

for their own sake. He rightly chastises Boas for mining this tale for “story elements” but neglecting larger meanings, and he calls Lévi-Strauss’s famous analysis of “Asdiwal” an oversimplified “flight of fancy” (p. 93). But, after tearing down other approaches, Maud’s own lengthy analysis contains mostly questions which the ethnographic record could have answered for him. Maud conjectures that “Asdiwal” is an Eagle-clan saga (p. 105, p. 141), though it bears none of the hallmarks of lineage histories, such as protagonists who leave matrilineal descendants. This is obvious to anyone who has spent sufficient time with the Barbeau-Beynon corpus.

Maud’s own “flights of fancy” abound. Maud complains that little is known of Tate’s identity and offers a confused genealogy identifying him and Beynon as brothers (p. 14), but much could have been cleared up by consulting Garfield’s and Beynon’s preserved notes. Of Tate’s relative, the Tsimshian diarist Arthur Wellington Clah, Maud assumes that Clah is from Chinook Jargon and was a sobriquet given him by a missionary (pp. 11-12), though records are clear that it derives from Wellington’s Tsimshian hereditary name La’ax.

Whether it is details or larger issues, Maud seems obsessed with Boas’s injustices to Tate’s work but strangely uninterested in its context as elaborated elsewhere in the literature. The ludicrous suggestion that a lineage history is unreliable when told by a member of that lineage (p. 91) is a case in point.

Finally, in an epilogue, Maud complains of *American Anthropologist*’s rejection of his earlier paper on Boas and Hunt: “Boasians closed ranks with a vengeance, and the piece was not published” (p. 129). (One wonders: are there any more Boasians?) For a scholar to speculate about possible politics behind a rejection is only human, but airing conspiracy theories publicly is unsavoury. Any readers making it that far in *Transmission Difficulties* will remain unworried about A.A.’s review process but may well wonder what exactly is going on over at Talonbooks.

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**Caroline B. Brettell**, *Writing against the Wind: A Mother’s Life History*, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999, xxiv + 193 pages.

Reviewer: *Sally Cole*  
*Concordia University*

The title of anthropologist Caroline Brettell’s “life history” of her mother recalls Nisa’s words to Marjorie Shostak in *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (Harvard University Press, 1981): “I’ll break open the story and tell you what is there. Then, like the others that have fallen out onto the sand, I will finish with it, and the wind will take it away.” As Shostak sought to do with Nisa’s words, Brettell hopes to ensure that, by recording and publishing a life of her mother—a practice Susan Geiger calls “writing against the wind”—her mother’s words and life will not be lost to the

wind after her death. This life history is also Brettell’s attempt to come to terms with the loss of her mother to cancer in 1991.

Zoe Bieler was a talented woman whose life began on a farm in the Okanagan Valley in 1915. As a child she was an avid reader who dreamt of other worlds and who early discovered writing as a tool of self-realization and exploration of life’s possibilities and alternatives. Zoe was profoundly curious about the world and trained herself to be a keen observer and a good listener through the practice of journal-keeping which she began as a young teenager. At the University of British Columbia during the 1930s, she worked on the campus paper, the *Ubysey*. Through the gift of a savings bond, her dying mother encouraged her to travel to Europe after graduation and Zoe faithfully recorded her observations of that year, 1938-39, in a travel memoir. A few years after her return to Canada, she was launched in what became a lifelong career in journalism in Montreal working first for *The Standard* (1943-1954), then for *The Montreal Star* (1954-1979). In an appendix, Brettell provides a fascinating sample of Zoe’s writings as a journalist on topics such as adoption, divorce settlements, single mothers, working mothers, sexuality, genetics and pay equity.

Brettell organizes the book around the different genres of writing her mother explored throughout her life: the adolescent diary, the travel memoir, the published journalism. In addition to these sources, she draws on her own memories and those of relatives and her mother’s friends and colleagues as well as the weekly letters she and her mother exchanged from 1967, the year Brettell left home to study anthropology at Brown University, until a month before Zoe’s death in 1991. “As mother and daughter we were bound by writing,” Brettell recalls. Brettell’s structure for the book effectively creates a multiply voiced text: each chapter begins with a quote from Zoe, then a prologue in Brettell’s words as daughter-author-social scientist in which she situates the account that follows in social, historical and literary context. The text that follows relies largely upon Zoe’s words chosen by Brettell both to help “compose” her mother’s life and to offer her mother’s words as an observer of the world of women of her time and place. “It is my mother’s production of words that provides both the foundation and the structural framework for this book,” Brettell writes (p. xviii).

In her Introduction, Caroline Brettell—who has previously published the life histories of three Portuguese emigrant women in *We have Already Cried Many Tears* (Waveland Press, 1995)—reviews the anthropological literature on life histories and the issues of voice, authority, self and other that are present in all life writing and ethnography. In reading *Writing against the Wind*, I was reminded of *A Very Ordinary Life* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1974), anthropologist Rolf Knight’s life history of his mother who also grew up in British Columbia in the early years of the 20th century. When Knight had asked her if he could record her life history, his mother had replied: “Why would you want to tell my story? I’ve lived

a very ordinary life." Brettell had wanted her mother to write her life story during her retirement but Zoe had felt there was not much of a story to tell. Why would people be interested in her life, in her career? she had asked (p. xi). *Writing against the Wind* joins the best of anthropological life histories of "ordinary" people in giving us extraordinarily rich ethnographic insights into the diversity of ways of being human in particular times and places.

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**Karsten Paerregaard**, *Linking Separate Worlds: Urban Migrants and Rural Lives in Peru*, Oxford: Berg, 1997.

Reviewer: *Susan Vincent*  
*Mount Allison University*

Paerregaard begins his book by invoking the long-standing image of Peru as two separate worlds, one modern, official, urban, Spanish-speaking and capitalist, while the other is traditional, informal, rural, Quechua-speaking and peasant. While early treatments largely left the connections between the two worlds unanalyzed, over the past two decades these connections have been made the subject of anthropological research. Paerregaard contributes to this focus on connections by writing about migrants as the manifestation of the links between the worlds.

This is a wide-ranging book, replete with fascinating detail about the lives of the villagers of Tapay in the southern Peruvian highlands and of Tapeño migrants to Arequipa and Lima. The strength of the book lies in the way disparate aspects from sports to religion are shown to be linked together. Paerregaard refuses to portray an easy homogeneous picture of Tapeño society and culture. Instead he weaves polyvalent themes of history, ethnicity and folklore, religion, kinship, livelihood and politics around the movements of migrants to present the complexity of Tapeño identity. This is an ethnographic rather than a theoretical book: Paerregaard's framework is to present a multitude of perspectives on Tapeño identity, rejecting the functionalist representation of homogeneity of much past anthropological writing.

The major focus of the book relates to ethnicity and identity which Paerregaard demonstrates to be complex and dynamic. For example, a discussion of the impact of the immigration of a family of Spanish-speaking mestizos in the 19th century, a priest and his brother and sister-in-law, reflects a combination of history, migration, kinship, politics and economics. While the priest's children (!) were identified as local people (*runa*) since he could not acknowledge paternity, his brother's children continued to be considered *mestizo* and formed the local elite. This domination ended when return *runa* migrants, with a command of Spanish as well as of political and economic process, were able to displace the *mestizo* family. Paerregaard then goes on to demonstrate that the current state of ethnic identity is differently formulated from the inherited class/cultural/linguistic division of the past. Thus, in

Chapter 8, Paerregaard presents a discussion of ritual in both rural and urban spheres, demonstrating the dynamic and contextual hybrid that comprises folk identity.

Paerregaard's focus on migration allows for a rich analysis of the interplay between ideas deriving from rural and urban worlds. For example, in Chapter 7, a discussion of Catholicism and of conversion and reconversion to different Protestant sects in Tapay is set against a background of politics and migration. The necessary abstinence from drinking, music and dancing that Protestantism entails in Tapay leads to social isolation for converts, making it difficult to participate in rural social life. Thus, Paerregaard argues that Protestantism is linked to migrants, whose image of being Tapeño is less invested in close reciprocal social ties than non-migrants. Still, many lapse back into Catholicism as they attempt to adjust to a workable identity in the context of peasant life.

Much of the literature on rural-urban migration in Peru takes the economy as a central focus. While Paerregaard's concentration on identity overshadows economic processes, livelihood activities are a part of identity. Thus, the barter-based economy of Tapay is contrasted with the participation of migrants in capitalist markets. Barter and reciprocity do not imply harmonious social relations as, within Tapay, the vertical ecology is described in relation to the competing claims of the different regions in the community: there are social and political tensions between herders and agriculturalists, and among the agriculturalists there is rivalry over access to irrigation water. Clearly, the rural and urban economies are related as the wide range of activities in which Tapeños families get involved in order to meet their needs has extended to include urban work as migration becomes a part of a family's strategy. The family, like the community, is realistically portrayed, as he shows the contradictions and disagreements which arise as children and siblings grow up and have different experiences and expectations.

The message Paerregaard conveys is complex and even confusing. He is at pains to emphasize the great differences between urban and rural Tapeño lives and insists that these worlds are separate and incompatible. Nevertheless, he simultaneously shows the ways in which these worlds are intertwined and mutually defined as migrants and villagers move or visit back and forth, send agricultural produce or money to each other, and derive their identity from being from Tapay. On top of these opposing binaries of rural and urban, separate and united, Paerregaard adds a third: anthropologist and Tapeño. He notes that "An essential observation in my study of Tapeño villagers and migrants is that the separation of Peru's rural and urban worlds is as real to the people I studied as to myself as anthropologist" (p. 250). However, he says, unlike the anthropologist, the Tapeño is not disconcerted by living a contradictory double life and, indeed, finds that this "engenders strong feelings of unity" (p. 251). For the anthropologist, the living of contradictions is the problem to be analyzed and that is what Paerregaard has done here. There is no "dark side of the moon" (p. 250) as Paerregaard has shone a light on