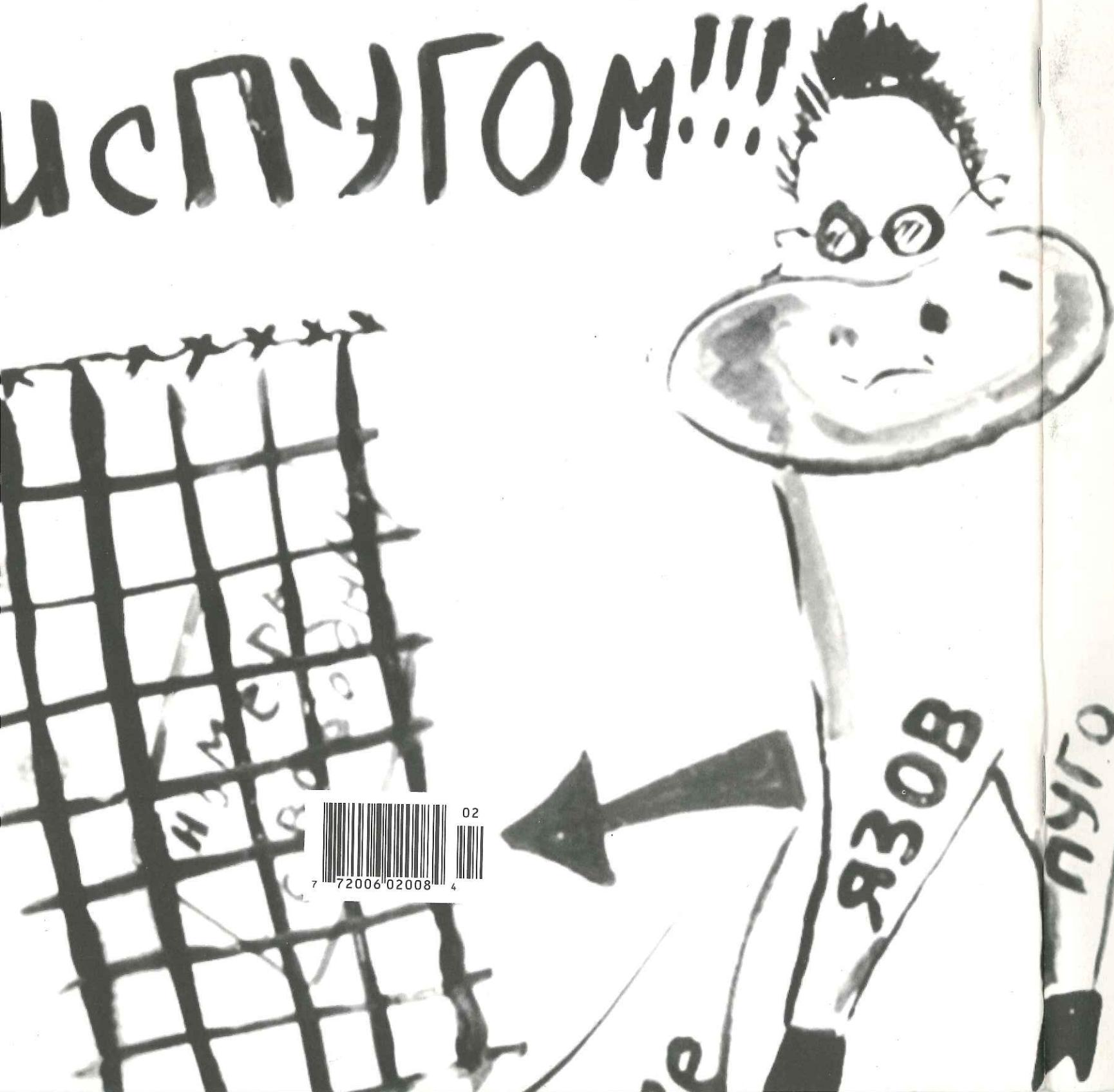


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BORDER/LINES

CANADA'S MAGAZINE OF CULTURAL STUDIES
ISSUE NO. 28 1993 \$6.00

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Rampike
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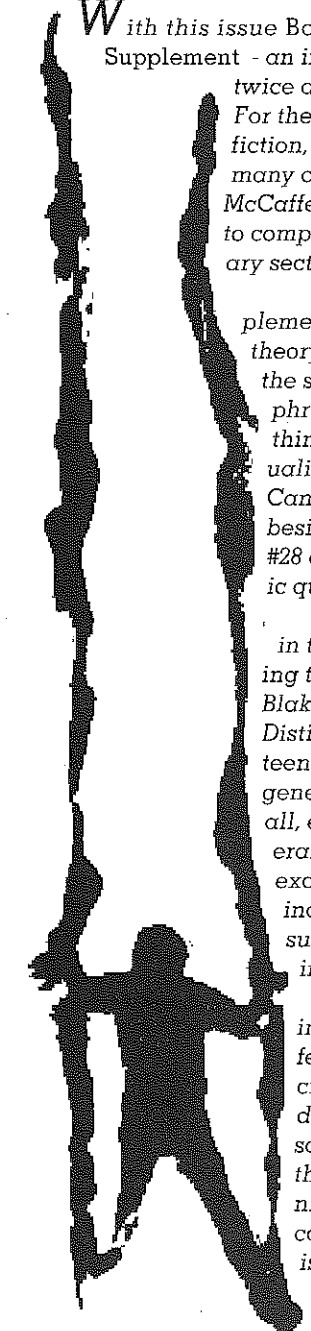
Editorial

With this issue Border/Lines is launching its first Rampike Literary Supplement - an insert/pull out, whichever you prefer, to be published twice a year, of the newest writing edited by Karl Jirgens. For the last ten years Rampike has published innovative fiction, poetry and criticism by, and interviews with, among many others, Kathy Acker, Nicole Brossard, Steve McCaffery, and Phillippe Sollers. We are pleased to be able to complement our regular offerings with a significant literary section.

Border/Lines #28 features not only a literary supplement, but also, we think, incisive work on art, cultural theory and social practice: Cultural Studies in Australia, the state of the arts in the former Soviet Union, schizophrenia and "family values," new trends in Marxist thinking and organizing, the classification of homosexuality in the Library of Congress, the iconography of Canadian bank note imagery, gender equity, and more besides. We have collectively referred to Border/Lines #28 as our "general" issue which raises a few very specific questions for us.

Given the heterogeneity of the material involved in this issue, do we theorize the absence of an overriding theme? Do we invent one? "To Generalize," wrote Blake, "is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit." Blake was railing against eighteenth-century intellectual traditions which emphasized general matrices and which, in an attempt to encompass all, excluded even more. If we present this issue as "general," it must be with a different aim: not to invite the excluded (from other issues, other themes) to become included, but rather to reassemble the particular in such a way that it respects the specificity and even the incompatibility of a wide range of concerns.

It has been a central principle at Border/Lines to investigate the discontinuities, the particular, the differences, and the disjunctive (with this we feel a special kinship with Rampike). Culture, after all, is seldom monolithic but rather, a range of conflicting and sometimes overlapping communities. Each piece in this issue addresses the growing diversity of communities, cultures, knowledges, and identities found in contemporary culture. This is, of course, to present this issue in the most general, thus approximate, terms; for the particulars, read on....



Stan Fogel, Joe Galbo and Sophie Thomas
Note: Robyn Gillam also helped edit this issue

BORDER/LINES

CANADA'S MAGAZINE OF CULTURAL STUDIES ISSUE NO. 28

Stan Fogel, Joe Galbo
& Sophie Thomas

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Celia Haig-Brown

Jim Ellis
Jean-Francois Coté
Sophie Thomas
Richard Ashby

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Alexsandrinsky Column in
Leningrad on the first day of the
coup. The Russian word for
"fear" contains the letters "Pugo"
in red. The head is that of
Pavlov. The names written on
the legs are Yazov, Pugo,
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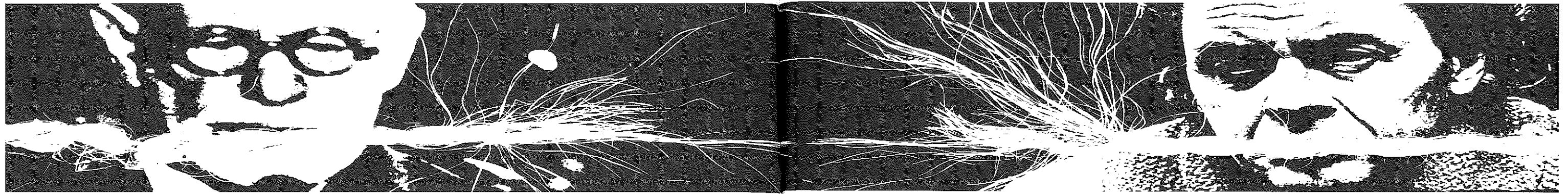
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Rafael Goldchain, "Shoemaker"
Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico, 1990



SCHIZOPHRENIA

AND

FAMILY VALUES

BY ALEX FERENTZY

Family values may not have worked for the Republican party in the last U.S. election, but they enjoy considerably more success in helping to shape the agenda in specific areas of institutional practice. For example, groups composed of the families of diagnosed schizophrenics called "The Friends of Schizophrenics" have gained a more powerful voice, both within the psychiatric literature and in the popular press, than their schizophrenic relatives whose interests they claim to represent. Twenty years ago, a book entitled *Schizophrenia and the Family* would have been operating under some version of one of the popular Freud/Marx syntheses of the day. Psychoanalysts, existentialists, situational analysts and others conceived of the families of schizophrenics as a reactionary unit of oppression. Essentially, our families (as smaller and in some sense representative units of capitalism) drove us nuts. Whatever the problems of this obviously simplistic perspective, it at least allowed the introduction of social, theoretical and experiential issues into the discussion of the cause, etiology and meaning of schizophrenia. If people such as R.D.Laing were not strong theorists, they were at least strong practition-

ers. However the weakness of their theory was matched by their inability to detach their findings from their theoretical assumptions when the evidence contradicted them. Over this twenty year period there has emerged a dominant, reductive (and very profitable) biological approach to schizophrenia and a focus on the family as the context of therapeutic intervention. Today, a book with the same title, *Schizophrenia And The Family* (Anderson et. al., 1986), would accept the family as the essential framework of the therapeutic process and, unlike twenty years ago, could ignore the organization of society as an element of oppression.

The rise and fall of R.D.Laing's theories and influence offer a microcosm of the exodus of radical thinking on this subject and the downfall of the Freud/Marx synthesis, particularly on this continent. Further, this story reflects the naivety of the 60s in North America and its premature radical consensus. It is also an example of a science caught within its positive and liberal premises and a critical practice that cannot reconstitute itself when its theoretical assumptions are shattered.

Of more immediate interest is how family values entered into this debate before, and considerably

more effectively, than Dan Quayle's attack on Murphy Brown and the "notoriously" liberal media. The current attempt by the Ontario government to bring in advocacy legislation has encountered the wrath of the Friends of Schizophrenics, an organization that is to the psychiatric patients' rights movement what Real Women is to feminism. This legislation (Bill 74 An Act Respecting the Provision of Advocacy Services to Vulnerable Persons) and the responses to it show how issues of human nature, subjectivity, institutional power and ideology become entangled and how schizophrenia not merely affects a conception of human nature or a specific institutional practice, but also reflects how we deal with, what breadth of issues we bring to, and what paradigm we use on social issues.

In *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, R.D.Laing and Aaron Esterson presented a series of interviews with schizophrenics and their families. They found a constant pattern of double bind relationships in which the schizophrenic was inevitably at the bottom of a hierarchy of contradictory and hidden deals within the family. Some were as obvious as the denial to the schizophrenic that he or she was being talked about covertly when it

was obvious that the family members had been doing just that. Others were more complicated but the point is the same: Laing and Esterson felt that they had discovered clear patterns of oppression within the modern family. Like the class structure of capitalist society, the family had a boss, middle management and workers, and in this economy of rational subjectivity, schizophrenics were the underclass.

As we can see from the final report of the 1990 provincial enquiry on mental competency, edited by David Weissstub, the idea of an economy of rational subjectivity is actually embedded in legal/psychiatric practice:

"In this regard competency to make psychiatric decisions may be considered to be one dimension of the multi-dimensional competency matrix which helps to shape the relationships and relative power of individuals in society. Competency or capacity within any one dimension may be seen as forming a continuum ranging from absolute incompetence at one end to absolute knowledge and rationality (a sort of super competence) at the other, and along this continuum the wider the compe-

tency gap between any two points the greater the relative power of the more competent over the less competent. Within the medical competency division while lawyers, judges and average lay persons are considered to be normally competent, and therefore relatively more competent than patients whose competency is in question, the medical profession is seen (by virtue of education and professional accreditation) as being super competent and therefore more competent than average or less than average persons."

In this conception of the economy of the subject, the 'economy' is directly related to institutionalized power and the ability to determine the competency of the subjectivity of others. In fairness, this is merely a formal hierarchy and competency is connected to super-competency only after the fact, and not implicitly. By contrast, R.D.Laing's idea was of an unconscious economy of the subject where the parents (or, broadly speaking, the winners in the family context) were specifically, and individually responsible for the lack of rational subjectivity on the part of their schizophrenic offspring. The attribution of blame makes the parents of

schizophrenics morally culpable and the schizophrenics victims. This is then linked with an underlying concept of reason (taken rather awkwardly from Marx) which we no longer find necessary. Actually, the institutional expression of the economy of the subject is much more straightforward: the inherent contradiction that people are *a fortiori* less competent than the "super-competent" doctors is technically not a double-bind since it is admitted here or at least brought into the open. When, for example, they say we have power over you because our education and social position give us this power, at least the power structure is clear, regardless of what one's position is in relation to this power. Laing wanted more. He wanted to be able to humiliate a middle class family and say that certain individuals were to blame. Further, his insistence that schizophrenics were not crazy, but on a voyage of self-discovery, while the parents of schizophrenics were their oppressors was contradictory at best. If there is nothing wrong with being schizophrenic what is he blaming their parents for?

This type of research, which linked madness to a more general critique of society, was actually fairly well received (at least by comparison with the vacuum of social and politi-

PUNCTURES



cal thinking in mainstream psychiatry today). If anything the reality of double-binds is more common than Laing and Esterson suspected. Far from being limited to the family, we find the same kinds of deals in office politics and elsewhere. Mainstream psychiatry has made one major criticism of Laing and Esterson's work. The families of schizophrenics are not that unusual. The amount of double-binds (which involves both a contradictory deal and the negation of the existence of this deal) in a schizophrenic's family is not altogether unusual and it is not clear whether the excess of double-binds can be attributed to the families themselves (as schizophrenogenic), or to the stress of having a schizophrenic family member. In fact mainstream psychiatry has gone much further than Laing and Esterson in a number of areas. It has dropped the need for blaming specific family members and made an important distinction between families that are good for schizophrenics to return to and families that are not, based on a measure of expressed emotion in those families. Further, cross-cultural studies of schizophrenia indicate that extended family structures help

the psycho-analytic and existential left even to debate the biologists, thereby delaying the development of a position which accepts the biological evidence as descriptive, but rejects the normative interpretation of that description. This silence between the biological and psycho-social approaches allowed the grooming of a generation of social workers and other health care professionals who thought the parents of schizophrenics were guilty of some vague subjectivity crime. Parents of schizophrenics were harassed not only by the traditional institutional structure, its red tape and self-protection, but also by a collection of left-wing hippie do-gooders who were variously located within the institution. In this

context, it is not surprising that these families began to organize themselves both to get some straightforward answers from the system (what is schizophrenia?, what is the cure? how long does it last? is it inherited? what can we do?), and to push for increased consultation with the medical community. If the answers to these questions were nuanced with complicated psychoanalytic, sociological or political ideas by the old guard, there was an emergent simpler

approach to schizophrenia in the form of biological reductionism.

At this point in the story, a complex of political, economic, cultural and scientific forces comes together. First, there are the above-mentioned parents of schizophrenics looking for answers and input. Second, there are major advances in the understanding of genetic reproduction which accelerates interest in this area. Next, we have a rationalization of biological

research for maximum profitability. The impact on medicine and psychiatry becomes increasingly clear as multinational pharmaceutical companies organize seminars, influence doctors and researchers and everyone makes more money. In fairly straightforward capitalist rationalization, the search for profit re-aligns research goals, diagnostic criteria and psychoanalysis (which is

altogether useless for any serious mental disorder in any case) are replaced by biology and behaviorism (which is just as useless, but at least less complicated) and so on. These psychiatrists were able to give the parents of schizophrenics the answers they wanted to hear: namely that schizophrenia is a genetic disease which they do not completely understand yet, but which is controllable with maintenance drug therapy. The parents' groups came to equate the red tape and the theorizing with an all-encompassing attack on the family. We see here a fairly typical populist backlash against an overzealous left that presumes that it can impose a context-free truth onto communities or families without taking their day-to-day considerations into account. As a consequence, we have a swing to the right and yet another push for the elimination of politically critical research, the maximization of profit for corporations and the elimination of expensive government programmes.

This confusion of forces makes it difficult to examine the organization of these groups of the Friends of Schizophrenics (there are regional, provincial and national versions) to see if they started out with reactionary intentions or just turned out that way. Simultaneously, we could blame the naivety of the sixties' 'radical' synthesis and the romanticism of the Freud/Marx approach to critiquing society. We now know, for example, that there is no authoritarian personality even if we've all met the anal retentive, conservative bureaucrat that this term evokes. Both Freud and Marx present us with theoretical and practical problems today that were not so obvious twenty five years ago; this helps to explain why Laing could not go beyond his particular theoretical framework. The point that was missed was that

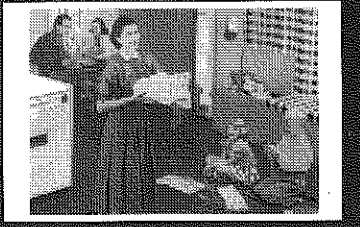
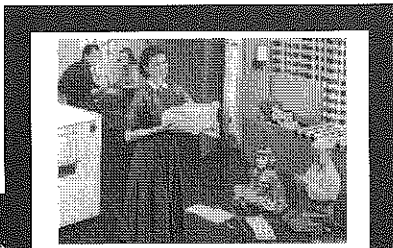
widespread psycho-social oppression of the nature that Laing was hypothesizing might not be localizable to specific families, or even specific individuals. The focus on the family itself might be an overvaluation of the role of the family in the development of the individual. Part of the problem surely lies in attempting to criticize the family using the family as a fundamental conceptual frame of analysis (i.e., as in Freud). One wonders why the issues of work, technology and patriarchy weren't thrown into the mix. In any case, both the relationship of schizophrenics to their families and the structure of the authoritarian personality turn out to be at least as irrational and complicated as the market and society within which they are developed.

While I make no attempt to explain what schizophrenia is, let me present some of the complexity one gets into in any discussion of schizophrenia that attempts to go beyond specific research areas. This

complexity has helped spawn two generations of dissident thinking. The relationship of class to the institutionalization of schizophrenics is often dismissed because of the divergences in different countries. For example in the U.S. the working poor are hospitalized more frequently in large urban centers than in smaller communities or in the country. Meanwhile in India, according to Richard Warner in *Recovery From Schizophrenia: Psychiatry and Political Economy*, it is the middle class that is most frequently institutionalized as schizophrenic. One hypothesis is that it is members of the class most exposed to the prospect of dropping to underclass status and life-threatening poverty who are the most likely to be institutionalized for schizophrenia. It is therefore arguably the people with the greatest class related stress, and not a specific transcultural (or even trans-urban) class, who are at greatest risk. Seemingly straightforward biological research is even more complicated. While drug therapy is by and large considered the most useful intervention, it is actually negatively correlated with cure rates. By cure one can only mean remission, which happens spontaneously

(i.e., without the help of psychiatrists) about forty per cent of the time, but only when there has not been long term maintenance drug therapy. Genetic studies are also confusing. The most significant work comes from studies with identical twins of schizophrenic parents (who are raised separately), but they show a concordance rate of 50% percent (rather than the expected 100%); Thus we are left with the idea that there is an inherited predisposition for schizophrenia which requires an environmental trigger. Further, there is some evidence that those people with schizophrenic relatives have a

better prognosis than those without. At the same time it is not clear what percentage of diagnosed schizophrenics might have that genetic predisposition. So one can more accurately talk of the schizophrenias as a group of related disorders. The major problem in the literature is the attempt to solve or sidestep this complexity by all sides in the dispute. Perhaps most frightening is the tendency of psychiatrists to extrapolate beyond their expertise and deal with social and political issues beyond their ken. Even more amazing than the diversity of approaches and research findings is this ignorance of both the limitations of their own investigations as well as the solid work done in other areas. For example, the information on class relationships is largely ignored, partially because there is no great profit potential in that area, but also because psychiatrists basically "just don't get it." They attribute ideas like downward socio-economic drift (over generations perhaps) to the fact that



spread out the emotional conflicts simply because there are more emotionally significant people with a wider range of personality and affective mannerisms to talk to. So while the nuclear family may be a psychological minefield, blaming individual family members is a contradictory proposition. This attribution of blame inevitably becomes scapegoating of the weakest link. In fact psychiatrists went looking for the schizophrenogenic mother (it's all mom's fault in other words); this was not convincing for long, but offered an accurate snapshot of society. Lock up the economically unproductive and blame their mothers.

Significant, though, is the loss of the critique of society from the understanding of schizophrenia. This process was assisted by the unwillingness on the part of

schizophrenics (as sub-competents) would generally do worse and tend towards the lower or less functional strata of the population, ignoring that this implies that schizophrenics in India are upwardly mobile and that schizophrenics in smaller towns and the countryside are stable socio-economically.

In any event, the Friends of Schizophrenics are quick to respond to any development that might have an impact upon schizophrenics. They oppose the current patient's advocacy legislation that the NDP in Ontario is introducing because it removes the family as the primary locus of social action. Their articles appear in the newspapers where they spread disinformation and instil a sense of fear in the general population about madness in the streets, and so on. The recent killing in Toronto of a schizophrenic by a cop is a good example. The Friends of Schizophrenics responded that this was unfortunate and that families should be better informed, but they did nothing to alleviate the public impression that schizophrenics are dangerous. Nor did they make a plea for training programmes for police officers. In fact, schizophrenics are less dangerous than

so-called normals, but this is another issue. The basic point which the Friends of Schizophrenics make is that the family is the proper locus of analysis and treatment and that any legislation which purports to deal with issues on a broader social basis amounts to an attack on the family. Notice as well that they do not call themselves families of schizophrenics or relatives of schizophrenics, but rather the cosier 'Friends' of schizophrenics. As the saying goes, "with friends like these..."

The family may have been given too much exposure during this entire debate and we can learn something from what is common to the failures of R.D.Laing and Dan Quayle. Insisting in public debate that complex issues be brought back to the family for analysis might well be a losing proposition, whether this is done on the left or the right. The best thing to do may be to ignore this ideological construct (and most efficient consumption machine) called the nuclear family and hope it just goes away. At the very least it is a mistake to use a theory of family interaction to critique the family (i.e., Freud) and it is confusing at best to blame families (i.e., Laing), for what are broad issues of subjectivity and power.

Alex Ferentzy is a writer living in Toronto.

Further Reading

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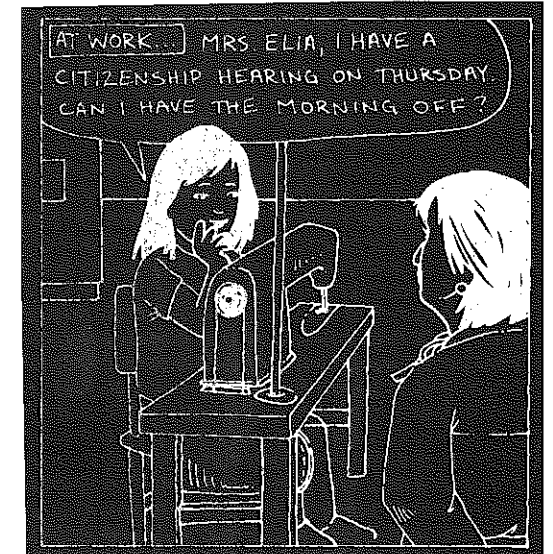


HERE INDEED ARE SYMBOLS OF CANADA'S GLORIOUS PAST...

WHOSE HISTORY?

Advertisement by Stephen Foster

MULTI-CULTURALISM IN THE ESL BUREAU-CRACY



by Jeremy Stolow



I have always thought I knew what multiculturalism meant. After all, I'm supposed to be living it, aren't I? I'm a Jewish anglophone and my 'co-' is a Catholic francophone. I enjoy Indian food, I listen to African music and I wear South American sweaters. I've got friends from Argentina, Haiti, Hong Kong, St. Lucia, Italy, Ghana and Germany. 'Being' multicultural feels good.

EXCURSIONS

But

what is this word supposed to refer to? Those who 'practice' it fancy that they are partaking

in a 'national dialogue' that weaves the ever-growing fabric of our 'cultural mosaic.' Indeed, Canada is a nation filled with many people of distinct ethnic, cultural, and geo-political origins, who speak different languages and live in different communities: a society where people share, exchange, and (mis)interpret each other's cultures, languages, heritages, and even the symbols and images of each other's cultures.

We often construe the intricacies and implications of living in such a 'multicultural society' as being defined in and through a 'dialogue' about its meaning. As citizens and as critics we assume that we have the power to propose — if not impose — our ideas and dreams about the kind of society we live in, and the kind of society it could be. Be that as it may, there must be more to multiculturalism than saying that we 'believe in it.'

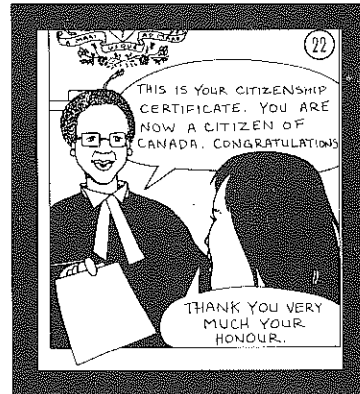
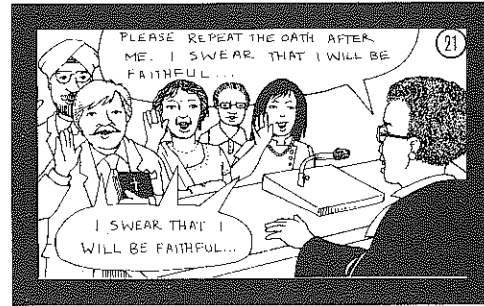
Whatever the pleasure we might generate employing such homilies, we cannot escape the fact that our colloquial sense of the word is entangled in a morass of institutional definitions: government statistics, race relations guidelines, policy statements for newcomer services, and so on. This merits a pause for consideration if only because there is no way to understand our 'national dialogue' without seeing the ways in which its very words are being put to use by our government bureaucracies today.

Working as an instructor of English as a Second Language (ESL) for the Toronto Board of Education (TBE) and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture (OMCC) over the past few years has acquainted me with the definition of multiculturalism as it is found in government services which come into direct contact with a diverse range of communities. ESL instructors — as agents of the Canadian government bureaucracy — are some of the principal disseminators of this pre-packaged multiculturalism; it dribbles out of the pen of every memo-writer and off the tongue of every petty bureaucrat in the ESL racket. But there is

more to this than saying that people use the word because it has become 'official policy.'

What strikes me is rather how it is increasingly seen as a priority for bureaucracies to explain what multiculturalism means to all the immigrants and refugees who come to Canada. If you're going to stay here, you had better learn about our multicultural society. But please don't 'pick it up' on the streets. Let the government take care of this. Excepting matters of classroom 'management' in a multi-racial and multi-ethnic environment, why should ESL instructors be so concerned with the meaning of multiculturalism? If this question is unimportant to some, ESL bureaucrats have given this matter a great deal of thought. Their answer is found in the 'preface to the instructor' of any Canadian ESL manual, where it is argued that the business of teaching ESL must amount to more than merely imparting needed language skills and information; it must also consist in preparing one for the practice of 'participation in Canadian society at large.'

The ESL instructor is thus supposed to share with the student (read: potential citizen) an examination of the 'practical significance' of assimilation as it pertains to the 'ordinary' everyday life practices of 'ordinary people.' Lesson number one: our society is a multicultural mosaic in which everyone is tolerant of everyone else, and all traditions are maintained within the strict boundaries of this 'peaceful co-existence.' Lesson number two: believe what the ESL instructor has to say because she is the moral authority so far as the business of preparing for everyday life in Canada is concerned.



However well-intentioned we may be, when we seek to 'inform' immigrants and refugees about life in Canada, we promote a distorted image, and thus involve ourselves in a process of indoctrination as to how one ought to live. For it is one thing to spell out one's ideas about what makes a good society in the context of a 'dialogue'; it is quite another to present these same ideas to people not equipped with the historical and linguistic baggage to decide for themselves what Canada is like, and hence what being a Canadian might mean. Despite the disclaimers that pepper all the books — that there is no single way to define being Canadian for all people — there is an iconography at play in most ESL material I have come across regarding both the image of the good life in Canada and the corresponding image of 'the good Canadian.'

The good 'newcomer-Canadian' not only works hard (read: doesn't stay on welfare for too long) and obeys the laws about behaving in public (read: doesn't drink or urinate in public), but also celebrates the diversity of Canadian heritages (read: learns to conceal racism the way all other Canadians do). What is of interest to me here is that ESL instructors — and with them, all the various agents of government settlement services — have not always operated with such directives in mind. In fact, it doesn't take a historian of Canadian immigration policy to know that there was a time when the issue of how newcomers are to assimilate into Canadian society was articulated quite differently. Arriving at the shores of a nation where 'concerns' about potential 'migration risks' — enemy aliens, strike leaders, religious pacifists, the yellow threat — were openly voiced, the immigrant's experience of the government was at best that of an unsympathetic host. Often, this meant falling prey to those (read: sweatshop owners and their friends) eager to take advantage of a cheap labour force unable to speak the dominant language and ignorant of the law.

Canadian governments of the past held little interest in whether immigrants 'sank or swam,' and certainly didn't bother to entertain considerations of cultural assimilation and integration with respect to the newcomer. By contrast, the governments of today assure us that they are concerned about settling immigrants and refugees, and more specifically, that they understand it to be their responsibility to help newcomers assimilate into our 'multicultural soci-



ety.' In other words, even if bureaucracies such as Employment and Immigration, Citizenship and Culture, the boards of education and Metro Services still seem to harbour 'cold shoulder' policies, what has become an issue now is the question of how newcomers are supposed to understand themselves in relation to their new 'hosts.'

If the concrete, material terms in which newcomers to Canada are expected to assimilate into 'our' society have not changed all that much, there has been a decisive shift in concern about how smoothly and how effectively this process of assimilation is being carried out, and in tandem with this, a far-reaching rationalization of the government services responsible for keeping this process from straying off course. Consider the redefinition of the role of the ESL instructor in Toronto. I began teaching ESL in Toronto for the TBE when teachers were hired according to the exigencies of demand rather than their merit or their conformity with the aspirations of a 'profession.' If the questions raised at my job interview indicated that my superiors had begun to take interest in what kind of people should be teaching ESL, this was certainly something new. Most of the teachers who were hired a couple years before me found that the only identifiable prerequisites for working as an ESL teacher were 'a good command of English grammar' and 'clear diction.'

The ESL instructors of today, however, are expected to articulate and monitor their own advancement as 'professionals' through a systematic procedure of mutual surveillance, and to express their professional aspirations, among which figures the promotion of multiculturalism, in process-

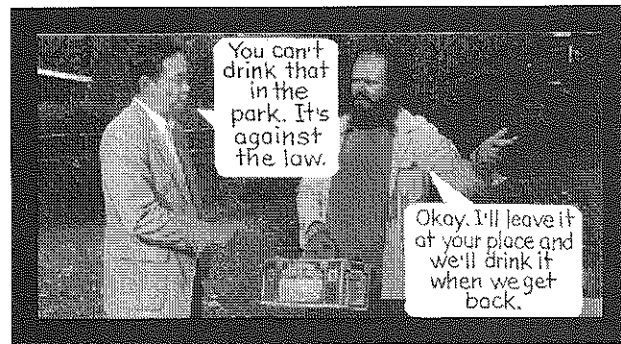
es which have been borrowed from manager training courses. What is of significance here is that ESL instructors have come to assume the role of managers, not just of language learning but also of classroom behaviour — the prolegomenon to functioning in a regulated public space 'out on the street' — and of the representation of Canada's multicultural society. Nowadays, what with the careful planning of materials designed to respond to all the anticipated questions and concerns of the newcomers — everything from chatty newspapers replete with 'immigrant success stories' to prudish lesson materials from which one learns how to obey the law and 'behave normally' — instructors have effectively been relieved of all responsibility for representing Canadian society to their students on their own terms. We perform our duties in tandem with the interests and exigencies of a bureaucratic apparatus formed to manipulate this intrinsically 'malleable' and 'powerless' immigrant population.

Prior to this 'managerialization' of ESL instruction, there seems to have been a virtual absence of coherent policies with respect to the conduct and behaviour of the instructor. ESL instructors used to be left to their own devices, to 'fend for themselves' or at best consult each other in the adoption of any measures. The 'quality' of adult ESL education was subject to the whims of the instructor. Some teachers behaved abominably, and reflected the prejudices and ignorance of white, middle class, Canadian society about other cultures immediately and without much deliberation; others demonstrated a bit more self-consciousness with respect to their position as teachers, and were more disposed to treating their students not like children, but like people from whom a great deal could be learned. But whatever their individual disposition, all teachers were expected to cope with the flood of 'cultural' questions they faced daily from their students largely as they saw fit.

Now, whatever one may wish to say about which way is better, what I find so crucial to note is that the newcomers of the past were not so decisively delivered into the hands of smarmy bureaucrats who have made it their business to 'take care' of everything newcomers might and ought to think about life in Canada. The adoption of official policies like the 'promotion of multiculturalism' by the OMCC or the TBE has effected very few material transformations in the conditions of labour or social co-existence for Canada's 'diverse mosaic.' The question obtrudes, then, why so much attention has been given to this policy: why it appears to be implemented so universally and so vigorously, and yet so insincerely. To phrase this somewhat differently I would like to ask why in a school like Ontario Welcome House (jointly run by the TBE and the OMCC), which prides itself on meticulously adhering to the 'official' policy of multiculturalism, are students harassed, subjected to trivializing prejudices, and brushed aside precisely when their day-to-day needs are brought to the fore, by the very same people who act as the agents of these official policies?

The ever-growing litany of 'incidents' I have wit-

nessed, participated in, or heard about in my experience as an ESL teacher has led me to conclude that these cannot simply be dismissed as coincidental or unrepresentative. Stories constantly surface, such as when a student complained that his teacher, who was easily bothered by cigarettes, would not allow him back into the classroom after he had been smoking unless he first brushed his teeth and washed his hands. Another story reports a teacher who locks the door of his classroom before he begins class so that, as he puts it, "latecomers can't sneak in," despite his knowing that most of his students come rushing to class after a long day of cleaning toilets at the Eaton Centre, working in sweatshops, or hanging around the welfare office only to be told to return the next day. Or is the 'point of view of the student' really taken into consideration when another instructor dragoons her classes into memorizing the Canadian national anthem without her students being able to understand most of the lyrics?



Such stories could fill volumes: OMCC-sponsored Santa Claus contests, lessons about dental hygiene, Father's Day poetry, warnings about urinating in public, meritocratic 'self-worth' sessions. Nothing is too trivial to be considered as the basis for something that newcomers should worry about, what they should find funny, what to buy, how to behave. Nothing is left out in the 'preparation' of the

newcomer for her/his public life in 'our' multicultural society. This institutionalized response to the inter- and multi-cultural production of life is essentially a 'bureaucratic' endeavour; it is one which seeks to claim responsibility for the welter of the quotidian experiences of contemporary Canadian society.

This notion of responsibility merits further thought. For if we (government agents, politicians, lobby group members, or even just 'concerned' citizens) wish to say we are 'responsible' for multiculturalism, then we are saying that we have power over it, that we wish to determine it, to manage it, to legislate it. Multiculturalism thus increasingly comes to be seen as a situation in need of a definition: a host of social relations that 'must be controlled.' But what does it mean to say that things appear out of control? "Without a multiculturalism policy, there would be racism and ethnic conflict." I'll bet you've heard that argument before. But should any proposal for syncretism of supposedly 'warring ethnic cultures' be left to stand above critical examination? If multiculturalism is supposed to 'bring us together,' what kind of a 'together' are we invoking?

One might be tempted to ask whether there really is such a thing as a 'multi-culture' *per se*, and not just different cultures. Perhaps even the use of the word 'culture' in the plural (as if one could talk about discrete, bounded cultural entities) is suspect, and we should restrict ourselves to speaking about 'culture' and its production and reproduction. But however we might wish to tackle this problem, it seems that within the confines of government bureaucracies this question has been addressed by construing multiculturalism as a Canadian incarnation of Esperanto: an utterly con-

structed state of affairs where all cultures are 'blended together' and homeomorphized. It is precisely at this point that the inherent contradiction of the term multiculturalism emerges. It purports to speak of a utopian conviviality, but achieves nothing (except relieving a bit of guilt), since it doesn't refer to anything. It claims to present an ideal context for cultural differences to co-exist, but instead it merely idealizes the context in which different cultures do exist.

In the hands of the bureaucrats, the word multiculturalism lacks positive content. At worst, multiculturalism policy is nothing but the attempt to 'place' us on the map of the status quo. At best, it is the promotion of certain cultural stereotypes — in this case those propagated by the Canadian middle class (of which I and many other ESL teachers are a part), phrased in terms of a dehistoricized and decontextualized iconography which can appear anywhere at any time: Thai food, world beat music, third world clothing, and so on. And what is eradicated formally (i.e., cultural differences) is tolerated in practice: segregation, division, unequal treatment, and institutionalized sexism and racism.

Of course, one would do well by asking whether instructors actually bother to read the books that the bureaucrats write, and whether what is enacted in the classroom in any way resembles what is spelled out in these official guidelines. The short and obvious answer is that there are hundreds of versions of what happens in the ESL classroom, ranging from the strictest adherence to the letter of OMCC and TBE materials to outright subversion of these doctrines. The longer and less clear answer involves the problem of whether the idea of resistance or subversion — of the instructor to the ESL bureaucracy or the student to the instructor — is really the key issue given circumstances where the force of the word has moved from the mouth of the instructor to the printed text with which she comes armed every day. The ESL discourse I have invoked here has not 'replaced' the instructor; but it has transformed the context in which she functions, as have the massive transformations in the institutional structures which define ESL instruction in general.

My point has not been so much to sketch the contours of a tentacular, 'Big-Brother' styled bureaucracy that

sets itself the task of controlling the few cubic centimetres left where resistance to the status quo might germinate. Bureaucracies, after all, are still composed of people whose efforts are as much determined by 'culture-at-large' (shopping, reading *The Sun*, swapping fishing stories, listening to the radio) as by the fully explicit and supposedly rational interests that sociologists speak about. Given this, perhaps there is no way to speak about how bureaucracies communicate with 'society-at-large' without at the same time perpetrating a myth about their coherent and bounded identities, if not their outright omnipotence.

The more interesting question, it seems to me, is one of how the instrumentalist mentality — part and parcel with the formation of the model of a 'successful newcomer' — which at one time signalled the presence of Big-Brother bureaucracy comes to inhabit the numerous discursive positions in the social space I have been trying to characterize, just as it inhabits, in another shape, other social roles which end up taking on similar characteristics: the realms of consumption, entertainment, leisure, therapy, and so forth. The 'management' of ESL students can provide an interesting illumination of the practice of our own self-administration in this bureaucratic society of controlled consumption. What concerns us about the newcomer is what concerns us about ourselves: a regulated public space where whatever differences that emerge can be managed or controlled.

This might cast a different light on any critique of multiculturalism in general. I have mentioned the unease that some experience over the terms in which inter-cultural activities are spiralling out of the control of the official organs which were set up to 'manage' such things. For my part, I have had to come to terms with the fact that my students had various reasons for coming to my ESL class, most of which did not conform to

my own expectations as the class 'leader,' and with the fact that the many cultures I have dealt with did not so perfectly fit into my model of 'multiculturalism.' I remember a Halloween party where my students were not particularly interested in what I had to say about 'what halloween means,' but instead grafted to it their own ideas about Harvest festivals. I also remember having had a Lebanese student in my class who was more interested in learning Vietnamese than English since it proved to be quite useful among the circles he traversed. Perhaps concrete 'multicultural' events such as these can never be reined in by institutional frameworks. The frustration that 'we' (?) ESL instructors sometimes feel about how different (how much more 'racist,' how unlike 'us') many of our students seem might not be the terrible thing that 'we' suppose. At the very least, it should provide an occasion to reconsider what I am trying to do when I begin a sentence with "In Canada, we"

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re thinking

rethinking

marxism:

A report from the "Marxism in the New World Order: Crises & Possibilities Conference"

by
**Joe Galbo
&
Miriam Jones**

Intro:

The post-cold war era is a tangled web of global tensions, xenophobia, racist and populist movements, economic uncertainties, and an unchallenged American hegemony that is deeply riven and unsure of its capacities or willingness to lead. It is a time, as Gramsci put it during the rise of European Fascism, "when the old is dying and the new cannot be born." In this interregnum many strange things can happen. While American politicians of both parties are claiming the birth of a New World Order, other critics are bleakly announcing the emergence of a protracted crisis of global capitalism. No one, and certainly no-one on the left, seems to have ready answers about how to meet the upcoming challenges, though there is room for some guarded optimism.

No longer weighed down by the bogeymen of the Soviet Union, many western leftists, and in particular American Marxists, find themselves in a unique position to reconsider the rich legacy of their intellectual and political traditions. Over the past 40 years Marxism has expanded from a focused economic theory of social change into a much wider amalgam of theoretical discourses and new social movements. Marxism has continued to provide one of the richest assemblages of theory, experience and talent for the new social movements of feminism, post-colonial resistance, anti-racism, AIDS activism, and the ecology movements. There is more than a glimmer of hope that a new Marxist thinking, decentered and more attuned to the breadth of contemporary political struggles, can provide the critical thrust for a radical democratic coalition and new types of progressive politics.

Marxism in the New World Order: Crises and Possibilities, a three day conference sponsored by the journal *Rethinking Marxism* which featured more than 140 panels, roundtables,

exhibits, and three plenaries, captured some of the eclecticism of current Marxist thinking and wrestled with the difficult questions of the present global crisis. Held on the campus of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the conference brought together over 2,000 leftist economists, cultural critics, historians, philosophers and activists, nearly double the number of participants at the first conference three years ago. It was an opportunity for progressive intellectuals to take stock of what they are doing in their own cultural and political work, to be reminded afresh that there are possibilities for building a social order *not* based on exploitation and class oppression, and to keep alive and continue to evaluate and learn from the history of socialism. The global contributions of socialism have been deeply significant and emancipatory, and if a counter-hegemonic political culture is to be sustained, one cannot forget the experience of previous generations.

Antonio Collari, one of the conference organizers, stressed that careful attention was paid "to getting as many voices heard as possi-

ble and to organizing a rich diversity of outlooks." Nevertheless, the contradictory position of a Marxist movement within the United States was quite glaring. Many of the sessions included a mixture of notable and less well-known critics and activists. The bulk of the presenters were academics with a good sprinkling of cultural workers but relatively few people who were, primarily, community and labour activists or members of the organized left. A considerable number of Canadians were there: Leo Panitch, Pat Armstrong, Alex Wilson, Greg Albo, Marie-Christine Leps, and Norman Feltes all presented papers. Largely because in the United States Marxism is closely bound to academia, sessions on theory, ranging from Althusser to Zizek, were prominent. On balance, however, the conference was not as esoteric as most academic meetings. The discussions were accessible and most of the speakers dealt with specific cultural and political themes. And throughout the conference



The message was quite clear that class, that often maligned term in the discourse of contemporary theory, has not disappeared either as an agent of history or as an important catalyst for social change, though the definition has been modified by new political realities.

From Old Left to New Left

The difficulties that the left faces in the 90s have some of their roots in the political and cultural transformations that have taken place since 1968. There is nothing magical about the year 1968 — in fact it has its own built-in problems of periodization — but it does provide a useful marker for discussing the shifts that occurred between the Old Left and the New (which are in themselves somewhat totalizing categories), and for identifying some of the themes and problems that have since become evident. Of all the speakers in the plenary sessions it was, perhaps predictably, Immanuel Wallerstein who took it upon himself to provide a broad analysis of this transition. But nearly all the speakers alluded to or relied on the implicit assumptions of this shift and the consequences it had on Marxist political organizing and theoretical development.

According to the generally accepted narrative, by the end of the 60s the New Left had successfully challenged the hardened ideas of the Old Left. As the failure of socialism in the Soviet Union became apparent, many western Marxists questioned the wisdom of first taking state power and later transforming society without wider cultural and political preparation. While vanguardism remained rooted in a few increasingly marginal Marxist parties in the west many people on the left had become suspicious of centralized control and the idea that a single cohesive party should organize political activity. As a consequence of the cultural and political upheavals of the 60s a New Left politics gradually emerged that was not only more democratic and less centrally controlled but decidedly more critical of the traditional tenets of Marxism. There was a growing confidence that democracy was profoundly anti-capitalist and indeed a revolutionary rather than merely a bourgeois idea that blocked revolutionary action. Economic production, which was often touted as the essential prerequisite for socialist construction, was soundly criticized by new emerging political groups in terms of environmental issues and its commodification of everyday life. At the same time, faith in science as the foundation of a socialist utopia gave way to an emerging skepticism about science and the notion of a new complex relationship between scientific and technological determinism on the one hand, and free will on the other.

The chief transformation in Marxist thinking, however, came about with the reformulation of the idea that conflict between capital and labour is fundamental, while other conflicts based on gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality are secondary and derivative. By the end of the 70s this central argument was no longer tenable. Economist Richard Wolff underscored this point during his plenary talk: "the traditional Marxist focus on class and the exploitation and undemocratic appropriation of surplus by a tiny minority must now be seen more or less as one perspective that includes others." Within contemporary Marxism it is now widely recognised that the current emphases on anti-racism,

feminism and subaltern studies are generating different knowledges and irreducibly different ways of making sense of the world, and that these social movements are integral to the equation of social change.

But if the New Left is now multifaceted it is also less coherent. Ever since 1968, argued Wallerstein, there have been an evolving panoply of parties and what he calls anti-systemic movements: the women's movement, anti-racist struggles and gay and lesbian liberation among them. In the 1980s in the United States there was an attempt to create a "Rainbow Coalition" of such movements, but very little came of it as Jessie Jackson's presidential campaign floundered, despite the gains outlined by Vincente Navarro in the final plenary. These movements, while successful in their attacks on the premises of the Old Left, have often fallen short of providing strong alternative strategies and vision. As we write this, the ability of the various autonomous forces on the left to consolidate is being threatened by other events. In the 1990s, in the midst of an economic recession, we are witnessing the spread of new movements which are racist, nationalist and populist and which often use themes and language that overlap with those of the anti-systemic movements. There is enormous risk of political confusion. So in essence we are, according to Wallerstein, "exhausted and eclectic, with no visible concept of a revolution, with new anti-systemic movements that are vigorous but with a narrower strategic vision, while new racist and populist movements are growing in strength."

The call for coalition building can be understood and accepted intellectually by many socialists, yet the task is by no means simple. Ralph Miliband struck a responsive chord when he suggested that what prevents the left from making lasting alliances is a deep sense of skepticism and cynicism about the possibility of a new social order. The culture of the left, Miliband argued, is profoundly dispirited. It is the first time since the French Revolution that so few western leftists have believed in the idea of social transformation. The intellectual climate seems to be one of despair, in which many people either accept Jean-Francois Lyotard's discouraging idea that metanarratives are dead, illusionary and sinister, or embrace the more explicitly conservative view of Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis that liberal and market capitalism is the highest level human society can reach and hence the terminus of history. Variations on the "end of ideology" theme have been internalised by many socialists and have become, Miliband argued, "the shameful little secret of the left." The retreat that we have witnessed in the left is unwarranted. Nor should we be overwhelmed with pessimism by the rise of neo-fascism in the west. These groups continue to be a small minority irredeemably lost to progressive movements. While it is true that some may have sympathies or may passively support them, on the whole, most people will not support parties or groups committed to insurrectionary projects.

Nearly all the speakers exhorted the audience not to forget that we live in a capitalist system which is inherently based on domination and exploitation. For all its democratic claims, this is a system that is fundamentally oligarchic, but which can take democratic forms in the sense that social pressure from below has helped to push back the frontiers of exploitation. The socialist project, as Miliband in particular reminded his listeners, must regain its confidence and spirit

by continually pushing for the radical extension of bourgeois democracy. Socialism is both reformist and revolutionary, demanding both an extension of democratic rights and a new economic equality. Ultimately, concluded Miliband, supporting the ideas of other speakers, socialists must demand the radical reorganization of the economy in the direction of a mixed economy with a predominantly public sector and a regulated private sector, for there can be no freedom without economic justice.

African-American activist and critic Manning Marable echoed these sentiments and contributed other explanations for the inability of the left to support and sustain a broad coalition for democratic change. He quite correctly pointed out that the building of a radical democracy will fail, and will deserve to fail, unless progressives squarely confront the issue of race. In the United States today, argued Marable, nearly 30% of the population is either Latino, Native American, African-American or Asian-American. By the middle of the 21st century over half of the population of the United States will consist of people of colour. Marable pointedly asked the audience why, given this basic reality, most socialist organizations have consistently failed to attract these constituencies and why most whites who consider themselves Marxists have little or no intimate contact with grass-roots organizing efforts among inner-city working people, the poor and the homeless.

The intricacies and complexities of developing both local and global anti-hegemonic alliances were further examined by Gayatri Spivak from a subaltern perspective. Post-colonial development continues the work that colonial racism began in previous generations. What we see today in the developing world is a new form of re-colonialization based on the principle of the "free" market and export-driven economies. For many developing countries, argued Spivak, the state is unable to resist the pressures of the World Bank or the interests of multinationals. Consequently, the new social movements within the Third World are learning the importance of bypassing the state and building a new internationalism. Her examples here were what she termed "non-Eurocentric feminists," and ecological and other progressive movements which confront the issues that divide people because of their different economic and cultural locations.

Once again the terms of a political alliance among these groups are extremely complex and fragile. Population control and environmental protection, for instance, mean radically different things and are tied to different political interests, discourses and knowledges in the west than in subaltern nations. Thus, the political desires of subaltern groups for self-sufficient economic development cannot be identified with the desires and interests of the green movements in the west and are on occasion radically opposed to them. Similarly, the struggles of western feminist movements for abortion and reproductive rights cannot be separated from the more ominous shadow of enforced population control in the Third World. Spivak pointed out that the "consumption explosion" in the USA was far more dangerous than any "population explosion" elsewhere, and went on to critique the rights-based discourse of the liberal strain of the pro-choice movement, which she rejected in favour of a model of freedom as political means rather than as some nebulous and ever-retreating "end." Spivak could be ques-

tioned here for seeming to conflate western women into one (privileged) group, for certainly women of colour and poor and working-class women here in North America have been equally critical of the emptiness of the liberal model of "choice." The debates about political strategies around reproductive rights and freedoms, and reproductive technologies, are only going to intensify. Nevertheless, Spivak's use of FINRRAGE (Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering) as an example of a new kind of non-hierarchical international political organizing, the focus of which is not to take, and in effect replicate, state power, but to diffuse it, was evocative.

Many of the speakers in the three plenary sessions took the debate in different directions. The feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham talked about what feminists can reclaim from Marxism — its commitment to social justice, its large vision of social change and its thorough historical analysis — and also about what Marx missed and what Marxists have been slow to recover: namely, the various feminist contributions to socialism. The modern feminist movements in the past two decades have struggled with the tensions between self-emancipation and social emancipation. Yet these debates have been going on within the largely forgotten history of feminist socialism for over 100 years and are linked with women's knowledge that their subordination is internalised and their oppression closely tied to the under-examined area of sexuality and the economic organization of the household. For women, socialism has been experienced historically as a deeply transformative experience, but they have also had to contend with an entrenched male thinking that marginalized their contributions and confined them to issues of reproduction while men took care of the more "important" problem of production.

While Rowbotham exhorted Marxists to reclaim the buried experiences of socialist feminists, it was Belgian Marxist Ernest Mandel who gave the most rousing speech of the conference and brought the audience to its feet with thunderous applause and fists clenched in solidarity. Mandel is a veteran of many important battles in the movement, which, as he reminded everyone, is about social justice, equality and fundamental liberty. These are the themes, he declared, that are central to Marxism and that need to be restated and reclaimed.

Crises and Possibilities

MARXISM in the New World Order

Daily Sessions

The more traditional economic and historical concerns of Marxists were clearly evident, but the conference was notable for its breadth of attention to social movements and cultural issues. The latter were nicely supplemented by two art exhibits, "This Is My Body: This Is My Blood," about the gendered, class- and race-encoded body as a contested



political site, and "ReSituations: A detour into the throbbing heart of the mall," as well as by an array of films and videos such as Pratibha Parmar's *Khush* and *A Place of Rage*, Tony Buba's work on African-American steelworkers, and Laura Kipnis's *Marx: The video*.

There was a whole series of sessions on sexuality and queer studies with papers by Eve Sedgwick on "Queer Performativity" in which she explored the "queer" body as a site of unusable social meaning, and Cindy Patton on AIDS discourse. Rosemary Hennessy challenged the left for its silence on queer theory; she critiqued Judith Butler and others who reduce queerness to signifying play and narrative strategies, and looked to a solidly materialist queer theory which challenges the bourgeois subject, but which also comes to terms with patriarchy and capitalism. Meredith Michaels explored the possibilities reproductive technologies such as surrogacy may hold, if women can appropriate them, for assisting in the deconstruction of the heterosexual nuclear family. There were also a number of papers which dealt with sexuality in history: Chrys Ingraham on the Comstock Act of 1873, in which she spoke of middle-class interests in working-class reproduction; Michelle Barale's analysis of the rhetorical strategies of 1950s lesbian pulp novel cover art; and Barbara Epstein and Jennifer Terry, who each examined the marginalized ways in which homosexuality was constructed in the 1950s and 60s, in the popular media and in dominant psychological discourse, respectively.

There were a number of sessions on materialist literary criticism, as well as cultural studies and popular culture. Alan Wald's presentation in the session "Cultural Studies in Late Capitalism" was a very good example of the kind of exciting work that can be done in intellectual history. Arguing that cultural resistance is a good indicator of the strengths and weaknesses of emancipatory movements, Wald traced the various careers and work of a number of now half-forgotten working class, ethnic, gay and lesbian American leftist writers of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Writers such as Howard Fast, Pietro di Donato, James T. Ferrel, Tilly Olsen, Dorothy Doyle and Josephine Herbst not only contributed to an original non-doctrinaire proletarian literature that interrogated dominant representations, but are themselves inspiring figures whose work — some of it avowedly feminist and anti-racist — recorded the excluded memories and experiences of an oppositional left culture. Wald ended his talk with a critique of contemporary cultural studies for not being sufficiently interested in the cultural history of the American left. Barbara Harlow continued the theme of resistance literature by focussing on the current Irish literary and political scene. During discussion period she also pointed to the shortcomings of British cultural studies for paying scant attention to manifestations of Irish cultural resistance and Irish anti-colonial struggle. Both Harlow and Wald emphasized that there are some counter-productive tendencies in contemporary cultural studies: namely, its emphasis on theoretical abstraction and its lack of historical rootedness and empirical research. There were also several sessions on ecological issues — in some ways the most salient indication of a true paradigm shift on the left — with papers by Alex Wilson and Andrew Ross which examined our uses of the environment in refreshingly concrete and historicized ways.

On the second day of the conference there was a

wide-ranging roundtable, "The History of Modern Feminism," which included Sheila Rowbotham, Lourdes Beneria, Joy James, Cynthia Halpern, Barbara Joseph, Rosalyn Baxandall and Harriet Fraad. The panel raised important questions, even if they could not be fully answered, about different tendencies in feminism, the impact of Third World women's movements and questions of race and ethnicity on Western feminism, the relationship of feminism to other social movements and to socialism, and the integration of different oppressions, race, gender and class, despite the traditional foregrounding of the latter on the left.

What's Left? The New Internationalism.

The conference left us with a sense that Marxists in North America are living through a problematic historical moment that is simultaneously depressing, challenging and liberating. Many of the speakers stressed that a renewed commitment to internationalism is a crucial part of the solution. There are many problems that confront us today that cannot be addressed at the level of the nation-state, but must be articulated globally and require the active participation of socialists and progressives alike. Public health issues such as AIDS require international coordination and so must be addressed with a global strategy in mind. Women's oppression, as Sheila Rowbotham and Gayatri Spivak made clear, must also be seen within a complex structure of power, property and privilege. Women have a long history of resistance against systematic subordination, but their oppression is tied to global structures and must be perceived in international terms. Critical environmental problems such as the dangers of nuclear power and waste, acid rain, the depletion of the ozone layer and water and air pollution need to be linked by leftists with the labour movement, and it must be made clear that the export of manufacturing jobs and industries to developing countries is motivated not just by corporate desire for lower wages and higher profits, but by the wish to avoid even minimal pollution control and health and safety standards.

Finally, the basic strategy for building socialism, either in the United States or Canada, is inextricably linked with the deeper currents of the social protest movements: the struggles of trade unionists, gay and lesbian activists, peoples of colour, environmentalists, feminists, native peoples and the dispossessed. For the near future, as Manning Marable eloquently argued, the essential debate will not be between socialism and capitalism, but with the character and content of the capitalist social order. Progressives and Marxists should seek to strengthen their own counter-hegemonic movements in order to resist both the systemic racism and the new-found influence of xenophobic groupings. Such a strategy may not be "socialism" and it does have its drawbacks, rooted in "particularism" as Wallerstein pointed out, but it can provide the necessary bridge to the site from which a new socialism, which may take a form inconceivable to us now, can emerge.

Joe Galbo is a member of the Border/Lines collective; Miriam Jones is a reproductive rights activist with the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics.



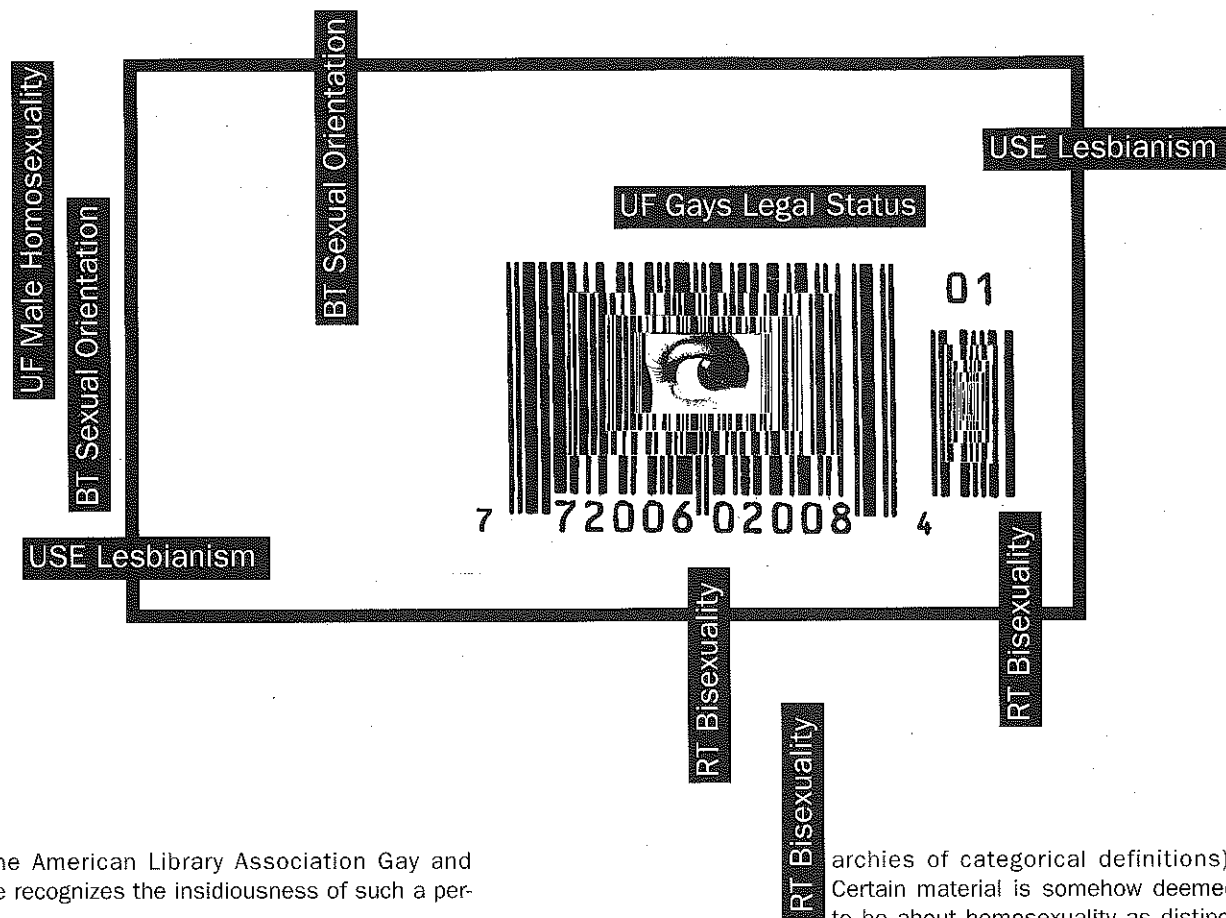
Browsing the Apparatus: homosexuality, classification, power/knowledge

By Nicholas Packwood

"Browsing" can be a dilettante's pursuit. It can also be a tactic of resistance. It is such an act in its negotiation of the territory of regular categories by extraordinary means. In browsing we have decided to disregard the elaborate systems by which knowledge is usually presented to us. In browsing we need have no specific purpose beyond our own enjoyment. We allow ourselves the luxury of surprise. "What is this?" "Who could have imagined we might find this here?"

I was browsing recently in the Maxwell MacOdrum Library when I had a nasty surprise. Everything that MacOdrum had to say about "homosexuality" seemed to sit on the shelves between everything it had to say about sex crimes on the one hand and prostitution on the other. This is not an accidental (dis)placement.

Ours is still a society which has very specific and unflattering ideas about homosexuality. My browsing did not reveal anything to contradict these constructions. Gay men, after all, are commonly held to be notorious for selling their bodies and for tampering with children.



The founder of the American Library Association Gay and Lesbian Task Force recognizes the insidiousness of such a perspective:

Today when I speak to gay groups and mention "the lies in the libraries," listeners know instantly what I mean. Most gays, it seems, at some point have gone to books in an effort to understand being gay or get some help in living as gay. What we found was strange to us (I'm the kind of person they're writing about but I'm not like that!) and cruelly clinical (there's nothing about love) and always bad (being this way seems grim and hopeless).

Barbara Gittings

While this is a common concern for lesbians and gay men, little has been written to challenge the established order either politically or theoretically. Browsing library literature written from 1967 on, I discovered only four articles under the headings homosexual, gay or American Library Association Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Three of these articles concern library services and none concerns reclassification of material related to lesbians or gay men.

What browsing performed for me was more fundamental than the simple assertion that services may usefully be provided to "homosexuals" in a library environment. I found a map of power, a guide through the ordering principles by which power places ideas and experience into categories and rigidifies knowledge. Before me on the shelves were the outlines of an "order of things" where it makes sense to put sex crimes, homosexuality and prostitution together. (This order posits categories as essential in themselves and implicitly imposes hier-

archies of categorical definitions). Certain material is somehow deemed to be about homosexuality as distinct from any other subject. More fundamental still is the constitution of homosexuality as a category which may be defined and delineated. Before me on the shelves this category was made concrete.

My browsing allowed me to become aware of a site. In a closed-stack library the taxonomy of power is less visible than in an open-stack library such as the MacOdrum. This visibility is a function both of access to a place where an order is made manifest on shelves and, further, of the ability to browse through those shelves. The shelves further serve to constrain means of accessing knowledge which do not fall within this taxonomy of knowledge by the way they physically channel bodies through the stacks. With this constraint in mind, though, it may yet be possible that, in browsing, the order of the catalogue may be circumvented and the nature of this ordering by classification be brought into question.

The operation of browsing illuminates an outline of power/knowledge. The shelves of the MacOdrum library represent nothing less than an undertaking to constitute a comprehensive map of the order of knowledge and power. If we take up this map we may liberate ourselves from our dependency upon the catalogue and the librarians who serve as the gatekeepers of knowledge. This is an expedition into the logic of power. Not only in the library are the categories apparent before us, but, with care, we may move through the system by which the library illustrates in microcosm the operations of the apparatus of power/knowledge in society at large.

homosexuality

The reality of the category of homosexuality is sustained only in a specific social constitution of parallel, oppositional and contiguous categories of gender, sex and sexuality. Outside of a specific historical and social moment there is no homosexuality, but only simple actions and desires which within a given apparatus are understood to be homosexual. MacOdrum inadvertently provides a veritable history of the formation of sexuality in the polyglot nature of material which it classifies as homosexual. Psychoanalytic material shares space with histories of Chinese courtly life and post-Stonewall Gay liberation. By some logic these materials are held to be the same. They are furthermore posited to be so "homosexual" in subject-orientation as to be categorized as homosexual and not as primarily psychological, historical or political. This may be seen as particularly important in a system where a work has to be "very homosexual" to be categorized as such. Material concerning alcoholism and homosexuality, for instance, is categorized with material concerning alcoholism not material concerning homosexuality.

Double entries of this sort enable a researcher to locate some material concerning the category of homosexuality only in subject areas outside of that category. This does not negate the posited stratification of categories, but serves to emphasize a hierarchical relation. In this sense the category of homosexuality is subordinated to other categories within the *dispositif* put forward in the MacOdrum taxonomy. This taxonomy of knowledge is socially contingent while attempting to represent itself as natural. It is hierarchical while making an appeal to common-sense. Moreover, it is a witness to its own prejudices while attempting to feign transparency.

the Library of Congress Classification Schedule

The Classification Schedule is one of several primary guides to the taxonomy established by the Library of Congress. The Union Catalogue is a comprehensive summary of material designated with a Library of Congress number. The Library of Congress Subject Headings provide signposts by which material ranged within taxonomies may be classified and sought out. Both the Subject Headings and Union Catalogue are readily available to patrons of the MacOdrum library attempting to find specific works or material in a general area of interest. The Classification Schedule is distinct from these other guides in that it is not a guide for research, but an outline of the physical disposition of material as it appears in the stacks. It is this guide that library cataloguers deploy in situating material both within the library physically and within the logic of the Library of Congress.

the site

The subject area of "homosexuality. lesbianism" - Library of Congress designation, HQ75 - is not only a region within a map of the logic of power, but also a place and time made physically concrete. Here, the discursive taxonomic abstraction is made articulate within a non-discursive institution. An enormous expenditure of resources is necessary for the specific organization of knowledge manifested on the fourth floor of

MacOdrum. This construction is no accident, but the result of a century of the agonizing operation of the logic of the Library of Congress and the circumstance of Carleton University's policy of acquisition in specific subject areas.

Even this is not the entirety of the site outlined by HQ75. An illustration of the moment which this space promotes could take the form of any one of dozens of encounters over my six years in the MacOdrum Library as a patron seeking out material concerning homosexuality. Rounding the corner into the HQ75 section a surprised face will look up at me and quickly down again. Within seconds one or both of us has either scuttled off or is carefully checking the other out.

ahh! Another queer!

It is ludicrous to pretend that a patron may anonymously peruse the subject area of homosexuality as if this subject had no connection to the violence which characterizes a homosexual life. The homosexual experience is one of subordination and separation from the norm. Any association with this category is potentially incriminating and, still worse, contaminating.

The terms "incriminating" and "contaminating" are not accidental. It is possible for a researcher to ponder material concerning Ukrainian-Canadians without being assumed to be a Ukrainian-Canadian or even sympathetic to Ukrainian-Canadians. This is not the case with material concerning homosexuality. An interest in this subject-area is supposed a deviant interest. This is not coincidental with an apparatus in which homosexual desire and behaviour are first categorized and are then understood to be criminal or pathological:

The establishment of homosexuality as a separated category goes hand in hand with its repression. On the one hand, we have the creation of a minority of "homosexuals," on the other, the transformation in the majority of the repressed homosexual elements of desire into the desire to repress. Hence sublimated homosexuality is the basis of the paranoia about homosexuality which pervades social behaviour.

Jeffrey Weeks

A similar case must be made for the categorized material which directly brackets homosexuality. The Library of Congress marks the categories of sex crimes (HQ64) and sadism/masochism/fetishism (HQ79) as being precisely contiguous with homosexuality. Would you take your mother to HQ79? Would you like your picture in the paper next to HQ64?

Clearly these subject-areas are not value-free. The HQ75 designation concerns work which is not culturally neutral, but which is loaded with pejorative denotative and connotative significance. When made concrete in the form of books on shelves this symbolic weight is maintained and serves to constitute a dangerous space in which a patron may be seen to demonstrate a criminal or unhealthy interest.

None of this is lost on the person whose desire is pejoratively categorized in this fashion and who wishes to explore material on lesbian or gay culture. The creation of this shameful site as a reification of legal and medical categories may be seen to be of tremendous importance to the constitution of identity in

those lesbians and gay men who come seeking knowledge of the self. These seekers find themselves in the midst of an institution whose operation systematically subordinates that selfhood. Joseph Harry points out that:

a significant minority of young gays have learned about homosexuality from books written by psychiatrists. In consequence, the teen-aged gay searching for identity with which to clothe his desires is offered one that is extremely negative. Some may give in to that identity and perceive themselves as mentally ill.

In this context the valuation of knowledge has direct consequences for those who must seek to understand themselves within an apparatus where certain desires and acts are shameful. In making concrete this form of knowledge and power, the library has further created a space where the person seeking this understanding must risk exposure of an illicit and contagious selfhood.

— hierarchy and subordination

Very specific and socially contingent assertions concerning sexuality and gender are collapsed in the HQ75 subject-heading of "homosexuality, lesbianism." A nineteenth-century logic is here incorporated into the taxonomy following the distinction between a male homosexual as a homosexual and a female homosexual as a lesbian. This typology is made explicit in the Subject Headings directory where for "Homosexuality, Female" the inquiring researcher is directed to "USE Lesbianism."

The assertion of a category of sexuality not only serves to valorize this category, but in its operation also legitimates the increasingly transparent associated and co-dependent categories of sex and gender. This valorization serves to concretize these categories within a taxonomy of knowledge and power and situates underlying frames of sex and gender within an all too obvious hierarchical relation. Lesbianism follows homosexuality and is subordinated within this category in precisely the fashion that topics concerning women are systematically subordinated to topics concerning men.

This hierarchical relation is regular, rigid and systematic. Its logic serves to assert certain categories of humanity, experience, being and knowledge over others. Under the heading of "Sexual behaviour and attitudes" the category of girl follows the category of boy (HQ27.3-HQ27.5). The category of men (HQ28) is followed by women (HQ29). HQ30 is a catch-all category further subordinated to the preceding categories in which the aged, the handicapped and the sick are conflated.

The category of homosexuality is systematically subordinated following the same logic. Under the subject area of "Sex instruction and sexual ethics" HQ55 is a single classification in which the aged and homosexual men are conflated. Lesbianism does not suffer the same comparison but is simply erased. This precise logic is represented again in general works concerning alcoholism where HV5138 "Alcohol and the aged" is contiguous with HV5139 "Alcohol and homosexuals." The precise logic by which these two categories are arbitrarily associated is a subject

of investigation in itself. It is sufficient for the purposes of this investigation that the Classification Schedule regularly links these categories.



— browsing as derive and detournement

The Library of Congress Classification Schedule may be understood as a "system of relations that can be established between... elements." Multiple overlapping strata of sex and sexuality, gender and hierarchy are meticulously ordered in nothing less than an attempt to categorize all knowledge. As a representation of our society in its construction of power/knowledge the classification schedule provides an opportunity for substantial archaeological exploration. As a result of it we can move into a space at random and discover meaning in everything we stumble across.

The MacOdrum Library represents a concrete manifestation of the abstract disposition which is the taxonomy of knowledge/power articulated in the Classification Schedule. The physical site is precisely contiguous with the site of multiple epistemes and as we meander through the one we do so through the other. For this expedition we are either limited to the strict channels afforded us by the apparatus or we may decide to browse, to wander off the posted route.

Guy-Ernest Debord struggled with parallel restrictions in his *Memoires* of 1957 and his *Society of the Spectacle* of 1967. His "situations" may be understood as parallel to and subversive of the rigid dispositions apparent in the Schedule. Urban architectural forms yield an accurate map of modernity as does the physical institution of the library. Both models constitute maps of an underlying apparatus of rationality and feigned non-aesthetic functionalism. Both reveal a logic of individuation and restriction and of systematic limitation and exclusion.

Debord's "syntax" of society is remarkably post-structural in its acknowledgement of context and emphasis upon a reflexive discourse. With this in mind we may understand the Classification Schedule and urban geography as parallel narratives. Debord's strategy of resistance takes two forms: "the *dérive*," a drift down city streets in search of signs of attraction or repulsion, and "*détournement*," the theft of aesthetic artifacts from their contexts and their diversion into contexts of one's own device." Might we drift through the stacks without apparent aim and take to ourselves those treasures which luck presents us

with? Might we disregard the organization and simply learn from whatever we find? Do I need to discover myself only in HQ75 - a category of the apparatus and not of my own creation?

Debord's tactic may be understood as "browsing the city" or more fundamentally "browsing the apparatus." We do not ignore the safety promised in the signposts we are offered; we simply disregard it in favour of adventure:

t hat was the burden assumed by those who committed themselves to a life of permanent novelty. Each day the members of the LI (Lettrist International) would walk the streets not as prisoners of wages and prices, not as employees, shoppers or tourists, but as travellers in a labyrinth revealed by their wish to find it. Each day they would case the spectacles in art and advertising, news and history, pillage bits and pieces, and make them speak in new tongues, in a counterlanguage, in every instance leaving a small hole in the great spectacle of social life, at least as it governed the group's own space and time. Playing a "game of freedom"—"a systematic questioning," Debord said, "of all the diversions and works of a society, a total critique of its ideas of happiness"—the LI would become "the masters and possessors of their own lives."

Greil Marcus

Alongside this "systematic questioning" we may perform a questioning of the system. As we delve into the syntax of the social life - its underlying epistemological assertions, its tyranny over knowledge and subsequent delineation of our selfhood - we may begin to free ourselves from our allotted disposition and rove the stacks at will.

Nicholas Packwood is a Carleton University M.A. student in cultural anthropology studying the relationship of AIDS to culture.

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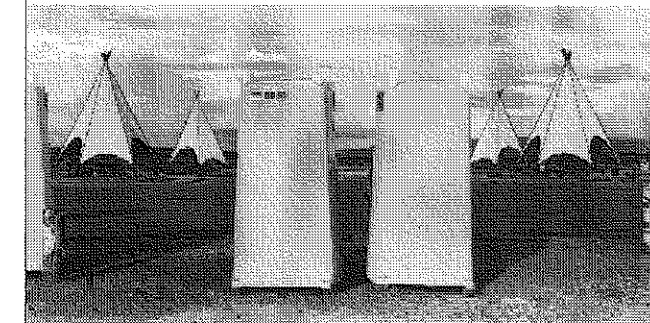
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by Robyn Gillam

AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL THEORY: CRITIQUES & POSSIBILITIES*

When I left Australia fifteen years ago, the discipline of cultural studies did not exist.

Now, as a practice based on the study of mass or popular culture from the neo-Marxist perspective, cultural studies is one of the fastest growing and prestigious areas of academe. Australian contributions to cultural studies have played a surprisingly large role in this process. I found out more about this in 1991, during a brief visit to Melbourne and Sydney. I spoke to some of the most active practitioners of Australian cultural studies, including Jenny Lee, Editor of *Meanjin*, McKenzie Wark of Macquarie University, Stephen Muecke of the University of Technology Sydney, and Helen Grace of the University of Western Sydney.

ARTICLES

Over the past ten years, Australian Cultural Theory has developed as a recognizable field of discourse. It has produced such important writers as the cultural theorist Meaghan Morris,

the philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, and historians like Ian Hunter and Tony Bennett. It has explored a variety of themes and has debated them. In the beginning, few of these debates were actually carried on in an academic setting.

Australian has a small population of sixteen million people. 160,000 of these are of aboriginal descent and the rest are made up of settlers from Europe (in the past, principally Britain) and, in increasing numbers, Asia and the Pacific. Formerly, the Australian economy was dependent on the export of raw materials such as agricultural products and minerals, but, as elsewhere, restructuring of markets for these commodities has put pressure on Australia's high standard of living.

Australian political consensus fractured in the wake of a small but vociferous anti-war movement in the late sixties. The rise of feminism shortly thereafter, along with Gay Liberation, challenged the patriarchal and homophobic character of the Australian social fabric. The early seventies also saw the rise of the Aboriginal Land

Rights Movement, which, whatever its success as a strategy for self-government, irrevocably shifted the moral centre of gravity away from white, Anglo-Saxon culture. Australians of British descent have also been forced to acknowledge the presence of large numbers of other European and Asian communities, especially in the cities, where nine out of ten people live.

Although the Federal Labour Party led by E. Gough Whitlam, elected to Government after 23 years in opposition, was only in power for three years, its progressive social programmes outlived it. As Meaghan Morris has pointed out in *Pirate's Fiancée*, Labour's social programmes helped make possible the occupation of positions of real social and political power by the left and also had an empowering effect on independent activist or community groups.

Against this background, Australian cultural theory began to emerge in the late seventies. Its main participants originated in feminist and gay activism. Although people like Paul Foss (later co-editor of *Art & Text*) and

Meaghan Morris worked in activist community groups, they were also exposed to Marxist and neo-Marxist theory being studied in the universities. Morris left to study French literature in Paris in the late seventies, and others including Stephen Muecke and Elizabeth Grosz followed her into French academe. The impact of this exposure can be seen in the later numbers of *Working Papers*, a Sydney publication replacing *Gay Liberation Press*, founded by a collective which included Paul Foss, and later Meaghan Morris. *Working Papers* and other such publications often included translations of writings of prominent French thinkers, as well as interviews with them. Some of these translations of figures such as Baudrillard, Barthes, Deleuze, Guattari, and Lyotard, predated by years those in other parts of the English speaking world.

At this point the intellectual complexity of writers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan began to prove more attractive. Initially, the contributors to *Working Papers* were more interested in the practical appli-

cation of French theory: Lacan's re-writing of Freud and Foucault's "histories" of institutions were of interest to the anti-psychiatry movement, for example. However, in the conservative political climate of the late seventies, more and more people, disillusioned with political activism, turned to the study of pure theory.

By the beginning of the eighties, interest in French theoretical writing, under the general rubric of "semiotics," had become so widespread on the left and in the arts community in Australia that a backlash began to occur against it, not so much in conservative journalistic and academic circles, as amongst members of the more traditional activist left. Xenophobic nationalism and even old English Francophobia began to surface. Anxiety that wholesale appropriation of French thought had somehow "diluted" Australian cultural identity raised the awkward question of what that cultural identity actually was in the first place. A conference entitled "Foreign Bodies" was convened in Sydney in 1982 to address these issues. Almost all

of the conference's participants seemed disillusioned with the very idea of political mobilization. The adoption of this foreign body of theory showed how problematic the very notion of a speaking position was. It suggested cultural models other than British or American and made irrelevant a quasi-Maoist strain of nationalism that had flourished in the seventies. Most importantly, the participants in "Foreign Bodies" demonstrated that theory could still be useful, but in a contingent, highly specific way.

Art & Text was founded by Paul Taylor in 1981 specifically to foster an interdisciplinary approach to art and its critical practices. Taylor also hoped to elevate what he regarded as the abysmal standard of art criticism in Australia. *Art & Text* built on the theoretical foundations of *Working Papers*, locating itself in a left cultural tradition, in spite of its editor's more conservative politics. As Taylor editorialized in the second issue of the magazine:



ART & TEXT

new Australian art magazine



It becomes increasingly apparent that the exhibition gallery, art school and art magazines are not neutral or transparent spaces for the presentation and promotion of art. They themselves are culturally determined objects whose cultivation is one of the tasks of today's 'advanced' art.

When Art & Text first began publication Popism was thriving on the Australian art scene. Popism reworked the concerns and themes of sixties Pop art. French psychoanalytic and cultural theory was used to interpret Popism and, by extension, the mass cultural material on which it was based. In this way, the writers who contributed to Art & Text, many of whom were also connected with Working Papers, were drawn into the realm of cultural theory. Important articles, such as Meaghan Morris' essay on Crocodile Dundee as well as pieces by Eric Michaels on Aboriginal-made television programmes and Stephen Muecke on nomadology, all appeared in the magazine in the mid-eighties. Art & Text

had now achieved world-wide recognition. But at this point in the history of the magazine, and of Australian cultural studies as a whole, a moment of symbolic rupture occurred.

Around 1983 there appeared a parody of Art & Text entitled Art and a Texta. Texta Colour was the brand name of a felt-tipped pen of Japanese manufacture which was sold in Australia in the early sixties. Its name, in popular speech, referred to all felt pens, which, in Australia, as elsewhere, are the preferred medium of expression for graffiti artists. Although the name Art and a Texta suggests an oppositional, anarchic stance, it was basically intended as a joke. However, Paul Taylor did not see

it this way. He was able to prevent its circulation and took its creators to court on the grounds that Art & Text was his commodity and he did not want anyone else exploiting his trade name or writers.

The shock expressed by the artistic and intellectual community at Taylor's course of action marks the self-conscious entry of Australian art and life into the postmodern age. The politically conservative, middle-class Taylor with his connections to the gay community and international art world had apparently squashed a collective led by a working-class, ex-footballer (who had kicked the winning goal in a Victorian grand final game) with a left-wing populist slant. It was a struggle that pitted exchange value against use value and life against culture. Dubious though these oppositions were, they were to furnish an important theme in the institutionalized version of Australian cultural studies, created under the aegis of the British academic, John Fiske.

John Fiske arrived in Western Australia in 1983. By the time he left at the end of the decade, an entire academic discipline, heavily funded by the government, had been created in his image (or at least the image of the school of thought that he represented). The institutional and popular success of British cultural studies in Australia can be explained by a confluence of social, political, and economic factors.

It was also in 1983 that the Federal Labour Party under Robert

(Bob) Hawke, the former president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, regained power. While skillfully making use of a populist, leftist rhetoric, the Hawke government embarked on a monetarist, neo-conservative restructuring of the economy. Many changes resulted, most notably the drying up of funds for arts and community groups. The resulting disappearance of the small magazines that had supported freelance writing meant that many cultural theorists of the early eighties had to drop out of local cultural practice entirely or, if they were lucky, find positions in universities. This process was exacerbated by a restructuring of higher education as recommended by two government reports in 1988, known collectively as the Dawkins Report, after the then-Federal minister of Education.

The Whitlam government had attempted to open up education to a greater proportion of the population by abolishing university fees. This had long been a cause for irritation on the

right, so too had the proliferation of regional universities and CAEs (Colleges of Advanced Education) which led to calls for streamlining, cost effectiveness, and installation of the user-pays principle. The Dawkins report called for the implementation of these objectives as well as institutional and financial centralization. Small institutions were amalgamated into larger, more "efficient" units, with CAEs being absorbed completely by universities. This had many serious consequences, not the least of which were high enrollments as a guarantee of funding and lessened control of research funds by universities and their departments. However, the students of CAEs did obtain easier access to academic resources such as libraries and laboratories.

The homogenization of the student body of universities and colleges and the emphasis on enrollment numbers put pressure on university departments to offer courses with a wide general appeal. Cultural studies conformed to this requirement perfectly, and its expansion in Departments of English and Communication across Australia took place at the expense of more traditional subjects. Thus the growth of cultural studies as an academic discipline in Australia can be explained both by a supply and

demand approach to higher education, as well as an Australian nationalist populism often, but not always, of leftist character.

The popularity of cultural studies had, however, other sources. Throughout the mid to late eighties, before the Dawkins Report, it had been generously funded in anticipation of the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988. Government policies on multiculturalism and national identity converged to create images of a diverse society, united by an irreverent popular wisdom and a series of routine but apparently random everyday practices. An early forerunner of this imagery is to be found in the State of Victoria's Life Be In It campaign which had similar aims to the Canadian Participaction initiative. Beginning in the late seventies, the campaign consisted of advertisements in the form of cartoons which featured Norm, a sort of couch potato, as Everyman. Public service or "humanity" ads later aired on Australian commercial television exalting the work and

leisure activities of similarly symbolic Australians. The climax of this genre is surely the Living Together campaign, designed to whip up patriotic fervour for the Bicentennial. Best known to the outside world through postage stamps, Living Together celebrated every conceivable aspect of Australian life. As well as essential public services and commercial activities, other aspects of social life such as diving, surfing, children (two boys eating meat pies), and ten pin bowling were lovingly documented, often in a humorous way. Women were seldom shown, except in traditional female roles, and Aborigines and multicultural groups were almost invisible in this celebration of everyday life.

If the content and approach of such media bear an uncanny resemblance to the later versions of British Cultural Theory, it is perhaps not entirely a coincidence. Although Australian nationalist populism, which dates back to the early 1900s, provided the form and content of this discourse, British cultural studies gave it intellectual legitimation and played up the opposition between high and low culture that had crystallized around the Art and a Texta affair.

This strategy mirrors a practice used by cultural theorists of the metro-

politan centres. Meaghan Morris has described how some British and North American writers discredit opposition to their theories by marginalizing their critics within the discipline of Cultural Theory. Such critics are often related intellectually to the Frankfurt School or feminism, and their basic sin is a refusal to join in the unqualified celebration of everyday life as it is mirrored in mass cultural products. This strategy seems to be a response to a situation where any effective political opposition to global capitalism has completely evaporated. More unfortunately, this tactic, particularly popular in British cultural studies, also has helped validate the misogynist, homophobic, and racist tendencies of Australian society at a time when they finally seemed to be losing their credibility. These aspects of

Australian society found their apotheosis, not only in the official celebrations of the Bicentenary, but in a book which was the collective work of John Fiske, Graeme Turner, and Bob Hodge,

Myths of Oz.

Myths of Oz, a local bestseller, drew mixed reviews, the most negative of which came from academia. Many of these were knee-jerk condemnations of "popularization." However, as Graeme Turner later admitted, the book's main failing was that it applied theories formulated to explain British conditions to Australia, which presented a far different social and cultural landscape. It was difficult to contest such formulations since the little magazines, accessible to any intellectually curious reader, which had been the original forum of debate in cultural studies, were no longer perceived as a legitimate arena for the exchange of ideas. Academic journals from the metropolitan centres or their colonial outposts had supplanted them as vehicles of reliable information and authoritative utterance. These academic publications, such as *The Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*, are so expensive that they are beyond the means of the kind of freelance writers who founded cultural studies in the late seventies. Thus, such people, unable to secure positions in universities, are cut off from the latest developments and their intellectual credibility is diminished.

The bureaucratization of Australian universities was hastened



by the implementation of the Dawkins report, which introduced an invidious

distinction between research and arship. An obsession with the profitable applications of research and development has discouraged academics from participating in public debates, and the drying up of freelance work has conspired to make the Australian public intellectual almost as rare as her North American counterpart. Meaghan Morris and John Docker are among the few survivors.

The institutionalization of formerly independent thinkers in the cultural studies field has led to the formation of professional organizations and newsletters as well as the organization of conferences, such as the Australian cultural studies conference, held at the University of West Sydney in December, 1990. Such gatherings and organizations are not perfect, however. Although Aboriginal and feminist concerns have been addressed to some extent, multicultural representation is practically non-existent.

A notable innovation of Australian cultural studies is the sub-discipline dedicated to the formulation of, and intervention in, public policy. It is centered in Brisbane at the Queensland University of Technology and Griffith University and includes Tony Bennett and Ian Hunter. Ian Hunter suggests that British cultural



studies suffers from a lack of consideration of public policy, as generated by government institutions, in its definition of culture. He has made an innovative study of British government interventions in culture in the nineteenth century. Hunter, Bennett, and their colleagues believe that cultural studies should adopt a reformist stance, to train its students to be citizens rather than consumers, and, above all, to intervene to apply the methods and conclusions of cultural studies to the arena of governmental policy towards the mass media. To date, however, no one, with the troubling exception of John Docker, has heeded their calls for Australian cultural theorists to intervene in the public arena.

John Docker, like Meaghan Morris, has operated as a freelance writer throughout his career, although his recent choice of patrons is in stark contrast to that of Morris. In the past decade, Docker's political orientation has completely reversed itself. Born into a Communist family, he began the sev-

enties in the New Left. By the mid-eighties he had moved from Maoist-inspired nationalism to celebrating the consumer society under the banner of cultural theory.

In 1988 Docker helped write a submission for the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations which was presented to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's enquiry into Australian content. The report argued for the abolition of all Australian broadcasting content regulations, suggesting that government regulations privileged elite culture against the popular. Docker made extensive use of the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, the great Russian critic, especially his writings on the European carnival. He projected Bakhtin's ideas about carnival as an authentic cultural expression of the lower classes onto entertainment television, especially quiz shows, newscasts, and soap operas. Because they are dependent on selling audiences to advertising, Docker argued, commercial radio and television are a genuine populist forum. As such, they have been responsible for the revival of this suppressed, carnivalesque popular culture. He further maintained that the privileging of serious drama in content regulations is the result of self-interested lobbying by theatrical craft unions. In other words, content regulations had

been formed in response to pressure groups representing bourgeois culture.

The scholars at Griffith University replied to Docker, showing that his argument was a tissue of half truths and obfuscations. It misrepresented the intentions of commercial broadcasters, and offered misleading interpretations of the history of Australian broadcasting and the development of modern western culture. Docker's submission was not even taken seriously by the Broadcasting Tribunal. However, his polemic should send a shiver down the spine of any cultural theorist who reads it. The authorities he cites include Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, Foucault, Tania Modelski, Andrew Ross, and Raymond Williams. Although the contemporary theorists cited would not likely agree with Docker's conclusions, his views are a perfectly plausible extrapolation of their theories and in an important sense, as Graeme Turner puts it, they are "directly licensed" by them.

How could a left, ostensibly neo-Marxist form of cultural critique come to be used as an apologia for the consumer-based free market? Stuart Cunningham of Griffith University has suggested that the resolutely optimistic stance of British-inspired cultural studies has led it to ignore any connection between the exercise of political power and media control.

Concerns about the wider politics of cultural production have been voiced in the public and academic sphere, most notably in Canada and through the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), an initiative of UNESCO, originating with Third World nations concerned about their cultural autonomy. The criticisms voiced through NWICO, and the report of the MacBride Commission, have been dismissed in North American academic circles for their lack of intellectual sophistication. This especially applies to anxieties about the loss of cultural self-determination. Cultural self-determination is, of course, dreadfully passé.

However, some academics working in Communication Studies, a field somewhat more attuned to everyday political and social realities than cultural studies, have taken NWICO and the MacBride Report more seriously. Both Colleen Roach and Herbert Schiller have noted that North American critiques of these documents serve

political and economic rather than philosophical ends. The validity of NWICO's arguments was not accepted because it was a Third World initiative and was seen to pose a direct threat to the markets for U.S. cultural products (now that country's second biggest earner of foreign exchange after arms). Furthermore, suggests Roach, the theories of John Fiske and others like him reflect or even celebrate their authors' political context. Arising in a world where any credible vernacular practice of leftist politics has been erased, Fiske's later writings, such as *Reading/Understanding Popular Culture* and so on, seek to undermine not only the notion of cultural imperialism but of ideology itself. Conceptual tools such as ideology and class structure are dismissed as the product of Marxist delusion. Indeed, Fiske has repudiated his earlier writings, such as *Reading Television*, which utilized such conceptual frameworks, as being outmoded, although to an unbiased ("uninformed") reader, they display a more

cautious and critical use of sources and the empirical method so beloved of this writer. Fiske's celebratory vindication of mass culture, which dovetails perfectly with the needs of the postmodern power structures, can be placed in the same context as American Francis Fukuyama's thesis in *The End of History and the Last Man*. Fukuyama argues that history in the sense of events generated by competition between systems with differing ideologies and economic systems is over, with liberal democracy and the free market reigning supreme. For Fukuyama, as well as most supply-side economists and neo-conservative politicians, the fraudulent nature of Marxist and all other leftist political thought as a blueprint for social and economic activity is supposedly demonstrated by the repudiation of Communism in eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Such momentous events can be events are linked, with the benefit of hindsight, to the rise of neo-conservative governments around the world, both in the developed and developing world. The thought that the collapse of the Eastern Bloc has structural, economic causes, or that dissent in this area was both fed and directed by transborder flows of cultural information or propaganda from the west, is too trivial and sordid to impinge into such a pure theoretical

realm. Likewise, the suspicion that governments in the west are elected by small, marginal groups of swinging voters (the "undecided/confused" persons of former Canadian pollster Allan Gregg), who are particularly vulnerable to the corporate media barrage, is disagreeable to entertain in our new, free-market Jerusalem.

Critiques of cultural studies such as those of Roach and Schiller deserve a good deal of attention, although I doubt that they will get it. Even within U.S. academe, such challenges, coming from outside the narrow field of cultural studies, can easily be dismissed as theoretically uninformed and unsophisticated. The "theory" in cultural theory, which has been its ticket to academic professionalization and credibility, is

also its protection against wider intellectual scrutiny and social responsibility. If the grey eminences of this field have nothing to fear from their fellow Americans, how much less they need heed the voices of those on the colonial periphery, in places like Australia and Canada! As McKenzie Wark of Macquarie University has noted, someone working and writing on this periphery cannot make the slightest difference to the Fiskes of this world, not because of intellectual inferiority, but because of the (hidden) realities of economic and cultural geopolitics.

Although Australia is a small country with a highly concentrated intellectual culture, strategies tried there for dealing with trans-border flows of cultural information, are, in this time of global communication networks, worth considering in Canada and Europe. The Australian model of informed intervention in government and private sector media policy is one worth considering for any western country. For example, those

Canadian academics and intellectuals who bewail the lack of independent and informed debate on cultural matters in their country may find a more tangible explanation in the effect of the imposition of the Goods and Services Tax on printed matter and the disappearance of special mailing rates for books and magazines than in the writings of Fredric Jameson or Andrew Ross. Legislation affecting cultural practices is the result of activity by actual bureaucrats and politicians who are situated at a specific location. They may be interpellated by such mundane means as letters, petitions, committees, lobby groups, or even the telephone. Although the sphere of governmental control of culture, as of other activities, has shrunk in the last decade, it provides the

essential regulatory framework in which the corporate sector operates and is far more accessible to the public. Last, but not least, as the Australian experience clearly shows, possession of a graduate degree or tenured position is not a necessary prerequisite for embarking on the study of contemporary culture. Anyone interested in cultural practice, as well as theory, is ill-advised to lose track of vernacular realities.

* This article is based on a paper which was read at the annual conference of the Popular Culture Association, Louisville, Kentucky, March 19th, 1992.

Robyn Gillam is a member of the Border/Lines Collective.



Better bled than dead.

BLOOD & APHORISMS

A JOURNAL OF LITERARY FICTION

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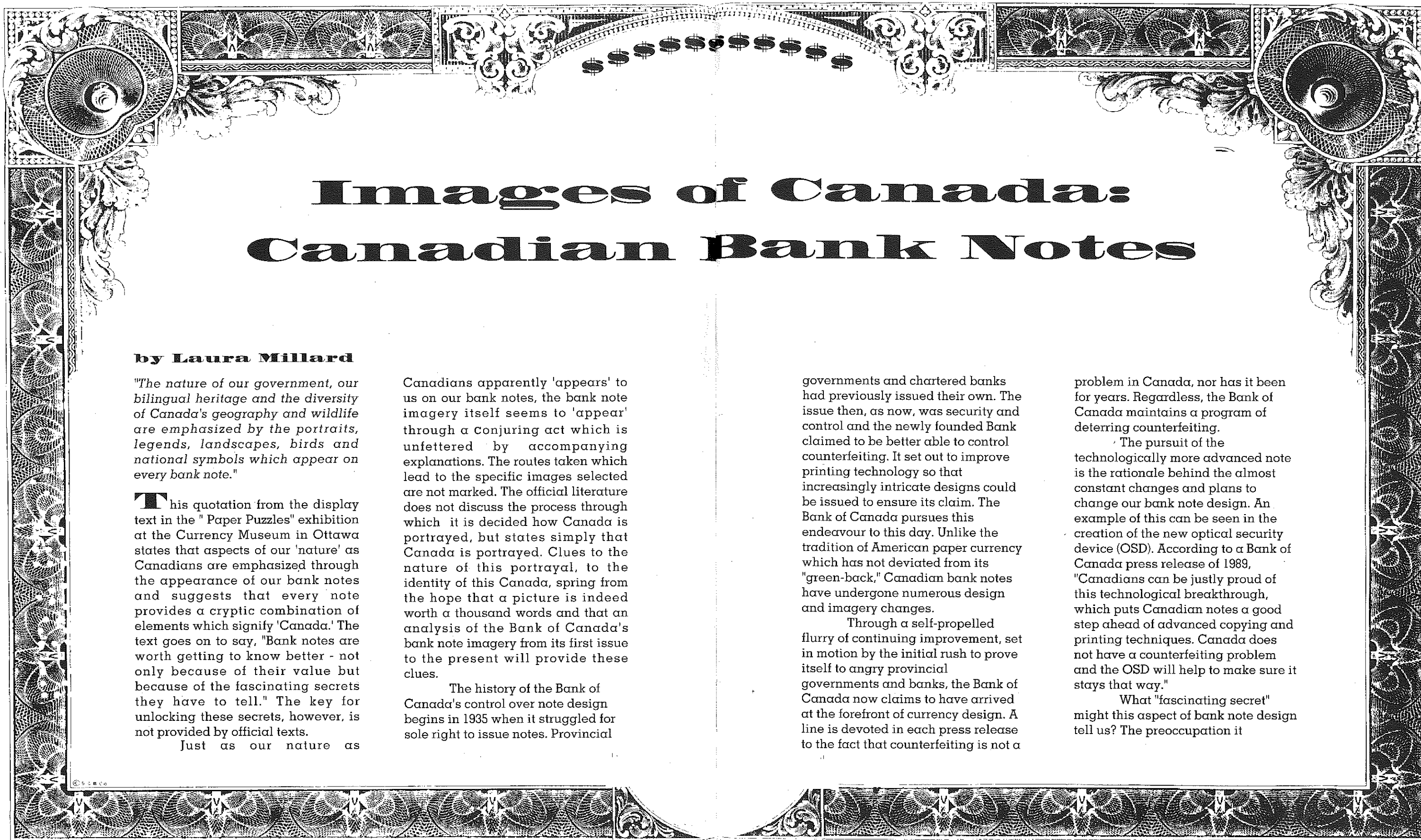
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Images of Canada: Canadian Bank Notes

by Laura Millard

"The nature of our government, our bilingual heritage and the diversity of Canada's geography and wildlife are emphasized by the portraits, legends, landscapes, birds and national symbols which appear on every bank note."

This quotation from the display text in the "Paper Puzzles" exhibition at the Currency Museum in Ottawa states that aspects of our 'nature' as Canadians are emphasized through the appearance of our bank notes and suggests that every note provides a cryptic combination of elements which signify 'Canada.' The text goes on to say, "Bank notes are worth getting to know better - not only because of their value but because of the fascinating secrets they have to tell." The key for unlocking these secrets, however, is not provided by official texts.

Just as our nature as

Canadians apparently 'appears' to us on our bank notes, the bank note imagery itself seems to 'appear' through a conjuring act which is unfettered by accompanying explanations. The routes taken which lead to the specific images selected are not marked. The official literature does not discuss the process through which it is decided how Canada is portrayed, but states simply that Canada is portrayed. Clues to the nature of this portrayal, to the identity of this Canada, spring from the hope that a picture is indeed worth a thousand words and that an analysis of the Bank of Canada's bank note imagery from its first issue to the present will provide these clues.

The history of the Bank of Canada's control over note design begins in 1935 when it struggled for sole right to issue notes. Provincial

governments and chartered banks had previously issued their own. The issue then, as now, was security and control and the newly founded Bank claimed to be better able to control counterfeiting. It set out to improve printing technology so that increasingly intricate designs could be issued to ensure its claim. The Bank of Canada pursues this endeavour to this day. Unlike the tradition of American paper currency which has not deviated from its "green-back," Canadian bank notes have undergone numerous design and imagery changes.

Through a self-propelled flurry of continuing improvement, set in motion by the initial rush to prove itself to angry provincial governments and banks, the Bank of Canada now claims to have arrived at the forefront of currency design. A line is devoted in each press release to the fact that counterfeiting is not a

problem in Canada, nor has it been for years. Regardless, the Bank of Canada maintains a program of deterring counterfeiting.

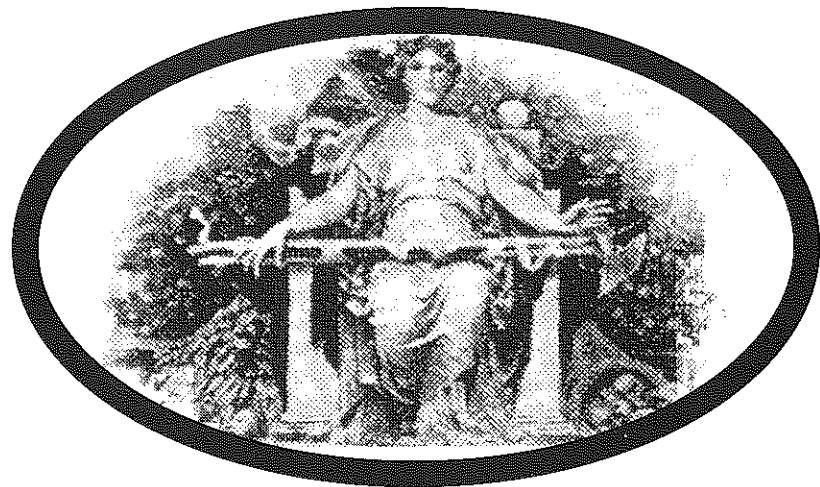
The pursuit of the technologically more advanced note is the rationale behind the almost constant changes and plans to change our bank note design. An example of this can be seen in the creation of the new optical security device (OSD). According to a Bank of Canada press release of 1989, "Canadians can be justly proud of this technological breakthrough, which puts Canadian notes a good step ahead of advanced copying and printing techniques. Canada does not have a counterfeiting problem and the OSD will help to make sure it stays that way."

What "fascinating secret" might this aspect of bank note design tell us? The preoccupation it

suggests with security, control and the law, is met with the relentless pursuit of a technology that will ensure the maintenance of that preoccupation, in spite of the fact that there are no real threats or enemies to protect against. Compare this with the situation in the United States which have, according to the Currency Museum's employee, the most counterfeited currency in the world, and yet employ design technology equivalent to what ours was in

1935. Perhaps the American government is just less inclined to interrupt the cash flow of its spirited entrepreneurs, but more certainly it shows that country's own preoccupation with its history and the tradition of its "green-back."

Beginning with its first issue in 1935, which was issued in separate French and English versions, the images presented on both versions were as follows:



ONE

"Agriculture allegory: Seated female with agricultural products."

\$2.00 bill: "Harvest allegory: Seated female with fruits of harvest."

\$5.00 bill: "Electric Power allegory: Seated male with symbols of electricity."

\$10.00 bill: "Transportation allegory: Mercury with ships, trains and planes."

\$20.00 bill: "Toiler allegory: Kneeling male exhibiting the produce of the field to the Spirit of Agriculture."

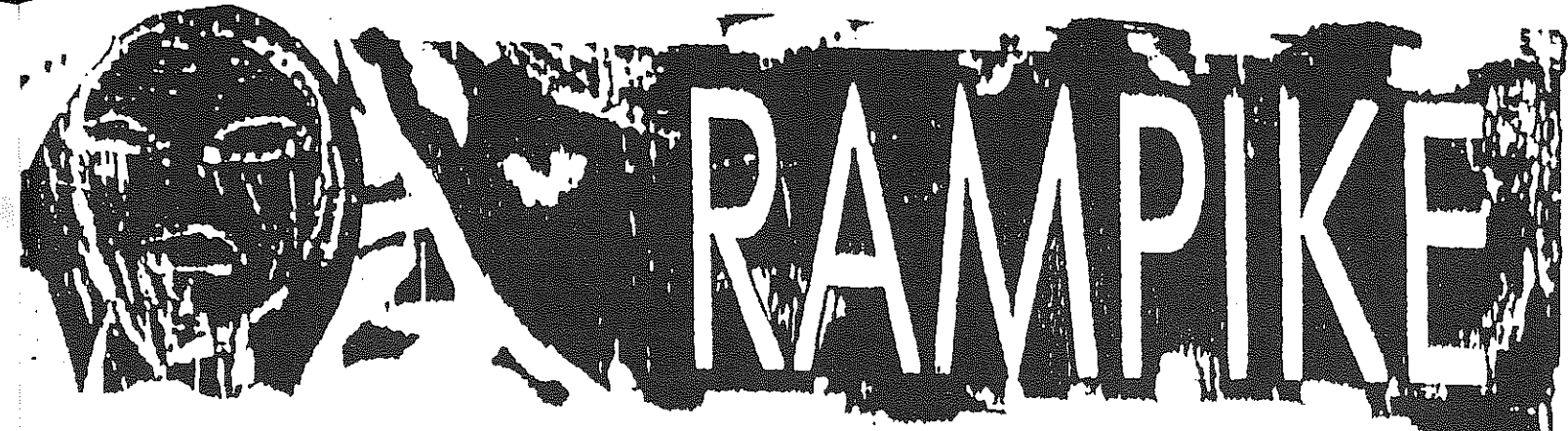
\$50.00 bill: "Modern Inventions allegory: Seated female with symbols of radio broadcasting."

\$100.00 bill: "Commerce and Industry allegory: Seated male showing ship to child, harbour scene and blast furnace in background."

The same images were used on the following 1937 bilingual issue. When I first saw these images I was taken aback by how foreign they appear, slightly European but predominantly American. The promise, the optimism and the reassurance offered by the supernatural beings portrayed are not aspects of the nature of Canada as I understand it. Portrayed in these bank notes is what Gaile McGregor, in *The Wacousta Syndrome, Explorations in Canadian Landscape*, describes as the American colonist's experience of the New World environment: "Under the influence of the millennial expectations of the 17th

century, the early American colonist, borrowing concepts from scriptural explication, tended to interpret the empirical environment predominantly in terms of signs or types of supernatural events." Through this association, "the entire world became charged with cosmic significance and every human life was seen as part of a cosmic conflict between the forces of Good and Evil."

The landscapes in these images have been won over by Good. The landscape is set in the distance and poses no threat, only the promise of space fully inhabitable and hospitable. It is almost



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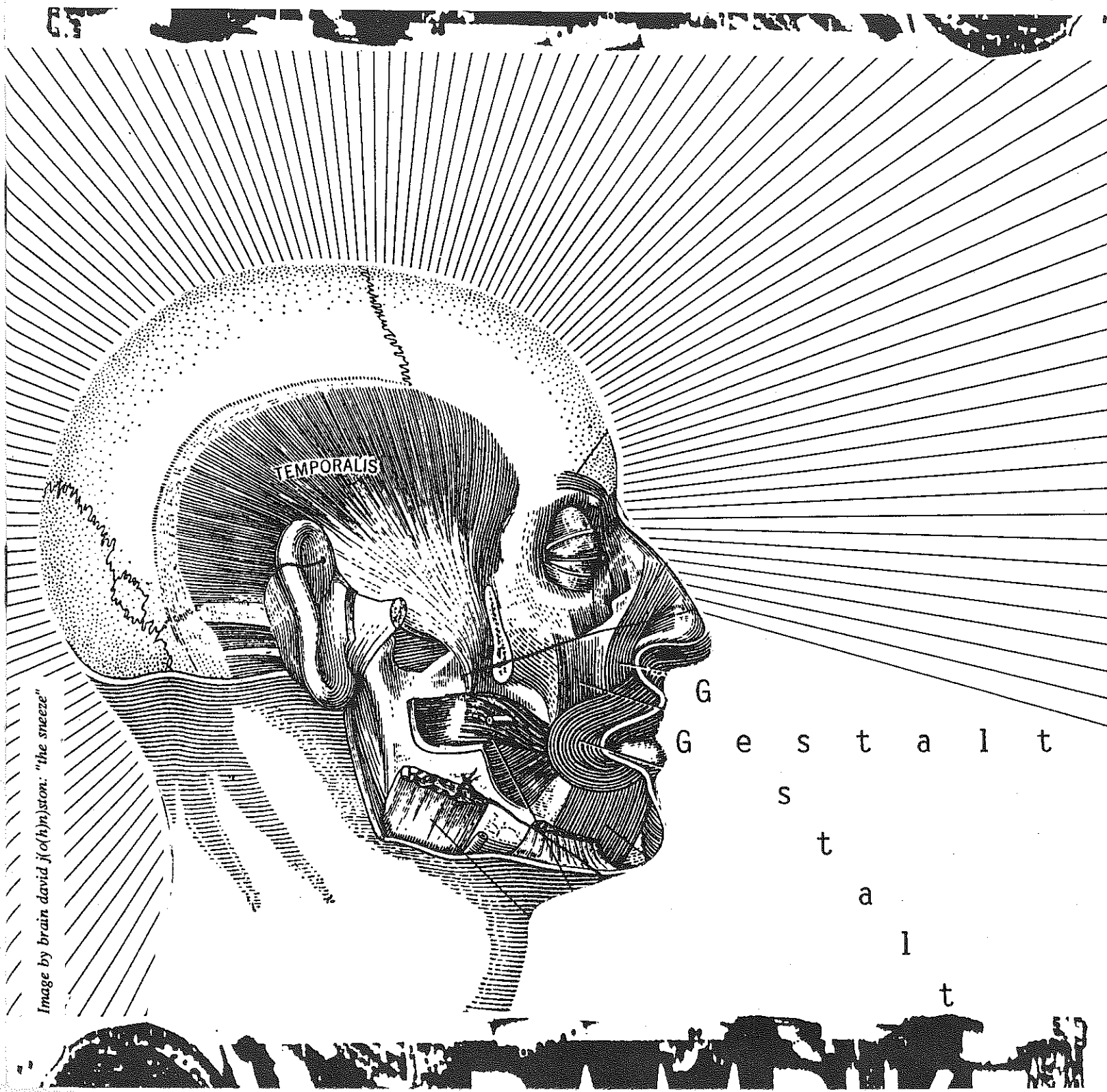


Image by brain david j(ohn)ston: "the sneeze"

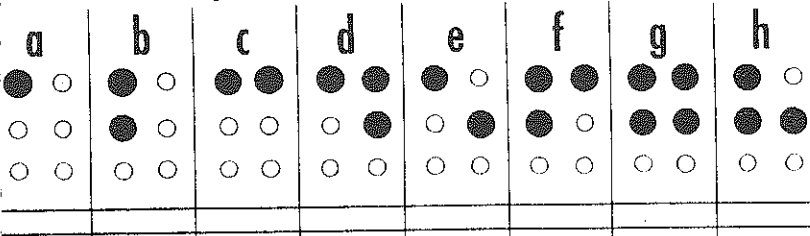


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EDITORIAL: This is the first *Rampike Literary Supplement* to appear anywhere. In the spirit of cooperation, *Borderlines* magazine has generously invited *Rampike* to include a literary supplement within its pages on a semi-regular basis. This current edition includes a range of works by writers and artists from across North America. In future, we will expand our horizons and continue our policy of publishing the new and the innovative in recent art and writing by emerging as well as established talents from around the world. The *Rampike Literary Supplement* will continue the tradition of *Rampike* magazine which has an on-going policy of seeking out modes of expression that are inventive in structure and/or concept. Upcoming supplements will include interviews with writers and artists, and will feature a range of texts & images by authors, visual artists, performance artists and theoreticians. Within the context of *The Rampike/Borderlines Literary Supplement* we will indulge in a polyphony of voices, a ram-blur-border-pike-line that lies beyond the inspected, rejected, expected, and disconnected. *Rampike* regularly enters into a textual subterfuge and celebrates the disjunctive, the genre-bending and the heretofore, unknown. As editors of this modest first edition, we look forward to this new forum. We thank our steady readers for their on-going support in the past, and we welcome all new readers to these pages!

Sincerely -- J. Francis, C. Turner, K. Jirgens, 1993.

Chippoke Na Gomi*

by Misha

It is raining sand and dirt. It slithers down in truckloads and flows around his feet, spattering his shoes and his gray slacks and the hem of his duster. The red bricks of the station platform spit at him as he leans forward to catch sight of his connection.

His leather bags heel at his feet like two black lizards. He grabs their collars and drags them hissing across the gritty floor of the station.

He frowns, straining with the luggage. It grows heavier with every mile.

He focuses on a shadow etched against the wall. It is a shadow of a missing person bent over in thought.

His eyes bounce the room. He sees the eclipsed woman in a soft sable coverall. The coverall has a flame colored lantern patch on the shoulder. She is leaning forward with her elbows on her knees. Her head is down and her hands are lightly held in interlocking fingers. When he blinks she is all flat again, like a shadow.

He slides the bags over to the bench and sits down. He brushes the raindust off of his coat and stares at her. The sun slides through an opening in the cloud. Small strings of dust float from the ceiling toward the floor.

He sneezes. A brown bottle bounces across the tile floor. He turns and sees a tattered derelict stagger out of the door. From him rags unravel and fall into the debris of the station. The sake bottle rolls up against a hairy dust bunny under the benches.

A huge column of purple and orange flame is rising. A phone jangles and echoes in the station. He turns his head. The stationmaster croaks into the receiver. He cocks his head expectantly, listening.

He hears someone crying on the other end of the line. He looks at the shadow woman. Her coverall is stained at the knees and elbows with a thick white ash. She is wearing scorched hightops with yellow flames embossed on them.

Carbonized timbers and beams twist and burn hundreds of feet above the ground.

He can't ever remember being this tired. Or this thirsty. He hopes to waken himself in her conversation.

"In Japan they have trains that travel 120 miles an hour and this one is 120 minutes late."

She looks straight ahead, then slowly turns her head toward him. She has the dusky complexion and features of an Aino but he decides she is American Indian.

"Were you in Japan?" Her voice is soft bran. It makes his throat itch.

"That's right." He coughs into his white gloves. "I've been studying Japanese dust."

Although her eyes are huge and dark, he can't help but notice that they are inflamed and sticky at the corners. A little whitish matter clings there.

He rubs his nose. "I'm a konologist."

An inch thick of gray ash covers everything. As he tries to write her a letter, the brush drags into the ash falling on the rice paper.

She chews the inside of her cheek. Her feral look and a strange efflorescence on her cheeks alarm him.

He pulls out his white kerchief. She scrunches up her nose. "Konologist." The word breaks in her mouth, as if she spoke around grains of sand.

Her voice grates on him but he continues. "The study of dust." He slides closer to her to obscure her shadow. He notices she is wearing a fine covering of face

powder which makes her skin look slightly farinaceous. Her bruised looking eyes fasten on his bags. "And what is in there? Dust I suppose."

He is reluctant to answer. A strange weakness sluices in his bowels and travels down his legs. He wants to lie down.

He has no energy to hunt her ashes in the ruins. That the train is late is amplified in the cave-like hollowness of the station. The only sound besides the falling of the dust and his raspy breathing, is the heavy impact of the freight cars slamming together in the yard. Metal couples spark against metal couples, throwing minute particles of oil soaked dirt into the air. Rusty filings grind on the track as steel rolls on steel.

He smiles at her. Her return smile is hot ice. A terrible thirst.

He is feeling better, more at home. He calls to the stationmaster. "Could you please tell me what the hold up is?" "Bad dust storm about thirty miles out. They're clearing the tracks now." After he speaks his face disintegrates into chalky disinterest.

He rolls his eyes at the woman shakes his head slowly. He brushes some lint off of his knees.

He checks his watch, then slaps his hand over it. He has just changed it to pacific time and finds it is still reading Tokyo time July 15, a whole day ahead.

Boats of lantern fire. The sable woman stares at his bag.

He sighs and stands up. "Excuse me," he says and walks to the pay telephone. It is grimy with use. Little circles of white had been cleared by fingertips dragging in the caked dirt beneath the dial wheel. He removes his gloves.

He dials his house and after a time there is an answer. It is his wife-- living migraine.

"The train has been delayed. I didn't want you to worry." "I was napping, asleep." There were hisses in the Migraine's mouth, between her sharp white teeth.

"I'll be along anytime." He is cutting into her chest with a letter opener. Her skin is like a paper bag. Lint and thick gray dust pour out of her lungs, along with pins, seeds, and an apple green condom of a kind he never wears. It is sticky with semen and dog hair.

His wife is silent while he does this, then answers "Fine." in a voice that means he is not welcome.

He feels his whole life comminated into this one emotionless phone call.

A miasma of heat and dust. He sits near the shadow woman. She seems to crumble in front of his eyes. Dust swirls in the open door of the station.

"I think some of the dust is leaking out of those bags." Her face is deadpan, as if she is serious.

A laugh splinters his throat. "No, its all sealed in vacuum jars." He reaches into his bag and pulls out a small glass jar of ashy looking dust.

The woman shimmers in a sudden bright shaft of light. Lightning, roar, rice white calx, black soil.

"I think some of that dust has escaped." She repeats. He studies the jar closely, shaking it in the air to catch the light. "Impossible."

She doesn't seem convinced. He feels he needs to make an explanation. "You see, dust is a fascinating thing. Have you ever, for example, looked at dust under an electron microscope?"

A sheet of sun falls through the window. She shakes her head.

He sets the jar of dust on the bench, reaches over into his bag and removes a thin green book.

He opens it to a page that is covered with large grains of grayish rice.

"What do you suppose that is?" he asks as he hands her

the book and slides close enough to see it over her shoulder. She shrugs. He sniffs her odor of baby powder. He wonders why women wash off and then dust themselves with talcum.

He glances at her and seems caught in her flat black eyes. A line of sweat pops out on his upper lip.

She stares at the plate a moment and then speaks in a dull, uninterested voice. "Dust."

He draws the kanji for man in the powder. He is disappointed she knows his answer. "That's right! Though most people would say 'grains of rice'. Look at this." It is a 100 times enlargement of a piece of pollen. It looks like a small moon pitted with craters.

He points to another grainy photo. It is a monstrous creature with a vicious set of mandibles and repulsive grape-like clusters on its hairy legs.

A mass for dead insects. "This tiger mite is too small to be identified by the naked eye, and yet--" he points to the clusters, "It has its own parasites even smaller."

He looks closely at the plate himself, though he has seen it many times, this time he sees something different. He sees a human face trapped between two tiny pieces of dust.

He snaps the book shut and tosses it in his bag. He holds up his jar of dust and peers at the label. "Dust tells us much about our history. You might be interested to know," he says boldly, "That this dust from Nagasaki is still radioactive. Even after all these years."

A crimson display of pyrotechnics explodes in her eyes. "Yes, that's right." He replaces the jar carefully, as if it is worth its weight in gold. "This dust is full of pulverized buildings, books, dinnerware, bamboo stalks and grains of rice - remnants of a great city."

A field of carbonated bone. He talks on a bit, but notices her obsession soon enough.

"Excuse me but," he captures her attention. She looks at him with cold mineral eyes.

They are like highly polished mirrors and in them he can see it. A huge column of dust traveling up and up and finally spreading out in a horizontal bank of cloud. In the cloud, thousands of faces, ancestors come for bon mitsuri.

She points at his shoes. "They're covered with the victims of Nagasaki."

Before he replies, the bellowing of the diesel horn, the grating of steel on pitted steel and the roaring of the engine meet his ears.

From the west a terrible arimitama wind. He jumps forward to grab her hand and the skin peels off just like a glove. She suddenly flares in a pillar of fire and a wave of intense heat sears his eyes.

He falls to his knees and cries out in terror and pain. The train roars in and pulls away while he is still kneeling in the station with a handful of crematory ashes.

It is pale dust, gray and gritty and still warm. A fine sandy loess blows about his knees.

The station is whirling with small dust devils. Through them he can see a dark shape.

"Ahhh!" He staggers to his feet and runs forward. She is not there but her shadow remains permanently scorched into the station wall.

He exclaims again and holds the ashes tightly in his fist. The tighter he holds them, the more they slip through his fingers.

With each step he takes he shakes the dust from his feet. His eyes seem to stare blankly ahead.

But he is focussing very intently on one thing. The tiny motes of dust dancing in a red shaft of sunlight.

*tiny dust

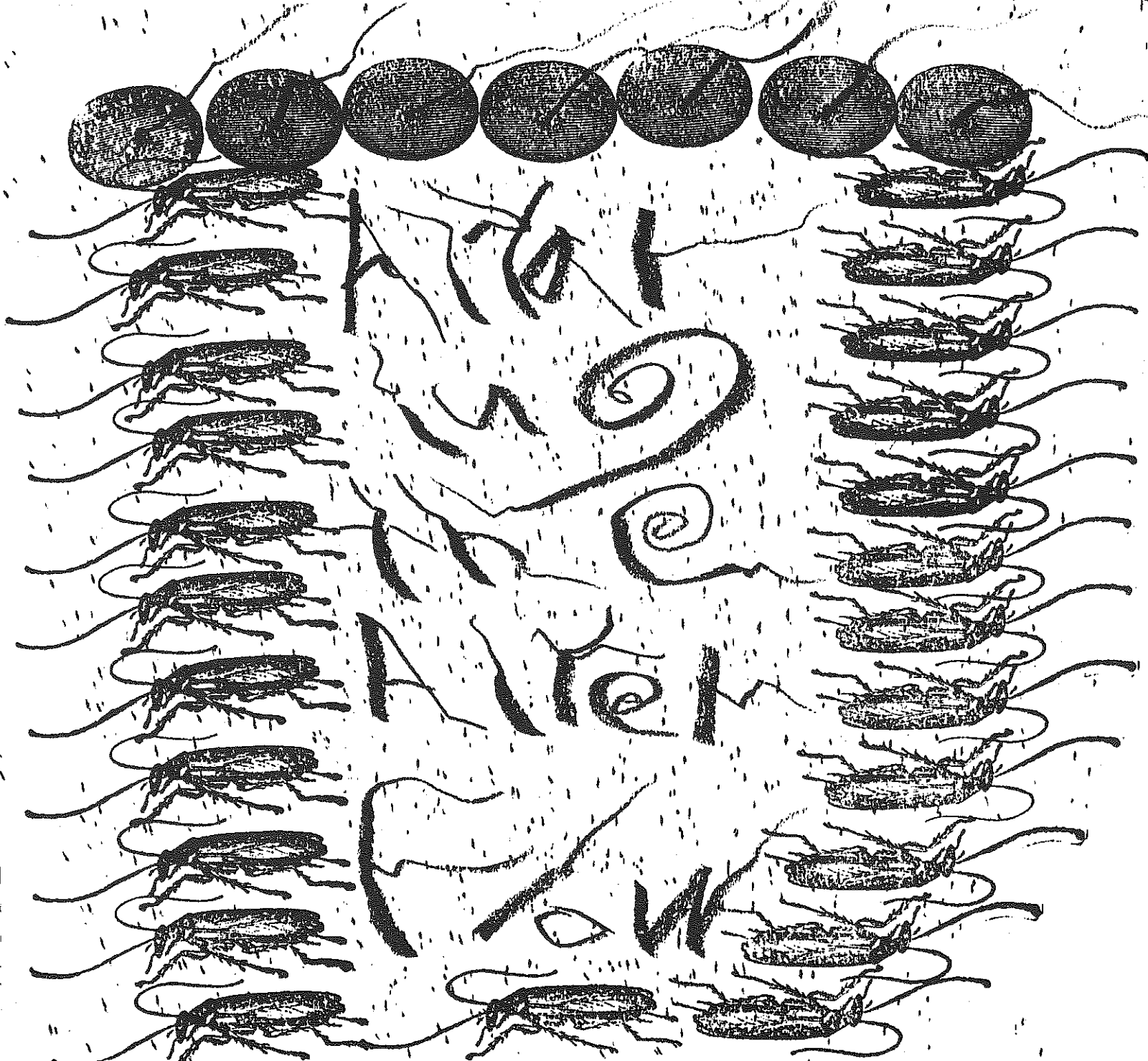


Image "Altering" and text "Autophagia"
by John M. Bennett

But I lint from that table at my pants brushing,
thin stacks of skin completion, off the edge slipping,
where you, on the door lentils chewing, staring (at
me?) with leguminous eyes; Ah's all swarmed in a
cloud-of-hats, different brimmings o'er the same
sweaty hands' holding-it-on (but I went from that
cradle in my grave rushing, laughless as I scraped
my chair and my face brushed off, just a grin under
my back pockets' inversion) So I, toward you, took a
step sloped, swallowed my eating, tried for my
tongue's conversion...

Two Poems by John Donlan

The Me

I'm not hip here.
I can never get enough credentials!
Don't take yourself for too real.
Easier to carry a frog than a snake.
All those looking for a short-term relationship
raise your right paw.
Eyeshine, ardent talk shimmer and pop
self, bubbleshell between
nature and nature.
Flying out of our skins, we
sparks rush into the gap left by John Clare.
TV vampire romance queen reclines
on bourgeois icon,
timesharing memory, will, sense
for the effect of simultaneity,
life-based thinking...
Forget who's watching
secret raccoons wash and eat.
Repeat No Voice, No voice, walking through
unimproved land.

Just Do It

This was Zhou En-Lai's cot, with its worn blanket -
nearly all he owned.
He was part of the new style, the new
attitude they call reckoning with death.
He aimed to violate some principles,
firmly held beliefs that look so different from the back.
Let's empty just one day of content, let's
dump its time out and waste it.
Martha I'm mourning,
painting the sacred book black.
Even grief has its utility,
plastic, molten, raging at the shapes
imposed on it by its handler.
They burn us, and we burn back, until the bars
between the crowd and the caged crazy animal
are gone at last. Symbols of old order
go next, and then the long forging begins
again, those chains of chilling generations.
Some of us by the stove were missed out. Water beads
racing over the iron: where do they go?

The Photographer Listens As the Shutter Closes

by Serge Mongrain
translated by Judith Cowan

Shed by the intestines of the buffalo
the Altamira fresco
sculpts itself into the rocky conformations
the destiny of the walls
and the movement of the stones.
This which is possible to the eyes
this anarchy of the hands
forges in the very iron itself
its alliance with the flames

In the silence
there is the blonde stretched out on the bench
who listens, inviting absence
there is the frame of bone, pulling muscles
there is the weight of the eyelash
In the gnawing silence
everything unfolds as foreseen
everything halts for the flight of the fly
everything cries out as if its throat
had been cut by song
In these silences of ecstasy
an everydayness sees to everything
a week is worth what a week is worth
a century as weightless as an eternal beginning

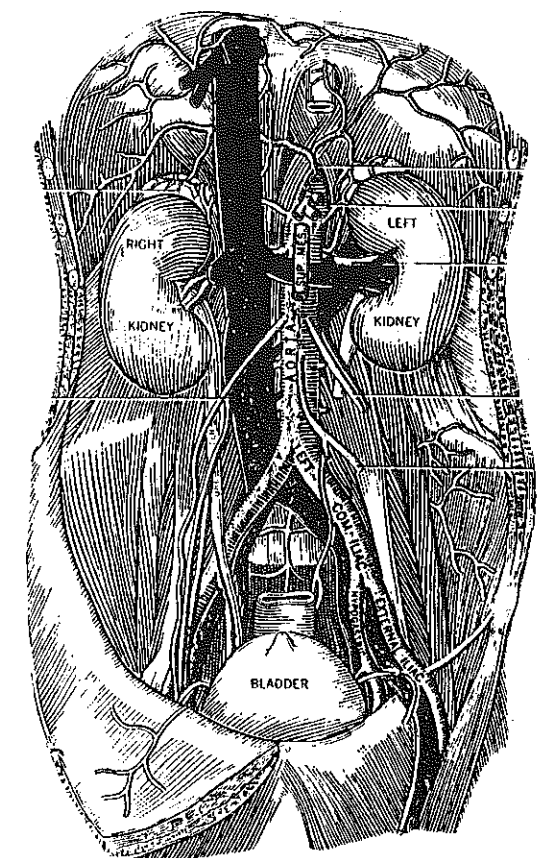


Image by brian david j(o(h)n)ston "melancholy"

Riddle in Silk

by Yves Troendle

A young woman parts the crimson velvet drapes and tiptoes into an ornate but deserted drawing room. Except that now she's standing in it. She looks very pretty, and very French. A maid's lacy cap is perched atop her waves of dark hair. Silk stockings give a magical sheen to her shapely legs. Pinned, as it were, on an unseen stare. The story is mainly about these stockings, though they're artfully introduced as incidental. They were sent by a pilot, Mike Traynor, from Cuba to this place, the palatial home of Ralph Vallon, a deep-voiced, silver-haired man who radiates wealth and distinction. Enable a can, elicit kneeling, diamond bursting from the certainty, flash seams a thunder. Vallon, you see, had hired Mike to develop long-range photography in the lonely air lanes above the Caribbean. Mike had a top-notch collection of sky maps. Down the corridors of cumuli, doors are numberless. While scurrying down the marble hallway, the maid glimpsed a man's swarthy face in a passing mirror. Or rim. .mir rO .r im...

Now she's haunted by the fear that he glimpsed her own!

You mean a plane flying over enemy territory could map their location and beam images back to headquarters? A deathly quiet, except for the maid's frightened panting, and rain hissing on the windows. You could almost hold the room in your hands, like a box filled with magic light. The pretty maid's lips are vivid scarlet, her face dead white-- chalky with terror. There is a telephone on a carved oak desk. The desk, with gilt griffin feet, and hiding tiny compartments, comes from successively older mansions (counting backwards); the telephone comes from a factory. Trees and spires attract lightning, just as a needle does electrical fire. Nanette, the maid, walks briskly up to it. Exactly! And Mike did it! He promised to send the secret in code, but all I ever got was... silk stockings from Havana! Nanette unhooks it furtively. After drinking scotch, the men lit cigars. Lubricity his hand down spiked, slap jasmine, grip the balustrade. "Ello. Important. I want ze policeman!"

But before Mike could send an explanation under separate cover, he was downed somewhere over the Gulf-- killed by agents of a war-like power. The last postcard he sent showed an orange sky, and sounded like a distant bugle. Images flicker, memory shaves, departs by the light of his shirt. So it was up to Vallon to figure out how the secret message was encoded in the silk. He walked up cold marble steps, leaving prints in the dew. Hold still so I can scribble all over you. He asked his niece, the gorgeous Dorthea, to wear them.

The perfect place to hide an invisible message-- for all eyes to see! First of many paradoxes. All guises of desire. We gaze her into life. Her whisper is barely audible. And nobody replies. The various brass fixtures on the telephone reflect the electric bulbs that light the room. And silver lightning shudders in the polish of the oak desk-top. Nanette spins around and clutches the edge of the desk, her knuckles turning white, but sees nothing.

And, standing by this very desk, Dorthea Vallon will soon be telling Scott Brickley, private investigator, that after drinking down some strangely bitter-tasting scotch in her room that evening, she'd fainted. Satin, sink, colossus, kiss, red dust, his ornaments. Now all Nanette can hear is the pulse

of blood in her ear. Dorthea recovered her senses-- and leapt upright with a gasp! Nanette glances behind the desk, and gasps! Someone had removed Dorthea's slippers-- and her garters were unhooked! The telephone wire is slashed! Those stockings meant the difference between peace and war on the Continent! Then the room is plunged into utter darkness.

Nanette can only see vague gray and yellow shapes swimming in the black. Darkness apprehends her. This excites the rest of us. Looking, after all, requires a distance at which to focus; darkness flows right in, pressing on her beating chest. Leaping into the room, the intruder will swing the muzzle of his Luger dead on Brickley. "Do not moof!" From out of the dark, a silver blur leaps at Nanette. Everyone will record surprise-- Ralph Vallon by gripping the carved crest of his walking stick, Dorthea by tossing back her honey locks, her eyes spitting ice. Her skin is like moonlight. Our hands are in huge black velvet gloves sprinkled with stars. And clouds are out collecting electrical fire. Go now, king one, dawn affront like knowledge cry. Except, that is, the private eye, at whose chest the barrel will be pointing! "I will need ze stockings, Mademoiselle. Remoof dem!"

"Do as he says, Dorthea," Ralph Vallon will coolly advise. Taste decorum, label ecstasy askew. She released enormous florid fans, their heads in milk. Slowly, with her face flushing, Dorthea will lift the hem of her silver evening gown to her knee.

She will hold the gown bunched like silver froth against her thigh while the other hand vanishes to deftly unhook the garter. Rain rippling down the tall windows will hammer its patterns across the room on stuttering lightning. The manor is on a hill. The hill is in America. In Europe, soldiers are dying. Ralph Vallon will cough, and then gaze at the intruder. This intruder, a swarthy man in a dark suit, who seems to block light, will glance apprehensively from Brickley to Dorthea's leg and back. Brickley will be resting against the writing-desk-- exactly where Nanette stands now as her red mouth flies open to utter a scream. Dorthea's leg is caught in a sinister web on doubles, symbols, ciphers. Sapphires you when Orion peel her fingers wing, memory, the ruby chamber, shin. There will be a faint sound of moist crackling as she peels the stocking down. A hand gloved in cool leather clamps over the maid's open mouth.

It was, or it seemed to be, a perfectly natural sequence of events. The windows were unfortunate. A man passed within six feet, but they did not see him. Suddenly the figure dissolving rushed together must have turned stone bright, magnificently clad. Himself stunned in the palm trees, he risked loosing his man in pillars of ink. A warning touch on his sleeve sent them both. Moonlight. Gesticulating at the window, Vallon will sputter: "B-but aren't you going to chase him?"

But the figure hurtling through the rain for the rope hanging from the garden wall will be going nowhere. Paradox. What do you mean? Lay it on the table! Crotchety bell-masters dropping wooden dreams. Huh? I don't get you. Resolution. Well, when Nanette found her mistress lying unconscious on her bed, she knew the thief was lurking somewhere in the house. And remember Della Street perched on Perry's desk for the wrap-up? Her long legs crossed. The *sense* life makes when viewed from the right keyhole! So the plucky girl quickly peeled off Miss Vallon's silk hose, and exchanged stockings with her so as to foil a spy plot. Unfortunately... The body goes limp in the murderous arms, and falls with a thud behind the desk. It will be Nanette's body, and the Vallons will gasp.

But that's a dick's job: produce the body, and expose the random as inevitable, after all. While overhead, rosettas converge. He'll realize soon enough that the prize he thinks he's clutching is still here, on the cold limbs on the very maid he slew! An overturned chair is set neatly back on its legs. Ask the

ants, glass departure, spoons. Wait-- isn't that an infra-red lamp on the desk? The dangling telephone receiver is dropped back into its cradle. Why, look at this weird purple bulb-- yes it is! Turn out the lights! With a dry snap, the ceiling lights blaze again, revealing a deserted room.

Except for the murderer's gloved hand, just now pulling the door shut. And of course Nanette's limp body. She lies there like an open book. One arm is thrown above her head. The concept "flesh". Under the infra-red lamp's ghastly glow, her legs will be suddenly covered with brilliant diagrams and glyphs, arranged in sinuous rows.

All those years, and now this ring. The sea churning and churning its dark harps. Break the body into webs that map out wholeness regained. The carved oak and brass clock on the mantle indicates the time. Late train, lizard blue, such is what is, or anyway, faces glass told. Exactly 11:17.

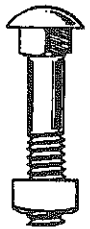
Muffled by the tightly-shut double doors, hurried steps and anxious voices can be heard coming down the hallway. Gazing at the legs while Brickley holds the lamp aloft, each person will betray a shock of recognition. The lenses of Ralph Vallon's glasses will reflect the glyphs in bright inverted miniature. Someone just outside exclaims, "Pray to God we're not too late!" as the brass knobs turn.

Rose World

by Edward Mycuc

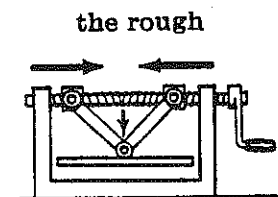
(for Donna M. Lane, inspired by her own story, STUCK, published 8 March 1992 in the Sunday San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle "Image" magazine, pp.20-23).

Carthefts
makeup
cellular phones
the beggars are bone-thin, filthy
a thin paper crust surrounds an electronic core
--an interface you read the data on,
and then recycle it--
songs, drawings, stories, tearful memories
: phantom memory patterns
in huge computer databanks
reduce to one small chip
or grain
like phantom hair
that itches where the hair had been
where the amputated little finger was
but not where the radiophone stolen
from the Toyota
was --
but all, feeling and unfeeling, are
addicted, squeezed, stung
by fate lurking under the rose bush
in the form of a bent, used hypodermic needle
wrapped in a newspaper
like some piñata paper balloon
surrounding a virus hand grenade.



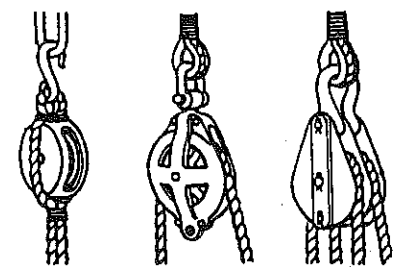
ab-sence

in the work of removal.



b eating

B locks



beheaded.

Textual Images by W. Mark Sutherland from: "Have you been DUCHAMP' d? Part 3"

The Spacious Chambers of Her Heart

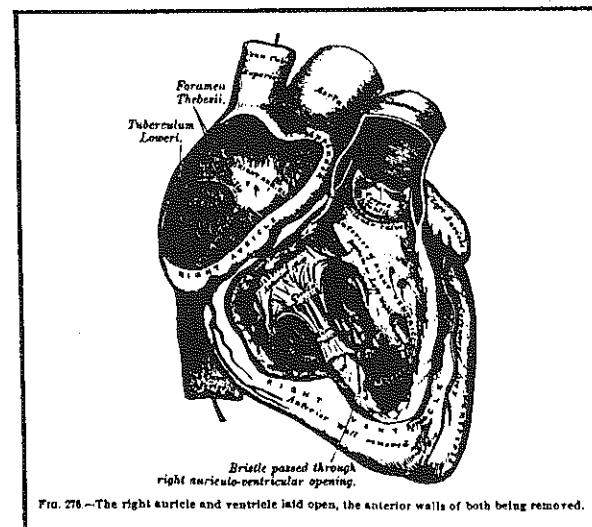
by Diane Schoemperlen

"The heart, in the adult, measures five inches in length, three inches and a half in breadth in the broadest part, and two inches and a half in thickness. The prevalent weight, in the male, varies from ten to twelve ounces; in the female, from eight to ten: its proportions to the body being as 1 to 169 in males; 1 to 149 in females. The heart continues increasing in weight, and also in length, breadth, and thickness, up to an advanced period in life."

--GRAY'S ANATOMY, 1901 EDITION

Evangeline Clark loved four things, and four things only. Her heart having only four chambers, spacious though they might be, she had limited herself to loving four things.

First there was music.



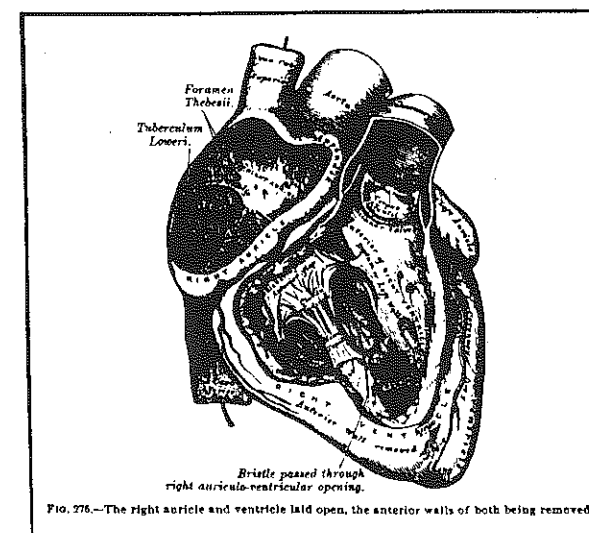
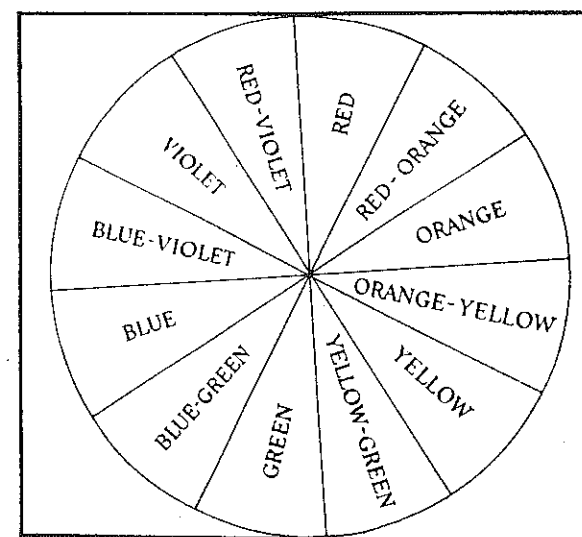
"The Right Auricle is a little larger than the left, its walls somewhat thinner, measuring about one line; and its cavity is capable of containing about two ounces."

This love she learned from and shared with her mother who was a pianist, long dead now but still an inspiration to Evangeline. The home of her childhood was always filled with music, her mother at the piano all morning and all afternoon. The meals were slapdash, the house was a mess, but always the air in the cluttered stuffy rooms was saturated with beauty and truth and just plain joy. Sometimes when she had insomnia due to the weight of the world on her slender shoulders, her mother would play Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* in the middle of the night and the sound would come gently to Evangeline safe in her little bed, the high notes sprinkling around her like confetti, the low notes like an August downpour, quarter-sized raindrops on warm asphalt.

At the crucial moment of her life, when she might have become a concert pianist, her mother had become instead her mother. For that was how things were done in those days, one or the other, not both, multiple loves in those days being deemed mutually exclusive. Regret and resentment, like infidelity, were not acceptable maternal manifestations. For this, Evangeline was grateful.

Although she had no musical talent of her own and so had never learned to play any instrument, Evangeline kept the air in her house too always filled with music, any kind of music. There was country and western for hurtin', rock and roll for dancing, jazz for the nerves, blues for the blues, and classical for catharsis. And especially there was Mendelssohn for the middle of the night, to smooth the wrinkles out of the weight of the world.

Secondly there was colour.



"The Right Ventricle is triangular in form, and extends from the right auricle to near the apex of the heart. Its anterior or upper surface is rounded and convex, and forms the larger part of the front of the heart...The walls of the right ventricle are thinner than those of the left, the proportion between them being as 1 to 3...The cavity equals in size that of the left ventricle, and is capable of containing about three fluid ounces."

This love she was learning from and sharing with her husband, who was a painter, a very good painter whose vivid larger-than-life canvases were shown all over the continent. "Brilliant" and "electric" were the words most often applied by the critics, used indiscriminately, it seemed, to describe both the man himself and his provocative and penetrating use of colour. Her husband was indeed a brilliant and electric man, a volatile over-stimulated genius who was always painting in his studio or wanting to. Evangeline quickly discovered that most of the manoeuvres and mechanics of daily life struck him as mundane, if not a downright waste of time. From him she learned that all things, animal, vegetable or mineral (also plastic, polyester or nylon), were intrinsically important not because of function but because of colour, which is all the naked eye naturally cares about anyway. He spent a lot of time mixing colours, trying to create the true green of grass, the true blue of sky, the true red of blood, and the true ineffable colour of the sun, which was not yellow at all, though we had all been tricked from an early age into believing that it was. This search for the true colour of everything was, he said, like trying to create life in a test tube. But what is life, what is truth, what is the colour of your breath in the summer, what is the true colour of flesh?

Although she had no artistic talent of her own and so had never painted a painting or anything, Evangeline took great pains to keep her house (his house, their house) full of colour. She had a stained glass window installed in the bathroom so that her husband's naked body (also his naked eye) would glow like an illuminated prism in the shower. This calmed him down considerably because any form of clarity (plain glass, cellophane, Saran Wrap, or water) tormented him unbearably because it was unattainable. She was careful to dress herself in bright colours, yellow scarf, green blouse, blue skirt, red tights, purple shoes, because clearly her husband adored her when she appeared before him like this, with the bands of colour encircling her body like a rainbow or pretty ribbons, like wondrous bandages from her head to her toes.

Every morning her husband sat in his blue shirt at the breakfast table, surrounded by the still life she had so carefully arranged: the yellow egg yolks, the red jam, the brown coffee, the purple lilacs on the windowsill, his red lips, white teeth, chewing and smiling. And while he admired the orange juice shot through with sunlight, Evangeline was left breathless and intoxicated with the pleasure of her own power. Of course she didn't put it to her husband that way. Instead she said she was smiling because she was happy.

Thirdly there was language.

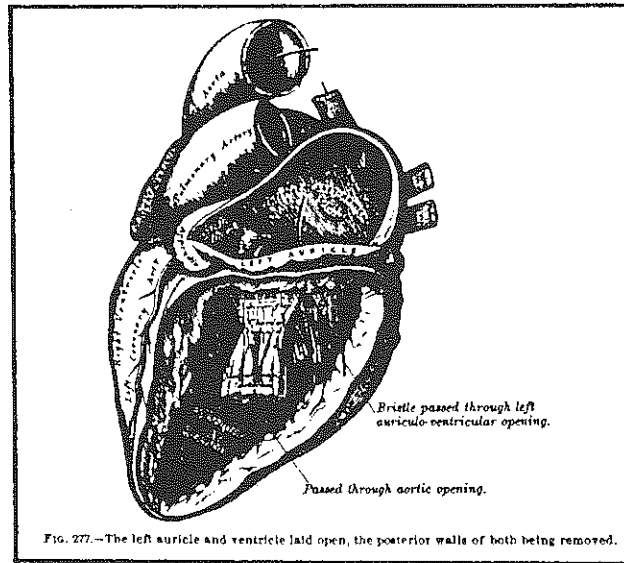


FIG. 277.—The left auricle and ventricle laid open, the posterior walls of both being removed.

hearse (hɜːrs) *n.* A vehicle for conveying a dead body to a cemetery. [ME *herse*, frame for holding candles.]
heart (hɑːt) *n.* 1. *Anat.* The hollow muscular organ that pumps blood received from the veins into the arteries, thereby supplying the entire circulatory system. 2. The heart regarded as the seat of emotions, as: a. Mood. b. Compassion. c. Affection. d. Character or fortitude. 3. a. The innermost area or part. b. The essence: *the heart of the problem*. 4. Any of a suit of playing cards marked with a red, heart-shaped symbol. —*at heart*. Essentially; fundamentally. —*by heart*. By rote. [< OE *heorte*. See *heave*.]
heart-ache (hɑːt'æk) *n.* Emotional anguish; deep sorrow.
heart attack. 1. Partial failure of the pumping action of the heart. 2. Any seizure of abnormal heart functioning, as a coronary thrombosis.
heart-beat (hɑːt'bi:t) *n.* A single complete pulsation of the heart.
heart-break (hɑːt'breɪk) *n.* Intense grief or disappointment. —*heart-breaking* *adj.*
heart-burn (hɑːt'bɜːn) *n.* A burning sensation in the stomach and oesophagus, caused by excess acidity of stomach fluids.
heart-on (hɑːt'ɒn) *v.* To give strength or hope to; encourage.
heart-soft (hɑːt'sɒft) *adj.* Deeply or sincerely felt.
hearth (hɑːθ) *n.* 1. The floor of a fireplace, usually extending into a room. 2. The fireside; family life. 3. The lowest part of a blast furnace or cupola, from which the molten metal flows. [< OE *heort*. See *heave*.]
hearthstone (hɑːθ'stoʊn) *n.* 1. Stone used in constructing a hearth. 2. The fireside; home.
heart-less (hɑːt'lis) *adj.* Without compassion; ruthless; cruel. —*heartlessly* *adv.*
heath (hiːθ) *n.* 1. An open, uncultivated tract of land covered with heather or similar plants. 2. A plant, as heather, that grows on such land. [< OE *Adri*. See *kello*.]
hee-thun (hiː'tʊn) *n., pl.* *-thuns* or *-thun*. 1. One who adheres to a religion that does not acknowledge the God of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. 2. One who is regarded as irreligious, uncivilized, or unenlightened. [< OE *Aðriþun*. See *kello*.] —*hee-thun*, *heathenish* *adj.* —*hee-thun-dom* (*-dɒm*) *n.*
heath-er (hiːθ'ɜː) *n.* A low-growing evergreen shrub having small purplish flowers and forming dense masses. [Prob. < HEATH.]
heave (hev) *v.* *heaved* or *chiefly* *heaved*. *heaves*. *heaving*. 1. To raise or lift. 2. To throw, esp. with great effort. 3. *Naut.* a. To pull on or haul. b. To push. 4. *Naut.* To come to be in a specified position: *The ship heaved alongside*. 5. To breathe or emit: *heaved a sigh*. 6. To rise up or swell. 7. *Informal*. To vomit. —*n.* 1. The act or strain of heaving. 2. *Informal*. A throw. 3. *heaves* (*stokes sing.* or *pl. v.*). A respiratory disease of horses characterized by coughing and irregular breathing. [< OE *heaban*. See *kap*.]
heaven (hev'n) *n.* 1. *Often* *heavens*. The sky or universe as seen from the earth. 2. The abode of God, the angels, and the souls granted salvation. 3. a. *Heaven*. The divine providence. b. *Often* *heavens*. A supplication for God: *Good heavens!* 4. *Heavens*. The celestial powers; the gods: *The heavens glorified our plan*. 5. A place or thing that affords supreme happiness. [< OE *heofen*.] —*heavenly* *adj.* —*heavenward* *adv.* & *adj.*
heavy (hev'i) *adj., adv.* 1. Having relatively great weight. 2. Having relatively high density. 3. a. Large in number or volume. *heavy rainfall*. b. *Heavy* *person*. c. *Heaviness* or

"The Left Auricle is rather smaller than the right; its walls thicker, measuring about one line and a half; it consists, like the right, of two parts, a principal cavity, or *sinus*, and an *appendix auricularae*."

This love had come to her of its own volition, right out of the blue (long before she'd married and discovered the meanings and messages of sky blue, the wild blue yonder or any other mutation of blueness). This love she was sharing with and passing on (she hoped) to her son who was just learning to read. He followed her around asking, "What does this say? What does that say?" For every room, when you looked at it that way, was filled with the printed word. Besides all the books which covered every flat surface, there were cereal boxes, labelled canisters, shampoo bottles, toothpaste tubes, postcards and notes to herself stuck on the fridge, all of these covered with instructions, ingredients, reminders, names and warnings. He came home from school with little books which she read to him every evening after supper. She nearly wept with happiness when he learned to pick out words by himself: "the, you, go, no, pop, hop, hop on pop". She printed out lists of rhyming words like: "book, hook, took, look, nook, rook, crook, shook", and they hugged each other with excitement. When she thought about all the words in the language, she had to marvel at the miracle of anyone ever learning to read in the first place. They were all geniuses, when you looked at it that way.

Although she had no literary talent of her own and so had never written a story, a novel, not even a poem, Evangeline kept the whole house full of books. There were bookcases in every single room, even the bathroom. The meals were slapdash and the house was a colourful mess, because when Evangeline was not changing the music or arranging the new purple and turquoise jewel-tone towels in the bathroom, she was reading. She had a special little bookstand which she carried around the house with her so she could read while she cooked, while she ate, while she did the dishes, vacuumed, washed the colourful floors. Often she went to bed with a headache (and so had to say to her husband, "Not tonight dear, I've got a headache") caused no doubt by eyestrain. But she preferred to think, in her more whimsical moments, that it was caused by the weight of all the words she'd jammed into her brain, all of them in there whirling and twirling, doing magic tricks and juggling for position. Some words were better than others, she knew that by now. All words were not created equal. All words were more than the sum of their parts. A word like "wither" was better than either "with" or "her", for instance. "Solipsism" was better than either "soul" or "lips". "Synergy" was better than either "sin" or "energy". Something was better than nothing. Her over-stimulated husband usually grunted and suggested Aspirin or therapy but she said she'd rather suffer.

Finally there was light.

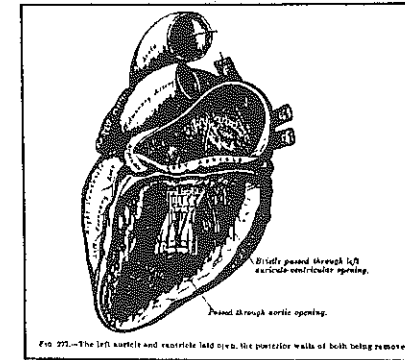
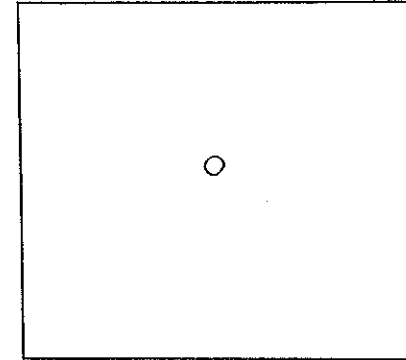


FIG. 278.—The right auricle and ventricle laid open, the posterior walls of both being removed.



"The Left Ventricle is longer and more conical in shape than the right ventricle, and on transverse section its cavity presents an oval or nearly circular outline. It forms a small part of the anterior surface of the heart, and a considerable part of its posterior surface. It also forms the apex of the heart by its projection beyond the right ventricle. Its walls are much thicker than those of the right side, the proportion being as 3 to 1. They are thickest opposite the widest part of the ventricle, becoming gradually thinner toward the base, and also toward the apex, which is the thinnest part."

This was her secret love which she had learned from and shared only with herself. For years she had carried it on privately, in love with the muffled pacific light of the bedroom in the morning when it had snowed overnight. Or the amiable pink light of a clear summer morning (which she refused to believe, as her husband warned, was really a result of all the pollution in the dying air). Or the fast-fading light of a mid-winter late afternoon which made her legs go weak with lassitude. Or the garish lurid light of a flamboyant sunset, a cliché certainly, but thrilling and unforgettable nonetheless. Or the spring sunbeams on the kitchen floor which her son, as a baby, had liked to sit and smile in like a little Buddha on the green linoleum.

All of these explicit and unconditional lights she had recorded, not with her naked eye, but rather with her naked heart which, she imagined, operated much like a primitive camera, a pinhole in the centre through which the illuminated images were funnelled and then amplified.

As she grew older, her heart was growing heavier (also longer, wider, thicker) and this spot of light was growing too. This process did not require talent. It only required patience and the imponderable passage of time. Right now, she figured, it was about the size of a regular incandescent lightbulb, sixty or maybe a hundred watts. Soon it would be the size of a spotlight, a perfectly circular beam of lucidity. It would mutate then to a strobelight, rendering all motion robotic and frenetic. From there it would transform itself into a searchlight, its radiant beacon searching out the secret corners of everything. Next it would stop moving altogether and expand smoothly to the size of a floodlight, washing away all colour and confusion within its vast range.

Finally the light of her life would achieve its apex, expanding inexorably and infinitely to illuminate all the spacious chambers of her heart.

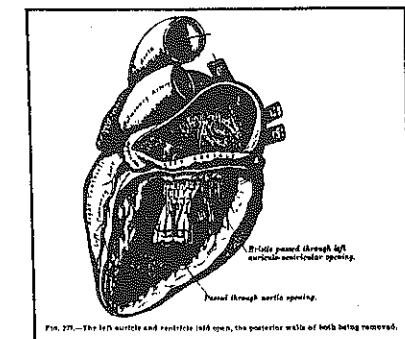


FIG. 277.—The left auricle and ventricle laid open, the posterior walls of both being removed.

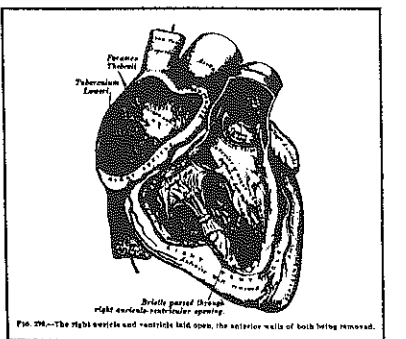


FIG. 278.—The right auricle and ventricle laid open, the anterior walls of both being removed.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES

Gray's Anatomy, 1901 Edition, The Illustrated Running Press Edition of the American Classic, 1974.
 The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Stanley Sadie Volume 12, Macmillan, 1980.
 The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques, by Ralph Mayer, Viking Press, 1970.
 The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Paperback Edition, ed. Peter Davies, Dell Publishing, 1973.

The Two Gentle Ladies from K-Mart

by M.A.C. Farrant

I'm in the basement coffee room at K-Mart, the downtown store. I came in here looking for cheap dish towels and the two women in charge of household items told me to wait in here, in their coffee room, a small dingy room located somewhere in the basement of the building.

There's some cold pizza in a box on the coffee table and they suggested that I might like to help myself to some or make myself some instant coffee if I get thirsty. Then they went away and locked the door.

I had a look at the pizza but declined a slice. With curling bits of dry salami sprinkled over its surface it hardly looked appetizing.

For some reason the K-Mart ladies think I am wonderful. Every now and then they peek in at me to show me to the other sales ladies from Home Furnishing and Lingerie. They point me out to them, smiling, and are extremely polite and deferential. Then they all giggle together and agree that I am quite a unique find.

I can't understand why they regard me as some kind of marvelous jewel they have just discovered or happened upon, so marvelous they wish to keep me here for their own private viewing.

Still, they are trying to keep me happy - I can't fault them for that - by telling me that they have an especially good bargain in dish towels (just for me!) and that they are arranging the items upstairs, this very minute, stapling them all together and sticking on their price tags. All marked down to one cent apiece. A bargain indeed. So I am grateful for their endeavours on my behalf and hesitate to protest my capture. Because that is what it is. A capture and imprisonment of sorts although I am quite sure that the two gentle ladies from K-Mart would not call it that. They would be offended if I were to suggest it. To them I am merely a tempting, interesting specimen they have found to ferret away and marvel at on their coffee breaks.

All well and good. I hate to disappoint them but my wife is waiting for me in front of the Bank of Commerce on the corner of Yates and Douglas streets. I told her I wouldn't be long - just stopping in at K-Mart to pick up some dish towels, I said - and, knowing her, she's still standing there, out front of the Bank. She will wait all day and longer if I ask her to and I worry because she doesn't know how to wait correctly.

That is, without drawing attention to herself. Anonymously. She will wait rather too far out on the

sidewalk, for instance, so that she becomes like an island in the pedestrian flow that people must break apart and steer around. This will cause her to draw stares of fear and perhaps even hatred from the passerby as if she were some madwoman because she is slightly off course with her not-waiting-properly. The other problem is that she twirls. She's an expert on twirling, on her heel and bending down. Sometimes she can manage two, three twirls at one go. This is fine for our backyard Bar-B-Q's but suicide on a busy street.

So I really am worried for her. But what can I do, captured as I am like some fabulous insect? The K-Mart ladies seem to regard me as a model house-husband which I certainly am not. It's just that I like a bargain. It would be all right if they regarded me as an ideal shopper, though, because there could be some commercial advantage in that. I could have my picture taken and appear on their advertising flyers drying dishes with my new dish towels. For a small fee, of course; there's no denying I could use the extra money. But, no, the K-Mart ladies prefer to keep me for themselves, a found object, somehow giving meaning to their daily work at the store. Meanwhile I worry about my wife.

There's a small window near the ceiling of the basement coffee room. By climbing up onto the coffee table beneath it, I am just able to peer out well enough to see the church across the street and for the past while I have been occupying myself by drawing a likeness of this church in the lined notebook I always carry with me. It's a large church resembling three same-sized blocks with a stick on top, quite simple to draw.

When the K-Mart ladies peek in on their next coffee break they are disappointed that I have not eaten a slice of their cold pizza so to accommodate them, because they really are nice ladies, I summon up my courage and eat a piece. This pleases them so much that I am encouraged to show them my rather crude drawing of the church, torn hastily from my notebook. They take it solemnly, with tears in their eyes and seem to study it most appreciatively. What do they see there, I wonder? But before another moment has passed they have handed me a set of bargain dish towels (at no charge), unlocked the door and waved me farewell. (But keeping the picture, I might add, for themselves.)

Now that I am free to go and have hurried off in search of my wife.

I have found her, standing in front of the Bank, too far from the curb and twirling, as I had feared, drawing angry stares from the passing crowds.

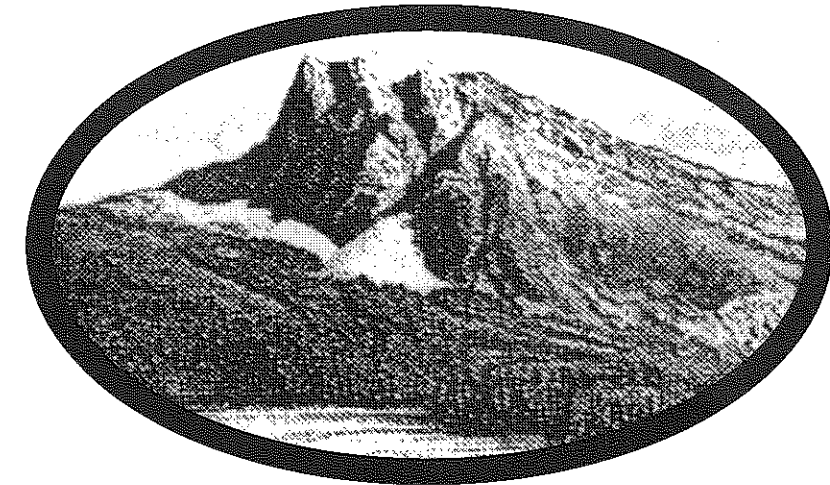
So I have taken her now by the arm and together we are hurrying up Yates Street. Correctly, on the right side of the sidewalk, because in this life the journey is perilous enough - what with the chance imprisonments that can befall you at any moment - without inviting further misery by disobeying the rules of the road, as well.

completely obscured by the archetypal and supernatural figures which foreground and fill the frame. As allegories for the human domination and domestication of the New World, these images clearly present the wilderness as tamed.

In 1954, when the Bank of Canada issued its next series, it did so with the stated aim of creating "a Canadian dimension" through a complete change of these note images. Concerning the selection of the new images, the Bank of Canada stated only that "a

prominent Canadian dimension was created by replacing the earlier allegorical figures with Canadian landscapes." They are described simply as a series of "realistic landscapes and seascapes."

Clearly the Bank of Canada felt that the previous imagery was not Canadian enough. The difference between the 1935 images and the 1954 images is startling. The 1954 images are as follows:



10
"Mount Burgess, Alberta"

\$1.00 bill:	"Prairie View Saskatchewan."	\$20.00 bill	"Laurentian Winter."
\$2.00 bill	"View of Upper Melbourne, Richmond, Quebec."	\$50.00 bill	"Atlantic Seashore."
\$5.00 bill	"Otter Falls at Mile 996 of the Alaska Highway."	\$100.00 bill	"Okanagan Lake, British Columbia."
\$10.00 bill	"Mount Burgess, Alberta."	\$1000.00 bill	"Anse St. Jean, Saguenay River, Quebec"

It is assumed, or hoped, that the Canadian dimension that these images create is self-apparent. How does this created dimension imagine itself and how do these images locate it? The allegory of garden paradise in the previous images is gone, replaced by realism. This realism is attained by beginning the image production process with a photograph of the landscape. The photograph is then used as the source for a painted image, a procedure also employed by many Canadian landscape painters from Tom Thompson to Jack Chambers. The painted step in the procedure, which brings in a "human" touch, is almost

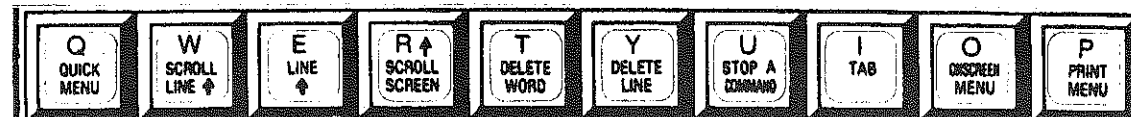
apologized for in the Currency Museum's display text: "Because of some of the technical and esthetic considerations of Bank note design, the illustrations may vary slightly from the actual locations depicted." The engraving made from the painting renders it mechanically reproducible but so intricately detailed that it is as difficult to copy as possible. The resulting landscape has a technological esthetic, a realism devoid of subjective interpretation or of the mythicized encounter with the landscape in the 1935 series. This process of demythicizing the landscape is also commented on by McGregor: "Too extensively

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demythified the environment tends simply to become a kind of void that resists all human connection. This is what happens in Canada."

What evidence of this void can be found in the Canadian dimension series? Whereas all the previous issue images celebrated the inhabitable and benevolent landscape, only half of the 1954 series show any sign of a human presence at all and it is revealing to look at how this human presence is portrayed.

For example, the \$1 bill presents the landscape as a vast expanse under a stormy sky. Cutting through it are telephone poles, a dirt road and a barbed wire fence that recedes in one-point perspective to a distant grain elevator poised on the horizon. A large thunderhead hangs just above the tiny structure. It is a far and rather lonely cry from the Agriculture allegory seated in her throne surrounded by heaps of produce. The thin threads of transportation (road) and communication (poles) provide little reassurance against the distant storm and vast space.

The \$2 bill shows three or four small farm houses and a church clustered in the center of the mid-ground. The distant houses are alone and unreachable. The \$1000 image is like the \$2 one, showing a few structures in the mid-ground, but here the foreground is greatly reduced and mountains loom on the horizon which almost obscures the sky. The vast landscape again engulfs a few buildings. This image is also in stark contrast to its previous image of the Security allegory.

The remaining images of the 1954 series depict landscapes devoid of human presence and of these only the \$100 one has a foreground which it seems possible to enter. The other images do not suggest possible passage through them, their foregrounds blocked by rapids, trees or snow. The images on the \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills specifically appear utterly wild and alien. McGregor suggests that, "The real relevance of the wilderness mythos to Canada can be seen only if we pay attention to what its proponents show us unconsciously, rather than giving too much weight to what they say they are doing."

What do the 1954 images show us, given that they are to create a dimension that is Canadian? With regard to the portrayal of Canadians within the Canadian landscape, they unquestionably show a great deal of It and a little of Us. We huddle together while the landscape surrounds us and look out at a

wilderness that prohibits our entry. Northrop Frye has termed this response to the Canadian landscape the "garrison mentality" and McGregor has termed it the "Wacousta syndrome."

Between 1969 and 1975 a new set of images replaces the 1954 issue. They are as follows:

- \$1 "Parliament Hill across Ottawa River."
- \$2 "Inuit hunting scene on Baffin Island."
- \$5 "Salmon seine, Johnson Strait, Vancouver Island."
- \$10 "Polymer Corporation, Sarnia, Ontario."
- \$20 "Morraine Lake, Alberta."
- \$50 "Dome Formation, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Musical Ride."
- \$100 "Waterfront scene at Lunenburg."

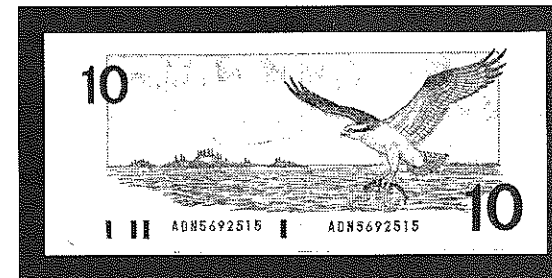
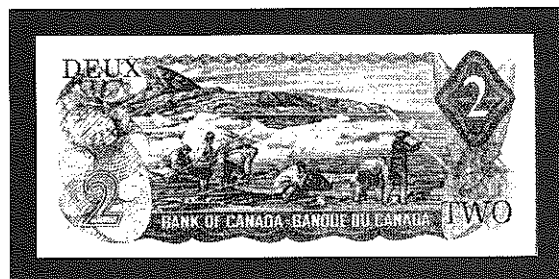
These images again provide an interesting set of comparisons. In this series the landscape becomes inhabitable again, but without the assistance of supernatural beings. Technology, government and the law are now featured and, with the exception of the image on the \$20 bill (found within the confines of a National Park), all these new images show clear signs of human presence.

In the new \$10 bill this presence overwhelms the landscape: it presents a techno-landscape where not a trace of Nature remains. This complete reversal is all the more remarkable because of the extremes it represents.

Into this new configuration of It and Us, a third term is introduced by the first appearance of Them in Bank of

Canada notes. "They" are the Inuit pictured on the \$2 bill, appearing in the harshest of the series landscapes. With minimal (low-tech) means, they interact with the icy environment in a nostalgic hunting scene. Nostalgia plays a part as well in the ship building industry pictured on the \$100 bill with its sailing ships of a bygone era.

The government is presented on the \$1 bill back and center, crowning Parliament Hill and overlooking the river. The threatening storm and the vast distances portrayed on the previous \$1 bill are replaced by an image of a log-choked river (prosperity through natural resources), overseen by government's central body. It is worth mentioning here that the industrial scene on the \$10 bill of this series depicts Polymer Corp. which was at the time of issue a crown-owned company.



While the government is portrayed on the \$1 bill centrally placed and looking outward from its vantage on the hilltop, the law is portrayed as a ring looking inward. The R.C.M.P. Dome Formation on the \$50 bill gives the unfortunate impression of a law force poised to attack itself, its weapons pointed in. The threat of the sea presented in the previous \$50 bill is replaced by an image which shows the national police force ceremonially closed in on itself in a circle with nothing at the center save the threat of its own spear.

The idea of generalized landscapes reemerges with the current series issue. The current series began in 1986 and the Bank of Canada's decision to make the change is described as follows: "There were three principal reasons for its introduction: technological advances in printing and photocopying of coloured graphic material that made the earlier series more vulnerable to counterfeiting; the need to facilitate the operation of high-speed, note-sorting machines by means of a bar code; and the development of features to assist the visually impaired." These new notes which come to be through "advanced Canadian technology" and make "le Canada à l'avant-garde de la conception des billets de banque" picture the Canadian landscape utterly devoid of any human presence. The word "CANADA" now fills the sky of a landscape solely inhabited by birds.

Buried under assurances that these new notes are even more secure and are more helpful than before, the question that lurks is "Where did We go?" Optical security devices, electronic readers and high-speed note-sorting machines do not provide an answer. Perhaps the question is not a relevant one, the "predominantly Canadian dimension" being technology itself and not the imagistic concern of locating Us, Here.

The 1986 issue images are as follows:

- \$2 "Robin."
- \$5 "Belted Kingfisher."
- \$10 "Osprey."
- \$20 "Common Loon"
- \$50 "Snowy Owl."
- \$100 "Canada Goose"

The bird images are constructed so that they best accommodate the advanced security printing technology. The design criteria state, however, that specific birds were selected because they have wide nesting ranges and would therefore be most familiar to Canadians. There is a concern, then, for recognizability.

While the birds are specifically named, the landscapes are general; the wetlands, the grasslands, the northern wilderness. The specific locations of "here" in most of the previous images (Otter Falls at mile 996 on the Alaska Highway, Upper Melbourne, Richmond, etc.) is now replaced by a general image of "there." The placement of birds, large in the immediate foreground, right of center and facing left, is done for reasons concerning printing and verifiability. The landscapes are minimal, primarily to contrast the detail in the birds, and for reasons of cost. Because of this, the birds seem separate from the landscape - momentarily halted, ready to fly off again.

The Canadian landscape here is seen as utterly uninhabitable and unenterable, the possibility of moving through it blocked by the apparition of its own name in huge block letters. The unconscious treatment of this landscape may be more familiar and

more recognizable to Canadians than are the birds that fly in front of it. Looking out across a sparse and unlocatable land we see only the ghostly name of ourselves, a mirage which names our country but prohibits passage over its own horizon.

Laura Millard teaches at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design.

Further Reading

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Micheline Lefebvre-Manthrop, Department of Banking Operations, *Designing Canada's Bank Notes* (Bank of Canada Review, January, 1988).

Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome, Explorations in Canadian Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).



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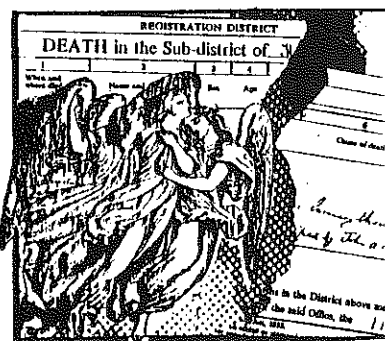
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what's to be done?

REVOLUTION IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

by Jo Anna Isaak

From the height, Moscow appeared to me a swarming anthill. Below, the crowds were seething in the square and pointing up at me with mocking laughter; and I became ashamed and terrified.— *Pushkin, Boris Godunov*

The Russian workers will have to undergo trials immeasurably more severe; they will have to take up the fight against a monster, compared with which anti-Socialist laws in a constitutional country are but pygmies.— *Lenin, What's To Be Done?*



WE are all suffering from a hang-over; after the three day carnival we are experiencing the after-effects of a party. This was the

first post-modern revolution, a revolution according to Baudrillard. From the first day we watched this revolution on T.V. CNN played a key role here. Each person had the possibility of playing a role. We played with all possible stereotypes from Prague in 1968 to Hemingway's Madrid to Santiago. During these three days we (artists and art critics) had a lot of discussions about what kind of performance art this reaction was because the barricades were no more than decorative. They were very expressive as installations, but were completely useless against tanks. People drew on the stereotypes they received from countless movies about the first Russian revolution because probably against cavalry these barricades could play some protective role, but not against tanks. Even this defence of the Russian White House was a kind of fancy dress ball; everybody tried to select some costume suitable for these events. It was not more than a performance and as result we received not more than a very bad Hollywood movie with Yeltsin starring as Batman. Now, aside from the couple of days we spent in front of the White House, it is not very good for us to say that we took part in this because the defence of the White House was performed by our mass media as a kind of new stereotype. They made a success out of this putsch. Everyday we have on T.V. countless programs about the event. Now it is not more than a new myth of perestroika. For us it is not as heroic as it could be. This feeling of the postmodern value of the affair was strong from the start. From the first moment it was not very serious, it had more of the elements of comedy than tragedy. It was a new thing because this country usually tries to be very serious at any historical event; this mask of seriousness was a symbol of the Soviet Union. Now without this mask we lost our stability, our structure. We understood that for so many years we fooled ourselves, but no more.—Konstantin Akinsha, art critic, in conversation with the author.

Russians have a highly developed "smechovaja kul'tura" (laugh culture). This is the culture that produced Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* which argued that laughter and the carnivalesque are potent catalysts for popular explosions. Many of the artists and intellectuals who took part in the resistance at the barricades were revolutionaries in the school of Rabelais and knew, in theory, how emancipatory collective laughter could be. Yet there is growing concern that this "ludic" revolt has been inscribed into somebody else's canonical text—the monolithic mechanism of mass media. In listening to Akinsha's account of the influence of the media upon these events, I was reminded of the joke about the Soviet journalist who visited America and was amazed that all the major American TV networks reported exactly the same news—all without any coercion! An important shift in the function of ideology has taken place; an obvious system of manipulation has been replaced by one offering seductive, constitutive identification. Marginalized people, artists, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, prostitutes, and members of the new "mafia," the whole Rabelaisian cast that gathered at the barricades, are having difficulty recognizing themselves in their new, made-for-TV stereotypes. In an amazingly brief period of time, they have been transformed from the overlooked into the overdetermined.

The awareness of being watched was a common enough phenomenon in the Soviet Union. Those who went to defend the White House knew the KGB would be recording their actions, but they also knew there was another gaze upon them—the gaze of Western media. For many Soviets, holding the attention of Western media has historically functioned as a form of life insurance—the physicist Andrei Zakharov is perhaps the most famous example of someone who stayed alive by living in the public eye. Many artists had learned to utilize the presence of Western journalists; it gave them an opportunity to be far more transgressive than they could be otherwise. In 1988 during the Sotheby auction in Moscow, artists had put up what, at the time, was a highly controversial exhibition at Kuznetsky Most. I was taken to it before it opened as the organizers were

sure the censors would close it down. (Inspectors come to every exhibition before it is opened to the public.) Three days later I went back. The controversial pieces were still up; they remained, according to my friends, because so many foreign journalists were in Moscow. Now, however, there is a growing sense of unease with this formerly benign and permissive gaze. It has taken on the dynamics of a new system of surveillance with the power to provide internalized censure or externalized approval and legitimacy. Those who once engaged in a critique of Soviet ideology understand that again they are being asked to "perform" an identity. Some are experiencing a form of *déjà vu*.

The replays of the "barricade tales," as they are now referred to, range in genre from fairy tales to horror movies or B-grade Westerns. In each case there is some overwhelmingly powerful evil that the protagonist, by virtue of having Right on his side, is able to overcome. For example, this is the account given in a popular newspaper: "A small group of people around the White House withstood the gigantic machine of repression which had the ability to annihilate millions, just as Saint George withstood the fire-spitting Dragon" (L.Ionin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Sept.12,1991). In reports by the commanders of the KGB hit squad "Alpha" (who boasted about how easily they could have wiped out the democratic defenders had they chosen to obey orders) the description of invisible, omnipresent, omnipotent, well-trained secret killers is borrowed from Ninja turtle movies. The topos of the horror movie has provided the most fertile metaphors for the event, perhaps because there is a lingering sense of the uncanny in the way "the forces of evil" were overcome. The minister of defense, E. N. Shaposhnikov, spoke of his "feeling of the diabolic" at work during the plotting of the coup. The leaders of the coup, by the logic of the genre, are constructed as nonhuman or alien forces plotting in the dark. On the day of the coup numerous hand-made posters appeared in the streets. In one poster Pavlov's face is painted on the head of an animal that looks something like a bull; the caption reads: "You won't take us by fear." The Russian word for fear contains the let-





ters "pugo" (painted in red) - another instance of the uncanny in that Pugo is the name of one of the plotters. The failed coup has become known as the "The Nightmare on Yazov Street," due to a play on the sound of Yazov, the military minister's name, and the Russian words for "on Elm." (I am indebted to Irina Sandomirskaya for bringing these "barricade tales" to my attention.) The general inability to think clearly about contemporary events is frequently linked to the bad American movies currently flooding Russian theaters. Ironically, one woman still blamed the former Soviet government for this—she thought the ministry in charge of imports lacked either the money or the taste to select good American movies. As a character in a Wim Wender's movie warned Germans many years ago -- "The Yanks have colonized our sub-conscious." The colonization has now spread to Russia. An enormous discursive shift has taken place, but who has appropriated it is not clear. What is also not clear is the relationship between these narratives and the formation of determining social structures. The hangover so many people are experiencing may be vertigo, the result of their precipitous plunge into what Julian Dibbell of the *Village Voice* called "this ever exponentially expanding hell-hole of American mass culture."

The Worldbackwards

Regression is not origin but origin is the ideology of regression.

Theodor Adorno,
"Perennial Fashion-Jazz," *Prisms*

Roll away the reel world, the reel world, the reel world.

James Joyce



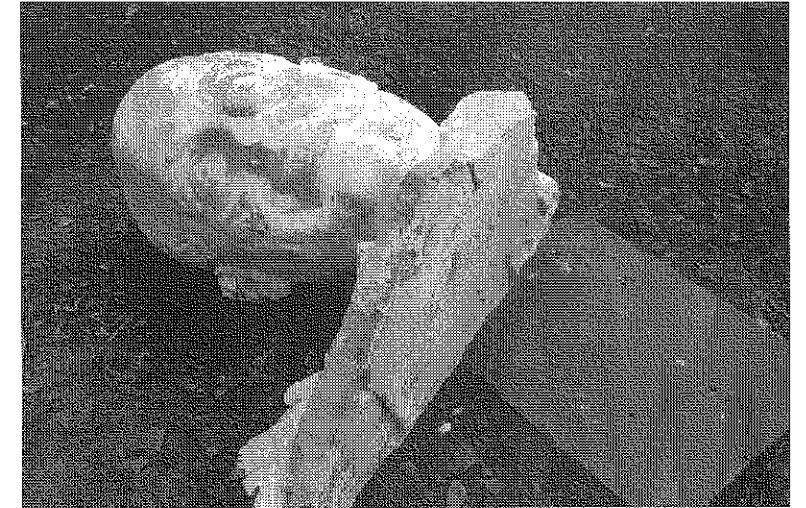
Even Kruchkov, former head of the KGB and one of the plotters of the coup, invoked a cinematic metaphor during his interrogation. He admitted to having made mistakes and, as if hoping for redemption via the media itself, wished he could have the chance to play the film backwards. His statement was picked up by Russian TV and provides the prefatory comment to a short clip in which the reel of Russian history, in the form of old film footage, is played backwards. Bombed buildings magically reassemble, missiles return through the nozzles of cannons, erect artillery guns go limp, columns of marching men march backwards and vanish into the distance, crosses fly up in the air and settle on the tops of church domes, Romanov monuments lumber back onto their pedestals—the war, the revolution, all "mistakes" are undone. This replay is hard to distinguish from the fast-forward of contemporary events. Both seem to be parodies of the opening scenes of Eisenstein's *October*.

In this contest of symbols, statuary everywhere is toppling. Behind the Dom Khudozhnika there is a rapidly expanding cemetery for statues of the ideologically out-of-step: Stalin, Kalinin, Sverdlov, and the head of what looks like the particularly unpopular General Ordzhonikidze, its face smashed, lie on the ground. Towering above them all is the huge statue of the KGB founder Dzerzhinsky who still looks overbearing and oppressive. There has been a long history of storage problems for white elephant art in the Soviet



Union. The equestrian monument of Alexander III has sat for over seventy years on a pile of cement blocks in the back courtyard of the Russian Museum. This statue was toppled from its pedestal in Znamenskaya Square in St. Petersburg when the Revolution began and rescued by the staff of the Russian Museum because Alexander III founded the museum. The artist Sergei Bugaev (a.k.a. Africa) has made it his project to rescue discarded art from the Soviet period. His apartment is filled with Soviet paintings, books, china, street and metro signs, statuary, building markers, etc., which are all being jettisoned. His greatest success is saving the last statue of Lenin cast by the Leningrad Plant of Art Casting. The statue had been commissioned by the city of Krasnodar in 1990, but Krasnodar no longer wanted it. With the help of Paul Judelson, a gallery director in New York City, Africa has had this fifteen foot, four ton, bronze statue shipped to New York. The problem once again is where to store it. At the moment it is sitting in a warehouse in Chelsea. As I write this, another Lenin statue has just arrived in Brooklyn harbor. . . .

Whole sections of the past are being eradicated in a manner familiar to Soviet citizens, not just because they have lived in a totalitarian regime, but because they have been so deeply marked by the pathos of utopian desire. Libraries and museums devoted to Lenin and the Soviet period are being closed. Names of streets, squares, and metro stations are being altered.



History is being revised so rapidly that schools no longer issue history textbooks; teachers use newspapers and periodicals. "The names are changed," one woman explained, "to protect the innocent." She was not referring to reruns of *Dragnet* (although numerous early American T.V. series are now being aired on Russian television and a whole generation of Russian children will grow up with Donald Duck); instead she was referring to the children who will be taught only the new history. Utopias require a protective narrative. It is a question of purity—the young, the future, cannot be contaminated with old errors. Utopia is also a question of time; even during the period of "heroic communism," which was full of accounts of success, Soviets lived with the sense of the "not yet" of a future utopia. Now utopia is being sought in the past, through a return to origins. November 7th, the planned celebration of the communist victory over capitalist exploitation and tsarist rule, was quickly converted in Leningrad to a celebration renaming the city St. Petersburg. Mayor Anatoly Sobchak promised to "return" the city to capitalism and to its former splendor as the "City of Czars," while his economic advisor expressed his concerns in a strange variant of an old theme: "We cannot build capitalism in just one city."

What is the robbery of a bank compared to the founding of one?

Bertolt Brecht, *Threepenny Opera*

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of Free Trade the most predatory wars were conducted . . . The term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood.

Lenin, *What's To Be Done?*

PHOTOS: SUSAN UNTERBERG

I was speaking with the artist Andrei Khlobystin about the effect the onslaught of the Western art market had on artists. "We resisted totalitarianism," he assured me. "We can resist capitalism." I wasn't so sure. I was afraid the Soviet notion of capitalism was derived from one of those old posters of Mayakovsky in which the capitalist, depicted as an enormous pig in a top hat, is about to devour the globe as if it were a big cookie, the cautionary caption saying something like "Capitalism can eat anything."

On the flight over I was again reminded of those old agit-prop posters. There, literally unable to fit his girth into the passenger seat, was a metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox church. No doubt he was returning from a visit to the Russian Orthodox church in America; a new rapprochement has been achieved of late between the two branches. The metropolitan was exactly as Mayakovsky and Cheremnykh had depicted him. In the cartoon version, however, the fat metropolitan was pushed off the globe, skirts flying. The figure in front of me looked like he was here to stay, his importance underlined by his enormous gold necklace and gold scepter. The scepter he used effectively to clear a space for himself in front of the baggage conveyor, which delivered to him four shopping carts of luggage. The church is emerging as one of the wealthiest sectors of Russian society, but is not considered a reliable venue for the distribution of Western aid to the needy. Other signs of freedom of religion are the young American Baptists and members of numerous evangelical sects coming in groups to spread the word of God and enlist converts. There is also a growing enthusiasm for everything occult.

Many other signs of "freedom" and "progress" can be seen: a huge duty-free shopping mall has been built in the Sheremetyevo airport; buses now carry advertising billboards with happy faces advertising Colgate toothpaste; other billboards and neon signs advertise a range of Western products, from beauty aids to electronic equipment. Signs also announce Casino Moscow, Business World, the newly founded banks, and the stock exchange. A seat on the exchange

costs several hundred thousand dollars. Western franchises such as McDonald's that offer "freedom of choice" (lettuce, tomato, or onion?) are experiencing amazing successes. Queues are now even more a part of Russian life. Still, the queue that remains the longest is the one to Lenin's tomb. Graffiti have begun to appear on the streets and subways; the most radical demand "Private property now!" Private ownership of buildings has begun, and artists perform the same role for developers in Moscow and St. Petersburg that they do in New York city—they are allowed to occupy buildings fallen into disrepair. The artists pay rent and repair the buildings. Often heat is not provided, only electricity and running water. When a speculator wants one of these complexes (usually some foreign interest is involved), the electricity is turned off and the artists are forced out.

ARTISTS

have had a head start in the shift to a market economy. In the summer of 1988 the Trojan Horse of the Sotheby's auction arrived in Moscow. I was as awed by its well-oiled machinery as were the Soviet artists. We marvelled at the fax machines, the computers, the photocopiers, the multiple phone lines that worked, the homogeneous blonde women in red jackets who glided amidst the crowds ministering to various needs. We devoured the food spread lavishly on banquet tables, stared at the exotic rich, and listened to "snap, crackle, and pop" as one Russian artist after another discovered bubblewrap. On the night of the auction we witnessed the birth of free enterprise. None of the artists in the auction became the millionaires they thought they had become that night. In spite of Pavel Horoshilov's assurances from the Ministry of Culture concerning payments to be made to the artists, it took more than a year of wrangling before any of them saw a ruble. Several weeks after the auction I happened to be meeting an artist in an old church. As I negotiated puddles of water in the dank basement, I saw the

art from the Sotheby auction sitting on dirt floors and propped against the walls—over four million dollars worth of art and not a guard or a dehumidifier around!

The Sotheby auction affected the Russian art world much the way the *Salon des Refusés* affected the Paris Salon in 1863: it incorporated art production and distribution into the system familiar in capitalist countries. It announced in the most public and powerful way possible that the criteria for judgement and the potential to make things happen could be located somewhere other than the entrenched bureaucracy of the Ministry of Culture. Not that all of those comfortable government jobs within the Artists' Union and other branches of the arts administration disappeared. Foreign museums and organizations even today still have to pander to numerous Soviet directors who do little to facilitate the project at hand, but continue to enjoy the travel and expensive hotel rooms that their position still allows them to demand. Yet their role as gatekeeper was over by the summer of 1988. The financial success of the auction meant that the Artists' Union could no longer control the selection of artists for exhibitions and sales abroad, nor could they control the activities of artists at home. Artists and critics began to arrange their own exhibitions and new entrepreneurial structures developed around them. At the time of the Sotheby auction there was not a single gallery in Moscow, but buoyed by the demand of a foreign market for Russian art, a local market has since developed and now there are close to a hundred galleries. Some of these may exhibit work of dubious taste and engage in questionable business practices, but all that was true of the old Artists' Union as well. Last fall Moscow held its second international art fair, called Art Mif at the grand Manege exhibition hall. The organizers of the fair were a mixture of the old bureaucracy as well as new art dealers and critics. The show as a whole looked as dreary as any of the past official exhibitions held in that vast space. Many of the artists were the old favorites of the Artists' Union. Nevertheless, works sold. With new Soviet banks buying art both for

investment and for public relations, this may have been more financially successful than art fairs held in Europe or America last year. The success of this fair was especially significant because it coincided with the announcement that the Artists' Union would no longer be able to meet its payroll to artists. Thus ended six decades of support for official Soviet art.

NYMPHETS

do not occur in polar regions.

Nabokov

When I first went to the Soviet Union in 1981 I was struck by the fact that women were not "hailed," to use Althusser's term, by ubiquitous images of themselves on billboards, posters, cinema marquees, shop windows, and magazines. Images of women were not used as part of the continuous barrage of exhortation and entrapment that "a capitalist society requires . . . to stimulate buying and anesthetize the injuries of class, race, and sex" (Susan Sontag, *On Photography*). Moreover, I was conscious that women walking in the streets of Moscow are not looked at in the same way, are not the same confection of meanings as they would be on the streets of Paris, Rome, or New York. I always felt more confident, more at liberty in Moscow. When my husband came with me in 1987 he complained that the culture seemed de-eroticized. Ironically, once I learned more about how Soviet women perceive their construction within the dominant representational systems, I discovered that his response was closer to theirs than was my own. Women in the Soviet Union have invariably been depicted as heroic workers or warriors—woman as trac-

tor or combine driver, construction worker, steamroller operator, vegetable farmer, engineer—all form part of the myth of the legendary *omuzhony*, (amazon) or "masculine woman." Coming from a culture in which the image of woman signifies sale and sexual titillation, I found these images of active, strong women at work refreshing, but Soviet women, conscious of the violation inherent in so overdetermined an iconographic program, do not. They recognized in this stereotype of the all-capable and resilient Soviet woman a strategy to colonize a work force. The appropriation of the female body that in Western culture facilitated the construction of difference there contributed to the notion of the ideal collective body, to the sexual in-difference of totalitarian androgyny. Paradoxically, both representational systems serve to control women's sexuality and to guarantee manageability in the work place.

Recently in St. Petersburg I came upon a poster in which a bikini-clad



woman assuming a standard pin-up pose was juxtaposed with an image of a computer. At first I misread the relationship between the two images, thinking the pin-up was the visual gambit to call attention to the computer, but the caption read, "Shaping—It Is the Style of Life for the Contemporary Woman." This was a self-improvement poster addressed to women. Although the role of the computer was unclear, it could simply have been the signifier of all that was progressive, like the tractor in

Soviet posters of the thirties. Now the emphasis was on the appearance of the woman, not on her work. In very real terms, however, this poster was no less about women and work than were the Socialist Realist posters. As job opportunities arise in the emerging entrepreneurial sector and in Western businesses, the call is for young attractive women to occupy predominantly low-paying, decorative jobs in the service "industry." As the free market brings unemployment in its wake, the education, training, and professional skills of women will likely be sacrificed first—at the moment of writing it is estimated that eighty percent of the unemployed are women. The subliminal message of this poster aimed at women is, "Either make yourself look like this, or you'll be out of a job."

Posters of pin-up girls are still a rarity, even in the streets of St. Petersburg, which has always been the most Westernized of the Soviet cities. While Western ads and movies are bringing with them increasingly explicit representations of the female body, pornography is not yet part of the everyday sexism of this culture. Historically, Russian art has not shared the Western tradition of the nude, except, oddly enough, during the period of Socialist Realism. This winter an exhibition of Socialist Realist art at the New Tretyakov Gallery displayed more nudity in one room than can be found in the entire collection of

Russian art in the Russian Museum. Although Andrei Zhdanov, as minister of culture under Stalin, led campaigns against the representation of sexuality, images of nude women were nonetheless officially encouraged. Under a seemingly perverse strategy, desire was aroused in order to be appropriated. There were many images of female fecundity; bare-breasted harvesters or nursing mothers were very popular, as were nude female athletes or bathing scenes that enabled the artist to depict the nude in numerous postures.



Aleksandr Samokhvalov's *After Running* (1934) is a classic of this genre. It depicts a female athlete in the process of undressing and drying her body; her panties are pulled down to reveal a little of her pubic hair while she smiles at the viewer. The obsession with the healthy athletic body as a vehicle for sexual sublimation during the Stalinist period is remarkably similar to the mechanisms of libidinal alignment used on us today—twenty pounds lighter, and this girl could be in an ad for Evian water.

Although Russian artists have for the most part been much more reticent in the depiction of sexuality than Western artists, a thriving gay and lesbian community in St. Petersburg has effectively used erotically charged material in art exhibitions and performances to announce its existence, to counter stultifying assumptions of normalcy, to celebrate the body, and to allow for the articulation of an already constituted but previously repressed set of behaviours and desires. Eroticism is explored as a locus of subjectivity, a venue by which the self may be liberated from its previous incarceration in the de-erotized communal body constructed within Soviet ideology. Central to this movement is Vadim Mamyshv, a performance artist who does such convincing impersonations of Marilyn Monroe that the official newspapers reported he was an hermaphrodite. In a culture intolerant of even small deviations from the norm, this was cause for an enormous scandal, especially as Vadim's mother was a prominent party member. Bella Matveeva also explores androgyny and homoeroticism in her paintings of highly stylized, Egyptian-looking nudes in which the male and female models seem to blend into one sex. Initially these paintings seem uncomplicated offerings of visually pleasurable bodies, but installations of Matveeva's paintings include the living nudes who modelled for them. The presence of the actual people used in creating the work disturbs the viewer's passive identification with the illusion of art. Matveeva plays with the subject positions of speculation and, in doing so, ingeniously reveals how these fixed positions of separation-representation-speculation are classically fetishistic.

A number of recent exhibitions in both Moscow and St.



Aleksandr Samokhvalov, *After Jogging*, 1934, Russian Museum, Leningrad. Photo: Susan Unterberg.

IdiomA, under the editorship of Irina Sandomirskaya. With a grant from the Ms. Foundation for the Arts, it will publish its first issue in Russian and English this Spring. The title is a reference to the feminine sign "α" in the gender-divided Russian language. Like the French feminists, the Russian feminists are trying to find a voice for women, a language, "l'écriture féminine." To do this in the context of the powerful patriarchal syntax of contemporary Soviet culture is to undertake a much more difficult task than that undertaken by Western feminists.

Petersburg have attempted to address issues of representation and the construction of gender. The curatorial team of Oleya Turkina and Viktor Mazin have organized three such exhibitions. The first, called "Women in Art" (1989), was a retrospective with a section dedicated to female students of Malevich and Filonov, as well as work from the sixties and seventies, a liberal period in which many women artists were admitted into the Artists' Union. The second and third exhibitions focused on contemporary art. Influenced by their readings of the new French feminists, these curators attempted to address such issues as art as text, the gender assumptions surrounding textile art, fetishism, forgery, lesbian love, and hermaphroditism. The theoretical impetus for these exhibitions come from the West, and as the participants themselves note, it is not easy to organize an exhibition about feminist issues in a country where feminism is simply absent as a social or philosophical movement. In some cases the signs of this absence, particularly in the case of exhibitions which purport to be addressing the cultural construction of gender or the problems of women and art, are glaring. The exhibition "Woman as Represented in Contemporary Avant-Garde Art" (Feb., 1990) seemed to be designed to support the commonly felt assumptions that woman's artistic role is naturally that of muse. However, there are signs of an incipient feminist movement. In Moscow, a feminist collective has emerged and has managed to organize two feminist art exhibitions; the second attracted international interest and is currently on tour in Europe. This collective began the publication of the first feminist art magazine

The Icon of Our Time

It is only over there they think
That living means you have to eat.

Dmitry Prigov

As the old order of art production, distribution, exhibition, and critical reception collapses, those with the requisite energy, commitment, and enthusiasm are finding that for the first time their projects can be realized. Ironically, the closest historical comparison is to the activities of the avant-garde just after the Revolution. When Lunacharsky went to Lenin for funds to support the avant-garde, Lenin replied that in these difficult times, artists would have to live on the energy produced by their own enthusiasm. Today, as in 1918, enthusiasm seems to be very rich fare. Currently, there are almost no government funds to support artistic activity, yet paints, paper, and building materials are gathered, exhibition sites are rehabilitated, and volunteer labour is in abundance. Making a joke of their straitened circumstances and the anxiety over food shortages, two artists put on an exhibition at the Marat Guelman Gallery which included a huge table loaded with fruit, bread, and sausages they had transported from Odessa; at the opening the audience was invited to eat the work of art.

As official art institutions flounder, independent curators and critics have been quick to take advantage of the opportunities chaos has created. At the Dom Khudozhnika or Artists' House in the New Tretyakov, Yelena Selina and Yelena Romanova were able to organize an exhibition of contemporary art unlike most previous exhibitions sponsored by that institution in that it was political, provocative, and at times very witty. Once again the recurring motif was food. Yelena Elagina raised the sausage to its appropriate place in the Russian collective consciousness—to the level of "The Icon of Our Time." The price and availability of this item is a daily topic of conversation, discussed regularly on the radio and television as



Aleksandr Samokhvalov, *Iksisos (Sausage)*, *The Icon of Our Time* 1991. Photo: Susan Unterberg.

if it were one of the leading economic indicators. In *Iksisos* (sausage spelled backwards) sausages made of wood are strung together and draped like rosary beads over a wooden cross. Where traditionally one would find scenes from the stations of the cross, one finds instead back-lit illustrations taken from a book distributed to food service employees during the 50s. The book is a safety manual instructing people on the proper procedure for the handling and cleaning of huge food processing equipment. There is an implied threat to the dwarfed humans working with this equipment and consequently something suspect about the content of the sausages.

With the abrupt collapse of various state-run publications numerous new voices are making themselves heard. The main art magazine *Iskusstvo* ceased publication because of a paper shortage. In its wake a number of small publications have started up. In St

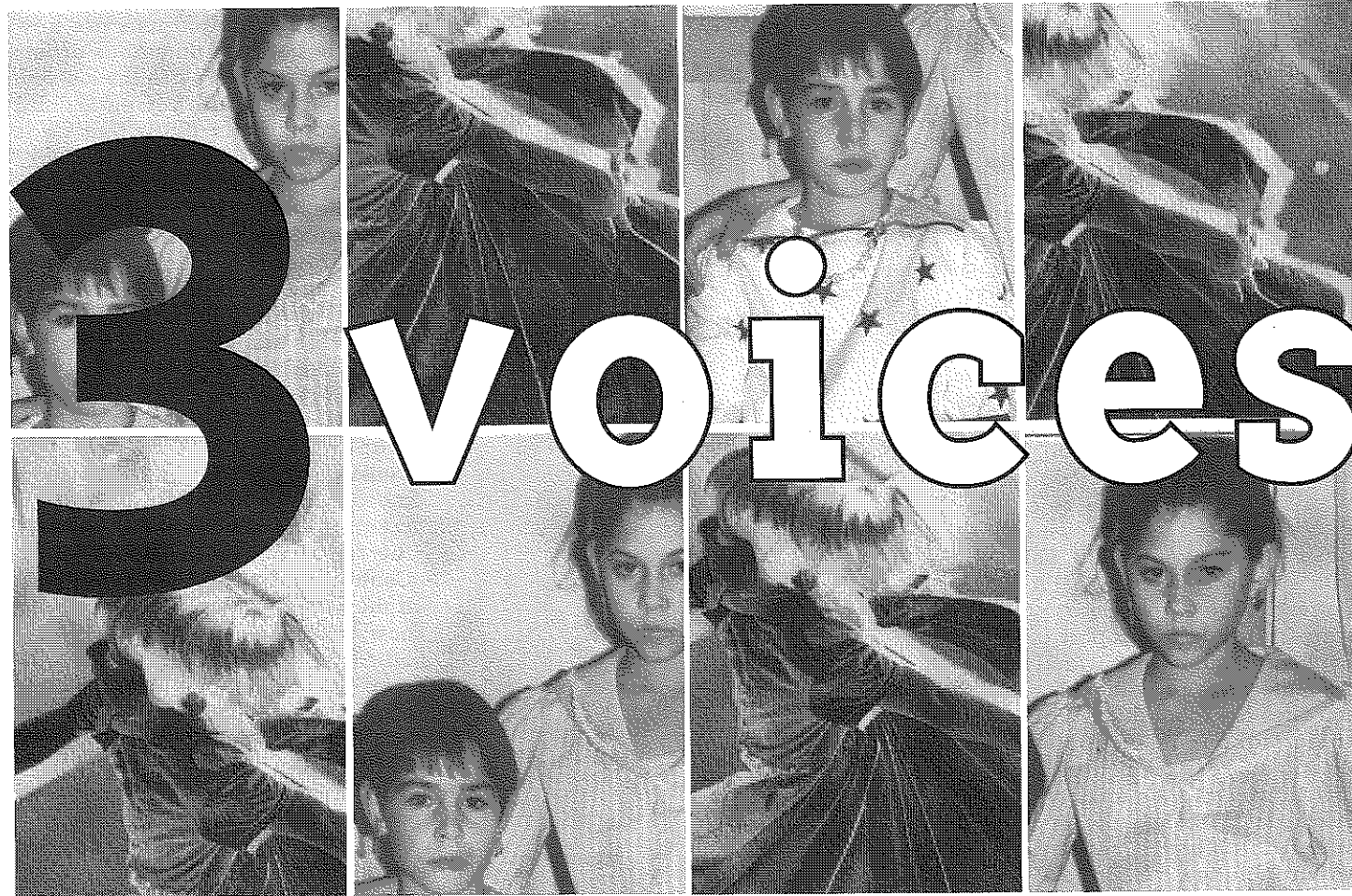
Petersburg the first issue of *Kunstkamera International* appeared this fall. This is an illustrated art newspaper containing interviews and critical essays along with guides to exhibitions and galleries. Many small publications are now possible because numerous artists who came to the West in the last few years returned with computers and small copiers. In 1987 when I was doing archival research, I would have to take material to the xerox machine in the Canadian Embassy. Now, with the possibilities of desktop publishing, small groups of artists and critics are able to form collectives and produce their own magazines and manifestos. A lot of the publishing that is going on at the moment involves exposés of government and KGB corruption. The graphic artist Alexandra Dementieva is making the cover for a book written by Lef Khrutsky documenting the connections between the mafia and the members of the Central Committee. She wasn't sure if the book could be published even now, but if it wasn't accepted by the official publishing organs she was prepared to publish it herself. "We'll risk it!" she laughed, echoing the words of that early revolutionary Chernyshevsky.

On the plane home I sat beside a man who was working for the CIA. He had spent the last two weeks in Moscow running a workshop for the KGB on international drug control. He was an affable American, showing me all the souvenirs he had brought back for his family, but as he told about his stay in the hotel inside the KGB complex, the opulence of the surroundings, the lavish banquets held every evening, the dacha he was taken to outside Moscow, and all the privileges the KGB were still enjoying, I thought of Alexandra and I remembered that Chernyshevsky wrote *What's to be Done?* while imprisoned in the fortress.

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gender equity/gender treachery



sexed tetes collective

Mary Bryson
Suzanne de Castell
Celia Haig-Brown

I have a dream of an intellectual who destroys evidences and universalities, who locates and points out the inertias and constraints of the present, the weak points, the openings, the lines of stress, who constantly displaces himself [sic], not knowing exactly where he'll be or what he'll think tomorrow because he is too attentive to the present;

who, in the places he passes through, contributes to the posing of the question of whether the revolution is worth the trouble, and which (I mean which revolution and which trouble), it being understood that only those who are prepared to risk their lives to reply can do so.

Michel Foucault

Introduction

We present here a rather unorthodox text in a rather unusual form. It's a collaborative attempt to wrestle with a set of very concrete challenges surrounding the conception, implementation, and our own involvement in institutional efforts to address what is widely termed 'gender equity.' It was not in total naivete that any of us began this work, yet none of us fully anticipated the kind and extent of the difficulties we would face. When one educational administration after another explicitly targets 'gender equity' as a 'major initiative,' we know at least this much: there is real danger here. We know there's no choice about dealing with this issue now, but for all the grand talk of 'pedagogies of possibility,' we know that the agenda is set elsewhere and that we—women, lesbians, feminists—are not the architects of its design. We are at best tacticians looking for 'transformative moments' in tiny fissures and crevices in a system which, hitherto predicated on the creation of gendered difference, now proclaims—incredibly—a commitment to its overthrow. Knowing, then, that while we cannot really act, and yet we cannot not act, we embrace the tactics of the weak with just one positive idea: our lesson from Virginia Woolf that 'gender equity' can't be allowed to mean just 'sex equity.' Nevertheless, that's most likely to be precisely the basis of the institutional strategies within which we set out to work.

here be dragons...

SC: How did we come to this, this social project of 'equalizing the genders'? What are the main historical lines, directions, sources of this project, these discourses which reform and regulate girls and women as subjects of public education? Usually, 'equity' is a term of concealment. In a progressive masquerade, it announces the right to be or to become like the idealized subject of 'human rights.' It re-asserts traditional rules, roles and relations by announcing the right of non-dominant, marginalized persons to 'assume the position' of dominance, to hold the same jobs, go to the same places, have the same desires, and do the same things as the normatively-sanctioned bourgeois subject of human rights. These become, then, rights to pseudo-membership in the dominant group, rights to be like—but always impossibly so—those whose right it is to define the proper subject/s of rights.

These are, of course, not rights as homosexuals, as indigenous people, as Asian, as poor, as women. Such rights might in truth be 'human' rights. The struggles of native people in Canada today, for example, seem to be principally for such human rights, accorded *despite* differences, and without the necessity to 'assume the position.' Conversely, struggles for gay rights are advancing only to the extent that the

state reconstitutes homosexuals as inevitably failing heterosexuals.

In education too, of course, it has always been the purpose of state systems to equip diverse student bodies with the 'habitus' universalized as normative. This compulsory submission of all children to extensive and intrusive state 'standards' is the process whereby the state constitutes the subjects to which it then accords rights, and then represents. This is what 'equity' in education has meant for minority students: the right to try, but inevitably to fail, to become white, male and middle class. And this is very much the kind of thing 'gender equity' means for girls and women.

As the New Right mobilizes around 'family values,' current gender equity work inscribes 'women's ways' as a new regime of truth in educational policy, entrenching even further the very tradition it pretends to reject—the gender version of a pre-civil rights 'separate but equal' policy justifying systemic discrimination.

MB: What gender equity means to me is equal opportunity to be who I am, not who I will *not* be, and can't even aspire to be. So long as we insist on working within 'gender' as a necessary or transparent categorical system, there can be no such thing as 'equity.' On the topic of 'gender' Judith Butler has written:

The presumption here is that the "being" of gender is an effect, an object of a genealogical investigation that maps out the political parameters of its construction in the mode of ontology. To claim that gender is constructed is not to assert its illusoriness or artificiality, where those terms are understood to reside within a binary that counterposes the "real" and the "authentic" as oppositional....If the regulatory fictions of sex and gender are themselves multiple contested sites of meaning, then the very multiplicity of their construction holds out the possibility of a disruption of their univocal posturing.

Gender Trouble

CHB: I was hired to develop and teach a course which a Ministry of Education Gender Equity Committee suggested to the universities. Through this work, I became interested in the euphemism, 'gender equity,' which seemed to include the possibility of allowing more space for feminism as praxis to expand its presence in established social institutions like schools and universities. It might serve as an alibi for feminism. As I worked, I pondered the duo: gender equity/feminist treachery.

Where does the traitor come in? A traitor to socialization or to some essential being lost in the process of socialization? A traitor to feminism? The notion of treachery appealed to me when the title was proposed: now, it has come to encompass some personal history, gender, and feminism and the praxis around all three. For me the treachery begins with amelioration, as we wait for the big change to an equitable society. Let me count the ways.

Through talk and education, we will find justice. Whose talk? Whose education? Whose justice? Can we be sure that this talk in which we engage at the university is not



simply a diversion, something to keep our busy little minds busier as the bosses and owners sleep peacefully and continue **their** lives of privilege? Can we, as Gayatri Spivak suggests, "unlearn **our** privilege as our loss" in a way that contributes to change for those who are being hurt?

Michel Foucault writes of "regimes of truth," or "...general politics of truth which each society adopts, a type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true." As we move into positions of declaring truth in the form of working papers on gender equity, outlines of courses called gender equity, delivering courses in gender equity, we accept the role of soothsayer and we prepare the discourse, our versions of truth. Whose interests are served? Who benefits? Can we keep the discourse open enough for the visions we'll never be able to conjure up?

We exploit our friends. We call them to be what Suzanne calls the performing parrots. "Step right up: a real live Lesbian. She walks and talks and you can ask her anything you want." We expose our friends to ignorance and abuse: "Black woman, First Nations woman, Woman of Asian origins, Lesbian. Come to my class and enlighten us." When is a token not a token? How many differences, how much diversity to really address this theoretical position called anti-essentialism? How many lives? How much pain?

As the teachers, we agree to take on an impossible task. The limits of time: one nine-day course to challenge essentialism with nineteen people. Some of them have never considered gender issues; a few are committed essentialists. The latter have barely considered that their experiences could be other than universal, and that their interpretations and political directions are not the only appropriate responses to situations of inequity. In nine days, we will change all this.

"True Stories" about Academic Feminism/s

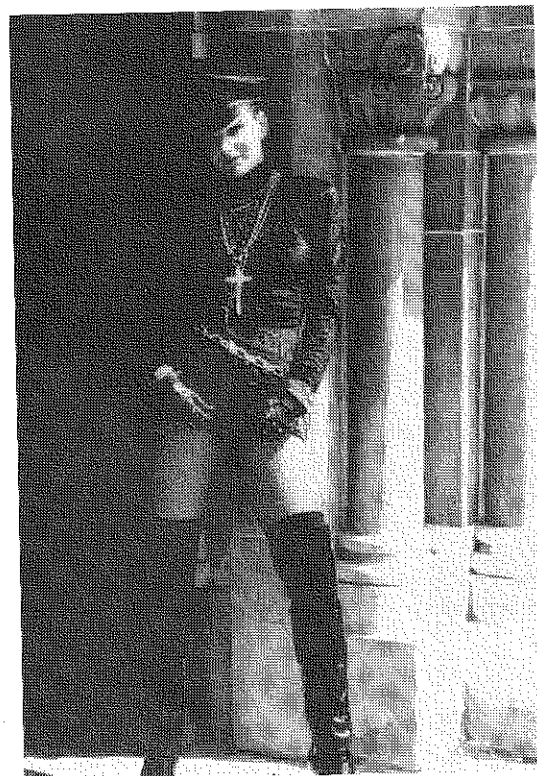
SC: Imagine This Scenario:

I should have known when I first walked in and saw those bowls of mini-lifesavers around the table that I was in trouble.

The first meeting began, as I knew it would, taking for granted that least clear, most contested, most fragmented conception: gender. The mood was to be one of purposeful, optimistic consensus. We all, it seemed, knew who 'we' were, and why we were here: we had a job to do, and an unprecedented opportunity to do it. We were here to advance, together, a hitherto neglected human rights agenda, the agenda of 'women.' We were here to ensure the provision of equal rights—and our job was to work on the ways this mission would be carried out.

I put it this way, because our job was assuredly not to discover or to invent the ways in which this was to be carried out, as this had already been done for us. Accordingly, our first agenda item was to approve the Ministry of Education's implementation plans for the next four years, from 1990 to 1994. The first year had already, if inconveniently, taken place. Undeterred, we were advised this meant we could proceed at a faster rate to 1991—a kind of bonus right at the beginning of the game.

We began, predictably enough, with instructions to

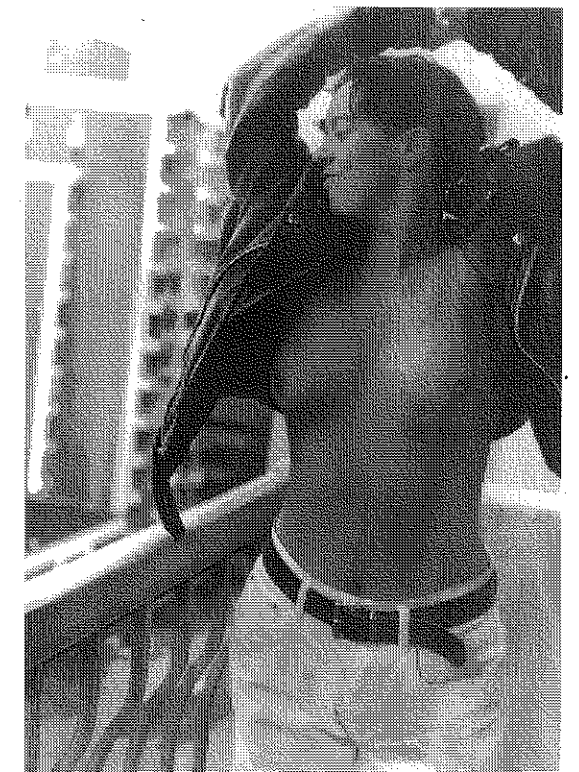


identify ourselves and to share with the group information about the gender equity initiatives presently underway at our respective institutions. This tactic served, of course, to cement the taken-for-grantedness about what gender equity meant. This rhetorical short-circuiting of the main argument, which was dutifully carried out by each one of us, nonetheless failed to effect a total ban on discussion. Because if I knew nothing else, and at that point I really did know very little else, it was that 'gender' and indeed even 'equity' were not unproblematic terms. I didn't know who 'we' were; that is to say, it was already all too apparent that I was not part of the we who were there, in skirts, in jewellery, in salon-styled hair, in wedding rings, in nail-polish, in smiling, lipsticked lips. Nor was I part of 'we men,' who joined the first meeting: one young, in jacket, collar and tie, boredom you could taste, resentment you could feel on your skin; the one who was told to be there, who never came back. Then there was the older one, the jovial human-rights-in-the-school administrative activist, enjoining us all to work for the advancement of 'both genders,' berating his absent, unsympathetic colleagues for their failure to see how gender equity was so necessary for us all, how it was so necessary for men, oppressed by sex-role stereotyping, their wives' careers impeded by the glass ceiling, their sons' emotional development obstructed by the burden of expectations of their manliness, who were not allowed to cry (the pinnacle of women's achievement in the affective domain). I wasn't part of we women, nor part of we men—I was instead—and this was the primary source of trouble for 'us' from that day on, one of the hitherto unthinkable 'differently gendered.'

MB: Imagine This Scenario:

It is "Women's Ways of Knowing Day" and I am intensely uncomfortable as I walk across campus to attend a session advertised as an "Informal Dialogue for students and faculty interested in feminism and epistemology—an opportunity to discuss the complex issues involved in feminist research" with two of its shining stars, Mary Belenky and Blythe Clinchy (see *Women's Ways of Knowing*, by Belenky, Clinchy, Tarule, & Goldberger, 1986). I feel nervous just contemplating what lies ahead. 'As a lesbian,' attending academic events advertised as 'feminist,' is inevitably to disrupt the 'always already' of compulsory heterosexuality that circulates through these gatherings. Invariably, 'speaking as a lesbian,' I am the 'outsider'—firmly entrenched in a marginal essentialized identity that, ironically, I have to participate in creating by naming my difference—sort of like having to dig one's own ontological grave.

Predictably, the speakers use the royal 'we' in talking authoritatively about women, and 'our ways,' though the actual sample of women about which they speak is almost exclusively identified as heterosexual and white. Periodically during this fireside chat, the speakers talk about the fun they had leaving husbands and children behind to constitute a regular series of women's ways pyjama parties where the researchers 'let down their hair' and collaborated in the production of a differently gendered epistemological framework, eventually to be described in the best selling book entitled *Women's Ways of Knowing*. Parodying one of my favorite postmodern identities, whom I sometimes refer to as "PoMo the Super HoMo On the



Photos: Heather Cameron,
Gender Treachery,
a photographic exhibition
exploring the edges,
A Space, Toronto,
April 1993.



Heather Cameron,
Gender Treachery, a photographic exhibition exploring the edges,
 A Space, Toronto, April 1993.

Go," I break into the cozy and convivial atmosphere and talk about how odd it is to find myself "not a woman," or "a woman by any other name" in their analyses. I describe my anger in reading the *Women's Ways* book which, intertextually, locates on the page descriptions of their research methods and findings between quotations by lesbian writers such as Audre Lorde or Adrienne Rich without ever naming the presence of those voices as 'lesbian,' and, simultaneously, without ever naming their own voices as discursively constructed through white heterosexual privilege. An uncomfortable silence hangs perceptibly in the room.

Lesbianism: "A difference that dares to speak its name"?- Not if you want tenure!

In the opening scenes of Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, women are being systematically hunted down and incarcerated for a variety of 'crimes against the state.' One woman identifies her particular crime as 'gender treachery,' used here as a code word for lesbianism. It is not surprising to see the representation of lesbianism as a form of deviancy that will not be tolerated under an explicitly repressive regime.

But how might it come to pass that for me to 'speak as a lesbian' within the purportedly liberatory context of women's studies programs or academic feminism would, likewise, be consistently interpreted as an undesirable form of disruption, or as a form of 'treachery to my sisters' that undermines the otherwise cohesive bond among feminists, ostensibly committed to the betterment of all women?

SC: It is the institutionally-sanctioned 'REAL' woman, the Good Housekeeping woman, necessarily white, heterosexual, and middle class, that gender equity seeks to affirm. Not women of colour, lesbians, or poor women. Hence institutions in this period of the rise of the New Right now gain popular approval and assuage liberal tensions by condoning 'approved' understandings of women's culture, or women's 'ways' and have relegated to the sidelines feminist culture, feminist 'ways.' Still, how to trust academic feminism any more, to believe in it... Because there's another treachery concealed at the heart of

academic feminist's bond with 'women.' To be a feminist is to be on the side of women. But women's culture isn't always feminist culture, and we know that in real life feminists and women are often in bitter conflict. In the end feminists always have to take the side of 'REAL' women—it's a rhetorical tendency the feminist project has of slip-sliding away. I want to say, dangerously, "queers against women," as a way of naming my own agenda—"Queers against academic feminism" for the way it seduces and betrays us, blindfolds us with our own good feminist intentions, and leads us back, unseeing, uncomprehending, into the culture of 'women.'

CHB: My first encounter with the new gender equity course was hallway gossip. One of the powers that be had asked what the academic content of such a course could possibly be, the implication being that there was none. I suggested he could visit my office and I would show him my books. The next thing I knew someone was asking me to teach the course. The feminist treachery began with the course approval process. I was assuming a strong relationship between feminism and gender equity. On March 5, 1991, I received a phone call to let me know that the course outline submitted for approval had been turned down. As I noted in my journal, there were concerns expressed that the course emphasized feminism and that such a course should focus on 'respect for persons' as opposed to women alone. I was speechless. All I could think was that I had never agreed to teach a course about respecting men. They already have respect, positions of power. I do bring in race and class which suggests the need to consider some men, but the focus to me should be on girls and women.

The head of the committee told me that I needed to make the course look more attractive to men. (A friend assuming heterosexuality suggested that I put a woman in a low-cut dress on the cover.) Second I was to take out the word 'gendered' which was a 'feminist' term. Feminism is political; the course should focus on moral issues like justice and respect for persons. "I see," I said. "If I teach a course in justice for persons, that's assuming a

moral stance, but if I teach a course that focuses on injustice to women, that's taking a political position." Finally, I should add "affective learning outcomes" to ensure that the course did not 'look' like a course in indoctrination.

The course outline, eventually accepted, was an effort to meet the needs of the course approval committee without losing sight of the important issues to be addressed in any serious consideration of gender equity. Nineteen students attended the nine-day summer institute. They read, listened to a variety of resource people, and participated in class discussions and presentations as well as keeping journals and preparing a final paper based on their presentations. Topics addressed included conceptualizing gender and equity; language and gender; women and history; women, girls, First Nations people and science; women and the law; teachers as researchers. Student presentations included gender and math, children's literature, technology education, physical education, and feminist pedagogy.

It was a 'good' course, well received and challenging. Most significantly the teachers appeared keen on channelling their anger around sexism, increasingly revealed for some, into thoughtful classroom and personal action. A mother commented that she was going to change her parenting. She had been encouraging her daughter to conform to society's stereotypes of women. "I've just been preparing her to throw her to the wolves," she said.

MB: Thrown to the wolves? Being a lesbian in academia means being 'thrown to the wolves' on a daily basis. Probably the most disheartening and disturbing aspect of my work in academia is the series of double binds within which anyone whose identity is constructed in the contradictory dynamics of difference is profoundly implicated.

In my case, there is the double bind I face as a 'lesbian/lecturer'—a position which Suzanne and I have described as an 'untenable discursive posture.' As a lesbian I am profoundly committed both to the production of difference and the support for difference, yet to 'speak as a lesbian' I



assume an identity which automatically situates me as an outsider whose very marginality invalidates my right to address central issues and silences my voice. How can I talk about issues that may be specifically of concern to lesbians without claiming the authoritative voice of experience—without claiming the unique capacity to speak as a lesbian. My capacity to speak is entirely a set of effects of contradictory and overlapping discursive positions—my white skin privilege, my middle class roots, my dyke world, my able-bodiedness and so on....

As a lesbian,' for example, I was asked to review the proposal for a new Women's Studies degree-granting program. Although bibliographies for new courses included many lesbian writers, there was no explicit textual reference to lesbian 'subjects' either embodied or otherwise. When asked for my opinion of the proposal, predictably enacting my role as institutionalized lesbian, I discussed the absence of any lesbian content and suggested that it seemed ironic that much of the feminist 'canon' had been contributed by lesbian feminists and yet our actual embodied existence as lesbian subjects seemed nowhere in sight. Conventionally, this problem is usually described as one of 'lesbian invisibility'—yet this seems to misconstrue reality in an important fashion. Namely, that while lesbians are entirely visible and vocal it is the authority conferred by heterosexist myopia which rules our representations out of court. Striking while the iron was hot I proposed that Women's Studies fund a "Dyke Theories in the Post-Feminist Academy" lecture series that Suzanne and I had talked about putting together. Our lecture series turned into a 'lezzy studies' course, which we co-taught in 1991.

In the classroom, we quickly found, however, that only the students who identified as 'queers' (that is, as women who were committed to what we refer to here as gender 'treachery,' or in the students' terms, 'gender fucking') could effectively engage in the work that we had prescribed for our course. That is, the other students came to visit us, as instructors, during office hours in order to talk about their difficulties participating effectively in

class, but didn't voice their frustrations during class time. Most white students who unproblematically identified as heterosexual, for example, made lifeless presentations about lesbians that bore painful testimony to their inability to imagine an encounter between two lesbians. In their journals, non-lesbians typically made no attempt to make use of discussions of identity to reflect on the constructedness of their own identities, but chose, rather, to consume or to reject the material on the basis of critical rationality. Lesbians and lesbianism, in this form, became commodified texts or artifacts to be recklessly appropriated in a context with no ethic of consumption. Students with no direct experience of homophobia asked questions or made requests to the class that betrayed their privilege and that failed to meet the needs of lesbians in the class in relation to issues of safety or rights to privacy.

SC: The Ministry of Education hadn't seen the meaning of gender equity as much of a 'poser' at all. The minutes show that the job of the advisory committee was to 'adopt guidelines.' The chair's main task was to provide 'status reports' and to 'make statements.' Some members of the committee brought in papers and information for circulation, but no time was made available to discuss anything which was brought to the committee, unless it directly expedited the (entirely vacuous) 'implementation plans.' Members requested access to the briefs on gender equity which had been submitted to the ministry during the extensive process of public consultation which had purportedly been the basis for these initiatives, but were advised that they had been inaccessibly filed away. For those who had invested their labours in this democratic process of consultation, it would have been instructive to see the ease with which their work was dismissed as entirely dispensable to policy formation.

Whenever we took time away from the work of making statements and approving guidelines, it was made clear that we were to resume work as quickly as possible. Repeatedly, we were advised that budgeting deadlines made it impossible to alter min-

istry plans. For nearly every issue the advisory committee was 'consulted on,' there was no change made to what the ministry had already determined.

Time, we were constantly reminded, was at a premium, and at the beginning of two of the five whole days devoted to achieving gender equity in the province's public schools, we were promised that if we could get through the day's agenda quickly, we could go home two hours early. So it seemed almost impolite to ask, "What do these documents mean by 'gender equity'?"

This critical omission, and the ambiguity it enabled, was a strategic move which functioned to expedite a process of legitimating a (pre-ordained) policy that had the surface features of a progressive reform, but a policy which was in fact empty, devoid of meaning. It functioned as a placeholder—an unwritten, but yet paradoxically a regulative, fiction.

An operational definition was shuffled past us, de facto, but this was covertly achieved—and it was the only thing we concertedly opposed. Distributed to all members of the advisory committee along with the first meeting's agenda was a report commissioned by the Ministry of Education on "Gender Distribution in the British Columbia Education System: A Status Report," by a firm of management consultants. This commissioned report renamed 'sex' as 'gender,' and construed 'gender equity' as 'balanced distribution' of 'both genders' across a range of targeted roles, statuses and occupations. Accompanying that report was a memo to the effect that this document was provided to assist us in the formulation of our 'baseline goals.' The memo made it quite clear to us where we, the 'advisory' group on gender equity, were to be headed.

I thought it would be possible to subvert this process by creating a counter-document: a text which could materially stand in policy to define and demarcate what could and what could not be included within a 'gender equity initiative.' Collaborative writing, always a series of compromises, produced this:

Understanding Gender Equity

Gender equity is concerned with the promotion of personal, social, cultural, political and economic equality for all who participate in the education system of B.C. The term 'gender equity' emerged out of a growing recognition in society of pervasive gender inequities. Continuing traditions of stereotypical conceptions and discriminatory practices have resulted in the systemic devaluation of attitudes, activities and abilities attributed to and associated with girls and women.

The negative consequences of stereotypical conceptions and discriminatory practices adversely affect males as well as females. However, in the short term, greater emphasis in gender equity initiatives will be placed on improving conditions and attitudes as they affect girls and women. In the long term, these initiatives will also improve the situation for boys and men.

Gender equity, as distinct from 'sex equity,' is not attainable solely by a quantitative balancing of females and males in all aspects of the existing system. It must entail, also, a qualitative reworking of gender assumptions within all aspects of the present system itself, both formal and informal. Concretely, this means promoting gender equity in respect of (1) curriculum, instruction and assessment (2) social interaction within the school setting (3) institutional conditions and structures, and (4) the socio-cultural context of public education.

The treachery here involves one's complicity in the construction of a 'regime of truth'; a regulative fiction crafted in the name of emancipation, all the while knowing that such a regime, whatever liberatory illusions it may create, will operate repressively as a technology of standardization and normalization.

For Whom Do the Belles Toil?

CHB: As I work, I must focus on the (im)possibility of gender equity. Gender equity involves negotiation with the oppressor, and is yet another example of sleeping with the enemy, women or men. It begins with a denial of feminism. We keep the people in the Ministry of Education and ourselves well fed. I've replaced Suzanne on the

Gender Equity Committee. At my first meeting, I was greeted with the fat report entitled "Gender Equity: Distribution of Males and Females in the British Columbia School System, 1991" and a list of criteria for evaluating gender equity learning resources. There are grants available for local gender initiatives. A person describes a meeting she attended in which she was 'the only skirt in the room.' I present a report on the gender equity course. We spend the second day 'reacting' to the drafted Review Framework for gender equity program initiatives. "Take out the reference to feminist research," the ministry person advises, "It would be like a red flag to a bull." Gender equity can reduce feminist projects to the number games of liberal equality and Spivak's table-manner feminism. It is a retrogressive move in that it forces us first to critique gender equity before we can move on to the real work in feminism.

MB: For this lesbian involved with institutional Women's Studies, there's no place called home. There is, likewise, no home in many of the texts of academic feminism. In my work in a Faculty of Education, I cannot speak 'as a lesbian'—and yet I cannot say a word that isn't inflected, at some (usually awkward) point, by my lesbian voice, just as my white skin privilege constitutes a voice that makes counter-hegemonic practices simultaneously non-optional, suspect and contradictory. As Elizabeth Meese wrote:

The lesbian subject is not all I am and it is in all I am. A shadow of who I am attests to my being there, I am never with/out this lesbian.

SC: When the Ministry of Education calls and asks for help with any emancipatory project, hang up immediately. You may want to call them back, but only after having thought about what it is that this particular question excludes, denies, conceals, precludes. Gender equity functions as a conceptual roadblock, obstructing any progress in extending fair treatment to girls and women, as well as all the 'differently gendered.' It enacts the violence of a false universalization of a privileged identity on all who are contained within that fundamentally meaningless term, 'gender.' In its abstracted generality, it

leaves all of the problems which it purports to encompass wholly untouched, and in place of emancipation, it achieves a tightening of the reins of conformity in the name of progressive reform. In whose interests is 'gender equity'? To the extent that it succeeds, to that extent does it enhance the privilege of the already privileged. And for female 'career academics' it is at the present time, like academic feminism in general, the most direct route to professional advancement—particularly if what one seeks is a career in administration—for women willing to take on its agendas.

Whose carrot/
Whose stick?
Or, "Why should the
fates of the groovy
and the creepy be
intertwined?"

(Solonas,
1968)

In this article, we have described our involvement as faculty members in Education with/in a range of ostensibly liberatory activities and institutional relations. From our very different subject-positions in relation to this work, different kinds of praxis have entangled each one of us with/in a familiar tension; a profound dis-ease that hangs in the balance created by the apparent irreconcilability of socially transformative goals and painful institutional realities. These have been words that speak more of pain than of pleasure—that attest as much to the damages wrought in the name of social transformation, as to the benefits.

Through the telling of these 'reflexive tales' of our respective



engagements, disenchantments, and complicities with institutionally-sanctioned ameliorative projects we have broken a powerful pact of censorship that forbids participants to say anything about these kinds of activities other than that which falls within the resolutely positive 'language of solutions.'

You could even say that, as is often the case for oppositionally-positioned marginals, we have taken a familiar pleasure in telling tales out of school. These are stories significantly at odds with conventional narratives and received wisdom about commitments to implementing progressive policies for the advancement of social change loudly proclaimed on our respective campuses. Audre Lorde's oft-cited words continue to be suggestive of an avenue for generative inquiry:

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house... Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns.

In trying to work seriously on 'equity issues' it is critical to understand how institutional responses to, and production of, 'difference' function in the context of university communities so as to entrap minorities into doing work that, paradoxically, engenders further oppression rather than producing equitable social change.

Chandra Mohanty, writing about the "commodification of diversity," argues that, on university campuses in this period of right-wing backlash, the production of discourses of multiculturalism and so-called equity policies function both to depoliticize, and hence to 'manage,' difference. As Mohanty observes, "The central issue, then, is not one of merely acknowledging difference; rather, the more difficult question concerns the kind of difference that is acknowledged and engaged." It is instructive in this regard to see how difference is treated in 'equity' initiatives, as something to be alternately represented by 'authentic members' (the walking, talking lesbian who, it turns out, is 'just like us') and re-constructed as commonality ('our common humanity') to which students in such diversity-management classes learn they must

become 'more sensitive' so 'we' can learn to 'work together.' (But for what! And for whom?). Would we then continue in this work, whose origins, we do well to remember, are in the defensive political strategies of institutions attempting to cordon off and contain social movements which became, in recent history, so powerful that they threatened to disrupt 'business as usual'? To participate in this work

is all too often to undertake a job of management, not scholarship, or pedagogy. This work of management resembles in name alone the social movements in whose name it purports to work. And that is treachery in/deed.

Perrot: And there's no point for the prisoners in taking over the central tower?

Foucault: Oh yes, provided that isn't the final purpose of the operation. Do you think it would be much better to have the prisoners operating the Panoptic apparatus and sitting in the central tower, instead of the guards?

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Father, Don't You See I'm Burning (You)?

BY Jim Ellis

Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

In spite of the vast intellectual and political gaps that separate them, Kaja Silverman's *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* and Robert Bly's enormously popular *Iron John* do engage the same issue: contemporary crises in masculinity. As with any crisis, of course, where you stand determines how you feel about it. Bly is attempting, through the invention of a new mythology centered on the hairy beast in every man, to reinvigorate the penis/phallus equation, while Silverman is intent on dismantling the murderous and repressive structure that that equation supports. While Silverman's book will never achieve the popularity of Bly's, it will certainly prove important for work in the areas of film studies, psychoanalysis, feminism and queer theory (rather than gay studies, towards which Silverman pays some lip service but remains a little hostile, associating it with biographical criticism). *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* constitutes an

analysis of what Silverman calls nonphallic masculinities in the work of, among others, R. W. Fassbinder, Henry James, T. E. Lawrence and Marcel Proust. On the way, the text provides often brilliant and always useful rereadings of such concepts as Althusser's theory of interpellation and ideology, Lacan's discussion of the gaze and its relation to female spectatorship, and Freud's analysis of "feminine" masochism.

Silverman's target is the group Bly feels has recently been victimized - white, middle class, heterosexual males. Her preferred method of attack is an undermining of their props. The basic premises of the book are Lacanian: that identity is external in origin, and that the basic condition for cultural subjectivity is lack. Her strategy is frequently to locate in male subjects those characteristics which are typically designated feminine, such as soliciting the gaze, acknowledging lack or castration, or assuming a passive or receptive role. In so doing she attempts to disrupt and denaturalize the categories of masculine and feminine, and indeed, homosexual and heterosexual.

Perhaps the most powerful chapter in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* is Silverman's rereading of Lacan through the films of Fassbinder, in which she rigorously distinguishes between gaze and look. Whereas the gaze, like the phallus, is something to which no subject can lay claim, the look of an individual subject remains within the realm of desire, and often functions as a signifier of lack. Feminist film criticism since Laura Mulvey has often argued that women in film typically function as the object of the male gaze, and that women must work to turn the gaze around. Silverman argues instead that we are all always simultaneously subject and object of desire, and that the real problem with the dominant cinema is that "male desire is so consistently and systematically imbricated with projection and control" (144-5). Just as the penis is continually conflated with the phallus, to support the belief in the male subject as "whole," so too is the male look, a signifier of lack, often conflated with the gaze. "We have at times assumed" writes Silverman "that dominant cinema's scopic regime could be overturned by 'giving' woman the gaze, rather than by exposing the impossibility of anyone ever owning that

visual agency, or of him or herself escaping specularly." This, for Silverman, is precisely what Fassbinder's films demonstrate over and over: "The insistent specularization of the male subject in Fassbinder's cinema functions not only to desubstantialize him, but to prevent any possibility of mistaking his penis for the phallus, a dislocation which is at the centre of Fassbinder's 'aesthetics of pessimism.'" In films such as *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* and *Gods of the Plague* the male characters are inevitably caught in the same structures of seeing and being seen as the female characters. We are all always subjected to the gaze: like castration, it is a basic condition of subjectivity, a condition which is not strictly limited to women. As Thomas Elsaesser notes, in the films of Fassbinder to be is to be seen.

Much of the second half of *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* deals with what are normally designated as perversions. Silverman devotes three chapters to various forms of masochism and a fourth to male homosexuality. The significance of these sexualities goes beyond the purely sexual (and indeed, Silverman argues that nothing is purely sexual), in that perversion "turns aside not only from hierarchy and genital sexuality but from the paternal signifier, the ultimate 'truth' or 'right.'" Writers such as Jean Laplanche (*Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*) and Leo Bersani (*The Freudian Body*) have taken care to separate sadism from masochism, insisting that they are neither reversible nor complementary. Freud noted that sadism was completely compatible with heterosexuality (and hinted that sadism was in fact a usual component of it). Masochism, on the other hand, when it occurs in men, disrupts the economy of heterosexuality, often by foreclosing on the position of the father. (In Gilles Deleuze's account of masochism, derived from the novels of Sacher-Masoch rather than the writings of Freud, what is being beaten in the masochistic fantasy is precisely the father. Masochism is a contract entered into by the subject and the pre-Oedipal mother, who attempt to bring a new subject into being without the intervention of the father. Although certain elements of Silverman's and Deleuze's

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 pleasurable 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 ecstasy. 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 re-finding 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 impor-

tant 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 "scientific" 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



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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 synthetic 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 pragmatist 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, naive) 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 irrelevant but vacuous Architecture Stickers (for example, "THIS IS JUST ONE BIG BUILDING FUCKING ANOTHER" and "YES! 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 architectural 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



piece on space and "corporeity," which suggests that it is the task of architecture and urban programming to reterritorialize the modern, deterritorialized human subject - and to keep pace with the wild growth of a techno-scientific world where "interactions b/w the body & constructed space unfold through a field of virtuality whose complexity verges on chaos." The projects in *Semiotext(e)/Architecture* attempt, in Guattari's terms, "to think both the complexity and the chaos along new lines," but ultimately they represent such an attempt, or some of the conditions for its possibility, rather than enact it. In this sense, the volume lacks the new praxis demanded by its premises. Guattari's call for the return to architecture of an "animist" conception of the world is nowhere (else) in evidence.

Although it may seem that *Semiotext(e)/Architecture* speaks only obliquely to "real" architects, it must be pointed out that the intent of the volume is to enlarge the list of concerns proper to "architecture," to push architecture beyond the limits of the built project. This effects a critique of current architectural theory/practice at the same time as it appropriates architectural models for other domains and discourses. It is the palpable and unresolved tension between these two aims - which of these, after all, has priority? - which generates confusion and raises hackles.

Because of this double movement, however, there is much here of interest - occasioned of course by architecture - to the theorist-at-large. For at stake is the age-old problem of representation, returning in the essentially Derridean question of the *writing* of architecture. The conventions and assumptions governing the presentation of architectural and design projects are explored and exploded, and why not? Deconstructive architectural strategies, looking more like the liberal tradition it ought to have devastated, suggests that this should be a creative process. This issue's editor, Hraztan Zeitlian, writes that the representational modes of architecture and design are "contaminating," "infecting," and, in keeping with new movements in the technology of the image, the projects in *Semiotext(e)/Architecture* are said to be "less representative & more manipulated in a positive sense." Indeed, the point pursued throughout this volume is the exploitation of new possibilities for design presented by technology. I imagine that, from the

point of view of the contributors to *Semiotext(e)/Architecture*, most current design practice - and certainly its conceptualization of its task and its limits - lags far behind in this respect.

A rather obvious example of this positive manipulation in action is "x...stasis," a project directed by Catherine Ingraham, which stages mutations of the line - occasioning an "ex-siting" of the line from straight (orthos), into another realm. It charts the progress of a simple, "figural conceit": x,X, as mathematical symbol, as turnstyle, as chiasmus, as sign of erasure, as indicator on a map. Pithy "cites" - quotations, reflections - are arranged in boxes along with CADD-generated images ("x" turned on three axes) against a backdrop of line formations progressively blown-up and focussed into greater and greater surface detail. The implied aim is to relax "oppressive" linearity which, in terms borrowed from Derrida, "is not loss or absence but the repression of pluri-dimensional thought." Architectural design ought not to be linear in a repressive sense, but must be able to represent pluri-dimensional spatial conceptions. Since this is already what architectural renderings are supposed to accomplish (despite their paradoxical dependence on line and detail), this does not seem to be such a radical program for architecture *per se*.

Part of the difficulty *Semiotext(e)/Architecture* sets out to engage is with the term "design." As Avital Ronell and Albert Liu point out in "The Inexact Essence of Design," an inessential piece at the end of the volume (its brevity thinly disguised by twice repeating it in various states of overlay and compression), design is not object or function, but a morphological process (formation rather than form). As such, it demands a theory of *morphogenesis* - but in "a non-romantic, non-absolutist mode of self-production." One of their topics is technological self-representation ("cybernetic corporeality") in which the prototype exemplifies the design process (and its necessary relationship to "testing"). The prototype is a "singular simulacrum" before the existence of the original: it allows the beginning to begin. Neither then, a medium of agency nor communication, "the prototype serves as a pure medium...." The importance of design as experimental and inexact - its status as medium rather than matter - is clearly underscored by the positioning of such reflections in a volume whose success depends on the viability

and currency of these very ideas.

In *Semiotext(e)/Architecture*, the problematics of the representation of architecture - the movement from building to (written) image - are often suggestively articulated by analogy with another discipline. Two pieces, for example, deal with film. In an interview with Atom Egoyan, Deborah Esch discusses his interest in the transition from room to screen in film - a passage formulated as "the moment of mediation, of the medium." Eve Laure Morse investigates the films of Maria Brooke Dammkoehler for the construction of "woman" in classic Hollywood cinema. Other moments, other media engage with the architecture of the image. James Derderian's video essay on the Gulf War and another short piece by Ronell (also on the Gulf War) foreground the problematics of technology: Virtual Reality, Baudrillard's simulations, and so forth. Architecture, technology and design theory must "commingle."

It would be easy to criticise this volume for its casual borrowings from "other" disciplines - especially philosophy and critical theory. Although such borrowings are often used effectively to shed new light on old problems (and indeed to create some new ones), they usually offer little in return. Daniel Tiffany's "Unbridled Space" (thoughts on architecture, mass media and death - on cryptic spaces, dwelling and memory) infects architecture with a provocative, if opportunistic, conflation of Heidegger, Benjamin, Adorno et al., but, from the point of view of the specialist, perhaps finesses crucial issues in those authors' relevant works. The point is clearly to enhance the concerns proper to architecture rather than the other way around.

Oddly enough, then, for the general reader (by now as fictional a figure as the architect-reader invoked here at the outset), the most successful projects are finally those which are the most architectural, that is, those which engage most fully with the problematics of the representation and design of "building," and those which extend architecture to reach other strata of human habitation - those which attempt, in a meaningful way, to force open the whole package.

Sophie Thomas is a member of the Border/Lines collective.

Deconstructing Nature

BY Richard Ashby

Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez*
Toronto: Between The Lines, 1991.

Over the past thirty-five years, nature has come to occupy an increasingly important place on public agendas and in the popular imagination throughout the world. Though its current manifestation is peculiar to our times, there is nothing particularly unique about interest in nature as such. As analytic concept and regulative principle, nature - and especially the nature-human nexus - has always been an important, if ever-shifting, fragmentary and often contested, site of social and cultural articulation. Neither fully a positive entity nor an unmediated object of knowledge and experience, "nature," notwithstanding its noumenal substrate, is first and foremost a political and epistemological category, a vector for interpenetrating regimes of power/knowledge: science, religion, economics and industry, technology, morality, gender, nation and so on. It is, moreover, neither simple nor single but a multiplicity of objects, a multiplicity of sites: body, earth, other-than-human life, environment, or a less material (but no less materially effective) natural order of things. Generally speaking, the power to name and define nature (and by extension what is and what is not natural) has always been more or less coextensive with the power to define how things ought to be. As construct or plurality of constructs, however, both "nature" and nature are always the products of particular cultural and social formations, serving at once to legitimate certain social relations over others, and to normalize what could loosely be termed an attendant environmental praxis.

Interestingly, the increasingly widespread acceptance of the foregoing remarks is itself due in good measure to the specificity of current preoccupations with nature. It is the result of an encounter with two natures: the real one, so to speak, and the culturally constructed one. On the one hand, there

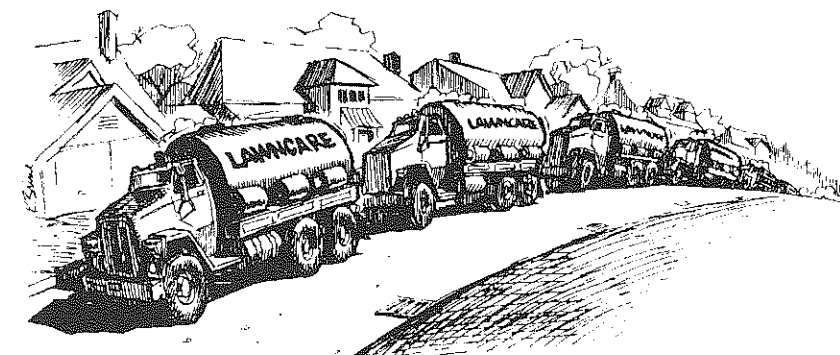


Illustration from *The Culture of Nature*.

was an alarming realization that nature's continued capacity to sustain life as we know it can no long be taken for granted, that, in effect, we are in the throes of an ecological crisis of no small proportions. On the other, many began to recognize that 1) "nature" is indeed a cultural construct; and 2) the conceptual vocabularies with which we apprehend and inscribe nature are intimately bound up with the way we treat it. Not surprisingly, both nature and "nature" quickly emerged as focal points for an environmentally informed social and cultural critique.

Crudely stated, and without reference to their many differences, advocates of this critique argue that Western societies have placed themselves outside of and above nature, thereby rupturing the mutually nurturing relations with nature characteristic of agrarian and hunter-gatherer societies. The vocabulary of nature is saturated with the language of conquest, domination and mastery. It has been constructed as an inert object of manipulation and an expendable trove of resources existing for the satisfaction of human wants and needs. This conception legitimates and encourages exploitive environmental practices, strips nature of any intrinsic worth, and assigns it value only for and in the service of human beings. This critique's project is to speak for nature, to recuperate and reconceive it as a moral subject, and to reintegrate humans into nature, and to promote an environmental praxis predicated on ecologically harmonious cohabitation.

It is against this hastily sketched background that *The Culture of Nature* should be read. It is a cultural history of nature in twentieth-century North America that is not only situated within environmentalism, but also attempts to move beyond what Wilson views as the tendency to reduce the nature-civilization relation to a simple good versus evil opposition. By strategically placed references to aboriginal peoples and rural agrarian societies, Wilson's rhetoric constantly seeks to evoke a pastoral sense of nature which has all but disappeared in North America. On the other hand, Wilson is acutely aware that nature is not a positive entity preceding representation; it is and always will be a cultural construct. As such, nature is lived and fashioned as, say, parks, roads, farms, backyards, indoor gardens, cities, etc. In effect, nature is a collection of landscapes. In the context of his discussion, these are treated as historical texts structured and inscribed by the discursive economies of industrial capitalism. His project is to deconstruct nature-as-landscape, to put it at the centre of cultural debate, and to urge an aesthetics of nature which would allow us to live on and with the land - that is, to intervene in nature without dominating it. Such a project can yield an understanding of what our constructed landscapes have to do with the 'nature' of environmental crisis. It is only with this kind of understanding that we can "be mobilized to restore nature and to assure it, and ourselves, a future" (291).

Though informed by environmentalism's recognition that our various ideas about nature operate to circumscribe and normalize particular appropriate and/or exploitive practices, Wilson's discussion largely surpasses by now familiar ideographical analyses of modern discourse on nature. (They are one point of departure for an illuminating account of industrial technologies of representation and knowledge of nature in contemporary North America.) Moreover, he extends his examination of representational



practices beyond the limits of film, advertising, television, etc. to include a vast array of sites, technologies and institutions, such as suburbs, shopping centres, automobiles and highways, trains, RV parks, theme parks, interior and exterior landscape design, industrial complexes (James Bay, Hibernia, nuclear power stations...), tourism, education, and so on. In sum, the book is a literal *tour d'horizon*, a meticulous and wide ranging first-person survey/narration of the multiple landscapes (their histories and their logics) comprising the North American experience of nature. Indeed, the book itself does not contain a single linearly developed argument. Its theme is reproduced in each chapter, each a specific site or class of sites constructing nature and our experience of it. Far from dulling the book's effect, this serial reproduction actually enhances it. A single chapter or extended essay would likely fail to capture the extent to which the experience of nature has been fragmented and compartmentalized as so many objects of attention, appreciation and consumption. Throughout, he argues that, individually and collectively, these lived landscapes simultaneously disclose and impose distant, singular and transitory natures.

The point here as elsewhere in the book is that nature, considered as a dynamic whole of which humans are inescapably a part, has both disappeared and is effectively unattainable. At bottom, *The Culture of Nature* is about boundaries, enclosures and exclusions, that is, the regulation of the exchanges between humans and nature. The blurring of constructed tourist space with that of 'authentic' memory is but an aspect of a larger re-inscription/fragmentation of natural surroundings. Be it the manicured foliage lining parkways, the packaged seclusion of a singles cross-country weekend, or a seven-minute jungle cruise at Disneyworld, nature is represented in terms that disallow the experience of it as a whole, "as the total environment that for centuries has been our *home*" (28, emphasis in original).

The experience of nature-as-scenery - as object of aesthetic appreciation - through a car window, for example, limits it to the visual dimension alone. It removes or at the very least inhibits the possibility of an integrative exchange with nature. This experience is

private inasmuch as the car itself is less a vehicle of community and communalism than an enclosure separating viewer and viewed. Nature becomes something static to the extent that its re-inscription by tourism industries is necessarily governed by a logic of commodity production. The imposition of the commodity form on nature - the production of tourist landscapes - both pluralizes and singularizes it as specific objects of particular modes or forms of tourist consumption. At the same time, this commodification of nature imposes a logic of sameness, predictability and reproducibility. In other words, much like the food in restaurant chains or the mechanical animals in amusement parks such as Disneyworld, nature, in its myriad transformations as objects of tourist consumption, is everywhere and always the same. It is made to conform to specific expectations, always guaranteed to fulfill or correspond to a previously evoked desire. All that is contingent in nature, that is, all that might disappoint or blemish the experience of it, is removed.

Both the novelty and acuity of Wilson's insight reside less in his discussion of the various forms of the commodification and industrialization of nature as such. This and the discursive modalities of nature's subjugation have been extensively treated by a variety of authors. At one level, as I mentioned above, the book's force derives from the sheer scope of his investigations, and his discovery that pristine, technologically unmediated landscapes have almost become a thing of the past. At another level, however, what is perhaps his most interesting contribution lies in his recognition of the cumulative representational effects (and their implications for the environment) of the interpenetrating deployments and practices of technology itself. He argues that "in the late twentieth century, technology is not merely a collection of tools or machines or a representation of power. It is also a sensorium, a field of perception" (258). In short, technology is a way of life, a logic that produces and structures its own environment.

In removing all traces of contingency, in constructing a collection of environments which are all things to all consumers, nature is not only represented as cornucopia. It is quite

literally made over into a cornucopia, a vast and infinitely varied site for satisfaction of desire. As such, it becomes increasingly difficult to view nature as having its own exigencies and imperatives. That is, it is difficult to view nature as something having limits that we have learned to transgress in the practice of everyday life on the one hand, and in the fulfillment of our selves on the other.

In this connection, consider one of the many examples Wilson offers. Advances in agricultural, transportation and refrigeration technology, combined with (or driven by) free enterprise economies, have made it possible and require that we have out of season fruits and vegetables on our tables. Indeed, the very meaning of "out of season" has been reduced to variations in the prices we pay for these items. This leads to an effective homogenization of the seasons on the one hand, and to a very profound restructuring of our relations with nature on the other. It produces misleading conceptions of what nature is, of what its limits and possibilities are, and of what we should expect from it. There occurs a dislocation of nature within our daily lives, the communication of an idea of nature which is false.

The 'nature' of environmental crisis is not only the one of global warming, felled rain forests and ozone depletion. It is also, and perhaps more fundamentally, the one that is always there when we turn on a light switch, peel an orange or open a book. It is the basis of our daily wants and needs, and which for all intents and purposes have become invisible and therefore infinitely distant. In this conceptual space, nature is a kind of distant presence. That is, the perceived limits of nature are forever receding precisely because it is seemingly always there waiting to be turned on. Such a nature cannot be anything other than bountiful; its only limit is access to it, access mediated by our power to purchase it and our willingness to work to acquire that power. As a kind of implicit environmental rhetoric, this conceptual framework locates the 'nature' of environmental crisis as always being somewhere else, as only being the one of large-scale imminent and visible catastrophes. Environmental crisis is thus constituted as a political problem and not also a cultural one.

Terms do not define relations;

they are articulated by the relations themselves. Out of season fruits and the mouths they feed articulate a social relation that produces consumer and consumed alike. Nature is fragmented into singular landscapes fashioned to correspond to - be the satisfaction or fulfillment of - constructed needs, wants, desires, pleasures and dreams, which are then sold back to an equally variegated self which validates them as its own. In sum, the technological mediation of nature is co-extensive with a socio-cultural dynamic initiated during the industrial revolution and which has reached its apogee in consumer society.

But there is no question here of technological determinism. Wilson is very much concerned with the history and the historicity of the current technosensorium regulating exchanges with nature. In the spirit of Raymond Williams, whose thinking about technology informs much of the book, Wilson recognizes that both technological innovations and their subsequent applications are socially and culturally mediated. That is, technologies and their uses are embedded in a web of historical relations; they are responses to socially perceived needs, constitutive of a socially determined means-ends continuum. The 'natures' of tourism, for example, emerge out of and reinforce the consolidation of the historical separation between work and leisure. Cars, trailers, highways, campgrounds, Rocky Mountain resorts, ski weekends, Club Med beaches are all so many sites and/or vehicles. They, that is, the tourism industry, literally re-construct and re-present nature as get-away, freedom or repose. Moreover, they articulate the idea of, say, freedom, an articulation not only of nature but of leisure and the leisure-seeking, working individual.

Reading *The Culture of Nature*, one is both caught up with its deconstructive project and troubled by its redemptive mood. Wilson has made an important contribution to our understanding of the production and conceptual falsification of nature under consumer capitalism. His argument marks a significant improvement over those condemning a nature-hating modern world. Less clear, however, are his remarks concerning the restoration of nature. Inasmuch as he is arguing that we need to develop a particular idea of nature as total environment of which we in all our actions are a part, there is little problem. Clearly, the placing of

landscape at the centre of cultural debate entails a commitment to a politico-historical understanding of the interpenetrating political, economic and culture factors mediating our experience both of nature and ourselves.

On the other hand, his references to aboriginal peoples, though intuitively appealing, tend at times to sound the same false notes as *Dances With Wolves*. His employment of the aboriginal experience of the land is clearly intended to give meaning to the senses of nature, self and community he wishes to restore and to cast our own environmental practices in sharp relief. Yet even supposing that pre-industrial societies represent harmonious cohabitation with nature (and the historical record is far from unambiguous on this point), how could this inform or alter the environmental praxis of inner-city populations? Neither *Dances With Wolves* nor two decades of nature education seem to have made much difference thus far. This 'public,' however, is precisely the bed of consciousness needing not only to be informed, but, more importantly, to be empowered as a political public. Clearly, "we [do] need to tell new stories

about settlement and work on this Earth" (297), but we need to do so with a language and with strategies belonging to the present, not a romanticized past. All too often this past must itself be wrestled from the same logics that produce a nature for weekend expeditions.


In this respect, I would nuance Wilson's claim that we must restore a sense of nature and its limits by suggesting that we must acquire one that is consonant with our own lived separation from nature. This entails not only, as Wilson argues, new practices and a new aesthetics of nature, but equally and at the same time a new (political) praxis of the self. For a knowledge of nature's limits, it seems to me, must be accompanied by a politics of the limits of public and private experience.

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The B/L List

Stanley Cohen & Laurie Taylor. *Escape Attempts: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Everyday Life.* New York: Routledge, 1992 (first edition, 1976).

Rescued from obscurity, *Escape Attempts* has been reprinted by Routledge with a new introduction ("Life After Postmodernism") by the authors. Cohen and Taylor chart the range of possible escape routes - from sports to holidays, mass culture to art, and drugs to therapy - which people use to resist "the mental management of routine" and "the nightmare of repetition." While eliding questions of difference, this study details the minutiae of everyday resistances in a rigorous sociological fashion. M.H.

Manuel Vasquez Montalban. *Barcelonas.* Trans. Andy Robinson. London: Verso, 1992.

The history of a people, the memory of a culture, and the interventions of "progress" are all captured in this flowing tale of a city. Written on the eve of the Barcelona Olympics, this account by one of Catalonia's best known writers is a powerful allegory for questions of social history and urban development in general, and a lyrical testimony to the struggles of the Catalan people in particular. M.H.

John Clarke. *New Times and Old Enemies: Essays on Cultural Studies and America.* London: Harper Collins, 1991.

A collection of recent essays by a Birmingham veteran, *New Times and Old Enemies* does not push the border of our understandings as much as consolidate trends in contemporary critical and cultural theory into one handy tome. Depending on the needs of the reader, this is either an excellent introductory text to evolving concerns within cultural studies or a disappointing rehash of ideas which are currently readily available. M.H.

Jim Sinclair. (ed.) *Crossing the Line: Canada and Free Trade with Mexico.* Vancouver: New Star Books, 1992.

Essential reading for Canadian activists preparing the radical economic and political restructuring occasioned by post-Fordism. This volume offers detailed analyses of both general (e.g. Ken Traynor on "The Origin of Free Trade Mania") and particular (e.g. Wendy Holm and Donald Gutstein on water: "Drink Canada Dry?") concerns under NAFTA, as well as a major section, "Fighting Back," on activism. Packed with information, this book offers a quick education on issues which concern us all. M.H.

Peter Middleton. *The Inward Gaze: Masculinity and Subjectivity in Modern Culture.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Male responses to the feminist critiques of masculinity and men's power needn't take the nostalgic, mythopoeic (and shlocky) route of Robert Bly's *Iron John*. *The Inward Gaze* is one of a number of books (see also David Cohen's *Being a Man*. London: Routledge, 1990; Arthur Brittan's *Masculinity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) that deconstruct masculine subjectivity in terms of psychoanalysis and pop culture. *Superman* and Freud's *Rat Man* are among the "texts" examined for what they disclose about modern masculinities. S.F.

George P. Landow. *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1992.

Hypertexts are what circulate in hyperreality. Electronic, interactive, esemplastic, they reconstitute reading and writing, readers and writers. Or so the argument, made in a spate of books including this one, goes. Camille Paglia will be elated, Neil Postman deflated. The poststructuralism of Derrida and Barthes is understood as a precursor of hypertextuality. Chronology can now be discerned as moving from modern to postmodern to modern. S.F.

Noam Chomsky. *Letters from Lexington: Reflections on Propaganda.* Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993.

Never gnostic, Noam here goes after targets upon which he has previously trained his sights: monolithic and homogeneous American media; U.S. government aggression; Israeli intransigence towards the Palestinians. The pieces were written over three years - from 1990 to 1993 - and take the form of letters addressed to the editor of *Lies of Our Times*, a journal of media critique. Although there is nothing "new" here, Chomsky's impassioned prose, coming from someone with as much renown as he has in a milieu as turgid as the one he writes in, always is a useful antidote to mainstream political nostrums. S.F.

Leslie Marmon Silko. *The Almanac of the Dead.* New York: Penguin Books, 1992.

Silko's *Almanac* is the story of the deciphering of an ancient and battered text which survived the slaughter of indigenous Mexicans at the time of the Spanish (Cannibalist - the indigenous people were amazed by the Spaniards' consumption of their own God) invasion interpreted through the meetings and cross-purposes of numerous participants: a quiet but banished Laguna Indian; a psychic, her son and her twin sister; a mother searching for her lost child; the *sangre* pure; a brain-damaged biker; several drug dealers; attempted escapees from the Mafia; arms dealers; guerrillas; native healers; eco-terrorists and the army of the homeless. The story leaps from time to time and from desert to desert. More than anything else, this unravelling requires drugs, guns and money, and the violence and cruelty that are inevitably bound up with them. Silko carefully weaves each thread of disparate lives and locations into a final apocalyptic vision of the clash of European and Indigenous peoples in North America. The book is long and, sometimes, too cruel, but the vision and desire of its author are inescapable. R.A.

Zygmunt Bauman. *Intimations of Postmodernity.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

As Bauman suggests, "the essays collected in this volume bear no other ambition but to report a number of sightings, or glimpses, of the relevance of sociology in postmodern culture," turning to such cross-disciplinary concerns as consumerism, freedom, justice, and responsibility. In addition, there is included a helpful interview which situates both his recent and early work. Bauman's essays, then, are recommended as a fine general introduction to the complex and multiple issues of postmodernity from a specifically sociological perspective. T.D.

Peter McLaren & Peter Leonard. (eds.), *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter.* New York: Routledge, 1993.

For the uninitiated, this important collection of original essays provides an excellent introduction to critical pedagogy in general and the work of Paulo Freire in particular. For those who have long worked with Freire's ideas, this volume provides a refreshing taking-stock and critical reevaluation of Freire's legacy. To the editors' discredit, the collection is decidedly male - Freire's 'lads' - but as bell hooks points out in her contribution: "I never wish to see a critique of this blind spot overshadow anyone's (and feminists' in particular) capacity to learn from the insights." Essential reading for those practitioners who are more interested in a liberatory 'project' than a theoretical 'position.' M.H.

David Harris. *From Class Struggle to the Politics of Pleasure: The Effects of Gramscianism on Cultural Studies.* New York: Routledge, 1992.

The verdict is not yet in on who has written the definitive account of British Cultural Studies. While Harris has not ostensibly set out to do so, his book describes issues and currents within BCS in painstaking detail. This intellectual history is augmented by a sustained critique of the "Gramscians" for systematically reserving "the last work" for Gramsci while too flippantly discarding or ignoring the insights of sociology and critical theory. A chewy morsel this one; just be careful not to choke on the generous use of the term "Gramscianism." M.H.

Reviews by Rachel Ariss, Todd Dufresne,
Stan Fogel, Michael Hoehsmann

