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エスニシティの新たなる地平 新しいユダヤ系アメリカ文学の可能性 ポストモダン・ユダヤ系アメリカ作家とのインタビュー

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# エスニシティの新たなる地平

新しいユダヤ系アメリカ文学の可能性 ポストモダン・ユダヤ系アメリカ作家とのインタビュー

The New Horizon of the Jewish American Literature: Interviews with Three Postmodern Jewish American Writers

レイモンド・フェダマン Raymond Federman ハロルド・ジェフィ Harold Jaffe デイヴィッド・マトリン David Matlin

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## はじめに

2005年から2008年の4年間、私は科学研究補助金(基盤研究C)を頂き、課題「エスニシティの新たなる地平――アメリカ文学における新しいユダヤ性」に取り組んだ。そしてこの研究の一環として、1970年代以降に文学活動を始め、新しい文学表現を試みる四人のユダヤ系アメリカ作家、ウォルター・アビッシュ、レイモンド・フェダマン、ハロルド・ジェフィ、デイヴィッド・マトリンのインタビューを行った。

アビッシュとフェダマンはともに、極端なまでに実験的な文学表現で文壇に登場した作家で、アビッシュに祖国オーストリアを離れることを強いたナチスドイツの侵攻や、フェダマンから両親と姉妹の四人を奪ったホロコーストへの言及はあっても、それを歴史的な視点から直接描くことを作品の目的としてはいない。しかし、作品の基盤をなす歴史認識や道徳観、社会的責任感には、ホロコーストの影響が明白に見て取れる。こうした社会的・倫理的特徴は彼らを他のポストモダン作家と区別する大きな特徴であるだけでなく、彼らよりも少し若いアメリカ生まれのユダヤ系作家で、ホロコーストの影響を直接受けていないジェフィとマトリンにも共通する。そこで、これらふたつの世代の新しいユダヤ系作家のインタビューは、興味深い新しい文学作品を作り出す作家たちの個別の特徴を明らかにするためだけでなく、彼らの共通基盤となる普遍的なユダヤ性やホロコーストの影響について論考するうえで、極めて重要な資料になるだろうと考えた。

インタビューではできるだけ作家の率直な意見を引き出したいという思惑から、 くつろいだ雰囲気を作り出すため、雑談を交えてかなり長い時間をかけて行った。 そのため、公開を目的に録音した部分にも、文学議論だけでなくプライバシーに関 わる内容やたわいない話が多く含まれていた。文学議論の枠に縛られず、自由な展 開を見せる会話はそれなりに興味深いものだったが、録音データに基づいて私が書き起こした原稿を作家に校正してもらう段階で、その大部分は、あまりに個人的で、不用意に言及されたものとして、あるいは、脈絡を欠いていたり、冗長に聞こえるからという理由で、割愛されていった。

従って、最終版のインタビューは実際のインタビューよりもずっとコンパクトになっている。ただし、校正の段階で作家は自分の著作姿勢を鮮明にすることに腐心し、多くの表現をより正確で厳密なものに書き替えている。しかも、その後も作家と私の間で何度もメールを交換し、曖昧な点や不明確な点をさらに細かく議論した。このようにたび重なる校正を経て仕上げられたため、最終版インタビューにおける作家の言葉は研究資料として十分信頼できるものになったと断言できる。

2008年に私はこのインタビューを日本語に翻訳し、『英語青年』5月号から8月号に連載した。この連載は好評を得、新しいユダヤ系アメリカ作家に対して多くの方に新たな関心を抱いてもらうことができた。そして、この連載ののち、いろいろな方々からインタビューの原文を公開してもらいたいという要請を受けた。

日本語と英語は性質が大きく異なる言語であり、翻訳にあたり自然な日本語にしようと思えば、意訳せざるをえない場合も多い。それ故、文学研究者であれば、作家が実際にどのような言葉を用いているのか知りたいと願うのは、当然のことである。しかも、インタビューの内容が作家によって丁寧に検証し直され、信頼に足る資料となり得ればこそ、本インタビューの原文公開は一層重要なものになる。そこで、インタビューの原文をできるだけまとめて公表したいと考え、『広島大学大学院文学研究科論集(第69巻)特輯号』の出版をお願いした。ただし、四人の作家のうち、いちはやくインタビューを行ったアビッシュのものは、すでに『英語英文學研究 第51号』で原文を公開しているので、本編では残り三人の作家のインタビュー原文だけを収録することにした。

なお、私の応募に答え、インタビューの原文公開の機会を与えて下さった、広島 大学大学院広報・社会連携委員会委員長、河西英通氏、及び委員の皆様、委員会判 断を快諾して下さった文学研究科の皆様には、心よりお礼を申し上げたい。

ところで、上述したように、作家による厳密な校正を経た最終版インタビューは、 文学研究資料として非常に価値の高いものだと確信している。その反面、うち解け た自由な会話が切り落とされたことで、長時間のインタビューを通して私が感じ取 った作家の人となりは、十分に伝わらなかったのではないかと懸念している。そこ で、この機会を利用し、最終版インタビューを補完する目的で、それぞれの作家の 略歴のあと、英文インタビューの前に、私の個人的な思い出を書き添えた。

特に、フェダマンとジェフィは以前から知っていたこともあり、今回のインタビューに留まらない思い出を書き記した。勿論、ここに記したことは私のほんの個人的な印象にすぎない。しかし、この私の記憶の中の作家を通じて、完成版の洗練された文面から窺える人柄とはひと味違う、より生身に近い作家に触れてもらえることができればと願っている。そして、こうした補足から作家がより身近に感じられ、彼らの今後の活動に一層注目してもらえるならば、これに勝る喜びはない。

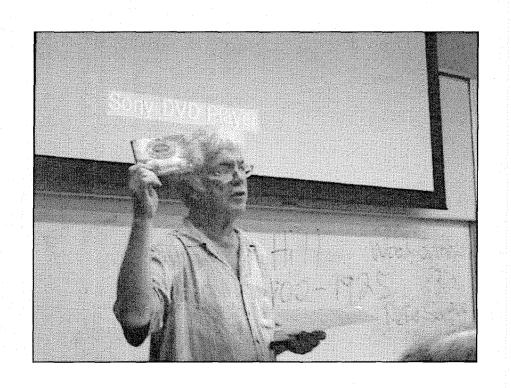
## 2009年9月1日

新田 玲子

追記(2009年11月11日):

2009年10月6日早朝にレイモンド・フェダマン氏が逝去されたと、お嬢さんのシモーヌさんから連絡を頂いた。11月29日には追悼式典が彼の自宅近くのカントリー・クラブで催される予定である。特撮号に英文インタビューを掲載させてもらいたいとお願いしたとき、氏の病状はすでにかなり悪化していたのだが、まことに残念でならない。

ここに謹んでご冥福をお祈りしたい。

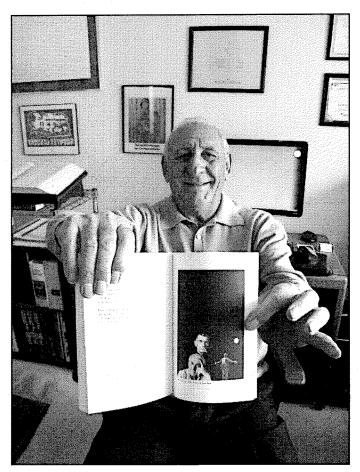


ラリー・マキャフェリー教授、

2007年6月の広島大学における講演風景:

今回のインタビューが無事終えられたのは、マキャフェリー 教授が寛大にも様々な助言と手助けを与えてくださったか らである。教授には心から感謝している。

# レイモンド・フェダマン



レイモンド・フェダマン氏、大好きなベケットの写真と共に: フェダマン氏宅にて筆者撮影

## 1. 略歴

レイモンド・フェダマンは、1928年5月15日、フランスのパリで生まれた。両親、姉、妹の五人家族の、貧しいながらも平穏な生活は、1942年7月16日の早朝、突如破壊される。この日、ゲシュタポが絶滅収容所へ送るために狩り出したユダヤ人の中に、フェダマン一家も含まれていたからである。レイモンドは母親の手でクローゼットに隠されて難を逃れるが、この出来事により両親と姉妹の四人を失う。彼が自身の文学について語るとき、その原点としてしばしば言及する X-X-X-X という象徴は、この四人の喪失を表すものである。

フェダマンは南フランスの農場で働きながら終戦を迎え、先にポーランドからアメリカへ無事逃げ出していた叔父を頼り、1947年に渡米する。当時叔父はデトロイトに住んでおり、彼はそこの自動車工場で夜勤を務めながら高校に通うが、この生活は彼にとって孤独で惨めなものだった。高校を卒業すると彼はニューヨークに出、昼間は働きながらニューヨーク市立大学の夜間部で勉強を続ける。しかしアメリカ市民権を得ようとしたことが災いし、1951年3月、朝鮮戦争に徴兵。1952年2月に韓国の戦場に送り込まれる。幸いなことに前線にいた期間は短く、フランス語の通訳として日本へ呼び出され、そのまま1954年3月の除隊までを日本で過ごした。彼はこの間にものを書くことを始め、1953年に東京でアメリカの市民権の交付を受けた。

除隊後、フェダマンは GI 法の特権を活かしてコロンビア大学に入学し、創作学科で学ぶ。そして 1957 年 6 月に優秀な成績で卒業すると、カリフォルニア大学ロサンゼルス校からの奨学金を得て進学。1958 年に修士号を、そして 1963 年に、サミュエル・ベケットに関する論文で博士号を取得。さらにこの間、1958 年に妻エリカと出会って結婚。1962 年には娘シモーヌが誕生している。また、1959 年から 1964

年にかけてカリフォルニア大学サンタバーバラ校でフランス語を教えるかたわら、 多くの詩も書いている。

1964年、フェダマンはニューヨーク州立大学バッファロー校のフランス文学講座に迎えられる。1973年、英文学講座に移籍。以後、1999年の定年までそこで教鞭を執りながら、英語とフランス語の両方で作品を発表するバイリンガル作家として活動。定年後はサンディエゴに落ち着き、サンディエゴ郊外の瀟洒な住宅地に居を構え、そこで執筆に専念している。

フェダマンの作品は、母親の手で押し入れに隠され、ゲシュタポから逃れた体験を扱う The Voice in the Closet (1979)、南フランスの農場での生活を回顧する最新作 Return to Manure (2006)、1947年に渡米した頃の出来事を題材にした Double or Nothing (1971)、アメリカについての発見とアメリカ軍での生活を描いた Take It or Leave It (1976)、朝鮮戦争のあとコロンビア大学在学中の恋愛に関わる Smiles on Washington Square (1985)、アメリカで 10年以上も暮らしてから初めてフランスに戻ったときの体験に基づく The Twofold Vibration (1982)など、すべてが実体験に拠っている。しかし、自ら〈サーフィクション〉と名付けた、フィクションを凌ぐ新たなフィクションを目指す彼の作品は、通常の伝記を超えた大きな広がりを呈している。

# 2. フェダマン氏との思い出

フェダマン氏が広島大学で講演をしたのは、1998年5月27日のことである。この時、彼の翻訳者で、来日講演のお世話をなさっていた東京女子大学の今村楯夫先生から電話が入り、今度レイモンドがそちらに行くから宜しく、と言われた。私ははたと戸惑った。というのも、氏のことはもちろん知っていたし、新しいユダヤ系作家であるから、作品を読もうと努力したことはあったのだが、いかんせん、最初にトライしたのが Take It or Leave It、そしてその次が Double or Nothing で、そ

の書き方の奇抜さに悩まされ、どちらの作品も最初の 10 頁を越えられなかったのである。

これはまずい! と、大慌てで本を開き直したが、一生懸命読もうとすればする ほど、自分の英語力のなさ、詩的表現に対する苦手意識、新しい文学に対する研ぎ 澄まされた感性の欠如を思い知らされ、劣等感が膨らむまばかりで少しも先に進め ない。結局、どちらの作品も読み終えられないままにフェダマン氏を迎えることと なった。

自己紹介、それに続いて、日本や広島についての印象など、お決まりの挨拶が交わされるなか、フェダマン氏は満面の笑みを浮かべ、フランス語訛りの英語で饒舌に語り、人の心を開かせずにはおかない親和感に満ち満ちていた。私はすぐに彼に好感を抱く一方で、彼の作品に関する意見をいつ求められるかと冷や冷やしていた。

恐れていたその瞬間は予想以上に早くやってきた。互いの紹介が終わり、私と面と向かい会った途端、氏はにこにこ顔のまま、ごく気軽な口調で、君は僕の本のどれを読んだことがある? と、実に単刀直入に尋ねてきたからである。私は最初、その点をなんとか誤魔化し通すつもりで、あれやこれやの台詞を用意していたのだが、彼の明るい率直な眼差しを前に、思わず正直な答えを口にしていた。

何度か本を開いたけれども、どうしても先に進めないんです。

私は彼の顔に当惑の表情が浮かび、周囲に気まずい空気が流れることを予期して、 内心身をすくめた。しかしフェダマン氏の笑顔はそんなことで曇らされることはな かった。

じゃあ、今日の講演が助けになるかもしれないね。今度は僕がどんな作家かわかっているから、作品がずっと読みやすくなるよ。

フェダマン氏は明るい笑顔のままで私を力づけた。これが彼の人柄の大きさ、度 量の広さを、しみじみと感じた最初の瞬間だった。

その日の講演は、"The Necessity and Impossibility of Being a Jewish Writer"という題目で行われた。その中でフェダマン氏は、1942 年、パリのアパートにゲシュタポが

やってきたとき、母親が彼をそっとクローゼットに押し込んだおかげで彼だけが生き延びたことや、彼の作家活動がその体験に強く影響されていることを語った。そして、今日のユダヤ系作家が抱える問題について、"the question is not; WHAT to speak / write about, but HOW to speak / write about this unforgivable enormity"と、彼の新しい文学形式がホロコーストの本質を伝えるための彼なりの挑戦であることを説明した。ホロコースト生存者の生の証言や作家の生の声には心を動かす強い力がある。私は奇抜な形式や猥雑な表現に惑わされて見逃していた、氏の切なる思いに初めて触れ、もう一度最初から作品を読み直そうと心に誓った。

実際、この講演の後、私はフェダマン氏の作品を初めて面白いと感じるようになった。その手助けをしてくれたのは、フェダマン氏のフランス語訛りの強い、明るく楽しげな声だった。氏は、広島の講演会でも、そのあとの歓迎会でも、いかにもラテン的なくつろいだ様子で、身振り手振りを交えたフランス語訛りの強い、実にエネルギッシュな英語で語らった。次に東京で今村先生を交えて再会し、三人でもっとプライベートな時間を過ごしたときも同様だった。おかげで、それ以後、彼の作品を読むといつも彼の声が聞こえてくる。そしてこの声に助けられ、私は作品に籠められたユーモアに気付かされ、あからさまな逆境の中でも不条理なほどの希望を確信して行動し続ける主人公の楽天主義を笑いで受け止める作家の視点や、挑戦し続けるしかない世の中を生き抜こうとする未来志向が、理解できるようになった気がしている。(気がするだけで、理解はまだまだ不十分かもしれないが……)

フェダマン氏とはその後もずっと連絡を取り続けていたので、今回のインタビューにもふたつ返事で応じてもらえた。

氏の現在の住まいは、サンディゴ市内から車で30分くらい北に向かって走った、谷間を望む小高い住宅地にある。車がないと不便だ、と言われていたので、私はレンタカーを借りていた。そして、万一に備えて少し早めにホテルを出たせいもあり、安全運転にもかかわらず、予定より30分ほど早く到着した。そこで、フェダマン氏

宅に乗り入れる前にあたりを軽く一周した。

南カリフォルニアらしい真っ青な空のもと、スペイン風の美しい家並みのオレンジ色の屋根と目にも鮮やかな白い壁が、濃い緑の木立に映えてからりとした明るさを放っていた。また、通りから見おろせる広い谷も見応えのある景色で、胸がすく思いがした。のちほど、なぜサンディエゴに住むことにしたのかと尋ねたとき、氏は温暖な気候と地中海を思わせる美しい風景を挙げたが、彼の住まいがある場所はサンディエゴの中でもそうした特徴が顕著で、氏の気質にもぴったりなように感じられた。

フェダマン氏宅は内部も美しく開放的で、間取りもゆったり取られていた。氏は 仕事スペースとして、二階の左端の二部屋を、一方を書斎として、もう一方を書庫 として、使っていた。書斎にはコンピュータの載った机と書き物机。書き物机の正 面の窓からは、美しい谷を遠くまで望むことができた。

ひととおり家を案内してもらったあと、私たちは書斎に落ち着き、少し近況を交換してからインタビューの録音に取りかかった。

フェダマン氏の作品がすべて自身を語っていることからも、また講演会で自身の 経歴を語りつけていることからも、彼は自分自身について語り慣れているに違いな い。少し水を向ければ、愉快な逸話や具体的な資料を挙げて、次から次へと話しが 展開してゆく。これがただの会話であれば、私はきっと笑い転げながら耳を傾け続 けていただろうにと思う、そんな楽しさに溢れたものだった。

ただ、インタビューとなれば、そうそう聞き惚れてばかりもいられない。というのも、こちらが聞き役に徹してしまえば、彼が語ってきかせたいことしか聞けないからである。そのため、話の腰を折るようなことになったとしても、時々はこちらが聞きたいと思うところへ会話を引きずり戻す必要があった。幸いなことに、フェダマン氏は極めて融通が利き、そのうえ、強引に話題を変えても元気が損なわれたりはしないので、会話が止まることは決してなかった。

インタビューにおいてもっと大きな支障となったのは、フェダマン氏が話の途中

でしばしば席を立ち、机の引き出しからファイルを引き出したり、戸口の傍のファイルケースから古い写真を取り出したり、あるいはまた向かいの壁に飾られた写真を示すために歩いていったりと、しきりに動き回ることだった。私は簡単な録音装置しか用意していなかった。マイクの性能はかなり良かったのだが、絶えず移動し続ける音源をどれくらいカバーできているか気が気ではなかった。

そんな私の心配をよそに、フェダマン氏が資料を求めて隣の書庫へと駆けだしたときは、私は内心、"Oh, my God!"と叫びながら、録音機とマイクを両手に抱え、ばたばたと後を追いかけた。そんな私を彼は呆れたような顔で振り返り、録音のことは気にしなくても大丈夫だよ、と言った。もしうまく収録されてなければ、メールで質問し直してくれたらいい。それよりか、僕の話をしっかりお聞きよ、と。

実際、古い写真を紐解きながら話してくれる昔の思い出話には、恋愛絡みの話題 (!)も少なくなく、「これはここだけの話だよ」と、ひとさし指を唇にあて、釘を刺されることも多かった。結局、私は彼の家に足を運んだ者だけに許される喜びを与えてもらっていたのだ。それに気付いた時点で、私は彼のアドバイスどおり、彼の話を直接聞くという喜びを味わうことに専念し、録音についてはのちほど考えることにした。(幸い、書庫での会話を除けば、すべての会話がほぼ聞き取れる状態にあったので、この判断はまさに当を得たものとなった。)

フェダマン氏の話があちらこちらと展開してゆくため、インタビューは予定時間 をはるかに超えてしまった。その時間は私にとってとても楽しいものだったのは言うまでもないが、氏もまた、私との会話を心から楽しんでくれているように見えた ことは嬉しかった。もっとも、このように感じさせるところに、フェダマンマジックがあるのかも知れない。

インタビューのあと、写真を撮らせてもらいたいと言うと、書き物机に座ってものを書いているポーズが作家らしいだろうと、やらせを提案(28頁の写真)。さらに、僕の好きなおもちゃ、というので、資料室のギロチンと並んで一枚。一方、書斎に飾られていた、彼が尊敬してやまないベケットの写真の横に並んで欲しいと頼

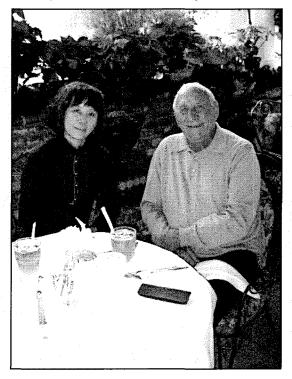
むと、ガラス越しの写真ではうまく映らないからと、彼とベケットが一緒に写った本を取り出し、お目当てのページを開いて見せながら、こうしているのを撮るといいと、本章の冒頭(7頁)に掲載した写真のポーズを取ってくれた。その行動のどれひとつをとっても年齢を感じさせない素早さで、私はカメラを手にあたふたと彼のあとを追いかけ続けなければならなかった。

インタビューのあと、遅めの昼食に誘うと、彼は行きつけのフレンチレストランに案内してくれた。料理がおいしいだけでなく、オーナーがフランス語を話すのだと、彼は嬉しそうに説明した。そして、少し待たなくてはならないと言われたときも、オーナーに私を紹介したり、彼とちょっとした世間話をしたりと、束の間のフランス語の会話を楽しんで、退屈する様子は全くなかった。

そう言えば、フェダマン氏はいまだにたばこはフランス銘柄である。今ではフランスで暮らした期間よりもアメリカで生活してきた期間の方がずっと長いにもかかわらず、女性客に対する態度ひとつを取っても依然フランス式である。強いフラン

語訛りに加え、こうしたフランスの習慣は、失われた家族とその後の辛い体験に対する彼の思いが決して消え去ることがないように、彼の中に深く根を下ろしているように感じられた。

フェダマン氏と筆者: インタビュー後、フェダマン氏の行きつけ のレストランにて



# 3. Interview with Raymond Federman

The following is based on an interview with Raymond Federman, December 18, 2007, at Federman's house in the suburbs of San Diego, later revised by both Federman and Nitta.

Reiko Nitta: First, to start the interview, I would like to ask about your newest novel, *Return to Manure* (2004)? How did you decide to write it?

Raymond Federman: I have written by now 15 novels in English. All my books form a big story. A big book. The story of the farm in *Return to Manure* is part of it, but it is a rite of passage. I spent three years on a farm during World War II when I was a young boy hiding from the Germans. I suffered a lot there from the hard work. Because I was so lonely I kept telling myself stories, I became a storyteller. That's what I described in the novel.

RN: Ah, yes, that really happened.

RF: That's right. Yes, that's how I managed to go on in spite of the suffering. The stories were always about escaping. I locked up within myself. It was a way of protecting myself. I had no idea where my parents were. No idea what had happened to my sisters. I was just hoping that someday all this nightmare would end and that we would be back to Paris and that things would be fine, like before my parents and sisters were arrested and deported to a concentration camp. I thought that they would survive.

RN: Have you intended to write this novel for a long time?

RF: In 1963, I was in France with my wife and our four children. We decided to go to see the farm in Southern France. We found it. The old man and the woman who are in the novel were dead now. But the two grandsons were there.

In 1963, they were about twenty years old or so. They were working in the field and when I told them who I was, they said, "Ah, you are the young man who our grandfather told us worked on this farm." We went into the kitchen of the farm house to have something to drink and eat. But this visit did not do anything to me. I felt nothing, even though it was fun to be there. My children enjoyed it.

Four years ago, my wife Erica and I were going to Cannes by car and along the way we suddenly decided to go see the farm. It took us a while to find. But this time when we finally found the farm, all the sad memories came back to me, and when I got back home in California, I wrote the book, which is really the search for the farm as well as the search for the young boy I was in the past.

Two years ago we were back in France. This time my daughter was with us, and she wanted to see the farm. So we drove south, but when we came in the region where the farm is located we could not find it this time. Finally we came to a river, and I knew that the farm was on the other side of that river, but we could not cross it because the bridge over it had collapsed. My wife said, "Perfect! You wrote the book. The story of the farm is finished. No need to go see it again. This collapsed bridge is very symbolic of the end of this story."

RN: Were you afraid that the farm would be completely lost?

RF: Yes. Basically the novel is the story of a journey by car in search of a place, but it is also a journey in search of the past. I think it was necessary that I go there in order to be able to write the book, even though the farm we found was no longer the same. It was now in terrible shape, dirty, neglected, as if the people who had bought it didn't really are about it.

RN: I see. And you have succeeded in restoring your farm in your novel as well as retaining the past.

RF: Actually there are many holes in my memory so that I had to invent a lot of

things or reinvent them. In fact, I do not remember so much, rather I "reconstruct" my souvenirs. For example, in the new novel I just finished I use a metaphor that explains that this book is constructed with loose sentences just the way one constructs a house with bricks.

RN: Is that the way you construct what you call "surfiction"?

RF: Yes. In other words, as I have said many times, I make no distinction between memories and imaginations. That is to say, between what really happened to me and what I imagine happened to me. So you always have several different versions of the same story.

RN: Ah, yes, that is repeated in your novels, too. Still I think that each version is true to you.

RF: At the beginning of my novel, *To Whom It May Concern* (1990), it says that a story is made of little lies that accumulate and eventually become a real life.

RN: You said that *Return to Manure* tells how you became a writer. But it is also a novel about a young boy's growing into a man, isn't it?

RF: Yes, certainly. There is an important sentence in the book that says: "Everyday I was assailed by death and fornication." And that's what made a man of me. With the farm animals, sex, the farm woman, and the old man always screaming at me, I was living a different life than the one I had in Paris. It was in a completely different world. And I had the hard work. When I first arrived at the farm, I was a very weak shy young city boy from Paris. On the farm, I became very conscious of my body. And yes, I became strong, physically and mentally. And it is there also that I discovered my sexuality.

RN: By the way, when you write your novels, you do not look back at your past chronologically, do you?

RF: No. If I were to put the novels I have written in the chronological order,

that is to say in the logical order of the events of my life, the first one would have to be *The Voice in the Closet* (1979); the next one would have to be the story of the farm, *Return to Manure*, the next one would have to be *Double or Nothing* (1971), the arrival in America; the next one would have to be *Take It or Leave It* (1976), the discovery of America and my life in the American army; the next one would be *Smiles on Washington Square* (1985), the return to America after three years in the Far East during the Korean war and in Japan; then *The Twofold Vibration* (1982), the story of my first return to France after more than ten years in America; and so on. But these novels were not written in that order.

RN: Why not?

RF: They were written in a different order because the element of time is always faulty. Life is not lived chronologically. One does not remember one's life chronologically. My latest novel called *Chut*: *The Story of a Childhood*, which has just been published in Paris [I wrote it in French], is really the beginning – it tells the beginning of my life, my childhood, so that the events related in this novel precede those of *The Voice in the Closet*, and yet I think of it as the end of the big book I have been writing for more than forty years.

RN: Oh? Is it the end? You are not going to write about Japan?

RF: Well, it's true. There is still one more book, one more chapter of that big book that I must write. The story of the three years I spent in Tokyo, from 1951 to 1954 when I was in the American army. Yes, I think I have to write that book. In fact, I started. I have about fifty pages already written. That book will be called *Out of the Foxhole*.

RN: Foxhole?

RF: Yes, it is because I was in a foxhole in Korea, fighting the war when the captain of my outfit told me that I was going to Tokyo. Why? During the

Korean war there were many soldiers from different countries. Not just Americans but many of them from French speaking countries. And they needed a French interpreter. This is why I was sent to Tokyo where I spent two and half years. What is interesting about this book is that the Tokyo I knew in the early 1950's is no longer the same today. It was like a huge village that had been bombed. It was dirty, there was a foul smell all over, there were lots of prostitutes, lots of people selling and buying thing on the black market, there were night clubs, corruption, etc. That Tokyo has now disappeared. I went back to Tokyo several times since, but I do not recognize it. So I have to reinvent the Tokyo I knew then, my Tokyo.

RN: And there your novel becomes a surfiction once again.

RF: Yes. To write fiction on top of another fiction, because finally the Tokyo I knew and where I spent almost three years was like a fiction. But this story, my life in Tokyo, is very important to me, too, because it is in Tokyo that I began writing. My first poems were written in Tokyo. Why I was seeing in the street of Tokyo, what I was experiencing there as part of the occupying forces, is what inspired me to write.

But, I think that the farm was more important in terms of my own physical and imaginative development. I have realized that I tell stories that only survivors can tell.

RN: I had been thinking that you had not written about your experience in the farm because it was too hard for you to remember it.

RF: Yes, that is true. Though I think it was also because it had been such a terrible and traumatic moment in my life.

RN: So, when I learned that you at last picked up this subject, I was very much interested in how you were going to deal with it. Especially after so many years

have passed.

RF: There is something very important in the process of writing that book. That was the presence of my wife, Erica, in the novel. When I would suddenly remember something, she would comment, "Maybe you just made that up." Actually many things were made up. I have never forgotten the old man's name, Lauzy, but his two grandsons' names, Gaston and Gustave, I made up. Similarly a lot of things were imagined on the basis of a very, very vague memories.

There are also those pages with the book with little boxes which present Ace's words. Ace is a very good friend of mine. His name is George Chambers. We wrote a book together called The Twilight of the Bums, a book about friendship. The story of two old men who have only six months left to live. George is a very fine writer. We have known each other since 1974. We write to each other almost everyday. (Opening one of the cabinets to show me the letter files) You see all these letters, it's the letters form George. There are more than 2000 letters here. And George has some 2000 letters of mine. Someday that correspondence should be published. So I was saying those framed passages in Return to Manure are really E-mails that I received from George while I was writing the book. He kept asking questions, telling me to tell more about certain stories, etc. In other words, like Erica he was another voice in the book, another interlocutor. I call him Ace. The reason for that is that in one of his novels there is a character called Horace. Therefore Ace.

RN: Oh, I see. So you had a clear image of him.

RF: Yes, like Erica. But remember all that is still fictitious. In fact, the book starts with Ace's words: "We did wonder Federman since you're driving to Cannes if you would stop by the farm on the way." That was a real E-mail from

George. But many of the other E-mails from Ace were invented. He was sort of a stimulus to urge the book to go on. And Erica is the one who holds me back because I am inventing too much.

RN: I have noticed their intended functions. I have also realized that you created very original sentences scattered with French. Still, in spite of those literary challenges, isn't this book constructed in a much simpler style than your earlier books such as *Double or Nothing* or *Take It or Leave It*? Actually it seems quite strange to me that while you made such graphic pages in your earlier works on a typewriter, you do not use so many graphics in your pages now on a computer, though it must be much easier to make them on a computer.

RF: I am not interested in writing the same way I wrote the other books. I always try to find a new different form for each book.

RN: No, you are not interested in writing the same way but why did you take this turn? Could it be because the visual impact was more important in your earlier works while in later works we are expected to be more attentive to the tone of the books?

RF: Well, let me put it this way. Some critics have said that after Double or Nothing or Take It or Leave It, I was less innovative and became more traditional. I don't agree because it was doing a new kind of experimentation with syntax ... and with the shape of the book. For example, Smiles on Washington Square is very deceptive, deceptive in its simplicity. The whole novel is written in the present tense. Yet the characters move in time and all over the place. And yet nothing happens. It is a love story but nothing happens. Then there is a story within a story. So it is actually more complicated than the earlier works from the point of view of the narrative

structure.

RN: And I think that one of your new experimentations in *Aunt Rachel's Fur* (2001) is the way you used French.

RF: There was one reason I had to use French in Aunt Rachel's Fur. In 1958 I went back to France for the first time. I had a girlfriend at that time. The girlfriend I described in Smiles on Washington Square. She was a real girlfriend when I was at Columbia University. She was arriving from America and I was going to the airport to pick her up.  $\;\;$  It was raining badly and I called a taxi. When I got in the taxi driver said, "Don't you remember me? We used to live very close to each other. We went to school together." He kept talking and all the way, he used "tu," the familiar form of address in French. Then, he asked me, "What do you do?" – "Qu'est-ce que tu fais, toi?" I told him I lived in the United States and I was a writer. He was very impressed but could not believe me. Then at the airport, I decided to have him wait though I did not have much money. I went into the airport and came back with this beautiful blond. In the taxi, my girl friend and I spoke in English. Suddenly, the taxi driver realized that I was really an American and a writer. And when he next addressed me, he did so with "vous," in the formal form. He realized the distance that existed between us now.

RN: You used this anecdote in *Return to Manure*, too.

RF: Yes, to show the shift from "tu" to "vous," I had to write this scene in French. It was impossible to write this book in English alone because there were so many scenes that needed to be written in French.

RN: As French is my second foreign language, I could read the book without any difficulty. Still I believe that one could enjoy the book without any knowledge of French.

RF: Yes, of course. If you read the book carefully, you will see how I retell French sentences in English. Very often, in the next sentence I clarify in English. Or Ace asks me, "What did you mean by this?" Then I give the English words for it. So I try to clarify the French for the reader.

RN: And yet, I think that those French words you first use indicate that there are very strong emotions you cannot convey in English. I also noticed your sense of humor there. I think *Return to Manure* is one of your funniest books though it deals with such a bitter experience.

RF: The French found it very humorous, too. The French version was published before the English one in September 2005. It won two prizes in France. Le Prix Grangousier. Et Le Prix Télérama. It received fantastic reviews.

RN: I am not surprised.

RF: It is incredible. As you know, I write all my novels in two languages, French and English but France had ignored me for over thirty-five years. Then suddenly, the last four or five years, seventeen of my books were published in France. I am being discovered as if I were a young writer. I am leaving for France in two weeks. A theater company is staging *Return to Manure*, and they want me there.

RN: That is wonderful. By the way, I found the title of this book very significant, too.

RF: Yes, I am happy with it. The book was originally called *The Farm*. But when my wife and I had a dinner with my stepson and his family who live in Paris and I told them that I had just finished the book called *The Farm*, they said that there was a terrible popular TV program in France by its name. In this program, celebrities go work on a farm and make themselves ridiculous. It was a terrible coincidence. So I decided to change the title to *Return to Manure*.

Actually it is a much better title because it is a "return" to a specific place while "manure" suggests all the craps inside of your head and on the farm.

RN: Aha... you may call them craps but I found them very interesting. Now, may I ask how your Jewish background affects your writing?

RF: Certainly. You know, To Whom It May Concern is a story about Israel. The protagonist is going there to see his cousin Sarah, whom he has not seen for 35 years. When I started writing it, I became very conscious that I am a Jewish. But this does not mean that I consider myself a Jewish writer. I am a writer first who happened to be Jewish. But in this book I talked about it more openly than before. Still I have no religious belief. My father was a communist. And I was raised without any religion. I had never been inside a synagogue when I was a child. But since my mother was raised in a Jewish orphanage, she had a few ideas of religion, and Judaism. My father would get very angry when she talked about religion. "I do not believe in God. There is no such thing," he would say. As a result of what had happened to the Jews during the war, I became more conscious of my being Jewish and I am very proud of it. But that does not mean I am a Jewish writer. That is what I write about. I am a writer of what I call the Post-Holocaust. Something happened to me because of the Holocaust. I am a part of the history of the Jews. I am familiar with all the great textbooks of the Holocaust. But I have no religion. To me my Jewishness is purely secular. I am what you call a good Jewish atheist. And as it is known, the best atheists are Jewish.

RN: That is an excellent and humorous way to identify yourself. Still you have to deal with Jewishness.

RF: I cannot avoid it in my books. The reason why I was in this farm – I could almost say that I was deported in that farm – was because I was Jewish. On

the farm I went to church with the farmers on Sundays because they didn't know I was Jewish. Do you remember this scene in *Return to Manure*, where I talked to God and asked him to help me and said, "Give me a sign. I will count up to 20, and if at 20 you have not given me a sign, then I will be finished with you, and I will try to go on by myself"?

RN: Oh, yes.

RF: Of course, I asked the Jewish God for that sign. So I did not kneel like I did in the church because Jews do not get down on their knees. So you must notice that there is a little amount of Jewish tradition in the book. But the major difference between well-known novels about the Holocaust and mine is the language. Other books are written in what is called the passive traditional white language. I am writing about absurdity, about the obscenity of the Holocaust. So I am using an obscene language.

RN: Such a new way of writing could be still Jewish? I think Jews are very radical and inventive.

RF: But I am inventing my own language. You see, the language in *The Voice in the Closet* is very difficult. With no capital letters, no punctuation, there is just a long, long articulation of words, like a scream. Some year ago, when I read from this book in a conference in Milwaukee, Edmond Jabès was there. He is an Egyptian Jew who lives in France now. He is a very great writer. When I finished reading the text — a special version for the conference, he got up and said, "C'est un grand cri dans le noir! —It's a big cry in the darkness!". That's what it is. In this book there are no words like Jews, Germans, Nazis etc. There are only two significant phrases that refer to the Holocaust — the yellow star and the final solution. And yet I think it is a very important text about the Holocaust. In most critical works, it is never mentioned. But recently — only

recently, out of nowhere " in Portugal, in Italy, in Denmark, in Russia, in Rumania, critics and scholars have started to situate me in the Holocaust as you do in Japan. They now discuss "Federman and the history of the Jews," or "Federman and the Holocaust." I am pleased about that because now my work cannot be ignored in the future. I have been labeled mostly as an experimental writer, a surfictionist, a postmodern writer, a French writer. But this is the best. I am not a Jewish writer, either.

RN: Are you concerned about lasting in literary history?

RF: I want to last in relation to history. Actually my work is very much about history. My novels are historical documents as well as personal documents.

RN: Now, for my last question in this interview, I would like to ask about "the collaborative work" which I have been told that you were recently engaged in. How have you been involved in it and what are you actually doing in it?

RF: (Pointing to his computer) It is because of the internet. As a writer in America, I live alone. I see my writer friends once in a while and we talk on the phone from time to time, but I wish I could see them everyday. I do not mean I am lonely but I am isolated. The internet helps me to stay in touch with the rest of the world. I have completely invaded by the internet. So I do a lot of writing on the internet with other writers. Collaborative work.

Right now, one of the projects I am involved with is the translation of a book written by Samuel Beckett. One day a young French writer visited me and said, "You know Beckett very well. You have read his works well. You have written several books about him. Would you be interested in working with me on a new translation of Worstward Ho?" I said, "Yes," and this is what we are doing. It's a very beautiful but very difficult Beckett book. So we do that translation by E-mail. He sends me what he has done, I work with it, send it

back, then he sends it back, and so on. Next time I go to France we are going to meet and finalize the text.

RN: Ah, we often do that, too. It is very convenient.

RF: Yes, but this is only one project. The more important one is what I am doing with another friend of mine. He is a very good French novelist. His name is Frederick Tristan, winner of the Prix Goncourt for one of his novels. I had lost touch with him for many years. Last year when I was in Paris, he showed up at a reading I was giving. We had dinner together. Then we realized that all the years we had been doing similar experiments with the novel. He does his own kind of experimentation and I do my own. So he invited a critic called Jean-Luc Moreau to lunch with us. It is he who suggested that we should write a book together. Now Moreau sends us questions and we answer about them, etc. The book is expected to tell about how we became writers in the way we are and to articulate the theories of our fictions.

Then, one more book I did with someone else — this will be published in a few months in France. The book is called *Federman hors Limites*. I did this one with a French woman writer, Marie Delvigne. It is like a long dialogue about my life and my work. There are lots of photos, illustrations, documents in the book.

So you see, I work with a number of people. Besides, I spend a lot of time on the computer. I keep my blog and my homepage going all the time.<sup>1</sup>

These are important to me. For example, (pointing to the top page of his home page) this young man from Rumania wrote to me and asked some

His blog address: http://raymondfederman.blogspot.com/
His homepage address: http://www.myspace.com/raymondfederman

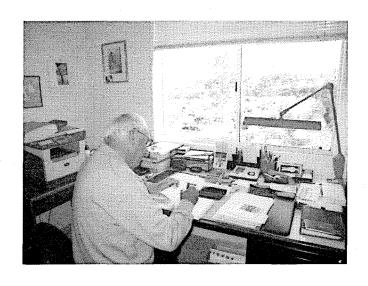
questions about my writing. I answered them. This has become a kind of manifesto for my writing.

RN: Can anyone – for instance, one of my students – write to you? You do not mind receiving all those E-mails?

RF: Not at all. I like exchanging E-mail with young people, if they don't abuse of my time. They all should visit my blog and write to me.

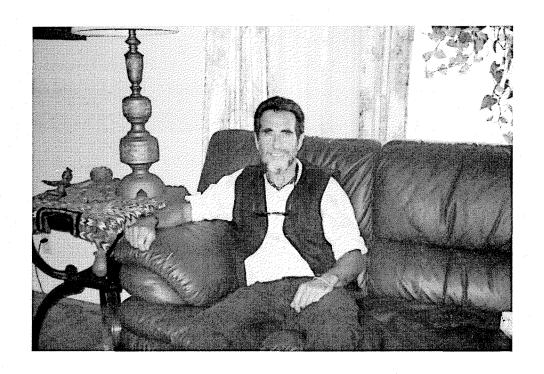
RN: Well, I will surely advise them to do so. Thank you very much for sparing so much time for today's interview.

RF: My pleasure. I hope this interview will be published in Japan, and will attract some attention. I now have three novels translated into Japanese, but perhaps it is time that another one should appear.



書斎で机に向かうフェダマン氏(筆者撮影): 窓から地中海風の美しい谷間を見下ろすことができる。

# ハロルド・ジェフィ



自宅で寛ぐハロルド・ジェフィ氏: 1999 年の訪問で筆者撮影

#### 1. 略歷

ハロルド・ジェフィは 1945 年ニューヨークで、物理学者の父とファッションモデルの母のあいだに第二子として生まれた。兄は後にユング派の精神分析医兼作家となる。

ジェフィは両親の仕事の関係で、幼少期からアメリカ、南アメリカ、ヨーロッパ、アジアで過ごし、様々な文化の影響を受けた。大学は初め、バスケットボール奨学金を得てアイオワ州のグリンネル大学に進学。だが怪我のためにバスケットを断念。大学院はニューヨークに戻り、ニューヨーク大学で文学の博士号を取った。その後、二度のフルブライト奨学金でインドとチェコに赴き、さらにグアテマラやエクアドルなど、中・南米を自費で旅して回っている。

現職のサンディエゴ州立大学で教え始めたのは 1982 年からで、文芸雑誌 Fiction International の編集長を務める傍ら、作家として積極的な活動を続けている。

## 2. ジェフィ氏との思い出

ハロルド・ジェフィ氏に初めて会ったのは、1999 年 9 月、当時行っていた研究に関するレビューを受けるため、ラリー・マキャフェリ教授を訪ねてサンディエゴ州立大学に出かけたときのことである。サンディエゴ州立大学に行く機会があるのならハルに会っておいでよと、当時ジェフィ氏の翻訳を手がけていらした東京女子大学の今村楯夫先生に勧められた。その頃私はジェフィ氏の作品についてごく浅い知識しかなかったが、氏は快く会見に応じて下さった。

翌年発表された翻訳、『ストレート・レザー』に付された今村先生の解説では、先生がジェフィ氏と初めて会われたときの印象を、「ジェフィは頬からあごにかけて黒

いごわごわしたヒゲをたくわえ、ニメートル近くはあろうかと思われる長身を黒のチョッキに黒のズボンで包み、……いかにも繊細な眼差しと表情とは裏腹に、何とも威圧感のある姿だった。」<sup>2</sup>と紹介されている。今村先生自身が日本人としては長身の方なので、ジェフィ氏が自分よりも背が高いことや、「あたかもユダヤ教の牧師、ラビを思わせるような黒くて立派なヒゲ」<sup>3</sup>に強い印象を持たれたのかもしれない。しかし、私を出迎えてくれたジェフィ氏は、まだ暑い季節ということもあってか、髭を綺麗に刈り込んでいた。確かに、ぴんと伸ばされた細い背筋は、彼の身長を一層高く感じさせたし、ズボンもベストも黒だったが、皮のベストの下には、こんがりと日焼けした細身の体を包む真っ白なシャツ、その開いた襟首にはネイティブのアクセサリーと、幾分くつろいだ雰囲気を漂わせていた。また、動作は運動家とは思えないほどゆったりおっとりしていて、ややかすれた低い声で、ゆっくりともの柔らかに話した。大きな声で笑ったり、にこにこ微笑むことはなかったが、おかしいと感じたときには、かすかに口の端を上げて照れたように顔をしかめたりもした。

彼はサングラスをかけていることが多いようで、マキャフェリ教授によると、学生の中には彼のサングラスが威圧的だと苦情を述べる者もいるとのことである。しかし、と、教授は笑いながら片目をつぶって付け加えた。本当は威圧的でなんかちっともない奴なんだけどね、と。私が初めて会った 1999 年のときには、ジェフィ氏は屋外の強い日差しの中ではサングラスを使用していたものの、室内では外していた。そして、その眼差しは憂いを含んだ優しく思いやり深い印象をもたらした。

一見いかめしいにもかかわらず、内に優しさを秘めているという印象は、私達が しばしば交わすメールからも感じている。例えば、ジェフィ氏からのメールは通常、 非常に端的である。用件を手短に伝え、ちょっとしたおしゃべり的な会話は皆無と いっていい。 ぶっきらぼうでも、礼儀に欠けるわけでもないのだが、効率が良すぎ

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 『ストレート・レザー』ハロルド・ジェフィ、今村楯夫訳、新潮社、2000 年。161 頁。

<sup>3</sup> 同上、161 頁。

る会話が、ややもすれば距離を感じさせかねない。もっともこれは、作家として活動しながら、大学の仕事をし、その傍らで長年雑誌の編集を手がけ続けているために、必要に迫られて身につけた習慣なのかもしれない。

そんなふうに、手短に用件だけを伝えるものでしかないにせよ、彼のメールはいつも迅速で、こちらを待たすことはない。しかも、ごくプライベートな事柄にも、こちらが尋ねさえすれば、いつもきちんと答えてくれる。また、面倒なお願い事でもうっとうしがることはなく、多忙なときも、時間の調整を付けながらぎりぎりの線まで応じてくれる。

実際、初対面においても、隙のない外観どおりの几帳面で鋭敏な知性と、それと 真反対の、非常にソフトな内面を併せ持った人だと気付かされるのに、あまり時間 は要さなかった。

1999年の会見とき、彼は車で私をホテルに迎えに来てくれた。私は作家のジェフィ氏に会うつもりで、彼に接待をさせるつもりは微塵もなかったのだが、彼は会いしなから、いろいろ面倒な用事が多くて、一日しか相手ができなくて申し訳ないと恐縮していた。そして、何がしたいか、どこに行きたいか、まず私の希望を聞いた。

ジェフィ氏との付き合いではいつもそうなのだが、彼はいつもまず、私が何を望んでいるのか聞いてくる。これは私に迎合するためではなく、彼は彼のスケジュール持っているため、そうやって私の望みに最大限合わせる方法を模索してくれているように感じている。

このときも、私がどこかでゆっくり話ができればそれでいいと言うと、彼が良く 利用する海辺の喫茶店に案内してくれた。私たちはそこで波の音を聞きながら、日 本の雑誌に掲載された彼の作品に対する反響や、彼の最近の文学活動について、大 学での仕事や個人的な好み(彼は毎日水泳をすると言い、私は水泳は好きだが、最 近は時間が取れないと羨んだりした)などについて話した。それから料理に話が移 ると、僕は菜食主義者なんだ、と彼は言った。

「健康のためですか?」

毎日水泳をすると聞いた後だったし、私の友人の中にはカロリーを押さえるため に肉を避ける者がいたので、贅肉のない精悍な体つきを見ながら私はそう尋ねた。

それもあるけど、それ以上に、できるだけ殺生はしたくないんだ、と彼は答えた。 自分の欲望を満たすために他のものを傷付けるのが嫌なんだ。できるだけ世界と調 和した生き方をしたいんだね、と。

そういう言葉は世俗に浸った凡人と一線を画するものになりかねない。事実、ジェフィ氏は仏教や神秘思想などにも深く傾倒しており、俗人の塵を嫌うようなところがある。だがたとえそうであっても、彼の説明には何の気負いもてらいも見受けられなかった。彼はただ、周囲に対して思慮深く細やかに配慮することや、弱いものを虐げずにいることが、自分の内面にとって一番平穏で好もしいという事実を説明しているだけのようにしか感じられなかった。

昼食に、ジェフィ氏行きつけの寿司屋に出かけたときも、氏は、自分は菜食主義 者セットを注文するが、私は自分の好きなネタを注文すればいいと言ってくれた。 日本人もよく来ているから、味は請け合えるよ、と。

そのときのアメリカ滞在は限られた日数だったので、私は日本に戻れば食べれるものよりも、むしろジェフィ氏がどのようなものを食べているのかに興味があった。そこで私も彼と同じ菜食主義セットを頼んだ。きゅうりにお新香といった、日本でもお馴染みのものの他、アボカド、味付けした人参やゴボウなど、野菜を上手に使い、彩りの面でも味の面でもよくできた一皿だった。私が珍しい取り合わせとその味に心から感心すると、ジェフィ氏の生真面目な顔にちょっと得意げな色が差し、子供っぽい表情になった。

食後、サンディエゴは久し振りだと言った私を案内して、ジェフィ氏は散歩がて ら街の中心部を歩いてくれた。それから彼は、作家の仕事場を見たいのではないか と尋ねた。もちろん大いに興味はあった。しかしプライベートに踏み込むことにな るのではという遠慮から、初対面では頼めないでいた。

仕事場を見せてあげるのは一向に構わないんだけどね、最近離婚をして、近く引

っ越す予定だから、少し雑然としているよ、と彼は言った。

ジェフィ氏の自宅には彼の車で行ったので、その当時の家がどのあたりにあったのか、私は説明できない。ただ、その家は板塀の奥にあり、軒下近くまで木立が迫っていて、外の強い太陽とは対照的に室内はひんやりと静まりかえっていた。引っ越しの準備らしい片づけがところどころで始まっていたが、それでも全体的にとても整然としており、基本的に几帳面な人なのだなと感じたのを記憶している。

彼は席を勧め、何か飲み物はいらないかと尋ねた。私はその頃までには彼に対して幾分寛いだ気分になっていたに違いない。実は、飲み物よりも、あなたの写真を撮らせてもらえると嬉しい、と答えた。

私は最初から写真を撮りたくてしかたなかったのだが、どうせ断られるだろうと 諦めていたのである。それでも、作家の自宅でのポートレイト写真というのには抵 抗しがたい魅力があった。きっと、プライベートすぎると言われるだろうなあと、 首をすくめる思いで切り出した私の態度が、いかにもためらいがちだったからかも しれない。ジェフィ氏は口の端をちょっと上げ、なんだ、写真を撮りたかったのな ら、もっと早く言えばいいのにと、低い穏やかな声に笑いを含めて言った。

私がいそいそとカメラを取り出すと、ジェフィ氏は居間で寛ぐポーズを取ってくれた。(29 頁の写真) それからすっと立ち上がり、庭の方に出て呼びかけた。大きな猫がどこからともなく姿を見せた。彼はその猫を抱え上げながら、うちの同居人だと紹介してくれた。私は大急ぎで、重そうな猫を抱きしめる氏に向けてシャッターを切った。

そのあと書斎で、彼はこれまで編集した Fiction International を取り出しながら、 掲載された作品が試みる新しい実験的な書き方や、編集の苦労話を聞かせくれた。 そして最後に、ところで君は僕の初期の作品を読んだことがあるのかと尋ねた。私 は恐縮しながらも、不勉強で、まだ Straight Razorや Eros Anti-Eros しか読んで いないと告白すると、彼は、じゃあ Dos Indios をプレゼントしようと申し出てくれ た。僕は最初から今のような書き方をしてるわけじゃあないんだ。思うに、君は僕 の初期作品の方がもっと好きになるんじゃあないかな、と。

この洞察の鋭さに、私はのちに舌を巻いた。

実は、この会見のとき、私はジェフィ氏の作品についてコメントを控えるようにしていた。まだ批評できるほど作品を読み込んでいない、というのも理由のひとつだったが、何よりも、Straight Razorや Eros Anti-Eros を初めて読んだとき、その感性の高さに驚嘆しながらも、性的なものがあまりに露骨だったり、グロテスクだったため、登場人物に対して共感が持てず、結果、作品をあまり好きになれなかったからである。

ジェフィ氏はこの日一日を共に過ごすことで、私の性質をよく見抜き、私が口にしなかった、彼の最新作に対する反応を予測したようだった。そして彼が予期した通り、私は彼の初期作品の Dos Indios にはすっかり夢中になった。作品の場面は南米ペルー。そこで暮らす人々は昔ながらの素朴な、自然と調和した生き方を守っており、機会文明や物質主義文明に汚されていない非常に純粋なものに満たされていた。牧歌的な理想郷を追求したようなこの作品を読んで、私はそれまで見過ごしてきたジェフィ氏の重要な一面に初めて触れ、それ以後、彼の作品に対する姿勢が大きく変わった。

このように、一日だけの短い会見ではあったが、この出会いを通し、物事のツボを外さないジェフィ氏の繊細な感性や鋭い知性に触れることができただけではない。 彼が非常に純粋で暖かい心を持った人であることを、身を持って感じることができた。そして、10年振りに再会した今回のインタビューでも、その印象を新たにした。

今回は計4人の作家をインタビューしたが、他の作家の場合、会話の録音時間はずっと長い。書き起こしの手間をできるだけ省くよう、前座部分は録音を省略しているのだが、録音が始まってからも会話がストレートに進むことはほとんどない。そのため、後に書き起こしたり、校正をしてもらう時に、大がかりな調整が必要だった。ただ一人例外だったのがジェフィ氏で、彼のインタビューについては、私は書き起こしの際に録音内容に手を加えてはいない。ただし初校の段階で、ジェフィ

氏自身がかなり手を入れ、さらにメールでのやりとりを通して、表現が一層厳密な ものに改められている。

同様のことはインタビュー収録後にお願いしたビデオメッセージにも言えた。授業や市民講座で作家を紹介するとき、写真だけでなく動画を用いることができればもっと関心を持ってもらいやすいのではないかと考え、ビデオに向かって何か言ってもらえないかとお願いしたのだが、話の内容については私の方から特に注文を付けなかった。

急にビデオカメラを向けられれば、誰しもちょっと戸惑ってしかるべきだろう。 だが、ジェフィ氏はまるでカメラ慣れした俳優のように冷静で、書いた原稿がどこ かにあるのかと思いたくなるほどまとまったメッセージを伝えてくれた。

ところで、私は日常ではほとんどビデオを使わない。そのため、ビデオの扱いに不慣れだった。しかも居間の明かりが十分でなかったため、撮影画面が非常に暗いものになってしまった。急な頼みに嫌な顔ひとつせず、即興でパーフェクトのメッセージを述べてもらっただけに、私の方から取り直しをお願いすることはためらわれたが、ビデオの出来をチェックしていた私の様子から、あまりうまく撮れていないのがわかったのだろう。彼はさりげない調子で、何の準備もなしにしゃっべたから、二度目の方が一度目よりも絶対にいいものになる、取り直したいなら歓迎するよと、申し出てくれた。そして、家の中で一番明るい書斎に場所を移し、再度ビデオに向かってくれた。

ジェフィ氏はまた、写真撮影にも快く応じてくれた。しかも今回は、猫の代わりにとてもかわいいゲイル夫人の肩を抱き寄せての撮影となった。(48 頁の写真)不十分な室内照明と私の技量不足のために映りがいまいちなのは残念でならないが、普通の読者はなかなか想像できないだろうと思えるような、幸せ一杯のジェフィ氏を見た。

### 3. Interview with Harold Jaffe

The following is based on an interview with Harold Jaffe, December 17, 2007, at Jaffe's house in San Diego, later revised by both Jaffe and Nitta.

Reiko Nitta: First I would like to ask you what has interested you recently.

Harold Jaffe: My interest are wide, as I think you know. I am an "innovative" writer but I am not interested exclusively in innovative writing. I read as much as I can in a number of areas.

RN: I have realized that the materials of your works are shifting from one to another?

HJ: My writings are situational. When we are in a particular social milieu which is oppressive, I tend to respond to it—usually in a resistance mode or in an alternative way, as I did with AIDS.

Especially in the US, AIDS was not so much the disease as the official ideology that the disease unleashed. In other words, the official culture in the United States employed the disease as another weapon to keep people repressed and in line. They did not make any distinction between ways in which the disease can pass. The young people were told simply, "No sex, no AIDS." This amounted to social manipulation or human management.

The AIDS-generated repression was the 12 or 15-year period when young people — denied the natural outlets of the sexual body — started using their bodies in different ways — tattooing them, piercing them ... so that the body itself became the site of their struggle.

RN: Is that when you wrote Sex for the Millennium (1999), Straight Razor (1995), and Eros Anti-Eros (1990) in the 1990s?

HJ: Yes. I felt the need to present a counter-theory to the repression. When the worst of the official repression passed—at least in the United States –I altered my primary subjects of interest.

RN: And now you are more interested in political situations after 9/11?

HJ: I've written about 9/11 in a number of ways, as fiction, in essay form, and in "docufiction," such as Beyond the Techno-Cave: A Guerilla Writer's Guide to Post-Millennial Culture in 2007.

It is not just the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that I am addressing, but the xenophobia, self-righteousness, and excessive American pride that 9/11 in good part released.

In the process, I am citing and employing extremity of various kinds, primarily in the United States, but also in Japan and other countries. When a populace is angry and frustrated and trained to consume, extreme violence, such as portrayals of serial and mass murderers, Nazis, even animals like sharks, rattlesnakes and crocodiles, are portrayed everywhere on TV and the Internet both as entities to *condemn* but also to *consume*, since these entities are at once loathsome and filled with an extraordinarily violent energy which is, in its own way, appealing. And the vicarious violent identification of the TV or Internet consumer substitutes for his or her frustrated anger which is fundamentally directed at the failing economy or cutback in social services—because so much of the country's money is going to the wars and to large corporations.

This extreme violence is, then, condemned, but at the same time consumed both as a substitute gratification and by purchasing the products which advertise the extreme violence on TV and the Internet. RN: Referring these recent works, you often use this term, "docufic- tion." How is it different from nonfiction?

HJ: I use the supposition, made popular in the Postmodern period, that "truth" itself is a shifting category that is almost always employed for the benefit of the entities which employ it. I deliberately meld data which professes to be true, with fictionalized elements which are "true" in the sense of art.

RN: That is, you pick up your materials for your work in news? And then you transform -

HJ: Reconstitute. And not just in "news" but in the various data and "information" that encompass us.

RN: I see – you then "reconstitute" them into ficition?

HJ: Yes. I did that in three books — False Positive (2002), 15 Serial Killers (2003), and Terror-Dot-Gov (2005). The next book I did was Beyond the Techno-Cave. Here I combined both the creative nonfiction and the docufiction. But I was addressing many different things —social activism in art, technology, and how technology has altered the human species. And I cited a number of people who are thought to be irresponsible or beyond the pale. Like the Unabomber, Theodore Kaczynski, who killed people not because he was against technology, per se; rather because of how technology was being employed against the welfare of "ordinary" people. Kaczynski spells this out very clearly in his "Unabomber Manifesto."

RN: Do you write in a similar style now?

HJ: Currently, I am working on three new volumes. One, Jesus Coyote (2008), is based on the Charles Manson events of the late Sixties. Jesus Coyote is actually in production and should be available in March.

And I have just completed a volume called OD, Overdose, where I am

addressing fifteen personages who are all well-known and who died, either intentionally or inadvertently, of an overdose. These personages include Marilyn Monroe, Freud, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix, Walter Benjamin, Billie Holiday, Aldous Huxley, Poe, and others.

I am also writing a volume called, *Death in Texas*, where, among other things, I have inmates sentenced to death speak out without any kind of mediation. So you see and hear them from the subject position. They are not objectified or manipulated in the way official culture does. So we can take them seriously.

RN: Aren't you becoming more and more political?

HJ: "Political" is a bad word for an artist in the United States now. I call my writing "socially activist."

RN: I see ... Well, besides those changes, I also recognized that your writing is becoming shorter and shorter, more and more condensed. Is it intentional?

HJ: Yes. When I wrote *Madonna and Other Spectacles* in 1988, the text was very dense because intelligent readers were capable of reading dense material. Now I have much more space in my writing. The artist is compelled to address the culture he inhabits. And the present culture does not spend time reading. People move; their minds move. It is speed, speed, but often without any clear direction. I feel that I am a good enough craftsman to work in various ways. It is like changing musical instruments or using an instrument differently. So it was not actually difficult to insert space into my writing so that the fast-moving generations who are my principal readers can concentrate a bit.

RN: Right. Besides, I feel that if your materials, subjects, and styles are changed, your voice is fundamentally the same. For example, the way you exaggerate a situation for a laugh, for a grin, ejecting humanity in it.

HJ: Actually the exaggeration or caricature in my writing varies. I am doing it

rather less than before. My tone is quieter—still very tense, but quieter. It does not rise or fall as it did before.

RN: I understand that but what I intended to point out was different. I do not think that you are one of those writers who are solely interested in dealing with new styles though your styles are so original that they often draw people's attention. In fact, I myself find you interesting because there is always your serious concern with people and society, that is, your humane attitudes in your innovative writing. And now when you say that your tone is quieter, your attitudes towards people and society are changing as well?

HJ: No, I think that I still feel pretty much the same: "a pessimist of the intellect but an optimist of the will," as the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci put it. And I am still as angry as I was. I am just addressing different things and working with different tonalities. It is a kind of artistic restlessness. You work with one tonality or one series of tones and then you try something else.

RN: And when you move around, you also consider the quality of the reader?

HJ: Yes, I try to, because in the United States, literacy is fading fast. Cultural awareness is very low here. Most young people cannot tell Beethoven from Schubert, do not know anything about film or art ... but they are also among my readers. So I have to keep them in mind to some extent. I try to elevate them, move them and even shock them into a degree of awareness.

RN: When you think that literacy is going down so low, how do you think your work is accepted in the United States?

HJ: Well, actually I prefer the reviews of my work I read in Japan. Japanese readers tend to recognize the feeling element which they do not degrade. Here, feeling, empathy, is still in disrepute. It is rather like Americans complaining about Iran trying to achieve a nuclear capacity but not acknowledging its own

dreadful responsibility for Hiroshima. It is a kind of American blindness that is officially validated. So I am more pleased to read Japanese responses to my work.

In the United States writing is changing radically, with almost everything transferring to virtuality. Major libraries like Berkeley and the University of Texas are moving their books – even very precious ancient manuscripts – out of their main libraries and filling the libraries with computers.

Under these circumstances, reading somewhat complex material is—for American readers – harder than ever. So I think that here I am considered a cult writer to some extent. There are a number of people, young or middle-aged, who respond to my work ardently but I still have to publish my work mostly with alternative presses.

RN: Still, you are now very highly appreciated in France, though French readers are always quite understanding toward new trends of writing.

HJ: A very intelligent Japanese (I can't recall his name) once remarked that many people think Japan is like the US, but at root Japan is much closer to France, especially in the realm of esthetics.

RN: Yes, I think there are many good readers who can appreciate your work in Japan, too.

HJ: Yes, but the situation in France is a little different. The French, though always welcoming the avant-garde and the offbeat, tend to be more interested in style, in language, in texture. Not absolutely, of course. There is a long tradition in France seen, for example, in Camus, Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, whose interests delve deeper than just style.

Still, much of the avant-garde and the postmodernism in France has to do with style, language, texture, ornament. So I never know quite what to expect there. Next spring I am going to talk there again to greet the French translation of 15 Serial Killers, and I will give some presentations.

RN: I see. Japanese are drawn to your work for different reasons.

HJ: Yes. In that regard I would feel on firmer footing in Japan. I do not mean that being in Japan is always easy. Responding to Japanese culture takes care and one has to be keenly sensitive to it. I refer simply to Japanese responses to my writing as opposed to the French responses.

RN: As you know, Tateo Imamura was one of the first Japanese scholars who find your work interesting and translated two of your books in Japan. Though he reads very widely, his special subject is Hemingway. So I wonder if there is any connection between your writing and Hemingway's. Both your and his writing is quite austere and sometimes shocking though the impressions are quite different ... Have you ever compared yourself with him?

HJ: I say yes but only because Hemingway is prototypical in the way he used prose. Every prose writer, particularly every male prose writer, is aware of him.

A superficial similarity with Hemingway is the precision, tensility and clarity in the sentences of my last few books. More than before, I use single sentences separated as paragraphs. That is, every unit is composed of just one sentence. The reason is it allows me a kind of range. I could follow the narrative, sentence by sentence and suddenly I could strike out, bringing in some other element which does not quite follow the narrative but which I want to insert quickly into the text. Writing sentence-long paragraphs you can wrench, twist, and zap the reader – particularly the younger reader who often needs to be shocked into a wider awareness. Although I have been using that sentence-paragraph form in recent books, few people have actually noticed it.

Happily, my French translator did notice the technique and remarked on it.

RN: I am glad he did. ... Well, now may I ask about your background?

HJ: Yes.

RN: You were born in New York, weren't you? Were you raised as a non-religious Jew or a religious Jew?

HJ: Non-religious. Both of my parents were born in Europe. My mother came over from Russia when she was about thirteen. My father came from Lithuania when he was also a teenager. My father was a physicist, and my mother was a fashion model. I had only one brother. My brother was eight years older than I. He recently died. He was a Jungian psychoanalyst. I was born in New York, in 1945. I am a first-generation American.

The attitudes toward Judaism in our house were, as I said, very loose. We did not pay very much attention to it. I was bar-mitzvaed (confirmed) but did not take it seriously. In fact, when people were in my house celebrating, I sneaked out to play basketball. You know I was an athlete and had a scholarship to play basketball in college. My earliest identifications were not so much with Jews. They were with Black people. The pain of Black Americans touched me. Actually, I never got along terribly well with Jewish Americans – with few exceptions. With Black Americans I tended to get along better. In Beasts (1986), my fourth book, there are a good many texts about Black people.

RN: You don't, then, recognize any influence of your Jewish background on your becoming a writer?

HJ: I can put it like this. Whatever Judaic spirits I have are related to the culture which is long dead. It was a culture of Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, who were central to progressive-minded European Jewry. The Holocaust ended it and people who survived the Holocaust and

came to the United States or Canada or Israel were assimilated in a very different way. They are a very different kind of people, even as Japanese who are born in Hiroshima are different from Japanese Americans.

The pre-Holocaust Jews who were involved in arts and thinking, tended not to be interested in themselves first but in culture at large; but they are largely gone. That is the culture I identify myself with if I identify myself with any Jewish culture.

RN: I thought you were basically a city boy. Especially because I was introduced to you with *Straight Razor* and *Sex for the Millennium*. I can easily identify their materials with New York—

HJ: Ah, I do not think that *Straight Razor* is New York. It is urban mentality – metro-sexuality, as it is sometimes called.

RN: Still, it is urban. On the other hand, your earlier work, *Dos Indios* (1983) is quite serene and pastoral. It does not seem to me to go with your New York background.

HJ: I lived in Ecuador and Guatemala.

RN: When did you?

HJ: It is when I left my first teaching position in New York. I thought I could exist as a writer. I was wrong. I could not make a living from it. But I traveled widely. I went to India, then to Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia. I lived in Guatemala for two years off and on. Then I lived in Ecuador almost a year. So I traveled widely in that area.

RN: So *Dos Indios* is based on more than ordinary textbook-knowledge. Your own experience is in it.

HJ: Yes. I actually saw those two men in *Dos Indios* actually walking along the street in Cuzco, the site of Machu Picchu. One of them was blind while the

other was badly crippled. They were musicians. I had a sweater I purchased in Ecuador and wanted to give it to them as a gift. I walked and walked and did not see them. And when I was just about to give up, I saw them and gave them the sweater. They were the germ of the novel. But even as I was writing about the Quechua Indian, I was also thinking about Buddhism and Hinduism. In fact they are similar – Indians, American Indians, Latin American Indians .... So, it seemed natural for me to write *Dos Indios*.

Truthfully, living in San Diego is less natural for me than living somewhere in Guatemala.

RN: Really? I am discovering something new in you.

When this book was published in 1983, more and more attention was paid to ethnicity and ecology. As you are very sensitive to your time, I thought that you decided to use South American Indians as a topical theme and made it up with your imagination.

HJ: No. I actually composed the book in the late 1970s but got it published in 1983. It was based on my experience. And I was interested in visionaries. That is another movement some readers have pointed out in my work. In a recent collection, *Death in Texas* and to some extent, in *OD*, I am working with the visionary. I could call it "spiritual" but "spiritual" is a bad word in intellectual circles.

I am interested in many aspects of the visionary. In Central and South America I met shamans and learned from them. I had a spiritual teacher when I lived in India. I have been interested in Zen Buddhism for a long time. I sat in Zazen many times here in San Diego, as I did it in New York. I visited Ryoan-ji in Kyoto. Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Suzuki-roshi is one of the important books for me. It is a part of my life.

RN: What do you expect in visionaries? What kind of vision do you want to experience?

HJ: I think I would like to see the confirmation of my optimism, which I have willed myself to feel. Very early on, when I was in college, I read Pascal, who "wagered" that God existed. Pascal said in effect that we do not know if God exists or not, but he was going to wager that God did exist. Because, as Pascal put it, if he lost, the only thing he would lose is pride. But if he "won," he would gain God through all eternity. I sensed even then that something about Pascal's argument, simplistic as it may sound, was essential to me.

RN: Would you explain that "something" a bit further?

HJ: Human "History" is very brief. Anything can happen, things change, history is ongoing. I have made a distinction — drawn from the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor — between "liberation of Nature" and "liberation from Nature."

Liberation of Nature proponents would, among other things, embrace the possibility of effective concerted response on behalf of an issue or even an ideal. Liberation from Nature proponents would deny that possibility, maintaining, in Auden's words (after his disillusioned stint as a committed writer), that "poetry makes nothing happen."

The aspiration to the liberation of nature "grounds its confidence on something in the motivational make-up of human beings which could be the basis of a more convivial, ecologically responsible, more self-managing society." Whereas the opposition towards the institutional appropriation of consciousness and desire proposed by the liberation from Nature advocates aspires to what Foucault called an "aesthetics of existence," and Derrida, "the joyous affirmation of the free play of the world, without truth [and] without

origin."

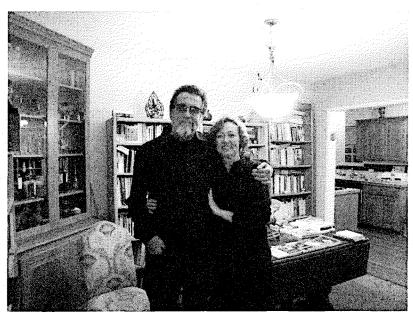
Liberation from Nature signifies the option of existential delectation – insofar as it is accessible — without the "illusion" of anything beyond it which might – collectively or otherwise – ameliorate some aspect of the human dilemma. As I mentioned, the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci, a famous proponent of the liberation of nature, referred to himself as a "pessimist of the intellect but optimist of the will." The liberation from Nature proponent would alter that to: pessimist of the intellect and pessimist of the will.

RN: So you believe in liberation of Nature.

HJ: Yes.

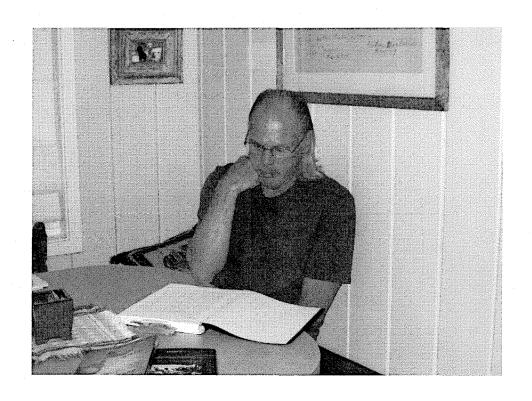
RN: Well, I have asked all I had in mind for today. Still, do you have something to add to this interview?

HJ: No. Thank you for your attentiveness to my work.



ジェフィ氏とゲイル夫人: 2007年の訪問中、ジェフィ氏の自宅にて筆者撮影

## デイヴィッド・マトリン



デイヴィッド・マトリン氏: マトリン氏の自宅にて筆者撮影

### 1. 略歷

デイヴィッド・マトリンは 1944 年 10月 5 日、カリフォルニア州アップランドで、ユダヤ系の父と先住民系の母との間に生まれた。両親はその地域でバラ栽培などの農場を営んでいた。1965 年、彼はミシガン州デトロイトに行き、そこでウェイン州立大学に入学するが、卒業することなく終える。その後、工場労働者として働いているとき、芸術家をめざすゲイルと知り合い、1970 年に結婚した。またその頃から詩を書き始め、それを詩人のロバート・クーリーに送ったことがきっかけとなり、ニューヨーク州立大学バッファロー校の博士課程に入学が認められた。彼はそこでクーリー、ジョン・クラーク、アンガス・フレッチャー、ダイアン・クリスチャンなどに学び、ウィリアム・ブレイクとモダニズムの研究で博士号を得た。

若き日のマトリンとゲイルはそれぞれに芸術活動を続けながら、生活費を稼ぐために、マトリンは建築現場で働いたりトラックの運転をし、ゲイルは市が芸術家支援のために斡旋してくれる高齢者施設での仕事をこなした。

マトリンの処女詩集 Fontana's Mirror が発表されたのは 1982年、38歳のときで、一般の注目を浴びるようになったのは、処女小説 How the Night Is Divided (1993) が全米図書批評家賞の候補に挙がってからと、作家としての出発は遅い。しかし 1997年にはサンディエゴ州立大学の創作学科に迎えられ、現在では、詩、エッセイ、小説、さらには芸術家であるゲイルとの共同作品など、幅広い形態の執筆を精力的に展開し、急速に地位を固めている。

マトリンの作品には、カリフォルニアのバラ栽培農家に育った幼少体験に加え、 核実験、環境問題、ホロコーストといった、ユダヤ系や先住民系の背景を示唆する 重要な社会的テーマが数多く取り込まれている。社会的関心の強さはいずれの作品 にも窺われるが、中でもニューヨークの刑務所で教えた体験をもとに書かれた Prisons: Inside the New America (2005)は、アメリカの刑務所制度に大きな波紋を 投げかけた。

## 2. マトリン氏との思い出

デイヴィッド・マトリン氏のことを知ったのは、2007年11月、冬休みを使ってレイモンド・フェダマン氏とハロルド・ジェフィ氏のインタビューを行う計画を立てている最中のことだった。最近注目を集めている作家がいるから、サンディエゴでもう少し時間が取れるなら会ってみてはどうかと、ラリー・マキャフェリー教授に勧められたのである。名前を聞いたことのない作家であり、作品も読んでいないのにと言うと、何にでも最初があるさ、今回会っていれば、次回はもっと充実した会話ができる、という返事。そこで、サンディエゴ滞在の最終日、サンフランシスコ行きの飛行機が出るまでの時間に会ってもらえるかどうか、先方の予定を尋ねてもらことにした。

返事はマトリン氏から直接、メールで届いた。私はいつも朝が早いから、午前中に来てもらうのは構わない。よければ、朝食を一緒に食べよう、と。彼はまた、現在書いているものを含め、幾つかの作品を送ると言ってくれた。すべて読むことはできないだろうけれど、私のことが少しはわかってもらえるかもしれない、と。資料は翌週には手元にあり、読み始めるとすぐに、その独特の夢みるような語りや、原爆やホロコーストから環境問題に至る幅広い社会的主題の虜になった。

マトリン氏の現在の住居はサンディエゴ州立大学の近くにある。私のホテルからは車で10分ほどで到着。しかも家番号を捜すまでもなかった。その通りに入った途端、何となくあの家ではないかと思った。というのも、周囲はどれも、小さな前庭に芝生が植わったごく普通の街中の住宅だったが、その一軒だけは、亜熱帯植物を見事に取り合わせた芸術的な空間に浸っていたからである。それは美しい庭という以上に、自然と調和したゆっくりした時の流れる異空間だった。

出迎えてくれたマトリン氏はそんな家の主にふさわしい、おおらかな雰囲気の人だった。彼はとても大きい。上背があるだけでなく、ゆったりと頼もしい印象を与

える。髪や肌の色は薄く、目は明るいブルーなのだが、ストレートの長めの髪をオールバックにした額から鼻にかけての顔立ちは、明らかに先住民系のものだった。 優しい目がなければ、インディアン戦士という表現がぴったりだったかもしれない。

ゲイル夫人も女性としてはとても背の高い人で、明るい目と自然に垂らしたストレートの髪、Tシャツにジーンズという気さくな格好が似合っている点で、夫妻は 互いにとてもよく似ていた。

夫妻は前庭だけなく、屋内にもいろいろ手を加え、居心地の良い生活空間を作り出していた。リビングには様々な美術品に加え、ゲイル夫人の陶焼きの作品も飾られていたが、それらをバランス良く配置して落ち着いた雰囲気を作り出すために、飾り棚や戸棚を作りつける、少なからぬ大工仕事が施されていた。そして、それらがすべてマトリン氏の手作業ということだった。

私は若い頃、生活費を稼ぐためにこういう仕事をしていたから、お手の物なんだ、 と彼は説明した。

マトリン氏の手腕は、書斎を初めとする各部屋の至る所に発揮されていた。そして、最後に案内されたダイニングキッチンもまた、氏がすべて工事したということだった。この部屋では壁やキャビネットはすべて白で統一され、家具や壁の縁取りには南カリフォルニアらしい先住民的なデザインがペイントされ、ところどころに明るい色の絵画が掛けられて、明るい家庭的なくつろぎの場に仕上がっていた。

私たちは台所の一番奥、窓を背に、白いテーブルを取り囲むように据え付けられたベンチに腰掛けた。テーブルの上には様々な種類の菓子パンと自家製ジャム、庭で取れた彩りも艶やかな盛り合わせフルーツの大皿、そして大きなポットに紅茶とコーヒーが用意されていた。

ゲイル夫人は、私が卵やハムを食べるようだったらすぐに用意できると言った。 私は通常、朝はあまり重いものを食べない。その一方で、フルーツは大好きで、それがたくさん用意してあるのが嬉しい、と答えた。それなら私たちと同じね、とゲイル夫人は言った。フルーツはうちの中庭で採れたものだ、とマトリン氏が付け足 した。夏場ならもっと種類が豊富なんだが、冬でも何かしら採れるのがサンディエ ゴのいいところだ、と。

インタビューのあとこの中庭を案内してもらったが、そこでは本当にたくさんの 果樹や野菜が栽培されていた。自家栽培のものは完熟を収穫するので、市販のもの よりも味が濃い。私はその贅沢な味に堪能しながら、こうした趣味はサンディエゴ に来てからなのかと尋ねた。

私はもともと農家の出だから、ものを育てるのが好きだ。妻も同様でね、とマトリン氏は答えた。こんなに本格的ではなかったが、ニューヨークにいた頃から何かしら栽培していた。自分が育てたものはおいしいし、家庭ゴミを使う有機栽培で、健康にもいい、と。

朝食のパンは日本のパン専門店で売っているような上等の品だったので、すべてが自給自足で手作りというのではないのだろう。だが、アメリカのスーパーではまずお目にかかれないディニッシュを頬張りながら、私は自然と共存しつつ心豊かな生活を営もうとする夫妻の姿勢を強く感じた。そして、おそらくこうした生活へのこだわりが夫妻の芸術活動のエネルギー源になっているのではないかと推察した。

私たちは食べ物の話の他にも、ゲイル夫人の作品について、部屋を飾っている絵画や工芸品の由来、大学での仕事について話しながら朝食を終えた。そして、柔らかい日差しが差し込むその居心地の良いコーナーにそのまま留まることにして、ティーポットとカップ以外のものをテーブルの上から片づけ、インタビューに取りかかった。(ちなみに、コーヒー党が多いアメリカの食卓では、最初から大きなポットに紅茶がなみなみと用意されているのは非常に珍しいと思うのだが、マトリン氏は私と同じく紅茶党だった。)

さて、アメリカに出発前の短い時間に次々と作品を読んだため、エノラゲイ、原 爆実験、ホロコースト生存者、農薬汚染、バラ栽培といった、ひとつひとつは非常 に鮮明な光景が、夢みるような語りで緩やかに流れてゆく心地良さに思わず引き込 まれはしたものの、それらが全体として集約してゆく先が十分に見極められていな かった。そこでインタビューではこの点についての手がかりを得たいと考えていた。 ところが録音に先立ち、作品の話をしていてすぐに気付いたのだが、質問に対するマトリン氏の返事は作品同様に次々と広がってゆき、なかなか要点が捉えにくかった。

私がインタビューした作家は誰も皆、私に対して非常に協力的だったが、受け答えには各人の癖がよく現れていた。ウォルター・アビッシュ氏はとても低姿勢で、なんとか正確な答えで私の理解を助けてくれようとする。だが、答えてもらえばもらうほど、ますます謎が増してゆき、そのパラドキシカルな状態に苦笑いを禁じ得なかった。レイモンド・フェダマン氏は非常に饒舌で、質問の答えに代え、大仰な身振りで次から次へとエピソードを語ってくれる。彼の話を追いかけるのは、うなぎのしっぽを追いかけるようなもので、それ自体、とても楽しく、ついつい夢中になってしまうのだが、うっかりしていると本題がするりと抜け落ちてしまう。その点、一見楽そうに見えるのはハロルド・ジェフィ氏とのインタビューである。私がミットを構えると、彼はそこに直球を投げてきてくれる。ただ、この直球がなかなかハードで、受け留めるにはこちらに相当の力が必要になる。私はしばしば球の勢いに打ちのめされ、ひっくり返っていたのではないだろうか。

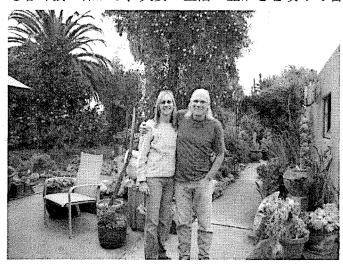
マトリン氏の場合、語り口調は作品同様とても穏やかで、聞いていても実に気持がよい。しかし内容を要約しようとすると、なかなかうまくゆかない。そして、しばらくすると、このどうにもうまくゆかないことが、彼の文学観を最もよく表しているのではないかと感じられるようになった。インタビューの中で彼は自分の作品を〈風景画〉に例えているが、風景画はそこに描かれた様々な要素をそのまま取り込んで一枚の絵として完成する。そのどれかひとつに的を絞って議論してしまえば、絵の全体像を見失うことになる。

実際、収録を終えてすぐ、マトリン氏が自分の作品の主題についてふと要を得た 言葉を用いたため、私は思わず、あ、それをさっき言ってもらえるとよかったのに、 と叫んだ。すると彼はちょっとはにかんだように微笑んでから、そういう都合のよ い言葉はあまり信じない方がいいと思う、と言った。

短いビデオメッセージを頼んだときも、彼は少し首を傾け、何かメッセージをと言われても、何を伝えたらいいのかわからないと、困り顔になった。それから、むしろ作品を一部を朗読した方が、私が実際に作品をどう捉えているのか、もっとよく理解してもらえるんじゃあないだろうか、と提案した。そして、そのとき書いていた作品を取り上げ、その中の一節を読み上げてくれた。

予定していた録音と録画がすべて済むと、マトリン氏は中庭を見せてくれ、さらにその奥にあるゲイル夫人の工房に案内してくれた。展覧会が予定されているということだったので、邪魔されたくないのではと心配したが、マトリン氏自身、自分の仕事の合間にちょくちょく工房を訪れては夫人の作業を見守るということで、私たちは快く迎え入れられた。ゲイル夫人はちょうど展示物の試作品を作っているところで、実物の十分の一のモデル作品がいくつも並んでいた。また、それにかける上薬の材料や、それらを焼き上げるガス窯なども見せてもらった。(67頁の写真)

最後に中庭で記念撮影をした。そのすぐそばでオレンジの黄色い実が鈴なりになっていて、マトリン氏は幾つか木からもぎ取ると、おみやげに持たせてくれた。そのオレンジは、次の研修先、スタンフォードに落ち着いてから食べたのだが、とても甘く濃い味がし、夫妻の生活の豊かさを改めて噛みしめる思いだった。



マトリン氏とゲイル夫人: マトリン氏宅の中庭にて 筆者撮影

### 3. Interview with David Matlin

The following is based on an interview with David Matlin, December 19, 2007, at Matlin's house in San Diego, later revised by both Matlin and Nitta. Besides his already published books, this interview discusses A HalfMan Dreaming and It Might Do Well with Strawberries, which he had just finished writing and sent their manuscripts to me before the interview.

Reiko Nitta: First will you explain your background a little?

David Matlin: Sure. I was born on October 5, 1944, in Upland, California, then a small fruit growing and ranching community next to the San Gabriel Mountains. And, yes, my father is Jewish. He was born in the family homestead in Ontario, California in 1912. His mother and father came from Russia in the late nineteenth century and first settled in New York. They were political radicals and my grandfather spent two years in solitary confinement in a Russian prison before coming to America. On my father's side I would be a second generation American. On my mother's side (she was born in 1914) that's more complicated. Her mother's people came to California with Crespi Expedition in 1769. They were Mexican and Indian people from Mexico and were part of the original Spanish colonial settlement of California. I am told they intermarried with the Indians of California who went into the Mission system and often did not survive. My mother's father was a lumberjack and construction engineer who came to take the great redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. His people were part of the original English settlement and they were related to Roger Williams. The story is full of adventure and sorrow.

RN: When did you actually start writing poems and novels?

DM: I started writing poems in my teens and the first novel, *How the Night Is Divided* (1992), began to evolve in my early forties. I knew with the appearance of the first phrases of the opening line the piece would be a novel. I could feel its motions and knew from that point I had to chase it.

RN: As you started your writing career as a poet and first published the collections of poems such as *Fontana's Mirror* (1982), *China Beach* (1989), and *Dressed in Protective Fashion* (1990), I believe that you are quite conscious of the tone of your writing even when you write your novels.

DM: Yes, it is very important to read mine, and any book which deeply touches the reader, aloud. The sounded word through that becomes much more of a restless, living thing. But I am not sure how conscious I am of a tone of writing as a writing collects its sounds and pitch. Much of my experience of composition is often a wandering, a stuttering, a waiting as the language itself appears underhand and offers instruction. I don't mean by that a daemonic visit of messages; rather the thing of the writing as physical presence coming to the page and the first seeing, you as the writer are given. That first seeing is always a bewilderment, a mystery of initial unknowns.

RN: I think that one of the important characteristics of your writing is seamless sentences. They produce the dreamy continuity of the narrator's consciousness as John Clarke calls "Dream-Time continua past the size of dreaming" in the preface to *Dressed in Protective Fashion*.

DM: I often think my basic sense of composition comes from having watched my mother knit when I was kid. How she chose her yarns and colors; chose her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Dressed in Protective Fashion. David Matlin. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Other Wind P, 1990. 6.

knitting needles. She was inventive and courageous and made much of her own clothing. The formation of knots and weavings fascinated me and still does. I think in that of the pre-Columbian khipu in their varieties and forms, the possible repositories of "dream" and "consciousness" those very great textiles might hold and the fact that we still know so little about these objects and the questions they pose. I don't purposefully compose a "dreamy continuity"; I do try to listen to the language as I experience it and weave the multiple levels of the material into story and what story might hold.

RN: As the multiple levels of the material, I think you use dreams, myths, folktales and mix them with the ominous realities to create a large American epic such as Frank Norris's *Octopus*.

DM: When I think of a tradition of "ominous realities" it is more Melville and Hawthorne, Faulkner and Mary Austin, Mari Sandoz and D.H. Lawrence, Jack Spicer and Frank O'Hara, Robert Duncan and H.D., Edward Dahlberg and Fanny Howe, Hardy and Landscape, Gericault and Eakins, Whitman and Tecumseh, Blake and The Body (there is much more). Human existence seems so often to be a motion of haunted fragilities.

RN: In your first novel, *How the Night Is Divided* (1993) as well as in the novel you have just finished, *A HalfMan Dreaming*, important social themes such as World War II and the Atomic bomb, the Jewish refugees, the Vietnam War, Insecticides, the Nevada test-site and environmental problems are recurrent. Are they very important topics for you to deal with in relation to human existence?

DM: I do not think I chose those topics particularly. They are a part of the world I perceived. They were certainly not "topics" in the world in which I began my life. They were a part of my landscape. After the Second World War the Enola

Gay was housed in an obscure rural airport in a little town called Chino, California. I spent my early childhood in that ranching and farming community. That is where my life began. We saw the Enola Gay as children. It is a fixture in my imagination. It is a haunted object because all of our fates and beginnings are still held in it. And I began A HalfMan Dreaming with the reference to this object and the relationship to the two boys, Wesley and Lupe, who is the protagonist of A HalfMan Dreaming. He is, without his knowing, made strange by this object, carries that in to the Vietnam War, carries that in to prison, carries that to Detroit, Michigan. He originally goes there to see a sergeant he knew in Vietnam and who is an Ojibwa Indian. Then he is arrested there. All of my work, I think, is dealing with a strange material because the presence of human life, or any life is extraordinary.

RN: Besides the social references, the strong image of roses is also recurrent in those two books. The narrator of *How the Night Is Divided* and Lupe's friend, Wesley, in *A HalfMan Dreaming* are both the sons of the rose farm. So were you, weren't you? Your parents owned a rose farm, didn't they?

DM: Yes, they did.

RN: Then it is also a part of your landscape, isn't it? What is your earliest memory of the roses? And how about the water, which I think is also an important image in the books?

DM: My father was a rose farmer when I was a child. Flowers and the Rose are continually what the hand and nose and heart can hold, or not. They hover. They are at the margins full of trouble and wonder. And water. I grew up in a desert. The history of water in Southern California is murder, greed, power. It is central fact of madness, central issue of waste and danger and mass stupidity. Its primordial wholeness cannot be, and has not been spoken for thousands of years.

RN: In both novels, the farmer's foreman is a Kiowa Indian, Tom Green, who appears as a very reliable and respectable man. Especially in the first novel, he plays one of the main roles. Is he modeled after somebody on your father's farm?

DM: When I was a child the presence of the Great Depression was still real. Many of my classmates in grammar school were the children of "Okies." In the late 1940s and 1950s these "immigrants" were still, in many ways, a despised and questionable population in California. Tom Green is an "imagined person" but still, a "person" who emerges from these early experiences.

RN: Was his native American background essential to *How the Night Is Divided* because he introduces Kiowa beliefs and folklores as well as a solid knowledge of nature in it?

DM: The novel would not exist without "Tom Green."

RN: You said that you deal with strange material because the presence of human life is extraordinary. I often find that your strange material is also quite violent. Do you think it is a part of contemporary American life?

DM: America is a very violent place. And a very dangerous place.

RN: But here you live in such a wonderful place with a totally peaceful atmosphere. I was very much impressed by your front garden when I arrived as well as the inside decorations. They are not only very artistic but also soothingly comfortable.

DM: How one deals with violence, how one thinks about the problems or pressures of America is still unresolved. I have written a book called *Prisons Inside the New America* (2005) and focused on the American prison system, which is the most dangerous prison system in the world. And the final sentence in the book refers to historical degradation of generations of persons and the fact

that American civilization has invented a protective remove to shield itself from the trouble of these tormenting facts.

RN: Ah, yes, I was next going to ask about that book. It is based on your teaching experience in the prison, isn't it?

DM: Yes. For ten years I worked in an experimental educational program in three prisons in New York State. It was one of the most unusual educational experiments attempted in America. It seems to me now the three profound images of my early childhood are roses, the Enola Gay, and prisons. Chino was at once an agricultural and prison town. I grew up with boys and girls who ended up in prison. Had I not grown up in a family that had access to money and education – with the kind of learning disability I had - without this accident of birth – I do not know what would have happened to me.

RN: Did you have a lot of difficulties in your youth?

DM: I could not read even the simplest preposition until I was ten or eleven years old. That was very difficult. My mother cared very deeply and spent at least two years of her life working with me along with a very gifted woman.

RN: Now I remember that you mentioned it in *Prisons Inside the New America* and how hard your mother worked on your "word blindness" with another woman's help. With such an experience, you could have learned not only that the education of writing and reading is important for us but also how to teach it. DM: Many of the prisoners I knew had learning disabilities of one sort or another. Often I was able to recognize a problem and be of use. Many of these men were gifted. I suppose, and it is always difficult to articulate, that I learned about the consequences of racism in America. That we, and any other society burdened with this mess, would be an entirely different people, if somehow we were able to release ourselves from this repulsive, deadening burden.

RN: In *Prisons Inside the New America*, you revealed the predicaments of your students in the prison but your interest was not limited to the prison system alone. With various anecdotes, it turns out to be a humane story far deeper than a social propaganda. And this is more apparent in *It Might Do Well with Strawberries*, another book you have just finished and in which you respond to social issues in 2004 and 2005 including such horrifying prisons as in Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, Bangram.

DM: It Might Do Well With Strawberries is a series of commentaries, poems, fictions, passages and meditations about daily life, art, gardening. Its focus is the twenty-four month period of 2004/2005. Phenomena surfaced in this time-frame which no human generations have ever experienced. I wanted to search for a language, to see if any language might exist, or if one needs to be invented before the deepest and most dangerous frustration we all seem to face; there basically is no language to help us articulate what we are going through. Words have painfully no Word/Life and what are the bereavements we are forced to hold or will be left with as common men and women?

RN: You said that the Enola Gay, Jewish refugees, Nuclear Test-sites, Insecticide, Vietnam War etc., are your landscape. Probably so are the prisons and those current events in the US society. And what is very impressively peculiar in your usage of these materials is that each issue is not strongly connected to one another, hinting at a confused presence of our existence. Are there any writers or any literary ideas which influence your writing?

DM: William Blake, H.D., Christopher Marlowe, Basho, Whitman, Rimbaud, Gertrude Stein. The list is too long. It includes visual artists, every day experience, my home life, my son and his wife, watching Gail make a ceramic piece.

RN: You received a Ph. D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo, didn't you? What was the subject of your Ph. D.?

DM: It was the wide ranging consideration of William Blake and the roots of Modernism. All its materials focused not only on the industrial and scientific revolution, but on the patterns of tyranny and enslavement, and visionary persistence in relationship to how Blake was perceiving the world. I also focused on the questions of what the artist is, how the artist either loses his or her imagination before what always seems to be the expertly managed pressures and adaptations of tyranny or how the artist can begin to imagine new forms of possibility of being alive before this challenge.

RN: Does Blake's view of the world affect your own view of the world? And just as Blake fights with his imagination and art against tyranny in his world, have you been trying to fight with your writing against American tyranny?

DM: I think that is difficult to articulate. America's tyranny is a very skilled and slippery triumph as I have tried to say in various writings. I am particularly American — very much American — and the fate of the American "Person" as Whitman imagines and makes it instantly primordial is a continuous fascination and source. America is a bewildering, very guilt ridden, fate ridden world, and how each generation comes upon and discovers that world anew and not be brought in to the seductive, undermining designs of its fatigues is a major concern. D.H. Lawrence's call to smash "the vast lie of the world" I find to be magnificent. I think it is certainly part of my artistic tradition and when I call upon the tradition, I think of many artists who have spoken directly to me in their books because I think they are generative examples of how one confronts the presence of imagination. When I think of Hawthorne, and the greatness of The Scarlet Letter, I think of the opening passages about prison and how prison

instantly ages, rots, and makes America barren. And I thought about it a great deal because in my background, not only was my grandfather thrown into solitary confinement in a 19th century Russian prison, but my mother's uncle was locked up in San Quentin in 19th century California. This sense of political radicalism and conscience I grew up with is not metaphorical at all, but real.

RN: Talking about your background, you used to be in New York -

DM: For twenty-five years.

RN: And you came across many artists there, I believe. Do you think that they influenced your writing?

DM: I was much more influenced by painters and visual artists in New York than I was by poets even though St. Marks was just right down the street from where we lived. Ted Berrigan, Alice Notley, and many others were there. But I found my resources for the most part were centered upon the visual arts — with painting, with sculpture, and the fascination with the energies in New York. I was much more drawn to that world and its experiment than I was to the actual literary culture. It was available then. And I do not mean I was not interested in literary culture. I am deeply interested but I felt much more given to an empathy with visual arts during that time and most of my friends socially were visual artists.

RN: Who are your favorites artists?

DM: I suppose this probably needs further explanation. In the world I grew up in, the secretary of the rose business was a man named Frank Pollock, who was Jackson Pollock's brother. So I was familiar with a number of artists as a very young boy and I was drawn to them and what they did. My Godfather was Reuben Kadish who was boyhood friends with Philip Guston, Jackson Pollock, Herman Cherry. All four have been significant. So the news came right to the

front door. The charm has never lost its intensity.

RN: And your wife is also an artist, isn't she? What kind of artistic relationship do you have with her?

DM: We are very close and I have been deeply influenced by not only her courage and invention but how differently she sees and responds to the world. Our languages are very different. I have learned how to listen, how to watch, how to perceive in a way that would have never been available to me otherwise.

RN: Is she your first reader as well?

DM: Yes. And a very difficult reader. (laughing)

RN: Oh, is she very demanding?

DM: Yes. Besides that she is not literary. She says what she thinks.

RN: But it means, if you can please her, you can please any reader.

DM: I do not want to please anybody. I am not looking for her agreement on any level. You know, I am a difficult writer. But she brings to my work an eye and ear which is completely different and which I find immediately alert and curious. And as she is a very acute reader, if my work has the clarity and motion I would like it to have, then the labor will become clear to her at some point. But I do not want to "please" anybody. You know, presenting something new, an actual experience to somebody whoever it is going to be, is perilous uncertainty and actionable energizing presence. I do not think of any ideal reader until my work is finished. If the work is addressed to the reader from the beginning, I do not think that the work comes alive.

RN: I see. Well, besides those literary and artistic influences, how about your Jewish and Native American background? Do you think that you have received any influence from them?

DM: Well, I have a Jewish background, a Native American background, a

Mexican American background ... all of those. In a world like California, particularly in the world I grew up in, all these materials seem to be a part of the landscape, even a grab bag of possibilities that I think are fatefully given and arrive randomly. They are major things. They have certainly the presences and elemental materials of my childhood. And I perceive that the fact they do relate to mythologies, and the fact they do relate to all of our fates as a species, becomes even more a part of the rhythmic element of the narrative.

RN: Are you ever fully aware of using different qualities in your background for a certain artistic purpose? For example, in *How the Night Is Divided*, Tom Green's native American mind seems to be strongly contrasted to the farmer's Jewish way of handling the farm.

DM: In How the Night Is Divided I attempted to mix Tom Green's Kiowa visions, nightmares, joys, and troubles (both wonderful and disintegrating) with the Russian Jewish political radicalism, visions, despairs, rages, dreams, and Cold War fates into at once a delicate/mad story defined by roses and water. I tried to introduce something peculiar, eccentric, and, yes, new into the fabric. A HalfMan Dreaming is the second extension and there will be third.

RN: Then you have just a big landscape -

DM: A huge landscape.

RN: With many different contents?

DM: Yes.

RN: So if each content seems to present a different image, it is a part of a huge landscape called David Matlin?

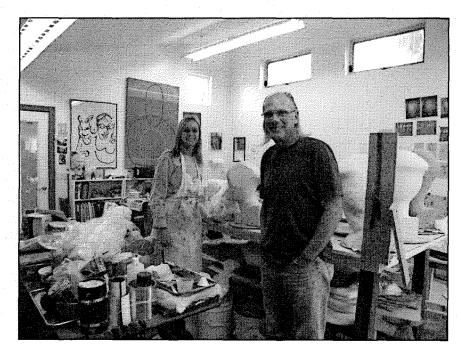
DM: The landscape is a very important theme for me as it was for Thomas Hardy, for instance, who is to me a great master and one of the greatest landscape painters. His is an invented "landscape" and if I can imagine a life for my own

writing, it might be something similar.

RN: What is your future writing plan. Are there any new literary challenges you have in your mind?

DM: At this moment I'm almost done with a collection of novellas, long short stories, and other writings. The work has occupied me for nearly three years. I find the novella form to have a compelling, startling unease. When this is done I'll begin a new novel. There are other pieces in sketch including a collaboration with Gail.

RN: I am looking forward to other new works which will become more pieces of a huge landscape called David Matlin. Thank you very much for today's interview.



マトリン氏とゲイル夫人: ゲイル夫人の工房にて筆者撮影

# The New Horizon of the Jewish American Literature: Interviews with Three Postmodern Jewish American Writers

#### Reiko NITTA

(Graduate School of Letters, Hiroshima University)

This issue includes my interviews with three Postmodern Jewish American Writers: Raymond Federman, Harold Jaffe and David Matlin. I held these interviews from December 17 to 19, 2007, as a part of my research project from 2005 to 2008, supported by the Japanese government's Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research under the title: "The New Horizon of Ethnicity: Postmodern Jewish Characteristics in American Literature." As part of the same project, I also interviewed Walter Abish on December 25, 2005.

I translated these four interviews into Japanese and with a short introduction to each writer, published them in Kenkyusha's *The Rising Generation* from May to August, 2008. They interested many Japanese scholars and some of those scholars asked me to publish the English version of the interviews. As I have already published the English version of Abish's interview in *Hiroshima Studies in English Language and Literature* in March, 2007, I collected here the English version of the remaining interviews, those with Federman, Jaffe and Matlin.

These interviews were first transcribed by myself from my recording. Then they were carefully revised by the respective writers and myself. As we spent much time revising them, I believe that the final version of any interview clearly expresses its writer's literary intention. On the other hand, I am afraid that the process of careful revision erased some aspects of their personalities which were apparent during the interviews. This is why I added a note on my memory of the writer to each interview. I hope that it will supply personalities missing in the final versions of the interviews, and that with the summary of the writer's achievement at the beginning, it will help the reader understand the content of the interview and the writer's activity better than before.

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