

grid because we have generated too many overlaps, too many nuances of detail for a simple asylum to hold. The truth of the asylum (as Jean Baudrillard and Donna Haraway have pointed out) is no longer in the seeing, but in maintaining electro-chemical contact. Like the cybernetic chart of information flows, the individual is merely a point of contact, a point of possible feedback, and the new discipline is characterized by being on this grid, and having the truth of any specific point removed from localized access. This is why it is so important to be in a cluster. The point on the grid only makes sense in relation to the flows which surround it; without a decent cluster, these flows can be rerouted without the least consultation with the points in question.

that bar access to the undeserving or to discipline the body into conformity with the dominant aesthetic criteria. The points on the grid must be capable of subtle adjustments to the changing flows around them. As Paul Virilio writes in "The Third Interval: Critical Transition,"

...with the revolution of instantaneous transmissions, we are witnessing the beginnings of a type of general arrival in which everything arrives so quickly that departure becomes unnecessary.

So today's training regimes—aerobics, treadmills, stationary bikes, step-climbers—display a sense of going nowhere fast, denigrating the importance of the journey and affirming the preparedness to change and to adapt to new circumstances. It is this general

tion systems. The new professional-managerial class colonizes exclusive spatial segments that connect with one another across the city, the country, and the world; they isolate themselves from the fragments of local societies, which in consequence become destructured in the process of selective reorganization of work and residence.

In the movement from a money to an information society we see a reduction in the distance between the economic and the social. The number and complexity of abstract-rational calculations increase tremendously in an information economy since the means of information exchange involve learning technically specific processes (using automated tellers, logging onto databases, programming your VCR, playing video-games, etc.) and enacting them with considerable exactness. So it should not be surprising if each of the above elements is best understood as an exaggeration and an extension of earlier developments, rather than as an entirely new form. Taken together, however, they do present a distinct cultural complex which takes its meaning from the shift to an information economy and reflects an attempt to legitimize the views of those groups that have privileged access to the new technologies and its social-economic organization.

The emerging international urban elite expresses its alignment with the dominant orders of the day and is continually poised to re-align itself along the possibilities of its flexible specialization and, from there, to transmit its functional imperative unhesitatingly, with no internal resistance, all the while presenting itself as a clear, smooth package of this same political positioning; it is refined and capable of the most subtle transmutations of its aesthetic or ideational nature. The quest is to be fully immersed in the flows of the grid: to have the channels cleared of all extraneous material and to create a social space out of this same sensibility, to create a society of smooth transmitters.

Alex Ferentzy writes about the cybernetic asylum.

I am thinking here of keeping in touch, touching base, networking and so on. They all affirm the importance of maintaining contact, of being a point on a grid.

The only way to follow through to the question of the truth of an experience is to chart a path back through the grid. But the grid can only be navigated with the kind of educational and social skills which make radical feedback unlikely, or in any case provide the individual with the kind of resources which make unwanted external control improbable, though as the history of psychiatry continues to prove, by no means impossible.

preparedness that is being inculcated with all our exercise routines. What kind of population is it that is always at the ready but never has to go anywhere? We are, it seems, being prepared for war. This is where Baudrillard has it backwards; it's not that the revolution has already happened, but rather that the war has already begun.

Smooth Transmitters

The grid in question is not merely a technological-informational complex. It is being carved into city landscapes. According to Marvel Castells in *The Information City*,

The new industrial space and the new service economy organize their operations around the dynamics of their information-generating units, while connecting their different functions to disparate spaces assigned to each task to be performed; the overall process is then reintegrated through communica-

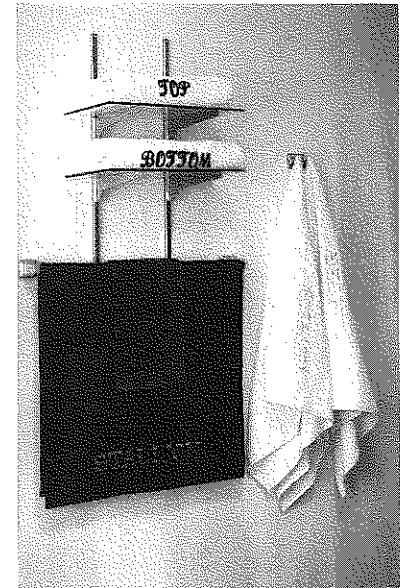
the demarcation of the point on the grid is not merely a negative technique, but also a positive one, involving the creation of culture as much as the denigration of uselessness. But the techniques of this delineation are different. They look different. Their purposes are different. To be sure, there are still all kinds of conspicuous consumption and the presentation of the self is increasingly packaged and codified into specific abstractions of our possible aesthetic aspiration. But it is no longer enough to erect institutions

Excerpts and Commentary on Dreaming of You

Garnet Press Gallery,
Toronto. July 2 - August 20, 1994

An exhibition featuring works from over 75 artists to celebrate and remember the charm, talent and generosity of David Buchan, Robert Flack and Tim Jocelyn.

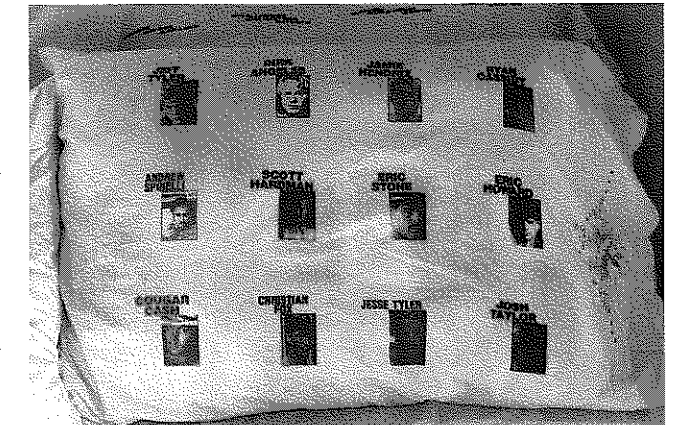
David Morrow's "Couplings," a parody of "HIS" and "HERS" merchandise, features towels embroidered with "TOP" and "BOTTOM" as well as "Stallion" and "Colt."



There are about 5 billion people in the world. 5 billion tears, assuming the average tear to be 2 ml, would be 10 million litres of warm salt water. Cry me a river.



John McLachlin's "Slumbering" parodies promotional merchandising tie-ins (usually aimed at children) of television programs and movies. Here pillow cases have the images (head shots) and names of current gay porn stars.



Hamish Buchanan in "Mourning Cap-Veil of Tears" has taken a cap (recent staple of young gay fashion) and attached a veil to it. Definitely haute couture rather than the off-the-rack prototypes of Morrow and McLachlin...

by Steve Reinke