

DOING /

BEING

(For Roger Simon,
in love
and solidarity)

1. SENSING TIME

Sunday afternoons (I think) television used to show 'films not seen for more than a quarter of a century.' Immediately, but of course now, the brain thinks of the indices of economy and the rest which made such a slot broadcast. But, then, it was the problem of imagining 'a quarter of a century' which sticks in the memory.

'The War' was much talked about, often initialled by 'D'you remember...' not addressed to me (and how much learning comes from such half-attentive early listening (in)?) but between, for example, my mother and her sister who had survived 'The War' together (with me there too from 1942).

Recollections, otherwise, before my birth, were likewise of the occasioned reminiscence, especially materialized on walks with my (maternal) grandfather who lived into his nineties. This talk, his talk, was also mobilized (and subsequently forever concretized) because we walked whilst he talked, along by the river Thames where he'd worked as a Waterman and Lighterman, as a Docker, and then, so his pocket watch told me, for twenty-eight

years (more than that 'quarter of a century' above) for the Woolwich Free Ferry, ending up as Bo'sun (Boatswain, check the O.E.D. for that!). The first of my substitute 'fathers' but different from almost all the rest: anarchistic, pleasure-seeking, patriarchal, always angry about any talk of the 'Good Old Days' ('Them was bleeding hard times, Philip, don't you forget it.') When he died, by then within that caring social institution called 'sheltered accommodation', his wife, my (maternal) grandmother, threw all his clothes, and, a terrible loss for me, his 'documents', down the rubbish chute, and demanded of her two daughters (Norah my mother and Edith, her sister/my aunt) that his chair, yes HIS chair, be burned in the yard, watched from above by my grandmother, slightly, every so slightly, smiling. Then her long, lingering death, with all its extra labour for Norah and Edith (situated close enough to my grandmother's 'sheltered accommodation' that they could attend, and so no 'need' for medical/social assistance), but in the end, her calm decision, to my mother 'I'll not be here tomorrow' and dying, passing on, passing away, in that lonely (by then) hospitalized night....

Other times, other dyings. Never to be forgotten, the dream, grim (I think in a poem I called it 'greer') midevening of my running, running (no use of taxis then!) to the 'Maternity Hospital' to find Janet half-dead through blood loss, and the/her/our child born dead at birth (stillbirth, such an evocative shocking category!) and all that the State allowed was a 'disposal certificate.' Screaming and clinging and hurting our dualistic and different way through to Ruth Natasha Sarah (1966) and, subsequent to our separation (9 November 1969), Rebecca Clio Julie (1969).

All I am suggesting, hinting, delineating, simply (and, yes very,very

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Remarks on a personal anniversary

By Philip Corrigan

obviously) is that what normally passes itself off as 'History' and 'Cultural Studies' says nothing of this, indeed such remembering, such senses of time, of being there/not there, are ruled out. Such practices of exclusion, denial and, yet, a violent abstraction which thereafter claims as comprehensive (even, universal) validity what are the sign systems of very very distant (seemingly disembodied) observers. Nothing shown, everything known. Deaths and Entrances (I am sure this 'quotes' Dylan Thomas, whose 'Rage, rage against the dying of the light' stays with me, as I once - to the massive hilarity of my Mum and Dad - brought an Ordnance Survey Map which included his place (and that of Under Milk Wood, who now amongst my friends recalls, knows, that exact spaced memory of the opening words of the radio (and best) version, spoken by Richard Burton?) but also a lot of ocean and, being practical, they both guffawed at all the blue space, all that sea.)

2. BEING PRACTICAL

Cultural forms (and productions) first came to me in a split which is (I subsequently discovered) seemingly universal (in fact it is a production of a certain Societal-form which works very hard to deride and deny the validity of the aural, except when opera-ed or dramatized, or, indeed broadcast in the Arts section of radio and TV, the rest is, talk, chatter, or gossip, along with that much contested evidential form, oral history): I read and wrote, quietly, privately, out of sight of the parental and,

mostly, the teacherly gaze; but certain radio, certain musics, certain television could be enjoyed in company, en famille (precisely). The whole enclosure of the latter aural, audio, audio visual mediations, as entertainment (pleasure) sometime seemed, and today excessively seems, to me wrong.

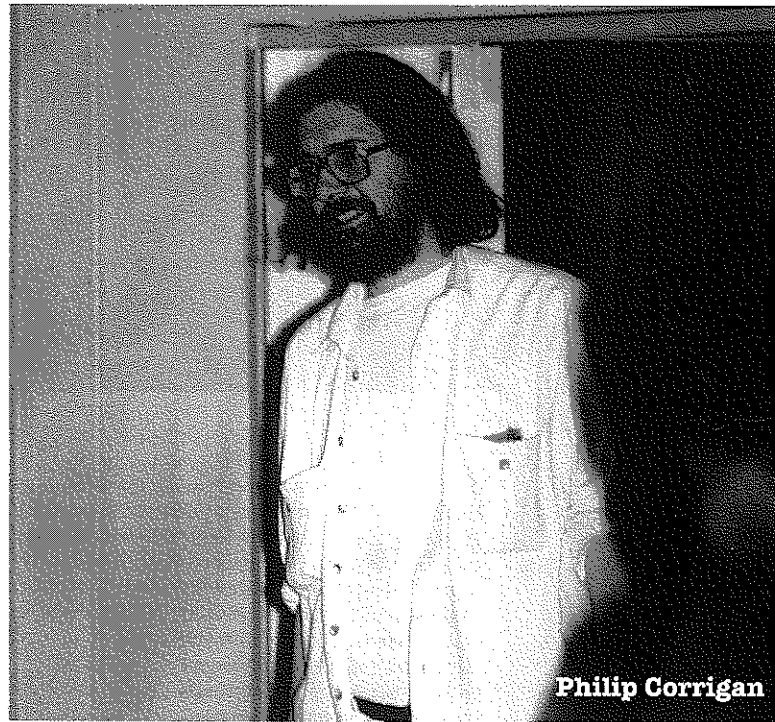
But there is also a whole set of cultural forms (of production) that are still almost impossible to proffer within even the most progressive (in the end, academic) discourses: varieties of having fun. One memory, very strong, is of the annual holidays (less so, the day-trips) out of South East London to 'the Sea.' By coach (bus), by train, Dad struggling with 'the cases', Mum with 'the bags', brother Paul and I: queues (line ups), special coaches (buses), special trains, the excitement of 'Going On Our Holidays' (constructed, and of course, through discourse 'Where you going this year, Norah?!). A whole bodily sense of TRAVEL (although I doubt the word was much used), MOVEMENT, GOING ON GOING ON, which was and is so strong with me now. 'Going On our Holidays' meant, for example, meals out, distance, the sea (ocean), the beach (sand, cliffs, sunshine): Difference. Ever since, and in all sorts of ways, I am usually very tearful when I see people 'Going On Their Holidays', going forth, going on, of course, going on. Quiet, gentle, in their various ways, Apocalypses.

Later of course (and this is yet another 'lateness' in learning why, learning how) I realized what this all meant in terms of scrimping and saving, a few pennies/cents a week, calculated to bring enough surplus at the right time to make the holiday good. And the planning of when/where/by what means of transport. This, and of course quite generally, you too, in other words, part of a too-late discovery that those figures of abundance and control, my parents, had their own limitation, their won constraints, their own 'experienced determinations' (providing that we



understand the latter as Raymond Williams argued as the setting of the 'limits of variation'-later, after Paul and I were 'offhand', in all senses, then, only then, could Mum and Dad enjoy a different set of spaces, times, occasions, namely the hotel, the luxury trip... Curious, is it not the way in which we endow these adults with enormous powers (especially in the last 20 years, monetary powers) and yet, quite soon, discover the limits of possibility, that whatever our dream (including our dream of the Not Yet) we have to hustle and bustle to find what is possible, what is doable, within OUR LIMITS OF VARIATION, in our cultural landscape?

Nevertheless, just now, in that/this time in the rhythm of knowing what 'being practical' means, I want to accentuate the culture of 'fun' (in a later, argot:time out) against the culture of 'restriction', the daily hustle, needs, constraint, working 'it' out, doing well, carrying on. In this I want especially to salute that group, quite and totally universal, who conduct, with dignity and care (including frequent self-sacrifice), such 'carrying on carrying on': namely, women. But, without any hesitation or contrast, I want now, from the remembered embodiment, want to greet all the children of the world, who are rarely given an explanation of what constrains them (their parents, guardians, adults) and so who suffers in silence and anguish (increasingly so when they begin, as I did, circa age 13, begin to think and feel that it is 'all their fault'). To slightly amend a famous song: 'Growing Up.....is HARD to do.'



Philip Corrigan

3. DIVE IN, THE CULTURES'S WARM

Somewhere, sometime, I started to write. I embody these words in the way that someone might say, for example, they started to cycle, to swim, to dance, to grow rare orchids, to understand astrophysics, and so on. I started to write in a particularly inky sense to do with a typewriter that was willed to me after my Aunt Grace's death (she being the sister of my father). There was something, as there is, quite literally now, as I type this, in the action of the hand and the production of some trace which looked quite a lot like the 'printed word' like The Books I had been borrowing from the local 'Junior' and then 'Adult' Library from the age of 9. That we often combined

such trips to Plumstead Library with going to swimming lessons seems to me entirely exact! Suddenly I could press - and the word is hardly lacking in significance -keys and produce this trace, these worked out letters. A lot of this result from the triple confluence of (1) being silent (concealing, even) at home about 'School'; (2) encounters with the sung as much as the written word, and also with other musics, notably 1942 be-bop jazz (3) Antony Harding who suddenly appeared (from the 'YOU/SSSS/AAAY' no less) to teach us 'English.' Indeed, in a peculiarly strong way, I'd think that my life has been organized, in terms of the Word, by the three sided reality of the familial remembrance, Tony Harding, and VERY contrastingly the History Master(s) I have then and ever since encountered (another range of my surrogate Fathers).

And so, what then, what, uh, 'career path.' did I "choose" after school? Well its quite a normal story, I had two interviews, one in the morning and the latter in the early evening: the first was to become a salesperson in a Menswear shop, the latter to be an assistant librarian in a Public Library: for the former, I was deemed 'over qualified'; for the latter 'tall enough to reach the top bookshelves.' Hey, heightism, *avant le mot!* So, by such decisions are lives made, yes? But concurrently with this 'career move' I also (re) moved

myself from the domestic space to life in a flat (apartment) with a friend, called Philip also. He happened to be involved in the Bookshop in Central London that was avant-garde, so fast and loose we made contact with what was then called 'The Scene' (London, to track back, had always been the fascinating place, severally I'd journeyed there and returned on a train that left at 0108 reaching the parental/familial home circa 2 a.m.). Together we discovered the shallow, shadow copy of both Beats and Jazz in the USA. So, at night I did "The Scene," during the day I was tied and jacketed 'The Librarian.' If, as I was, I'd been split in class, and to some extent, sexual, categories, before, here I was being asundered around cultural forms: echoing, with some loving, Andy Warhol: Allen Ginsberg slept on my floor in early 1961!

The practises here (as they had been since age 16) were essentially those of the (type) written and the aural, but always at the edge, waiting to be realised, was that of my greatest adoration and worship, that of film. Since an early age, say 10, there had been various affiliations to, and filiations from, film, the cinema, 'Going To the Pictures.' The other 'outlet' of all that passion was musics of various and contrasting kinds; but nothing then, or since, has matched going to the cinema, finding a seat, settling down, the lights dim, and then the big (or nowadays, alas, usually the small) screen: attention, musics, credits, attention....A chance to be 'lost,' a chance to 'find' oneself; equally so, but usually, and here's the 'charm,' both at the same time.

Later, some shifts, feeling awkward, feeling gauche, going to the Berliner Ensemble at Sadlers' Wells Theatre, and waking up, changing posture, attending, in other words to the PRACTICES thereby revealed. Suddenly, slowly, inadequately, discovering PRACTICES, and later, much later, PRODUCTIONS.

4. OTHER PLACES/ PLACING THE OTHER(S)

Like 'most people' (but only 10% of US citizens have passports) I hadn't been far. I recall a 'school' trip (to Paris when I was 13 years old), but nothing else. Then, in 1967 came the invitation to 'Go To The U.S.A.' in 1968. What did this mean, a whole-istic flood of desire since the invited trip (all expenses paid) involved - after the conference in Albany, some 3 days in New York. NEW YORK, a magical icon if ever there was one. So the first time ever on an aeroplane I flew off to New York, fumblingly found my way to Albany, did 'Doing Conferences' and was then free: curious memories: iced sherry from the refrigerator, the largest piece of meat on my plate I had ever seen, being booked (and with advance payment) for a cab because 'otherwise it was dangerous,' leaving the very day that Columbia University 'blew' up...

Sometime, a lot, later (having been to New York in 1973, 1979, and - to attend Yoko's arrangement for a memorial to John Lennon, in Dec 1980) I was telegraphed to request 'Can you teach the History of Capitalism in Tanzania?', 'I did not know what this meant, but said 'yes.' Then, perhaps amongst the four or five most improtant moments of my life, I went to 'Africa' (because, of course, I 'already always knew' about Africa, had I not taken part in innumerable school ceremonies called at first Empire Day, and then Commonwealth Day, and did I not learn at infant (kindergarten) and primary (elementary) school, ALL about 'Africa'?) - and after a fourteen hour flight, I 'landed' in 'Africa' and at least, initially ALL was confirmed. This was/is/and ever after shall be: 'Africa.' Two, of at least two million, experiential truths which punctured this happy white male illusion: I learned of, met and became comprehensively friendly with, someone who knew far more about European (especially French) debates within Marxism, than I even knew a trace of; there, in Tanzania, and later, as I

landed, in a rainstorm (tropical monsoon?) at London Airport (when I thought the electricity consumption here, London Airport, could support the whole of Tanzania) I discovered, very belatedly, very, as Barthes would say it, 'stupidly,' DIFFERENCE. Henceforth I would have, and have, no time, no place, for anyone, from WHATEVER political perspective, who claims a voice, standpoint or

thematic which DENIES DIFFERENCING. The first trace of this is 'Towards A Celebration of Difference(s)' (presented at a British Sociological Association Conference in 1981).

I returned in Summer 1991 (to use the Norther Calendar) to Dar Es Salaam, and was intending to do so in Summer 1982 when I was invited to 'do' Summer School at OISE, University of Toronto, Canada, Summer 1982. Recall that I was jumping off to the latter from the Institute of Education, University of London's Department of Sociology of Education (Bossman: Basil Bernstein). So the 'jump' in some ways seemed less, but I experienced it as greater, in a certain measure of cultural and pedagogic difference, and found it possible to make myself welcome within the prevailing norms. In other words, as so many before me, I found it comfortable/easier. So in 1983, after some bloody struggles with the Canadian High Commission, in September, I crossed the Atlantic, landed and became a 'Landed Immigrant,' to a permanent job (after 3 1/2 years of temporary contracts).

5. TO TORONTO/WITH LOVE & SOLIDARITY

In anyone's lives there are places and moments, situated times, no less, that are specifically SPECIAL/CONCRETE. For me, arriving in Toronto in September 1983 will be mentionable in such a series (although a Summer School visit in Summer 1982 had been some kind of 'advance warning'). Arriving from the enclosing fog of England, TORONTO (which I capitalize for I may be talking of a fantasy here) was well down the Liberation Road I'd chanced upon after 1960. I could teach what, and how, I wanted. Well, and so it seemed (seemed, like there were no constraints of form/realization!), the foolish innocence of the newly arrived! But not so stupid (and here I will annoy certain readers, my apologies in advance) since, when I returned to England in 1988, I felt like I was walking into walls, into fog, into miasmatic unnamings of what was happening, whereas all the time (and, hey, I do know the limits here!) in Canada there were sanctioned or half



allowed discourses, forms, and images which remained and remain unsayable, unshowable in England's green and pleasant land. Of course, and age here does 'tell', I was re-turning to a place, space & time, that was one I could much more caringly decode and understand, BUT, and the 'BUT' here is very solidly material, there are spaces, however grudgingly provided and whatever ways negated in practices, in situational contexts like that of 'Canada,' which do not exist in the 'YOOOO/KAAAAAY.' Put more generally, the 'crisis' of what it means to be (any sort of) 'Canadian' is in effect a series of spaces of contestation, withdrawal, opposition or refusal, at the very least, within that 'infinite hospitality' so well identified by Jody Berland, some forms of alternation, decoration, or supplementation of 'the State' and its ways. You see, here, in 'YINGLAND' (I think here of 'KANADA' there's so very very little space, so little time, in the rhythmic organizing of the subject population, albeit within a recent rhetoric of 'citizenship.' They call, we jump (or turn, bored, away): their rituals continue (decoratively and efficiently) to 'successfully claim' a certain allegiance, a certain belonging, a definite sort of home: all, materially, such that naming of difference and/or distance seems increasingly more and more difficult. 'Europe' does not help here, since it has assumed none of the forms of, e.g. the USA/Canada 'Free Trade Agreement'; rather it is a sort of inevitable 'happening' (like the changeable English weather) which nothing very much can be done about. In the very construction of its very UNpopularity, it is popular, if you take my meaning, and if you don't think about the varied crises of 'Canada' internal and external since 1975.

6. OXYMORON: IT'S VERY SIMPLE / IT IS NOT THAT SIMPLE

(WITH DEDICATION TO JUDITH MILLEN)

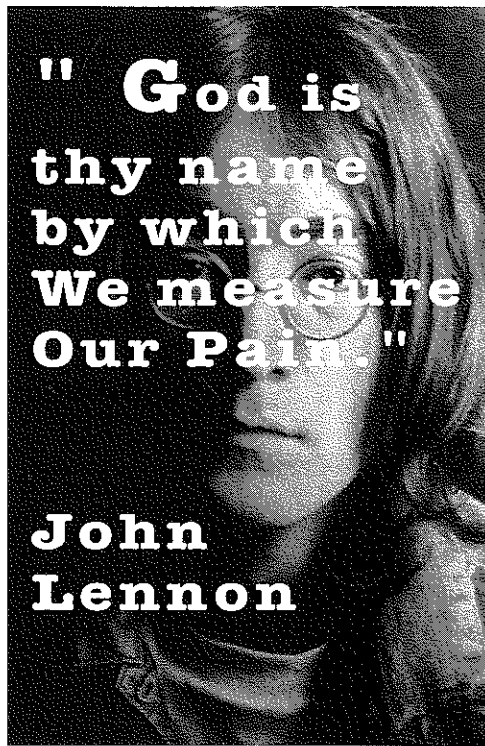
So here I am being doing 50 years old (and all that is mobilised as meaningful). This whole script (strike ONE) has been written whilst listening to a collection of the 'Very Best' of MOTOWN. As Wim Wenders has so often said, various Rock & Roll musics have saved my life. "I've been undressed by kings/And I've seen some things That A Woman isn't supposed to see...." and so on. In what ways (and how far) was Bruce Springsteen



7.

wrong to sing that he'd learned more from a three minute record than he'd ever learned at school? Well, of course, there is much to say and show about that claim. But, that being proposed, and argued, I can think of no other cultural form that has been both meaningful and energizing for me through the 60's and 70's and 80's and 90's....

So along with the cinema (partially, but not quite violently abstracted as 'film') has been 'Rock&Roll.' How to collide these two forms? Well, do not both allow (much more massively than other forms?), a sort of arranging of meaning and, very very significantly, a refusal of any meaning that can be communicated (i.e. 'D'you hear/feel/get it?') And then, just like I am arguing, what and whose language of love/ing do we have? The interruptive linguistics of 'WOW, 'COOL', 'YES/YEAH,' 'Now/NOW/N O W,' and alternating special coded language games, do they not all indicate the boundaries of Language-USE as normalised? If rhyming slang, along with other specific codes, were invented to defeat or at least confuse Authority, then why not trace a widespread language of refusing inclusiveness regarding e.g. bebop jazz and Rock&Roll? Who, after all, really wants Boring Old Farts (BOFs) and Heavy Academic Males (HAMs) on board, there, knowing what, knowing where, since such knowledges and invasions deny the project (projet) to create a space, a hope, a sight of another world. And IS NOT ALL CULTURAL PRODUCTION THE BEARER OF SUCH HOPEFULNESS?



Apple Records

John Lennon's albums after his scream therapy (like those of Tears For Fears after theirs, e.g. 'Songs from the Big Chair') as, differently, with Annie Lennox after 'going solo' or resolutely those of Bonnie Tyler (whom few would connect with both a South Wales singing tradition or that now famous Shirley Bassey from Tiger Bay, South Wales, not to mention Tom Jones) provide a certain embodied voice which I want to liken to film (like, that is all, no 'grim similarity' is here intended). There is the multitracking: the words, the music(s), and then, specially strongly, the grain the voice (one of a million tributes to Barthes in this writing). Recently, listening to a lot of Motown records, there is something, a quality which 'ranges' across the different singing voices (and may be to do with the standardization of the 'back up' both musical and voiced?) which is there in Dexy's Midnight Runners also. Perhaps, to further honour Roger Simon's recent book (Teaching against the Grain) and, following to the source, his (re)sources, we might limpidly think, for a moment, as it were, from the corner of our ears, of the musical voices in that Age of Mechanical Reproduction?!

I say this after viewing yet another offering in the (English) Channel 4's *Fin de siècle* series (as the late and much lamented Angela Carter phrased it: "The *fin* is coming rather early in this *siècle*") here (unlike the semiruin temple provided for Stuart Hall, Salman Rushdie

and Alain Finkelstein all those months ago) set in what was either a Gentleman's Club or the adjunct to an Oxbridge Senior Common Room: we were provided with (in order of who spoke most): George Steiner, Terry Eagleton, and Julia Kristeva. They were presumed to be discussing nothing less (and nothing more) than the 'God-shaped hole' recently voiced by Salman Rushdie. In fact they discussed (a lott) about Steiner's recent book *Real Presences*, that is to suggest whether or not any language appropriate to (isomorphic with?) works of something called 'Art' is not, of necessity, the strong version of Steiner's argument, religious. In the midst of this (yes, the boredom factor was high, it was after all postmidnight [a safe time for such voices to be grained?]), it was noticeable that it was Steiner who spoke of the 'end collapse' of 'communism' as the loss, the terrible loss, of a Messianic Hope. Not Eagleton (Wharton Professor-Elect at the University of Oxford, 'of Marxist leanings' we were told in a soft voice-over at the start); not Kristeva (whose recent reversion to/acceptance of Catholicism is congruent with her novel writing), but George Steiner, and the grain, in his/then voice spoke and showed very muchly.

Is that /this into which dark night we are proceeding (being processed)? Once again, whereligion(s) provide for the sigh of the suffering soul, for the tracing of our chains with paper/plastic

"If any meaning is possible, then - quite precisely, no meaning is possible."

flowers; rather than our release 'to pluck the living flower.' These paraphrases of Marx's 1840s words (read aloud to myself in that lonely Christmas 1969 after Janet, Ruth and the just about born Rebecca had gone, gone, gone away, because A.N. Other provided what, it may be presumed, I could not, or no longer). By then I had, from the USA, Allen Ginsberg reading HOWL, KADDISH, and, above all, SUNFLOWER SUTRA ('we are not our skin of grime....'). And in ways I have never fully understood I had 'moved, *après* 1968', *les evenements*, etc etc. But unlike the pomposity which opens Edward Thompson's *The Poverty of Theory* (1978); then, after 1968, I started to UNreason. Never at any time would the notions of 'dream' and 'task' cease to be collided and scrambled together, a *menage à trois* of a certain excess, of a certain embodiment. Later, and deliberately, the word 'Culturalove' would be formed (I still do not know what it means, for one strand see the BOOMISTA MANIFESTO, Shades (Toronto) Feb 1984; for another, listen to Diana Ross whilst it is raining!).

So, in shortness, the 'hopefulness' within cultural production is profoundly ambivalent, multi-accentuated, means for the embodied meaningfulness of difference. And, does this have to be said, not all differences (and their celebration) are progressive in that measured expansion of DIFFERENTIATED human capacities within REGULATED social forms. Think, simply, of all the varieties of fascism. Fascism is what I most fear; defined simply, as I am here, it means the taking of an aspect/one characteristic of a group (or some members of such a group) and playing that back - as a sign-system - as though that exhausted all there is or ever will be to speak, depict, represent that group. In these terms, which I would defend, then patriarchy/sexism, racism/ethnic violation, age-ism, linguistic imperialism, class-ism, height-ism and able-bodied-ism (and this list does not begin to even list the categories involved) are all fascisms. Fascism, in this capacious definition, is therefore coextensive with the history of all Feudalisms and Capitalism, not to mention Ancient forms!

In contrasting critique, a cultural (re)presentation/production that is 'Progressive' all ways shows that more has been found (or could be found) than has been lost. That is to say, the energy is focused not upon alternation/ supplementation, but upon oppositional, refusing, TRANSformation.' But, another huge 'but', this all too frequently happens in the very very lonely hours of the First Instance: some bodies, some wheres, hearken to a trace (the grain, perhaps?)

and think/feel/work out and/or retain somatically, that this particular I/Eye could be different, could live difference, differently! But with whom to speak of this, who will celebrate this understandingly and caringly, isn't it usually taken, more often, commonly, as 'not quite feeling right'/'not being/feeling myself, today, now....I'll be alright in a minute....'

8.

NERVOUS BREAKDOWNS, TO THE 13TH DEGREE

There's a branch of medical science which is called Neurology. There's a history of commonsense estimation which concerns itself with 'being nervy', with having 'nerves.' The two, for a while came together, in a focus called 'Neurasthenia' (coincidental with the masculinist rendering of some 'female' complaint called Hysteria). A friend of my parents, Alf Bullen, had 'nerves' (later spoken of as 'neurasthenia') and had to be handled with a certain care (or, as often, avoided when out in parks and common spaces, walking). In my teenage years I was spoken of, *en famille* and by Doctors, as 'highly strung' (an odd musical analogy, a return of a certain repressed, the body as tuneful?). Accused at Primary/Elementary School of being 'an only child' that set of designations (denying any signing I might have made/claimed for myself) stayed and stays with me: nervy, later 'neurotic.' One liberation came when I, in my usual mad collage reading, 'ran' the opening and closing sentences of C. Levi-Strauss' *Totemism* together! Another with the antipsychiatry movement and writers of the mid 1960s through early 1970s. What the latter provided was a notion of the necessary familial 'devil' (The Enemy Within/The Other Amongst Us), whilst the former (and much work before and since) shows how arbitrary SELECTION of a series of passable symptoms could become networked and connected, without contradiction(s), as a 'dis/ease', and 'ill/ness.' In the crisis of my/familial experience, all of us (the four of us) were diabolized in turn by particular circumstances - later I came to see this was the warp and weft of all (familially



**9. NOWTIME,
A SONG OF
VARIOUS
SERPENTS AND
LOVING FOR
TREES**

based) Soap Operas, hence their BODILY connection and appeal: the mundane facticity of their ordinariness, within a working, and lower middle, class meaning-making, was precisely WHAT MATTERED!

Yet, over and beyond that, indeed to some important extent as rejection of that mundane facticity, the nervous breakdowns associated with 'creativity' (The Author, The Artist, The....) provided a counter challenge, not just within the family but also at school, where a certain sort of, um, 'culturalness' provided a means of holding off the twin pressures of (1) denying the system and all it stood for (cf. P. Willis *Learning to Labour* for a paradigmatic exploratory ethnography); (2) joining in Their Game about doing well/getting better. That, let me name it as, life line opened for a certain homo-erotic (it was a boys only school) grouping which took as its 'neurotic' stand Neither/Nor, a lesson I've never forgotten; tho it took me a long time to find, thanks to Mao Tse-tung and Raymond Williams. Both/And. Later, much later, I discovered that this was the paradigmatic form, social form, of organized social struggle against the obvious, The Normal, that which goes without saying, etc. and here 'Toward(s) a Celebration of Difference(s)' is a shifting text, to which all writings previous are struggling and from which all writings after are struggling, also. Lindsay Anderson's film *IP* leads, via enormous detours, to *The Making of the Boy* (1988, another text of a breakdown, or as my friend Stephen argues they should be called, 'break/up' well, yes, both!).

It's always seemed to be a relevant question, within metaphoricality, about whether a given (some)body would want to be confronted by a dangerous poisonous snake or, say, a boa constrictor. Against the former, if there is

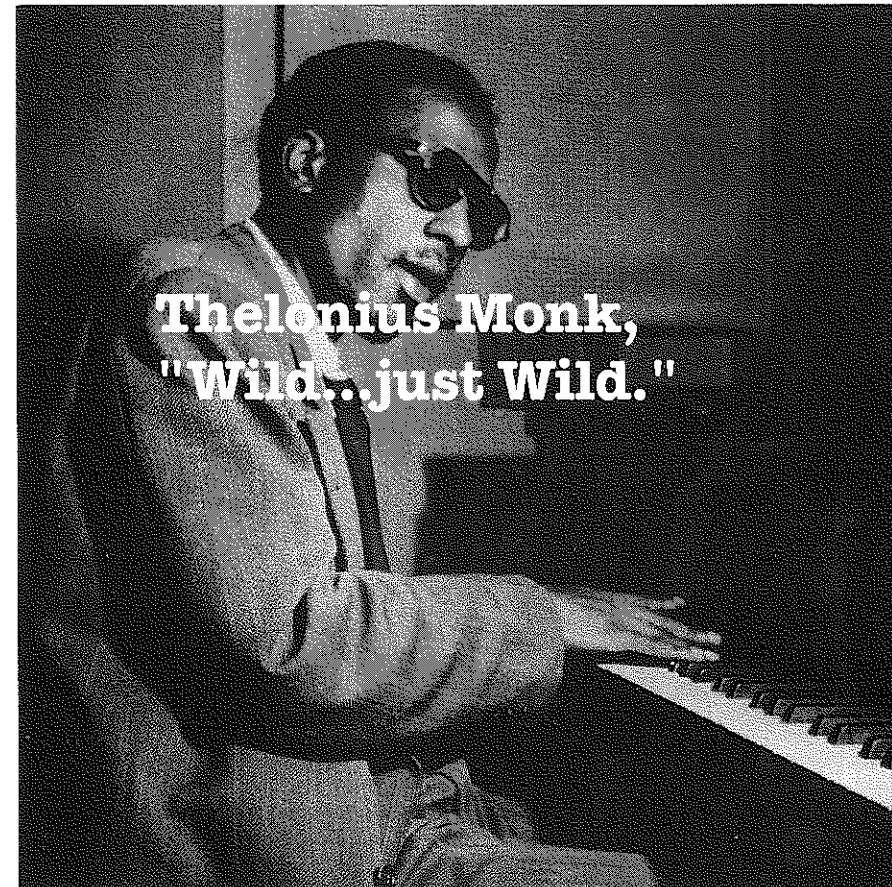
time, there are antidotes, against the latter, there is no escape, once the broils and squeezing have started. But, from the latter somebody might run, whereas the bite of the former is often too quick, too unexpected, to be avoided. Capitalist relations of (here, academic/intellectual) production seem to me to provide such pseudo-choices. This is not just a matter of cultural forms, after all. I write now from a curious social formation which has, through its ruling historic blocs, offered approval of a variety of nation/states in their sovereignty claims whilst remaining, since the 1830s anyway, the most centralising and Statist of social organizations ever experienced. Latvia, Estonia, Bosnia, Croatia, and, rather differently, Albania, are urgently welcomed into some company of 'Free States' whilst, quite deliberately, such possibilities are not even 'thinkable' for Wales, Scotland and those two curious 'difficulties': The Channel Islands and the norther part of the island called Ireland, the latter having been subject to continuous forms and means of English imperialism since 1086; the former now considering forms of Independence struggle because of the rigid authoritarianism of Westminster. This is taken further in a number of forms: the non-legitimated, ad-hoc bodies now claiming some sort of national hegemony (the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals, to take two prominent exemplars) and various politicians (notably the former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) talk of the dangers of a Euro-centralisation, and/or, in the case of the ad hoc bodies, a national centralisation whilst the politicians (since 1975, mark you) have engaged in the largest augmentation of Central State powers since the 1830s or

possibly since the 1530s, whilst the latter, within their 'own' institutions, have centralised power upwards and (re)presented themselves as national authorised/legitimate 'Bodies.' To have lived this, as I did, from 1975 to 1983 and then, more violatingly, from 1988 onwards, is to see the disappearance of part of a social (social-democratic, in fact) fabric that had simply been thought to be there (for ever).

Working through, working across, the range of possible cultural institutions and sites, what can be seen, time after time, is the delimiting of any possibilities of producing other than within what Raymond Williams (*Towards 2000*, Ch 1) called 'Plan X' and which has been in evidence since 1988 in a rapid idealism of repudiations, aided and abetted (in a sort of McCarthyism without McCarthy) by the 'end of communism.' And, rarely uttered in the same breath, the same text, the same moment: 'The Rise of Consumerism' (with a few empty signifiers about 'Citizenship' in more recent years).

**10. So,
FEELING
BACKWARDS/
THINKING
FORWARDS**

What Roland Barthes once called 'the fires of language' cannot be (entirely, all at once, in every instance) smothered by forms of moral regulation. Eyes melt, skins and fingers connect, words meld, songs link, images connect, hopes have a way of laughing critically (I image here brandy into black coffee, it's only a personal image). There'll always be a certain space between words/within sounds/around images: I'd like to embody these as always already hopeful, but I cannot, they can, for two examples: confirm isolation and individualism; they can also foster fascism. That is why there cannot be, in design, in hope, in loving solidarity, any/old/just 'Open Text' (Foucault's critique of Derrida is here very exact). If any meaning is possible, then -



The Record Changer

quite precisely, no meaning is possible. As I wrote in 1983 to say/depict 'An Old Woman' is to provide an encyclopedia of always already known meanings, a reassuring text for some (for many) but a violating text for some (for a few).

As I suggested in *Border/Lines* No. 1 ('Doing Mythologies') - a writing whose love, solidarity and hopefulness I would wish to stand within there are always resources for making meaning differently and, importantly, these need not be those solitary candles of the lonely last instance, but may indeed be very much in the Now-Time of our lives, may indeed be, in all the luscious senses of the words, coming together. It does not have to happen all ways, it may not happen often, but that IT CAN HAPPEN ONCELY, and MUCHLY, IN SOME HAPPENSTANCE OF SUDDEN UNEXPECTEDNESS blows apart (Charlie Christian on the first electric guitar is whom I honour here, Mintons, New York, 1942 and the grain of Gertrude Stein's voice in her reading of, e.g., the poem 'Picasso' not that different in time, in *limbre*) that which was always to be/to seem 'the case.'

Sexuality has been much more discussed in the last 10 or 20 years than previously (at least within the rarified spaces of the academy and approved publication) but the living of varied and variable sexualities does not yet seem to be an approved academic discourse, a lot

of the time, indeed, it is the sexualities of Other People that become discussable, not how the wordless merging and enlightenment of suddenly varied bodies SHINING comes to a be/coming of a certain soft, gentle silence. That is not, emphatically, witness the chatter which followed, a silencing. Rather a sort of song, the grain again here tho, the voice of the skin, the sing of the shine, the slipping of the body, in and out, of its skintful container and into a certain, uh, ectoplasmic ether, but without the narcotic (or aided by the same: highs on C, deep deep dives on M). There is, in other words, a graininess and difficulty to word situation about *bliss* (for sweet Roland, all ways seen from a distant shore, his definition of pleasure). And, is this not true, quite generally, there is a certain loss of words, and or a certain stuttering, when it comes to DESCRIBING being within the, um, field of cultural productions that reduces, in fact to certain words, like Great, Wonderful, Far Out, Too Much, Cool, WOW and the rest. Now, pause for just a millisecond, and think of the language of love/ing, does not that tend to the wordless (e.g. the long sighing) or the staccato jubilation (alas, not always *jouissance*) of singular words: WOW, Cool, Too Much, Far Out, Wonderful, Great. There's an ending, on a tape I have, of a Thelonius Monk performance, where Monk at the end, says

'Wild....just Wild.' How can the meaning of such a word, that word, be violently abstracted from the circumstances, context, situation of its employment, its use, not precisely as EXCHANGE, but as Use, as labour(ing)?

I talk, nonetheless, and arrogantly, of 'feeling backwards/thinking forwards' (precisely the stupid sort of either/or which intellectuals and academics trade in!), and there's a hint here of Gramsci's abused ideas about pessimism/optimism, normally made to link to intellect/will. Yet I, and I cannot be alone in this, have always been optimistic intellectually and pessimistic regarding the will (whatever that might be). Thinking and thought(fulness) seem, to me, much neglected in such simplicities. I've had a couple of seminar experiences which accentuate the rhythm of what I am saying here: returning to London, England, in 1984 I 'performed' a first version of 'The Body of Intellectuals' which was greeted by a muchness of heavy silence; coming back to Toronto in 1989 (was it?) I (with the help of Allen Ginsberg and Laurie Anderson) performed 'Analysis is not enough, there's all ways pleasure' and was greeted by the heaviness of a muchly silence. Later, in Exeter, at Michael Wood's STAR/CROSSED seminars I preformed something similar which almost led to violence, with people saying 'But what does it mean?,' 'But what do you think?,' when all I had done was play Laurie Anderson singing. This revealed, somewhat palpably, the 'limits of variation' that are 'proper' within an academic discourse/display/performative utterance. Later I learned this ALL OVER AGAIN when I began my inaugural lecture, on Occidentalism, with Laurie Anderson's song THE DREAM BEFORE (for Walter Benjamin) and showed slides simultaneously about 'Clogies,' but then I gave 'Them' lots of quotes and so latterly they were 'made happy.' For me, tho, and here a great loss, a further causation of my 13th nervous breakdown that dates precisely from then, what mattered was not this or that textual/songful form, but their collage, their montage, their-precisely-Unreasonableness, their distinctiveness within a general range of possibilities (yes, for hope).

So, to an ending, or a pause, just for now, and for our shared Now-Time: it seems to me that we are all still trapped in a very early paradigm in which analyst-observers make sense of the confusions/resources of SOME others. That these minorities happen out to be white male heterosexual metropolitan middle classes etc etc etc, isn't surely an accident! That continuously we read in various (New) Times of the cultural producer.....he, he, he, he.....cannot be some sort of typographical constraint, can

it? That since the late 1970's there has been a stalling and since the early 1980s a regression regarding - and this must be said boldly - MAJORITIES not now so accepted into postsecondary schooling in e.g. the USA, Canada, 'Europe,' the USSR or China, for some signifying examples, surely relates and yet contradicts some wider claims about equality, access, freedom, advancement through certification, etc etc. Do we not now, and very caringly, have to attend to contra/dictions! Do we not have to find the means, voices, the grain to show that and how even 'admission' (granted by whom, I might ask) can tear, wound, savage and, I use the word VERY directly, abort the desire, the possibility, the dream....the dream, and the hope. How, in other words, there are not enough of 'US' to MAKE A DIFFERENCE when we singularly, alone, arrive at some destination (which may well be an end stop) of a driven hope, a desired be/coming, and find it is not enough, it is not excessive enough, there is no (be)coming, there is no orgasmic release. So, finally, and sharply, when will, and can it ever, in an embodied way, cultural studies/historical sociology (re) turn to the conditions of its own varied PRODUCTION, as c u l t u r a l production? To place, e.g. in graduate school the analyst professor as simply another 'analysand' with no Words (certainly not 'The Word') but a member, a participant, in that all ways open, never to be completed unstitching and reweaving of the fabrication of meaningful possibilities, such that any interpretation is not dismissable solely, and in advance, because it does not gel with, link to and become OVER determined by 'The' meaning, handed out, in small droplets, as Artaud suggested, to succour the beasts of desire (here the empirically common male-graduate course providers are, strictly, mummified, hence, once again, sexuality returns to the centre of meaningful provision and meaning making. It may indeed be the embodied 'situational logic (that analysis is NOT enough, there is, after all, albeit with stuttering, hesitation, mumbling and thus a certain lexical erasure, ALL WAYS PLEASURE). And that, in the end, Historical Sociology, Cultural Studies, and YES, critical pedagogy, cannot reach me, this body here jumping up and down, dancing, singing, and speaking that body language which is never body reading. To that hope these autobiographical remarks are, uh, sung. Milton wrote of someone sightless, I write for everyone to be tuneful/dancing. That anarchistic dancing, laughing and singing Against The Power has had rather a limited 'press' in the last few years (the historians continually turn and return to those who so refused). Surely what such signs sinew is a realised (and not just perhaps, potential) embodiment of showing and sharing that, and what could be more profound than this, 'it' doesn't matter. 'It' is superfluous, 'it' slips by, 'it' simply does not concern us (bodily), 'it' goes, yeah, and also 'it' goes by. I want here, finally to invert or, better, disrupt, a certain cosy theory of ideology much (ab)used in the last ten or so years: so what that 'they' claim certain rights, and indeed do so successively and successfully,

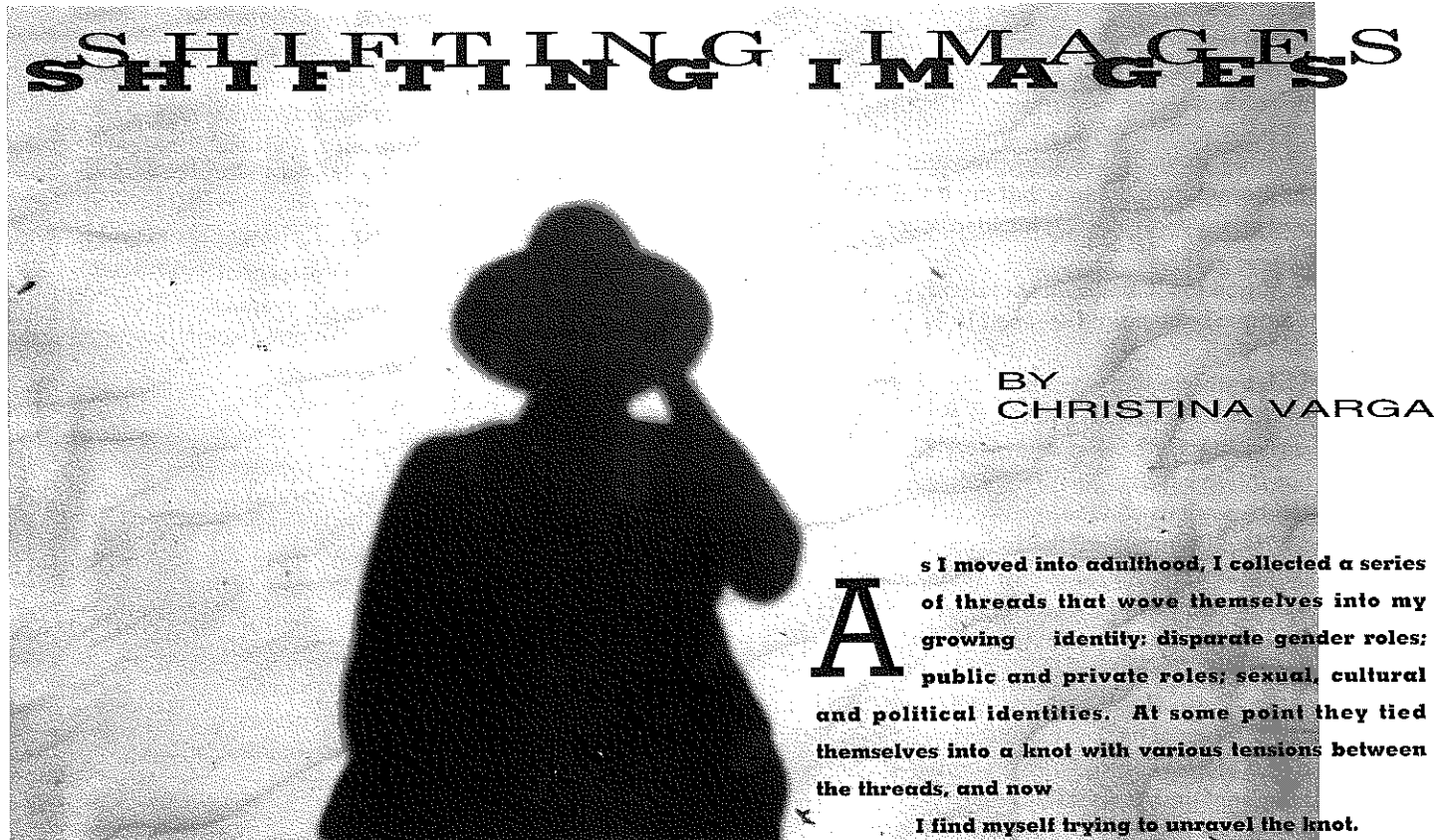
"Historical Sociology, Cultural Studies, and YES Critical Pedagogy cannot reach me, this body here jumping up and down, dancing, singing, and speaking that body language which is never body reading."

so what?! Does an adopted universal Christian oriented calendar stop Jews, Chinese, Muslims, and many many others celebrating their days, their years? Of course it does not! Does the worldwide and precapitalist resourced practices of racism and patriarchy stop nonwhites and nonmales saying 'This' just t h i s 'cannot be true, is not fair, is monstrously and violently unjust'? Of course not!

So, yes, and of course, 'we' (a term which is empirically unuseable) haven't done 'it' yet, found a way to organize/celebrate differences differently, but neither have 'They' found a way to celebrate them as grim similarity, have they? So what is going on is a shifting and complicated, indeed, contra/dictory shifting 'Frontier of Control', but our advantage is that this is several and differentiated. No sooner has a programme and policy been articulated around ONE difference than it is revealed that this CANNOT address or attend to differences within that difference. Then the game, round about, roller coaster starts again.

You see, as a final comment, they can never 'get it right,' they'll always stumble and misrepresent/misallocate; we may not yet be able to unify our refusal within a celebration of difference. But, you see, the differences are not simply eradicable, as if they were facts of nature, but they are produced and reproduced by the very workings of this anti-Human violation of any possibility of GENERALLY being human, called, for shorthand, capitalism. They claim to have the dream; ours, in fact, in labour, and that all so so difficult production, organisation, is the task. Organized knowledge, differenced, differently remains our cultural studies, resourced by our historical sociology, and informing our social curriculum, our political pedagogy. Thank you all.

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One of the deepest contradictions that has influenced the way I see myself in the world is the tension between "European" (especially East European) and "North American" cultures. I was born in Hungary, but apparently my birth was the catalyst for my parents to leave. They decided to emigrate to the West soon after I was born, to allow me the opportunity to grow up with greater political and economic freedom.

For decades the situation in Hungary had been such that it was dangerous to voice any opinion contrary to the regime. The increasing bureaucratization and deteriorating economy of a state socialist system meant a lack of consumer goods and housing, long work hours and deepening cynicism for most people, with the exception of an elite few. However, my parents did not leave after the partly-failed and bloody revolution of 1956 as many others did. Both had familial ties cementing them there and it was illegal, and therefore dangerous, to leave. They would not have been

able to take most of their belongings with them and only the unknown awaited them in the West. Their knowledge of certain aspects of Western culture was limited, as isolation of the East Block was encouraged by elements such as a tightly controlled media with anti-Western interests. As a Canadian today, I take travel for granted. Even on a secretary's salary it is possible for me to travel (I don't have a criminal record or outstanding traffic fines) and I have access to foreign currency. For my parents in the fifties and sixties, however, even a trip to another East Block country was difficult enough. Obtaining a visa meant going through endless layers of bureaucracy and the money they were allowed to take out of the country was very limited.

In addition, my father, particularly, was engaged in political activity. There was rebuilding of the country to be done after the Second World War. As a socialist he was committed to working towards bettering the condition of workers and peasants, at the same time as creating a more just and equal society.

However, the existing regime did not live up to many of its promises and, in fact, during the 50's and under the influence of a Stalinist model, conditions became extremely oppressive for many. Intellectuals were particularly targeted for violent censorship and scapegoating. Nevertheless, while many people were disillusioned by the way socialism was implemented, believing in those ideals made simply packing up and leaving difficult.

It was, then, the appearance of their child, along with the obvious deterioration and bureaucratization of the regime, that led them to leave everything behind and turn to the West. They did not expect to settle in North America, but came to Canada because my father found work here. Although they did not come from a radically different culture, unlike some of the immigrants who come to Canada, they, like many others, found the cultural transition difficult. The freedom they found was built, as it was

