

The Institute of Current World Affairs

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Institute Fellows and their Activities

Adam Smith Albion. A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is studying and writing about the republics of Central Asia, and their importance as actors within and without the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. Degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Christopher P. Ball. An economist, Chris Ball holds a B.A. from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and attended the 1992 International Summer School at the London School of Economics. He studied Hungarian for two years in Budapest while serving as Project Director for the Hungarian Atlantic Council. As an Institute Fellow, he is studying and writing about Hungarian minorities in the former Soviet-bloc nations of East and Central Europe. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Chenoa Egawa. An enrolled member of the Lummi Indian Nation, Chenoa is spending two years living among mesoAmerican Indians, studying successful and not-so-successful cooperative organizations designed to help the Indians market their manufactures, agricultural products and crafts without relying on middlemen. A former trade specialist for the American Indian Trade and Development Council of the Pacific Northwest, Chenoa's B.A. is in International Business and Spanish from the University of Washington in Seattle. [THE AMERICAS]

Marc Michaelson. A program manager for Save the Children in The Gambia, Marc has moved across Africa to the Horn, there to assess nation-building in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and (conditions permitting) availing and unavailing humanitarian efforts in northern Somalia and southern Sudan. With a B.A. in political science from Tufts, a year of non-degree study at the London School of Economics and a Master's in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame, he describes his postgraduate years as "seven years' experience in international development programming and peace research." [sub-SAHARA]

Randi Movich. The current John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, Randi is spending two years in Guinea, West Africa, studying and writing about the ways in which indigenous women use forest resources for reproductive health. With a B.A. in biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz and a Master of Science degree in Forest Resources from the University of Idaho, Randi is building on two years' experience as a Peace Corps agroforestry extension agent in the same region of Guinea where she will be living as a Fellow with her husband, Jeff Fields — also the holder of an Idaho Master's in Forest Resources. [sub-SAHARA]

John B. Robinson. A 1991 Harvard graduate with a certificate of proficiency from the Institute of KiSwahili in Zanzibar, John spent two years as an English teacher in Tanzania. He received a Master's degree in Creative Writing from Brown University in

1995. He and his wife Delphine, a French oceanographer, are spending two years in Madagascar with their two young sons, Nicolas and Rowland, where he will be writing about varied aspects of the island-nation's struggle to survive industrial and natural-resource exploitation and the effects of a rapidly swelling population. [sub-SAHARA]

Daniel B. Wright. A sinologist with a Master's Degree in International Relations from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, Dan's fellowship immerses him in southwest China's Guizhou Province, where he, his journalist-wife Shou Guowei, and their two children (Margaret and Jon) will base themselves for two years in the city of Duyun. Previously a specialist on Asian and Chinese affairs for the Washington consulting firm of Andreea, Vick & Associates, Dan also studied Chinese literature at Beijing University and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary of Pasadena, California. [EAST ASIA]

Teresa C. Yates. A former member of the American Civil Liberties Union's national task force on the workplace, Teresa is spending two years in South Africa observing and reporting on the efforts of the Mandela government to reform the national land-tenure system. A Vassar graduate with a juris doctor from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Teresa had an internship at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg in 1991 and 1992, studying the feasibility of including social and economic rights in the new South African constitution. [sub-SAHARA]

Chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise, Institute Fellows are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

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ICWA

LETTERS

Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young professionals to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. An exempt operating foundation endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

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SUBSAHARAN AFRICA

John B. Robinson is an Institute Fellow studying the struggle of the people and island of Madagascar to survive.

Grand-Mère // Granny

ANTSIRANANA, Madagascar

October 15, 1997

By John B. Robinson

Introduction

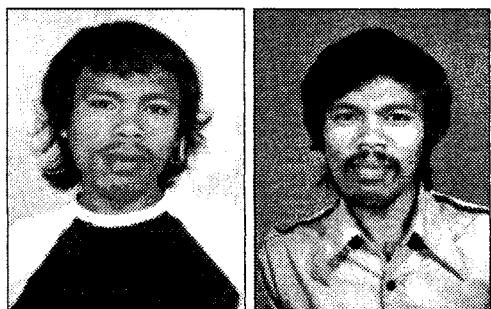
Dear Readers,

I offer you my no-doubt flawed translation of Narcisse Randriamirado's short sketch, "Grand-mère." It was circulated among friends of the author and read before an assembly of dignitaries in 1990 before being printed and distributed to 40,000 primary-school teachers in Madagascar. The Malagasy readers who browse this work for the first time instantly recognize themselves or elements of their culture they have almost forgotten.

I say this is a flawed translation because as an American raised in a society whose Apollo 13 landed men on the Moon, I find it near-impossible to enter this text from the inside and change the verbal expression of deep-felt Malagasy sentiments and values. The Malagasy cult of the ancestors, the free and uninhibited sexual relations found in highland villages and on the coastal regions, the powerful rites of a pagan people, all are far removed from my own experience.

That Narcisse chose to write this short story, this remembrance, in French, is a sign that he has already made deep concessions to the Occidental reader. Village life and traditions, centered around death, sex, birth and union, are not just fantasies found in dusty anthropology books, they are the everyday reality of 10 million Malagasy peasants. The peasants are not just suspicious of "development" along International Monetary Fund and World Bank guidelines; they see it as a positive threat to their cultural mores.

In writing this story, Narcisse asks the educated Malagasy who live in cities with electricity and running water, and the strangers who have come here to "save" the Malagasy from themselves, What are you doing to our people? Where is the human warmth in a paved city street, in imposed democracy, in conditional debt reduction? The Malagasy are a culturally rich people who do not just worry about the evils of industrialization and mechanization, they don't care for it. They have their own ways.



Narcisse Randriamirado: four faces



Granny

My older brother is a bureaucrat. The Mayor presided at his wedding, he has two children, and even I call him Mr. Rakoto out of respect for his position.

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

I was married in the village — before God, the ancestors, the sacred hill, and anyone who showed up. We sacrificed a zebu with a white head, drank rum till we fell down, danced. How we danced! My wife and I have been blessed with seven children and everyone calls me Papa when I pass by.

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

Our parents joined the ancestors early. They were in the back of a *taxis brousse* when it fell off the bridge. They were still jammed upright in their seats when a tractor towed the wreck from the river. My father hated water all his life. He knew it was his enemy. We were his only two sons, her only grandsons.

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

Our neighbors guarded her corpse for three days. Most of them swapped lies outside her shack, others held her hand in theirs. They combed and plaited her hair so that she would look young for Grandpa. They massaged her forehead and calves, they drank coffee and sang songs to stay awake. Her corpse rotted slowly for someone so old.

Granny talked about dying for two months before she actually left to join the ancestors. She told everyone how she wanted her funeral. It had to be just so, traditional. I had premonitions too. I dreamed a night owl ripped a wisdom tooth from my head. And my wife had premonitions. She saw me eating meat with all my friends.

Granny was ripping out weeds in the paddy when she saw her reflection turn black. That's how she knew it was time to go. She went to the next village and dug clay to make cooking pots for the feast. Afterward she was tired. She came down with a fever and died. She wanted everyone to eat fully.

The village knew she was going away just as well as

she did. The cat ran away from her shack and her chickens stopped laying eggs. Nothing ever happens unnoticed in our village.

I feel bad that I didn't try to save Granny with the special pills I keep in the North-East corner of my house. Maybe I should have forced her into town for a shot. But if she had wanted to live she would have told me which plants to collect. She knew the secrets of the forest. That's why she stayed old so long. To cure Granny I would have needed the logic of the ancestors, not the logic of the town, a science of the stars, not the science of pills and serums.



The village women rose early in the morning to wash Granny's body, comb her hair, decorate her body. They started in on her shack next. They dusted the palm-branch walls, swept the mud floor clean. After that they began cooking. When the biggest pots in the village were bubbling away a village woman pierced the sky with a soul scream. A cry as loud as the hills are wide. All the women followed with a hu-lu-lu, the death summons of a night visitor.

In our village we always kill and eat an entire zebu for a funeral. None of the meat is salted or saved for later. People bring rice and coffee to accompany the meat. People bring silver coins to be blessed and clean white plates to feast from.

By the time night shrouded the village everyone was in high spirits. They vied with each other to sing the best songs and they sang on until the next morning. They sang of death, life, the harvest, and sex. The smell of grilled meat and high hopes filled the air. The unmarried girls made coffee and passed a bucket of rum. They walked on their knees to be more polite. They told horny jokes so everyone could hear, they laughed until they cried, then they laughed. A good part of the men were stone drunk. They argued and fought and wept for Granny.

The night of a funeral there is always love in the air. For the romantics it is the perfect opportunity to see whether they are suited for marriage. They make love in an empty bed and if a baby comes of their union perhaps a marriage will follow. In our village, you can make love to anybody you want as long as you are not closely related.

Granny wanted everything traditional. People had to insult her putrefying corpse. Dirty words, vile sexual thoughts, depraved obscenities. We all mimicked sex and fertility in a semi-religious atmosphere. What greater honor for the deceased?

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

Granny lived in the countryside and she hated the town. All the people in the village admired her and remembered her when she was young and lived with Grandpa. Mr. Rakoto and I live in town. Myself on the edge, him right in the middle. From time to time Granny would honor us with a visit. She would stay three or four days with my brother and the same amount of time with me.

She always arrived at dinner time, a problem because she had old-fashioned tastes. She would eat only stewed vegetables and forest leaves. To make matters worse she didn't like food cooked over charcoal, gasoline, or propane. She wanted the taste of wood smoke when she put something in her mouth. She liked to eat on the floor because she was scared of falling off a chair. At night she slept on a grass mat laid out on the floor.

Her fear of toilets was a major problem in town. She claimed she suffocated "from the smell" and was horrified by the idea of closing her self inside a little closet. For a father and a daughter to take care of their personal busi-

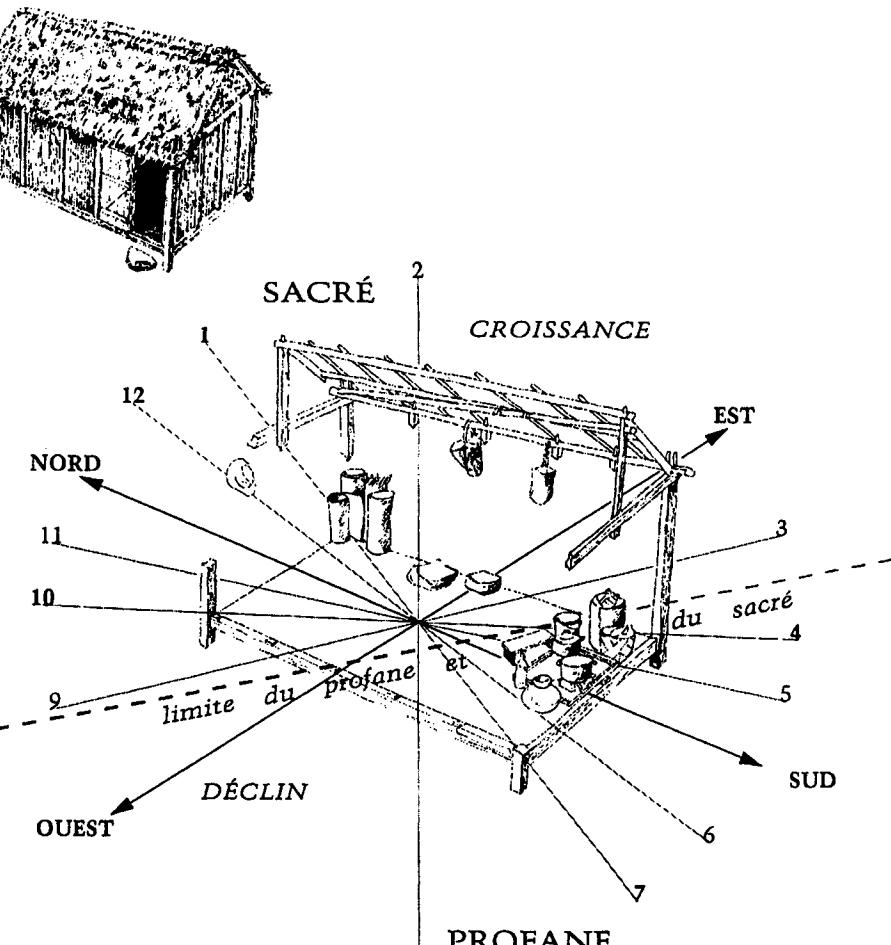
ness in the same place *Femme à l'enfant*
"is practically incest,"
she told us. What a
headache to find a dis-
creet place for Granny's
needs!

The bother didn't end there, either. She refused to wipe with toilet paper. She used only water: it's cleaner. Two or three times a day my children had to guide her to the chosen place carrying a small bucket of water, a cup, and a shovel. Everything necessary to draw the maximum amount of attention.



My brother, Mr. Rakoto, didn't know what to do when Granny visited. He had a very respectable position in

La maison sanctuaire



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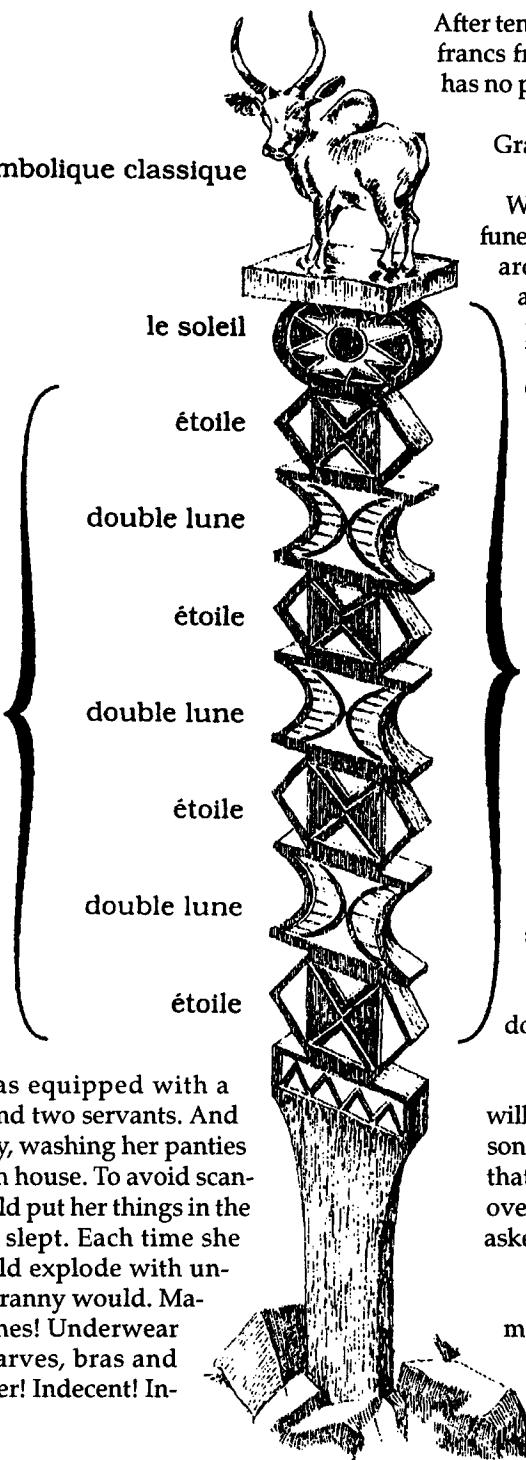
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society and he thought a great deal of his reputation. His house was equipped with a washing machine and two servants. And along comes Granny, washing her panties at the common wash house. To avoid scandal Mr. Rakoto would put her things in the machine while she slept. Each time she found out she would explode with uncontrollable rage, Granny would. Machines destroy clothes! Underwear tangled around scarves, bras and shirts mixed together! Indecent! Incestuous!

Sometimes she sold peanuts in front of Mr. Rakoto's house. She would squat on the ground and intercept visitors. She would sing and tell jokes to make people look her direction. She never went anywhere unnoticed. She wanted to talk loud and live large. What better place than the wash house to exchange gossip? What better place than the street to meet new people and survey the sights?

Granny could bargain 20 minutes for a cup of peanuts worth 20 francs. She brought the warmth of the village with her to town. "Friendship first," she always said.



After ten hours in the hot sun she was happy to make 100 francs from 200 francs' worth of peanuts. "Friendship has no price," she would tell you.

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

When her time came she wanted everyone at her funeral to sing and clap. And they did. They clowned around. They danced the dance of the crocodile and the warrior, they waddled like ducks. They pretended to fuck each other. Her funeral had to be done according to custom, not the way foreigners or townspeople do it nowadays.

There was no cross above her grave or flowers on her coffin. Her grave carried the horns of the zebu we sacrificed for her. Folk put practical things in her coffin: knives, baby chickens, tobacco, silver coins, plates. I didn't forget to add a bowl of stewed vegetables.

le chiffre 8 magique The funeral procession moved in a chaos of laughter and song, some known or just improvised, and not in the cold hypocritical silence of the town. We wore ripped and dirty clothes because we had to run Granny's body all over the place. The old and the children stayed in the village. All the young men drank alcohol and smoked marijuana before they departed. They sat her great-grandchildren on the casket.

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

A month before she died she confided her last will and testament to Mr. Soja. Soja is the oldest person in the village and a witch doctor. He is the one that chooses a woman for the strangers who stay overnight in the village, a thinking man. Granny asked Soja to put a little radio in her tomb.

In the end Granny gave Mr. Rakoto her shack made of palm branches, six acres of land, 20 head of cattle, 50 chickens, and all the kitchen utensils. She saved her best gift for me. A huge packing crate filled with batteries, all the batteries she had ever used for her radio. Mr. Soja showed them to me after the burial.

Granny didn't like to be alone. Without her "gossiping stones" she would have never made it through all the nights of her widowhood. She bequeathed me the closest thing to her heart, her bedtime companions.

From time to time I buy new batteries and a little rum and I carry them to Granny's tomb. I know she appreciates the attention.

Granny died with the first cock-a-doodle-doo.

Original Text

Grand-Mère

by Narcisse Randriamirado

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico.

Elle n'avait que deux petits-fils. Nos parents ont disparu dans un banal accident de voiture voilà bientôt dix ans. L'aîné, c'est mon frère: monsieur Rakoto. Il est marié, mariage civil et religieux, et n'a que deux enfants. Il est fonctionnaire et gagne assez bien sa vie.

Le cadet, c'est moi. Je suis marié. Mariage traditionnel, c'est-à-dire devant le Créateur, les ancêtres, la colline sacrée et la communauté villageoise. Avec le sacrifice d'un zébu à tête blanche et du rhum à gogo. J'ai sept enfants. On m'appelle Rainibe, ou le père de Be. Le diminutif de Bertrand, mon dernier enfant.

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico.

Nos voisins étaient restés à son chevet toute la nuit. Une case d'une chambre, en falafa. On se relayait. Les uns bavardaient à l'extérieur et les autres tenaient la main de grand-mère dans les leurs. On lui peignait les cheveux. On lui massait le front et les jambes. Le café circulait.

Grand-mère n'avait pas cessé de parler de sa mort depuis deux mois, de ce qu'on devrait faire lors ses funérailles. Si bien que tout le monde était au courant. De plus, il y avait des signes précurseurs: j'ai rêvé qu'on m'extrayait une canine. Cela voulait dire le "grand départ" d'une personne âgée de ma famille. Ma femme a aussi rêvé que je mangeais de la viande de boeuf et qu'il y avait beaucoup de monde.

Et pourtant, une semaine plus tôt, elle était encore à la rizière pour arracher les mauvaises herbes. Elle était encore allée chercher de l'argile dans un village voisin pour fabriquer des marmites de terre. Une vingtaine de kilomètres à pied. Et puis, la fatigue. Un peu de fièvre. La maladie qui empirait, et la mort quelques jours après.

Une semaine avant sa mort, le village savait déjà qu'un deuil se préparait, qu'un membre de la société "partirait" bientôt. La nuit, les chiens du village ne cessaient de hurler d'une drôle de façon en regardant la lune. Le chat de la maison avait disparu: les rats quittent le navire quand il va sombrer.

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico et je me sens un peu coupable. La fièvre? Quelques comprimés ou une petite piqûre et tout est résolu. Mais allez donc le dire à grand-mère. Ne connaît-elle pas le secret des infusions et des plantes? C'est pour cela qu'elle est restée vieille. Pour grand-mère, il fallait une autre science, une autre médecine, une autre logique. Une demi-heure après

avoir accouché de papa, elle se baignait dans la rivière, de la tête aux pieds.

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico. A son retour de la riziére, une semaine plus tôt, elle savait qu'elle partirait bientôt. En arrachant les mauvaises herbes, elle voyait son reflet dans l'eau. Celui-ci était plus pâle que d'habitude. Il en était de même pour les yeux, et la pénombre était plus sombre...

De bon matin, les femmes du village lavaient le corps de la disparue, l'habillaient et la décoraient. Après, elles nettoyaient la case et préparaient la cuisine. On apportait de grosses marmites, des assiettes...

Quand tout était prêt, voilà qu'une femme pleurait. Le plus fort possible. Un cri à fendre l'âme. Peu après, toutes les femmes l'imitaient. Un étrange hululement de hibou. Puis le silence. Une façon d'annoncer que dans cette case il y avait un mort. Ainsi, dix kilomètres à la ronde, tout le monde était au courant de la nouvelle qui passait de bouche à oreille. Tous les paysans voisins délaisseront leur travail quotidien pendant au moins une semaine.

On tuera un ou plusieurs boeufs; c'est selon la richesse de la famille endeuillée. La viande ne sera pas salée. Les gens apporteront du riz, du café, de l'argent et des assiettes.

Le soir arrive. Tout le monde est là et c'est la fête. La gaïté totale. On rivalise de chants jusqu'au matin. Les thèmes touchent tous les aspects de la vie: la mort, la vie, la moisson, le sexe... Les grillades parfument l'air. Les jeunes filles préparent le café et apportent de rhum dans un seau. Elles marchent sur les genoux pour plus de politesse. On se raconte des blagues et on les dit très fort pour que tout le monde en profite. Rires à gorges déployée de toute l'assistance. Une bonne partie des hommes seront ivres cette nuit. Ils se disputeront entre eux et pleureront grand-mère.

Cette nuit, il y aura de l'amour dans l'air. Chacun peut se coucher avec n'importe qui, pourvu qu'il n'y ait aucun lien de parenté. Pour les romantiques, ce sera l'occasion d'une idylle, qui se terminera par un enfant puis un mariage.

Grand-mère avait exigé pour sa mort une veillée traditionnelle. Tous les gens prononceraient de gros mots devant son corps inerte et l'insulteraient. Des mots obscènes, abjects, vils et sexuels. Tout le monde mimerait le procréation dans une atmosphère religieuse. Quel plus grand honneur pour la défunte?

Grand-mère habitait seule à la campagne et détestait la ville. Tout, dans son village, avait un sens affectif pour elle. Elle avait vécu là sa jeunesse avec grand-père.

Monsieur Rakoto et moi habitons en ville. Moi à l'orée et lui en plein centre. De temps en temps, grand-

mère nous rendait visite. Elle restait trois ou quatre jours chez mon frère, et faisait de même chez moi.

Elle arrivait toujours au moment du dîner. C'était tout un problème, car elle avait des goûts précis. Elle ne voulait que des brèdes, sauf pour l'anniversaire de sa première rencontre avec grand-père. De plus, elle n'aimait pas les aliments cuits sur le charbon, le pétrole ou le gaz. Elle voulait manger par terre, car elle avait toujours peur de tomber de la chaise. La nuit, elle dormait sur une natte étalée à même le parquet, et nous assurait qu'elle était très bien comme ça.

Un autre problème venait du fait qu'elle avait peur des W-C. Elle y suffoquait "à cause de l'odeur" et répugnait à s'y enfermer. D'ailleurs, faire ses besoins dans un même lieu, pour le père et sa fille "c'est pratiquement uninceste." Quel casse-tête de trouver un lieu discret pour les petits besoins de grand-mère...

L'ennui ne s'arrêtait là. Elle ne voulait pas de papier. Elle utilisait de l'eau: c'est plus propre. Alors, deux ou trois enfants devaient conduire grand-mère dans un endroit propice, munis d'un petit seau d'eau, d'un gobelet et d'une pelle. Bref, tout ce qu'il fallait pour attirer l'attention.

Mon frère aussi, monsieur Rakoto, s'arrachait les cheveux quand grand-mère était là. Il occupe une place distinguée dans la société et tient beaucoup à sa réputation. Et voilà grand-mère lavait son linge — et quel linge! — au lavoir public du quartier. Alors que la maison avait une machine à laver et deux domestiques. Pour éviter cela, mon frère, monsieur Rakoto, mettait les affaires de l'aïeule dans la machine pendant qu'elle dormait. Elle entrait dans une colère folle, la grand-mère. La machine abîme les vêtements. Ça ne fait pas attention. Les culottes y sont mêlées aux foulards. Les slips de tout le monde y sont mélangés. C'est indécent. C'est incestueux.

Parfois, elle vendait des pistaches, à même le sol, au marché de quartier et interpellait les clients. Elle chantait et racontait des blagues pour faire rire les gens. Elle ne passait jamais inaperçue.

Le lavoir et le marché n'était que des prétextes. Elle y trouvait des gens à qui parler. Elle y nouait de nouvelles amitiés. Là, tout le monde parle fort, plaisante, rit sans complexe. La lavoir et le marché? C'est pour rencontrer quelqu'un et apprendre les nouvelles. N'était-ce pas à la foire de village qu'elle avait rencontré grand-père?

Avec elle, on mettait un quart d'heure à marchander pour un tas de pistaches à vingt francs. Voilà la chaleur humaine qui manque dans cette ville. Et alors, qu'est-ce que ça fait si elle achète deux cents francs de pistaches pour les revendre cent francs après dix heures passées sous le soleil? L'amitié d'abord. L'amitié n'a pas de prix.

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico.

Elle avait exigé que lors de son enterrement tout le monde chante en battant des mains. Tout le monde ferait

le pitre. On jouerait la danse de crocodile et du guerrier, et on imiterait la marche du canard. On parodierait l'acte sexuel. Son enterrement devrait se faire selon la coutume, et non à la mode des étrangers et des citadins.

On ne porterait pas de croix, mais des cornes de zébu. Il y n'aurait pas de fleurs mais des couteaux, du poulet, du tabac, de l'argent et des assiettes qu'on mettrait dans sa tombe et par dessus. On n'oublierait pas les brèdes et quelques semences. Le cortège s'avancerait dans un fracas de rires et de chants assourdissants et improvisés, et non dans le silence glacé et hypocrite de la ville. On porterait la tenu la plus débraillée possible, car on porterait le corps de grand-mère en courant. Les vieux et les enfants resteraient au village car ils ne pourraient pas suivre la course des jeunes. Ces derniers boiraient de l'alcool et fumerait du chanvre avant le départ. Sur le cercueil de grand-mère, on ferait asseoir ses arrière-petits-fils.

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico. Avant de mourir, un mois plus tôt, elle avait confié son testament, oral bien sûr, à monsieur Soja. Soja, c'est le chef du village, doyen et sorcier à la fois, celui à qui incombe le lourd devoir de trouver une femme à tout étranger qui passe la nuit au village. Grand-mère a chargé Soja, le moment venu, de mettre sa petite radio dans sa tombe. Comme cela, elle pourrait écouter de la musique.

Ainsi, toute la richesse de grand-mère irait à mon grand frère, monsieur Rakoto. Sa maison en falafa, deux ou trois hectares de terrain, une vingtaine de têtes de bétail, une cinquantaine de volailles, les ustensiles de cuisine... Mais elle ne m'avait pas oublié. Elle a dit à tout le monde qu'elle me réservait la meilleure part de l'héritage. Que ce serait une très grande surprise pour moi, son petit-fils préféré.

La grande surprise se trouvait dans une énorme caisse de presque un mètre cube. Je ne pourrais en prendre possession qu'après l'enterrement.

Après, je suivis donc monsieur Soja pour ouvrir la lourde caisse. Dans la boîte, il y avait toutes les piles usagées que grand-mère avait utilisées pour sa radio.

Grand-mère n'aimait pas la solitude. C'est pourquoi elle vendait des pistaches au marché. C'est pourquoi elle allait au lavoir du quartier pour faire sa lessive. La nuit, c'était la radio qui lui tenait compagnie. Sans piles, "ces pierres magiques et bavardes qui chantent," elle se serait trouvée seule. Aussi me léguait-elle ce qui lui tenait le plus à cœur: les piles usées et jalousement collectionnées durant son veuvage.

Avec elle, c'est un monde qui a disparu. De temps en temps, j'achèterai des piles neuves que je porterai sur la tombe de grand-mère.

Grand-mère est morte au premier cocorico.

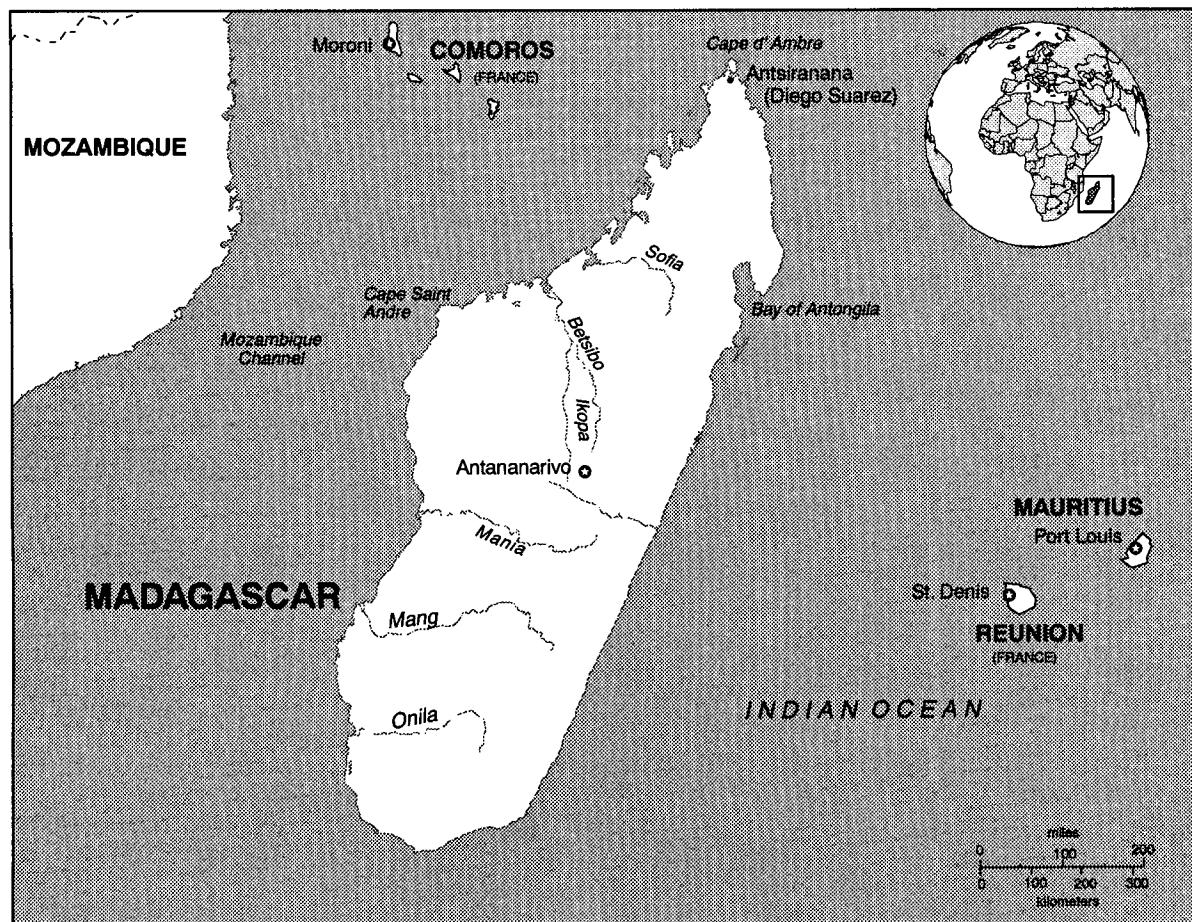
About the Author

The author of "Granny" is Narcisse Randriamirado, a forty-five-year old writer associated with the "Generation of 1980." These writers, who were born under the colonial regime, have witnessed independence, riot, political assassination, military power grabs, socialist revolution, penury, popular backlash, and even the return of a deposed dictator in the course of their short lives. The guiding theme of their work is the search for identity — Who are the Malgash?

Narcisse presently lives in Antsiranana where he is well known as a journalist and a teacher.

Other works by Narcisse Randriamirado:

- On ne vit que trois fois*, A Play (1991)
- Allons z'omelettes....*, A Play (1992)
- Dahalo, Voleurs de Zébus*, Short Story (1993)
- Gri-gri à la noix*, Short Story (1997)
- A la ronde*, A Play (1997)



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Institute Fellows and their Activities

Adam Smith Albion. A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is studying and writing about the republics of Central Asia, and their importance as actors within and without the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. Degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Christopher P. Ball. An economist, Chris Ball holds a B.A. from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and attended the 1992 International Summer School at the London School of Economics. He studied Hungarian for two years in Budapest while serving as Project Director for the Hungarian Atlantic Council. As an Institute Fellow, he is studying and writing about Hungarian minorities in the former Soviet-bloc nations of East and Central Europe. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Chenoa Egawa. An enrolled member of the Lummi Indian Nation, Chenoa is spending two years living among mesoAmerican Indians, studying successful and not-so-successful cooperative organizations designed to help the Indians market their manufactures, agricultural products and crafts without relying on middlemen. A former trade specialist for the American Indian Trade and Development Council of the Pacific Northwest, Chenoa's B.A. is in International Business and Spanish from the University of Washington in Seattle. [THE AMERICAS]

Marc Michaelson. A program manager for Save the Children in The Gambia, Marc has moved across Africa to the Horn, there to assess nation-building in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and (conditions permitting) availing and unavailing humanitarian efforts in northern Somalia and southern Sudan. With a B.A. in political science from Tufts, a year of non-degree study at the London School of Economics and a Master's in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame, he describes his postgraduate years as "seven years' experience in international development programming and peace research." [sub-SAHARA]

Randi Movich. The current John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, Randi is spending two years in Guinea, West Africa, studying and writing about the ways in which indigenous women use forest resources for

reproductive health. With a B.A. in biology from the University of California at Santa Cruz and a Master of Science degree in Forest Resources from the University of Idaho, Randi is building on two years' experience as a Peace Corps agroforestry extension agent in the same region of Guinea where she will be living as a Fellow with her husband, Jeff Fields — also the holder of an Idaho Master's in Forest Resources. [sub-SAHARA]

John B. Robinson. A 1991 Harvard graduate with a certificate of proficiency from the Institute of Kiswahili in Zanzibar, John spent two years as an English teacher in Tanzania. He received a Master's degree in Creative Writing from Brown University in 1995. He and his wife Delphine, a French oceanographer, are spending two years in Madagascar with their two young sons, Nicolas and Rowland, where he will be writing about varied aspects of the island-nation's struggle to survive industrial and natural-resource exploitation and the effects of a rapidly swelling population. [sub-SAHARA]

Daniel B. Wright. A sinologist with a Master's Degree in International Relations from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, Dan's fellowship immerses him in southwest China's Guizhou Province, where he, his journalist-wife Shou Guowei, and their two children (Margaret and Jon) will base themselves for two years in the city of Duyun. Previously a specialist on Asian and Chinese affairs for the Washington consulting firm of Andreea, Vick & Associates, Dan also studied Chinese literature at Beijing University and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary of Pasadena, California. [EAST ASIA]

Teresa C. Yates. A former member of the American Civil Liberties Union's national task force on the workplace, Teresa is spending two years in South Africa observing and reporting on the efforts of the Mandela government to reform the national land-tenure system. A Vassar graduate with a juris doctor from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Teresa had an internship at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg in 1991 and 1992, studying the feasibility of including social and economic rights in the new South African constitution. [sub-SAHARA]

Chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise, Institute Fellows are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

ICWA Letters

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