

If it is in speaking their word that men, by naming the world transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which men achieve significance as men. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity. And since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. Nor yet is it a hostile, polemical argument between men who are committed neither to the naming of the world, nor to the search for truth, but rather to the imposition of their own truth. Because dialogue is an encounter among men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some men name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one man by another. The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by the dialoguers; it is the conquest of the world for the liberation of men.

--Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, page 77

Literary magazines--literature itself--has no "effect" on our society--at least none that anybody can very tangibly trace; it might be just as well if people seriously involved with literature stop worrying about their "impact" on society.

--Gordon Weaver, "Mississippi Review", *Green Isle in the Sea*, page 96.

"For now it is the living who haunt the dead"

--Jo Barret, "Twentieth Century Twilight", ln 54, *Old Martins New Strings*

Table of Contents:

Introduction

Preface: 3-6

Introduction:
The Literary Artifact, Marxism and an Expanded Aesthetic 7-18

Section One

The Little Magazine, Life, and the Literary Scene

Part 1: Structures and Definitions: A Quandary 19-23

Part 2: History: Tracing A Solution 24-45

Part 3: Evaluations and Purposes 46-49

Part 4: Dynamics and Implications: 50-54
Creation of a Communal Art and the Editor

Section Two

The Little Magazine in Action: *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*

Introduction: 56-66

Part One:

Appalachia, SAWC, and Hegemony

A. The Appalachian Context 67-77

B. SAWC 78-114

Part Two:

The Macro-Aesthetic in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*

Structural Relationships

within the Central Appalachian Region 115-131

Part Three:

The Micro-Aesthetic in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, vol. 3

Getting Down to Basics, the internal paradox 132-142

Bibliography 143-148

Interviews:

1. Gurney Norman
2. Jim Webb
3. George Ella Lyon
4. Renee Stamper and Pauletta Hansel
5. Richard Hague and Pauletta Hansel
6. Mike Henson
7. Bob Henry Baber
8. Pat Arnow

Section II

Part 1:

Appalachia, The Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative and Social Hegemony

Within an objective situation of oppression, antialogue is necessary to the oppressor as a means of further oppression--not only economic but cultural: the vanquished are dispossessed of their word, their expressiveness, their culture.

--Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 134

I talked about what I thought poetry was and that poetry didn't have to rhyme and that, as all speech has rhythm and we naturally use images, poetry is just an intensification of that. I forget who it is who said that there's not that much difference between walking and dancing: when are you walking and when are you dancing? When are you speaking and when is it a poem? But they <High school teachers she's talking to> just weren't sure that something that close to home, that familiar could be art. And, of course, they had this notion of poetry as being unapproachable and in many cases obscure and so there was a lot of work to do. But as I say I was prepared for that, but I wasn't prepared for them to say, "You can't have a poem with the word ain't in it. You can't have a poem where the verb and subject don't agree because if my students see that that's all right in literature, then how am I ever going to convince them that it's not right on their English paper?"

--From an interview with George Ella Lyon, 7

The family encourages biculturalism. The schools create a duality--a world different from the family environment. Branscome speaks of the "annihilation of the hillbilly" by the institutions. Many mountain youth remember the shaming process when they had to deny their "mother tongue," reject their music and their religion. Memmi says the colonized turns away from his music, the plastic arts, and, in effect, his entire traditional culture--the consequence of which is ambiguity. Smathers talks of two routes the educated mountaineer can take: cultural schizophrenia or cultural transvetism (biculturalism).

--"Family, Religion and Colonialism in Central Appalachia" by Lewis et al., 134

A. The Appalachian Context

The 1970's began as a time of relative prosperity for central Appalachia. Demands for coal increased as a result of a national energy crisis; in West Virginia "unemployment, which had fluctuated between two and three times the national average during the worst years of the preceding decades, had fallen to within one percentage point of the national average by 1970" (Williams, 188); new laws concerning strip-mining, pollution control and worker welfare were beginning to make waves in state legislatures, if not actual advances.

On the other hand, these were dubious advances at best. The increased coal production took the form of increased surface (strip) mining. The benefits for miners affected by black lung in West Virginia were only grudgingly given by Governor Moore after direct action techniques such as sit-ins and wildcat strikes by the Black Lung Association (BLA). And this was only in response to a horrendous situation:

"The national average of claims under the black lung provisions of the act processed by the Bureau of Disability Insurance is 43%. However only 24% of those from West Virginia had been processed by early November, 1970. And 52% of the processed claims of West Virginia have been denied . . . The figure for claims denied for the rest of the nation is only 20%" (Branscome, 215).

The following poem, by Bob Baber, was based upon a meeting of the BLA he attended during a time he was doing literacy work in West Virginia. The local vice president, James Collins, who could not read or write, though Baber didn't know this at the time, stood and spoke:

"A Poem for James Collins"

Now youse may not believe it, but its the truth
I throwed lumps as big as I could lift
to get my Daddy his quota.
Why coal was so much a part of my life
I thought God made it before he make night,
but tell that to the Labor Board
and see what'll getcha--
a knock on the noggin with that headache stick
the sheriff's got ahangin on his hip

this ain't suppose to be a slavin' place
but we got widders out here
there husbands died
and they tell her autopsy autopsy
cut him open
see if he got the blacklung
hold them lungs up to the light
listen to hear
iffin there's any air left to be wrung out

but this ain't suppose to be a slavin place

tell em that
see if they stop pattin their hair
and clicken their pens,
scream it in their ears
THIS AIN'T SUPPOSE TO BE A SLAVIN PLACE
they'll say youse outa order
hang a sign on youse like yousa a pop machine
or somethin--

youse outa order Mister, outa order

Well if this be order
give me a wheelbarruh of chaos
and a pop bottle full of shook up rattlesnakes

Further, the extreme disproportion of wealth was blindingly obvious: "in 25% of the counties there were fewer than 30 physicians per 100,000 people, as compared with 139 per 100,000 in the United States as a whole" (Lewis and Knipe, 14). The results of this are easily seen in the infant mortality rates which if lowered to the rates of "East Germany's in a five year period, the lives of more than 1,000 children a year could be preserved"(Branscome, 216). Over 70% of the population would leave before reaching age 24 (Branscome, 221), no doubt partially due to educational and employment opportunities minimalized by alienating educational methods in massively underfunded schools¹--thereby inspiring a 65% drop out rate, 25% higher than the national average (Branscome, 217). Beyond this, little economic freedom was possible

1. To bring up the average rate spent on a student to the national average would have cost over 363 million (Branscome, 217).

in a land where in "eleven major coal producing counties in eastern Kentucky. . .31 people and corporations owned four-fifths of east Kentucky coal"(Lewis and Knipe, 18). This is reflected in the rate of armed forces enlistment of 25/100,000 in West Virginia compared to 17/100,000 nationally (Branscome, 219).

One of the most significant events of the early seventies was the Buffalo Creek Flood in 1972 where 125 people were killed during the breakage of a giant mound of "gob" (mine refuse used to damn impounding water used in coal-washing operations) (Williams, 197). Gail Amburgey, a future Soup-Bean Poet, would write of the flood:

It's friday late--on the summer side of this WV town wishing it was nother WV town maybe on some other WV river bank river bank beautiful as autumn in your mind. . .My thoughts are clear as the empty vodka bottle on my window sill. . .I can't remember the dead dogs I pulled outta mud in the houses wishing and hopin and good God above, praying it wasn't some child still warm yet stiff from the mud. . .And I've forgotten the look in Mr. J's eyes on that saturday morning. The way he stared at me laying down in that rubble like that. Genitals torn completely off his naked tormented body. It showed in his eyes when I shook him asking him for an answer. I swear I did. I swear damnit-- I can't forget-- not this late at night (Amburgey, *Mucked*)

The result were massive grassroots efforts to fight corporations such as the Pittston Company¹, who when asked about the cause of the disaster called it "An Act of God". It is precisely through such tragedies and extreme circumstance that people come to organize themselves against oppressive forces. Bob Baber relates that in "the early '70s the United States was still hopping in a big time political way, it was a cultural movement, strip mining was not regulated. . . so there was a lot of fuel to it. A lot of righteous anger. But anger towards how things were going, not towards each other" (Baber, 4). Further, Gurney Norman emphasizes the unifying nature of disaster, "anger on the strip mining question was causing people to come together. A lot of

1.Owner of the dam, of which the governor's commission said that they had "shown flagrant disregard for the safety of residents of Buffalo Creek"(Williamson, 198).

people who wound up in SAWC had met each other previously in other contexts such as anti-strip mine organizing" (Norman, 1).

Still, in the face of the even more extreme poverty and wealth contrasts of the past, any change was major change. But along with such economic disparity there came the need for explanation. Why were the people in such poverty? Who was to blame? Such transitional works as Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* were forerunners in raising issues to the attention of the people. The change of attitude in the late sixties and early seventies can be charted by an examination of how academics were beginning to reconceptualize the forces at work in Appalachia. Once considered a sufficient model, "the culture of poverty" (which blames the individual's lack of morals or culture for poverty) had been shown to have significant flaws in such a simple statement as is found in C. Wright Mill's *The Sociological Imagination*:

Consider unemployment. When in a city of 100,000 only one man is unemployed, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief we look to the character of the man, his skills, and his immediate opportunities. But when in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million men are unemployed, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solution within the range of the opportunities open to any one individual. The very *structure* of opportunities has collapsed (Mills, 9). |

Yet, caught up in the unimaginable circumstance of sitting upon a wealth of raw resources which would bring the corporate vultures over 1.5 billion dollars a year the only solution for Appalachians has been to survive as well as possible in a system of imposed economic exploitation of "natives" by "outsiders". Many of these ideas were being brought in by scholars from third world development studies and the academic movement would simply call the process "internal colonialism". But further work was to be done, elaborating on the colonial model and expanding it to include understandings of cultural systems (i.e. paternalism) which were built to discredit and blame them, while at the same time limiting their control of vital cultural resources such as schools and media. Against such overwhelming forces, the individual is forced

into a system of "powerlessness and dependency"(Eller, 41), exhibiting the characteristics commonly sighted by the advocates of "the culture of poverty model".

Later studies in the late seventies and early eighties would investigate those parts of the power structure used to control and limit resistance based on many of these initial works. The simple question was, "Why do people accept these circumstances except under the most adverse conditions?" The answer was hegemony. Even though this term was not a popular catch phrase amongst academics of the early 70's, it was an implicit assumption among groups engaged in educational and cultural reform.

{But I would like to explain the concept through more recent works.} John Gaventa in *Power and Powerlessness* explains that power operates on three levels, the first being what we normally consider legitimate power arenas such as courts or voting. The second level is limiting access to the primary arenas by force, sanctions, mobilization of bias. In the third level, the one we are immediately concerned with, Gaventa describes the forces at work as "the power processes behind the social construction of meaning and patterns, be this in conception of necessities, possibilities, and strategies of challenge in situations of latent conflict, the study of the communities of information, both of what it is and how it is done" (Gaventa, 15-16). This hegemonic suppression of a people's ability of self-consideration and definition results from the domination and forced adaptations of value-forming institutions such as schools, newspapers, churches, and families. Or in Sally Maggard's words, "The economic and political power associated with patterns of ownership and control is integrally related to another form of power--the power to set the terms of a community's self-understanding. People with that

power fashion the tools we use to interpret everyday life"(Maggard, 67).¹

The control occurs on two levels. One is the institutions of cultural-material production which are coopted and financially controlled in their content (television/newspaper/schools). In a speech given to Berea students in 1971, Mike Clark ruffled some feathers when he drove home this point:

It's not enough to simply own a region if you cannot control it and then exploit it. In order to do this... You need an educated class willing to run the local businesses, set up schools and other institutions which train people to do the job and keep their minds and mouths shut. . .

It is my belief that Berea College and other colleges in Appalachia have fulfilled this function since they were established. (Clark, 205- 206).

Freire also speaks of this level of domination: "In cultural invasion it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than with their own; for the more they mimic the invaders, the more stable the position of the latter becomes"(Freire, 151). One problem with the study of cultural domination in Appalachia is that Appalachians play a number roles similar to the rest of the America: they are all American, and the local elite in Appalachia are not dramatically different than other local elites. The middle class of Appalachia holds many of the same values as the middle class over the rest of the country--which is capitalist/consumer ideology.

The second level of control occurs when a cultural system adapts to a climate of powerlessness, instilling such compensatory mechanisms as fatalism and protectionism. A plethora of examples of family adaptations in such a situation are provided by Lewis, Kolack and Johnson. "The family becomes

1."To this end the oppressors attempt to destroy in men their quality as "considerers" of the world. Since the oppressors cannot achieve this destruction, they must mythicize the world. In order to present for the consideration of the oppressed and subjugated a world of deceit designed to increase their alienation and passivity, the oppressors develop a series of methods precluding any presentation of the world as a problem and showing it rather as a fixed entity, as something given--something to which men, as mere spectators, must adapt" Freire, 135.

resistant to change. Family members restrain their members from taking social action. There is little revolt or conflict since one is afraid to disrupt the only remaining refuge"(Lewis et al., 132). Mike Henson, author of *Ransacked* and *A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind*, reiterates this point: "As radical democrats we say we want these people to take their history into their own hands and run it and that's nice, makes nice slogans at a rally, but lack of education is a form of censorship, limits that are put on people's self-esteem is a form of censorship, economics, poverty are forms of censorship"(Henson, 9).

In much the same way, religious beliefs change to reflect the social situation. In a massive survey¹, from the summer of 1958, various members from different social strata were asked which statement they agreed with: "God is more pleased when people try to get ahead" or "God is more pleased when people are satisfied with what they have". Of the lowest economic strata in the rural area less than ten percent said, "Get ahead", while an overwhelming 90+ percent said "When people are satisfied". Of the highest socio-economic strata in the rural areas 80 percent said "Get ahead" and 20 percent, "When people are satisfied". (Ford, 21). Strangely enough, the study took this to be a sign that "religious fundamentalism" was a retardant to social-economic mobility rather than a result of the lack of such mobility. Even such obvious findings were twisted under then current dominant ideology of "the poverty of culture".

Yet, due to the civil rights movement, Vietnam, the war on poverty, and strip-mining, the late sixties and early seventies proved to be

a time in the mountains when there was a lot of community around various issues. I think empowerment is probably a very good word for that, in that for the first time people were beginning to believe that they could do something about powers that had effected them all of their lives--

1.Ford, "The Passing of Provincialism"

strip mining and coal companies, union busting. And they were looking to their history and their parent's history and finding those kinds of continuing powers and pressures from the outside as a strength. And SAWC and the southern Appalachian Circuit of Antioch college were very political. It wasn't art for art's sake, for better or worse, it was art as a voice. (Hanse1, 3).

One long-standing institution in the Central Appalachian Region in Tennessee had long stood against any form of repression and control either in the direct arenas of decision making or in the more subtle realms of hegemony. This institution was The Highlander Research and Education Center, founded by Myles Horton in 1932. For the next forty years, The Highlander Center was involved in helping the disenfranchised learn to educate themselves and take control. The Highlander Center was involved in the labor movements of the thirties and the civil rights movement of the fifties (they hosted the SNCC (The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and saw such figures as Stokely Carmichael, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King walk through the doors. But into the sixties Highlanders' focus was gradually reoriented toward Appalachian considerations.

Although the Highlander Center had been situated in the mountains of Tennessee for over 30 years and had been involved in labor organization, its primary focus had never been on "Appalachia". Perhaps it was the prevailing social currents of the time which led the group to engage this new task. But soon, "often wedged between the dramatic rush of events in the civil rights movement"(Adams, 182), the Highlander Center began to end "the dialogue of non-equals" which was characteristic of the war of poverty methods by helping Appalachians "learn about unity by acting in unison". It was "an educational experience for the poor, both in and in terms of their own culture"(Adams, 207).

Although, the Highlander Center was never politically affiliated, the very fact of their empowerment of the powerless made them unappreciated by every sheriff, landowner, racist and governor within a thirteen state radius.

The process of Highlander is described in a nutshell by Myles Horton in a 1981 interview with Bill Moyers:

"We have a philosophy. We believe in people--our loyalty is to people, not institutions or structures. We try to translate that belief in people's ability to learn and to facilitate people's learning. Now you don't tell people things who are adults. You help them learn, and in so far as you learn how people learn, now that's a help. That's a powerful dynamic force when you realize that people in these hollers and factories and mines can take much more control of their lives than they themselves realize.

Adults come out of the past with their experiences so you run a program at highlander based on their experiences--their experiential learning from which they might not have learned very much because they haven't learned how to analyze it. But its there. And our job is to help them understand that they can analyze their experiences and build on their experiences and maybe transform those experiences even. Then they have a power that they're comfortable with.

You develop those seeds, they're crusted over with all kinds of things. They don't even know they're there. We know they're there. We dig for them. We cultivate those seeds, we prepare the ground for them to grow in. We help people learn they can learn from each other, that they are stronger, that their individuality is enhanced by being in a group instead of telling people that they should be alone, should be competitive against their fellow man, we say go at it together and you'll be a better person.

A major influence on the thinking of Myles Horton has been his continued interaction with the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. In a work which was popular fare in the Appalachian intelligencia in the 1960's (and still is today), Freire outlines a course of "praxis" for breaking the cycle of oppressor and oppressed which remains the theoretical articulation of the practices of the Highlander Center. The "oppressed" must break out of the definitions of the world provided by the oppressors. "They <the oppressed> are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized¹" (Freire, 32). A necessary step in the process of liberating consciousness is not to reprogram the oppressed but rather to "trust in their ability to reason" (Friere, 53). For it is only the engagement of a critical historical consciousness which defines limit situations (a definition of possible action) which allows growth through *dialogue* not domination by "slogans, communiques, monologues and instructions" (53). The educator's job is not to program but to assist the oppressed in realizing that they have the

1. Note the similarity to the concept of hegemony.

capacity to engage in self-learning from one another through dialogue.

The important thing is for men to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of their world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades. Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate (Freire, 118).

B. The Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative

Historically in America, one of the most economically and culturally marginalized groups has been artists and writers who are dependent upon a system of production which limits their input beyond the raw production of artistic material. If this was true in New York in the seventies, it was three times as true for Appalachian writers. The nature of the work of the writer is solitude. It is to work alone. This fact acts to alienate the writers from any effective group organization. Add to this the difficult circumstance of travel in the Appalachian mountains and isolation becomes an even greater problem. Yet the writer and artist hold tenuous positions because they, in part, help make up the cultural definitions of a group. They are part of the creators of self-image and in this sense, act to restrict or delimit possible actions as the viewer/reader finds the relationship between the world and themselves defined by the art. But under the severe restrictions of supplying self (and family) with food, having limited exhibition potential (this being controlled by money interest), and simply the lack of self-esteem promoted by isolation and main culture depiction of the artist, the range of artistic endeavor is limited; the voice is silenced.

The early 70's saw the birth of many significant little magazines which would greatly affect the state of Appalachian letters. Jerry Williamson started the important critical journal *Appalachian Journal* in Boone, N.C. (Appalachian State) in 1973, Al Stewart started *Appalachian Heritage* in Pippa Passes, 1973. These journals joined the ranks of such magazines as *Twigs* which was a literary magazine out of Pikeville since 1965, *Laurel Review*, done by WVA Wesleyan College since 1966, and the more recent *Wind*, founded in 1971 by Quinton Howard, Pikeville Kentucky. The newer magazines tended to focus on culture using a variety of mediums--essay, art, and literature. Accordingly,

in 1974 Appalshop would publish the first issue of *Mountain Review*, a little magazine featuring cultural articles and literature of the Appalachian region. In a essay entitled "New Media in the Mountains" Norman writes in almost prophetic style:

As the makers of the magazines and newspapers, tapes and movies well know, the first function of their work is to enhance communications among the mountain people themselves, to encourage a native expression, to give talented mountain people access to the tools of modern mass communications, to use them as they see fit... It's premature, and would be presumptions, to try to guess precisely what the ultimate political and social consequences of the people's new access to media will be. . .(but) People talking together, face to face, one to one and in groups is where communication begins.

It is appropriate, then, that the Highlander Center be the birthing ground where writers came together into a forum to share and wield group strength. And after a series of conversations between Mike Clark, Dave Morris and Don Askins (self-made lawyer, strip-mining activist, Virginian poet) a letter was composed and sent out by Mike Clark (Director of the Center after Horton's retirement in 1973) and Dave Morris (then living in Beckley, WV and part of Antioch Appalachia). Here, in part, is what the letter of October 21, 1974 had to say:

Dear Friends:

What is an Appalachian writer? What should be the balance between politics and art? How does a writer break the catch-22 law that says no one can be published until they have been published? Is it time for a new direction in style and content in mountain literature? Is writing a form of cultural revolution?

The hills are alive with the sounds of typewriters, yet the isolation of individual writers is probably as great as ever. The question of "who shall I write for?" still needs answering. The problems of publishing and making a living from one's craft still bedevil most of us. Sometimes it's all we can do to survive, much less write.

Yet life is different now, here in the mountains. The last ten years have been years of struggle--anti-strip mine battles, intensive land speculation, the black lung. . .community colleges, the schemes and highways of the Appalachian Regional Commission--and now seems to be a good time to find out what the effect of all this has been on those of us who write¹.

1. From University of Kentucky Appalachian Special Collections, Appalachian Poetry Project, Box 3, folder 8.

The letter goes on to invite the writers together for a forum to discuss what use a Appalachian writers' group might have and what form it might take. Actually, the formation of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative would not take place until April 3, 1976 almost a year and a half after the first meetings. Bob Henry Baber recounts his memory of the first meeting at Highlander:

Wonderful meeting, really funny. We all met up at Highlander, We all went around the room, it was very tentative, very nervous on Friday night. Forty people none of whom knew each other, everybody who was there might have known two others who were there. Nobody really wanted to say that they were a writer, nobody did say they were writers. People went around the room and said, "I'm here to see what's happening, I'm here with so and so"; there just wasn't any trust there yet. I think people came into it with an open attitude to find out what was going to happen, but I think they wanted to assess it before they jumped in.

But by the end of the weekend a group had coalesced, things had really happened. A group emerged, a feeling emerged, a feeling of support and camaraderie, positiveness. So both of these groups, the Southern Appalachian Writers' Cooperative and the Soup Bean Poets ran parallel track, crossed paths. Almost everybody, until we had a publishing blow out, everybody was together. Working along the same lines (Baber, 4).

There were writers from Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia representing a tremendous range of talent and intent. The tone was set in the first meeting, a gathering of people "of support and camaraderie, positiveness". The course of action was unclear, but after being apart from a group of mutual support for so long, it was enough.

At this point, we need to describe a group of writers out of Beckley, West Virginia, which had formed around Antioch-Appalachia, the Soupbean Poets. It is important to understand this group for two reasons, first because there were a number of mutual participants in both groups, though this did not mean exactly parallel tracts or influences. The Soup Bean Poets were a much smaller group than SAWC was to be, and had a great deal more cohesion as a result. While the two groups' stances on art and politics could only be called radically participatory--meaning that both groups saw a direct connection between the two as mutually effecting--but The Soup Bean Poets, led by Laska, were more directly vocal in the proclamation of this attitude (even though Snyder

would be less so). The influence of Antioch-Appalachia's thinking is a more diluted in the latter SAWC publications, perhaps because SAWC never rallied around any specific artistic agenda, as the Soup Bean Poets. Pauletta Hansel, member of both the Soup Bean Poets and SAWC, relates that "SAWC was really something else, there were some members of the Soup Bean Poets who were connected to SAWC and others who weren't"(Hansel, Interview, 2).

The school's primary instructors were Bob Snyder (the school's director) and P.J. Laska. The school attracted a group of young writers from the region who, when mixed together with the political and cultural consciousness which the school emphasized (explaining what the societal structures were had led the Appalachian region in to exploitation and poverty), along with a good helping of friendship would form the group which would come to be known as "The Soup Bean Poets". The Soup Bean Poets included Snyder, Laska, Bob Baber, Pauletta Hansel, Mary Joan Coleman, Dave Morris, Don Williams, and Dave Chaffins; Gail Amburgey, Mildred Shackelford, and Joe Barret, while an active part of the group, were not directly involved with Antioch Appalachia. Don West was also teacher at the school and had a great impact upon the writing of the group.

Antioch Appalachia, an extension program of Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio, was founded in 1971 in Huntington, West Virginia, though within two years the school moved to Beckley. By 1973, the small group of students and teachers in the school, numbering only 75, formed an enclave of sorts standing out against the town of Beckley. Baber described Beckley as a high mountain coal mining town in southern West Virginia which "has, in my <Baber's> mind, airs to pretension that it probably doesn't deserve"(Baber, Int., 1).

The Soup Bean Cooperative was formed when

We started reading and hanging out and having these discussions about art and writing and what it

meant to be an Appalachian and what the politics of it were, what was political art, what wasn't political art, the big stuff. It was great and we started reading together, and finally somebody, I think it was Pauletta Hansel, said I think we ought to get a name if we are going to be reading as a group. (Baber, 3)

By 1975 a little magazine, *What's A Nice Hillbilly Like You...?*, had started featuring the work of the group. In the next two years, Mountain Union Books, which I will speculate was formed by the members of the Soup Bean Cooperative, published a number of books including *We're Alright, But We Ain't Special* by Amburgey, Coleman, and Hansel, *We'll See Whose a Peasant* by Billy Greenhorn (pen name for Bob Snyder), *Soupbean: an anthology of contemporary Appalachian literature* which presented the work of the Soupbean Poets and affiliates, and *D. C. Images and other Poems* by Laska. Later, *The Unrealist: a Left Literary Magazine* ran from 1978 to 1982, edited primarily by P. J. Laska and M. J. Coleman. The latest book to come out was in 1990 by Laska, Snyder, and Barret, *Old Martins, New Strings*. Mountain Union Press was also a distributor for all of the members' books, including those published elsewhere.

The significant nature of the Soupbean's work is held within the very name of the group--"Soupbean". Partially the significance is in the form of a collective writer's group supporting and aiding each other's publishing and writing. This itself is a radical departure from mythic American norm of "small writer fights way into the publishing houses and forces editors to see worth of work." The formation of the group was based on a gathering of friends, which offered the possibility of commitment without too much coercion. The Soupbean's formation paralleled similar grass roots activities all over the country in every arena including publishing and politics. But what stands out above the form of the group was the content and themes of the thought it proposed and lived--the connection between politics and art. I would like to share a poem written by one of the Soupbean members, Joe Barret,

which, though I am not sure when it was written, captures one aspect of feeling which represents the darker side of the truth. Joe Barret died last year, 1990.

TWENTIETH CENTURY TWILIGHT

now it is the twilight
the twilight of our century
the twilight of our heritage
the twilight of woman
the twilight of man
twilight of the bear
and of the horse
twilight of the river
and of the mountain
twilight of the child
and the fishes
and the wood
twilight of the ghetto
and the meadowlark
and the final greed
the twilight of love
twilight of the bayou
and the jackal
and the enlightenment

it is the twilight
of the intellect
and duplicity
of the arts and of science
and duplicity

it is the twilight of the seed
of the leaf of the blossom
twilight of the bomb
the porcupine
and the renaissance
twilight of the sow
and the sower
of the hound
and the hounded
twilight of the music
that makes the silence
and the brilliant eye
fixed upon the lily

it is twilight
of the human epoch
twilight of the green
and of the living sea
for the visiting sins
have come and remain
and tomorrow lay waste

with our legacy
for here is the netherland
and what you love foremost
shall not persist
for now it is the sky itself
that blights the garden
for now it is the living who haunt the dead

But the feeling of community was also one of elation, one of people brought together against the twilight. Bob Snyder comments:

In Beckley, I felt part of a tidal wave, felt part of something tangible, objective, and concrete. It was just a feeling of solidarity with people who wrote with the same content or stylistic concerns. The main idea was to write about a subject native to yourself and the mountains and to be able to use idioms, feelings, and experiences out of the mountains. One is being politically bold, and the other is being culturally bold (Baber, "true grit", 251).

Laska, raised in the coal fields, writes in an essay included in the *Southern Anthology* that,

"the reality of capitalism is no longer simply banal. It has become a life threat. We are in a life and death struggle against it. It no longer has reality on its side. Unreality is its everyday form. Fraudulence and deception are expected. Falsehood is enforced. Ignorance is necessary. . .The world is a blur. . .Unreality is the rule and the vision behind the fear"(Laska, 32).

There is no doubt that for an artist in Laska's position, risen from the working class in a region which had been and continued to be blatantly ravaged by industrial forces, that the role of the artist was to show the game for what it was, rather than focusing on value-situations which were compliant and unquestioning of the situation. The role of the socialist poet was to become an unrealist instead of a realist acceptance of capitalist unreality. And certainly, the historical exploitation of the Appalachian situation lent this view credence. The view of the unrealist is

fundamentally different. They are not resigned. On the contrary, unrealism implies the possibility of a true realism, of the creative potential of the real. This is why the standpoint of the poet is all important. It is the *standpoint* that makes a vision of reality possible. The socialist artist takes the standpoint of the working class and its historical achievements of socialism, the social rejuvenation of our world. This standpoint sees reality as the kernel of reason amidst bourgeois insanity; it discovers reality as repressed force developing in history, maturing in judgment and power (Laska, 33).

But at the same time there rose the question of the integrity of the work

being sacrificed to such a polemical position. Jim Wayne Miller wrote in the *Appalachian Journal* (Autumn 1977) that studies of Appalachian literature should, "first and finally, illuminate the works themselves, for no matter how interestingly the works engage history, sociology, economics, psychology, or other disciplines, they are finally to be valued and evaluated as literature" (Miller, 89). On the other hand, Miller also calls for a strong regional literature as "a regionalism that is not defensive about itself, not a regionalism that is full of self-relishing pride, but a regionalism that simply has the effect of making people more aware of who they are and how they got to be that way"(Baber, "true grit", 257). While Laska's poetic was not accepted among critics in the region as being as strong as other writers from the region I doubt if this is because of his political commitments, indeed the concept of "literature" itself works from a position that is inherently against Laska's political commitment, and this might be Laska's attempt to regain a useful definition. But George Ella Lyon would write in a review of Laska's *Wages and Dreams* that "the integrity of this voice is rare in Laska's work. Too often the poems struggle with the weight of their message, in tired voices whose energy is all spent" (Lyon, "The Poet's Job", 219). Yet the legitimacy of Laska's message (and indeed, the fine craft of much of his work) and the example of such poets as Don West seemed to be a driving force behind the Soupbean Poets. This was more than a symbolic rebellion against the delegitimizing role Appalachian literature had been used for in the past in the works of such writers as Fox or Roberts. Laska writes, "We drive home in silence, remembering the labor/ of the dead, coal fires that burned at night,/ and this rubble left behind"(Laska, "The Coal Field Passage", *Strokes*).

I could not disagree more strongly with Miller's evaluation of the focus of literary study--to study only the aesthetic interior of the work of literature is to ignore the life in which the literature occurs. It is precisely

against the attitude of literary study which focuses on what pleases rather than what illuminates that must be questioned. Or in Coleridge's words, "Nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise" (which Miller quotes); but there must be an additional focus on why a work was written, for whom, and what the goal and use of the art was. While we may not be reading the collected works of P. J. Laska in ninety years I do not think he would argue that we should; instead his work served many other uses, personal, political, and as a catalyst for change. It served to inspire those who needed inspiring and directly convict those who needed convicting in Central Appalachia: "The pig eats people/ and shits money" (Laska, "Doggreel Revelation of the Pig", 14). What more needs to be said? Similarly, Don West has come under heavy criticism for his strong sometimes overbearing language. But West's words were not written for or to college graduates but in simple sort often rhymed lines for a people, many of which could not read, who did not have the luxury to read.

The other poets and writers were not as overt as Laska and he represented one extreme pole in the argument over Appalachian poetics that still goes on today. There was no lack of political interest in the work of the other Soupbean Poets; and as Baber relates, "What I was trying to do was apply Don's strong politics but bring it the crystal modern image . . . To try to use the metaphor, the image, the language to say those things in a way that was more modern". Here is a powerful, chilling, understated poem by Bob Snyder:

Poem to my Grandfather

My grandfather argued
With bugles of phlegm,
Said gurgle a gurgle a gurgle:
No one could win with him,
He was so full of whiskey
and the sweet juice of human meat.

He could gargle up a bubble

Of the cold wind whistling
On a poor man's knife:
He made wine out in the open
In the foreign part of town
Where the cops were scared to go.

Just before he had to quit drinking
Old granddad got a split-tongued crow
And he taught it socialism:
Well, sir, they used to sit up drinking in the kitchen,
The crow saying all men are brothers,
The old man gurgle gurgle, yes yes.

(Snyder, *We'll See Who's A Peasant*, 23)

The Soupbean poets traveled all over the region reading and melding with each other. They met up with Mike Henson in Cincinnati when he invited them to read in the Appalachian resource center (Heritage Hall) that he ran for the Urban Appalachian Council. Another connection was made, and some of Henson's poetry and short fiction which focused on Appalachian immigrant in the urban setting appeared in the *Soupbean Anthology*. Watch out Joyce Carol Oates.

As Baber said, "I knew things were screwed, I just didn't know why. When I came to Antioch, I had no idea who owned Appalachia, I knew the people were desperately poor. So for me what was happening was the crystallization of some of my own interest in life. To me the clarity, even if it was horrible, of Appalachia's politics was great fuel for my writing and continues to be" (Baber, 10). For Pauletta Hansel Antioch-Appalachia and The Soupbean poets represented an embracing of an identity (not to mention a group of life long friends); indeed, Hansel says, "I think it took me longer to find what didn't fit" (Hansel, 3) and "I, during a certain period, romanticized the mountains even while living in them" (Hansel, 11).

The close personal connections in The Soup Bean collective were representative of the literary connections through out the mountains. When I asked Hansel how she would submit work to regional magazines she replied that "after I went off to Beckley and got involved in all this, it wasn't like hearing

about a magazine and sending work off to either be accepted or rejected, it was more a process". And that "It wasn't like (people) were starting this magazine in a kind of vacuum and people would hear about it; it was more of a group process that this magazine would begin. It may have been an idea with certain people, but when they took it back to the group the idea really blossomed" (Hansel, 5). Once again, the focus was not upon competition but upon cooperation.

So upon the inception of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative there was already a strongly unified group with backing connections and theory. The next meeting of the fledgling group took place at Highlander in May of 1975. In a letter sent out January 27, 1975 the planning committee included, Don Askins, Dave Morris, Ron Short and Peter Laska. Another letter was sent out in April, presenting two conflicting points (though it did not seem so then): the first was the question of a legitimate Appalachian literature ("Life in Appalachia deserves a literature that is honest and true to the realities"), the second at how to get that literature into the world ("How can I be published?").

The meetings and planning continued throughout the year and in May "it was decided that we <the group as of yet unnamed> should develop an anthology of Appalachian Writing...not only to publish previously ignored or unknown writers, but to help draw together a network of writers who could in turn help to uncover others"(Undated Letter). . . "The anthology would be not only a collection of writings but the beginning of a structure of dialogue, because what we need is a literature that comes from us and serves the region"(Anthology Planning Meeting Letter, Undated). But the idea laid dormant well into the year before the Whitesburg based magazine *Mountain Review* opened access to use its pages. The goal was to gather a group of writing together edited by

Askins and Morris, along with a section on dreams and story telling by Gurney Norman.

The basic foundations of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative had been formed. The meetings were made up of about 25 people a "very representative group from around the mountains; everybody was between the age of 25 and 39, that would be my guess"(Norman, 2). Gurney Norman had been flying in from California for the early meetings. They drew him home into possibilities of acceptance which had not been possible before. Norman refers to his dwindling access to the mountains before his 1971 publication of *Divine Right's Trip*:

I was losing touch with the place as a place, the reasons I would come home usually had to do with funerals. Then I would parley a funeral weekend into a three week visit. But I didn't know anybody, didn't have anywhere to go. As late as '65 or '66 I was living as a young guy in my mid-twenties in my hometown and didn't have one person my age to drink a beer with (Norman, 3).

But with the publication of *Divine Right's Trip*, "it was easy for me to find people. I had a certain energy and expertise to offer the situation"(Norman, 3). And what formed the cohesion between the group was exactly having some one to drink a beer with, someone to befriend. Organizing the writers made possible a healthy return. Jim Webb explains his surprise at discovering that there were "all of these different kind of people doing different things, about injustice; about what's going on. You know, you just scratch your head and say "Jeez, what *is* going on around here" (Webb, interview, 8). Also Peggy Hall says of the first organizational meeting, "(I) suddenly realize(d) that there were other people who wanted to write. It gave me some identity. All of a sudden to learn that I could write what I knew , that writing didn't mean "leaving home" "(Baber, "true grit", 258). I think that the entire phenomena of the early Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative is summed up in this poem by Jim Wayne Miller published in *New Ground*,

THREE DAYS OF RAIN

The sky had come down to live in pools, in ruts
and cattle tracks. My face looks up at me out of clouds.
In this drizzle of quietness time hangs like waterbeads
on barbed-wire fences, slides along black boughs,
falls like rain from one tier of leaves to another.
Something in me stirs, comes out of hiding
like rabbits slipping from fields in the evening.
And whatever was crushed in me straightens slowly
now like grass after it has been walked upon.

(Miller, *New Ground*, 170)

But it was only through the intervention of certain critical institutions (Highlander and Appalshop) that the writers were able to come together. These institutions provide the know-how of learning that you know-how, and they performed necessary functions such as providing meeting space and publishing space. But since the meetings and work took place only as individuals were able to contribute there were no "Xerox machines, we did not have telephone budgets, we did not have travel budgets" (Norman, 3). But the answer to Norman's question of what the new Appalachian media would be was slowly becoming coming clear.

In April of 1976, with the anthology well underway, a group of 19 people met in the Graces' home in Coeburn Virginia in response to a letter sent out in early March. In part, the letter said, "This collection of written material is turning out to be a fine cross-sampling of Southern Appalachian literature right now. But we don't want to turn out just another book, however useful it might be. We think the time is right now for a next step--the creation of a Southern Appalachian Writer's Co-op"(Letter of March 3).

The agenda of the group included¹,

"the need to establish community among writers in the Southern Appalachians in order to combat isolation, the need to open up lines of communication and establish links among regional writers,

1. For a full listing see Appendix One.

the need to form an institution that would seek to raise consciousness of Southern Appalachian literature regionally and nationally (from "Minutes of the Founding Meeting").

The decision was also made to incorporate as a non-profit organization, committees would form including a marketing and distributing committee, one phase of the publishing process that would prove to be the bane of SAWC as for so many other small groups, a Constitution Committee, and a news letter committee. By May, the by-laws were constructed and the constitution ratified. Yet, the diversity of the groups members and interest would eventually collapse any possibility of a solid external organization beyond the means of individual relationships. Indeed, the separation between the individual relationships and the interactions of SAWC are almost impossible to unwrap. The prime purpose of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative was to be as a hailing flag for individuals to come together under, much as Mike Henson's Heritage Room was a place where urban Appalachian residents in Cincinnati could meet and recuperate. Every member of the early SAWC I have spoken to has related this quality of the organization. In Norman's terms, "SAWC is clearly more organism than organization" (Newsletter, 1981).

The early conception of SAWC had more to do with gaining national recognition for the writers than developing an internal dialogue. What arose instead was an organization of relationships. In Hansel's words SAWC wanted to

have this solid, separate existence. And that never happened. What did happen was that fifteen years later there is still something we call SAWC and that there are a lot of little things going on and some bigger things that are going on all over the region and outside of the region that have happened wholly or in part from the strength people have got from the connection with either SAWC itself or people who were involved in SAWC. But there were no by-laws or dues or card-carrying members, there is no corporation. And SAWC itself is no more closer to having joined the main-stream of published writers. For the large part people have carved out their own little niches or recognition. And I don't think people would have originally seen that as being an acceptable goal.

The perception was that we need to find our place in the New York publishing scene, that we need to find traditional ways of making our livelihood out of this, we need to have a national basis of readership and there are certain ways in which this is done. But as people went on and as years went on what I think people discovered is this: no we can be successful and we can reject what we don't want out of and what we don't need out of the New York publishing scene.

There are other ways to measure success (Hansel, 5).

In part, the very process of gathering together to do a book, one which would eventually be called *New Ground*, would put more stress on the newly founded organization than the undeveloped relationships that made it up were able to handle. But the book, 208 pages long with 12 short stories and over 30 poets, did come out due to grants from Gurney Norman, "The Voices of the Mountain's Fund", and *Mountain Review*. Bob Baber recalls his feelings as the copies of the book arrived in 1976,

The book had a coming out party that was very dramatic. I mean literally where it came out of the boxes, you've heard this story that we hadn't even paid for it when they all showed up.

The printer printed it without having diddly squat in advance; that never happens, how that happened was some kind of cosmic deal. And it worked out great; just goes to show you if only we could do them that way today, because everyone plunked down the money. Paul Steele, this West Virginia writer, showed up and had a big wind fall of some kind or another and plunked down 800 bucks, everybody else threw in a hundred which nobody had. Within a day we paid for three quarters of the book right then, so it just goes to show you if we could get someone to front the printing for us, we'd probably be fine. That never happens and no one can get inspired enough to come up with the money otherwise. (Baber, 5)

But before this, there were arguments developing amongst the writers as to what the purpose of the Cooperative should be and how politically affiliated it should be. The operation was in the hands of many volunteers also, and as a result Bob Snyder was left out of the book which caused a tear down the middle of the group. There were many typos, editing errors, and other omissions of poems. Reasons given in a May 1977 Newsletter were "the unclear editorial policies of the Co-op, the difficulties in communicating with co-op members, and our fragile financial status which forced us to farm out technical work and which resulted in an inability to oversee the finished product" (SAWC, Newsletter, May 1977).

Whatever the difficulties in editing, the goals and basis of *New Ground*, a title referring to a field which has never been plowed before, were clearly stated in the introduction which says that

This boom (coal of the sixties) has meant many things, but one byproduct was not planned by the Appalachian Regional Commission or Consolidation Coal. All the hurly-burly, the building and

tearing down, the migration, as <sic> produced a people who are no longer willing that their image be presented with pens controlled by the hands of the non-indigenous (*New Ground*, 9).

It is important to recount more thoroughly the introduction's version of the development of Appalachian literature because to a large degree it is representative of the group's goals, understandings, and directions--for a history is never so much about the past as it is the understanding of the present. The earliest literature "was essentially colonialist" and written for outsiders by outsiders. "A literature written to explain to the invading society what the life of the natives was, in terms favorable to the invaders"(*New Ground*, 9). The second phase of the literature developed in response to the enculturation techniques of education upon the native middle and upper classes during the later phases of industrialization. There was a more inclusive voice but nevertheless, "the schools systematically denied the validity of the regional culture and joined with the church in attempting to eradicate the "hillbilly...the growth of self-consciousness was replaced by a search for external approval by the educated or withdraw. We now understand this to be part of the psychology of colonialism, of powerlessness in the face of change"(11). With the fifties came a great out migration of workers from the region and the beginnings of strip-mining. It seemed that "whatever people did remain would be culturless expressions of the mainstream rootless, bereft of a sense of place"(12). But with the Vietnam war came the wealth of higher coal demand and many workers which had migrated to the cities began to return, "The same pattern began to emerge: after the intensity of war, the individual returns home, tires to fit in and fails, and then begins the quest for meaning, security, self-definition. And then the home folks adjust and the younger ones imitate"(13). Along with the alternative cultures of the sixties Appalachia saw an affirmative cultural resurgence in such groups as Appalshop, and publications like *The Plow*, *Mountain Call*, and *Mountain Review*.

The SAWC also belongs to these groups. Ultimately the proclamation was that

"What is needed is a clear sense of what is involved in the spirit of a culture permeating the soul of each and every person, who then reinterprets and responds with his/her own unique contribution...It means a broad united front of creators, who may have widely divergent perceptions of mission, but who can agree that the finding of the self through one's own culture is a valuable act"(16).

The writing in the book reflects just such a view, with some strong political pieces, others not being so obvious except when we realize that talking about grandma on the collapsed porch is political just merely by its presence. To quote part of a poem by Jim Webb:

and the children run and laugh and play in the park
they've heard of StoneWall Jackson
And Robert E. Lee and rebels and
civil wars
but they can't see
General Lee's

Sword slash
To maim & cleave
My thoughtbox
In too many pieces

And the little kids,
playing as they will,
pick up my severed eye
and draw a ring
to play marble

(Webb, "An Afternoon in the Park", *New Ground*, 202).

One aspect of literature which the introduction did not consider was the problem of distribution. Even though *New Ground* was finally out how would it be made available to readers? The book cost \$1.35 per copy with the primary sales being made by SAWC members at \$3.50 a shot. There were great problems keeping track of just who had the books, as they were distributed by various members just taking along a box of books with them. Paul Steele, for instance, sold over 500 books around the Charleston/Huntington area but there was no organized distribution of the book. A flurry of letters was sent out inquiring after boxes of lost books by Jim Stokely, treasurer. In response to such a letter Norman, in California, wrote back, "I left ten boxes in storage

in Highlander; I don't know their fate"(Norman, Letter, Nov. 2, 1977). The problem of distribution is one which especially affects amateur publishers who do not have access to the normal means of regional and national distributors.

Plans were made for a second anthology, to be edited by Susan Williams and Neale Clark. But for what ever reasons the second anthology never came to fruit. Possibly, the work of the first anthology placed too much stress on relationships that were too newly forged. We know that mistakes made in the first anthology caused a rift in the group it would take years to heal and the logistics of distribution were never worked out by the fledgling organization.

From this point on, the nature of publishing in SAWC would take on a different character, one which focused more on the group rallying around one individual editor who used the groups connections to bring together a body of work. Meetings continued though; people kept up friendships and conversations; newsletters were frequent and full of information.

The next publication to evolve from the SAWC tree was in reaction to the 1977 flood in Williamson, West Virginia. This publication was put together in an angry reaction, as a cry for justice and retaliation, rather than as an anthology of writing which was reflective of the culture. The writing in this work would focus on the blatant abuses of power and the effects on the powerless. This is clearly stated in a Coop News letter from the time,

After the Williamson meeting the Co-op decided to do a special Flood issue to be edited by Jim Webb and Bob Henry Baber. The rag, which is tentatively titled, "They take the buck, we rake the Muck", will center around the survival of our culture and the mountains from which it grew. In specific the issue will attack outside corporate investment, strip-mining, clear-cutting, mining deaths etc. If you suffer from this malady this is your chance to let the venom out, to strike back!

The inside story runs something like this: after the flood Jim Webb called up Bob Baber (they had become extremely good friends since their first meeting) to come down and help with flood relief, such as writing news releases.

During this time there was also a SAWC meeting,

So we packed up our stuff and went on down. We weren't thinking too much in terms of literature, we were thinking in terms of political essays and statements. So we drove down to Highlander, and I remember we got about 50 miles away from Williamson and we went into shock, as people who have been in great traumas and find the rest of the world kind of merrily sailing along get in. We couldn't believe, and we got down to Tennessee and it was like real life, smooth.

But we were all pumped up and we blew in breathless to the SAWC meeting. We drove all night to get there. Everybody was just sitting around and we said hey we're going to do this anthology. It's going to be the next book to come out of SAWC. And while New Ground had a political statement, this is going to be about the flood, Appalachia's demise, we're going to write about it, tell about it, change people's hearts, protest it, scream and wail. And everybody said great go for it. We more or less took over the meeting (Baber, 7).

The Jim Webb and Bob Baber editing duo would become a mainstay in the future work on *Pine Mountain Sand and Grave*. The reaction to the situation was a natural one for Jim Webb, during his Graduate work at Eastern Kentucky University, he had started and ran three issues of a little magazine called *Reck* by finding any means possible to publish it. The second *Reck* was done while Webb was working at a printing shop. Each issue was a new one, with little coherent development beyond the quality of the printing, there was no solid group of writers to support the effort. So under the gravity of the situation in Williamson, and having access to a network of focused writers, the production of *Mucked* was natural. Copies were sold for a dollar, but only because the book was printed at cost in the college where Webb was teaching. This is an important point because if there had been no access to printing the book would not have come about, there would have been one less bit of evidence of the flood, there would not have been Gail Amburgey's poems from the '72 flood (Quoted above, 16) to emphasize the neglect of reoccurring tragedy. Jim Webb says

We wanted people to think, we wanted to make a record, we wanted it to not be forgotten and just covered up and come out in a special edition in the newspaper every now and then, and we wanted it to be vitriolic, we wanted it to piss people off, we wanted people to scratch their heads and think, 'Yeah, wait a minute. What in the hell is going on around here.' And so it was very strong, very strident and I'm proud of it. It was a good, it is a good book. (Webb, interview, page 10).

The pattern for the later development of *Pine Mountain Sand and Grave* was

suggested in this effort. There is a driving difference in the substance of Webb's early editing work in *Reck* and his later work with *Mucked* and *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, partially due to the connections made available by SAWC and partially because of Webb's developing political consciousness which had opened creative doors only hinted at before. In Jerry Williamson's article on Appalachian Poetry published in *Southern Exposure* Webb says of himself, after seeing Bob Gate's movie on strip-mining "in Memory of the Land and the People" that, "I don't feel I came anywhere close to being a poet until I started writing strip-mining stuff. Before that I was just doing bad Rod McKuen imitations"(Williamson, 70). In a voice reminiscent of Otto Renee Castillo, Webb writes such poems as "America"

America,
You are my teeth,
Rotting even as I live.
My tongue
Searches out the pain.
One tooth rotted to near nothing
Hurts even now.
All of them are filled
or capped.
Some have gone, gone forever.
Coke bottle, Dairy Queen, popsickle,
Chewing gum, Milky Way, Forever Yours
Rot.
Some I lost head first
On a concrete street.
Your fire department
Hosed away the blood and
tooth pieces of my mouth.
You capped the shards
With plastic and assured me
The gaps would close with time.
They did.
But other's crop up, America,
And holes remained
No, I won't stand in your line, America,
But I will chew & chew & chew, gnash & gnarl
Till they fall out, every last
Lead silver gold bone plastic
Tooth.
I'll watch them fly in my spit
And never never take your

Set of plastic perties,
But I will
Gum you till I die.

The work in *Mucked* is a bit more desperate and haphazard, but nevertheless, was as striking and moving as the book's form was. The book was a printed on brown 8.5 by 14 sheets and stapled in the middle. It was the words that mattered, they would have rankled in the midst of a beautiful cover, though perhaps the casual buyer would have picked on up then. But then, *Mucked* was not casual it "was pulpit-pounding and that was what it was meant to be"(Baber, Int. 7). Bob Snyder's closing two lines of "The Country Jakes", included in *Mucked*, speak as strongly as any, "O them old time hillbillies/ Slip through your fingers like nothing"(Snyder).

After *Mucked* the fervor of SAWC seemed to die down: at least in so far as organized publishing ventures. The co-op began to play a closer role with *Mountain Review*, the magazine was actively looking for SAWC members to help edit poetry and fiction sections of the magazine. Yet the formal business like structure of the non-profit corporation could not support the strains and conflicts generated such projects as *New Ground*. I would like to present segments of a letter sent by Gurney Norman to Betty Edwards (editor of *Mountain Review*), Bob Baber (Secretary of SAWC), Jim Webb (director of distribution), and Jim Stokely (treasurer), which captures some of the feelings and expectations of the time:

"As always, SAWC business is confusin and amusin. I think we have learned to live with chaos pretty well by now. Maybe that is the essential lesson we all are trying to learn, that is available to us to learn through this on-going adventure together. I trust the process. Everything seems in fine shape to me. The main thing we are learning I think is how to keep on feeling good about each other as people, how to maintain a certain spirit, in the midst of disorder and apparent defeat. We all got to keep on laughing, keep on trucking, keep on writing, keep on with the effort".

". . . if SAWC would hold many or even all its meetings somewhere in Whitesburg or near by, (for 1978 only) then I think we would begin to have the sense of focus, order, that we badly need." this includes using Mountain Review as a base for voice and information at appalshop.

"I'd like to see SAWC publish another book. Do it more business-like, build on what we know, learn from our mistakes.

"I'd like to see Mountain Review truly serve people, as a forum, as a communication link.

"I'd like to see us all get our shit together in 1978. Try some new stuff.

"I know a hundred writers in the mountains, looking for a literary home."

Yet, contrary to the desires of the letter, the original hopes for the co-op were not realized. But something of a different order arose, something beyond and below a business or institution. There were no literary agents, there were no permanent staff people. There was the discovery of mutual need, interest and support; there was the cooperation of people aiding one another and taking responsibility in their battle against the alienating powers of a fragmented societal system.

It is important at this time to focus at who the typical individual was that participated in SAWC's activities. Although from a wide range of backgrounds, I would identify the socio-economic status and position of the majority of the members as being part of the professional-managerial class (PMC) in Appalachia. This class includes, as outlined by Thompson and Wylie, four sectors-- (i) The Professional Petty Bourgeoisie who are independent professionals providing expert and necessary services to their community and includes physicians, attorneys. (ii) Upper level managers, including bank managers, plant superintendents. (iii) Lower level management who are as likely to have extended vested interests with the owners or workers, low in the corporate hierarchy but have little say. (iv) Semi-autonomous employees such as teachers, professors, social-workers: as the proletariat, sell their labor but still have great degree of autonomy. "Usually identify more closely with profession than their job. Such persons play a key role in serving the ideology of capitalism as "culture producers" and "intellectual workers""(110). The majority of the members of SAWC fall into this last category--increasingly so as the younger members of the cooperative move into more stable jobs and positions. The ties are as close to the middle class as with the working class; but importantly, the jobs and professions of the group (the PMC) are

mobile throughout the national economy. This has allowed for out migration to pursue interests and then return, or even permanent placement outside of the region while still holding direct ties to it: such as Jim Wayne Miller's teaching position in Western Kentucky University, or Bob Snyder's being able to continue his education at Harvard after the break up of Antioch-Appalachia. Further, almost all the SAWC members I have spoken to have left Appalachia for an extended period of time and then returned. Critically, the group as a whole, is not restricted in mobility as the working class of the region; also, their positions do not put them into conflict with the people (working class) of the region.

These structural factors result in both strengths and weaknesses in the group. Because of their mobility, the group has fewer limitations on their political activities and rhetoric. Most members find employment with universities, individual foundations, or are self-employed. Thus they are somewhat protected from the threat of job removal¹ which is so effective in controlling other groups. Also, there is a ready market available for their skills even if a job is lost. On the other hand, the sort of solidarity of that a group of people might have if they were going to lose their jobs and had nowhere else to go is not present in the organization. They are not directly forced into communal activity to protect their livelihood. This has resulted in the usual fragmentation found in our advanced capitalist society-- i.e. it is easy not to band together unless faced with some catastrophic event.

Thus, the form of resistance characteristic of SAWC has been more on the level of individual support rather than developing an alternative structure as with unions. The individual will is never lost beneath the goals of the

1. Though Bob Baber did lose a teaching job over controversial language in a play he had written titled *Krazy Kwilt*.

collective but at the same time the full power of the collective is lost. Instead of being a publishing company, under rigorous financial restrictions, the publications which SAWC has produced are a result of interaction.

But the product, all the magazines are just the occasional constellation and crystallization of three or four or five years of conversation among one of these networks of friends. And finally the network is untraceable, you can't trace the linkage at all forward. You can trace a whole lot backward. You can trace a whole lot back to this meeting in '74 at Highlander. But there is a direct line of process; it's not even a line there is a direct motion of process. . . and that is the heart of the matter (Norman, 11).

It is important to note that SAWC also began holding yearly meetings at Highlander, and occasional poetry readings all over the mountains which are not documented. Yet, when necessary, the networks of individuals have been a creditable organizational force as we will see. But it was three years before another SAWC publication, primarily edited by Bob Baber, titled *Strokes*, came out in 1980. This does not reflect a lack of activity, the individual members were still going about their own artistic lives, but rather one individual utilizing the SAWC network. Here Baber put out a call for work which would "give the writers the opportunity to be as new as they could". After accessing the SAWC communication lines "Some interesting stuff came in. Some political stuff, some sexual stuff"(Baber, 9). The result was a small (66 pages) stapled book featuring poems with such titles as "44th Birthday of a Prostitute", "Dionysus Redux", "Rationale for Rubbers", and "On thinking of ending it all While Shiftin Shit in Gas Station Shitters". It is interesting that out of 66 pages 25 were devoted to Soupbean Poets, *Mucked* included 11 out of 21 works by Soupbean Poets. Nevertheless, such projects were to lay the ground work for the development of the second phase of The Southern Appalachian Writer's Cooperative and the most extensive grass-roots anthology ever compiled, if not published, in Appalachia, and it is to that story we now turn.

On Gurney Norman's first day of gainful employment with the University

of Kentucky in 1979, he walked into the office of Dr. John Stevenson, then director of the UK Appalachian Center, who was discussing an offer over the telephone with the Witter Bynner Foundation in Santa Fe, New Mexico for a grant of \$20,000 to promote poetry in the Appalachian Region. Norman immediately embraced the opportunity and within three weeks the money had entered the University of Kentucky System. The plan was simple and expansive. The project would be called the Appalachian Poetry Project and would utilize the money to hold poetry workshops over a six-state region. But I will let Gurney tell the story,

here's how I spent the money. I established myself as the director of the poetry project-- The University of Kentucky's Appalachian Center's Poetry Project to encourage poetry in the mountains and so forth.

I divided the money into two parts, 10,000 and 10,000. I said that I, as a faculty member, would be an unpaid director of this project. And I said that I need two assistants, I need one person to be the brains of the things, in other words the executive director, the one who does all the work, and that must be George Ella Lyon, Dr. George Ella Lyon. Fine poet and scholar. She will be paid \$5,000, and it will be like a 1/4th time job. And we would have as the field organizer Bob Henry Baber, who was living up in Richwood, West Virginia. His job was to coordinate, specifically to coordinate a series of poetry workshops around the mountains.

So there is salary money for two poets right there. That was my priority. I believe in getting poetry money into the hands of the working poets. So I created two jobs, see. And then that left 10,000 to disperse in the form of honoraria and expenses for these workshops. We found 20 people around the region in all the six states, qualified people, working writers, most of the experienced workshop-type leaders, to organize and present a weekend workshop in poetry at the local library, or church basement or courthouse or local meeting hall.¹ We gave them four hundred dollars apiece. One hundred was honorium for the individual. They had 300 to work with, to advertise the weekend workshop, to do whatever they wanted to do, to give it as prize money to some student poets or whatever.

So how much is 20 times 400 that's 8000, and then we had 2000 contingency. But that was how the money was spent. It took us eight months to organize this and in the summer of eighty like explosions going off all over the region: BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! these workshops happened. All around. And we had rules. Each local workshop leader was obliged to keep records, to keep a list of how many people came, what did they do and samples of writing from everybody.

And 400 people attended these workshops. The citizens loved it, they came out. The one in Mount Vernon, Kentucky has always been my favorite. It was conducted by Sidney Farr², one of our members, and a wonderful poet. This is ten years ago and Sidney was the workshop leader of her little deal in some little corner of the public library in Rockcastle County. And she presented

1. The complete files from this project are held in the University Archives at the University of Kentucky including details on each workshop and the manuscript of the Mystery Anthology.

2. Editor of Appalachian Heritage, Berea College at time of writing.

her weekend workshop and people came, and it was the first poetry event, literary event of any kind, that these folks had ever seen. They came on Friday night to readings. All day Saturday there were workshops and people read aloud to each other. And this was available to country folks and the point was-- you are important, you are valid, speak your truth, write it down and together we'll make a song. That was the spirit.

I had pins in a map. We had a map on the wall and we organized this deal, if we had been politicians we could have won an election. We really put it together, it was amazing (Norman, 8-9).

The Appalachian Poetry Project had several important effects. First, it reawakened the dormant SAWC connections and expanded them, bringing a new flood of people to revitalize the group. Pauletta Hansel, who had recently moved to Cincinnati, relates how she and Mike Henson acted as regional coordinators for the Appalachian Poetry Project's Workshop:

During that period before I moved to Cincinnati I went up to Cincinnati to do a reading up there and met Mike Henson and Dick Hague. And after I moved from Beckley and the Appalachian Poetry project happened, Mike Henson and I were regional directors for a reading up there. And Dick came to that reading and met Bob Baber and Gail Amburgey and a bunch of other people connected with the old SAWC and some kind of new alliances began to form.

For a period of time what began to happen around SAWC happened either in Cincinnati or with a Cincinnati base, Dick Hague and I (Hansel, 9).

Dick Hague would later play a significant role in being a regional editor for *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*. In her role as Executive Director the SAWC connections played a large role for George Ella Lyon in her reintroduction to the Appalachian region and literature, a literature that throughout her college education she was not attuned to:

What I had to do, which was just the perfect thing for me to have to do, was make contacts with writers throughout the five states of the southern region as part of the SAWC network. I had not been a part of that early Southern Appalachians Cooperative. But that network had sort of come loose and it hadn't reached into all these areas; it was more dormant, I should say, than come loose. But the hope with the Appalachian Poetry Project was that through Bob Henry Baber coordinating the workshops in all the states led by local writers and through my reading through the Appalachian collection, looking for writers, contacting them, telling them what we were doing, making big mailing lists and beginning the anthology that we would find one another and we would take what community was there and enrich and diversify it.

So that's what I did. I got to spend all this time reading and writing to writers and I helped manage the finances and so forth, although the Appalachian Center, thank God, did the bookkeeping.

Throughout that year I went to a lot the workshops, helped sign people up to do the workshops, and just met people. I had my eyes open to what a live literature was going on right now and I began to research, to read backwards, to where all this is coming from. I met people who knew a lot more than I did and people who knew even less than I did and so I was able to learn from and share all this excitement (Lyon, 3).

Lyon has continued from that time to work in the region, in 1983 conducting the Grassroots Poetry Project which brought Appalachian Poetry into eastern Kentucky schools for teachers and students, and is currently, amongst other projects working on a novel. So the network was expanding and embracing a new group of people, including then editor of the *Mountain Review* Renee Stamper who held a workshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky whose story will be recounted later.

I would like to include one anecdote told by Bob Baber about the understanding that people who ran and were in the workshops had about the project. It's as funny as it is revealing:

But about halfway through we realized that of everybody who was out in the field nobody knew who the Widder Bynner was. At this stage, neither did I. But Witter Bynner was a famous poetry translator who eventually landed in Santa Fe and had some money and left this foundation to give some money to poets. Gurney knew I guess. But anyhow, everyone else thought it was the widow (the Widder) like w-i-d-d-e-r. The widder Bynner is giving us this money. We'd think, o, the old widder with pictures of this old lady up the holler who had this money and gave it to the poets (Baber, 16).

But, on a more serious note, the project acted as a base to collect the work for a massive anthology of work from over 90 poets in a six-state region. The anthology was edited by Baber and Lyon who culled through the massive gathering of work from the 19 workshops and prepared the work for publication. Baber describes the anthology as "probably the most inclusive grassroots anthology that ever was done and probably will be done for a long time because it's hard to envision such a structure ever again coming into place"(Baber, 16). However, the anthology, titled *Common Ground: Contemporary Appalachian Poetry* was never to be published.

No publisher would take the anthology. First Lyon, Baber and Norman tried the Appalachian Consortium Press but were turned down. Then they went through a series of other rejections in the region. Eventually the anthology was accepted by Bill Ferris in at the Institute for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. There were publication parties and

announcements were sent to all the writers. However, the book was still unpublished two year later. Afterwards, attempts to find money from state's arts councils were fruitless also because the book included writers from out of state. At last, another publisher was found in Charleston, West Virginia at Jallamap Publications. New biographies were solicited from the 90 some odd authors, many of whom could not be found again, there was another publication party and George Ella Lyon wrote an article released around the state about the book called "Is Chicago tragedy greater than one on Troublesome Creek?" Yet on the eve of publication, after the book had been typeset the editor which had been working on the book for Jallamap, Harry Lynch, was fired and the book was taken over by the director David Bice. It was Bice's intention to bind the book in a plastic spiral--like that used to bind course readings together--instead of a perfect binding as originally planned. Baber and Lyon felt this to be an unbearable breach of confidence on the part of the publisher to them and the authors. They withdrew the book from publication. Still, Lyon's introduction is used in Appalachian Literature courses and the manuscript has been passed hand to hand, which has led Baber to compare the experience to a still birth: "it's been like a still birth, a baby we've lost. And not even been able to bury, and unfortunately, other than *Pine Mountain Sand and Grave*, that has been a metaphor for the lack of opportunity"(Baber, 17). In Lyon's words "not bound but not buried either".

The importance of the Anthology and the workshops ended up not in any tangible product but instead manifested themselves in an almost spiritual renewal of the artists involved with the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative. Interaction with literature does not always result in writing, and it is one of the illusions that the study of literature is only the study of words instead of the study of interactions. Literature as manifested in the

Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative is manifested as tangible relationships between people. "Actually," Norman comments, "this group for all its long existence can't claim a big long publishing resume. So whatever it all means it can't mean much on the basis of the amount of material. What's interesting is how only four publications have sustained social relations between a bunch of crazy people for going on sixteen years"(Norman, Interview, 1). Further,

I've come to value the social side of it as maybe the most important part. It has to do with how people outside of the Institution¹ sustain each other spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically as friends. And the key thing is that we are outside of the institutions, even if I as an individual am on the inside of an institution. The University of Kentucky does not answer this side of my writing life.

Old comrades, old history, old strugglers. People who have common memory of struggle-- that word is very important, it's a civil rights concept. We struggled together when we were younger. And when you struggle you are bonded. And bonds continue even if your work-load shifts and you do something different, you see (Norman, 4).

From 1980-1986 the primary developments in the SAWC were sustaining relations through annual meetings, rather than in publications. The time amongst the members of the group were moving into full maturity, establishing themselves. As a result From 1981-1984/5 SAWC really was inactive besides the yearly meetings. There was not quite as much energy as in the past, people were building and focusing on their own lives. Bob Baber reflects on the ripening of the group, and that because of the change of the groups member's social positions that the purpose of the group has changed:

There was a period in there, I'm not sure if it's a function of the Reagan years as much as it was a function of the age of the organization and the energy dissipated a little bit. A lot of those folks who had that great need in the beginning to get together and network because they felt isolated have matured and found themselves as writers whether they've found bigger success like Jim Wayne, George Ella and others, or maybe other writers like me who did not get success but knew what they were saying. I love getting together with my friends and buddies and hanging out but I don't really have a great burning artistic need to do that right now. I enjoy doing it, but I can continue to write without that. In the beginning we all had that, we felt like we were alone in the universe and asked, is this worth doing, is this worth reading, does it have value? It was a very young insecure scene. And in the middle of the eighties it wasn't there were people who were pretty confident about what they were saying and perfectly willing to go

1. The University System.

right on and say it whether they got together with other folks or not. The Co-op's initial function had changed (Baber 18-19).

Below are provided several sections from the interviews with Renee Stamper and Pauletta Hansel which reflect the situation.

I guess it started again in 1982 or 83 doing the yearly SAWC gathering at Highlander, where we get together once a year and do that. Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel happened when Jim brought the idea to a meeting at Highlander and then doing it. Dick and I organized some readings in Cincinnati and got together around that. There was a reading at Appalshop that Jim Webb organized. The other thing that happened to bring kind of new groups of people together was that some of us went in the early 80's every year to the Hindman Center. And that's where I got to know Peggy Hall though I had known her before that.

And another person who went in the early part of the 80's pretty regularly to Hindman Workshop was Jerry Wayne Williamson who is the editor of Appalachian Journal, and then he started publishing a lot of the people who were in SAWC. In that time Dick Hague published there, I published there, Jim Webb published there. He did the bibliography, and George Ella published there, though I imagine George Ella published in Appalachian Journal before then. And so that kind of worked for a while anyway for people who had been involved with SAWC (Hansel, 10).

In 1982 Hansel was working as poetry editor for *Mountain Review* along with her sister Renee Stamper who was editor for the review. After a long battle for funding Stamper finally declared that the issue would be the last, and in it Hansel placed a poem "Kentucky Road Closed", Hansel moved to Cincinnati and Stamper to Lexington.

Eastern Kentucky Road Closed

You said, I can't leave
if I did, one of these days
I'd be driving down that road,
thinking about home
and hit the county line and see a sign saying
Road Closed
Turn back, boy, you ain't going home
because it is no more.

You know I left once
but the mountains would not let me go
and I came home
like a child that heard its mother call,
like a bird that smells the scent of spring
but it was not there
just like Momma ran off with some no account man
and spring will not come again.

The land is sinking about me
all the while embracing
the hands that hold it down.
And I can't stand to stay

but I can't bear to leave.
before it's gone,
until the mountains disappear
once more forever.

So girl if you're leaving
just be sure to know
what you see then you will not see again.
Just be prepared as you hit that county line,
singing about home
that you'll come upon a sign saying
Road Closed.

Stamper speaks of her experience and disappointments,

At the point in time that poem was published and the magazine was ending was a time of real disillusionment for me. I think that by that time Pauletta was starting to work through some of her ambivalence, she had gone from romanticizing about the mountains and that strong sense of community with other writers, I had gone from being real skeptical with it to coming to terms with Appalachian identity. And then when I was trying to work through that was running up against brick wall with people who were supposed to have the same personal, artistic, political goals as I did. I felt a real strong sense of personal failure about the magazine. I was ready to leave, really ready to leave, but a lot of it was just to get the hell away from it, lick my wounds, whatever. And it was not until years later after my marriage broke up and all kinds of things had happened that I went to a meeting at Highlander, a SAWC meeting, and that period of time has been real nurturing for me, it has been real important to me in the last four or five years. I was running from that at the time, I really did have the feeling that this road was closed-- get the hell out of here (Hansel and Stamper, 11-12).

It's at this point around '85-'86 that the story of *Pine Mountain Sand and Grave* begins, built upon this base and history. There was increased activity in the last five years as reflected by Stamper's statements. Dick Hague also recounts the last five years as a time of increased energy for SAWC because of the connection with the same group of people gathering not only at Highlander for the SAWC meeting but also convening at the Hindman Settlement school for a week of more structured writing workshop. Here is a segment of the conversation with Hansel and Hague:

Hansel: The Hindman week is very structured. It's a program with presenters and teachers and participants who come to learn from them and from each other. But Highlander is more of an informal gathering. Without a particular agenda, or program, there's no difference between the participants and the presenters. But many of us who now make the stop at Highlander every year have really gotten to know each other through Hindman.

Hague: Given the regular SAWC group for the last four or five years that's almost a common denominator between just about everybody.

Green: So is this your tie into SAWC?

Hague: Ya. I think it was just that network that started at Hindman. A lot of friendships were made, Hindman's a great place to make friendships because your really living close together for a week and sharing your work and eating together and sworping together. So there was a revival of SAWC because of Hindman.

Hansel: It's true.

Hague: So we all just started getting together and going down to Highlander in the Fall and it was mostly people who had met down there at Hindman.

Hansel: I would say the biggest common denominator, at least originally was Jim Webb. He more than any of us had both the history, in terms of being one of the founders of SAWC, and then he also kept that as a dream throughout periods when it was less alive than it is now (Hague, 2-3).

It was from these connections developed inside these gatherings and the accumulated ideology of the past of SAWC that *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* is born. But before going into an examination of the magazine, and the subsequent history of SAWC, I would like to propose that one of the problems which arose coming into the latter second half of the 1980's, with SAWC, addressed above, was that doors were beginning to shut. In much the same way that institutions become who you know rather than what you do--precisely what SAWC was founded to overcome--SAWC itself faced the danger of exclusiveness. New writers could come to meetings but as Bob Baber explains:

The Co-op has had this problem, the organization is coming up on its sixteen or seventeenth year and it became more of a party for old timers than a bunch of unknowns coming together¹. The networks got established, people made friends and they didn't get to see them very often or at all. It was only at Co-op meetings, so people came together and read a poem or two, but mostly it was hey let's go drink a beer, hey how you doing.

Others may disagree with me, but in my mind what happened was those few people that did come to us during that period--it wasn't as if nobody wanted not to include them it was just that they were at a party that they didn't know anybody at. That's a tough place to be in.

I am trying to work with Mike Henson out of Cincinnati and this year we're trying to really stir things back up again. It is time to bring in the next generations. Explode things again, blow them open. It would be great to have some young writers come in and give us a shock--come on you old guys what is this shit, come on. It's like the old Duke Ellington thing Bob Snyder used to talk about where someone says let's do something totally avant-garde and he says, no lets do something more modern. So that's what we'd like to do now (Baber, 18).

Therefore it was only through a vital infusion of interaction by the

1. Recurring process also seen in COSMEP, CCLM, and others.

program developed at the Hindman Center that the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative has been able to carry on into the 1990's. At last years meeting plans were made to develop a week long retreat for writing as a way of reinforcing ties. Also *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was made the official voice of SAWC at the last meeting and the new issue is now underway. Its theme will reflect the theme of the 1990 Highlander SAWC gathering--dangerous writing. Work which has been censored or which the artist is afraid to share, for what ever reason.

Section 2, Part 2:

The Macro-Aesthetic in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*:
Structural Relationships within the Central Appalachian Region

The Macro-Aesthetic refers to the historical structural developments within which a artistic construction has been created. Actually, the entire first part of this section was written in order to provide, rather than a historical context, the socio-material background necessary to understand why *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* arose and what the goals and assumptions were behind the community it represents. In this part we shall complete that task by examining the immediate social-material parameters which result in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* and its difficulties, limitations, and successes.

The idea for *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* occurred after Jim Webb's return to his childhood home at Pine Mountain in Letcher County. His father having recently died, Webb returned to the place of his earliest life and work experience, and included in his brother's and his inheritance was his uncle's old quarry--Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel. During the clean up of the family home he came across an old time sheet from his uncle's business, which was to become the front page of every issue. As we can well imagine from Webb's past history of publishing (*Reck and Mucked*), especially as a voice in times of need, that starting a magazine after the death of his father was a form of healing. Webb speaks of this time:

Well, see now, the Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel is right up on the mountain <Pine Mountain> which is the second highest mountain in Kentucky. It's right up here. It's the first place I ever worked in my life. When I was about nine years old, my uncle owned it, it was a very small sand quarry, it's beautiful and so that's where I got the name. It's always been about my favorite place on earth, and the idea of the title is that the writing is, some of it is, new and some of it's kind of rough (Webb, 14).

Webb's brother, Robb Webb, was at the time living in New York city as an actor, conducting voice overs for commercials. The brothers formed a company called AppalApple Productions, Inc. With Jim Webb's writing connections and his brothers financing came about the possibility for creating a new publica-

tion, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*.

The first issue of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* came out about a year later, after Webb introduced the idea in a SAWC meeting and began to collect material. It was also at this same time that the group at the Hindman Settlement School's Appalachian writers workshop began to correspond more and more with the group meeting at Highlander from SAWC each year. And it was from this group that the majority of the writing in the first *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was gathered. The editing was done along with Webb, however, by two Whitesburg residents, Jenny Galloway Collins, a poet and playwright, and Carl B. Banks, a former teacher. After the material was gathered they typed up the galleys and printed them in Whitesburg across from Courthouse Cafe in Whitesburg. The project was relatively inexpensive. The end result was a 48 page stapled magazine full of some of the most ferocious and powerful writing gathered under a cover in Appalachia. The first poem in the book, by Bob Henry Baber, is titled "The truth will make you whole". In part it reads

Like hell.

The truth can crucify you. Ask Jesus. Ask Joan.

Tell it & friends will stick guns in their mouths.

You will be barred from the funerals.

* * *

Tell it & No Symbol will reveal its meaning.

Tell it & flies will regurgitate on your words.

Tell it & landfill dogs will sniff you turds

as one of their own.

* * *

you'll see even the moon

will shun you.

Baber, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* 1, 6.

And indeed, there were problems selling the book in Whitesburg because of Webb's powerful language in "Buzz Saws in the Rain" which was a critique of West Virginian politics in the Buffalo Creek Flood of '72 and continued strip mining. Perhaps the subject was not as volatile as the words of anger Webb used to describe his feelings about the removed mine owners:

Stand in that white house, look at it all, all
that you've done. Then may you
ram your fist
through the pane, slice up
your arm, shit your blood, &
fuck a buzzsaw in the rain.

--Webb, "Buzzsaws in the Rain", ll. 37-42, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* 1, 37

As Webb had returned to his home after his father's death, I will speculate that the magazine's role in his personal healing was realized through the publication of work which represented a public healing: the uncovering and speaking of truths. All of the work in this issue has the intensity of bringing us to face with ourselves as communal society and as individuals. No bounds appear taboo. George Ella Lyon's poem "A Visit", reveals the more nefarious and illusionary side of the popular version of the muse who tries to convince her to abandon her child and take her "to Bliss City/ in one spin on my machine./ When I've finished, you'll be so inspired/ your tits will blow up like balloons"(Lyon, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, 33). Instead she asks the muse to watch her child while she fixes dinner. Unrealism comes to fruit in this issue, bringing reality time and time again to our attention and not always in such dramatic ways but in well crafted recreations of people by poets such as Lee Howard in her poem "I Like to Go":

I like to go
There's no doubt about it
My husband always said
I should have been born
with wheels on my feet
then I would have just rolled
all over the world
Now he don't care a thing
on this earth about going
Sit right there in the shadow
of the hill was born on
and not care if he saw much more
than the head of the holler
and the creek that runs through it
About all the going he does
is to take his terbaccer to Lexington once a year

and he don't hardly get out of his truck
comes back home as soon as it's unloaded
Why will all that money in my pocket
I wouldn't be back in that same day
I'd spend the night in a motel
and go to all three of them malls they got there

--Howard, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* 1, 22.

If there is one unifying feature amongst the work it is its repeated ability to bring before the eyes of the reader the world they live in, ranging from Howard's recounting of a 66 year old woman's passion for going, to Mike Henson's chilling story of a young man who is faced with another day of work which is simply titled "Joe". The last few lines of "Joe" read, "The hunger shattered the dream, sure as a hammer. The root of it grew into his arms, his legs. It stiffened him, shook him at the shoulders, spoke like a commander, and pushed "Joe." him out of bed and onto the floor, staggering into the new light"(Henson, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* 1, 17). No more powerful collection of work has ever been gathered in Appalachia, or anywhere, which I have read that encompasses such a range of style and content but which always holds our eyes to the world.

Of the 15 contributors it is easy to see how they are the people surrounding Webb's life. There is a photograph by Robert G. Gates whose film on strip-mining awoke Webb's writing prowess, there are his long time companions from SAWC Baber, Miller and Yost along with more recent SAWC connections such as Lyon, Henson and Hague. Of the other poets and writers each is well known and in full bloom, such as Lee Howard and Jane Wilson Joyce, though I am not really sure of their connections. Perhaps this is the strongest of all the *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravels* because of its exclusive nature. There are no unknowns included--what beginners work could stand up to the work of these writers coming into or fully in their maturity? While the smallest of the three issues, the one with the smallest distribution, and the one which had the lowest quality printing this issue presents an undeniable array of ability

and intelligence. But the nature of the magazine's forum was exclusive at this point, focusing on already established writers.

Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel was seen, immediately, to play a role as a radical political and stylistic voice amongst regional magazines¹. Because its primary financial backing was secure the editors could publish any work they wanted without fear of direct loss or reprisal. Harmony between regional magazines, if not in the forefront of every editor's mind, at least has played a major role in shaping the goals of each individual magazine. Pat Arnow, editor of *Now and Then*, comments on her conceptions of the place of *Now and Then* and *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*:

When we got *Now and Then* going, we didn't want to get in the way of *Appalachian Journal* or *App Heritage*. I saw AJ as the scholarly journal and *Heritage* the a literary one. There wasn't anyone doing journalism focusing on the mountains, and there wasn't much of a contemporary feel to the work I was reading. So we went for the contemporary reality of life in Appalachia. We tried to fill a gap and not step on anyone's territory. *Pine Mountains* came after we did and published some pretty amazing stuff. They have more freedom to do whatever the hell they want because they aren't tied to any institution or idea of what they should do or be. (Letter from Pat Arnow, 3.17.91, in author's possession).

Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel could publish work which *Appalachian Heritage* and *Now and Then* could not approach because of its volatile nature. Webb speaks of the place and mission of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*:

We've always been aware of the fact that Berea College has got to write its alumni regularly. I got a letter from them just the other day asking for money. You know, if they get involved in a controversy, if they start doing things besides the-granny-on-the-swing-on-the-front-porch stuff they're going to piss people off and gonna cause problems. And there's a need for publishing those kinds of things. I like all of those publications don't fit what they are trying to do and I know that and it doesn't bother me and it doesn't cause me to not like them or appreciate them at all. It's just that can you imagine "Buzz Saws In the Rain" in *Appalachian Heritage*? But there has to be a place for political writing.

Yet, there is clearly a trade off in being self-sufficient: there have only been three *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*s over the last five years, though a fourth one is underway. George Ella Lyon shares her sense of the purpose and

1. For a complete listing of regional magazines and subsidiary information, please see attached sheets.

role of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*:

I think that the thing about *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* is that it's very diverse and one of its aims is to be surprising and that keeps it lively and challenges our assumptions of what Appalachian is, of what subject matter for a poem is, of what form is. That we should have a magazine like that in the region is real important.

I think of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* as reaching more of a literary audience say than *Now and Then*, which may reach a more general or sociologically interested audience in that it presents all kinds of non-fiction articles about different issues depending on the focus of that number of the magazine. So in a way, I think, about *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* as reaching other writers around the region, keeping in touch in that way.

Over three issues, the evolution of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* has carried it into the use of SAWC, as we shall see below. The fourth issue is to become the official voice of a reenergized SAWC and the specific role of the magazine, for vol. 4, is to publish the work which other magazines in the region could not or would not publish due to content. The focus of the 1990 Highlander meeting was on "dangerous work", work which the author felt may have crossed unspoken boundaries, moral, political, or other. The result was the realization that many people had actually been censored or magazines restricted (*Now and Then* was stopped by East Tennessee State University from publishing an issue on the experience of gays in Appalachia), and that many people felt that there had been a censorship of silence--where, although a piece was not directly rejected because of content, but just with a blank rejection slip. Mike Henson says that

I'm sure I have been censored by the fact that I write about the lonely people in poor neighborhoods and that I try not to write about the kind of leering paternalism which is current among writing about poor people: I try to write about them as if they were real people. But the kind of thing that I've felt most clearly has been the kind of silence with which my work has met, and until a few years ago I never had any thing in any of the local papers about my writing.

I was nominated for a local award. One of the local papers has an award ceremony for local artists and one of the categories is literary. And I was nominated but didn't get it, and I had somebody who was on the inside of the process let me know that it was part of what led to that was the political and social implications of what I was writing. That it was not a comfortable thing. But I don't know if anyone has ever taken my books out of the book store and burnt them (Henson, 6).

This might sound like idle boasting until you've read Henson's work which is truly staggering in its penetrating portrayal characters struggling to survive

in their day to day world. But with the united front of SAWC as manifested in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* the chance to breach the silence exists. Still, we need to examine the movement of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* into a position where it would become able to fulfill this role.

The second volume of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was completed by 1987 but the format had changed: the magazine was now perfect bound and 88 pages long. Along with this change came a distribution of editorial authority with Webb and Norman acting as primary manuscript gathers while Banks and Collins worked to create the final selections and order. There was an expansion of consideration. Many writers as Brett Litton, whose story opens the volume, were students of Gurney Norman. Lois Kleffman was another as was Marsha Walker (this was her second published story). Ed McClanahan was also an old comrade of Norman. But amongst the lesser known writers as Anderson, Charles, Litton, Walker and Kleffman we find the well known names of Miller, Marion, Norman, Hague, Snyder, Baber and Webb. Clearly, there was a new agenda which even if the over all work was not as strong represented a more diverse community and opened the availability of the consideration given to the more established writers to the less established. It is unclear exactly why Norman became involved with *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* but with his sense for utilizing available sources of media for the larger community and his knowledge of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*'s publication it is likely he approached Webb.

The one thing that we decided on when Gurney got involved with *Sand and Gravel*" was that the one fence that we would put up would be to always dedicate a part of each issue to unpublished writers. New writers, regardless of their age or who had only been published in school things, whatever. And I guess that goes back to the days of the co-op; that's always been our thinking in terms of that it serve as a means of encouraging not just the writers that we know but the writers who are coming along, who will be the writers, who aren't aware that they're writers right now, but who will be.

We can certainly fill the book with more established, with completely established writers and it might make a little more sense to the casual browser in a book store, but we hope that we have enough names in the book to still attract the browsers and still provide an opportunity for people who's names won't register (Webb, 13).

Thus *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* a combination of the skills and resources of a large group of people-- Jim Webb's energy, editing ability, and place, Rob Webb's financial backing, Jenny Galloway Collins' fine organizational eye and editing skills, Norman's community connections, Baber's organizational energies¹ and ties with Bob Snyder. It was a community effort in more sense than just having a community of writers under a cover. George Ella Lyon identifies

With the organization of the second volume it had become obvious that *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was the new voice of the old SAWC organization. This had its advantages and disadvantages. One great advantage was access to the work of a number of skilled and more importantly, devoted, writers who were interested in magazine which would always assure a high level of quality. But on the other hand, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* is "not a journal a lot of people know about so the group of people who submit is relatively limited"(Henson, 8). *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* is evidence of a community, rather than a magazine created to make a community. This is an important point in the consideration of little magazines: the best ones exist because the editors and writers exist together in a network. Or perhaps best is not the word. There are certainly good magazines which exist that cater to no particular group of writers (or say that they don't). When I asked Webb how he went about collecting work he said, "Well, there are a couple of ways. I solicited quite a bit of it, asking people who's writing I like to give me things. That's how a lot of stuff gets published and, you know, it's who you know, just like in any other business. But also, too, I sent a letter out

1."Basically, it fell to me to gather and hold stuff and make sure it didn't get lost to some extent or the other. My role, as much as anyone's, was just to keep stuff in one folder"(Baber,20).

saying that we were starting a new venture and if anybody wanted to send Appalachian things" (Webb, 9-10). Perhaps this is the most honest answer to the compiling question I've seen.

There have often been cries of "the editor only publishes his/her friends" followed by a heavy critic. And indeed any magazine would die that depended upon the same writers all the time. This is not to say that who-you-know isn't valid: indeed, in *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* it has shown tremendous success, as it did in Marion's *Small Farm*. The solution for Webb and *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was to give editorial selection choice to a group of people to diversify the group of selections. In the second issue this group was Webb and Norman, in the third issue the editors expanded to Webb, Norman, Baber and Hague¹ all of whom could solicit work from diverse communities but communities which were connected by their central focus on Appalachian writing. Commenting about the process, Hague says,

the set-up on the editing, very characteristic of SAWC, very characteristic of all us, is that Jim asked me if I would help edit and I said ya certainly. I was at Highlander I think. And then I went down to Lexington to meet with Gurney because Gurney had said let's get together and talk about the next issue.

Gurney says why don't you get a bunch of them Ohio boys up there, especially if they got poems about the river, landscapes associated with the river, because Gurney was doing river stuff at that time. That was his thing. And so I said, listen you're talking to the right guy, so I hunted up a bunch of guys who I know and suggested to Bob Baber and Jim Webb as I saw what was coming in that we solicit some women here, because it was pretty masculine dominated. I don't think it should do that, I've talked to a few people like Allison Thrope. But that was it-- it was very free and easy: if you've got any guys who have river poems, send them on down. Most of the things I sent were taken, I'm sure it was that way for everybody (Hague, 10).

Webb presents both his hesitations and thanks the extended-editor system:

Sometimes you just you open the envelope and you see the poems and they don't fit the what we're doing at all and it might not even be bad poems, but I do have a tendency to want things that bring you to an edge or take you to an edge.

You know, where you have to think about it or you're going to fall. I haven't necessarily

1. Webb: Collins, Quillen, Pauley, Davis
Norman: Lyon, Holbrook, Howard, Olsen
Baber: Barret, Snyder, Steele
Hague: Stansberger, Enzweller, Kennedy, Butler

been totally thrilled with everything that's been in the *Sand and Gravel* and I think every person who's worked on it, whose done some editing for it would say the same thing. I would hope they'd say the same thing.

And that's where, again, having different editors work on it is, to me, a real good thing because you do get different perspectives and you get a much broader view. I could edit it completely by myself with no input whatsoever and probably sell as many copies but I don't think it will be as appealing (Webb, 18).

But also the participation of other editors results in distributing the weight of the work: "You've got to understand that when you have no staff and you have nobody paid to do anything and when you deal with a derelict like me that deadlines are hard to set and reach. But that's one of the reasons why I like having other people involved with it because it helps speed the processor at least helps move it" (Webb, 17-18) This process of connection and transference has been representative of the SAWC process as a whole, it is a connection of individuals who are involved with each other, who have sought each other out, one hand bringing in the next into the group, into the conversation. Briefly recounting of the process Lyon relates how the gathering of writers at Highlander and Hindman has served exactly this purpose,

I guess the first one that must have been in the fall '80 or the fall of '81, I'm not sure, but there came together a lot of these writers who had never met each other. That's where I met Jo Carson who's a wonderful person, who changed my life and my writing. And many of the people who were there that year or subsequent years have seen their work appear in magazines together, like *Now and Then* or *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, have also furthered one another's work. Like Jim Webb was at that first gathering so he went on to do *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, Jo Carson is poetry editor for *Now and Then*.

So when those people become in the position that they can publish, they know people to solicit work, or work to look for. Then out of those literary gatherings comes a gathering of print that takes that circle and paginates it and then sends it out and new circles are formed that way (Lyon, 6).

The strengths of such a network are manifold: the connections support and give strength to the artist to keep working, but also when a collection of work is gathered from such a group there is already an internal connectedness between pieces so that one person's words, though of differing style and theme, mysteriously seem to reinforce the other pieces of work. I think this is one reason that the first *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was so strong compared to the others, simply the writers included there were more intimate. Yet, the

responsibility of the magazine is not to produce the strongest literature--it is to the community which it represents. Hence, rather than work from a new writer weakening the magazine, as it would in classical analysis, we may understand the inclusion of such work as responsive to the needs of people, rather than as a servant to the reified concept of "literature".

Typically the primary reason for the inclusion of such work has been understood as encouragement for the writer. Yet the effect of this action has repercussions beyond the individual: it is a strengthening of the communities resources which will have to be called upon in the future in times of need. While the goal of every writer is to create the soundest artistic work possible, one which critics have interpreted as being "responsible" to the art rather than the message, this view is only the cumulation of a voice reaching full maturity and power. It is a legitimate purpose to promote work who does not display such integral harmony for a number of reasons. First, such publication giving a more realistic appraisal of the artist in the community. Not everyone is a master. Second, there may be a need to print, as with *Mucked*, work which is not wholly artistically sound. I know of no artist which creates for art's sake only those who see their world and have a need to speak of it. Yet, on the other side of the coin, to encourage without reason or cause can be detrimental both to the artist's development and to the community of readers. Magazines and poems are related to specific places, they can not be written or understood but within these contexts. We may easily learn as much or more about a place from a piece of writing which is not well crafted as one which is. The goal is not Art but Consciousness. The magazine editor, unlike the writer, stands in a position to evaluate the use of all styles, themes, and levels of craftsmanship of work: the editor's responsibility is not to the best but to the most appropriate and necessary.

With *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel 3*, we find an even further extended group of writers, and as we read through the magazine we sense this. Too, the magazine has been expanded in quality. The total cost of the run of 1000 copies of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel 3* was around \$3,400. It is a magazine which is meant to be held, which is obvious, as people commonly refer to it as a book in conversation rather than as a magazine. With over 120 pages, the consideration of the book is expanded also and includes more art work than previously, a lengthy interview, and an essay, along with the usual repertoire of fiction and poems. *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was the single largest investment of energy and resources by SAWC since the publication of *New Ground*. The reason in the past no larger work was done seems to be the lack of money. Yet with Robb Webb's and Jim's aid *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* became possible.

The material production was widely distributed, the magazine was printed in Pikeville, collated in Whitesburg, and bound in Lexington. There were many copies as a result which were victim to missing pages or other errors. But the end result was a substantial construction. However, the drain was great upon the Webbs, both financially and temporally, which accounts for the three year gap between the publication of volume 3 and the projected publication of volume 4 this year.

One of the greatest problems in the past for any SAWC publication has been distribution. The same is true for *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*. Even though artists may have access to each other's work and to the means of production, they may not have adequate access to a "market" (as much as I hate to use the word). The third *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* was designed to be more appealing to the senses at tremendous expense, but for a limited operation perhaps the most difficult part of the business is to key into ways of getting the word about the book out. In the back of each *Pine Mountain Sand*

and *Gravel* has been a listing of other regional little magazine and recent literary works, other publications return the favor. Other ways to spread the news include obtaining mailing lists from other publications and send out flyers, or mailing to libraries, schools, and book stores all of which have lists available in the library. However, Hercules had an easier time cleaning out the Augeian stables: the task of magazine production is great enough with out the added time of self-advertising. But the editors of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* do not even consider such an outlet. Below is part of the conversation with Webb about distribution:

Webb: But distribution and sales are difficult things because they're so few book stores, relatively speaking. And they'll sell so few copies. Joseph Beths has probably sold 20 or 30 copies.

Green: Do you depend mainly on the authors published to sell books?

Webb: That's a part of it. They can take as many as they want, and sell them, even allow a little for them to make some money on it. But it's salesmanship. I carry some with me everywhere I go. If I do a reading, I can always sell three, I always carry some in my car if I'm going to a town and I go to a book store and they'll take some. The real problem is you may not be back in that town for two or three years and you'll forget what book store you took them to. And so a lot of times when you take books to a store like that you've just given them away. Which is okay except for the loss of money. It's better that they be out and available. But, we haven't had a coherent, cohesive sales plan. It's difficult to develop. For example, there's not a book store in this town.

Green: Wow. Do you have certain places that you go to in all the towns around that do have them?

Webb: Not really. Because by the time you would drive to Lexington to put them in a book store it would take a tank of gas and you've eaten the profit on ten books. I mean I might do it if I'm going to Lexington sometime but you can't drive some place to do it.

So there's no point in that. It's just accidental. Pretty much, who ever gets them. And then word gets out and you get a few orders by mail. And people will see George Brosi¹, now George will sell some books for you. And other places like that. And you'll realize some money from that because I'll see George at least once a year and every year he'll need some more of them. Last year, at the Appalachian Studies Conference I sold him another ten or so, and George will pay you up front so that's okay (Webb, 3).

I just think things like this aren't ever going to sell very many copies--whatever, however, you do it--and so I've kind of just resigned to doing it the best way that we feel it should be done and not worry too much about it. Take our licking and heal up and then come back and do another one another one a year or so down the road. I am determined that the *Sand and Gravel* is

1. George Brosi is the preparatory of Appalachian Mountain Books, whose address I have to find.

going to survive, but I'm not going to get rubbed in into any kind of a every September "Sand and Gravel" is going to come out. Well, I may, hell, if it makes some money sometime down the road when we could actually afford to get some help on it and stuff and it wouldn't be a major loss. But I'm not going to lose \$1,700.00 every six months or a year. I can't. It's that simple. I wish I could, you know.

And so, that's all, this issue is still going to sell. Everywhere I go I'll sell two or three and so that's gonna knock the debt down just a little bit each time.

Further, Baber comments about their problems with distrobution:

The last *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* to come out, the grey one, was probably one of the most nice, but there are boxes of them languishing at Appalshop and at Jim's house where he literally had not responded to orders. That's really bad, it's sad because Jim got so involved with the Radio Station and we spent the most money and this is the prettiest book that we ever did. I really love it, I love to hold it. And we just simply didn't get it out the way we should have.

Commitment to writing is also a commitment to buisness, something that most writers seem to be basically opposed to. But without a firm and reliable distribution policy the relationship of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* with the community at large is vague: though, clearly, its editors and writers are committed to one another and to many issues in Appalachia. The reach and goal of publishing *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel* go beyond personal interest but the effectiveness of the message is hampered from lack of public access. It remains to be seen if the increased involvement on the part of SAWC members will be able to address this weakness. It may well prove to be their single greatest hurdle to overcome.

This completes our consideration of the macro-aesthetic of *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*. What remains is to examine the micro-aesthetic of the magazine which, when all the chips are down, is what counts. By micro-aesthetic I simply am referring to the piece's internal relationships with one another solely "free" artistic creations. "Free" in the sense that our concentration shall not be on how the pieces came to be accumulated under the cover, but as works whose judgment shall be made based upon their collective aesthetic field. In other words, the basic parameter of judgment shall be whether these works, as an artistic totality (called *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, volume

3), foster a collective critical consciousness appropriate to its community as outlined in section one, part 4 of the paper "Evaluations and Purposes".

One of the favorite projects of the regions literary critics has been to outline the requirements for such a construction-of-attention--a term which designates the goals of an artistic work in terms of its relation to a collective critical consciousness. In other words, any artistic project is a designed construction whose intent is to bring consciousness into a certain state of attention with a specific focus.

Bob Snyder¹ outlines four areas of confusion which are barriers to such a development of critical consciousness both within Appalachian literary works and within the audience. (1) The regional/provincial transaction: "Regional art has come to mean limited art, so that the individual artist must either follow his own experience and be defined as minor, or follow mainstream trend and uproot himself"(Snyder, 340). In other words, there is a great temptation for a writer to abandon his/her legitimate experience and knowledge in order attempt to fit into a more prestigious group. At the same time, readers may down play the role of local literature because they do not conceive of the local as a proper realm for art². (2) Folk transaction: "The folk concept is one that outsiders find comfortable when approaching Appalachia, a tendency which as led native observers to be extremely wary of it, and of the romanticism, primitivism, and exploitation that cluster about it"(342). Yet the folk tradition which is a "historical product"--the adaptation of traditional cultural to new circumstance--"Literary critics have noted an analogous

1.Snyder, "Colonial Mimesis and the Appalachian Renascent". *Appalachian Journal*, Spring 1978. 340-349.

2.For an excellent discussion of regional studies see Jim Wayne Miller, "Anytime the Ground is Uneven: the outlook for Regional Studies and What to Look out for". *Geography and Literature*. 1-20.

"rebarbarization" of literature, where by writing must be reinvigorated by folk forms"(342). The lesson here: examine and consider the entire experience of the people both from working class to rural to the PMC semi-autonomous artists. We might also consider the Historical transaction under this grouping as suggested by Frank Einstein in "The Politics of Nostalgia".

One possible response to this sense of an alienated present is to turn one's thoughts toward the past. . .To gauge the political thrust of this nostalgic response, we need to ask what effect the poetry has on the present. . .The problems with this vision of the past is that it can so easily be coopted by the dominant culture and made to serve the hegemonic process by support the dominant culture which it purports to criticize. . .The process has come full circle when the past, once seen as the locus of alternative values, is trivialized. Having been made ideologically harmless, the past can now be marketed in the form of festivals. . .Recreation of an idyllic rural memory is an option open only to the elite. . .But nostalgia can also express dissatisfaction with the present by suing the past not as a place of escape but as a touchstone to judge the present (38).

(3) The Social science transaction: don't be duped by social scientists who do not understand the full structural implications of the situation resulting in a false-consciousness. Paternalism and the culture of poverty models are examples. It is obvious why the artist would suffer following such "expert" opinions. And (4) The political transaction: the artist must be alive to his heritage and cultural challenge. "He must create a presentation of his world that is both effective and true. He must validate the experience of the living in the mountains. And that is the first and best sense of the politics of art"(345). This action is carried out against the impinging artistic definitions and values of the more powerful main-stream culture. But at the same time, this connection if carried too far will sacrifice the integrity of the art and hence the value of its political resistance.

Snyder also puts forth a list of Appalachian strengths to achieve these tasks which include: a) linguistic identity b) leveling imperative c) sense of place d) familial imperative e) urgency of candor, and others. However, these strengths seem to me to be the end product of a successfully exercised construction-of-attention. All in all, the evaluation of the project of atten-

tion is put very simply by Jim Wayne Miller, echoing Tates' explanation of the goal of a critical quarterly, that a successful regional art (or magazine) "has the effect of making people more aware of who they are and how they got to be that way"(Baber, "true grit", 257).

Appendix 2

List of The Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative's founding members:

Present: Larry Richamn, Marcia Bost, Randy Smallwood, Helen Jervis, Sheree Fuller, Frank Kilgore, Don Askins, Robert Kuhiken, Tom Crowe, Madeline Flannery, Jim Webb, James Hannah, John Yost, John Clark, Jewel Aksins, Robert Baber, David Morris, Anne Shelby, and Peggy Hall.

Letters of Support: Joy Lamm, Peter Carey, Ron Short, Jack Welch, Eliot Wigginton, Gurney Norman, Robert Higgs, Barbara Smith, Jim Wayne Miller, Robert Snyder, Peter Laska, Pauletta Hansel, Gail Amburgey.

Appalachian Little Magazines

List compiled from Rita Quillen's 1985 Appalachian Index, *Now and Then* 1987 periodicals list, and independent library research at the University of Kentucky's Appalachian Collection

Name: Includes editor if sighted in Quillen's or *Now and Then* (not necessarily most recent or first editor).

Status: A Description of literature's role in the magazine:

A=Primary/only feature B=Plays significant role in conjunction with essay and art

C=Poetry and Prose occasionally used D=Primary purpose literary academia/essay

Dates: Starting date and date of last magazine published (if available)

Support: Supporting Institution/Primary Financial Base

Name	Status	Location	Dates	Support
Appalachian Harvest	????	Boone N.C.	????	Appalachian St
Appalachian Heritage (Al Stewart) 1,000 subscribers (Sidney Farr)	B	Pippa Passes KY Berea, KY	1973-84 1984-present	Alice Loyde College Berea College
Appalachian Journal (Williamson)	C/D	Boone, NC	1973-present	Appalachian State
Artemis	A	Roanoke, VA	????	
The Arts Journal (Donna English-Zinn) 500 distrobution; 2,500 circulation	C	Asheville NC	1975-present	NC Arts Council/ Community Arts Council/ Private Foundations
Backcountry	A	Elkins, W.VA.	????	Independent
Back Home In Kentucky	B	Mt. Morris, IL	act. 1987	Independent
Black Diamonds (Black Writing)	A(?)	Princeton, WVA	act. 1987	John Henry Memorial Foundation
Branches	?	Hudson, N.C.	????	Caldwell Community College
Gold Mountain Review	A	Boone, N.C.	act. 1987	Appalachian State (Eng Dept)
Corn Creek Revue	A	Young Harris, GA	????	Young Harris College
Cumberlands (formerly Twigs)	A	Pikeville, KY	1977-present	Pikeville College
Echoes of West Virginia	A	Huntington, WA	1949	????
Grab-a-Nickel (tabloid) Barbra Smith circulation: 1,000	A	Philippi, W VA	1976-present	Alderson-Broaduus College Barbour Country Writers' Wksp
Help Your Self	?	Richmond, KY	????	Eastern Kentucky University

Henlocks and Balsans	B	Banner Elk, NC	act. 1987	Less-McRae College
Hill and Valley (Shirley Young Cambell)	A	Charleston W.Va.	(1977)??	????
Illustrated Appalachian Intelligencer	B	Griffithsville, WVA		Appalachian Literary League
Images of Appalachia	A	Montgomery W.Va.	????	W.Va. Tech.
Iron Mountain Review	D	Emory, VA	act. 1987	Emory and Henry College
Jimson Weed	A	Wise, VA	1975-77	Clinch Valley College
Laurel Review	A	Buckhannon, V. Va.	1966-present(?)	WVA Weleyan College
Mocking Bird	?	Johnson City	???	East Tenn. State University
Mossy Creek Journal	A/B	Jefferson City, TN	1978-90	Carson-Newman College
Mountain Laurel	C	Meadows of Dan, VA	act. 1987	Independent
Mountain Holiday (Jim Stokely)	?	Newport, TN	????	Independent
Mountain Life and Work	C	Clintwood, Va	1925-1988(?)	Council of the Southern Mts.
Mountain Review	B	Whitesburg, KY	1974-81	Appalshop
Mountain Spirit (Craven Fall '81-sept. '83 Margret Gabriel thru present circ. 30,000)	C	Lancaster, KY	1981-present	Christian Appalachian Project
Nonad	?	Cullowhee, NC	????	Wstrn. Carolina University
Now and Then (Pat Arnow ed.)	B	Johnson City	1984-present	Cnt. for App. Stds./ E. Tn. St.
The Old Hickory Review (Charles T. Stanfill)	A	Jackson, Tn	act. 1987	Jackson Writers Group
Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel (Jim Webb ed.)	A	Whitesburg, KY	1986-present	Independent
Plainsong (Frank/Peggy Steele & Oakes)	B	Bowling Green, KY	1979-1990	Western Kentucky University
Puddingstone (John Coward ed)	?	Knoxville, TN	???	????
Rivercity Review (Sandra Dutton)	A	Louisville, KY	act. 1987	River City Review Press

Scripset (Harry Brown & William Sutton)	A	Richmond, KY	???-Present	Eastern Kentucky University
The Small Farm (Jeff Daniel Marion)	A	Dandridge, TN	1975-80	Independent
Sojourner (William Turner)	C	Lynch, KY	act. 1987	Eastern Ky. Social Club
Southern Exposure (rarely uses literature though may have a topic issue) circulation: 5,000	C	Durham, NC	1973-pres.	Institute for Southern Studies
Southern Poetry Review (Robin Grey) (non-regional)	A	Charlotte, NC	1958-pres.	University of N.C.-Charlotte
Touchstone (pamphlet) (Jim Stokely)	A	Newport, TN	1977-80	Independent
Twigs	A	Pikeville, KY	1965-77	Pikeville College
Unaka Range	?	Bryon City, NC	????	Independent
The Unrealist (P.J. Laska & M. J. Coleman)	A	Prince, WVA	1978-82	The Unrealist Press
The Wayah Review	?	Franklin, NC	???	Hacon County Cult. Arts Coun.
What's A Nice Hillbilly Like You...?	A	Beckley, WVA	1975-76	Antioch Appalachia
Wildwood	?	Dublin, VA	???	Appalachian Literary Guild
Wind/Literary Journal (Quinton Howard) (non-regional)	A	Pikeville, KY	1971-present	Independent

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