

SNAPSHOTS OF AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

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It is the case that experience gives meaning to theory, just as theory gives meaning to experience. Yet, somewhere between the abstracted privilege of theory and the embodied chaos of experience, there is a disjuncture. In the interplay of the two, we find connections at the same moment that the articulation of either loses something of both, leaving meaning ostensibly indefinable. The following snapshots of one autoethnography attempt to bring the two together, theory and experience, not to unite them but to underscore this complicated interplay. In the end, I find, there is, inevitably, something left-over.

SNAPSHOT #1—ELSEWHERE

“More and more, tactics swing out of their orbits. Loosed from those traditional communities which once circum-

scribed their functioning, they begin to wander throughout a space increasingly homogenized and extended. Consumers are transformed into immigrants. The system in which they circulate is too vast to localize them, yet too infinitely spread out for them to be able to escape it and to find a place ‘elsewhere.’ There is no elsewhere. The ‘strategic’ model thereby is also transformed, as though lost by its own success: it depended on a ‘proper place’ distinct from everything else; it now becomes ‘everything else.’”

—MICHEL DE CERTEAU

Traveling along the narrow, winding road that leads out of San Jose is slow and arduous. Even in the dry season, when the sky shows only a wide blue expanse, the damage of the heavy winter rains remain—roadways reduced to narrow strips of pavement with no safe-

