

In The Postmodern Condition, Jean-Francois Lyotard outlined the basic argument against the "grand narrative"—always reductionist, always ideological—and in favor of the "petit recit," the little story, the grounded, local anecdote. In Tom Lutz's And the Monkey Learned Nothing and Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World, the anecdote is employed to highlight not simply the contingent nature of the traveler's knowledge, but also the interplay between estrangement and encounter in the production of the sublime.

