The final irony, however, is that "getting" Musgrave's point is a dubious privilege. Once we realize that her voice is posed, and that she toys with the men, we might also realize that she is toying with us as well. In particular, we cannot ignore that these anecdotes are fictionalized enactments of the dreams upon which fashion magazines base their sales—dreams of glamour, wealth and romance. The article's byline is particularly telling: "Some were dangerous. None were ordinary. The men who loved Susan Musgrave in their fashion led to the one beyond anyone's reach but hers." As we read the article, though, we find that Musgrave poke fun at these hollow aspirations. She tells us that a bank robber—in jail—is her dream man. Mythic characters—Ulysses, Adam, the all-American boy, and earl-to-be—all fall short of the mark. And the bank robber is surely symbolic of someone who aspired to a life of wealth and excitement but now, as a prisoner in the story, and as a writer in real life, he has inevitably lowered his standard of living and his financial expectations.

This article is a series of put-ons, in other words. First, Musgrave suggests that she will reveal her past life and loves; instead, she disports them. Next, she describes herself as a victim of youth and idealism, dominated by the men in her life; but really she reduces them in print. Finally, she promises to write of adventure, glamour and romance, only to reject the values that make these things attractive. What this article reveals is that we have our own expectations as readers and as dreamers. Certainly, we do not get a clear and reliable portrait of Musgrave emerging from her work. She is hidden, after all, disguised by the past she created for herself and clothed in the garb of the fashion magazine female. Herein lies Musgrave's great escape.

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The Ideology of Adventure: Studies in Modern Consciousness 1100–1750
by Michael Nerlich
translated by Ruth Crowley
with a preface by Wlad Godzich
Minneapolis Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987, two volumes, 426 pp.

Studies in culture have witnessed steady growth over the last two decades. For many, the ways of investigating and writing about culture have changed. Semiotics, deconstruction and emerging feminist and ecologist critiques of science are pressing traditional disciplines to reconsider their axioms and rejuvenate their historical foundations. Still, even in the most innovative of the new approaches wherein the interdisciplinary purview is at its maximum, some of the older questions about the concept of culture return: questions of difference, of structure, of praxis and of universalism are certainly not new. We could argue that contemporary debates about the nature of culture follow a controversy already established in the classical sociologies of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel. Each of these theorists might argue that for a society to exist it must first have an imaginary representation of itself, a set of signs produced by actors and reproduced through institutions and the symbolic order that they provide. For a host of philosophical and political reasons, however, Marx differs from the others regarding the explanation of the transformation of the imaginary and the social. For Marx, the first critical sociologist, change is about praxis, about the overcoming of the constraints of the synchronic structure or layers of dom-
He integration of adventure ideology into bourgeois thought ultimately informs all social practice from primitive accumulation to the most ruthless and violent forms of imperialism.

In an age when any object is potentially an art object (Warhol), when any sign can be appropriated (advertising) and when institutions like the family, the church and the state, along with art and literature, are undergoing transformations so fundamental in nature that the production of images (of themselves) is rumoured to be in a kind of ultramodern crisis, it would seem that now, more than ever, we need to question the genesis of our social imaginary. This question calls for a reflection on the potential dangers of transculturalism; that is, not that which is common to all cultures, but rather that which crosses cultures, that which moves toward the universal through difference, and therefore challenges identity, negates power, and complicates tradition. There is no culture or language that is not already populated by a trace of some other foreign element. Mikhail Bakhtin argues that culture is a kind of open dialogue in which we are always anticipating the words and expressions of others, and that this process of evaluation, judgment, and ownership claims. Anticipation of the words of others is as much about curiosity as it is about semantics or language games. Is not the paradox of curiosity that witnesses the birth of culture?

It seems reasonable to assume that a certain curiosity about the culture of others has always existed. Even in neolithic societies that were unfamiliar with such metaphysical notions as "humanity" (as Levi-Strauss points out, outside the tribe there are only savages), the possible exploration of the other's culture would have been a central narrative in the imaginary representation of one's own sense of place, of belonging, of being. In a continuous development from the most traditional to the ultramodern, travel still contains this element of evaluation and, as such, is always bound as much by its cognitive as by its affective accomplishments to a social imaginary and its construction of otherness. The question that this theoretical position suggests is: What has travel between cultures contributed to the shift in the social imaginary of societies as they develop? Moreover, what has the image of travel as adventure contributed to social change?

It would also seem safe to assume that the curiosity that accompanies travel manifests itself differently in traditional and ultramodern societies. The first women, children and men who walked across the top of the world experienced travel in the context of a purely mythical view of the world. Here, the strange is accounted for through symbolic laws and not through a polyvalent imaginary (Club Med). To be sure, each culture deals with its own excess through ritual sacrifice or some form of carnival, but in the ultramodern excess becomes the norm. For traditional culture, symbols provide a complete fiction for interpreting that which is not known. Everything can be accounted for through a coherent and,
romances of Chrétien de Troyes and in the
legend of King Arthur and his Round Table. Hence the meaning of adventure is
strictly confined to the medieval context.
In old French it signifies fate, chance, and
above all, the surprising event "that the
knight must seek out and endure ... in
deed it is only in experiencing adventure
that the (knighthly) human being realizes
himself in his true essence." In a phrase,
Nerlich's book is about how this older
sense of adventure as fate is transformed
into the modern notion of adventure as
adventure.
Nerlich traces this transition across
literary, philosophical and historical doc-
uments over a period of more than six
hundred years, falling off with the split
between the progressive ideology of
adventure during the French Revolution
and the aggressive English imperialist ap-
propriation of the notion, finally showing
how it appeared in Spain and Italy in a
variety of representations.
Although Nerlich refutes a deeper ex-
istential critique of the medieval "man in
the man," he does provide a rigorous ex-
planation of the historical conditions that
accompanied shifts in the ideology of ad-
venture across the epoch. Each shift is
introduced with extensive but selective
quotations from Marx and Engels which de-
scribe the social conditions of the repre-
sentations under consideration.
An initial glance at Nerlich's book
leaves one disturbed by what would ap-
ppear to be yet another vulgar literary
sociology based in socialist realism and
reflection theory. But further reading
reveals that a more traditional, though
multi-layered, historical methodology is
being employed one that establishes the
link between the literary and the social in
a discursive and documentary framework
rather than through correspondence,
homology, negation, or deconstruction.
We don't only insist on the interpretive regres-
sion of the "hysterical male" in Lacan's
mirror stage, nor of the sign systems operat-
ing at a Round Table dinner party (an
equally interesting thesis topic).
Instead, Nerlich develops a political
economy of the rise of knighthood as a
social class in the 19th century, of how a
mode of production is reproduced within
certain historical conditions, and of how,
in the pre-capitalist mode, agents are al-
ready forced to seek out new territories in
order to support their class base. His
"scientifique combines the historian's fetish
for argument, proof and refutation, and the
literary hermeneutic's passion for the
recovery of meaning at the cost of aban-
donning objectivity. The result is a curious
critique of texts. On the one hand, his in-
vestigation ranges from medieval philo-
sophy and literature to selections from
Rabelais, Shakespeare, and Defoe; while
on the other hand, he provides a material-
ist critique of the ideology of adventure as
it accompanies the development of capi-
tal. The Ideology of Adventure stands out as a
landmark work of a master scholar, one
that offers an original look at the sources
of our social imaginary. •

Greg Norton teaches sociology at Guelph College.

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