

seems unlikely that "Chuck" is going to be helped much by listening to the voice of this morselated body.

Glass's account of "Chuck" and other patients similarly disturbed serves as an index to the radical separation between the essays of those contributors who treat patients who would be diagnosed as disordered even by a system infinitely more enlightened than DSM-III and those who deal with what Pope and Johnson identify as psychotherapy's preferred client: "young, attractive, well-educated members of the upper-middle class, possessing ... no seriously disabling neurotic symptoms, relative absence of characterological distortions..." Glass and Joel Kovel confront directly the anti-psychiatric maxim that schizophrenia is perhaps the most reasonable response of the human subject to the dehumanized condition of the citizen of late capitalism. They confront also the sheer misery of many schizophrenics' existences, misery that is partly but by no means completely the result of the medical, pharmaceutical, institutional prison into which most schizophrenics are placed. In so doing they address the currency of schizophrenia as metaphor in contemporary theory. In the context of Glass's patients, the schizophrenic taking a stroll who is Deleuze and Guattari's emblem for the postmodern condition is revealed as a remarkably neutralized figure. That "schizo" is not reduced constantly to quivering terror by the threats and orders of a genocidal police clerk. Those whose lives have demetaphorized this postmodern commonplace are generally less delighted about the situation than are those who invoke blithely Deleuze and Guattari's figure at academic conferences. (Glass's account of his patient "Vicky's" becoming-bug underlines the metaphorical opportunism of Deleuze and Guattari's program for becoming-animal, where the human retains control and is merely taking a vacation from species specificity.)

The question for these writers is whether or not there exists a continuity between schizophrenic and "normal" experience. For Kovel the continuum is interrupted by catastrophe. In schizophrenia the "critical negativity within being - that capacity to refuse the given world while remaining one's self - is demolished and transposed to the zone of non-being." Schizophrenia can tell the observer "more about existential possibilities - including emancipation - than does the flaccid despair of normal adaptation. But we appreciate this only if we recognize just how far the schizophrenic has fallen - that he shows us the contours of transcendent possibilities precisely by being so far removed from them." The schizophrenic is the pure product of technological rationality but one whose minor resistances, those guaranteeing the subject's continuing and socially necessary illusion of

independence have imploded, leaving only the chaos out of which schizophrenia is constructed.

Glass's essay is less engaged with the actual treatment of schizophrenics than is Kovel's. Thus it can emphasize the lines of continuity between his patients' illicit delusions and the "legitimate" political delusions that operate in society at large. That is, his patients' convictions of conspiracy are seen as signs of their alienation from reality; the equally ungrounded conspiratorial convictions of the National Rifle Association are regarded as sane. As François Roustang remarks in *Dire Masquetry*, "delirium is the theory of the one, theory is the delirium of several." If "Chuck's" conviction that malign forces are arrayed against him and the other citizens of Baltimore centred on the KGB, or a cabal of liberal legislators, rather than an Illinois police clerk, he might have emerged a national leader rather than an institutionalized schizophrenic.

Kovel's and Glass's treatment of the schizophrenic can, I think, be a guide to our own dealings with Levin's volume. Both schizophrenia and the collection are definite products and potential critiques of the postmodern condition. The central problematic of the collection is only occasionally addressed directly, but the editor's challenge to see both psychic disorders and writings about them as symptoms broods over and affects the reading of all the essays. Those set at an academic reserve suggest a number of applications of postmodern theory to an area of practice that remains primarily modernist in its assumptions. Those studies more involved, particularly those originating in campaigns for self-improving, self-transcending therapies, are useful as manifestations of sophisticated forms of adaptive pathology. Finally, in Kovel and Glass, we encounter ways of thinking through the critique of our society that is enacted by extreme, debilitating psychic disorders. These ways are beginnings only but they are better beginnings than others being at least relatively free of the metaphorical excess, sentimental liberationism, and the denial of the disturbed individual's actual being that too frequently infest such arguments. ♦

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ALAN O'CONNOR

Just Plain Home Cookin'

**City of Quartz:
Excavating the Future
in Los Angeles**
by Mike Davis
photographs by Robert Morrow

London, New York: Verso, 1990, 463 pp.

Like most enjoyable books on cities this one is bulky and unorthodox. It's over 450 pages of text, notes, maps, and Robert Morrow's black and white photos. Mike Davis no longer drives a truck for a living. But if he now teaches at the California Institute for Architecture he wants us to know that behind this book "There are no research grants, sabbaticals, teaching assistants, or other fancy ingredients..." Just plain home cooking from the same person who brought us *Prisoners of the American Dream* - one of a handful of books that actually makes sense of the Reagan and Bush years.

City of Quartz sounds like the title of a bad novel. You know the sort of thing: "Footsteps echoed on dark paved streets. The phone rang in the small sixteenth-floor office of Brad Concrete, Private Investigator." But *City of Sand* wouldn't have done because although Los Angeles seems at times to be built on a kind of dreaming, it is real and solid enough, and not about to collapse back into the desert. And *Silicon Valley* says only one part of what Southern California is all about.

One of the most fascinating parts of *City of Quartz* is an overview of the many ways in which this sprawling metro-centre has been imagined. One thinks of Los Angeles as a city which gets bad press. It has been variously thought of as a retirement health spa for elderly Midwesterners, a socialist utopia, a place of brutal union-breaking and racism, a nightmare of crime fiction and *film noir*, empty space for your very own \$500,000 Dream Home, and a military playground for the Pentagon.

Robert Morrow's photographs for the book might be called documentary. A great many of them are images of monuments or signs such as "Century Woods

Estates, from \$2 million NEXT RIGHT." As evidence they play a different role than the images that were to be part of Walter Benjamin's great book on Paris. Benjamin wanted to show that something like an advertising image works because it offers *something* of a dream for a better world as it distorts that dream for gain. Morrow's photos work like a wagging finger or security camera: they accuse. A good example is his photo of a "bum-proof" bus bench: shaped like a log so that anyone who tries to sleep on it falls off. It is useful to have that evidence. Just hope that municipal authorities elsewhere don't notice it. There is no photo in the book of something like this: Mike Davis, long-distance truck driver and socialist, watching (in his words) "the Space Shuttle in its elegant final descent towards Rogers Dry Lake." That would be a different kind of photo.

It is surprising how many intellectuals have tried to crack Los Angeles: the Frankfurt School in exile, Marcuse in the



1960s, Baudrillard and Jameson in the 1980s. But the hype that surrounds these names can distract us from other types of intellectuals who have decisively shaped what Southern California is about: water-works engineers, physics Ph.D.s, real estate developers and their boosters, and, in a different way, the artistic and intellectual elite of Southern California's museums, research institutes and universities, and the artists, musicians and writers who add culture and help increase property values. The work of most of these intellectuals is an organic part of the Los Angeles enterprise. What are the chances of resisting? The socialist utopia of the 1910s was driven out. The mural art movement has died out. But today Davis cites the work of radical intellectuals called the LA School. Located mainly in the planning and geography faculties at UCLA they're fixing on alternatives to the yuppie restaurants and the hungry streets of the fastest growing metro-centre in the industrialized world.

Los Angeles has often been taken, by visiting and famous intellectuals, as a general model for the world of late-capitalism. Davis describes the city as a product of its own particular history. In the early 20th century, this city based on real-estate speculation had two power elites: one based downtown, the other in the west-side. Each time one elite tried to use the Mayor's office to bolster its property values (for example with the public transit) the other side accused it of socialism. The Watts Rebellion of 1965 – of blacks against racist police and housing polices – momentarily upset the balance between the power elites, but they were soon back in control, pushing the same corporate development plans. This changed in the 1980s as new money from Japan, China, Korea and Canada started to buy up more than 75 percent of LA real estate. Mayor Bradley denounces any criticism of the powerful Japanese developers as racist.

Meanwhile, neighbourhood preservation organizations of middle-class home owners have organized for decades to keep housing segregated by class and race. Today, a slow-growth movement wants to put brakes on development and keep property values rising for those who already have a mortgage. The imminent collapse of the sewage, flood control and water systems along with the worst air pollution of any city in the advanced industrial world demonstrate in a different way that there are real limits to growth. The non-Anglo working class looking for a place to live is caught between the pow-

erful development corporations and the limousine environmentalists.

Both public architecture and private dwellings have been militarized as part of a war against street people. Public buildings are built like prisons to keep undesirables out. Affluent home buyers want private streets with electronic gates and armed security patrols. The Los Angeles Police Department carries out more helicopter surveillance of high crime areas than the British army does in Belfast. Gatherings of young people, even white youth, are strictly controlled and policed.

In spite of the LAPD record of anti-black violence, even some liberal black leaders support its war on black and Latino youth. Actual violence between the two super-gangs of crack dealers (since 1987 an average of a death every day) have been amplified into a demonology. Massive police sweeps which have resulted in 50,000 arrests (there are 100,000 black youth in LA). In effect, martial law has been imposed on a whole generation, their families and neighbourhoods.

Black street gangs in Los Angeles have a history that goes back to the 1940s when they were a response to racist attacks by white youth gangs. Traditional rivalries among the black gangs were overcome during the Black Panther years of the late 1960s. The Crips emerged in the early 1970s among the ruins of the black power movement. Something between a teen-cult and a proto-mafia developed in the context of massive black unemployment, overcrowded schools, a lack of recreation facilities, dilapidated housing and racist policing. The city put its money into downtown skyscrapers and then into a militarized police force. Even good leftists sometimes condemn the LA drug gangs as out of hand. Davis wants to open a dialogue: in a post-liberal society, with the gangplanks pulled up and compassion strictly rationed by the federal deficit and the Jarvis amendment, where a lynchmob demagogue like William Bennett reigns as drug czar – is it any wonder that poor youths are hallucinating on their own desperado power trips?

While the Crips and the Bloods were figuring out how an Uzi automatic works, the historically conservative Catholic Church in LA was discovering that more and more people coming to Sunday Mass were speaking Spanish. The Pope on his 1987 tour briefly addressed the predominantly Latino crowd gathered outside the downtown Cathedral. He spoke in English. The nominally progressive archbishop flies around in a \$400,000 jet-powered helicopter while busting attempts by his 140 gravedigger (paid \$6 to \$7.85 an hour) to form a union. The key seems to be that the hierarchy's moral agenda (against abortion and safe-sex education) neatly dovetails with the Reaganite political agenda of the Californian agribusiness elite. Nonetheless, his Lordship has been continually embarrassed by a small number of progressive priests who actually seek to empower the city's Latino population, especially large numbers of refugees

Los Angeles has often been taken, by visiting and famous intellectuals, as a general model for the world of late capitalism.

from the various Central American wars sponsored by the United States government.

This is clearly not a book about post-modernism. For Davis, history has not ended and a story can still be told. Nonetheless, this book is not composed as a single narrative, but is a series of smaller stories each working in its own different way. Los Angeles is clearly many different places. The final chapter – the book as a whole has no conclusion – tells the story of Fontana, 60 miles east of Los Angeles. The area was first marketed as franchise citrus and chicken farms. It was doing well when Henry J. Kaiser moved in with a steel plant to supply his wartime shipyards. The coke fumes killed off the orange trees but Kaiser Steel was a paradigm of the postwar partnership between unionized labour, government and business. Black workers were kept in the dirtiest jobs in the steel plant and the worst part of town. To enforce this, in December 1945, the KKK soaked the home of a

black activist in coal oil and set it on fire. The entire family died in agony.

In December 1983 the last fires of the steel plant itself cooled. The plant closed, a victim of under-investment, competition from the Japanese steel industry and a final sharp Reagan-era takeover bid. However, Fontana didn't become another town like Flint, Michigan. It rose from the ashes as a new community of middle-class commuters. Mind you, it took creative financing and quite a bit of effort to overcome its gritty image problem. Along with this development came the rebirth of the KKK in Fontana the same year that the steel plant closed. The 1988 Martin Luther King birthday celebrations had to be protected by 120 cops as Klansmen shouted: "Long live the Klan. Long live the white boys." ♦

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GARY GENOSKO

The Bar of Theory

**Jean Baudrillard:
From Marxism to
Postmodernism and
Beyond**
by Douglas Kellner

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989,
246 pp.

Kellner's *Baudrillard* has not been kindly received. It has come under attack in the pages of *Telos*, *Economy and Society*, and the *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*. Rather than rehearsing these criticisms here, I will take a different tack.

A glance at the literature on Baudrillard published by English speaking critical theorists (some of whom take the prefix "neo-") provides insight into the ironies of Baudrillard scholarship. Aside from the illustrated Baudrillard of the art magazines and the pleasing diversions of the panic readers, the critical theory literature constitutes the major "tradition."

There are numerous papers and chapters on Baudrillard's relation to Marx. In general, there is as much banality as there is innovation with respect to the way that Baudrillard is positioned in this relation. For instance, the Marx-Debord-Baudrillard trajectory is as obvious as it is popular to repeat, while an investigation of Baudrillard's debts to Marshall McLuhan, Herbert Marcuse, Henri Lefebvre, the Arguments group, his role in the review, *Utopie*, his early translations of Peter Weiss, Bertolt Brecht and Fredrich Engels are less well known, if they are mentioned at all.

Among critical theorists, however, there is no agreement on whether or not Baudrillard has what might be called, generously or otherwise, a sense of counterpraxis, an oppositional strategy. Baudrillard's idea of hyperconformist simulation has proved to be undecidable. This undecidability can neither be reduced to the strength of Baudrillard's use of paradox, nor does it arise from the collapse of a unified critical perspective, with all of the nostalgia for the unity of the past. It is, to be sure, a situation that Kellner has chosen not to recognize. He is firm in his belief that Baudrillard offers no strategic-political alternative. While this position is not lacking in politico-textual

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