

Rod Coover. 2002. *Cultures in Webs: Working in Hypermedia with the Documentary Image*. Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems Inc. ISBN: 1 884511 44 9. Compact disk for Macintosh or Windows. Price: \$35.00.

Cultures in Webs is the first ethnographic CD ROM project of its kind to be distributed by a commercial publisher as a stand-alone text. It is an innovative and beautifully produced project that exemplifies some possibilities and potentials of hypermedia for anthropological representation. The text is divided into three parts and an introduction.

'Montage Metaphors and Worldmaking' is a critical essay about film. Coover draws upon Gardener's *Forests of Bliss*, Monnikendam's *Mother Dao the Turtlelike* and Trinh's *Naked Spaces*, suggesting the fragmenting editing styles of these films break linear forms to already anticipate 'the multi-linear worldmaking available to digital media documentarists'. The essay is divided by section headings, combines conventional written narrative with film clips inserted at appropriate points and is presented vertically on a single page. It demonstrates how moving images might be integrated into a critical essay. In *Forests of Bliss*, 'viewers are asked to link the fragments and reconcile the parts in an imagined vision of a whole and inhabitable world'. By integrating stills and clips from *Forests of Bliss* in the text in audio-visual files, Coover demonstrates how Gardner achieves this. This both invites the viewer to verify Coover's analysis, and allows her/him to actively and directly engage with the visual materials discussed. Overall this essay works well, but the problem of requiring the viewer to read a long essay on screen could have been solved better by using a section-heading menu to aid navigation, and white text on a black background might have been substituted for a more comfortable contrast. In terms of the issues discussed, I would have liked to see some mention of what film cannot do, and how digital media might resolve this.

'The Harvest' is a photo-essay based on Coover's study of the Burgundy wine harvest in France. Confronted with a horizontal text rather than the usual vertical web page, the user scrolls across (rather than up and down) the text and images. The screen consists of four parallel horizontal linear narratives, one photographic and the others written text. However, the written texts are not captions; rather, they evoke the experience of working with the grapes, express Coover's own thoughts and describe the history of the vineyard. The texts can be read in relation to one another and allow the user to weave in and out of narratives as she/he scrolls through the text.

'Concealed Narratives', the most complex of the three sections, is based on Coover's research in Ghana. It consists of 'a series of hyperlinked sketches of performances constructed from fieldnotes, video recordings, and photos', which aim to explore their relationships to each other and in so doing to represent local realities through parallels to the performances themselves. Here Coover's use of video reflects discussions in 'Montage Metaphors and Worldmaking'. For instance, one page shows an edited clip of a Ghanaian musician, first in slow motion with no sound, then in real time with audio and then with a series of stills over the musical sound track. This both attends to detail and holds the viewer's attention while viewing a clip on a small screen. In another page, a close-up still of the telephone wires that form part of the background in a video clip screened on the same page provides meaningful detail and context. Here Coover combines still images, written extracts and video clips in an exemplary way. Visually each page is beautifully packed with interesting knowledge. The navigation is limiting as

Coover leaves the user with few options to control the viewing narrative. With no access to a sense of what the 'whole' is until one has explored the complete text, the user has to concentrate on fragments and accumulate meanings as she/he goes along. This is not necessarily negative but can be frustrating: because the narratives *were* concealed, I felt disempowered in this text. This was compounded when I discovered that once I had chosen one route over another, I was unsure as to whether I would return to the original narrative, and on another occasion I followed a link that took me backwards in the text, forcing me to repeat a series of pages I had just worked through. These are, however, minor complaints.

Although I am not sure that this CD communicates as the complete sensory experience Taylor claims it is in his Introduction, Coover has definitely achieved something that goes beyond the uses of hypermedia that visual anthropologists have been experimenting with. As for Coover's contribution to anthropology, the ethnographic subject matter of *Cultures in Webs* is of anthropological interest and his concerns with representation are similar to those of many visual anthropologists working with new media. However, it will be left to anthropologists to produce hypermedia projects that begin to bridge the gap between anthropological theory and visual ethnography. In *Cultures in Webs*, Coover offers us an excellent example of how we might begin such a task.

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Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillippe Bourgois, eds. 2004. *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp. 496. ISBN (hbk) 0 631 22348 7, (pbk) 0 631 22349 5. Price: \$69.95, \$34.95.

At a time when the meanings, implications and rationales of violence are the subject of intense popular, political and academic debate, it is perhaps unsurprising that anthropology has recently returned to its study. Whilst some of the founding figures of social science, most notably Marx and Weber, can be read as being fundamentally concerned with the organization of violence, anthropologists have over the past 50 years largely ignored the civil wars, revolutions and structural violence within which the people they have studied have all too often found themselves. Anthropologists have not been alone in this lack of interest in the subject. Since the Second World War, many major thinkers, perhaps intimidated by some of the paths taken by social theory in the 1920s and 1930s, have largely chosen not to directly address the issue. Over the past decade, however, anthropology, along with social theory more generally, has returned to ask questions about the nature and consequences of violence. As a result, several collections and anthologies have appeared on the subject. Perhaps the most comprehensive of these is Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillippe Bourgois's *Violence in War and Peace*.

The editors describe their project as an attempt to denaturalize taken-for-granted forms of violence by deliberately juxtaposing the routine violence of everyday life with the sudden explosions of violence so often regarded as pathological. In doing so, they