

Field Notes 3

March 2013

Tracing trajectories from oral testimonies

Asking about what constitutes loss for informants

Informant recalls losing several items in the South Atlantic sometime in the sixties.

Note: I keep on asking - was Lévi-Strauss ever in despair about whether or not he could learn to talk to the Natives - I think so.

Note: Johannesburg is only one node on a fluctuating network. The principal informant lives in Johannesburg - also known as Jozi (the name itself is unstable) but holidays annually on the South Atlantic seaboard a good one thousand kilometres away from her residence and also travels frequently to France - more than eight thousand.





Lyon 2012
Informant's
album

Cold - hazy

LOSSES

In answer to your question - did you say you were an **anthropologist**?

You want to know what I count among my chief losses to find out what I value?

A) First **love**; B) Bob **Dylan** album Blood on the Tracks - lost at party in what were then the far northern suburbs - still in its sleeve C) Belief that **justice** would prevail



The South Atlantic

I saw floating
In the clear, cold Atlantic shallows
Everything or almost everything that was lost
My mother's bathing cap with the plastic flower
That she lost forty years ago as it swished past
Her plump legs that were young in the sixties.
I saw whole collections of my earrings
All the things the sea took from me
A strut from my yellow deck chair
A beach ball that went on the same wave as my mother's cap.



My first inkling that there were forces beyond my control
A ring with my initials
Filigree of seaweed
A paddle bat from a beach game
The keys to my first car - a Volkswagen beetle
Taken by an aberrant spring tide
From the beach
Leaving me stranded
And from that remote spot
There was no connection
Or the operator left me hanging
And god never got my call