

Matras, Yaron

- 1994 Untersuchungen zu Grammatik und Diskurs des Romanes: Dialekt der Kelderaša/Lovara. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

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- 1998 The Romani Element in Non-Standard Speech. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
2002 Romani: A Linguistic Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paspati, Alexandre G.

- 1870 Études sur les Tchinghianés ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman. Constantinople: Koroméla.

Voices in Bali: Energies and Perceptions in Vocal Music and Dance Theater.

EDWARD HERBST. Music/Culture. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan and University Press of New England, 1997. Pp. xxvii + 198, with an accompanying compact disk. \$45.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Jacob Wainwright Love, *George Washington University*

For those who write reports on their discipline, practical postmodernity welcomes unconventional forms of presentation. The classical style of ethnographic discourse, ostensibly objective and inert, has given birth to new styles, which transgress old boundaries, implicating ethnographers' reflexivities within the scene. Linear order makes way for the multistranded exigencies of serendipitous juxtaposition and interdisciplinary bricolage. We lose the presumption of an all-knowing observer, but gain the immediacy of engagement with proximate contingencies.

As an exercise in such freedom, we have this book. A case study in the process of learning, it records and recreates the happy confusions of fieldwork. Banning the general and embracing the specific, it finds immanence in the commonplace and avoids the orientation that rudimentary exposition would afford. Spatial perception sets its "compass" (p. 3), but nowhere do the introductory pages say even that Bali is an island (we gather it abuts the sea), that its people have consequentially encountered people of other islands, and that its culture, though distinctive, implicates cultures near and far. Nor do we learn whether the people number in the hundreds or the millions. Instead, like tyros plopped into the field, we plunge right in, surrounded by unmediated ecological and social signals, fresh for ideas but unguided by experience, not knowing what to look for, not making sense of what we see.

Early paragraphs illustrate the experiential struggle. The chapter subtitled "Lessons in Penetration" features a lullaby and its translation: "Restless baby, if mother should go bathing, / she'll tie a scarf across her breasts" (p. 5). After a few sentences of commentary, it proposes a radically different translation: "To stay well and clean in this world, / keep what you learn held close to your heart" (p. 5). One text, incompatible glosses: how can this be? The second translation accommodates cunning phonetic shuffles called *kirta basa* (in Balinese dictionaries, the first word is *kerta* or *kreta*), a phrase that Herbst glosses 'etymology-within-performance', though his examples prove only exegesis via paronomasia.

Four blank lines follow. Throughout the book, Herbst uses blank space as composers use silence. Its height varies, effectively to signify the amount of time we should contemplate the previous passage before starting the next.

Abruptly the subject shifts. As a composer may change instrumentation to introduce a theme, Herbst goes into a contrastive font, sans serif and all italics:

The house is located on the eastern edge of the hamlet, just bordering the wet-ricefields. The door facing west leads into the family compound, a domestic area for a Balinese family comprising three generations. The door facing east looks out onto a wide expanse of terraced hills. [p. 6]

"The house"? Whose? Why is it important? Is it where the lullaby underwent *kirta basa*? Unmaking potential connections, Herbst catalogues nearby holy sites. He recounts that the highlighted village bears the name of a (literally) pigheaded king, who reigned centuries ago. Four blank lines encourage us to ponder the king's anatomy.

Suddenly, a third font obtrudes, this time sans serif and roman, but with wide margins:

After hiking up through the hills to my house in the *gambelan*-forging village of Tihingan, Klungklung, I indulge myself in a midday nap. When I awake, there is a strange sensation in my head. I boil some water for coffee, figuring that a little caffeine will clear up this hazy mental buzz. [p. 7]

Why now *this* house and *this* village? Did the pigheaded king sleep here too? The caffeine jolts Herbst into an anecdote about how a singer-dancer from yet a *third* village bathed in a waterfall. After another pause, the sans serif italics with normal margins return to explain Balinese words *not* manifest in the anecdote.

More blank lines lead back to the wide-margined sans serif roman font: "As we sit around, gathering momentum to begin the session, her husband and friend offer advice on teaching" (p. 8). But who is she? It takes a footnote to name her and explain that she's a teacher in the Indonesian College of the Arts. Thus, does one of Herbst's principal mentors creep into consciousness.

And so it goes, typographically juggling three fonts and two margins, dramatizing this perturbability by peppering roman passages with italics, even for long-established English words, including *gamelan*, *gong*, and *mantra*. Interest vaults from topic to topic, teasing us through a tangle of untempered entelechies, all evidently chosen to teach us "lessons in penetration."

Does the chapter tell more about its lullaby? No, but we undergo an aqueous recapitulation. After one last italicized passage (concluding, portentously, "Letting things enter you creates fluid self-identity" [p. 24]) and then a final grand pause, we leap into the drink: "When Nyoman Candri was first learning from her father, she would sit in the river with water up to her neck and sing in her high register as loud as she could" (p. 24).

The manner feels aleatoric, but the process must be purposeful: it forces us, if we sustain any curiosity for the subject, to question—and then, by inventing answers, to reconstruct the experience for ourselves. Some readers may fancy the housing and build an appreciation on that. Others may take a splash in the overabundant liquidity: the bathing mother, the "wet-ricefields," the coffee, the waterfall, the fluid self-identity, the singer in the river. These images, seemingly random as they pop into view, cannot be accidental. If an intelligence lies behind them, they are meant to tell us something. Our job is to figure out what. Maybe they are meant to coopt us into the spirit of music. The typographical deployment of ideas, and even the use of nothingness (the blank space), strikingly mimic music in establishing structures, setting tempos, and orchestrating themes.

Linguistic issues in Balinese theater abound. With often exquisite subtlety, performers adjust tonal, rhythmic, and timbral qualities to exploit the constraints of poetic meters and stanzas, dramatic scenes and characters, and several languages, conventionally called Sanskrit, Old Javanese, Middle Javanese, and Balinese. In sometimes edgy executions of code-switching as they play to their audience, they test socio-

aesthetic norms. These issues do not attract Herbst, who responds mainly to concepts singled out as space, time, and context. He finds this trinity at levels so small as a single sung phrase and so large as the polyphonic sparkling of an orchestra's "confluence of temporal, spatial, and spiritual dimensions" (p. 156). Examples sprinkled throughout the text show how performers in Balinese repertory companies apply these concepts in improvising their performances, chiefly of the genres *arja* (sung-danced noncourtly theater) and *topeng* (masked-danced courtly historical theater).

During extended stays in Bali since 1972, Herbst conducted his research mainly in "the Indonesian language" (presumably Bahasa Indonesia). For lyrics originally in Balinese and sundry forms of "archaic" Javanese (which Herbst lumps together under the name "Kawi"), he works with Indonesian translations "made with the consultation of various Balinese colleagues" (p. xxiii). He gives most indigenous texts only as musical underlay or incidental supplements to the CD. He uses local or idiosyncratic spellings. His guide to pronunciation says the higher mid-front vowel *e*, which he spells <é>, "is pronounced as in the English word *hey*," and the unstressed lower-mid front or indifferently vowel, which he spells <e>, is pronounced "as in English *third*." Unstressed *a*, too, is "pronounced as in *third* or *first*" (p. xxiii). Complaisant rhotic readers may wrongly articulate these sounds.

Herbst exhibits no interest in how language uses grammar to say things, and his passion for particulars leaves the book unsituated in relation to recent trends in ethnopragmatics, cognitive anthropology, and Indonesianist literature. Few explicative concepts common in linguistics come to the fore. The word "morphology" occurs, but mainly in quoting John Cage's definition of "form," as "the morphology of a continuity" (p. 147). Superficially, the text is nontheoretical: it paints its vignettes, and leaves their viewing as an exercise for others.

Herbst presents and discusses thirty musical figures. Some transcribe excerpts from tracks on the CD. Most cover less than a dozen syllables each. In the staff developed for these figures and a few unnumbered musical examples, height on the page encodes pitch-height, and orthodox notes appear only on lines; the spaces indicate "miscellaneous deviations from the standard tuning" (p. xxvi). This notation is no fun. By warping the intonational gestalts habitual to those who regularly read Western music, it distracts and confuses; standard staves would be more immediately accessible to a larger audience. The transcribed rhythms are almost overprecise: they specify temporal values ranging from thirty-second notes to whole notes held under fermatas. Herbst checked the values with the aid of a computer (p. xxvii), but not all the notated rhythms match the sung ones.

The CD offers musical performances not available elsewhere, including delightful examples of unaccompanied solo singing and orchestrally accompanied singing in context. The elicited solo examples, though aurally offputting to outsiders, are precious nuggets of Balinese vocal practice, and they should serve well for appreciation by aficionados, who will savor the book's anecdotes of performers they admire.

Savvy readers will mind Judith Becker's hint in the foreword: "The book never crosses over the delicate, invisible line between commendable self-reflexivity and annoying self-indulgence" (p. ix). Beyond this line, on whichever side the author stands, affection for Balinese musical masters pours out. Readers may find the flow exasperating, but it is unfair to fault an enterprise for not being what it does not want to be. This effort—wonderfully fractured, multisided, discontinuous, nonlinear—is best viewed, not wholly as science, not merely as scholarship, surely not as a traditional ethnographic outcome, but as the record of an artist's odyssey, a lover's fantasy, a devotee's mystery. Of its energies and perceptions, with unchecked urgency, it broadcasts a blithe harvest.