



As writer as a writer as a writer of theatre

These pages are about the years in which I was not performing, nor producing, neither directing or involved in theatre, years in which I was a writer. And as a writer my attention turned for most of these years, to the writing of fiction in the form of four novels and my current novella, while writing for theatre came intermittently, mainly at the beginning of this period, but in the past year and a half I returned to writing for theatre and composed my latest theatre project, *A Sound That Calls People From Afar*.

The aftermath of *David* found me fairly well divorced from thinking let alone theatre. I was a wreck, unable to focus, meandering about, reliably capable of working in my gardens, or riding my bikes, wandering the streets, and that was about it. Wandering into autumn I was finally able to fully digest the intense emotions that had surfaced during the production. I had my work cut out for me, but my creative juices were piqued, and I picked up my

pen and engaged myself in the long and oft considered *America, a place*, a proposed four part opus about the American landscape. The work began strong, went smoothly, and rather swiftly. From early autumn 1996 through the spring of 1997, part one began to take shape.

The basis for this project was a thesis begun at university designed to explore the American Adam myth in American literature, a hot topic within the academic literary community at the time and throughout most of the 20th century. The hypothesis I conjured however, revolved around an American Adam who was not altogether literary protagonist, or of mythic proportion, but alive and well living somewhere, any and everywhere across the American landscape, cum Garden of Eden, and in fact, had always been part of the landscape, because it is the landscape after all, that molds us. This was the central dialectic of my thesis. If one properly reads their history, and archaeology, and carefully studies Native American culture, their myths, stories and legends, the American Adam can be observed walking in the *garden of eden*, the very landscape the Puritans, the Dutch and the early French explorers described. The average Native American was well aware of his place in Nature. They were no more central than the animals or the plants. Indigenous people evolved egalitarian ways of gender expression. Women held esteemed positions and their voice was highly regarded. In general, the tongue was acclaimed. Take Massasoit, the great leader of the Narragansett Tribe. He spoke eloquently. In fact, it was Massasoit who virtually single handedly facilitated the Pilgrim's first Thanksgiving, and his son Metacomet, known by the English as King Philip, who went to war with the Puritans after unsuccessfully rallying the tribes along the Atlantic coast in New England, even though he had been open to the English, had bent over backwards to accommodate them, but there was nothing that could appease

their hunger, and so, the greed to which the European viewed the land, was planted, but there were some and eventually, many, who were different. There was, god forbid, Hester Prynne, aka Anne Hutchinson of Scarlet Letter fame, Roger Williams, the most prominent of the early settlers who established strong and well bounded friendships with natives, a host of folks not afraid of the so called Wilderness, nor the native inhabitants, who successfully began to merge European philosophy with an emergent new age style of living, though they would forever remain a small but vocal minority. Take Henry David Thoreau, one of the main voices of that group.

The inherent problem with the literary creation of the early 19th century was its essentially European point of view. The novel, not being an American invention, was adopted by Americans, and quickly adapted into the vernacular, twisted and turned up and down, until it felt as though it had risen naturally from the fertile soil of the American landscape, yet for all these wonderful new world modifications, the American Adam, while born in the new world, was nonetheless reared by a distinctly European point of view. What was taking place on the landscape was mirrored in the novel: man against nature manifest in conquering a landscape they found unsettling. The literary myth of the American Adam failed to include the *wilderness* the Native American resided within, and relied upon characters like Natty Bumpo, or Ahab, to wrestle with this environment, as though there was some sort of universal battle taking place between Nature and Man, which there was, but only in the mind's of those who had come from Europe, not in the minds of those who were residing here upon their arrival. The literary conceit failed to incorporate the spirituality of the people who inhabited the American soil for nearly twenty thousand years. An even more dramatic

shortcoming was the failure to predicate the creation of a homeland on the mythic roots, stories, legends, and cosmogony that had already been sown.

My treatise went on to describe the context and evolution of the American landscape, how four distinct and separate roots have become inextricably intertwined,

“three roots, grafted to a land raw, wild, irresistible, beckoning, and, to a people who inhabited this land, an indigenous people, inseparable from the land they lived upon...three roots, each one distinct, de-fining, self in-dulgent, particular in their attributes... three roots planted, and the way each planter felt about their planting, these feelings too became part of the graft...three roots twined in an inexorable fusion, affixed to the land upon which they feasted, and the providence of the land, the frontier, the wilderness, like a fourth root, served as catalyst for growth...as she still does.”
(from America, part two, scene XIII)

When spring fully burgeoned (1997) a necessary break was taken. I phoned an old pair of friends and collaborators, musicians Ravish Momin (percussion) and Lee Robinson (saxophones). Together we began to cobble ***Solos, Duos and Trio*** a nite of words, music, sounds and passion; a nite of cabaret. Once again, *Three Quarters Below the Street* came alive. The three of us each performed a solo piece. I honored Allen Ginsburg, who had recently passed away, with a powerful rendition of the *Sunflower Sutra*; Mr. Momin performed a ravishing percussion piece, filling the space with the elegiac sounds of his tar, ending with the steady, deliberate, repetitious striking of bells that led to Mr. Robinson’s evocative solo on alto sax. The first Duo I performed was a haunting yet evocative revival of ***Tongues*** with

Mr. Momin; while the second, a humorous and peripatetic though somewhat melancholic *Savage/Love*, performed with Lee Robinson. Both pieces were written by Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaikin. While *Tongues* was scored by Mr. Shepard, the music for *Savage/Love* was written by myself in collaboration with Mr. Robinson. The trio performed an excerpted section from *America, part i, the arrival*, scored for saxophone, percussion and voice. It was a delicious evening, and a rare opportunity for me to act like a musician. My work was delivered recitatively, poetically. The characters I created for *Tongues* were more like emanations. The vocal quality however, was essentially musical. Approaching Shepard's work in this manner allowed me a much wider vocal range. I felt quite comfortable inside the material Shepherd had so carefully sculpted.

With the final notes of *Solos, Duos and Trio*, focus was re turned to my prodigious *America* project. I worked assiduously for the next year and a half, uninterruptedly, through the fall of 1998. Winter found me aback the hump of a Camelus dromedarius, roaming once again the fertile crescent in a return visit to the Middle East to gather additional material, essentially picking up where I had left my initial *biblical journey* to the Promised Land. While I spent considerable time roaming the Sinai and Israeli countryside, this trip saw me enter Jordan for the first time so that I could explore the Dead Sea Hills, as well as the sumptuous archaeological site Petra to the south.

Crossing the Allenby Bridge astride the Jordan River at its most central point, where the Israelites supposedly entered the promised land of Canaan leaving behind Mt. Nebo and their spiritual leader Moses, squeaking along in my beat up Fiat, I quickly began weaving a labyrinthine course through the mountains, south, toward the ancient city of Petra. Along the way



I discovered the nooks and crannies of a most captivating landscape largely unexplored by westerners. There was much to think about. The collaboration begun years before with Ishtar and Tmu-Na had run its course. In the end it was like grasping holy water. The intervening years marked by political uncertainty and cultural divergence made the project untenable. The ideas, images, feelings and thoughts cultivated during my first trip to the Middle East, framed by this most incredible landscape, re affirmed themselves, as new experiences were digested.

My route took me from Petra across the Gulf of Aqaba into the Sinai for a return visit. Traveling in solitude I walked right into the heart of the Sinai's forbidden wilderness, forsook the camel and guide for the solitude feet provided. I settled in at Farsh Eliahu beneath the omnipresent and penetrating gaze of Gabel Musa where I spent three days fasting and hiking in the place Moses had found relief thirty five hundred years previously; where Elijah encamped, fasted, and meditated; where countless others sought refuge. In the valley of Eliahu I conceptualized *Exodus Without a*

Tourguide. I began to sense a (theatrical) conversation between text, music and film; and visualize a *travelogue* about the Sinai Peninsula. The Sinai would become the backdrop to focus on those experiences that lead one toward change. I began to understand the Sinai as symbol, the symbol of our imagination; the Sinai as passage; the Sinai as transformation; the Sinai, that merciless place which shakes one until they have no choice but to focus on the personal rituals required to make a successful passage through such a forbidding desert, the practices which ultimately change one's way of viewing themselves and their surrounding world.

The EveryMan, Whitman, chronicles his journey into the Sinai as he re traces the route of Exodus, confronting his personal demons along the way which have long dogged him. His personal transformation, along with the changes that have slowly accrued upon the landscape, are explored through a richly poetic language, while a tapestry of Middle Eastern sound, and a lush film reveal an exciting and exceptional landscape:

“into darkness we are plunged...i come...with a story. there is a story i wish to tell...it happened to me many years ago. it is the story of a peregrination about the landscape...a journey across the Sinai Peninsula...which took me from the verge to the center of my life.”



Spring two thousand two witnessed a pleasant visit with a very dear old friend, *The Seder*. Revisions were made; characters gained strength; wisdom and passion. Humour was added and a new character unveiled—a wandering story teller, whose humorous Yiddishkite anecdotes seamlessly connect the Rabbi, the pubescent German soldier, and the taped voice of Simon Wiesenthal, the Jew. According to the Post Gazette, “Mr. Wenger’s performances were spell binding and hypnotic. Enraptured, he filled *Three Quarters Below the Street* with great spiritual intensity. Perhaps the intervening years gave Mr. Wenger new insights; perhaps the transformations in his personal life allowed him to create a more intimate and evocative atmosphere? The issues remained: guilt, separation, forgiveness, faith and hope, and once again they were the central serving dish, though this time around they seemed to be infused with greater intention.” And once again the black box space of *Three Quarters Below* smelled of freshly grated horseradish and the sticky, sweet cidery scent of newly prepared harosis.

America, a place,

a theatre piece in four parts

a particular way of looking at things.

a very special sense of Time

to smell:

part I, "the arrival" the birth upon the land of a mythology. seeds of this mythology are planted; roots are placed into the soil, the soft soul of the land, a land come known as America. the Vikings; the Lenni Lenape; two cultures, one from the west journeying east, the other, from the east traveling west, meet on the yielding shore of the Atlantic. The Arrival is a story about these people. it is the story of their meeting. it is the first millennium.

it is a film. it is like watching a film, or being in one.

it is cinematic. a musical. it is an opera.

it is operatic. it is ironic:

part I consists of 9 Lenape, 9 Vikings, a Poet, a chorus or chorale of three women and three men, and a six person music ensemble. the audience sits on the back of the symbolic tortoise in the middle of the performance space, in the middle of an ocean, in the middle of the script, on a ship, as the tortoise rocks and bobs back and forth to allow the audience full view of the action at either end and around the performance space.

part II, "the evolution of the landscape", is the evolution of America from the point of view of the land. the seeds planted in part i germinate six hundred years later as the footprints of the past, and the continent comes alive. more film and a great deal more music.

it is dead serious, intense, charismatic,

filled, yet quiet, didactic, slippery.

it is downright fun:

part II is a very large piece befitting the landscape it takes place upon. the Poet is back; there is a chorus once again, this time three women and three men, and a cast of twenty five who roam the landscape transforming with it.

part III, "the garden", a locale, a location, the local; from the particular to the general; two people, a male and a female conjoin. part iii is a dance for two. they come together, they separate, they return. they perform rituals; they make personal transformations. this piece is a rite of passage. in addressing the issue of place, one should begin with the relationship they have with themselves, locating themselves, so to speak, within their body, within the garden, upon the land, a land known as the body.

there are contradictions, contradistinctions, conundrums
and complexities aplenty.

some riddles are resolved, some cleverly
disguised.

part IV, "the journey up the mountain". the audience is taken up a mountain. along the path to the summit, twelve paths, pause is taken, rituals are performed, questions posed. at the summit a modern version of the Lenni Lenape **Big House** ceremony is enacted. there are no performers; there are no observers; there is only we.

it is poetic. yes. it is poetry. it is...

America, a place takes place in a place removed from all places, a place where nature and humanity come together for their mutual benefit, a place located near a mountain. A festival should be created around the production drawing people from around the globe to the place where a theatre has been created, a place where observation, and thought provoking discussion meet. Why? It is important we speak to one another. It is important we stand face to face, so that we may see one another, eye to eye,

and feel each other's presence, touching if need be, smell one another, taste if I suppose. It is necessary to know who we are, so that America, once again, can be the mirror it once seemed to be.

America, a place has been designed for the actors in parts I and II to play multiple roles, and reprise their roles throughout the production. A variety of acting styles should be employed:

part I. the Vikings should be played stiffly, wooden, as though their lives existed only within the confines of a painting, in contrast to the Lenape, *les sauvages naturelles*, whose interaction with their world is natural, fluid, organic and harmonious.

part II. three distinct styles rise from the earth beneath the actor's feet: in those scenes rooted in the South, the characters think heart, lungs, throat, the emotions located in these areas and their expression; those scenes which derive from New England, the characters focus on their stomach, groin, and sex organs—physical power—the emotions located in these areas, and their expression; while those scenes that emanate from the Middle Atlantic, the characters' actions and speeches are to be focused on their heads—intellect—the emotions located there and their expression. as the actors perambulate west, south and north, and begin to interact with characters from other environs, they are not to leave home without their original acting style—they simply append as they go, if they add at all.

part III. two actors; a man, for whom the surprise of living and learning, and being overwhelmed by both at times, is in contrast to the woman's quiet acceptance of life on earth.

part IV. the acting, if there is any, is mythic, heroic; it is tribal, as the collection of characters begin to form a community.

America, parts I and II make use of a chorus, whose function is to don masks, speak with accents, some strange and unidentifiable, play a variety of musical instruments, wreak havoc, and add humor. The role of the Poet, a kind of narrator, present in all four parts, tends to be the voice of poetic rationality. All these roles have appeared throughout my work. The difference here is they are not merely extensions of the main characters; they are not the personified counterpoint to a fragmented stage characterization, but voices removed from Time and Space. While they add texture, they also offer an intellectual component I have struggled to provide elsewhere. The Poet in *America* is not nearly as glib as Jack in *Dismembered.Remembered*, the video alter ego of live Jack, yet is far more prepared to eschew critical remarks, for

“the quest
a rigor of vision”

Perhaps the Poet of *Opening Windows Passages* has matured, seasoned with life’s multifarious rhythms, filled with the poetry living a full life provides? Perhaps he sees himself less separately from the mainstream, and more willing to share the insights he has gained as he moves into the prime of his life?

Part II *the evolution of the landscape*, was initially conceived as a single, multi-faceted work from the point of view of the landscape, composed of twelve separate yet simultaneously performed pieces, originating in twelve separate locations throughout the United States of America, each location representing a separate and distinct geographic region within America, with its own unique environmental considerations, reflecting discrete and separate histories and development. At the same time each regional performance was just that, one piece of America’s evolutionary

pie. All twelve were designed to be contained by an umbrella script loosely referred to as the national point of view. Sections of each regional piece would be projected to the other eleven sites so each audience at all twelve sites could experience at the same moment a slice of what was happening at another location and how the history and concerns of that region had bearing on their province. The so called national point of view was meant to be the heart of *America, part II*. It would be performed in all twelve locations at the same time, each regional piece weaving itself around this warp.

A third strain or element contained in the original proposal was the creation of twelve documentary videos reflecting a local milieu within each of the twelve regions, portraying a single member of a family whose roots stretch to the beginning of that region's history, either Native American or European. By focusing on a single person it was my intention to unearth deep rooted relationships families have to the local area they inhabit, how the region is mysteriously constructed by these families and the effect the larger entity, known as country, has on the various regions and localities that comprise it and the families who reside on the land, all the families inhabiting all the regions, the interplay between the local, regional and national as a way to reveal the influence we all have on one another.

My original concept for *America, part II* aspired to create a large scale production whose tentacles extended beyond the theatre, filled with interconnected layers of expression, from the search for a national identity to a basic local pursuit of setting roots in the soil. While I could not bring myself to accept the responsibility of writing all twelve regional pieces, in addition to the script for the national point of view, it was not my desire to hold the project up any longer than I had searching the landscape for prospective writers. I had spent considerable time doing research. I had also

placed the project in abeyance for nearly twenty years. Along the way my ideas had transformed from a strictly intellectual pursuit to ideas rooted by physical experiences expressed within the context of a theatre. In the end I surrendered to a simpler model which favored a single writer working at a single desk. While I did forsake the local video documentary, at least temporarily, many of my ideas for it were simulated throughout the four pieces of *America, a place*.

The technical considerations for *America* are nothing less than an evolution of the ideas embodied in all my earlier work, finding a new and hopefully more fulfilling home in *America, a place*. The heartbeat of *part I* is the environment the audience inhabits—the enormous tortoise shell raised above the floor. Beneath its arc the performers have free passage; the musicians and the choral group though remain beneath throughout the piece. This world the audience inhabits is an island floating in the vast sea of a performing area that completely surrounds them. The tortoise shell rocks back and forth, enhancing the sea like imagery, while allowing the audience unfettered view of the performances which take place at either end of the space. This sort of experiential staging treatment began in earnest with *Quodlibet*, albeit far less demanding technically.

Quodlibet itself was an extension of the scenic work that accompanied *Opening Windows Passages*. Over the years the treatment of the audience became increasingly central to my work, far more intrinsic than some clever re arrangement offered. What was accomplished in *Opening Windows Passages*, although playful in its staging did not really break through the traditional linear relationship between stage and audience as much as it took that line and bent it round and round to create circles. The audience was not asked to become an intellectual entity as they were in

Quodlibet when they became the mountains, the prairie, when they became the lurid city, or in *Modality part one*, when they were the corporate board members. *Quodlibet* and *Modalities* asked their audience to transform their usual way of viewing their place within the theatre. Action in each area was unique to that area, and the ideas embedded in the text were unique to their staging, but neither *Quodlibet* nor *Modalities* was revelatory. While each created wonderful environments for their audience to inhabit, neither asked their audience to probe their surroundings for some underlying meaning or significance. They were simply asked to embody them. In this way these pieces, along with *The Summation of Oranges*, *The Seder*, and *David, a documentary*, were preparatory, tilling the soil while laying the groundwork for *America, a place*. It is this production which asks its audience to take a more penetrating look about, observe and see their place as absolutely central to the performance.

The journey up the mountain the audience is asked to make in *America part IV* culminates the four part opus, while symbolically reflecting the metaphoric journey each one of us must make as we ascend our individual mountains. The various parts of *The Big House*, like parts of a body, carried by the performers and audience member alike, erected on the summit of the mountain, entirely dismantles the barrier between these typically separate groups, revealing their essentially interchangeability, allowing the audience in the end, to complete *America, a place* not simply when they help erect the Big House, but when they descend the mountain in solitude from their personal summit.

Every element I had once worked with was reconsidered. For instance, in *America, part I*, I utilize lighting and film in a more intimate and symbolic fashion to create my aesthetic. These visual elements are being

asked to render a series of *paintings*, frozen, wooden images suspended in Time, an extension of the restrained work begun in *The Summation of Oranges* in the desert scenes, but In *Summation* while slides were used to help create a set that remained a static background for the performers to interact with, in *America, part I*, this may be true of certain scenes involving the Vikings, but the consistent static framing of the Viking characters becomes a statement about the Vikings, their way of life, their philosophy of living, and a way to differentiate them from their counterparts, the Native Americans. In the scenes which involve the Native Americans, the film portrays a dynamic world with which the characters physically interact. Their survival depends on it. The film creates the landscape the Native Americans exist within. It contains them, and as this environment transforms, so do its inhabitants. The film helps to capture the organic and symbiotic relationship the Native Americans maintain and nurture with their environment.

Part II builds on this scrutiny, not so much in the way lighting and film are put to use, but in the styles of acting employed. The piece is much less operatic, more down to earth, and reliant on the actors to convey subtle and nuanced ideas. Various acting styles are employed. The actors in each region are asked to focus on different parts of their bodies, to develop a core set of movements and vocalizations that begin to differentiate one region from another. Naturally, each region comes to represent a set of ideas and emotions. Rather than being asked to reflect reality, the actors are asked to embody a specific set of ideas and emotions that reflect the region from which they hail and move these (ideas and emotions) through space and across time as their characters evolve and interact with characters from other regions, toward a *more perfect union*, as the national image of a place called America begins to blossom.

America, a place was completed on my birthday, the 6th July in the year 2003. Since, my pen has been engaged with other projects whose roots can be found in the *America* genealogy.

Two Peas in a Pod, two separate theatre pieces fashioned into a single production, reminiscent of *Ineluctable Modalities*, but in the case of *Two Peas in a Pod*, the pivotal concept of separation is dealt with more directly, and with much more intention. The audiences for ***A WomAn*** and ***The Man in the Flannel Shirt*** are separated from one another, not by the few feet that came between them in *David, a documentary*, nor the discrete worlds the audience was separated into by *Dismembered.Remembered*, but to separate theatres entirely, and the pieces performed simultaneously. Upon the conclusion of the first, the divided audience is asked to switch theatres and witness the missing link. The characters of the each piece make cameo appearances through live and previously shot videotape, adding to the mysteriousness of the experience.

The word separation hails from the Latin *separatio(n-)*, from *separare*, *to disjoin, or divide*. The antecedents for my decision to perform separate pieces simultaneously clearly has its roots in *Ineluctable Modalities*. Where this production simply leaned on the idea structurally, in *Two Peas in a Pod*, the concept becomes central. The audience sits face to face with the intrinsic human condition (of separation), juxtaposed against our need for social connections.

Two Peas in a Pod attempts to extend the conceptual premise underlying *David*, and explore the vicissitudes of our alienation, side by side with our ineluctable propensity to act as a social animal. In very basic terms, moving the audience about provides a sense of this social interaction, while

keeping them separated allows the concept of separation to percolate through the entire production.

Each piece is a solo tour de force; each performer must draw in their audience. Each piece is about how we parse ourselves together within the puzzle of our living; and yet for our enormous effort to understand who we are, and fit the segments of our lives together, we remain separate from our own image of ourselves even while intense feelings of intimacy linger. How constant the past beckons, holding us, even if only momentarily, as we move ineffably toward the uncertainty of our future. Moving forward can feel overwhelming and scary and that small insight plays a huge role in each of the actor's work.

My characters, and their personal issues, were placed in a mythic context, worlds largely free of definition, a place in the mind so to speak, my desire to portray characters who do not feel it is incumbent upon them to curb their behavior to suit those around them, so that we may catch a glimpse of the various ways we all act behind the scenes. The actors are instructed to "...cultivate an appropriate repertoire of gestures and vocalizations indicative of their essentially neurotic nature. It seems, on the whole, men and women (often fathers and daughters) fail to adequately develop the necessary techniques for achieving peaceful and intimate relations, and instead act and react in an endless pageantry of neurotic behavior as we attempt to communicate. Each of us is alone with essentially no road map, persistently tugged by our emotions, our bodies, how we may feel at any given moment, or what is passing through our minds disguised as thought.."

The characters are archetypal. The biblical parallel running through the production enhances the mythic quality, offering the audience an historical dimension to consider. Everyone is familiar with the biblical

stories that revolve around the characters Abraham, Ishmael, Hagar, and Isaac. The telling and re-telling of their stories, and the rituals which have evolved around them persist to our age, which make these people entirely familiar, personal, veritable household figures. We see them around us without necessarily noting it is them we are looking at, or speaking with.

With one hand a rather glum portrait of a man separated from the world, worn by his effort to live an ideal life, in pursuit of unfulfilled dreams, a man who has struggled internally to come to terms with himself, is painted; while with the other hand, the picture of a woman who has come to terms with her demons, and transformed herself and her dreams into things achievable, is rooted in the garden she tends. Perhaps they are a bit grandiose? Aren't we, as well.

America, part V, the blessing continues the *America* series, though it seems to draw less from any of the first four parts, and more from its preceding work, *Two Peas in a Pod*. The theatre in *Part V* consists of two elliptically shaped performing areas, eyes, a pair of eyes, joined, yet separated by a wall with a sliding door. Performers come and go, while the audience remains stationary. The eyes of the performing space become a metaphor as we observe the two main characters jostle for power, as they each make their bid to become director of the New World Order. Many of the characters in this piece were last seen as the guides in *America, part IV* leading various groups to the summit of the mountain. It is a simple and rather straight forward piece of theatre which rose up from my reaction to the presidency of George W. Bush during a time when i was still involved with the *America, a place* project.

The peculiar but highly personal way each of the characters is attached to Time, was influenced by some of the idiosyncratic acting that evolved while composing *America*, part II. Each character plays, to one extent or another, with some mnemonic device they carry throughout the piece. For instance, Bush holds a bowl which he asks again and again to be filled with soup, a constant reminder of his biblical roots, while Lincoln toys with a nautical compass, groping to find his way into the future. Perhaps the most obvious mnemonic device is the weaving process Jill, Rollo and Barbara E. are engaged in, with its obvious overtones to Greek mythology. For Isaac the bedpan is symbolic as well as mnemonic, a reminder of his being shit upon by his father, but who knows—it's personal after all; for Leah Alma, her poetic song; for Jack, the rhyme he repeats throughout the piece; Flannel, yes he too makes an appearance, carrying the book he referred to in *The Man in a Flannel Shirt*; Cheney an aide-mémoire (a cheat sheet in other words) which he consults rather frequently, prone to forgetting his lines; and oddly enough, for Rove, a pair of nail clippers; Eliezar has his tsit tsit; and Jacob his child-like ladder, a cat's cradle made from thickly colored cotton rope. Ayho is the only one with no mnemonic device. And who wears glasses (on the stage)? Everyone!

Projections once again are used to help create scenes, though in this case, they are static representations, kept purposely simple and direct. They draw little to no attention to themselves, and they are certainly not used to make statements. They are exclusively decorative. In the end, this piece written during a complex time in America's recent past, was a way to simplify what it seemed politicians were fashioning as complex, simply for their own personal gain.

Nearly fifteen years later, *A Sound That Calls People From Afar*, a theatre piece, picks up where the novel, *I Am the Frontier*, came to its cataclysmic end, and as a piece of theatre, in uncanny fashion, continues where i left off with *America, part five*, stylistically, a no holds barred, loose limbed structure, poking away at the boundaries of conventional theatre. I was surprised by my own ingenuity after so many years away from the theatrical form. The piece though, quickly become driven by music, certain rhythms I created in some of the early speeches, along with the sounds I was hearing around me, as well as certain pieces of music I began to explore, from cantorial works, to West Side Story, and Gavin Bryars' *The Sink)ing of the Titanic*. A small but vocal choral group follows the main character, A Sound That Calls People From Afar, lending their insights, cautionary tales and the like. After all, life can get awfully lonely when you're the only one left on the planet.