

Cixous is able to affirm the disruptive potential of the hysteric, to make it productive, to recognize in the hysteric's struggle the "insoluble contradiction" of being a woman when woman means nothing, to say "I am what Dora would have been if woman's history had begun." (p.85) Clément refuses the uncomfortable alliance Cixous makes with Dora, preferring to keep this ineffectual symbol of victimization firmly in the past: "Listen, you love Dora, but to me she never seemed a revolutionary character." The disagreement which erupts at the end of the book is provocative and points to questions that have been lingering throughout the text. At what point does individual rebellion become politically significant? For whom? To what extent do we exaggerate minor points of resistance to assuage our fears of ineffectuality or or ultimately cooptability? Is Cixous's powerful rhetoric and imaginative writing promising or misleading?

From Freud's essay "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" we learn that every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a world of his own, or, rather, rearranges the things of his world in a new way . . . The opposite of play is not what is serious but what is real.<sup>5</sup>

We should resist the temptation to use this analogy between the child and the creative writer to discredit Cixous (as I had originally intended to do), to claim, as her critics do, that her playful and poetic prose bears no relation to reality but remains hopelessly utopian. For Cixous's playful exploration of the feminine Imaginary and her emphasis on flight can indeed be interpreted as a flight from the dominant social reality, a reality founded on a master/slave model and on the repression/exclusion of otherness. Although the limitations inherent in any utopian project are applicable to Cixous (Toril Moi provides an exhaustive list<sup>6</sup>), this is far from rendering invalid Cixous's attempt to theorize other possibilities based on her own desire and experience.

In the realm of fantasy one takes one's own desire to be reality, and in the realm of reality there seems little room for fantasy. If the poet, the writer and the child occupy a different space it is because they are able to move between imagination and reality, to distinguish between the two. Perhaps the newly born woman, unlike the hysteric, will be able to live there too.

#### Notes

1 Cixous, "Sorties," and "The Laugh of the Medusa" in E. Marks and I. de Courtivron. *New French Feminisms* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981).

2 Clément, "Enslaved Enclave," in *New French Feminisms* . p. 131.

3 Cixous's work has come under attack by both French and English speaking women for being apolitical, ahistorical, essentialist, idealist and bourgeois. See "Variations on Common Themes," in *New French Feminisms*, Ann Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'Écriture Feminine", *Feminist Studies* 7(2), 1981, and Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*. (New York: Methuen, 1985).

4 Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" Standard Edition, Vol.8. Also see Cixous, *Portrait de Dora* (Paris: Ed. des femmes, 1976).

5 Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," Penguin Edition, Vol. 14, p.132.

6 Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Ch. 6.

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## The Nuclear Controversy

William P. Bundy ed.  
New York: New American Library,  
1985.

## Nuclear War: The Search for Solutions

Published by Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Altona, Manitoba: Freisen  
Printers, 1985.

## The Strategic Defense Initiative: Assured Security for Canada,

William B. Campbell and  
Richard K. Melchin  
Vancouver: Carachain  
Conservation Centre,  
Kirk Mailing services Ltd.,  
1985.

## Star Wars: Self-Destruct Incorporated

E.P. Thompson and Ben  
Thompson  
London: Maryland Press,  
1985.

The scrutiny of a major third player, the peace movement, has profoundly affected the way the public discussion of nuclear weapons has been conducted in the 1980s. The nuclear debate is no longer the exclusive preserve of policy makers, military strategists and the arms industry. On the contrary, the past few years have witnessed a remarkable growth of literature on the subject. Hundreds of books and countless articles have reflected the concerns and growing sophistication of a population deeply disturbed by the nuclear threat. This literature is the product of a broad movement and increasingly a resource for the movement as it deepens its understanding of the issues and seeks political strategies which will effectively impose genuine anti-nuclear policies on the governments of the world.

*The Nuclear Controversy* is a collection of articles first published in the journal *Foreign Affairs* between 1981 and 1985. Edited by William P. Bundy, former assistant Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy Administration and Assistant Secretary of State under President Johnson, the book is published for those who feel a "sense of frustration, even helplessness" with the breakdown of international peace negotiations and the poor quality of debate in the (Republican dominated) political arena. Though by no means a work stemming from the anti-nuclear peace movement it represents an attempt by a group of former senior government officials and experts to outline alternatives to the policies of the Reagan administration. As Bundy explains in his introduction: "... this is an action book . . . every article in this series offers not only important analysis

and historical background but specific policy recommendations". He concludes his introduction with a summary of the tasks facing the opponents of Reagan's policies: "The problem for most of us is what to get behind today and tomorrow."

The other articles in the book cover a wide range of topics focusing on four themes: the impracticality of a policy of first use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to Soviet conventional forces in Europe, the need to reverse the dangerous tendency for strategic planners to make assumptions about the possibilities of waging and winning limited nuclear wars, the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war, and practical measures for negotiated arms limitation. Two articles by the "gang of four", McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara and Gerard Smith, challenge the logic and feasibility of the first use policy of NATO, and of Reagan's plan for arms limitations through Star Wars. "What is centrally and fundamentally wrong with the President's objective (Star Wars)," the authors argue, "is that it cannot be achieved." Of special note is the article by Carl Sagan, "Nuclear War and Climatic Catastrophe: Some Policy Implications," in which he explains the likelihood of nuclear winter which would follow any significant nuclear exchange.

*The Nuclear Controversy* offers a useful summary of the opposition to the policies of the Reagan administration from within the American political and military establishment with its strong commitment to NATO. The problem with the book's perspective, however, is that it remains locked within the framework of a perpetual cold war. Its policies for nuclear disarmament are extremely cautious and its ultimate alternative to nuclear build-up is conventional re-armament. Additionally problematic is the writers' commitment to achieving disarmament through the established negotiating mechanisms and to changing US policy through Congress and the ballot box. It is no surprise that men of their public stations have little to say about the growth of the popular peace movement. They prefer to work through the giant bureaucracies of the U.S. government of which they are all influential members.

*Nuclear War: the Search for Solutions* is a publication by one of the most active and effective constituencies within the peace movement: Physicians for Social Responsibility. The book includes the published proceedings of a conference held at the University of British Columbia October 19-21, 1984. In his preface the honourable Walter Gordon situates the conference proceedings against the background of the peace movement in Vancouver where the 1984 Walk and Rally for Peace attracted 115,000 people. The editors strike a similar note, introducing the book as a contribution to the ongoing growth and development of an informed peace movement. The appeal

of the collective action dominates many speeches, including those by Leonard Johnson and Helen Caldicott. In the words of Michael Pentz, former chair of Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA), "some new political force" is required to halt the doomsday machine of the arms race. "I believe that such a political force is beginning to emerge. It is the worldwide movement for nuclear disarmament and peace . . . What is needed is a more powerful (movement). It is interventionist democracy at an altogether higher level than has ever before been achieved".

The 21 chapters of the book are comprised of speeches from prominent physicians and academics including two representatives from the Soviet Union. Along with the transcripts of the major addresses the book is peppered with edited versions of the question and answer sessions which followed many of the speeches and panels, and with summaries from the "action workshops".

Many of the contributions reflect the traditional concern of the Physicians with the medical consequences of nuclear war and the nuclear threat. However, several other themes are also covered. Dr. Howard H. Hiatt deals with the immediate human costs of the arms race, linking the appalling waste of arms production with world-wide deprivation and starvation. Speeches by John M. Lamb, Admiral Robert H. Falls, Dr. Ian Carr and General Johnson deal with aspects of Canada's role in the arms race in general and NATO in particular. Canada's Ambassador for Peace Douglas Roche, in the unenviable position of representing the Mulroney government, offers his own humble plan for moving Canada "Inch by Inch Toward Peace". It is refreshing to find the inclusion of a representative from the Soviet Union. This modest gesture at undermining the stranglehold of cold war ideology is further assisted by Jane M. O. Sharp's straightforward account of the history of "Soviet Approaches to Arms Control".

*Nuclear War: The Search for Solutions* knots together a wealth of factual information and analysis covering several themes. Inevitably in a book of this type there are many gaps and a lack of overall integration of the material. But these small failings are more than made up for by the fact that the book is faithful to the October 1984 Conference. Like the conference, the book is a genuinely collective exercise. Unlike so many arms length treatments of the issues, this book manages to convey all the excitement and dynamism of the peace movement in action. This feature makes it particularly appealing and accessible reading.

A decidedly pro-Star Wars position has recently been advanced in a tiny pamphlet published by the Canadian Conservative Center, entitled *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Assured Security for Canada*,

written by William A. B. Campbell and Richard K. Melchin. The authors defend Star Wars as a means of effectively neutralizing the Soviet option to launch a first strike. Not surprisingly, this hackneyed argument, with its rhetoric of peace and nuclear disarmament through "strength", fails to make clear several aspects of the Star Wars project.

First, nuclear parity with the Soviet Union is now a permanent feature of the superpower confrontation. No amount of space weaponry will make a military "end run" around the Soviets possible, or restore to the U.S. the strategic nuclear superiority it enjoyed in the 1970's. Second, SDI is a continuation of the Reagan administration's attempt to establish a first strike nuclear capacity. But as dozens of independent commentators have pointed out, Star Wars is every bit as offensive in its conception as it is defensive. When we get to the bottom line, unbridled anti-Sovietism is employed by the Reaganites to justify preparations for an attack on the evil empire before it attacks us.

Third, Star Wars is being sold as a plan for technological and economic development. Technology will be restructured around a vast military project spanning more than two decades. Economic development will abandon the problems of earth in favour of the "industrialisation of space". In this sense, SDI is being advanced as the solution to the economic problems of the United States and its allies. Reagan has answered the crisis of economic and social planning with the promise of a new future on the "High Frontier".

For these reasons an excellent companion to the above pamphlet is a lengthier essay by the renowned British peace activist E.P. Thompson and his son Ben Thompson, entitled *Star Wars: Self-Destruct Incorporated*. Thompson traces the gradual emergence of the idea of Star Wars from two sources: the ongoing search for a means to restore American superiority and the pressure to seize the initiative from the nuclear freeze movement and present the American people with a guarantee of security. Thompson's account highlights the irrational thinking which is characteristic of Reagan and his key advisors.

The pamphlet goes on to examine the SDI schemes and options in some detail. This is a useful summary for the untrained reader. Thompson argues that -- technically -- SDI is entirely unworkable. But that, he concludes, is irrelevant given that the real intent of Star Wars is to provide "intermediate" defensive systems which can be paired with existing offensive weapons systems to restore U.S. nuclear superiority in the medium term. This is the truly sinister character of Star Wars even at this so-called planning stage.

## Jump Cut: Hollywood Politics and Counter-Cinema

Peter Steven (editor)  
Toronto: Between the  
Lines 1986

These two pamphlets offer a compact summary of the choices which are now before us. On the one hand, the proponents of Star Wars appeal to a familiar well established set of values. For them America's superiority in the work is an unqualifiable good. The enemy of freedom is external -- the Soviet Union. The nature of the enemy makes the struggle for nuclear superiority a noble aspiration. Star Wars represents the moral and technological climax of our civilization. On the other hand, Thompson and others argue that SDI represents a psychotic vision of the future. Superficially plausible, SDI rests on assumptions which have no basis in reality. Star Wars, Thompson argues, is the apocalyptic vision of a bankrupt militaristic ideology which threatens to destroy the world. While the one ironically exposes the insanity of the cold war confrontation, the other soberly sketches out the chance for alternatives. Together with the rest of the literature born from the Nuclear Age, they dramatize the need for a deeper understanding and for broadening the base of collective action.

David Kraft

**The** rise of the New Left around the non-communist world in the late sixties brought with it a resurgence in progressive and explicitly left culture. Informed by and integrated into political activity, this culture developed a large body of work. In part it was based on the immediacy of those events that would lead to "revolution," or so those of us who were involved at the time believed. The rest took other oppositional weapons to "bourgeoise" culture. (Bourgeoise - such a nice word, especially when you spit the "wa" at the end, but so difficult to spell.) This battle against the dominant culture, which we saw as the "prime carrier" of ideology (specifically the odious disease of "false consciousness"), took place in the streets, in the cinemas, and on the printed page.

We recognized that one of the most powerful ideological media is film, and developed our own films both as tools of the "struggle" and as attempts to define and critique the dream factory. We also developed our own literature about films. One place where the propagation of a new culture in film joined with major critiques of mainstream, Hollywood films was the critical magazine, *Jump Cut*. Founded in 1974, *Jump Cut* quickly established itself as a journal of the independent left. With a decidedly non-academic tabloid format -- text set on a typewriter and printed on newsprint pages which yellow with age -- it has published some of the best analytical writing on film inconsistently ever since. (It has as unpredictable a publishing schedule as *borderlines*.) Now, Peter Steven, an associate editor of the magazine, has selected some of the best articles from over ten years of *Jump Cut*, and *Between the Lines* has published them as a book. *Jump Cut*, the book, will not yellow on your bookshelf, although it may become grubby from your repeated thumbings through in the years to come. The transformation from tabloid to book is quite remarkable. Those who have struggled with the tabloid's design (or lack of it) will find the book a pleasure to read. More than that, the book stands as a remarkable introduction to the film criticism and analysis that *Jump Cut* has provided over the years.

Designed very much as an introductory text for those about to jump simultaneously into the worlds of film and politics, *Jump Cut* is a welcome addition to the growing number of texts on film theory that are both politically radical and accessible to those with a certain kind of "intermediate-level" academic language (like me).

The book is divided into five parts. The first section, "The Dominant Cinema" offers carefully constructed critiques of the contradictory nature of our (sometimes guilt-ridden) experience of Hollywood's ideologically loaded pleasures. The article "Shirley Temple and the House of Rockefeller" by Charles Eckert contrasts Hollywood's Pollyanna visions of the Depression with the lived realities of poor and working-class children. This piece is good ammunition to use to debunk the alarming consistency of the "nostalgia market," which has sold "stars" like Temple as the cutesy representatives of some a-historical never-never land.

Jane Feuer's "Hollywood Musicals: Mass Art as Folk Art" describes further the contradictions between the escapism of the movies and the realities of everyday life. According to Feuer, that most American of institutions, the Hollywood musical, initially gained its enormous popularity because it used the work of (mostly) ordinary people, some of whom became stars later. But behind the musical's images lies an industrial apparatus that rivals GM -- an ideological factory which erases all indications of its production. The classic "rehearsal" scene -- frequently a part of the musical -- is the most blatant example of what Feuer call "creation and erasure." The rehearsal is the site where real sweat and labour are transformed and edited into a seemingly effortless, seamless product, sans sweat, sans labour.

The final essay on Hollywood is a series of interviews grouped under the title "Hollywood Transformed: Interviews with Lesbian Viewers." It gives insight into the range of perceptions that the audience brings to the cinema. The questions of audience identification with the movie's characters which the women raise, afford for most heterosexuals, I'm sure, an insight into their own readings of mass culture.

