authenticity. The voices of embodied characters, which might be heard as authentic, are positioned to pick up some of the accents of authority from their flashes of external perspective. The voice of the disembodied perceiver, in contrast, would be authoritative but for the audibility through it of other voices, the perceptibility in it of other bodies.

Intersubjectivity recovers from subjectivity, embodiment, and from objectivity the centrality of the Other. Perceivers are present in a realm of events which adumbrates itself around them as its centrality. Experience is inscribed on the body. But the body is not the body of the self but the body of the Other or, rather, the Other rendered a self. Intersubjectivity loosens perception from its lodge in the ethnographer’s body to insert it into the body of the Other. Authenticity, deriving from embodiment, is relocated in the body of the Other. Authority, deriving from disembodiment, is dismantled and reconstructed in the voice of the Other.

Modalities of Perception

The hierarchy of perceptual modalities remains inverted in intersubjective writing. Vision, the culturally privileged modality, is subordinated to sensation.10 Audition is banished from the scene. Or, more precisely, the locus of the audible shifts from without to within the body. Dialogism, the public locus of discourse, becomes interior monologue, its embodied locus. Embodiment is the pivot of intersubjective writing: Hence such writing moves remote apprehensions toward proximate perceptions, so that they display an affinity with the culturally deprivileged modality, touch.

Touch is suspect because information which has passed through the
body of the perceiver is regarded as idiosyncratic, peculiar to that individual. The reembodiment of seeing and hearing lays them open to the same suspicion. However, in this discourse, the felt body is presented as a sensory perceptor on which information is precisely and delicately inscribed. But the import of the information for its peripient is not presupposed. Indeed, that is the very question on which intersubjective discourse focuses attention. Without assuming either universality or idiosyncrasy of emotions, a nexus of circumstances is presented, in or toward which emotions are constructed or directed. In the presentation, sensation is disentangled from emotion. The body takes impressions rather than imposes interpretations. This abstinence separates intersubjective writing from subjective writing.

**The Category of the Other**

Bodily access calls into question the category of the Other in ethnographic writing. Objective writing sustains a view of the Other as estranged. The realm of the other is represented as remote from the ordinary and the other is inscribed as exotic. Subjective writing, on the contrary, attains an intimacy with the Other. The realm of the Other is represented as an adumbration of the ordinary and the Other is inscribed as familiar.intersubjective writing puts forward the body as the hold on access to the Other. We are moved to consider the incorrigible estrangement of the familiar Other, the uncomfortable intimacy of the exotic Other.

**Embodiment and Disembodiment**

In intersubjective writing, as in objective writing, the body of the ethnographer is banished from the scene. But as the body dematerializes, the self is relocated in the body of the Other. In intersubjective writing, as in subjective writing, I am embodied, but not in my own body. I intrude in the body of the Other. Intrusion is neither bodiless nor bodily but embodied. The evanescence of my body is commensurate with the recrudescence of the Other. Thus the Other becomes an embodied self.

**Alignment and Complicity**

Abstinence in intersubjective writing extends to abstinence from claims about inner states. All modes of touch described, though presented from within the bodies of characters, can be observed from without the bodies of characters. The focal point of perception has simply been pivoted into the body of the Other without altering the content of the observations, with one exception: a sentient awareness of touch has been attributed to the characters. They are presumed to be alert to what transpires. The patient’s apprehension of texture or pressure, the doctor’s sculptural modeling of the body, become part of their discourse. Here the ethnographer’s knowledge, knowledge of these characters in this scene, of the constituent properties of such scenes in medicine, and of the ontological conditions of medicine are reconstituted in the Other. Aspects of the account, which in objective writing are separated out from the description as the analysis, are returned to the status of situated knowledge. Specifically, the difference between one’s ordinary sense of one’s body and the specific twist medicine imparts to it are represented discursively in the sensibilities of these inhabitants of the realm of medicine.

The ethnographer in this style of writing is aligned with neither adumbration of herself, as-character or as-writer, but with the Other. The locus of the perceiver in the realm of events and of the narrator in the realm of discourse offers a foothold or discursive position to the reader. The reader is invited to align, like the ethnographer, with the Other-as-character. This invitation is neither undercut, as in subjective writing, by the imposition of the sensibilities of the ethnographer nor, on the other hand, is it insulated, as in objective writing, from the realm of events. The reader can thus skirt both sympathy, the effect of being swept into and by the experience of the Other, and detachment, the effect of being estranged from that experience, to embrace empathy, the effect of being located in the experience. The ethnographer and the reader are each shifted one lamination deeper into the realm of events: the self becomes the Other, the reader becomes a self. By this gesture, I make us both the Other. The reader is perceptually positioned to perceive the experience of the Other and discursively positioned to hear the voice of the Other.
And the thrust of that move in ethnographic writing is to tell what the Other has seen.

**FICTIONALIZATION AND SUBJECTIVE DISCOURSE**

Claims of access to the experience of the Other have been suspect in ethnographic writing. What are the grounds of this suspicion? On the objective view, access is impossible. The mind is taken to be so secreted in the body that embodiment itself foils access. The consequence of that is the discorporation of the Other as an exotic object whose external properties might be seen. On the subjective view, access is held in some sense to be possible but idiosyncratic. The mind is supposed to be so immaterial that it transcends the body. The consequence of that is the incorporation of the Other as an intimate subject whose internal properties might be felt. Both discourses spin out the Cartesian dialectic that underlies them. The estrangement of mind from body is literalized in objective discourse in the disembodiment of the ethnographer. A rarification of the self addresses a concretion of the Other. In subjective discourse, by contrast, the estranged mind of the Other comes to be lodged in the body of the self so that two rarified selves intermingle.

Positioning subjectivity and objectivity with respect to each other polarizes what is not only not antithetical but probably not even separable. Reality is conceived objectively as pure substance, subjectively as the absence of substance. The incommensurability between the two is the root of the mind/body problem: how is subject hooked to object, mind to body, self to substance? The two discourses do not properly occur at the same level of analysis. They work as alternative descriptions of the same event at different levels of analysis. Subjectivity construes events in terms of sense impressions; objectivity gives priority to independently existing objects. Either has difficulty from its starting point in arriving at the other order of events. Given sensations, impressions, ideas, inner states, how do we get to external objects? Given external objects, how do we get to inner states? Events can be construed either as perceptual phenomena whose objective status remains problematic or as material objects whose subjectivity is incalculable. Set together, the two discourses heighten each other's peculiarities. Objectivity excludes consciousness from the body. The body is regarded as an object whose peculiar surface does not necessarily evi-

dence an inner reality. Subjectivity excludes the materiality of the mind. Dislocated from the body, consciousness becomes unbounded, metaphysical, ghostly.

The nexus of subjectivity and objectivity in the body evidences their inextricability. Here the self is materialized; the body is inspired. The body is not the boundary between persons but the connection, the site, the instrument of their co-presence. The trick is to eschew the objecthood of embodiment in order to apprehend instead both the materiality of the subject and the consciousness of the object. The self is neither magically secreted inside the body nor does it hover spectrally around it. Rather it is suffused through it and expressed out of it. Nothing supernatual is required to get access to the Other. Our relationship with the Other is already replete with presence. The Cartesian dialectic to which we are heir accustoms us to the notion that the body of the Other conceals a self. In reality, the body of the Other reveals a self.

The root problem in ethnographic writing is not getting access to the Other but so constituting the category of the Other that getting access is problematic. Discourse is incorrigibly tinged with the presence of the Other. Indeed on the Bakhtinian view, the problem would be to avoid access. Objective writing might be said to be designed to do just that by fictionalizing an absence. But if the conventions of objective writing are fictive, then we cannot attain epistemological impeccability by preserving the perspective of the omniscient narrator. In subjective writing, the ontological grounding of description in the ethnographer's insertion in the scene rescues impeccability but blurs the discretion between self and Other. The move out of the subjective into the objective turns on embodiment. If we grant that the body is the hinge of experience, then this move discloses the ontological grounds for intersubjectivity. The devices of narrativity uncover the locus of the Other in the self. Its project is to make us present to the scene bodily but not in our own body. The focal point of perception is simply pivoted into the body of the Other without altering its content. Hence the fictionalized presence in intersubjective writing: the Other-as-self.

In the traditional Japanese folktales "Rashomon" (Akutagawa 1970, 19–34), three characters, including the ghost of one who died, describe the same scene, fabricating a description to suit their own purposes. Each description conflicts with the others but accounts for some of the aspects
of the event described so that it is possible, at least for a traditional Japanese judge, to cobble together the truth of the matter. It might be argued that each of these three discourses, the objective, the subjective, and the intersubjective, produce different, though not necessarily incommensurable, perspectives on the Other. Interlayering perspectives does not converge on the truth; the perspectives diverge toward alternate realities. The question is: How are we bound to these perspectives? How do we move among them? How do we legitimate these moves?