

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.

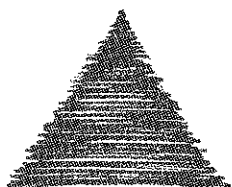
I'd like to ask you what you consider to be one of the most important tasks that critical and radical educators face in the future?

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.

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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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