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Introduction

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Introduction

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History, rejecting absolutes, gives no comfort to the many able, subtle, dedicated minds that crave finality and certitude.

Jacques Barzun (1974, p. 146)

Barzun's unsettling depiction of history is a fitting beginning to *The Qualitative Report* in that a narrative of qualitative and critical inquiry also rejects absolute, finality, and authority and embraces ambiguities, uncertainties, and diversities of human experience. Just as talk of qualitative and critical reflection is a multi-versed experience, so too is talk about that talk: What are possible and impossible shapes and forms of a twelve or so page publication dedicated to representing a phenomenon which seems to resist and to tease con-formity? To that question there is no answer; and thus begins a journal.

In the search for form--when sincere and honest--the action is twofold: to create form; and to diagnose the created form. Accordingly, as the artist proceeds with his[/her] creation, there simultaneously develops a rationalizing yet unwritten analysis of the work.

Eliel Saarinen (1948/1985, p. v)

One certainty, at least so far, for *The Qualitative Report* is the choice of the written word as foil for contributors in an on-going discussion juxtaposing created form, possibly extant studies or somewhat-held positions and ideologies, with diagnoses of that preexisting created form, which may be in shapes of reactions, musings, misgivings, and even inspired non sequiturs. Through the wonders of time, acts devoted to diagnosing created form evolve into another created form, which in turn becomes fair game for new and subsequent perusals, evocations, and invocations.

Let us get nearer to the fire, so that we can see what we are saying.

The Bubis of Fernando Po (cited in Ogden & Richards, 1946, p. 1)

The Qualitative Report is a calling for words and images inspired by qualitative and critical inquiry and reflections on those inquires. Papers, poems, and paragraphs; fragments, figments, and well-formed arguments; butts, rebuts, and re-rebuts are all desired and appreciated in an attempt to create a journalistic form somewhat in the shape of collage: "To write...on the model of collage would be to avoid the portrayal of cultures as organic wholes or as unified, realistic worlds subject to a continuous explanatory discourse" (Clifford, 1988, p. 146). Of course some may choose to rebut such a position, but then again, that is the idea.

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