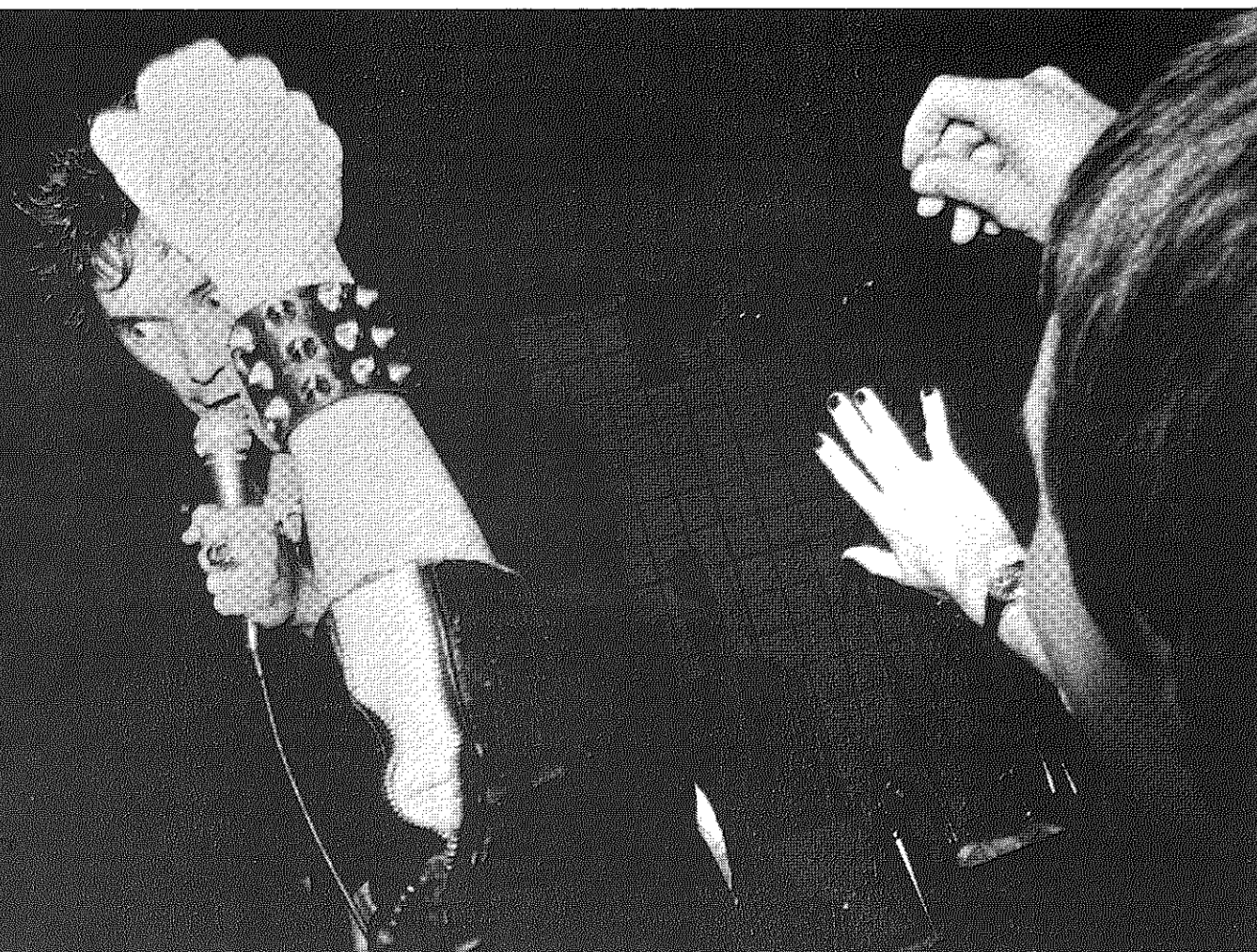


STEREO

MOURNING



(ON NO LONGER)

RECEIVING

(CKLN)

**Note, to begin**

with, a program not embarrassed by its content, which takes, in fact, that content to be the local. This being the turning away from a convention (a repetitious force) whose agendas only ever recognize the local as an illegitimate distraction (where, here, the marriage which legitimates would be a contract that promises a place in an international market; an arrangement that is stipulated as proper and professional, and in the face of this, the illegitimate equals an amateurish impropriety whose appearance produces embarrassment, that is, distracts or stumbles a stride made sure by its commitment to its professional direction). And if such conventional agendas should find local non-contracted items to deliver, it would recover any discomposure suffered therein by offering said items under a banner of speciality; constructing a sophistication which plays to fashion-consciousness, underwritten by an adherence to the intelligent, and announcing such a commitment with a promise of the interesting. This is to say that face is saved by negotiating a contract. But it is not as if the alternative would not also trade off some idea of the legitimate; it is not requirement of contract itself that marks a difference so much as a clientele, as announced, and the articulated arrangements and stipulations. The difference pivots on a certain mechanism of patronage and an operation of magnanimity.

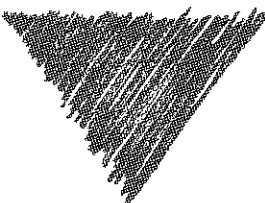
**Note, second-**

ly, a certain notion of the political, and particularly one which provides for a relation to an economy of explication, that is, a politicality that remains (always) to be revealed in conjunction with a composition and a composer (as explicators). And, here, a difference is already to be marked but within that very notion of conjunction; that the explicit is to be revealed by assuming a political relation in composing and in being a composer. A relation, then, that is accounted for by a commitment to the presentation of its issue. It would position itself as alternative to a choice of not dealing with such matters (for reasons which would articulate the matters as addendum). If it still suffers to designate the political as category, only this yime as category embraced rather than deferred, the question would continue to turn on a notion of the political as supplement, and also on a submission of the explicit as self-evident; a principle comfortable with the acceleration commensurate with its becoming implicit, its articulation already inaugurated and, thereby, as though unnecessary to repeat. For the categorical delineation retains a place for supplement inasmuch as its name could be a reduction and is thus available to challenge; whether its calling be cause to remedy or poison. This choice, too, serves to maintain a composure (a composing) again. It is for the sake of this further composition that a certain politicality remains, again, to be articulated.

**Note, finally,**

that this reception, given in the wake of reception lost, a loss mourned certainly, although not wholly lost as its resonance occasions this mourning and perhaps for some further notes, this reception, resonating, itself, if the acceptance of a certain calling to or of the alternative, finds itself entertaining such within a slight reserve, a reservation as it were, which both holds a place for and a distance from. In particular, that distance is to be registered against the sufficiency of a topic itself; against the acceptance of becoming political as itself already alternative, inasmuch as this becoming would undermine the explication of a relation which is already political (at the same time that this relation may bear its explication as inexhaustible) at the moment of situating its strategic specificity. If there was a question concerning closure, say, upon interpretation, by such a situating of a specific political strategy in regards to a composition, a question, then, of this as a finalizing move, this question becomes in the situating of an alternative a non-question. The alternative becomes a subversion of that question. And yet this is to repeat the move of its so-called alter. For, it is not as if this question is ever asked, but is itself situated as prior reasons for not allowing the presentation of that which would beg it; it is repressed, perhaps, in the face of its own inexhaustibility. It is this political move which continues to be covered and which serves to produce quantifiable differences while maintaining the same ground. If it is still refreshing, it is still contingent upon a reticent conjunction; a silenced 'but'.

MICHAEL BOYCE



## TOWARDS A PEDAGOGY OF LIBERATION

### An Interview With Henry Giroux

Peter McLaren

Illustration By  
Michael Merrill

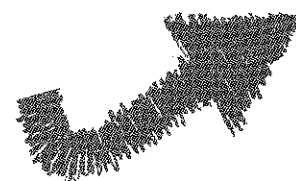
The appearance of the Bovey Commission in Ontario bears passing testament to late capitalism's—and late bolshevism's—onward rush to subject all aspects of education to the dictates of the market. If liberal capitalism at least attempted to preserve vestiges of the classical idea of education as the free play of ideas, as well as the critique of established moral codes, contemporary educational policy unites morality and pedagogy in one blessed tryst: the pursuit of ideas is at one with the worship of Mammon in league with a convenient God. There are no valid practices which are not economically useful, and there is no valid economics which does not serve the demands of the mechanisms of capital. Late capitalism—like early capitalism—sees the state as entirely beholden to the market.

*borderlines* will return to the theme of the educational crisis in later issues. Meanwhile it is important to record that counter-strategies cannot be based on preserving the order that is passing. Practice begins in the schools, in the community colleges, in universities as they are now. And these practices must be seen as inherently actively political, just as the policy-makers see their practices as passively (disinterestedly) political.

Ioan Davies

**Henry Giroux**

*Giroux is the author of over 70 articles and seven books. Two of his books, Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling, and Theory and Resistance in Education were nominated by the American Educational Studies Association as Critics' Choice Selection, indicative of the most significant books in the field of education for 1982 and 1983. He has a forthcoming book, co-authored with Stanley Aronowitz, called Education Under Siege.*



**Peter McLaren:** Let me begin by asking you how you would evaluate current trends in curriculum theory and instruction. I'm primarily interested, as you know, in how current issues in curriculum theory affect the lives and chances of working-class students.

**Henry Giroux:** There is a growing tendency in both the curriculum field and in educational theory, in general, to disregard schools as sites that provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to become intellectually and politically empowered as critical and active citizens. Many of the reforms that are emerging around public schooling in North America, especially in the United States, have abandoned a view of schools shaped by a discourse of freedom and possibility. In its place, they have substituted a view of schools that is narrowly technical, one that enshrines instrumental and pragmatic approaches to teaching and learning. As a consequence, public schooling, teacher education, and in-service teacher education are being reformed in the interests of business management ideologies. The real tragedy is that these approaches devalue teacher work and discount the ways in which students give meaning to the world via their class, ethnic, racial and gendered social bearings and formations. Within the language of the current educational reform movement, meaning is not something to be understood and used in the interest of helping students create a better world for themselves and others, it is something that takes on the dead weight of warehouse knowledge; that is, it is treated as fixed and static, merely something to be mastered, managed, controlled and generalized across teacher and student populations. In short, the current trends in curriculum and educational theory devalue teachers by limiting their roles to the implementation, rather than creation and critical appropriation of school knowledge and values. Consequently, these reforms treat teachers as 'clerks of the empire' rather than as intellectuals who need to reflect upon the principles of their practice.

I think that the current educational infatuation with the 'literal' and measurable in school life, with management pedagogies, and with highly detailed forms of teacher and student accountability represent an assault on the very substance and nature of critical thinking. Public schools often express an incapacitating silence towards the dreams, histories, language practices and hopes that working-class students use in order to give meanings to their lives. Most public schools produce a dominant culture that dis-organizes the experiences of working-class students, and in doing so undercuts the possibilities for enlarging their intellectual capacities and social destiny. Such students either learn how to live in silence, resist, turn off, or succeed at the expense of their own backgrounds. Furthermore, the political nature of schooling, its use of power, its privileging of specific forms of social life becomes all the more difficult to interrogate in educational theories that deny the normative, political, and historical interests that structure their ideologies and methods of inquiry.

Of course, this should not suggest that schools are merely agencies of domination. They are not. They are a terrain in which struggles occur, contradictions manifest themselves, and spaces occur where people do learn to think and act in a critical fashion. What this suggests is that at the current moment progressive forces will have to fight harder to reclaim schools as democratic spheres.

**What in your opinion, are the major obstacles preventing working-class students from succeeding in school? I'm wondering, too, what 'school success' should mean? I'm referring here to the concept of equality and schooling.**

I think the best way to answer this question is to start from the perspective of how we might view the notion of successful schooling for working-class students. I believe that working-class students need to be exposed to the knowledge and skills that they will need to assume the moral and intellectual leadership basic to their class and social formation. This means learning about the strengths and weaknesses of their own cultures and histories; it means learning how to appropriate critically the knowledge and skills from the dominant culture that promote self and social empowerment; it means learning how to understand and apply these forms of knowledge as part of a constant struggle to both humanize themselves and to fight for political, economic, and social democracy.

Any viable theory of working-class pedagogy needs to take seriously the

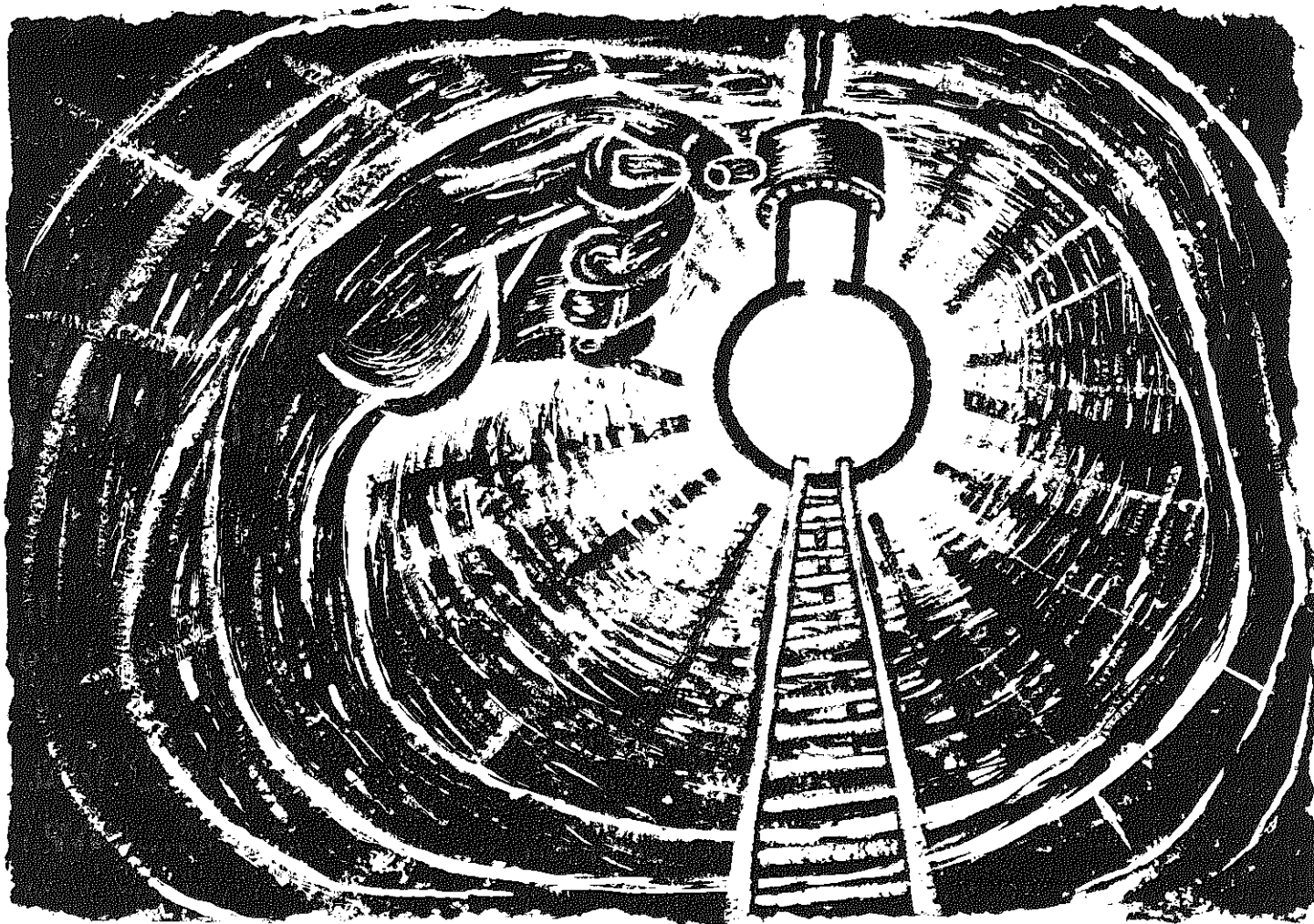
But working-class students also need a discourse of possibility. They need to be given the skills and knowledge to imagine a different world, one that gives them an active voice in controlling their own experiences, one that legitimates and respects their dreams and hopes; put simply, they need a form of schooling in which knowledge and power are inextricably linked to the idea that to choose life, so as to make it possible, is to understand the preconditions necessary to struggle for it.

The obstacles that working-class kids face in schools come from a variety of complex ideological and material sources. But the most serious, in the immediate sense, is that schools are organized and structured so as to deny the histories, experiences and voices of working-class students. School administrators and teachers rarely learn about or acknowledge the cultural and political dynamics at work in schools. Most have no idea that a concept such as the hidden curriculum, for example, might be useful in investigating the nature of what schools *actually* do. In effect, schools often are like a foreign planet to these kids, a political and cultural sphere that works on them rather than *with them*, a battleground where their only hope of winning is to retreat into either silence or into the dynamics of their own culture, one which is often view-

refusal to politicize schools is an ideology that hides the role that schools, administrators and teachers play in reproducing the dominant society, a society still rife with forms of economic, racial, gender and social inequalities. This ideology has to be fought by radical and critical educators in all of its ideological and material expressions.

**I am trying to find ways of encouraging students to become more sensitive to the concerns expressed in the radical educational tradition. I am wondering how those of us committed to developing a critical or radical pedagogy might find ways of helping student teachers and classroom teachers become more interested in issues within schooling that deal with concepts such as ideology, culture, power, liberation and oppression?**

I think this question can be raised by arguing that we need to make the pedagogical more political for prospective and actual teachers and administrators. In other words, we need to help educators understand that the process of schooling can never be removed from the dynamics of power, politics and culture. That is, schooling must be viewed as representing a specific ordering of knowledge, as an expression of human values constructed through a set of emphases and exclusions over what is to be legitimated and devalued in hu-



historical and social particularities of everyday life; it needs to confirm and make meaningful the experiences that make up the lives of those students who have been disconfirmed and excluded from the discourse of dominant schooling. But such a pedagogy needs to be characterized by a critical rather than a merely useful relationship to working-class culture and ideology. This suggests that working-class students need a type of schooling that provides them with the discourse of critique, a discourse that develops around a pedagogy that problematizes knowledge, utilizes critical dialogue, helps them to understand the political nature of their own schooling in terms of its limits and possibilities.

ed by teachers and school authorities as a threat to the order and values of the school itself.

Unfortunately, schools are not viewed by many administrators, teachers and parents as sites that honour *particular* forms of life and culture, particular forms of interaction and communication, or that serve to introduce and legitimate a particular form of social life. The latter position is usually buttressed by the commonly-held view that schools are apolitical, objective sites that merely transmit a common culture so as to provide all students equally with the chance to live an economically and socially valued life. In my opinion, this is a dangerous piece of ideology that does particular violence to working-class students and students who make up other subordinate groups. Underlying this

man life. By making the pedagogical more political, we can help teachers, student teachers and others understand the implications of their own behaviour and what ideological and economic conditions might be necessary for them to work as transformative intellectuals struggling for emancipatory forms of schooling. As such, educators need to recognize the importance of developing a critical discourse that will allow them to ask questions such as whose knowledge is being taught, what cultural practice is being legitimated, whose interests it serves, and how does it relate to forms of self and social emancipation? Educators provided with an alternative and critical educational discourse are in a better position to decide

whether they want to be transformative intellectuals and fight for schools that allow them to act in that capacity, or whether they want to function so as to serve the status quo and maintain a safe position within the dominant traditions of schooling.

The point is that progressive educators can offer alternative discourses and social practices in our universities and public schools so as to provide the opportunity for students to rethink the nature of their own values and how they might operate through the conditions of their work. This does not simply mean that radical educators should write books and articles, it also means they should construct alliances with other progressive educators and fight collectively where possible to establish schools as democratic public spheres whose intent is to foster the ideals of critical democracy and civic courage; moreover, it means radical educators should develop organic links wherever possible with the communities and neighbourhoods that have a vested interest in public schooling.

**I'd like to ask you what you consider to be one of the most important tasks that critical and radical educators face in the future?**

I think that critical and radical intellectuals need to develop a more dialectical notion of power and schooling. They must go beyond analyzing schools merely as agencies of domination. This suggests advancing beyond the discourse of critique to the discourse of possibility. One consequence would be that the notion of power and agency would take on a more strategic importance in analyzing the foundations for a critical theory of schooling. For example, power would no longer be defined as an exclusive instance of domination, it would also be seen as an affirmative and productive force. Posing power in a positive and critical way points to the need for radical educators to work actively within teacher education programs, with teachers in the field, with administrators and with parents so as to develop philosophical and programmatic changes in education in which we can imagine a public sphere where alternative changes in school organization, curriculum and instruction are seriously considered and proposed.

I want to stress that the language of critique loses its emancipatory character when it fails to embody the politically imaginative, the vision of what could be, a faith in people to remake their world, i.e. a language of hope and possibility. What this strongly implies is that radical and critical educators need to specify what schools as democratic spheres might look like. We need to link theory and action in the service of making, as Philip Corrigan has argued, despair unconvincing and hope more practical. This may seem like a utopian task, but it is a necessary precondition for any viable educational reform endeavour.

#### Peter McLaren

is a teacher at the College of Education in St. Catharines, Ontario, author of *Cries from the Corridor* (Methuen, 1979) and the forthcoming *Schooling as a Ritual Activity* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, to be published in Fall, 1985).



Behind the wall and the mirror, the hidden body is elided; in the thin space separating the mirror's polished, reflection-capturing surface and the opaque surface of the wall that catches only shadows, there is nothing. Through all these scenes glide similitudes that no reference point can situate: translations with neither point of departure nor support.

Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*  
1983

REASON

INTO

PASSION

## To interrogate

a history of representation is to wander into a world of refraction: it is to become lost in a simulation. Any attempt to retrace the specular maze, from destination to departure—from imaginary to real—will result only in artificial metemorphosis. Simulation as Baudrillard tells us, is a testimonial articulation of absence. Joyce Wieland's *Reason Over Passion* (Part II of a three-part political trilogy: 'True Patriot of Love', 1967-69), her most intricate and successful film, addresses this very absence.

*Reason Over Passion* undermines a predefined national/feminine typology, not by opposing a real to an imaginary, but by disrupting their hierarchical relationship. By exposing a double movement, real and imaginary collide in the speculum as contradiction, not as truth and untruth, but as negative truth: Absence. In unravelling the apparently seamless web of signification, 'process' is displayed as 'production'—the signifying practice is revealed as ideological operation.

This disjuncture is present as the film opens with Wieland singing a silent national anthem—a tight close-up amplifies her red lips as they move soundlessly; this is followed by the printed lyrics of the song. Moving through a dictated language, her silent feminine motion negates an overtly constructed idiom: the feminine subject. The juxtaposition of the printed lyrics frames the images within a historical pathology—prostrated patriotism—uncovering its ideological functionality: Silence. The dislocation of body and voice, the latter taking the form of the written word, effectively highlights the assumptions underlying female subjectivity; by severing the symbolic matrix the patriarchal bias of the anthem is exposed. Thus, those words so crucial to self-definition are dictated and imposed.

Images of Canadian landscapes (which are filmed through car or train windows) are represented in flux—vacillating, changing, mutable—they are vast vacant spaces

## Janine Marchessault

waiting to be explored and filled with a new history. In conjunction with the previous images of the female body, this body of land is deprived of synchronized sound and is, in the same way, 'denaturalized'. Here, the myth of the 'untouchable landscape' (as manifested in our painterly and literary traditions) is transposed and transformed through the refractory movements of the camera. The hermetic landscapes are at times nothing more than a grey blur as Wieland occasionally waves her hand in front of the lens, postulating a (self-reflexive) gesture of negation in posing the problem of representation. The various windows, which frame and isolate us from the moving images, foreground mediation—emphasizing the subjective presence of the artist: the Real, which can only be defined through representation, is always a reification. (Wieland records an epistemological crisis.)

The frantic landscapes are frequently interrupted by scions of Canadian iconography: such as the Canadian flag (a maple leaf on cardboard), the national anthem (a distorted rendition accompanied by printed lyrics), the words 'REASON OVER PASSION' and a cameo portrait of Pierre Trudeau. Through pointedly worked distortions, these tendrils of the imaginary, come to resemble cheap souvenirs (product commodities) rather than national emblems. Like little soldiers deprived of their guns, these indices have been drained of their hermeneutic capacities. Such indices, when interwoven into the real moving landscapes, would have served to stabilize and anchor them with meaning. Instead, the cardboard flag, presented in all its blasphemous splendour, stripped of context and ritual, becomes a hiatus of ambiguity. In this way, the thread of signification between the flag and the oscillating landscapes is disrupted; the symbol—hollowed out—is swallowed up by the very movement it seeks to detain.

This erasure is carried further as the words 'REASON OVER PASSION' appear in 537 different variations superimposed over the

landscapes. At first, this imbrication appears as fixed slogan—the phallogocentric order of the Father, Pierre Trudeau: '*La raison avant la passion, c'est le thème de tous mes écrits*'. However, because we have neither the presentation of pure signifier (word), nor pure signified (image) a tension is created which prevents one from 'flattening out' the other. The appendage, no longer contained in its traditional structure, is set free to join the landscapes in movement; the letters become unhinged—spinning and changing over (and in relation to) the fluctuating images. They resist one position, transfigured from sense to non-sense, from reason into passion: working to formulate a new language, separate from the discursive resonances of the old.

The images of the landscapes are, for the most part, accompanied by a mundane monochrome sound device which, through its constance, delineates and fills in a specific space in time and like an alarm, carries with it an urgent temporality. Unlike the heterogeneity of the images, there are two possible variations within this continuum—non-silence and silence, with the former posing the stillness of the latter: Closure.

For Wieland, *Reason Over Passion* constitutes a last look at Canada—an epitaph. For us, however, such epitaphs (and others) should not be laid to rest, but rather should be opened up, (re)worked and (re)examined as means of uncovering and mapping out particularized strategies. Wieland's own idiosyncratic practices are based primarily on a negativity which refuses all that is fixed, resulting not in simple inversion but in ambiguity. It is precisely the ambiguity of these 'translations', which many have interpreted as naïveté, that allows for an increased awareness of cultural and economic historicity—towards a feminist praxis.

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is currently pursuing graduate studies in cinema at York University.