models of masochism are similar, Silverman more or less dismisses Deleuze's account as radically utopian.)

In her first chapter on masochism Silverman provides a review of Freud's writings on masochism, and other contemporary psychoanalytic accounts. The second chapter returns us to the films of Fassbinder and the "ruination of masculinity." Silverman is at her best when discussing Fassbinder, when her stern and completely humourless style becomes as perversely thrilling as Fassbinder's unrelenting pessimism. In this stunning account of masochism in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *In A Year of Thirteen Moons* Silverman picks up Max Scheler's differentiation between heteropathic and idiopathic identification. Idiopathic identification is the model of identification usually encountered in psychoanalytic writings. It works as an incorporation or assimilation of the other: a sort of psychic imperialism. Heteropathic desire, on the other hand, is ex-corporative: it takes the form of an evacuation of libido from the ego and a total identification with the other's suffering at the site of the other's body. This form of identification "turns not only upon the exteriorization of identity, but also upon a pleasurably painful acknowledgement of the 'otherness' of all identity" (264-5). Heteropathic identification is thus closely linked to masochism, and could be seen as an instance of what Bersani calls "psychic shattering" or "psychic detumescence." Silverman emphasizes that the ego always functions as a loved object: in the writings of Bersani, it is precisely the libidinally charged or "phallicized" ego that is at the base of our problematic belief in "the sacrosanct value of selfhood" ("Is the Rectum a Grave?"). Both writers emphasize the political value of masochism and its potential for "self-shattering," which inevitably constitutes an attack on the proud ideal of masculine subjectivity.

In what might seem an unlikely move (although others have made it before her), Silverman deals with the utopian impulses in Fassbinder's cinema. Drawing on the Marxist writings of Ernst Bloch, Silverman finds in Fassbinder a utopian yearning that depends upon positing a "psychic elsewhere," one that is only glimpsed in moments of masochistic ecstacy. Whereas in Bloch's writings utopia depends upon transformation of society, in the films of Fassbinder the transformation takes place at the level of the psyche. Both however are based on a refusal to affirm anything in the present order. This form of utopia depends upon a complete foreclosure of the past, and thus upon a renunciation of the paternal legacy. Fassbinder's utopia, then, presents a stark contrast to the pastoral or nostalgic utopian impulse of Bly, which inevitably involves a refinding of the father. For Silverman and Fassbinder, reaching utopia involves the ruination of the masculine ego and a killing off of the father once and for all.

The final chapter on masochism takes Silverman more firmly into the realm of the political (although she continually insists that the sexual is always imbricated with the political) with a discussion of T. E. Lawrence's autobiographical works, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and *The Mint*. Silverman characterizes Lawrence's relation to the "Arab other" as a double mimesis: rather than employing the usual colonialist strategy of attempting to reproduce the colonialist within the colonized, Lawrence identified with the Arabs, seeking to become, in effect, the ideal Arab leader, who would then be reproduced in the other. Silverman argues that the ease with which Lawrence identified with the other was facilitated by his rather complex sexuality: a non-genitally based homosexuality that found its expression in extreme masochism. Lawrence's masochism is initially self-reflexive: he is both the punisher and the punished, who abases himself before the ideal and simultaneously partially identifies with it. This peculiar sort of masochism is, argues Silverman, completely compatible with Lawrence's extreme virility and his egoistic zeal for leadership. (One wonders if this analysis might also be extended to the leaders of the men's movement, who perversely seem to thrive on the ridicule that they generate.) After his rape at Deraa by the Turkish leader (although there is some question whether this actually took place) Lawrence's masochism undergoes a shift: he is not able to identify with his Turkish rapists and thus is unable to become his own punisher. The self-reflexive masochism is subsequently reconfigured as feminine masochism, which is no longer compatible with leadership. Lawrence, after the rape and after the war, withdrew completely from public life (despite numerous requests for him to take leadership roles) and enlisted as an R. A. F. airman. The point of the analysis in this chapter is, perhaps, to demonstrate that sexualities have consequences beyond the simply personal. Lawrence's relation to the Arab uprising was to a large extent determined by his own libidinal politics, a relation and intervention which had far reaching consequences in the political world.

The last chapter of *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* may well prove controversial, which is perhaps why Silverman occasionally adopts a somewhat defensive tone. Although it is for me the least satisfying part of the book, her discussion of the place of femininity within male homosexuality does have much to recommend it. It is not often, for example, that one sees three separate models proposed for male homosexuality in which one is not eventually privileged as the model. Although I'm not sure how radical it is to insist on the centrality of femininity to male homosexuality, it is certainly true that gay scholars have not questioned enough their relation to and investment in masculinity. Silverman's reading of Proust in this chapter develops a model of male homosexuality that can incorporate desire for a woman (and a lesbian at that), and if the reading itself is a little strained, the impulse behind it is certainly worthwhile. By attempting to destabilize the boundaries of homosexuality (and by insisting on the possibility of homosexualities that are not centered around the penis) Silverman enters the realm of queer theory, where, in effect, anything is possible. Queer theory is perhaps the ultimate perversion: a borderless terrain that denies every identity a natural, coherent or stable status. Although the call to perversion that ends the book is a little hilarious given the texts discussed (would you really want to be a character in a Fassbinder film?) Silverman gives us both the impetus and the critical tools to explore more critically the complex relations between politics, sexuality and identity.

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Eco: echoes...

BY Jean-Francois Coté

Umberto Eco,
The Limits of Interpretation,
Bloomington and Indianapolis:
Indiana University Press, 1990.

It seems difficult to reach a point where one might feel a *common committal* when reading Umberto Eco's *The Limits of Interpretation*; that is, a concern in which the author and the reader could partake and develop according to a specific shared interest or motive. Although the book covers a truly colossal amount of material, ranging from the Ancients (Aristotle) to the postmoderns (Derrida); from the tiniest needle point of erudition (some sixteenth century authors such as Giulio Camillo Delminio, or Cosma Roselli) to television commercials and series (*Dallas*); from the medieval tradition of semiotics to the contemporary theory of media; from the scholarly-oriented, chapel-like debates, to popular clichés of our time; one senses (at least, I do) a kind of emptiness in all of this. It is not due to the truly encyclopedic knowledge of the author, to his witty writing or the book's overall sympathetic tone. What is it, then? Is it the fact that the book, although concerned with a central theme, is actually a collection of previously published essays which hardly help to work out its "systematicity"? Is it his "mixture of styles" - which on the whole characterizes Eco - in a theoretical enterprise that we find there? Perhaps it is that we hardly find the definition of a position here. But is it not paradoxical that no position emerges from this attempt to grasp "the limits of interpretation," as the book title suggests? For paradox has now taken the place of contradiction, dissolving the need for a particular position which would result in drawing a line between conflicting views. But since the attempt to reconcile the opposites is today an effort of producing a "middle-range" arrangement, it seems to me that Eco finds his own way in the necessity of the day, and this makes him a very astute reader of himself; proving that, at some point, the "unintentionality" of an author can truly reveal some of his intentions after all.

This book is indeed a direct response to Eco's earlier book *Opera aperta* (originally published in 1962, and only recently translated in English as *The Open Work*). Echoing himself almost thirty years after the quite famous stance contained in *Opera aperta* (contemporary works of art evolve in a "undetermined" sphere of meaning, and do not assert any particular content out of the multi-various interpretations that can be made of them) and taking advantage of the feed-back effect that a very successful intellectual career can bring to the matter, Eco now tries to trace the limits of its own previous intentions. The shift is stated quite clearly at the beginning of the book, when Eco explains the difference between the two enterprises; he writes: "...I was [then] studying the dialectics between the rights of texts and the rights of their interpreters. I have [now] the impression that, in the course of the last few decades, the rights of the interpreters have been overstressed. In the present essays I stress the limits of the act of interpretation"(6) . The essays that follow, most of them written through the 1980s, develop different aspects of Eco's present enterprise.

Going to the crux of the matter, the reader's intention in "Intentio Lectoris: The State of the Art," Eco advocates, quite carefully, that: "I shall claim that a theory of interpretation even when it assumes that texts are open to multiple readings must also assume that it is possible to reach an arrangement, if not about the meanings that a text encourages, at least about those that a text discourages" (45). Here is an attempt to oppose some important currents in present literary theory (mainly the deconstructionist and pragmatist trends), in stating that it is only by acknowledging the necessary inter-relation between two levels of interpretation (literal on the one hand, and critical or interpretive on the other), that the question of the validity of reading can be addressed. One cannot read, or rather interpret a text, in a way that would obviously contradict the first, semantic, level of the textual analysis.

How far can a reader decide to go, intentionally, from the text's intention? The pragmatist would state: as far as this "use" of the text benefits a certain desire, need, interest, etc., the reader can use it to "fulfill" oneself; whereas the deconstructionist would state: the reader can go as far as one can demonstrate the (illegitimate) metaphysical reference that the text entails. Eco wants to avoid both the "self-sufficiency" of the former, and the relative "irresponsibility" of the latter.The text becomes an occasion for the meeting of a "Model Reader" and a "Model Author," and finds its limits of interpretation in the meaning that is found through this "reciprocal tension." Eco thus writes that "...the text is an object that the interpretation builds up in the course of the circular effort of validating itself on the basis of what it makes up as its result," adding to this that, "I am not ashamed to admit that I am so defining the old and still valid 'hermeneutic circle'"(59).

The problem, then, is not that this fails to constitute a specific position, but rather that this position is immediately challenged by Eco himself, in an effort to validate it through some "scientistic" devices. The first of these is the explanation of interpretation as proceeding from abductive reasoning ("The logic of interpretation is the Peircian logic of abduction"), which leads to the constitution of an hypothesis of interpretation, and the second is the application of a typical economy of research which seeks to eliminate "bad" interpretations which do not recognize the text's internal coherence. We see quite clearly here to which constraints Eco's vision of interpretation responds: first, the reader's distance from the text, which allows the development of the interpretation itself; second, the text reaffirms its presence against any pretension that the interpretation would impose on it. But can the solution to these two constraints really be attained by a legitimization of the

Peircian theory of abduction on the one hand, and by the positive presence, i.e. the "positivity," of the text itself? Are we really facing the "hermeneutic circle" in such a dilemma?

It seems to me that we can answer these questions by considering the idea that the distance created by interpretation is required not as much by the text as "object," than by the "object the text," something which is encompassed in the text, but whose meaning transcends the text, even though it is the text that mediates it. The most recent developments in hermeneutic theory have stressed either that it is precisely in elucidating the conditions that make possible the understanding of the remote object of a text which constitutes the task of interpretation, or that interpretation takes place between the origin (*arché*) and the goal (*télos*) of the text, understood in their past and present contexts. The simple "invention" of an hypothesis, following a Peircian approach, and its "application" to a specific case, in the more positivistic trade, do not agree with any of these hermeneutic principles, or rather they do not reveal that the process of interpretation, according to hermeneutics, is deeply engaged in the *mise à jour* of the context of the object, as well as in the very relation of the interpreter to it. It is within this (theoretical as well as existential) process that interpretation takes shape for hermeneutics, since it deals primarily with the historicity of meaning, that is, the narrated distance taken between the object of the text and its actual interpreter.

Hermeneutics is always reflexively-oriented, and acknowledges the contribution of its own very act of understanding in the process of interpretation. Such an understanding of the process of interpretation stands in clear opposition to Peirce's theory of semiotics and of his theory of knowledge and abduction, since Peirce, however fully acknowledging the genetic process of meaning in terms of the succession of signs' interpretations through what he called semiosis, never agreed with the synthetical character of what we can call the historicity implied in interpretation. For him, indeed, the synthetic aspect of the semiosis process belonged to a future community of interpretation, and was for this reason essentially of a prospective nature; it could not be achieved retrospectively by a single and actual "interpreter." So much, then, for the possibility of matching the "hermeneutic circle" with a pragmaticist perspective -and without doubt, with a positivistic approach of any other kind.

Is Eco's hesitation, or even duplicity, in the choice of interpretive strategy, not responsible for the more frustrating aspect of his work: namely, its ambivalent treatment of narrative either as history or as "story" (i.e., fiction). Everything that Eco has developed in his very impressive intellectual career, from his theoretical works in the field of semiotics (*A Theory of Semiotics, Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*) to his two novels(*The Name of the Rose*,and *Foucault's Pendulum*), without forgetting his "mid-range" essays of cultural critique (*Travels in Hyperreality*), can be retrieved in a sort of microcosm in this book. But can we mix together in one book what makes a theoretical work valuable and what makes a novel so brilliant, without falling into an awkward confusion of genres?

For Eco to take a position here he would have to acknowledge that there really are some things which have to be opposed, such as history and stories, theory and fiction, communication and hermeneutics, even if we acknowledge the very active part played by interpretation, according to its various modalities, in these fields. This positioning does not require one to dismiss one or the other side of the oppositions. Rather, it is through such oppositions, through their differences, that mutual identities can be established. In the meantime it still remains an "open work" to define how the so-called "limits of interpretation" define the exact position into which Eco will settle.

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Closing the Envelope, Opening the Package: On Reviewing *Semiotext(e)/Architecture*

BY Sophie Thomas

Semiotext(e)/Architecture, ed. Hraztan, Zeitlian, New York: *Semiotext(e)*, 1992.

Looking for the perfect reviewer for this volume seems, to this author at least, to have exposed an interesting problem: for whom, precisely, was it produced? Architects? Anarchitects? Mixed-media junkies? Concrete poets? Graphic artists? This apparent problem of audience, however, conceals the more interesting (and perhaps greater) problem of the volume's precise intent: is architecture the invited guest, or just the occasion for another interdisciplinary rendez-vous? But first things first.

Acting on an initial (and, finally, naïve) assumption that this issue of *Semiotext(e)* would speak most clearly to architects, or at least to architectural theorists - since it clearly challenges (indeed, threatens) the designated limits of "architecture" - members of the *Border/Lines* collective sought out a potential reviewer at the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto. There, it seemed, the volume hopped from hand to hand. The over-riding response was suspicion of the volume's pretensions, and a profound reluctance to express such sentiments publicly. I imagine the reasons for this recalcitrance were complex: respect for at least some of the volume's contributors and its more imaginative aims, a certain amount of political wariness, but perhaps, above all, an unwillingness to assume a too-easy reactionary stance toward a project which situates itself so provocatively on the edge of architectural discourse.

The criticisms that emerged were, however, telling. The most common complaint was about the sheer difficulty of making out the "contents" of the text, because of its literal opacity. (In most cases the print is minuscule, and overlaid or in collision with either more print or visuals - or both.) This impenetrability was felt to be an affront to a discourse (or at least, a practice) that retains its faith in clear communication, and depends on that clarity for the realization of its designs as physical structures. Such an affront was surely confirmed by the opening pages (numbered IN(Y)ERFACE1 and IN(Y)ERFACE2) which effectively conceal essential information such as the table of contents, production credits and editorial, behind Brian Boigon's irreverent but vacuous Architecture Stickers (for example, "THIS IS JUST ONE BIG BUILDING FUCKING ANOTHER" and "YES! I BELIEVE IT OR NOT THIS IS THE FRONT DOOR TO THIS BUILDING," etc.).

Such obscurity, further typified by a project such as Arthur Kroker's and David Carson's which mounts a graphic representation of/called "The Architecture of Sound* Saint Skinheads," perhaps flies too much in the face of the material communicability of the building project. This would, however, suggest an artificial opposition between "paper" architects who build drawings and "real" architects who draw buildings, and thus between theorists and practitioners. But the other main criticism from the architects' camp, namely that the volume contributed little, if at all, to cutting-edge archictectural theory - which always pushes "building" to its conceptual limits - indicates that the grounds for resistance may lie elsewhere.

The issue seems, rather, to be the appropriation of "architecture" into an interdisciplinary arts discourse that uses it chiefly as an experimental metaphor for the assembling or disassembling of the image/text, and as an occasion for a media experience that re-combines these elements into what one person I spoke with (a media theorist) called a "logocentric fantasy" standing in for written experience. In spite of the extensive layering of texts and images (or perhaps because of it), the component voices in this volume seem to speak more to themselves than to each other. As an accumulation of isolated signifiers, the ideal particularity of each site (and citation) is rendered homologous. For many, this new conjunction is finally superficial, and worse - irrelevant and, thus, irresponsible. The text becomes decidedly evasive: operating on the level of pure pronouncement, it resists critical reading - indeed repels both reading and criticism. All this despite the volume's implicit claim to make architectural operations and environments broader and more inclusive.

This discrepancy is only emphasized by the inclusion of Felix Guattari's