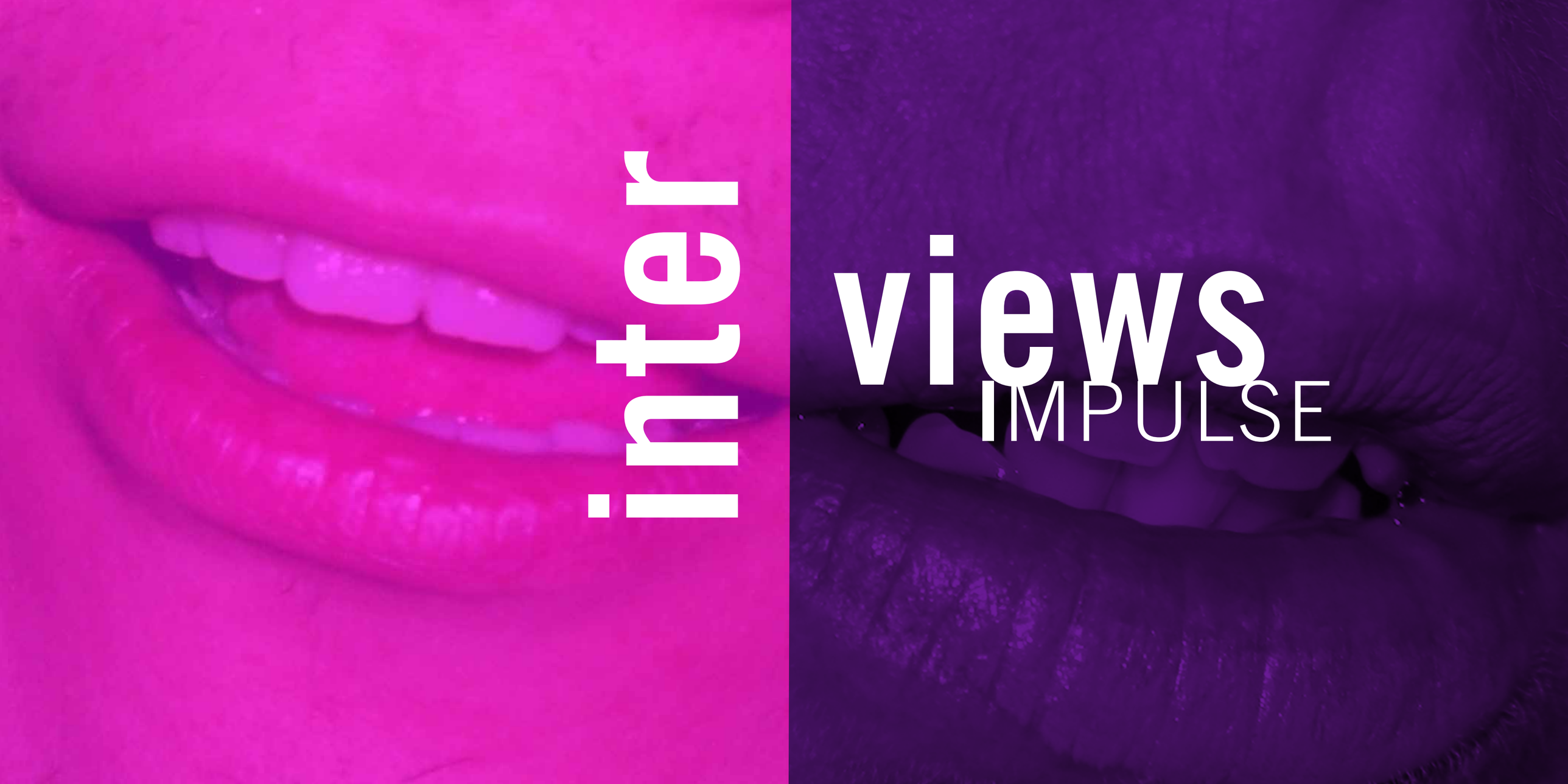

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IMPULSE



IMPULSE [b]

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Edited by ELDON GARNET

IMPULSE

For me, the first question would be, why was Impulse so interested in the interview format?

ELDON GARNET: I believe it was our essential nature, we wanted to publish primary material by a diversity of cultural creators. We did not publish criticism. Of course we published photography, drawings or writing that was fundamentally primary, but in many instances the contributor we wanted to publish could not make something directly for the printed magazine format. So in an effort to represent their voice, we resorted to the interview format. It was the closest we could come to primary.

IMPULSE: *Many of the published interviews are extensive.*

EG: Yes, we liked in-depth interviews. We wanted the essential ideas of the individual being interviewed. I conducted an interview in 1978 with Warhol at the Interview offices where I told him my desire was to do an in-depth interview.

IMPULSE: *And his answer was, "I don't do depth."*

EG: Yes, and so I made the most of it and imagined I was conducting a Warhol interview. He liked to keep it superficial, he often interjected such banal comments as, "isn't that great," or "wonderful."

IMPULSE: *So, you were able to capture the man in his own web. But while some of the interviews are indeed in-depth, often they are just fun, playful.*

EG: These shorter interviews were a way to juxtapose in one issue disparate voices, to create an exciting dynamic. It was a conscious effort to create an implosion based on a free movement between cultural creators. From the beginning, we wanted to play on the identity of an art magazine, freely mixing topics as varied as Canada's space arm, to monster hunting, to Chris Burden's transport truck. We were an art magazine interested in culture, science, technology, food, music, politics, anything interesting.

IMPULSE: '*It was all in the mix' as they say.*

EG: That was the fun, reflecting the culture by the enjambment of disparate moments together.

IMPULSE: *We seem to be now in a time of cultural separation, trying to keep things as clear and self-defined as possible.*

EG: You have to remember it was a specific era, we were producing this magazine from the late 70's throughout the 1980's as artists who were cultural appropriators. We were proud of our sources, loudly declaring their origins, we were not your hide in the dark plagiarists. Everything belonged to everyone. We mixed, we matched and we did so with ironic reverence. We freely appropriated and boldly placed our plunders beside an identity it had never experienced previously. In this way, I think one of the funniest interviews we published was a found interview with Foucault by a radio announcer who knew nothing about Foucault. Because of this naivety the information is revealing.

IMPULSE: *Your long interview with Sylvère Lotringer is essentially based in an innocence, if not naivety.*

EG: I didn't plan this interview. I was visiting him, not so much as an editor, but as a publisher. He was producing Semiotext(e) magazine and I was there to ask about magazine distribution. I realized after about 15 minutes of conversation that this was to be an interview and turned on the tape recorder. Warhol had instructed me in proper recorder holding technique, so I believe I spent a lot of time holding the small micro-recording machine up to Sylvère's face. But what he was describing was important to me, I didn't want to lose a word. When I walked in I was a frustrated structuralist, bored with Wittgenstein, choked to death on Chomsky's deep linguistic structure. What was being articulated to me for the first time was a post-structuralist position.

IMPULSE: *So for you this interview was perfect, it provided in-depth information about both the subject and their ideas?*

EG: And it was exciting for me to know both.

IMPULSE: *The range of those individuals interviewed in Impulse is extensive but seldom is there a visual artist.*

EG: Again, we wanted to publish in as primary a way as possible, creators of different disciplines. Artists and writers could often produce work for the page, so the interview was reserved for those who couldn't produce something for our printed page. Patti Smith for example published a poem and drawings in the magazine, but there is no interview. If we had wanted the musician we would have conducted an interview.

IMPULSE: *In some of the interviews there is a conflicted sense of respect and deprecation of the person being interviewed.*

EG: Conducting an interview is a conflicted situation. You want, of course, to respect your subject, but an interview that is too respectful is often boring, so my desire often was to poke deeper and then it becomes a question of irreverence bordering on disrespect.

IMPULSE: *You have to ask the hard questions.*

EG: Yes, I had this interview technique where I would begin with relatively easy questions and work my way to asking the subject about their attitude on death. The interview was structured on this progression and was usually over once the question had or had not been answered.

IMPULSE: *I presume death is the hardest question. In your Burroughs interview you do ask him about death and dying but at times you are almost rude in your disagreement with his ideas.*

EG: I was after all interviewing the mythical William Burroughs who had probably conducted a thousand interviews, so I wanted more. I wanted the essential man not the polite old man he had become with his fear of death and spiritual ideas.

IMPULSE: *The list of those interviewed in the magazine is often of famous people, from Buckminister Fuller to Iggy Pop. As a small, Toronto based magazine, how did you have access to these cultural icons of the day?*

EG: First, many of those interviewed were not as famous as they are today, we may be said to have had a cultural perspective before its time. I would also like to say we traveled, which we did, but mostly we took advantage of whenever someone who we were interested in visited Toronto. If John Waters was in Toronto someone from Impulse would be there and the magazine was important enough that the door opened if we knocked. We also had a number of editors in NYC such as Willoughby Sharp, who had been the editor of Avalanche magazine, who had access and were extremely competent interviewers. Also there were numerous international contributors who gladly would send us their latest interview.

IMPULSE: *And you didn't pay for these interviews?*

EG: Seldom, we did when we had grant money given specifically for contributors, but mostly it was volunteer, free, contributors pleased to talk with Russ Meyer or John Kenneth Galbraith on behalf of Impulse. As I said, it was a period of free exchange. We were all in it together making a magazine. It wasn't mercantile, but rather an art work and everyone understood that from the beginning.

IMPULSE: *You have arranged the interviews chronologically, not thematically.*

EG: The chronological arrangement makes the most sense, it provides a historical accuracy, it becomes a document of a period. A sense of history is also provided by the inclusion of advertisements from various issues. These advertisements give a sense of place to the surrounding interviews. Impulse was, after all, based specifically in Toronto and most of the advertisements are from the local community. Impulse was very international but also locally cosmopolitan.

IMPULSE: *What do you think these interviews represent collectively?*

EG: I am not sure. It is practically all the interviews ever published in the magazine. Chronologically they are the 1980's, though they span 1978 to1990. Impulse, if one reads the editorial of 1978, conceptually enters the 80's in the late seventies. I would say this is an era that has long since passed, but for whatever reason, still possesses a cultural importance for today. These interviews represent Impulse's editorial position and capture the gestalt of that period. If there was a philosophic, creative center in the 1980's, Impulse in its eclectic search for the moment, possessed that period and in these interviews represented both the moment and the period in action.

IMPULSE: *A question about editing, when we are finished this interview you will take what we have and edit it. Don't you feel you are constructing the interview and by doing so cloud the authentic voice of the speaker?*

EG: I wouldn't use the word construct but rather it is a process of editing. The central purpose is to make the speaker more articulate. I have few rules for editing an interview, but my intention is always to make the speaker sound lucid.

IMPULSE: *Obviously, you would remove the hems and haws and repetitious mannerisms of speech.*

EG: That's just fundamental editing. I have no remorse at rewriting the entire structure of the interview, taking entire passages and moving them around or excluding them entirely. The editing does become construction, making something dynamic and readable, again, my central rule is to make the subject sound articulate.

IMPULSE: *More articulate.*

EG: Yes, more who they are.

IMPULSE: *Would you call this interview in-depth?*

EG: As it is intended as an introduction to an anthology of interviews, I would call it rather synoptic. As for depth, I think depth is a misnomer. An interview can never be as rich as its subject, it can only, at best, be a brief and insightful moment, engaging, with its own narrative.

ELDON GARNET

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IMPULSE

"The Viletones are simultaneously the best and the worst band of all time, dead-centre in the danger zone, putting the vile back in violence."
Steven Davey
News and Reviews, April 25 1977

"Their music is certainly one of the finest punk distillations of this decade."
Jeremy Gluck
Teenage News, April 1977

"Nazi Dog and his cutesy fellow Viletones make a performance by the Ramones seem like an evening of contract bridge among cloistered nuns."
Paul McGrath
Globe and Mail, Fanfare 11 May 1977

"The music was a blur of distortion; but at least, when they bothered to change a chord, they changed it together."
Gerald Levitch
The Sunday Sun, June 12 1977

"The Dog ... smashes a beer glass and drags the shattered handle slowly up and down his forearm. Blood leaks out from the wound and drips down to his fingers."
Maclean's, June 13 1977

"Their stunning absurdity demands total attention."
Michael Park
Record Week, June 27 1977

"Nazi Dog burned, scratched and hacked himself into underground notoriety here this year. He even cut himself at CBGB's Saturday night. But by Sunday he was through with it and Toronto punk had changed."
Peter Goddard
Toronto Star, July 16 1977

"Family entertainment for the psychotic."
Ian Birch
Melody Maker, October 29 1977

"(Ugh!)"
Matt Cohen
Quest, December 1977

"They're posing like crazy, but they're good at it."
Glenn O'Brien
Interview, January 1978 Vol VIII no 1

"London has the streets and New York has the poets, I'll grant you, but Toronto has the Viletones and in this it is unique."
Jeremy Gluck
Sounds, January 21 1978

"Doomed to probable extinction within the next twelve months the Tones have released an extremely powerful EP on their own Vile Records, featuring three killer songs: 'Screaming Fist', 'Possibilities' and 'Rebel'."
Jeffrey Morgan
Creem, February 1978

"You could see that the chance of real violence getting mixed in with all the show violence gave this leader one of the greatest punk bands in the world.
Rosco Guard
Shades, No 1 February 1978

"After watching their set at the Restricted gig I think they're one of the most important rock 'n' roll bands Canada has. The Viletones played one of the most amazing sets imaginable."
Peter Noble
The News, Vol 3 no 3 May 1 1978

INTERVIEW: THE VILETONES

NOW AND THEN, AND WHEN?

LOLA MICHAEL

NAZI DOG (STEVEN LECKIE) 20

I am one of those kids that can distinctly remember being born. My mother had me when she was 17 and my parents were really into rock 'n' roll; my father drove a convertible, they were kind of loose. Anyway, I was in Grade I and I was listening to the radio and I asked my mother what made that sound and she said electric guitar. Electric guitar, eh? Boy that sounds good I thought. I have always wanted to do what I am doing now, just be a singer. I would always imitate what was on the records or on the radio. I am not a very good singer but I am a performer, that's for sure.

I saw the Ramones the first time they played Toronto and I thought wow, anybody can do better than that—I am going to do it better and have a greater relationship with the kids. I mean the kids can't relate to people in the CIA. A year and a half ago you had to really shock people. Now the personalities haven't changed but it's brought out different things in our characters. My attitude has changed in what youth is about. Nothing is planned with us — We went from Nazism to Communism in a week-end. One thing for sure we are different from any other group like in self-destructive ways.

Naturally the second record will be different. There will be a lot more money put into it, more advertising, everything in a big way—maybe five or six songs—really do it.

We are a Toronto band rather than a Canadian band—I didn't know Canada had an identity. Toronto as a city does. I don't like New York. It was all right playing there but the kids are so mundane. They just sit there like deaf mutes in phone booths. I want to go to the UK especially. I want to be there in the winter because there will be less tourists. I hate Americans anyway and I want it to be people from England we play to so I can see if they like us. I want to live in whatever area we like the most in London. We support the East End so maybe we'll find like a football team to support and we will be that team so there will be enemies and supporters and we will always have a battle. I fight almost every time I go out—I like to fight—I know that I really can't lose.

I can't get my mind off making sure that they have a reaction. I want them to hate us or love us but I don't want people to leave thinking we are all right. I want people

to hate us or love us and I will do anything to get that kind of reaction. If I see some guy talking to his girlfriend when we're playing that means he isn't paying any attention. So I will go down and punch him in the face. Then he'll probably hate us. He had a chance — he could have loved us.

I swear to God, and I don't want to sound like a braggart, when I'm out, there are always people standing around about two feet away from me and I notice that they don't say anything until I speak. Then they take it like the word of God or something, and I have nothing to say. I used to say normal everyday things like "Hey man, give me a few bucks to get a case of beer" or something. Then I realised what was happening so now I say anything like "Punk is going into a black period" and they believe me. I always have people following me about. I have a chauffeur and people to get me things and all I have to do to pay for this is give them the words.

KRIS HATE (KRIS HATRINEE) 25

There used to be a programme, "Hello World this is Bobbo" on CKYE. Every night I'd listen under the covers in my bedroom with these homemade headphones my brother gave me and the bit across the top was construction wire, and they'd be blasting. One o'clock was the start of my world. I like late 50's rock 'n' roll, the Ventures, Duane Eddie. I used to imitate them. I think there have always been imitators before there were innovators. I'd practice instead of doing my homework and fail all the time. Ever since early teens I was playing; well, we were kids and everyone was talking about pubescent hair and things so I guess we were young. I meet people now that I was at school with and they say "Oh yes, you were always running home saying I've got to practice." I've always played a precision base, mostly I have been using an accoustic top with numerous bottoms!

The Viletones is the laziest band I've worked with and I include me in that. The Dog sits there and points at me and says "You're the laziest." We could all sit there and point to each other and say "You're the laziest." Song writing is a group effort. If it wasn't for the Viletones Steve would still be singing into a mirror with a microphone.

Are you familiar with the Warner's Roadrunner show where in the introduction rows of people came up like silhouettes? Well that is what the audience is like to us, silhouettes. Some people say that playing is better than an orgasm. That's debatable yet it is in a sense, and it's a sexual thing too so I suppose it's the same. For the chicks too. Everybody gets an orgasm—everyone always did long before Frank Sinatra. Look how long Brando's been a punk. It's just something that's been taken for granted for so many years that it's just another minority of people having to say something original again—because of the boredom that's been going on for years. I've been bored for so long I don't remember how long.
We're better away from the conscious thing of a studio. When we broke the Big Apple, that was the most theatrical show we have ever done. I really like New York personally. I found I could really melt in. It was kind of like home for a while. I like to travel. I loved England.

We abused the money, especially on the promotional end of it. Can you imagine two guys travelling everywhere by air and eating, eating like fifty bucks a day. Whereas a 45 with some info is much cheaper to produce and better promotion. We kept going into side trips. American labels are better. They have a great way of marketing things in the States but Toronto has more talent.

With our first record we just rushed in and out. It was nothing, we just went bang bang bang and that was it. This time there will be a little more care and precision in our work. We're gonna sound better on wax. We are more conscious of our music now because in the beginning we were really conscious of ourselves and how we would be able to perform. We get a really good reaction and all that shit. We used to be quite nervous, conscious of making the right moves and still maintaining a good contact with the audience. Now we know we do have a good feeling and we just want to make our music. With multi-track tapes there's the danger that they don't sound like music any more. I would never like to go to that extreme. I want to keep in contact with people, with raw sounds.

MOTOR X (MICHAEL ANDERSON) 23

I've been playing since I was five. My mother bought me my first set of drums when I was eleven, then I stopped playing for a while. Then I kept missing out on school to play. I used to play along with records—it's the best way to learn. I used to have these headphones with the cans fixed inside a construction worker's helmet so no-one would hear and they'd be blasting away , Gene Vincent, 50's stuff, Jim Morrison, Alice Cooper. My father would find me in my room with this hat on. The Beatles were great. They never sold out; they were underground and above ground at the same time. Not like the Beachboys, hate the Beachboys. You know, there are these Power Pop bands about, oh, like the Romantics. Well I like them anyway so I don't want to put them down but they imitate the Beatles but the only reason the Beatles sounded like that was because it was beyond their control, little house amps.

I suppose Steve and I started the band. We used to have another bass player but he was very young, his mother didn't approve. He's in reform school now. The Dog does a lot of the lyrics but we write as a band, altogether. When we play I think everyone can do it all at once. I'm not as mad as I was last year but it's rolling. When I play I'm completely nowhere or nothing. It's like I'm in a coma. I'm in my own little world. It's better than dope, it's better than anything. You've got no problems. It's like sitting on a throne. I just sit up and play the drums. Sometimes I stand up too. In Montreal I used to do head dives over the drums. I was thinking of getting myself a crash helmet.

CBGB's was the best, it took right off. Like mathematics it all fitted together perfectly. At the end of the show Steve was taking down my drums one at a time and as he took one away I just played the next one right down until he took the last drum. Yeah, I like New York to visit but Toronto will always be my home. There's more a bar scene here. A lot of people kick Toronto in the ass; cop-outs like Neil Young who used to sleep in Yorkville. He even did a song putting down Toronto, it was called Ambulance Blues. We have a lot more respect for Toronto than that. A lot of people take it for granted.

After the record, we're gonna take a nose dive. Yes, September 1st we're gonna take a canoeing trip down the Don!

I like to use the best equipment. It's a Ludwig Quadroplus—extra big drums. I had this dream about a Rickenbacker; it had a really long neck and about 16 strings and I could play it! Bdm bdm bdm bdm! Music is a big part of us. It has a great effect on a lot of people. People get up and do something when we play.

FREDDIE POMPEII (FREDERICK DE PASQUALE) 25

I had a plastic M & E guitar for Christmas when I was about eight years old; it had buttons to push the chords down. I used to imitate the Everley Brothers, you know the way they moved. I liked Johnny Ray, Frank Sinatra, Elvis. What is important is that I played on street corners, singing, before I ever even heard of the Beatles. I got my first guitar ten years ago when I was fifteen and I've been playing electric guitar for 2½ years. I play a Vellino now; it's my favourite guitar.

We all write the songs. You can easily tell what combination of guys write; it has a certain kind of sound. Kris is more melodic—mine is more basic and linear. It was so ridiculously easy. For me everything in the music business until the Viletones was an uphill struggle. The only problem in the Viletones was getting to know each other and then everything was just plain sailing. Things moved, publicity happened, we didn't even pay for it, gigs were offered to us—it was never really hard work. We hardly even rehearse and we can still cut every band in town.

We signed a contract—they put a record out for us, rented some equipment for



GAIL BRYCK

us and that was it. We drank a lot of beer but we were not living it up, not according to my standards. I mean I know what living it up means. We are looking for a good contract. We want some money so we can put out the records the way we want to put them out.

The second EP will have a different sound. We really like the first one so we can't say it's going to be better but it will be better production-wise probably. It'll be "Dirty Feeling", "Don't You Lie" and "Swastika Girls".

They either loved us or hated us in Montreal. CBGB's is the best place to play. You can't make a mistake, the conditions are so good. I'd like to live in New York. But we are a Toronto band — we look like a Toronto band — we don't look like an English or American band. I've been living here long enough to call myself a Torontonian — I've even got the lingo.

Our music will just evolve. We come from working class backgrounds but we abandoned that years ago. If we were not playing in a band we would probably still live this way because, like, we're hopeless! Our music stirs people up, gets them excited. With the audience it's like getting fucked—if they don't respond then it's not worth it. We're playing more than we want to. There's a danger of over-exposure in a town. We are a concert band you know. Starting in September we are going to play Philadelphia, Detroit and hopefully Baltimore. Then it's the U.K.

It's like riding a motorcycle or surfing—it's a rush. The music is primitive and it has a feel of abandon. This is the raw ingredient as in some kind of drug. What we have is the main ingredient, the raw rock 'n' roll ingredient and we take it from there; we elaborate after that. Other bands leave out the raw chemical. They forget about it with using technology and then it ceases to be rock 'n' roll—it stops being honest. We are as basic as we can get. This gives us lots of room to work and to extend, to get better.



ELECTRA AT THE SILVER DOLLAR

THE DRAMA WAS NOT THERE, THE AUDIENCE MOSTLY UNCONSCIOUS, THE EXCITEMENT NEVER EXISTED,
THE CIRCLE OF CONFUSION WIDENED— SHRUNK, WHILE ELECTRA DANCED





TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Isaac Applebaum: What's the motivation behind stripping?

Electra: Well, it's very ego-gratifying. That's one thing I realized. Once you get into it, it's a very complex thing – you are using an aspect of yourself that is very highly personal, your sexuality and your identity. You're playing with those things – so it evokes certain conflicts or interesting questions. I mean, I like the theater of it.

I.A.: The audience wasn't reacting to the theater of it the night I saw you. You don't look for or expect any appreciation at all?

Electra: Oh, I do look for it though. First of all to keep myself at a level that I can stand participating in it, I have to entertain myself or at least keep myself occupied. The people, a lot of those people are just– they're practically useless. They're not going to react to anything, it's like talking to a brick wall in a lot of cases, but then I still get a lot of satisfaction out of… surprising people with who I am. Like they'll start talking to me and they say– Oh, you know you're, you're actually a nice person. (laughing) Something like that.

I.A.: Stripping in a bar must be such a blank situation that after that you could perform anywhere.

Electra: Oh, ya, really it's true…(pause)…Actually I probably have a conflict between some of my intellectual and some of my gut reactions to it. When I say that stripping is not art, I am thinking that the role is defined. It's sexually exploitive of women…but it's just as sexually exploitive of men.

I.A.: Well …I don't think it's exploitive.

Electra: Well it is. It is when you observe some of the reactions I get. It's only the reaction to it, like how people see it that makes it exploitive. In the sense that you get an audience and they're calling out "beaver, beaver". It's like the base attitude to it– it exists and I have to deal with it– and the come-ons, and the attitude of some people make it exploitive of me. But I don't see myself acting that exploitive role exactly…

I.A.: What is the beauty in stripping?

Electra: It's searching up the images that really incite– like if that's what you're really doing– if you really are doing a sexually enticing dance– if that's what it's going to be– it's searching out the images that work…or postures, or attitudes or expressions.

It's using the body, dancing with the body in a true exotic, ecstatic… ecstatic way. If I was to be quite honest I'm attracted to it and I would miss certain parts of it if I were to stop it completely, but it's not like I couldn't find that sort of gratification in another role, outside of bars or even stripping. It does give me that outlet, it's a high, it's something of a high to perform and do it with a certain amount of freedom.

For a period of time I thought, you know, that I had to stop or it was really going to destroy me. Then I started to see that it's just a challenge– to see if you can make it work for you …I started stripping at the same time as I started art college, and like it was a pretty unformed state– I had some ideas of what I was about or into– I was trying desperately to keep them separate, not in that I didn't want people to find out what I was doing…but just keep them separate, not think about my work or TRY not to think about my work… not to let it interfere with what I thought was my school work. That became a schizophrenic situation and I realized that it had to be pulled together or tied together. Then I started to see a lot of connections. I realized it was all the same. That I was INTO using my self image, and then I started to lean more towards theater and video and using my self image.

Stripping brings you closer to yourself, but it also puts you further away. It sort of puts you on a non-personal level– it's you and it's not you. The images are from you and from somewhere else. It becomes some kind of universal act, anyone could be doing it, and it's just revealing what everyone else is covering up.

(laughter)

I've often noticed if I go to work and I've had a hectic day or if something's bothering me – I start dancing and it's like watching television or something– like some people watch television for escape– it's an escape…. The performing becomes an escape. I don't have any scientific way of measuring how much of it is the stripping part and how much is the performing part.. I think that's one thing it really taught me, how important it was to be true to yourself. I couldn't be someone else when I was there because it would – it would come back at me. That situation – it's a crash course – it's important, like sink or swim.

BLONDIE: A TORONTO CONVERSATION

DEBBIE HARRY & CHRIS STEIN OF BLONDIE

They have just gotten up — They're not very awake. Chris lies on the bed, makes a couple of telephone calls. Debbie snuggles up, counterpane around her knees.

D: The band has been around for 3 years — I've worked with Chris for 5½ years. We've all played with a lot of people in other bands in New York — Ivan Krau, people like that. Our bass player went to Television. I started singing when I was very small — anything — singing with the radio, yes, I'd sing to anything. Just songs, nothing in particular. I like "Pretty Baby" on this third album. For me singing is both abstract and analytical at the same time. This was the first time I have enjoyed recording — I like stage work much better. I love the audience. I like to make people dance and stuff but it's difficult in a small club. We played Toronto before with Iggy Pop. It was a good tour for us.

C: Iggy and Bowie. They were great.

D: Pretty much everything I carry I could wear on stage.

C: All 300 lbs. of it!

D: Everything I own! People give me lots of things. I got this bracelet last night. Some guy just threw it up to me. I got a dress in L.A. Sometimes I buy stuff. I bought a great shirt. Chris had one from Macey's and I found one just like it so now we have matching shirts. We live together. How long is it now? We've probably only lived together for about 4 years.

C: It's our anniversary in October.

It's time to take some shots. Debbie is not sure if she wants to do them.

D: We're not supposed to be doing any photographs. I haven't got any make-up on. Do I look terrible?

She looks beautiful.

C: You look fine. Go ahead.

D: O.K. I'll wear glasses — it's safer that way. Yes, I like to see the photographs everywhere. It's great. It's good for publicity — makes us real legit. It's sort of preposterous — it's one of the biggest cliches.

C: When we're in London she's going to be on the front of the, what is it? Something like the Telegram week-end colour supplement? Anyway, she's the only singer to have her picture on the front except McCartney.



Photo: Edie Steiner

D: I love London. It's like a second home already. It's great because of the punk bands and the kids are like street level kids. They like us but not the middle class adult people — with them we were like total outcasts.

D: We have really devoted fans in London. Some stood in the rain all night. You remember those couple of guys? After a while you develop a relationship with people. It's very satisfying.

D: I just like to sing. Money motivates me but we haven't made any yet! We owed ... Can I say the terrible amount?

C: Why not?

D: Well, we owed over $100,000. We had to pay it back last year. Now we can start to make money — if we have a hit! We all write the songs — me, Chris, Jimmy, Nigel, Frank ...

C: As a band it's sort of different. It's not a particularly punk phenomenon. We like the Curse and the B Girls. It's much more pop than punk. They are close to us. What they do is just like what we used to do. We used to have three girls. They are intelligent and they enjoy their craft. I think jazz is going to influence the pattern of music a lot — much more free forms — before it evolves into acid rock or whatever again; very free music as a backlash against all this. Like Jonathan Richmond is doing. We would like to do some acoustic things later on.

Debbie doesn't want to do any more photographs but agrees to be photographed with Chris on the bed.

C: We can do a Lennon and Yoko. Do you feel more secure now?

D: We were mistaken for Paul and Linda once in Japan.

C: Yes, that was funny. Or was it Hong Kong?

D: It makes it a lot easier having Chris around. Sometimes it makes it more difficult but generally it's easier.

C: That works for me too. It does tend to separate us from everything else that is going on too.
Our stage act has just evolved. It's a group that is not entirely fixed.

D: I'm a girl and singing lead — in that respect it has a focal point, but we never planned exactly how it would be. It's just evolved. It seems to me that it's getting better with the addition of Nigel and Frank, particularly Nigel. He has so much experience with groups. He gives us a lot of inside info — you know — This is how it is and that is how it is!

C: This group is democratic. It would be a different type of thing if there was one particular leader. It's probably a lot easier to be a dictator. Look at Patti Smith — she calls the shots and her band is really devoted to her so I'm sure they don't object. We're reading a book at the moment about Valery Panov, the dancer. It's really nice. Anyway, he says how suppressed he was by the bureaucracy in Russia. Here there are just the same restrictions in a different way — people and cliques — it's just as difficult to get art out in this society — Here it's socially fucked up.

D: It's more a gamble here. But it's the same really. You have to conform to a certain sound to get played on the radio.

C: You have to be polite to people. You have to say what people want to hear. Cliques — 'in' groups and 'out' groups — it's really heavy; not that much different from the situation in Russia except for the basic economic differences.

D: I'd rather be here though!

C: We'd like to do movies.

D: We want freer music — more electronic music. We had a lot more electronics on the third album but they got eliminated.

C: There's always a market for that kind of thing. It is a little more commercial, this album I think. Also the bass playing is the best bass playing on any of the albums.

D: It really brings it together. Jimmy too.

C: We found him when he was working in a hospital. He was studying to be an orderly or something — he was an intern.

Debbie sits up on the bed. No more photographs.

D: I got these shoes from Frederick's of Hollywood.

C: It's a really gross store!

D: Lovely sleazy stripper stuff.

C: She has millions of shoes — it's amazing. She's definitely a foot fetishist.

D: Yes definitely. The back of the album cover is everyone's feet.

C: Yes. I'd forgotten that.

D: He's a collector. He collects everything.

C: I used to collect comic books but they all got burnt in a fire last year so I gave up. We collect records a lot. I used to listen to everything: movie music, blue grass, country music, folk — all that stuff. I was musically aware before the Beatles happened. Like lots of people I was into Bob Dylan. Dylan has completely sold out. You remember when he first went electric? Everyone was screaming and booing and stuff. They were saying he had sold out then but he hadn't even started. I don't think he is concerned with any ideals any more. I think Marley is amazing — his stage presence. What he plays is ancient. He transcends music and entertainment. To a lot of people it's just music.

D: There are not many good places to play. In the El Mocambo it's small and the sound is bad. The Masonic Temple is good — it's the best kind of room to play.

C: It's hard to play CBGB's although it's great for what it was. In London we played the Rainbow, Hammersmith Odeon, the Roundhouse and Dingwalls. Dingwalls is a pit. The Roundhouse was excellent but they've closed it now. That's a shame — it'd been around a long time.

D: College and universities are the best. They're the best equipped. Like in New York there's a place called the Quando Gym. It's the best place to play. It's like an old part of a school that the Puerto Ricans took over. It's a facility owned by the city and they have community affairs there, bingo etcetera. Sometimes they rent it out and we had a gig there — us and the Dictators and some other groups. We didn't have a lot of money to spend on publicity so we only got about 500 people but it was good. It's got a full size stage with a balcony and everything.

More people come to see them. They want to make a videotape. Debbie and Chris sit on the bed.

D: We're not supposed to do any photographs.

C: You look fine. Do you want to go and put on some make-up? Let's have some coffee. Anybody want coffee or something to eat? What've room service got. It's amazing how they never know what you're talking about. Yes, I'll have coffee and a cheese omelette and what's the soup today. O.K. I'll have a pea soup and a vegetable juice and some whole wheat bread. Did you get the pea soup?

LOLA MICHAEL

JOHN FOXX OF ULTRAVOX



I used to mess around with tapes in art school.

It wasn't music, I just used to tape conversations in bus queues and then edit them together. This is the first band I've ever been in. I'm a complete non-musician. I don't know anything about music.

I learnt not from the musical way but by ear.

I began to write things and then the band accumulated over a few months because it seemed a good time to have a band.

It couldn't have happened without the others because the idea was that you could join almost any five people together and make a band as long as there was enough enthusiasm. That's really the principle of the band.

People came gradually over six months. It was fairly haphazard, but we started working, we got more organized.

We have not had a manager.

It's only now that our affairs have got so complicated that we have someone to handle them.

I don't want to sign any more contracts. I hated being under contract for three years.

It's torture because you feel obliged to them because they invested in the album — you have a certain amount of work to repay them which is a false situation.

It's false because most of the money is wasted. Record companies are very wasteful.

We couldn't get a gig cause no one was willing to handle bands who didn't have contracts and managers.

It's easier now because of the New Wave thing.

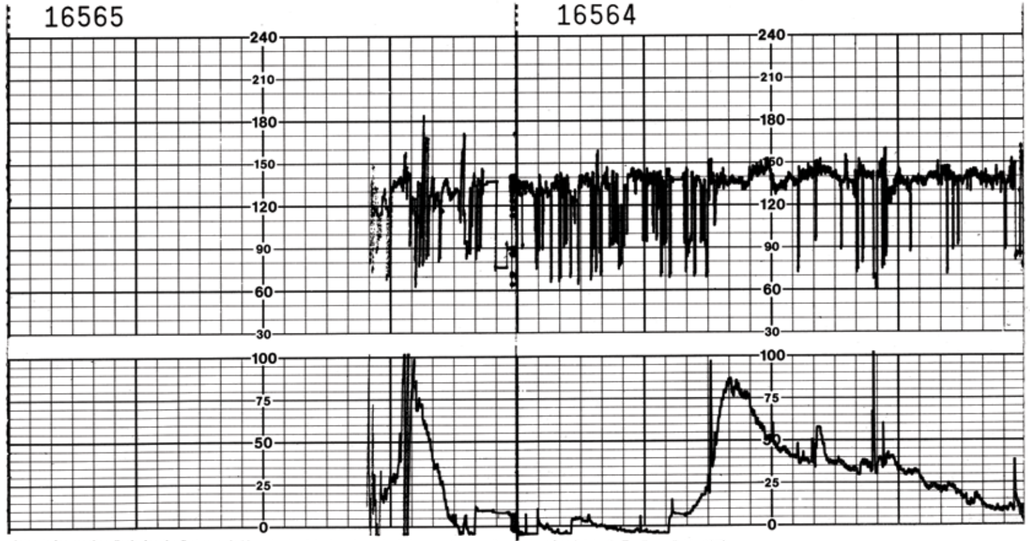
We liked the basic approach of the New York Dolls. That you could be an amateur and didn't have to be a professional.

At the time it was the end of the cycle where bands began spontaneously. They all seemed to be very sophisticated and everyone who started felt inferior to them because they were just starting — that would be the death of music because people would feel too inferior to start their own bands.

One of the good things that New Wave did was that it showed everyone that you could play and get excitement and fun from it without being technically competent. But as you go along you inevitably get more skilled and sophisticated at what you are doing.

We do a lot in the studio. We like program synthesizers and things using the machinery to work with because you are using technology and have access to it so you get a different sound.

NICKY HOLFORD



Interuterine monitor displaying the first recorded heartbeats of the Impulse baby Sylvon, and contractions of mother Brintnell, Trudi. April 13, 1979.



Photo: Eldon Garnet

ANDY WARHOL *INTERVIEW* FRONT OFFICE

860 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY. FEBRUARY 21, 1979.

IMPULSE: Two minutes?
A.W.: Yea.
IMPULSE: Alright, why did you start *Interview*?
A.W.: I don't know. We started, I started the magazine for that girl over there, Brigid Berlin, and she decided she didn't want it and we got stuck with it.
IMPULSE: You didn't start it for any esoteric reason?
A.W.: No, she just wanted it. Her father was Richard Aberman who ran the Hearst Corporation. But now, ten years later, she's back and working very hard. She does a lot on it.
IMPULSE: You don't see it as a vehicle of communication? A painting is one thing, but...
A.W.: I was just trying to introduce new people who other people didn't write about. That's something we tried to do. New art, but mostly new people. New photographers.
IMPULSE: But it's obviously famous people.
A.W.: Everyone says no one buys a magazine unless they know who they're reading about and it's sort of fun to meet older people ... Is this your magazine? What a great shape. Whatever made you get this shape?
IMPULSE: The square.
A.W.: It's a beautiful shape, god it really is. What city up in Canada?
IMPULSE: Toronto.
A.W.: Oh it's really terrific. You have such nice paper. I wish we could have gloss.
IMPULSE. How come you can't afford it? You should be able to by now.
A.W.: We have sort of a big staff. They get paid a lot. We're working to offset it by selling advertising ... This is really good, gee, can you sign it? (continued shop talk about magazines)
IMPULSE: We really like to edit tight. Throw out all the crap. That's why I wanted this interview to be in depth.
A.W.: I don't have any depth.
IMPULSE: You don't have any depth?
A.W.: No, I don't.
IMPULSE: You don't believe in in-depth interviews?
A.W.: No, the kind I like you follow the person around ... The kind of interviews all these kids are doing on underground television, not underground but cable TV, they're so funny because they do bad camera work, which is kind of fun ... they repeat everything over again. Truman Capote writes for us now. He wants me to teach him how to use the tape recorder, so I have to get some tape and some batteries and teach him how because usually people who are doing their first interview the thing never comes out or something and it's scary, you always have to have someone who knows. Well the last time I went I got involved, but actually I only went to hold the tape ... What time is it? Only because this girl is going to pick me up and take me to Elaine's because they're having a book party, it's called Murder Elaine's ... Do one more minute?
IMPULSE: On what?
A.W.: On ties. We finally decided what we're going to do with our extra canvas, you know, the leftover canvas after the picture is stretched, we're making ties out of it. They come in strips and we make ties out of it. We thought we'd sell them at Fiorucci.
IMPULSE: They'd probably buy them.
A.W. We just can't decide what to charge. What do you think anyone would pay for a tie like that?
VOICE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM: Fifty dollars.
A.W.: Really, do you think they would?
IMPULSE: Yea, for sure.
A.W.: I don't know. Let's do some photographs between the twins.
TWIN 1: What's that?
A.W.: That's a tape recorder. Do you want to know what you sound like?
T 1: No, not really.
A.W.: This is being done for Canada.
T 1: For what?
A.W.: For Canada. Will you get pictures of us?
IMPULSE: Oh yea, within a year. One more group shot. There's not much light in here.
A.W.: What kind of gum are you chewing?
T 2: Carefree. There's no more left.
BOB COLACELLO: What happened to what's her name?
A.W.: It's coming. The car's coming. She's coming with the car. It's coming, the car, and the book party's coming.
T 2: When's that party at Xenon's for Sophia Loren?
A.W.: I don't know. Are we Invited?
T 2: Someone told me about it, it's this week or next week.
A.W.: I don't have it in my book.
T 1: Call Xenon's and find out when it is. I know it's in February. I think it's the 29th. When's the 29th? Today's the 21st.
A.W.: Oh, is it?
T 2: There's no 29th. There are only 28 days in February.
IMPULSE: Except if it's a leap year.
T 2: This year doesn't have a 29th. Cause I'm moving on a Wednesday and that's Ash Wednesday and the next day is March 1st.
IMPULSE: What is Ash Wednesday?
A.W.: Yea, what is Ash Wednesday?
T 2: The beginning of Lent.
A.W.: What are you going to give up for Lent?
T 2: You don't give up anything. You just don't eat meat on Wednesday or something ... or Fridays.
A.W.: You're supposed to give something up.
IMPULSE: What would you give up?
A.W.: Yea, what would you give up?
T 2: A party or something.
A.W.: Just a good party?
T 1: There's a party at the Studio Friday night.
IMPULSE: What would you give up?
A.W.: I give up a lot.
T 2: Spending money a lot and making long distance phone calls. Do you know how much our phone bill is this month? $350.
T 1: We're not going to have a phone for a while in our apartment until we pay the phone bill because my mother's making us pay for it.
A.W.: You can't live in New York without a phone. Why don't you get a cheaper apartment?
T 1: No, where, in Harlem?
A.W.: Yea, then at least you could have a big phone bill.
IMPULSE: Are you off now?
A.W.: Yea, I'm just waiting for the car.
IMPULSE: Go to church?
A.W.: Every Sunday.
T 1: Which church do you go to?
A.W.: It's just around the corner, it's called St. Vincent's. Ronny, can you do one more strip so I can give him a tie?
T 2: What mass do you go to?
A.W.: We go to the late one.
IMPULSE: I like this one.

INTERVIEW WITH SYLVÈRE LOTRINGER.

I talked with Sylvère Lotringer, French philosopher, general editor of semiotext(e) *magazine in his New York apartment on February 23, 1979. The phone rang often as he made plans to depart for Africa. Neither of us was aware that this was to be an interview. ELDON GARNET*

EG: How would you define French theory?
SL: Around the mid-sixties there was an awareness, a certain ingenuity in dealing with literature. Then there was an awareness that literature was structured and the structure could be formalized. So it started from linguistics and extended. Then it seemed that everything could be understandable. French theory took the place, it replaced, all the other activities. It was just the becoming, the possibility of becoming aware that everything had some sort of order and was systematic.
EG: It had to come, previously a nihilistic feeling prevailed.
SL: At that time we thought it was a new opening, everything had to be re-appreciated, reconsidered, analyzed, formalized. There was the idea that there were universals: the structure of narratives, the structures of primitive societies. Anything could be formalized, it was kind of exhilarating then, it was a scientific kind of approach. I personally discovered that what you can understand is dead and if you could understand it, it's basically because it was on its dying end. I mean, what could you really understand? If you can understand how a novel is structured, it just means that the novel doesn't exist anymore, that's why you understand it. And in some way you can understand primitive societies, but the way we understand it is just our understanding. In our understanding of it we place it in a certain system which exists, but there are lots of things that we exclude. The problem was to try to re-incorporate specifics into a theory, which meant breaking the theory into pieces. The whole trend of french thought, starting with structuralism, is to try and get over that.
EG: It's a reactive approach.
SL: Now in France it became interesting once you have the theory or the analysis, the formal model, you basically forget the object from which you started and work on the theory itself. So it became very epistimological, and what happened was there was detheorization which means that once you quit the object then the theory itself can be manipulated. Then, for ten years we had a whole series of theories that fought each other, and replaced each other, disregarding really what they were supposed to be about.
EG: The basic object.
SL: Right, that's why you have, with say Kristeva , monuments of theory resting on a needle of actual use.
EG: Besides denying the object French theory also denied a humanistic concern.
SL: There's maybe nothing wrong with that. Man is a trap, the individual is a trap. When you try to define it you try to maintain it within some sort of boundaries, boundaries of comprehension, relation to the other, all sorts of interpersonal relationships. Where in fact what this awareness of the structures announced is the fact that structures were already exploded. I became much more aware of this when I arrived in New York, because in New York everything is not structured. It's made of networks, you follow one track and there is another crossing, you kind of freak out and get secluded into one structure, it could be anything, it could be a corporate structure, it could be a job structure, an art world structure. Assume that you accept the enclosure, then you find yourself as a human being again, which means you are full of anxiety and insecurity and jealousy and competition. For me that's what the individual is made of, he's cornered, he's trapped. You don't cure that, you just break the structures. That's why I'm not very much in favour of psychoanalysis, because you don't have to understand, you just change the situation.
EG: Exactly. You know what's wrong and you go on.
SL: That's why for me, the most interesting thing about *Semiotext(e)* isn't so much the output, but the way it constantly operates in between things, in between academe and the art world, in between the French and the Americans. The in between is essential because then it never solidifies within a structure, and each time there is danger of solidifying, it shifts. We are not going to become an institution, but people jump backward in relation to what's actually happening. In New York, everyone is really neurotic and upset by what people think of them and this is totally backwards, at the same time in New York it generates some energy, this energy comes from anxiety and insecurity, but people are that tense because they are afraid of being left behind.
EG: Is it a positive energy?
SL: For me it comes from the wrong place, but energy is energy. If you can float on top of a big wave then you can benefit from its energy, there is an incredible tension, you can feel it when you are in New York, everyone is on the make. So the fact is you are on the make. The fact that you are on the make on your own is totally destructive. The fact that there is this tension is very good because if you float on the tension, and precisely don't follow the individual patterns, and go from one thing to the other, mixing things constantly, overlapping one thing with the other, then you are closer to what I call schizophrenia, which is not a split between two things, just a certain way of keeping things open.
EG: Floating on the top...
SL: Right, right. What we're doing, even when we feel in terms of some vanguard, we're just seconds ahead, because already somewhere the system produces that. I mean if you are in to S&M, okay, there are millions of places where you can do that, or anything else. The system in the States as opposed to Europe, the system produces change, but it's one forward step and two back. If there is a leap forward it's just because there is a new field to be exploited. OK, S&M, a few years ago was kind of secretive, but now it's in the open. I went to some places, already journalists were there, people from New Jersey were saying ''rip-off'', ''reimburse us''. In New York, in two months time, everything is already co-opted. There is no way, in terms of this level, that anything can be done, because whatever we are going to come up with is going to be co-opted immediately.
EG: It becomes historical.
SL: Yes, it's become kind of a trend because in New York newness is a good factor at whatever level. It's lost all its moral qualifications, there is nothing that is right or wrong. Is it fun or not? Anything that is a bit unusual is fun, so it pays. Then you have this leap backwards where you organize, you have a membership for *Chateau '19,* if you are S&M for the *Mindshaft,* you have letters that are sent to members. It's just so hopeless. At the same time what is being done is that there is a constant vaccine, which means, what is co-opted is a weaker version of the thing, what is acceptable, what can be represented, what can be made commercial in some way. So if you go to an S&M place then you have a nice friendly atmosphere, where anything can happen, where people with their hangups can actually have them happen in a very warm, helpful, even analytical fashion. People are there to help you be tough. If you want to be whipped you can be whipped. It's very healthy and it's sickening. We've been publishing a few things like S&M as a life-death type of experiment, experiment with your body, experiment with the limits. Basically everything is accepted in small doses, and what is not in small doses is then somewhere else, is not quite public but will be public a bit later.
EG: For the mid-west, Semiotext(e) *is very radical but for New York it's not as radical, but isn't that part of your function, to educate a larger number of people to a radical trend?*
SL: No, and I think the problem is we have to rediscover what is radical, because look at the French, they've been Marxist for ten or fifteen years, and the French have not revolted, not even Levi Strauss. Then suddenly over the past two years they've discovered Kant in Russia, twenty years after the Americans. Now they're all down on Russia and down on Marxism and most French intellectuals have shifted totally to the right which for me is the same nonsense.
EG: You mean they weren't disappointed in Russian Communism until recently?
SL: No, because in France there is a strong leftist tradition, which means, you may be dissatisfied with it but you won't really come out against it. May '68 was a turning point. The communist party was so conservative that people started reacting against it. But still Marxist theory was alive until 2 or 3 years ago. So I think it is, at this point, a very healthy situation where there is really nothing we can believe in. Being in New York I am more and more aware of the fact that what happens is really generated by the Capitalist system itself. It's much more productive than any other system. You have to be aware of that. We've been living with this idea that socialism will change everything. But we have no example of any socialist state or country that has come up with anything that could be considered as an alternative. May '68 was the last of the old revolution. The incredible dynamism of capitalism creates a thing which seems to be radical, I'm not quite sure yet. It's like this explosion, this fragmentation both of the individual and life in general, and of art; at one level, it's great.
EG: You almost define the capitalist system as an order of no order.
SL: It functions on two levels. The first level is chaos, it's like imperialism, reaching outside. Anything that is not yet included has some sort of potential value, market value, its very crude but it's true. It has some potential market value, but you only take back what can be assimilated by the system and the rest is devalued or marginalized. That's why there is a double movement, the first one is reaching out and then you take back and you exclude.

EG: How would you define the new revolution?
SL: It's difficult to say because you have to say in France, in the States, they're just not the same thing.
EG: There seems to be a time gap between the two.
SL: Yes, a time gap and if you look at Italy for instance, it's already entirely different. There you have very obsolete structures, and there might be some short cuts in what's happening with terrorism. In a way that's why there isn't terrorism in the States. Because here there is no structure so rigid that you cannot push it around. So there is no need for terrorism, also the CIA is much better organized so you don't have a chance. Here the system, as opposed to Europe, goes by engulfing and accepting.
EG: Wouldn't you also say there is no real terrorism, or no real movement in North American because there is no ideal for one fixed change. The change is so fragmentary that there is no movement or revolution that wants to topple anything.
SL: The idea of having a change is not revolutionary here. Change is produced by the system, the system needs change. But in France, I always have the idea, you really have to fight, even with the little things because you are stuck with structure, stuck in your class, you are stuck in the place where you start from. You have a very hard time getting out of it and getting through to something else. But here, everything is open, the art world is like that, you come, you're a foreigner, great, you might have something to provide, so people accept you, they welcome you, until a certain point. They welcome you because they want to know if you have anything they can use. Then you either don't do anything, in which case you remain marginal and then that's it, you're out, or you do something, in which case you become part of the institution.
EG: Then you have to fight their heirarchy because now you have your foothold inside their system.
SL: That's why the art world is characteristic, it's not different from other groups, but it's just more open, very open to innovation because that's what it is all about. But sometimes innovation is very tightly encompassed after a while, and you have to pay your dues. Either you pay your dues or you don't. If you pay your dues, you produce something, you are already criticized, so you are already part and no longer dangerous. Either you provide or you become a member and have to guide, have to go around to galleries, parties and be known and make niceties.
EG: And you're watered down.
SL: Exactly. So that's the way it functions and I think functions at all levels. The art world is very innovative, in the sense, that there is such a push, you have to be the first to do something. So it's great. I was talking with Vito Acconci, his feeling was that he had to come up with something new all the time, he had to be first. There's this incredible pressure in New York. When people get to the top of something they really freak out, and they're very destroyed. The Jack Smith interview in the last issue, it's one of the best pieces, I think it's very wild, as he said, you know, ten years ago I was a pasty celebrity. And I don't want ever to be exposed to that, because now the expectations of people is such that no one can come up to it or sustain the effort, because here there are thousands of people waiting, pushing and ready to put you



Photos by Eldon Garnet

down. The tendency is like, let's say, Richard Foreman... when I first was aware of him and met him it was four or five years ago. Then he was very bitter because no one recognized him, he felt excluded, and he fed on the French because the French at least understood what he was doing. Three years later, everyone is saying, "ah Richard Foreman, his last play wasn't that new" Because now his work has already been assimilated. As soon as you come out on the top; even before you do that people are ready to reject you, and that's why it's like disposable things, that's why there is no individuality at this level. Even though the trend and the tension is individual, I think the system feeds on it, and you are just part of that.

EG: To go back to something we've talked about earlier, the structure of the capitalist system. The corporate structure mentality is becoming pervasive as a way of applying and a way of doing things. In other words, the corporate structure tries to do things properly, efficiently and tries to make money for it.

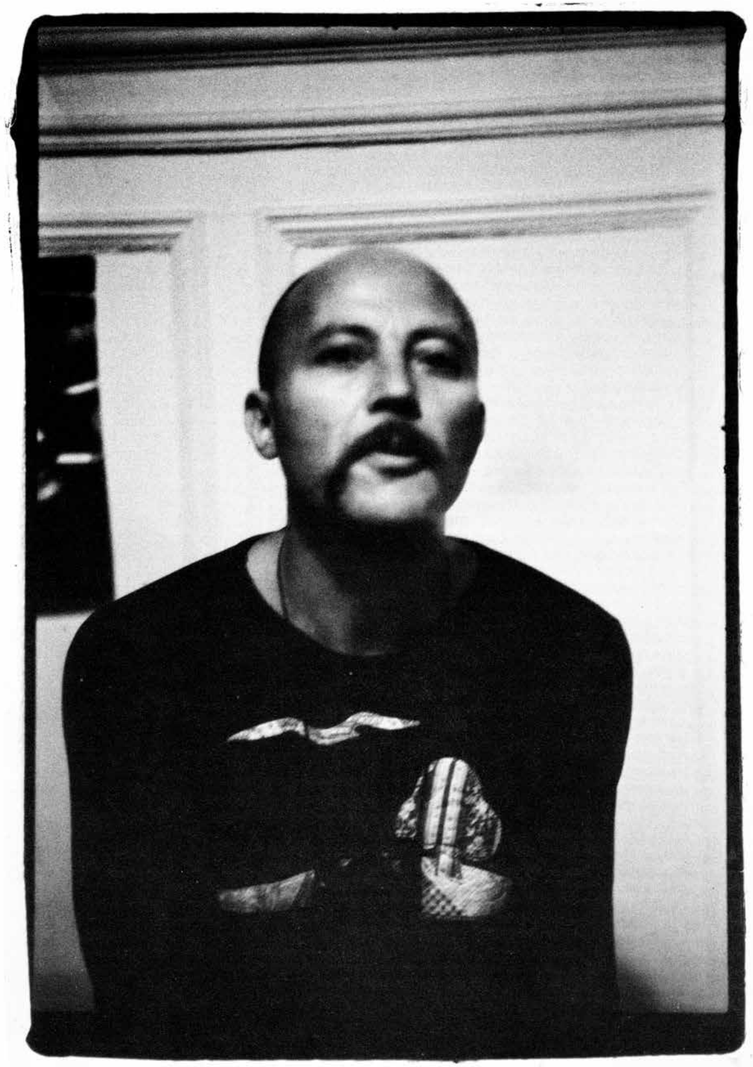
SL: At this level people have no individuality what-so-ever. The machine works by itself. I've talked to a lot of people who work in financial magazines, people from the stock exchange. People are really afraid, as much as artists. There doesn't seem to be any people who are powerful. At this point the machine runs by itself and everyone is disposable. I think anyone now is schizophrenic, in the sense that you belong to different things at the same time. People in New York go out with ten different people at the same time. There is no continuity, there is no set relationship. I can see that. I come from Africa and I lived with Nomads. It was very enclosed. There was the tribe, the religion, the extended family that they really wanted to be around and belong to. Even when they are moving around they have a territory they take with them. Everything is very crystal clear because they have no question in their minds, everything is there. But we don't believe in anything anymore. At all levels, we can see the extended family going to the restricted family and to the ... and the ... exploding, everything is exploding to pieces. Is it a revolution? I'm all for it, because it means you can find your way through that.

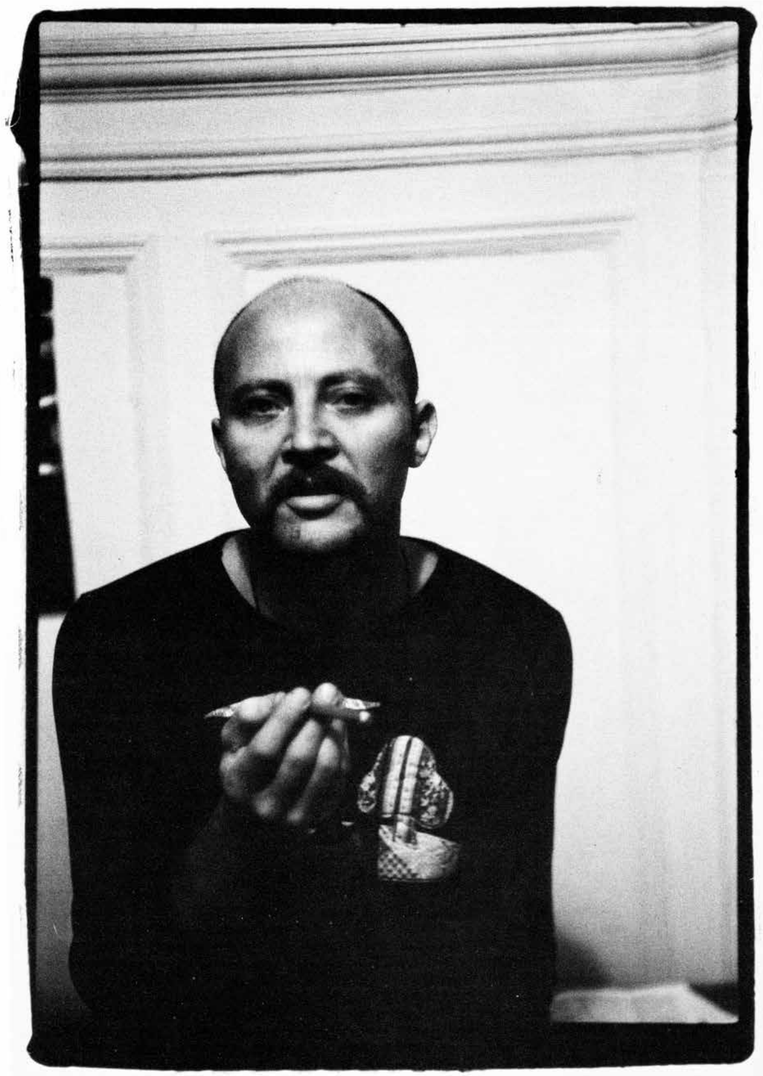
EG: Can you find your way through though?

SL: That's why it's a matter of stategy. I think it might be terrible, but capitalism is the ultimate type of society that we are going to go to, I mean it's already here. There doesn't seem to be any outside of it. Even in Africa I saw the more modernist people assimilating elements of the western culture which were already destroying their own structures. It's unavoidable. The big structures function through the chaos. Chaos is a balance. If you need something the system is going to provide it. It's like your hot-dog.

EG: How do chaos and the corporate structure relate?

SL: It's simple. Take the stock exchange, what's important is not that certain products are on the way up or on the way down, it's the difference between them. The value is in the difference. So how you get to have an increase in stocks is mostly pure luck. I talked to a guru of the stock exchange in the sixties. These people resort to things like palm reading, because basically there is no way of knowing, and it doesn't matter. The main thing is to create the difference, the difference pays. So the chaos is only in the making of differences. That's where the order is imposed. Once you create a value everything is re-incorporated. But the system functions through chaos. Our conception of system is that a system is finally very ordered. But in fact there is a deliberate chaos. The vanguard of capitalism is very revolutionary. It has to create chaos because that's the only way to open up things. If you are too ordered then you can't go beyond; so there is very adventurous movement. And that is only one side, the second side is to build a dam and start exploiting the new territory. And that's true with products or with sex or with anything.





EG: It's all of them of course then, you build a dam and go on to claim new land, to establish another dam.

SL: The movement for change is really part of capitalism. One alternative to the problem of keeping capitalism vital is to discover how to maintain the revolutionary potential for change. So, how to frustrate this return to some safe boundaries and exploitation of boundaries? You have to be faster. And you have to be faster than the stock exchange, in other words, maintain the state of chaos which is always on the verge of being re-incorporated. There is no outside of our society anymore. The punk movement is a very obvious example of that. So the problem now for me is, and this is the magazine's problem as well, how to work within the system because there is no outside unless you are very romantic, the way people were in the sixties. You think you can have alternative societies or be in the margin, obviously these were provided by the system. The system was flourishing, the economy was rich enough to allow marginalities. Now the system is restricting and that's it, the alternatives disappear entirely. So it was a false hope.

EG: What would happen to all these theories if we entered into a state of complete chaos, war, nuclear holocaust, famine. All these systems and concepts seen to function only if the chaos is held within a certain boundary.

SL: I had a discussion with Burroughs, he said, and I think this is true, there is no example in history of weapons that have been invented and not been used. Temptation isn't just temptation, you cannot constantly delay it. If you were to consider the possibility of annihilation which is very real, then there is no need to do anything. If it happens it happens. I think what is interesting is the collapse of all the traditional revolutionary conceptions. Again if it's a collapse for the west, it doesn't mean it has to be the same everywhere. If you go to Africa for instance, there is a possibility for African socialism which is grounded on a collective structure which doesn't exist here anymore. But, are they going to be able to integrate their tradition within some sort of new society or are they just going to be caught up by the western model.

EG: Are they going to preserve their cultural identity, is that what you're asking?

SL: I spent two months in Mali , there people live really on nothing. No one starves. You always have some rice and that is all that is needed. The form of the family is such that no one is ever excluded. You can always fall back on something. Of course it means the notion of individuality is very different. As soon as you make any money your brother-in-law moves in to live with you. If you have a fiance you have to give her half of your salary. So the collective structure prevents, as it does with the American Indian, competition. It's not worth it because you are not going to get anything out of it anyway. So it slows down the evolution towards the highly competitive kind of society which we have.

EG: Why do you do your magazine?

SL: I had a very specific purpose. I gave up on France, and since I was living here I wanted to be part of New York because New York is fascinating. Not just the art world, I think the art world is just one aspect, it's more formalized, it's more interesting because what New York is, is already formalized in the structure of art. But the institution of art is very traditional. If you can be on the level of what's being produced, not on the level of the factory itself, which produces it. A factory is a factory, whether it's an academic factory or an artistic factory, it is still predictable and oppressive. I'm constantly shifting, often in very deliberate ways. Allowing things to happen all the time that are going to take me off my track. This way I can remain sane, otherwise you become sane which means you've become a bit crazy, other wise you would become totally neurotic here. In which case you are being

controlled, because for me that's what an individual is, the attempt to unify, constantly, things around you, and to put yourself at the center and in control of that, whereas the very effort to be in control means that you are being controlled constantly at all levels. I think that in New York, especially now, the whole weight of the control falls of the individual, that's why the pressure is on the individual to be individual. There is no way you can control anyone in New York. Just get out of this house, that's it, no one knows you. You can be anything, you can wear anything, you can have twenty different personalities, you can pretend this and that, no one is after you, no one is checking you. So you have to create in yourself this control, to imagine that other people are looking at you, and be a part of a community which will put pressure on you to behave. The problem is, if the control is up to you then if you don't exert the control then you are really free ... But it takes lots of doing just to constantly dodge this control that is now on us. Before, control as in Africa or in the middle ages was exerted by structures. There was family, faith, classes, and you could react against these. Now to react against these is useless because they hardly exist anymore. That's why I am very much against the whole idea of individuality because it means the whole weight of keeping order is now on each of us. That's where we have to start from, if you want to loosen control then you have to loosen this unity of the individual and it is not easy, for me who is French and logical and all that. At the beginning I really had to get off my rocker, not to be constantly re-imposing structures and opinions. The art world, and any world, is made up of rumours and it doesn't matter what is being said or who you are, you just keep feeding the beast. What is being circulated, the main purpose of it is to maintain a cohesion. If you identify with this cohesion, then you are fully individual and then you freak out. Freaking out is like a joke because everyone has some sort of appendix, anything happens and there is someone else around to help you come back to your senses. When the whole point is how to get out of your senses. I always try to do something unpredictable for myself.

The French are very retentive, the society is really stuck. The only thing that they created through some sort of miracle, an instrument to understand what's going on in the States, not really what's happening in France. People are caught in traps here that the French analyze very well. But at the same time the French are totally incapable of living them. There is no theory that can be totally alien to the way people actually function. That's why I think the injection of a little French theory here can be interesting because here we are at the heart of things. The difference between the way people actually operate and what could be revolutionary is very slight. We were talking about chaos and recuperation, there is very little difference. We thought there was a capitalist society and a socialist society. It seems something has to be invented within the system and you have to outdo the system, go faster, but it is within the system that something can be invented.

EG: Using the tools of the system itself. That seems part of the feeling now prevalent, the Capitalist system is here, and at least this system has vitality, so how can we use this towards our ends which are not strictly monetary.

SL: It's monetary with so many mediations. In academe there is no money. It's a matter of reputation. Originally I was caught up in the academic system and then suddenly realized that it's an industry. It doesn't deal with culture anymore only people exchanging signs, signs of value. I mean you publish, how much do you publish and where, how many lectures and all that. No one reads it anymore, no one cares. Very few things have really any impact. So it is pure signs and there is an exchange of signs. That's exactly what the capitalist society is. Anti-signs are meaningful and have value, value eventually ends up being translated into monetary terms. But it doesn't have to be this way, as long as professor has enough money to get by, he is not after money, but it is like a carrot.

EG: That happens in the literary world, in the art world, building your curriculum vitae, its meaning less because you are not involved in social change, you are working totally within the system for the system.

SL: That's where the semiotics thing gets in because semiotics organizes signs. But, the signs have to be meaningful, things are interchangeable, they are disposable like we are. So basically, the more meaning the more interesting they are. Semiotics is becoming just another institution to try to save what can be saved, to reinstate some sort of order, some sort of meaning. It becomes so much more complex.

EG: You can't ever analyze the signs, because once you attempt to analyze you limit the meaning.

SL: We've got to analyze, you analyze from several positions. So here you are, you predict the results. I saw a transcript of a schizophrenic and each time he wants to please his shrink he comes up with oppositions, inside outside, black and white, everything is ready made so he just throws it and at least you can analyze it. But I think what is more interesting is to see how he dodges. The problem now is how to avoid producing meaning, how to avoid producing signs. Signs are exchangeable. In semiotic terms how can we have signs that have some effect and you find that in Africa. For example, I saw a mad-man, he was from a tribe of animists, and the guy converted to Islam and he became a neman and wanted to convert his tribe. So the sorcerer took a stick, cut it and the guy became mad. We have lost this feeling that science can have an effect. The closest we got was psycho-analysis where you expect to cure people through just an exchange of signs. But that's in a way, an anachronism, and the set-up itself produces change just because it is a power relationship and I think everything is a matter of power.

Signs are very powerful but we still want to understand them instead of realizing that signs are there to exert some power. When I teach, it doesn't really matter if I'm radical or if I'm not radical, the institution is behind me. I give grades, people are in the room, they are in a certain relationship towards me. That's what you learn, and at all levels that is what forms you. That's what forms the power function of every sign. What I say, anyone could say it, but the fact that I am in a position of power, even if I refuse the power I am still in that position, that's where signs are efficient. Whether you say something which is intelligent or subversive it's to no avail what so ever, it's fucked from the beginning. In Semiotext(e) terms, that's where we started. We started with a dissatisfaction with semiotics. The title is a bit wierd, but *Semiotext(e)* was a Freudian pun on semiotics. At that time it was the notion of textuality as opposed to structure. We didn't follow that track, as far as I'm concerned I gave up on the notion of text. It seems one of the monstrosities generated by French thought. It textualizes everything, texts of history etc. ... history is not just the text. But it is only when it becomes a text that it becomes understandable. That's a problem with the French, the reliance of the French on language. It's no wonder, since if you are a philosopher you deal with language, if you are a semiotician you feed upon language, that is your profession. So everything was translated in linguistic terms and everything became understandable and dead. We produced lots of meaning but what ever we produced was already in the form of language. That's also another element here, especially to make a connection with the art world. The art world here didn't really operate on that level. They tried to not understand too much because they realized very much that when you understand the thing is dead already. The pragmatism of the American is the element missing in French thought, Because they think something before they actually do it, and that's an enormous restriction. I think it was good in a nihilistic way. You have to understand what's dead. What ever you can, understand. I'm not against understanding or knowledge but then you kill your object. So if it is to be killed, beautiful, but it doesn't give you an inkling of what is alive. So the French have got an idea that the transgression of the norm, in order to understand, in order to produce something new then you have to abide by the law. I have some friends who got married just to pay their dues to the law. You have to accept language and language as a norm, language as a law, language as a social ability. It's only when you have paid your dues that you can get beyond it. That's why Batan and all these philosophers were very much in the forefront a few years ago, because it was the notion of 'dependance', which means 'to unthink' at the same time it means spent, either sexually or monetarily, and usually for nothing. It has that tone of being a spend-thrift. There is a whole notion that basically you live a very drab, normalized life but once and a while you blow your top off.

EG: It's difficult after a point to be truly irrational because that means you have to be unconscious.

SL: I am constantly experimenting to find new arrangements. *Semiotext(e)* is a wierd thing because I don't really know who is part of *Semiotext(e)* and who is not. We started as a group of friends and after three months everyone was getting paranoic. As soon as there is a power of exposure then people imagine conspiracies and want to take over. It was bloody murder, we had three revolutions before the first issue. The first issue was not the original one, it was really the second, because someone just took over, tried to do it on the sly and we had to grab it, it was a mess. I was accused at that time, I was in a higher ranking group which was purely academic, and I was accused of manipulating people because I didn't want to take over. After a while I said I would be the general editor; and ever since it's been very quiet because there is a possibility of looseness for most people only if people know where the power is, so power isn't at stake. But as soon as you have a society of equals, and that's what a capitalist society is, then everyone is going to compete and fight to get it. In Africa no one is equal. You are born in such a tribe, you are already somewhere, you are inferior, superior, each thing has it's own place, and that's the way it's been, so you are very secure, because you know you can't go beyond that. You are defined by birth so people are much more at ease and peace. But the more possible the exchange the greater the paranoia. I started experimenting with being an editor, which means trying to sit beside power, whatever power it is, which of course is minimal, but just to be always a bit off. Let everyone in and out very freely, letting them do their thing, knowing everyone does it for a purpose and the purpose itself may be really off the wall. So how to let people's desires get in but not get stuck. The group is very mutable, there is a Columbia team, there is an art team down town and they hardly know each other. In some ways I've kept things seperate. Everyone gets in but we very rarely have meetings. We had a theoretical and it was murder. So the idea for me was to delegate power to people who would be allowed to go their way. As long as it's vaguely within the scope of the magazine why not explore? To go in one direction is restricted. Sometimes people responsible are too all-encompassing or too narrow, but I have tried to maintain the possibility of diversity without being eclectic. You explore many things at the same time and you explore these things with a group. A collective has to be made of things that don't fit because it's finished as soon as it's unified. In the "Schizo" issue there is a thing on black gangs in the Bronx. For me there was a certain ambiguity of groups. The gang has been romanticized by the French as an attempt at creating a group which would fight the conditioning. We create some sort of a norm which would be protective. Also, the gang is in the margin of society. There is some good violence to be had there. At the same time, if you read the article carefully it's nearly facist at times. The group produces its own code of honour, praise of the family. So basically it was, for me, an attempt to show you can be marginal and there is good and bad, people who think left and people who think right. But these days they don't think either left or right. They overlap these boundaries. You can be an academic Marxist and live like the utter bourgeois. People I know meet on Mondays to talk about Lenin and the Revolution, on Thursdays they go back to their houses and live a very safe life.

EG: To live a Marxist life instead of just thinking about it. I've always had a hard time with the Marxists because they didn't live their theories, and that didn't interest me.

SL: You have to start with yourself, especially as the individual as he exists today is the place where the most pressure is exerted. That's why you first have to undo things, make it so you have nothing to lose. Somehow I believe that if you are a revolutionary you have to be able to live in a revolutionary way. Every day. You have to be hooked on something. I have three or four places in New York. The only thing I take with me is my coffee machine. But the problem is quite simply that. People are not ready for revolution. Take a look at the communist party in France. May 68, if they had really wanted it, something very major could have happened there. There was a big moment of hesitation. There was a period of four of five days when the country could have been in a state of total revolution. But the communist party had built this machine, and the machine is a possession and they didn't want to use it because they didn't want it to be destroyed. And that's the second time. My formative years were during the Algerian wars in the late 50's and early 60's. I was very surprised that the communist party never called upon their members to fight the war. The rationale was, if we do that then we will be outlawed and that's what the opposition wants, so we can't give it to them. So if you are not willing to risk anything nothing is going to happen and you become an institution. So my feeling is that you should get rid of as many possessions as possible and be ready. If anything happened I (really) have nothing to lose, I would be ready for it. The same way with the magazine. Vito asked; how do you feel now that you are in charge of a magazine which is very influential. As far as I'm concerned the magazine has fulfilled it's function. I wanted to make a connection, to build some sort of loose structure, I wanted to get out of the western university. In my personal economy the magazine is through.

EG: You have to move into something else. Instead of destroying something or giving it up, take it outside its present concept.

SL: My principle is not destroying but adding. Instead of destroying the old position and replacing it, you simply add to it. By adding it becomes much more difficult to encompass. And after a while you give up on it because there is no way you can rationalize this thing. It's like in the issue where we had so many inputs that were so different. The stuff itself was so different that just adding one to the other was, for me the procedure and the end, to establish connections which are not exclusive of each other. So that in between things something can happen. Even though I have my doubts about the real impact of a magazine. A magazine is already, in itself an institution. If it circulates then that means people are already expecting it, then you are fulfilling a function. If you fulfill a function, why do it? Anyone can do it.

EG: You can rationalize yourself almost to immobility if you applied this to your real-life situation. But you don't. As you say, you add to it, make it grow.

SL: We have a foot in Academe and a foot in the art world, I would like to include more things to disrupt this kind of two-footedness that we have here, otherwide things may degenerate very fast. I have my doubts about the impact of a magazine. I think we are very important in France but we are important in as much as we have created trends. It's impossible that you could create a trend or that the trend itself could be productive. With the 'schizo' issue I first of all wanted to make the word 'schizo' trendy. I had been working for three years with this ex-mental patients group and for them this word bears with it much condemnation. What you have to do is make things respectable, make it respectable to freak out, making it respectable to be chaotic, to dodge between structures. At least that's something. If something has to be trendy it may as well change a previous outlook. But now I think if you are going to have 'schizo-criticism, it's going to be the same. The only interesting thing about presenting a trend is that you get closer to real questions. Because the real question is not how to cure the individual, the question is not, at this level, to see what degree of decomposition we are in. Any attempt at cohering is basically backwards. The system is much beyond our own consciousness of it, we still live in a very structured way where the system is totally loose. We live in a flux. It is neither revolutionary or reactionary, it is a system itself. What they call desiring machine, it can be totally facistic, it's just a flow. It depends on exactly where it is and is just a matter of strategy. So each time you block the flow of desire then you create a new structure and the structure is there to prevent things from getting out of hand. But you have to let things get out of hand other wise nothing is going to move. So the system constantly plays on this kind of detheorization. The capitalist system is facistic at all levels. There is an overall structure which balances itself. It doesn't matter who is going to get in, as soon as there is a need the position will be filled by someone. But everyone is interchangable, so the flux is a flux of the capital itself. That's the whole paradox, what you would define as desire, intensity, etc. is an unchecked flow of the capital which makes everything interchangable. And everything being interchangable simply means there is no barrier, nothing is sacred, everything can be used. So there is an infinite expansion of this society. That's where the dynamism is. But if everything has to be exchanged at the same time, there is this risk that the looseness may be so great that the structure may be threatened. Even though the over all regulation systems are such that it rarely gets out of hand. There are still grocery stores, everything can function, which is a wonder. The system provides its own checks and balances, you don't need an over all system to do that. At the individual level the same thing happens. You have a certain looseness, which is I think ten times more in New York than in Paris for instance. When you have thirteen million people of all nationalities, each of them very specific, put together in an enormous vacuum, the notion of individuality becomes no longer workable. The notion of schizophrenia is not opposed to the system, it is a product of the system. That's why neurosis is a product of the nineteenth century. Freud himself is a product of the nineteenth century. You have these people caught in their families with father and mother etc. and Lacane just formalized that, the name of the father and the law. What does it mean here, 'father',? no one lives with their family any more. Masters are just one among many things that you have. I leave my department, no one is checking me. On the subway you are meaningless again so you have to impose mental structures that are going to internalize order, father, authority etc. So the internalization is exactly what you call neurosis. You internalize the control. They are the foundation on which you can maintain some sort of unity. So if you shatter this unity you are not doing something original, you are just keeping up with the system. That's all paradox. I oscillate really, thinking sometimes it's hopeless, but it's all a matter of breathing. If you let the structures close in around you, you can't breathe anymore, so why live. The encouraging thing is that while you keep breathing you do effect the structures. I have no illusions about the impact of anything we do but at least it's like ripples, you just put things a little askew, it has some effect and I don't think a wave goes too far, but it just upsets things. The notion is how to be irresponsible in a responsible way.

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DEBORAH SAMUEL

DIVINE

Divine, star of "Pink Flamingos", "Female Trouble", sexual time bomb, 300 pounds of restless woman, landed in Toronto recently to play Flash Storm, "last of the pink-hot strippers", in "The Neon Woman", a cultural hit/financial bomb. I spoke with him the following day at the Waldorf.

Have you been in Toronto before?

I was in Toronto about eighteen months ago; I did a show with Carole Pope at Massey Hall called "Restless Underwear".

I saw you in London.

Yes, I spent six months in London doing "Women Behind Bars." It was very beautiful, but after the first two months I'd had enough. New York is home. I miss my friends after a while. We might take this play to the Palais Internationale in Paris; but not for a long stint, two months is enough.

Last night was great. I really enjoyed the play.

Ah! First nights everyone is on edge. I think maybe I'm not as popular here as in America. That's one of my problems. I worry about what everyone thinks.

The audience reaction was fantastic.

Yes. When we did the show in New York, the audience would scream out, but they didn't do that in San Francisco. Here it happened again. I like that; of course you can't stop and say so. We had only one day of rehearsal on this stage so obviously we couldn't rehearse everything, just different bits. Thank God I have one of those memories where you open your mouth and it just comes out.

I loved your clothes, especially the black dress with the ruff down the back.

A very dear friend, Van Smith, designed all the costumes and make-up. Van trained Chelsea to do the make-up for the show here and in San Francisco.

"Women Behind Bars" was your first stage production. How did you feel about the transition from film to stage?

I was scared at first, but I wanted to do it. I thought, if it doesn't work then I won't do it again. Now I want to try recording. I'm supposed to talk to some people in New York about doing a disco record.

What about serious drama, a tragedy perhaps?

I would like to do something like "The Taming of the Shrew", but I am more towards comedy. If the right script came along . . .

About your disco record, when do you think it will be released?

Within the next few months I hope. I have a couple of tapes, one called Eat It – all about food but with a double entendre of course. It's very funny but it doesn't have the disco beat to it yet. I love disco, and before that soul. Tina Turner is marvellous.

What do you do when you're not working?

I collect orchids. I would love to have a greenhouse one day when I retire, but that won't be for a long time yet. I bought an orchid from The Peggy Mills Tropical Garden in Key West for $35. She said, don't you have to get it on a plane? Listen, I said, for $35 I am not going to leave it here. We managed to fit it sort of into a box with its roots trailing and got it to the airport. There they said there is no way you can take it on the plane and I said there is no way I'm going to leave it here! I collect porcelain too.

And jewellry?

Yes. A friend of mine, Richard Enker, has done a lot of earrings for me. I had my ear pierced three times.

You seem to spend a lot of time away from home and the things you like.

Not by choice. I would love to be at home all the time. I love cooking and having flowers around. But in this business you just can't. You have to go where the work is. I'm going back to New York after this. I am very much a quiet person, a stay-at-home person. Mind you, I love going out too, to Studio 54 and so on, my friends are all there so it's like home too.

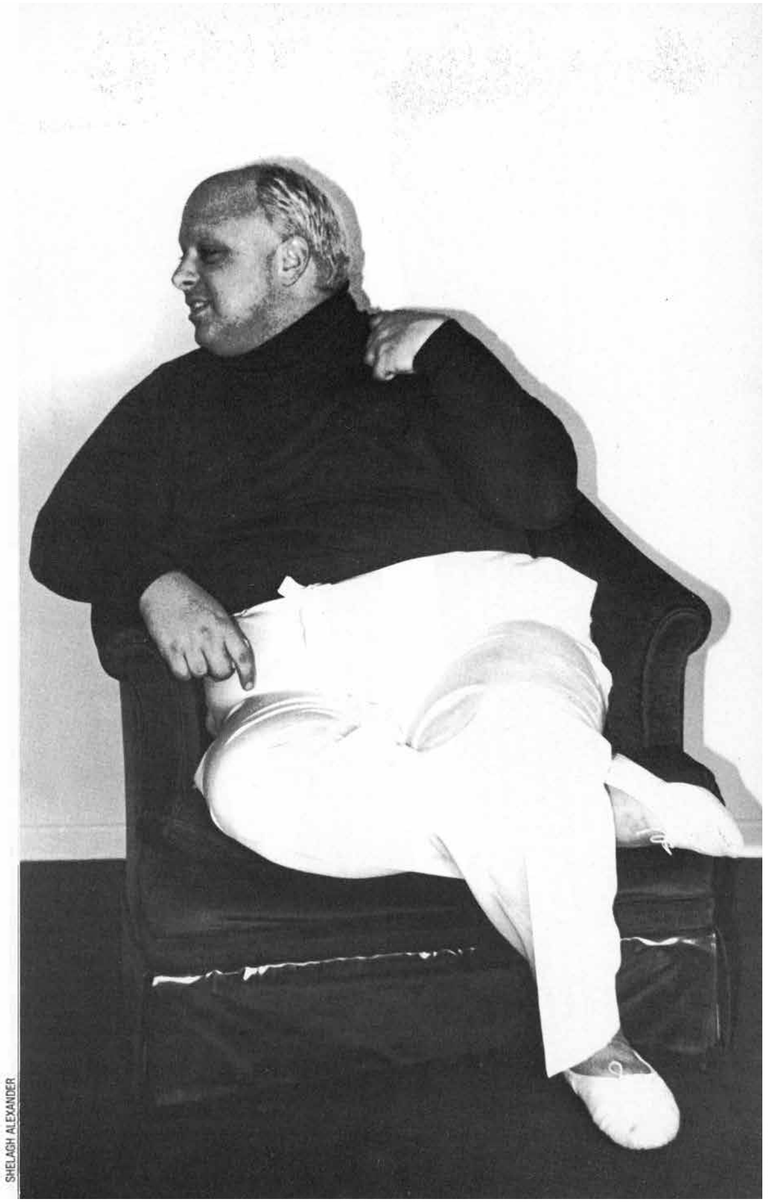
What kind of cooking do you do?

Southern U.S. soul cooking. I'm not really into gourmet cooking although I love to eat it, but it seems to take too much time and preparation. A friend of mine, Timmy Pearce, is a gourmet cook and he delights in cooking these fabulous things just to have me over to eat them. I do fried chicken and hams and black-eyed peas and pies. I like to bake. A friend of mine, Howard, was making a pie one day and I said, how do you do that? Oh it's so hard to do you could never do it, he said. I was really annoyed so I went home and got everything to make pastry and rolled out a perfect crust first time. I called him up and said, come over and taste my first pie: peach. It was delicious. I was making two pies a day at one point. I had to stop. I was putting on so much weight I could hardly move. I think I am just a fat person. There are some people in the world who are just fat. I could look at a plate of spaghetti and inhale it and put on 5 pounds.

It's very much a fashion thing of course. I think the Twiggy ideal of the sixties has changed. At least now women can have tits!

Really, nothing is more attractive than a beautifully built woman in a lovely low-cut dress. I always admired Elizabeth Taylor; she always looked fabulous.

Lola Michael



SHELAGH ALEXANDER

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JONATHAN RICHMAN

EG: Boston. Do you live there still?

JR: Yeah.

EG: Were you born there?

JR: Yeah.

EG: What year?

JR: '51. I grew up in the suburbs of Boston. I actually live in Cambridge now.

EG: What happened to the Modern Lovers?

JR: Well, I kept the band together until last year when I decided to go back to singing alone, which is how I started off.

EG: Do they still exist?

JR: No.

EG: Are you on your own forever?

JR: I guess, we'll see what happens.

EG: Do you like it better?

JR: Yeah.

EG: How come?

JR: I just like to sing songs with hardly any accompaniment. Uhm, that's because when I'm singin' even good accompaniment by a beautiful band is going to distract me a little, so here I have no one to blame but myself. I just have my little 6 string guitar so there's not much to get in the way of me and the songs and the audience.

EG: Are you married? Do you have a kid?

JR: Well, we better keep some of these things uh, that's an interesting question. I'm single . . . let's come back to that question.

EG: A lot of your material has a child-like quality. You like singing to kids in a sense.

JR: Yeah. Not in a sense. I just plain do. I think it's that I don't see that much of a distinction between so called "adults" and so called "children". The minds are very different, very opposite, but the "heart" is the same. I also like singin' to the elderly. I like singin' to almost every age group.

EG: With your early stuff, with The Modern Lovers, it seemed as though you were establishing yourself as a rock/new wave group: you seemed to be heading in that direction.

JR: That reputation was started mostly by people who never saw The Modern Lovers. Anyone who actually saw the group on stage, live, weren't reading third and fourth hand accounts of what we were. Even listening to the demo, which has since been called the record, "The Modern Lovers," is not a first hand account because it's not quite the way we were live. It's a little more serious. We weren't used to being in a studio, and I must say that isn't me at my best.





SA: How do you explain your appeal to a ''new wave'' type of audience?

JR: We did have a sound which has a lot of things that can be used by groups who want to express themselves that way. For example, a lot of the early stuff has me chanting and talking as much as singing, so suppose you're a singer and you want to put across something that has a lot of words in it, we had a sound that could be used very well to deliver that kind of a message.

SA: What type of people generally come to see you?

JR: I'm playing at an agricultural fair in Maine with livestock, things like that. I've played in old age homes. I've played . . .

SA: Highschools?

JR: More in the beginning. It's harder to get highschool work now than it used to be years ago. I cannot think of an age group that I haven't played for. In Europe, I have what I think you'd call a general audience, from every age group. People bring their parents to see me, mothers bring their 16 year old girls, and like, the mothers enjoy it often as much as their daughters do. Now, if you see the earlier stuff as more rock'n'roll, and the later stuff as less, that only means one thing, we just have a different definition of rock'n'roll. I don't think the earlier stuff is, I don't think it's rock'n'roll, personally.

EG: What tradition is your music coming from?

JR: Well, some of it started when I was 11 and was listenin' to radio. A lot of the stuff that I started doing at 17 through 19 and 20 was directly influenced by the Velvet Underground and the Stooges. Now, I love those bands. They had a lot of rock'n'roll qualities; but to me, what I call rock'n'roll is things like Little Richard, Fats Domino and Chuck Berry.

EG: You come across as a purist, both musically and physically. Do you exercise?

JR: Sometimes. Actually I don't favour them unless I'm in the mood for it, you know.

EG: But you seem to make an effort to stay in shape.

JR: Not at all. If I liked cigarettes I'd be smokin' them right next to you. If I liked beer I'd be drinkin' that too. If you want to see self-discipline you should see me try and drink a full glass of beer. That's my idea of a superhuman effort. You see, it's easy to paint a picture of me, as some people want to do, as a disciplined person, and that makes them feel superior. That way they can say, ''Hey, we're having fun here in the bar and he's out there . . .'' No, I don't do things much 'cause of discipline.

EG: I've heard you're still singing the streets.

JR: That's true.

EG: Why were you singing on the streets when you could have been playing concert halls?

JR: Because, again, I don't believe in discipline. I like to do what I enjoy. I enjoy the street more than the concert hall. Concert halls are a drag, kinda like beer and cigarettes for me; something very difficult which takes a lot of self-discipline to master.

EG: You're not avoiding fame are you Jonathan?

JR: Good question, gentlemen. No, in fact I'm not.

EG: You're out there trying.

JR: No, there's trying, then there's avoiding. Both of those are doin' something. Both require discipline. What I'm doing requires nothin'.

EG: So you're not going to shun fame if it came along, but you're not going to ''claw'' your way to the top either.

JR: Exactly, you got it.

SA: How did you meet John Cale?

JR: He was in the Velvet Underground. I used to see the Velvet Underground play all the time. I met him after he was out of the group for a long time. He was working for Warner Brothers and then he became interested and came up to see us as part of the Warner Brothers thing. It started out as me going to see them in Boston. They played Boston more than New York; I saw them about 50 or 60 times.

SA: Wow.

EG: He produced most of the songs on your first album. What happened after that?

JR: It didn't work out.

EG: Are you religious?

JR: I don't like that word.

EG: OK, how about holistic thinking.

JR: Keep on goin'. Try another one. None of those sound too good so far.

EG: What would you use?

JR: I wouldn't. I would say I love life.

EG: A hedonist loves life.

JR: You think so? Then I disagree. See, it depends on what you call love. To me my saying i love life answers the question about religion or anything else.

EG: The word love is really important to you.

JR: Love is life force. Life force creates. Life force does not uncreate. Then it ain't life force no more. Then it ain't love.

SA: Are you a romantic? Do you believe in love, lasting relationships?

JR: I feel love. I believe in lasting love.

EG: What about technology. It's right off the other end.

JR: The thing is, that's a good thing to bring up 'cause I'm starting to realize how it rubs me the wrong way more and more. The more sensitive I get, say in my body or anywhere else, the more I want to be away from those things because they repel me.

EG: When I say technology, how would you define it?

JR: Airplanes, all those things, to hotels where you can't open the windows. Like, uh . . . synthetically amplified music. All kinds of things like that affect me more and more, they are more of a nuisance to me. I mean it's not just a nuisance, I also think it's going to kill everything unless it's stopped.

EG: Then you think there should be limited technological advancement.

JR: I don't think there should, I think that if there isn't . . . we're already in hot water . . . it's just a question of whether we're going to all die or not. It's close you know.

EG: How so?

JR: You know what's happenin' to the ocean? You know what's happenin' to Lake Michigan? OK, when the oceans die, how well do you think you're gonna do? I think technology has destroyed. It's just a question of can we rebuild.

EG: How can you stop technology?

JR: We can stop it because one letter equals 100 letters because no one writes letters. So when officials get one letter they know that there's a hundred people who are thinking it. That's one way the statistics work for you.

EG: You believe in social action.

JR: No, I don't believe in it. I do it. I write letters, and I coach all my friends to. When there's a polluting thing, write to television shows and to newsmen. I've encouraged my friends to write to ''60 Minutes'', and I've gotten my parents to do it. And I tell other people, I tell all different people that I run into to do it. I'm tellin' you this on a tape recorder right now. Maybe someone's gonna read this and write to ''60 Minutes''. Enough letters and they'll investigate. Look what's happening to the nuclear power thing. They were doing this all under wraps, but if people didn't protest this never would have grown to be open this way. Look what's happenin'. Look at that nuclear power industry. Now it's at least questionable. It would have proceeded pretty much otherwise if it weren't for all the people, millions of people now, tryin' to stop it.

EG: Do you do this through your music?

JR: I don't choose to very much.

EG: It's not like the old protest stuff.

JR: That's right. I don't like that method much.

EG: It's too direct a confrontation.

JR: No. It's just not music to me. I like the direct approach, but it's just not my idea of rock'n'roll music.

EG: So you're saying ''stop it all''.

JR: Ah, it seems like we might be goin' down slightly a wrong direction. I don't even know whether I say stop it all, 'cause I don't say stop it all. I never have said that yet. People can do whatever they want. I'm just saying that it looks to me that if they don't stop most of it, there's gonna be not too many people and lots of strange cells. I would encourage people to look into it for themselves and not say ''Jonath n is sayin' to stop technology'', 'cause I'm not. I'm saying just look into it and make sure that what you're doin' is what you really think is right. See, if many of your readers are artists, I don't want to say I know how they all think, but I've talked to many different people and I get the impression that many artists have the attitude of ''What can I do about it? Well, it's too late now.'' I hear that from many people in the arts. What I'd like to do is let them know that I think it's everyone's responsibility and yes, there are things you can do about it. I mean, it's always on the edge of any interview that I do with people who work with magazines like this, this thing about lifestyles . . . there's kind of an urge to defend self-destruction, and I think that that is not taking responsibility for yourself. It's like sayin', ''Well there's nothing that anyone can do, might as well just blow it completely.'' And I think that's simply not going to make anyone, including the people who are sayin' it, any happier, and it's not going to help their sex lives one bit, it's only gonna take away their life force. And I mean, that's why I brought up the word sex, because flirtin' at the end of any discussion on self-destruction is sex life. It's inevitable. Then what you have is people rationalizing, and I'm speaking specifically to artists, rationalizing their lifestyle with the subconscious belief that it's helping their sex life by makin' it kinkier or somehow more exciting. Well, that's tellin' me about themselves that those are the people who have trouble relating and really enjoying sex.

EG: Sounds like you've lived in New York.

JR: Yeah. I want my life to be more simple all the time as well. I don't enjoy most of the things that veer too far away from plain old people being with people. That's why I don't like technology so much, simply because it takes time away from what I really enjoy, which is people. I see the future for me as just getting to know as many people, with as few things in between, as possible.

MR. LEATHER



SHELAGH ALEXANDER

getting dressed up to go to a mr. leather contest.
no it's called dressing down.
can you tell that i'm a girl?
no, you look like a cute boy.
oh no. it's wrinkled. i hate wrinkled clothing. they're going to say: hey look at that chick in the wrinkled shirt. agh.
i wouldn't worry about it too much.
maybe i should take a bag.
you should.

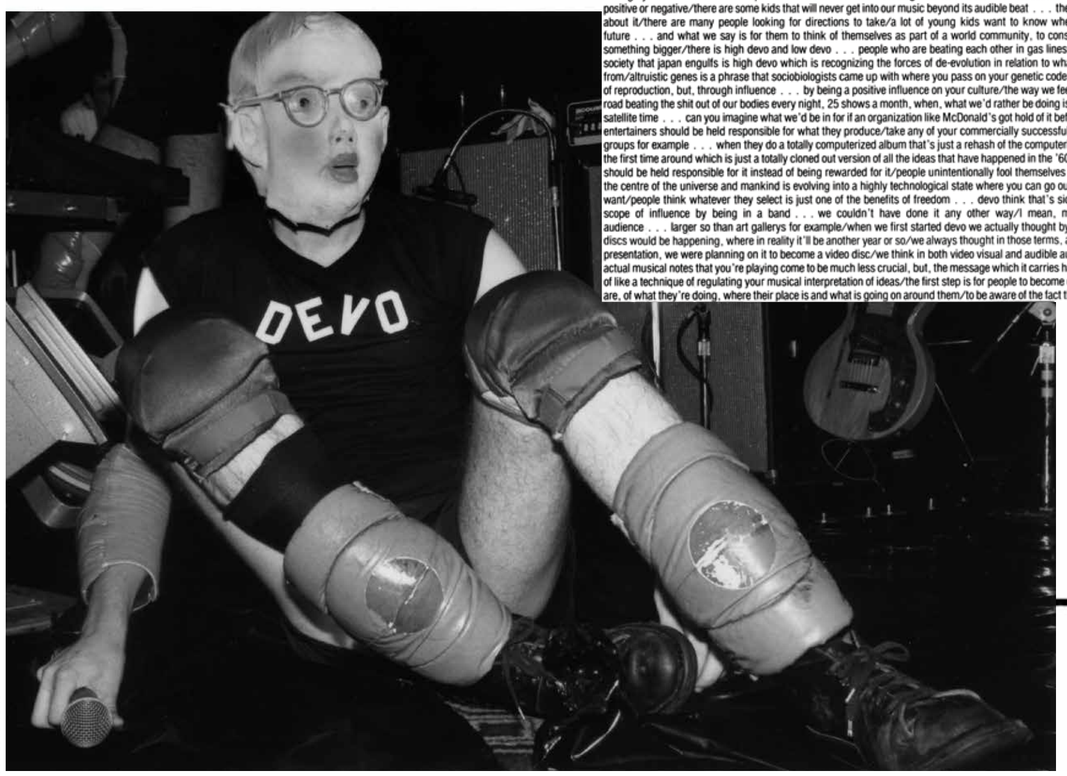
CHICAGO '79

there's been a lot of gang warfare here this year, already there have been 25 deaths. gangs. mostly in this area with latinos. in fact, a lot of straight people have been shot in the process.
latinos, they're from latin speaking countries.

what's your name?
david kloss.
when were you born?
november 1st, 1949. a scorpio.
how long have u been into leather?
3 years, ever since i moved to san francisco.
how did that happen?
i happened to meet somebody my second day there, they happened to frequent south market bars & from then on it was always south market which is the leather area of san francisco.
do u really dig it?
really really into it. there's a lot of different areas to go in san francisco, but that's the place i go to all the time for good times & hot men.
what do u do other times?
you mean when i'm not going to bars? i work. i work on oil rigs. my last assignment was in angelo. i used to fly from san francisco to new york to lisbon. i'd spend a month there & then come back to san francisco & enjoy.
then it's hard work & good play?
oh yea, always. when you're out there nothing happens, so when you get back you're more than ready.
how does it feel to be mr. leather?
i'm feeling such a state of euphoria that i don't know exactly where i'm coming from.
what is mr. leather to you?
actually, it means representing a lot of men who are very much into a masculine way of life. into good & heavy hot times.
what is the masculine way of life?
the only reason i have a hard time answering that is because i wouldn't want to offend anyone else. they are men who know they are men by the way they dress, by the way they act, by the way they conduct themselves, the way they play & they really like men who are into the same situation.
is there anything else you'd like to say?
no, i'm just really excited.
what are u going to do as mr. leather, will there be something different in your life?
that i really don't know, this is the first contest that i've ever gotten involved in. & when i came to chicago i really didn't know what was going on as far as responsibilities afterwards. i just talked to laffite's in new orleans & they want me to come down as a guest for mardi gras which i think would be fantastic. i really don't know what activities i would need to get involved with other than what i normally do. just meeting people & having a good time.
in other words, there is some responsibility, but it's not like being a reigning prince.
no, not at all. just continue the way i'm living & have a really good time & hope that i represent everything that i was voted in for.
is there any questions you'd like to ask him?
can i have your autograph?
oh, really.
is this your lover?
no, yes, this is david.
how do u feel about it?
other than being on the ceiling, i feel fantastic. he deserves it, he's a beautiful man.
you seem to epitomize everything that mr. leather would be.
i guess it's just a combination of the way i've been working & the people i've been hanging with. it's just the way i've always been. i really appreciate it.
(outside voice) there's a painting of your face on the wall of the gold coast, the guy looks just like you.
i never expected all this.
now you're a star.
no. i'm just going to be me. continue what i'm doing & that's all there is to it.
congratulations. i'm glad you won.
thankyou. have a good time tonight.
i know you will.

there's the L. you can hear what kind of noise it makes.
it makes me nervous especially when you drive right along underneath.
how many people were killed when the L fell?
about 5.
that's not too many. just 5.

DEVO



duty now for the future goes from our corporate anthem and works its way into the altruistic genes which, in turn, finishes off with a ride on the redeye express/strange pursuit is a devo love song/if you noticed we dealt with love more than once on this album/strange pursuit was actually inspired by those little magnetic dolls . . . those japanese toys where they have a magnet in the mouth with a boy and a girl doll/the heads either attract or repel/triumph of the will is more your classical greek love song/you can imagine businessmen in togas sitting around in the parthenon listening to it over the musak system about 1,000 years ago/we don't give advice/we just offer information/it's important and relevant . . . it's information people should be aware of . . . it's what's happening in the world/it's the sound of things falling apart . . . a need for people to work together rather than to carry on with their individual consumerism and their waste of energy on a planet that is shrinking . . . a planet where we have to be more and more responsible for our actions/when people absorb information it is an altruistic method/the other choice is for them to attend a Ted Nugent concert and listen to his interviews after the show where he brags about killing at least three different animals which are compiled on the endangered species lists . . . those are the alternatives/devo feel people should use their grey matter because it's important to think about certain things/we are much more concerned with getting a reaction, positive or negative/there are some kids that will never get into our music beyond its audible beat . . . there's nothing you can do about it/there are many people looking for directions to take/a lot of young kids want to know where their place is in the future . . . and what we say is for them to think of themselves as part of a world community, to consider themselves part of something bigger/there is high devo and low devo . . . people who are beating each other in gas lines is low devo/the type of society that japan engulfs is high devo which is recognizing the forces of de-evolution in relation to what the world is made up from/altruistic genes is a phrase that sociobiologists came up with where you pass on your genetic code, not through the means of reproduction, but, through influence . . . by being a positive influence on your culture/the way we feel about going out on the road beating the shit out of our bodies every night, 25 shows a month, when, what we'd rather be doing is initiating simulcasts by satellite time . . . can you imagine what we'd be in for if an organization like McDonald's got hold of it before we could?/we think entertainers should be held responsible for what they produce/take any of your commercially successful mainstream rock'n'roll groups for example . . . when they do a totally computerized album that's just a rehash of the computerized album that they did the first time around which is just a totally cloned out version of all the ideas that have happened in the '60's and early '70's, they should be held responsible for it instead of being rewarded for it/people unintentionally fool themselves when they think man is the centre of the universe and mankind is evolving into a highly technological state where you can go out and buy whatever you want/people think whatever they select is just one of the benefits of freedom . . . devo think that's sick/we've expanded our scope of influence by being in a band . . . we couldn't have done it any other way/I mean, music has a very large audience . . . larger so than art gallerys for example/when we first started devo we actually thought by this point in time video discs would be happening, where in reality it'll be another year or so/we always thought in those terms, and we did our first devo presentation, we were planning on it to become a video disc/we think in both video visual and audible audio terms, that way the actual musical notes that you're playing come to be much less crucial, but, the message which it carries has more impact/it's sort of like a technique of regulating your musical interpretation of ideas/the first step is for people to become conscious of where they are, of what they're doing, where their place is and what is going on around them,/to be aware of the fact that a car which is twelve



feet long or whatever, is using up more than their share of energy on this planet/it's when they realize there's a reason why you turn off your hot comb an extra minute earlier/people have got to understand that human beings aren't the centre of the universe and they should stop thinking in that respect/if they could quit thinking they were the most important things in the world, they could look around and discover they are in fact, part of something much bigger/we don't relish critics who dwell too much by trying to interpret our ideas which they consider to be a philosophy or some kind of religion/it's just as bad to be categorized on that kind of level/people can't observe without being excessively subjective/if all the guy can acknowledge is people go to a devo gig just to jump around, y'know, it's better he thinks that than try to throw in stuff he doesn't even understand/we get a lot of different responses to the same concert/when we played a gig in San Francisco, I read three reviews where each critic typecast in a different way . . . I never knew devo were dangerous, going downhill and the music of the future at the same time?/sometimes, people who attend our gigs get pretty strange/I can remember 110,000 hippies beating each other up at knebworth last year during our set/they were acid rock fans who were only there to see genesis and the starship/we came on right after the atlanta rhythm section finished doing this boogie set where they had this big fat guy waving this, y'know, mammoth flag/meanwhile you could hear all these english hippies yelling stuff like get it together, right on and yeah, yeah, yeah/when devo came on they completely lost it/after we did a couple of songs they were throwing anything they could get their hands on/they were hitting each other and they would get pissed and fight even more/they were really fighting it out, y'know, it looked so good/it was like playing hell/who knows what drives some people to come to concerts, but, they come and get up at the front of the stage and just go psycho/there's another interesting thing about audience interaction . . . things get thrown on stage by people who claim that they're well meaning, y'know, it's like "devo!" here comes a wine bottle . . . lookout/when mark goes into the audience, the spuds at the front of the stage think he wants to be injured or something/virgin records wasn't even interested in us until they found out that bowie wanted to produce us/then they had this thing worked out with bowie that it had to be a seven album production deal/his lawyers had it fixed that he was going to collect 4% of our royalties/after we arrived in germany, david was in real bad shape/he was so sick that he couldn't make it to the studio most of the time/we finally agreed there was no way that we were going to sign a deal like that/virgin records actually convinced us they were sympathetic and they wanted to help us stay alive, y'know, do things to make devo something big and important/something with an influence rather than being just another art band which fizzles out/we thought virgin were going to protect us/they told us there was no problems, we were signing with them and they'd fight warners/the truth of it is they made a deal with them/we ended up with this real shit middle position having two record companies that were both pissed at us for doing our own contract rather than working through lawyers and a manager/we had de-punk mentality about signing a recording contract at the time because we did it all ourselves/eno was not only a political choice, but he loaned us 30,000 dollars to do the first album/we probably set a record for being one of the cheapest in production amongst the major releases of that year/with our second album, duty now, our producer ken scott couldn't believe that we brought the album in for under 150,000 dollars/we cost about 70,000 dollars and he just couldn't believe there was an album that cheap which he produced because he's the kind of person who likes to sit around and eat pizza in the studio at 175.00 dollars an hour/it just won't be another album . . . next lp has got to be a major departure/for us it will be the statement we've been talking about in interviews through the past/we've done our two albums that are as close to rock'n'roll as we are going to get/next platter will be music for the eighties . . . it'll be healthy robot rhythms for doing your calisthenics to/////////////stop/

p.l. noble

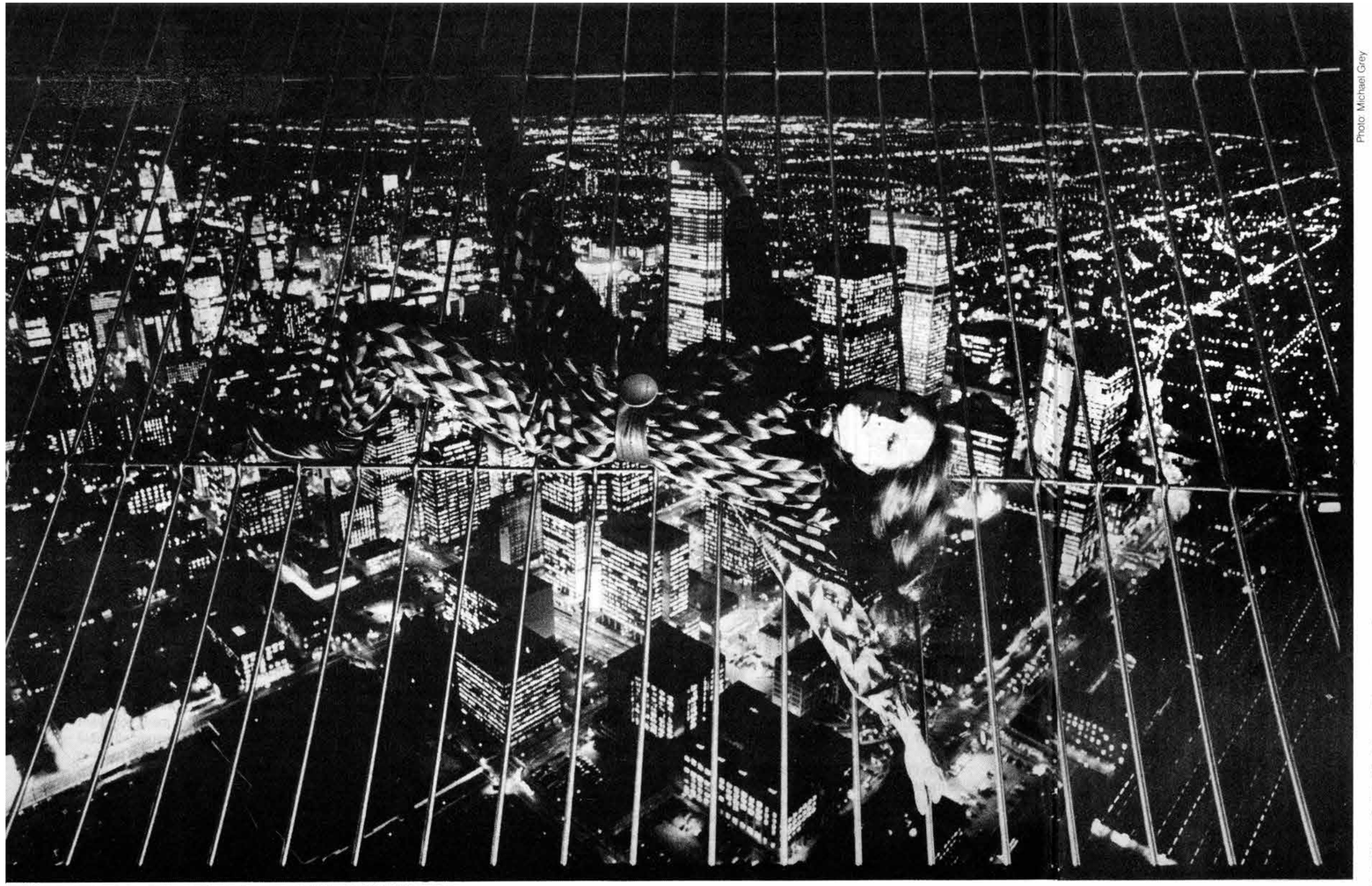


Photo Michael Grey

CAPTURING TORONTO

LEILA ANGELIC

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
NIGHT MAGAZINE

Who are you anyway?

I'm a Canadian, no.1. I like the CN Tower. I would like to see it work as a Communications tower and draw the people. It hasn't reached its potential yet.

How did you get involved with *NIGHT*?

I met Anton at the Studio and when he said he was starting a new magazine with pictures of people from the Studio and Regine's called NIGHT, I said "I'm going to work with you." Leila means "night".

If disco is dead, where's *NIGHT*?

We're not really into the disco thing in New York anymore. The reason Night happened was because everything was happening at the Studio at that time. Everybody from all over the world was coming there.

Who's everybody?

I'd say the creative energy in the world, the people who've made it, the inheritors who were there and not being recognized. I came along and started recognizing the inheritors. It encompassed a lot more people than INTERVIEW. We were all doing what INTERVIEW was doing, obviously we would have to give Andy the credit, but there are more people out there who are talented who are able to get into Night, whereas INTERVIEW is more difficult.

"Talented people"; is that the same as dilettantes with money?

Yes, well they're getting more powerful, they're getting more money.

What's happening in Toronto? Is there some sort of a scene?

Can be. It will happen.

People have been saying that for years.

But it's up to the people who are here to do that, to work towards that. Toronto is such a little gem. A beautiful little crystal, it has so many different facets to it. Sparkles has so much potential, it's the highest disco in the world. When I went there it was totally empty. It was wild.

What's your background?

Yugoslavia. We had to escape. My father was in trouble with the government. He was being thrown in jail all the time, his land was being taken away, it was getting very serious. I was running around in wheat fields, barnyards, and all of a sudden I hear this very secretive announcement that we're going to escape and I can't tell anybody. So the day came when my father was put in jail and this seemed like the last straw. So when he was in jail he was writing these notes to my mother with the escape plans under the stamp. I remember seeing this tiny writing under the stamp, I can't imagine how my mother could have deciphered it. My father escaped, he didn't even come home, he went to Austria right away, leaving it to a courier to take us to the border. At that point the adventure began. We eventually made it to Austria. I mean, having to go through this endless journey when all I wanted to do was go to school and be with my friends. I remember one incident that happened near the border in the black forest of Austria. It was a rainy, absolutely terrifying night. My mother, who was carrying my baby brother, had to take us across this river to get into Austria. She told my older brother and I to stay where we were and she would come back for us. So she goes into the river holding the baby up high and she slips and she and the baby go right under the water. Why my brother and I saw that we thought it was the end of our hope, we started crying and shouting. She comes up out of the water and says Ssshhh! There were guards along the border who would shoot if they caught you. So we got across the border and slept in the forests of Austria all night. Rain pouring down. We had a chocolate bar to spare between us, no cover, no shelter, nothing. The next morning we knocked at the first house we got to and my mother explained how we had escaped. The lady sat us down and said what would you like to drink, coffee? I thought it was hot chocolate and said yes. My first taste of chocolate wasn't, it was coffee.

IGGY POP



PETER NOBLE
Photography: Peter Noble

HISTORY STARTS HERE

'Now that we're through with the heavy metal, glitter rock, punk rock, the only alternative is new wave, man.' I'm dreadfully apologetic if I happen to misconstrue your wildest and most banal conceptions in relation to media labeling and terminology. I suspect it's not our fault if we've been conventionally brainwashed with some of the most outlandish bullshit imaginable.

Was Joan of Arc a punk? For all I know, it could be my grandmother cooking rice pudding in her fashionable day-glo pink spandex pants, complete with leather hair net, grooving to the modern sounds of the rotisserie, broiling chicken in the kitchen oven. How quaint. How divine. How depressing. You've got to be a modern-day soothsayer to predict the next 'big thing'. Momentary success I don't need. Give me enriched longevity and I'll have no qualms to render.

The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Donna Summer, the Bee Gees . . . are these the models of mediocrity we have to look up to? Oh yes, I almost forgot, it's 1980 and we're expected to endorse the Clash and last year's Devo, the B52's, right? If you ever gave a good goddamn about an influence which has never been accredited with an ounce of originality and international acceptance (on all scales united), then you've come to the right place. History starts here and goes by the name of Iggy Pop.

Iggy: 'It was 19 . . . mmmmm...WOW... it was 1966 when I decided to do something semi-constructive in the field of music. Believe it or not, but, I was a pick-up drummer in Chicago at the time. I was the cheapest drummer in town. I learned a lot by playing in those days. I mainly played for black guys, Y'know, older types . . . middle-aged men in their fifties. In effect, they inspired me to return to my home town, Ann Arbour (Michigan), and form my very own group. From about early 1967 until Halloween night of the same year, we practised constantly. I'd say that Halloween of that particular year was our very first public performance. We played at some party. In March of 1968 we started to play professionally. It took us a long time to get around to the ideas because the other guys were so lazy. I was the only one with any ambition in the group the rest of them were sort delinquent types.

You've got to understand there was no club scene in those days. Those days were something else Your main means of exposure was through what were called the ballrooms. Right from the world 'go' I was playing with, I think the term was 'top acts'. The first big gig I played was with Blood, Sweat & Tears. The second was with Frank Zappa. The Who and Cream followed respectively . . . there were so many! Anyways, I got a chance to see a lot of things come through town. I guess all of it was somewhat influential, only in that it made me increasingly . . . as I saw what was going down at the time I thought it was pretty inferior, y'know, most of music that was rated so hot back then. I really had a stylistic quarrel with those times. I was never thrilled by 'West Coast Muzak'. I always thought things like Big Brother and Janis Joplin was pretty naff actually . . . third rate chintzy music. I wasn't even impressed with what was coming out of England either. The more I saw these groups, it just confirmed my belief if anybody was going to come along and have any kind of success at that time, it would have to be entirely different. I guess it did affect my writing in that it kept me on my own tangent. All in all . . . I just wasn't impressed.

I remember the time when the Stooges (my group) performed a benefit concert in Ann Arbour with the MC5. Elektra records had sent talent scouts to see the MC5. One scout in particular, Danny Fields, who now manages the Ramones and Steve Forbert, came up to me and said, 'You're a star.' My immediate thought was 'Who is this guy?' I thought he was trying to pick me up. He said, 'I work with a record company.' I said, 'What are you, the janitor or what?' After I found out he was legitimate I curbed my insults. He told me he and his people were coming back to see the MC5 in a month and he'd make a point of introducing all of the executives to us as well.

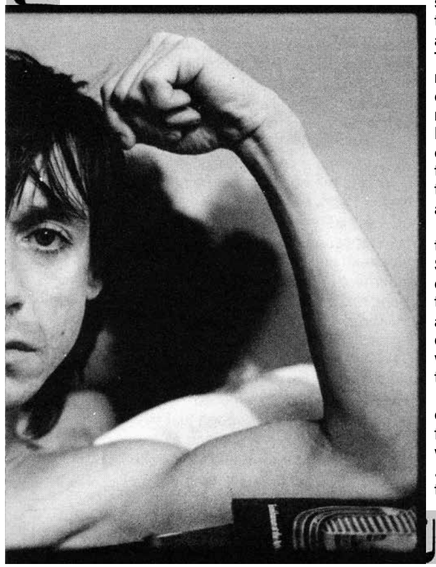
Eventually he came back and made me an offer. I gave them a price. I can still remember giving them one of those loose-leaf lined pieces of paper, y'know, the kind the kids use in school. I had written in pencil all the amps, drums and guitars that I needed. I wrote down this is why I need this amount of money. The bottom line would contain the total sum. That particular sum was about five times what they wanted to give me. They considered it an outlandish price for an Iggy Pop, y'know, for what they felt to be quality music. Elektra didn't want to sign me anyways . . . it was more Danny Field's doing. Eventually they agreed to take me on. I signed my first record contract on loose-leaf paper.

Had it been up to me, I would have produced both of the Elektra albums, The Stooges and Funhouse, which I did in effect anyways. It's really all my work. On our debut LP John Cale was wonderful, but the sound I was creating was clear-cut and extremely personal so nobody else knew how to get it. The lyrics were well defined already before I was in the studio so there was really nothing for Cale to do except to act as a custodian. He was accredited as the producer because Elektra didn't want to let me in the studio alone. I really enjoyed working with him because he understood enough just to leave us alone, y'know, keep his hands off. We had a laissez-faire producer which was great. Cale did play viola on one cut entitled We Will Fall. Cale can play so many instruments so well. He's a really incredible player if

you know what I mean.

Actually, We Will Fall was a message to Nico. In effect, I was saying, 'After I'm done with my session tonight, I'd like a few hours by myself. It's a song about narcissism and how much I enjoy being alone, but, then I go on to tell her that she can come over at six in the morning . . . until then I've got thinking to do.

Not Right, Little Doll and Ann were songs that were written at the last minute on demand . . . Elektra's demand that is. Originally, I wanted to record the songs just like we used to play them on stage. 1969 would go on for fifteen minutes, then we'd go into the following number. I liked the repetition . . . the constant sounds. I was working on stage with the format of mechanical repetition. We sounded like a big cheap machine which was wound up and left ticking. When we recorded the original tracks, Elektra felt they were much too long for a record. We re-recorded the songs and I wrote three new compositions. You've got to understand I had never written any songs until I got a recording contract. It took a great deal of effort to come up with three tunes because I was usually very lazy. I was just a lazy kid from Detroit.



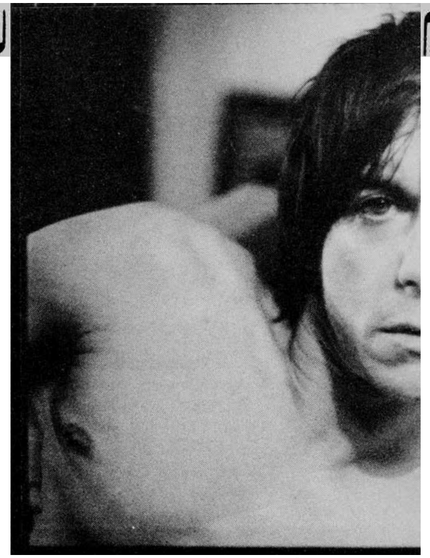
Things got so bad at Elektra, to the point where they hired an advertising agency to do a demographic survey on me so they could figure out what I was all about and where I should be marketed. Of course they got it all wrong. They felt I should have been marketed to college kids, when, of course, I wanted the exact opposite. I wanted to be playing for illiterates. I certainly didn't intend to become a thinking man's band. Dummies make good audiences, especially when you're starting your career.

After I recorded with Funhouse I parted company with Elektra and dropped out of sight for a year or two due to health problems, y'know, drugs and such. I mean in those days everybody went through it. I met David Bowie and Tony DeFries in a bar somewhere in New York City. DeFries offered me a management contract (Mainman) which I signed. Next thing you know I recorded an album entitled Raw Power for CBS. James Williamson had been in the last edition of the Stooges, and I felt he was the most talented member so I always had it in mind to include him in my future prospects, which at that time happened to be Raw Power.

The record companies never tried to sway me into a different direction which they felt would be more marketable on all accounts. They knew I knew my business. They didn't dare talk to me about my music. I would have told them to fuck off. I do not entertain opinions where my music's concerned. I can't stand criticism. I recorded Raw Power in 1972. It was officially released in the spring of '73. From the complexity of the rhythms and the tautness of the beat . . . it was way way ahead of its time.

After the release of Raw Power I began to have problems with DeFries. The Stooges had been dismissed on a morality charge. It's the old showbiz contract thing which states, 'If the employee does anything which might embarrass the company . . .', well, you know the rest. I was a heroin addict at the time. I guess that was embarrassing for them.

Live performances have changed over the years. It's an observation that fascinates me. In the 60's the Beatles would play for about twenty minutes . . . the Stones twenty-five maybe. I used to only do a forty minute set myself. The



time element changes the nature of the performance a great deal. A longer show demands more depth. As a performer you must have more things to offer. There has to be more levels of pleasure for the viewer so that he or she doesn't get bored. Boredom is the biggest sin.

I disappeared for about three years where I spent time trying to straighten out my life. During that time I didn't record anything with the exception of Kill City in 1975. I got the idea for a theme when I was in jail for five days in L.A. When I got out I went to James Williamson's place (a sleazy dive called the coronet Apartments . . . on Sunset Boulevard) and write the entire affair in two days flat. Nevertheless, I couldn't seem to stay out of institutional life very long. Two days was all I could spare. Next thing you know I wound up in hospital due to more health problems. Finally, I decided to check myself into the nearest psychiatric institute in Westwood (an L.A. suburb) which turned out to be a damned good place. While in the clinic, I received a call from James, where he went on to tell me that he wangled some studio time at Jimmy Webb's Backyard Studio. I think it turned out to be my most mediocre piece of work to date. I came out on weekend leave to do that LP. The doctor used to give me a pass. I sang the entire thing in two days.

I didn't really record professionally until 1976 with David (Bowie) at the Chateau (France). Originally, I was only supposed to do a single which David wrote with me in mind because of the low timbre in my voice. The song was entitled Sister Midnight (which has since been recycled as Red Money on Bowie's Lodger LP) and that affair resulted in my debut LP for RCA entitled The Idiot. After I left the hospital in Westwood I went to San Diego State University where I took a success course 'cuz I was tired of being such a failure. By coincidence I ran into David at Sea World of all places. That's when I went on the road with him to learn about the rock'n'roll life. The university course that I had taken previously taught me little disciplinary tricks which are important to know in this business. If you're going to lead what's a potentially rotten life and turn it around to make a good one and live with a sense of dignity, then things can be very stimulating. If you're a performer, that's one strike against you, but if you're a rock'n'roll performer then that's two strikes against you. Your really have to give it a good 'go' otherwise it can turn on you so quickly.

When we were working on The Idiot, David and I felt it would be much more interesting, album wise, if we could avoid the use of musicians. Musicians are extremely boring. They seldom make exciting sounds with their instruments . . . they just make music, but give me ideas . . . I want IDEAS! We tried to record the entire LP ourselves, but couldn't. We called several people at the end to add some instrumental work . . . Carlos Alomar to name one.

I wanted to create an interesting character for that particular LP. I thought I could play a good idiot. That LP is about regrets and confusion. Me.

Working with David is very stimulating. At times I know he wants to record things to the extreme. Other people feel he goes crazy, but I'm all for it. With me it can never be extreme enough. No matter how bizarre it sounds, I always encourage him to make it even crazier. David's really not used to that kind of thing.

I'd been produced enough. I wanted to make my own album, although I ended up using James Williamson to do it. I moved to Berlin, and that's what I regard as my home now. Anyway, I went back home and hawked my Chinese rugs 'cuz I had no money. I'd spent it all on presenting the Fred Sonic Smith Band on a European tour. It was worth it because it did my career a lot of good. People had never seen a real Detroit band in Europe before . . . an authentic one that is. This band was smoking hot; just like manic savages! Fred's truly incredible. I had been playing with some really 'mamby pamby' bands (Hunt & Tony Sales). So helping friends like Fred and company was very rewarding. The Sales brothers schlocked up my music. Y'know, they were what was available at the time. What can I say? They're good musicians, but they just failed to understand my style. Anyway, I hawked my Chinese rugs, signed a deal with Arista Records, bought a guitar and learned to play it. It was the happiest time I've ever had in the last couple years 'cuz I was home everyday. Everytime I go on tour I get homesick for Berlin. I'd get up in the morning and put on my favorite Keith Richards records and learn how to play my guitar. I'd learn one of his licks and take a few German diet pills to keep going (over the counter stuff . . . nothing strong). When I couldn't play anymore, I'd walk a mile to the wine store and just try to forget what I had learned. Y'know, just go and have a few drinks. Later on I'd walk back, feel great, run upstairs and then I'd write a song, which of course was nothing more or less than what I'd learned that morning turned backwards, but by that time I was drunk enough I'd think it was mine. This was what you could call 'my creative approach'. I'd do this for about fourteen hours a day. I got to be a pretty interesting little guitar player. Way out of tune and things like that . . . I couldn't keep time, but I had good ideas. I then took my work to America where it got the sterility treatment, y'know, take your music to L.A. And have it run through the strainer. New Values is what came out. The title speaks for itself, really . . . discipline and hope. I couldn't have written songs like How Do You Fix A Broken Part if I didn't have all that time in Berlin.

I've just completed a new album which should be out in February of 1980. I recorded it in Wales. It's entitled Soldier. The Cover picture is really horrific. It's a photograph of myself collapsing as if I got the wind knocked out of me (in livid color). I wanted to take a picture of myself collapsing so we worked all day on the shot to get a good collapse. On the reverse side I'm suitably heroic . . . pointing the way to the troops.

If I had to describe my music in a particular way, I'd refer to it as mood music. I don't like to view it as rock'n'roll. I'm a performer who reacts to sounds which are created on stage or in the studio. I don't always feel it's necessary to jump up and down like some mechanical clown or cheerleader. I usually dance when I feel it is appropriate. Sometimes there are nice things you can do visually in a stationary way, too. I guess you could use the term subdued.

I like it when there are a lot of pretty girls in the audience. I especially like it when I see a lot of good healthy faces out there. When I played those two shows at the Music Hall in Toronto, there were a lot of young, healthy kids who seemed 'interested'. It seemed as if they were using their thinkers . . . and I like that. As a performer, I don't always want to put on a slavering rock'n'roll show. Once in a while it's nice to give a thought provoking performance when people sit back and take in what you do and enjoy their own stream of consciousness. It can be very nice.

On the other hand, the industry is like a big machine which sells wonderful, boring rock'n'roll bullshit. More cars. More girls. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Wow, wow, wow. Big beat. Big noise. Big nothing. As it stands today, rock'n'roll has got to be the ugliest music that's ever been put on the face of the earth. It's just a blemish, man. I think what I'm doing now is as close to rock'n'roll as it should be, but it's got nothing in common with how the term is used.

When I have the time I read a lot of historical biography. I've been interested in history ever since I was five years old. I'm reading McArthur at the moment. Before that, I read Caesar's own account of the Gallic wars. It was great. Brilliant! I've always had an interest in historical biography. I guess it's just what I like. I probably like history so much because it's already over.

I was born cross-eyed. Not until I was four years old was it discovered that this was caused by my being abnormally

BUCKMINSTER FULLER

INTERVIEWED BY
MICHAEL KIERAN

GIVEN THAT WE ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE AS WELL AS SOCIAL HUMAN BEINGS, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES OR ADVANTAGES BECOMING AVAILABLE TO US?

I don't really get your question because we had an enormous amount of technological advantages in operation long before you were born.

I'M PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HOW, AS ORDINARY PEOPLE, CAN WE MAXIMIZE OUR ADVANTAGES?

Humanity has almost nothing to do with the technology they have. You personally had nothing to do with developing the transistor. You had nothing to do with developing the camera you're using right now. These are products of private enterprise. Or they're products of enormous government enterprise getting ready for war. The people have really nothing to do – they don't design the automobiles and when it comes to problems of today, for example energy, people have nothing to do with the kind of fuel that, they use. They have nothing to do with adapting the equipment. Humanity is very much a victim of the decisions of others.

SOME OF OUR MOST SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY IS DEVELOPED BY THE MILITARY AND IT AFFECTS EVERYDAY PEOPLE -

Right.

HOW DOES THAT CONTEST OF WEAPONRY FIT IN WITH YOUR IDEAS?

Well I think that obviously they don't fit in. One is exactly the opposite of the other. We continually say we can't afford things, and particularly enterprise says we can't afford that, we're not gonna make money. Then we get to where they say that the enemy is going to use this, and the politicians say to the people – buy or die – so they say we'll buy whether we can afford it or not. We get these enormous programs with the kind of money that is really necessary to initiate technology. The kind of money which is not forthcoming except when humanity is scared to death, scared of war. Today I don't think humanity's quite so scared, so other kinds of decisions might be made one of these days, but that is how the great momentum did get going, with the military being able to afford it. The everyday people could not afford it, and I say that people are not technically literate enough to be able to make very good decisions about such matters.

DO YOU FEEL THAT IT'S REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT IN THE FUTURE HUMAN CONCERNS WILL EVER COME BEFORE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS?

If they don't, humanity's all through on our planet. You've really given me the biggest question we can have. We are here on our planet for some very good reasons. We're a very complex design, and we've been included in the design of the universe. We're not supernumerate to the universe, and we are here for our minds, not our brains. We're here for our minds, not our muscle. So unless the human mind really comes through and begins to control affairs, unless humanity really uses its mind to make decisions about doing things logically, not out of fear, I think we're all through on our planet. In other words, I think we're in what I call a final examination. And I think in order to talk about the future we must go all the way back and know how humans happened to be on our planet. Remember that humans are born naked, absolutely helpless for months, hungry, thirsty, curious. They have to learn by trial and error, no other way, how to satisfy their hunger and their thirst. We had humans making those kinds of decisions long long ago. Took them a long time to invent words to be able to tell the other person what their experience was, and where the food was. Then we got all those words, and then we began having the written word and could carry on experience from generation to generation. We're now at a point where we have an extraordinary vocabulary, we have enough information to really make it, where we have literate people, and we have the capability to communicate to each other around the world. We're now at the point where we're supposed to graduate and start making some really good decisions in our minds. I say I want to know why humans are here. If I wanted to get any good answers about anything regarding the future, I would ask how and why are we here. Common to all lives and all history is problems, problems, problems. We're here for problem-solving. We don't get to a utopia where there are no problems. If you're any good at problem-solving, you get worse problems to solve, so we're here as local information gatherers, local problem-solvers in relation to the maintenance of the integrity of an eternally regenerative universe. Nature does not take a chance on just one egg in the basket. She has always had many alternate circuits – failsafe. We may really flunk out in the final examination – whether or not we really can make sense on our planet. It is now highly feasible. That within a ten year design revolution, if we took all the weaponry and converted this to essentials of peaceful existence, within ten years we'd have all humanity living at a higher standard than we've ever known, simultaneously phasing out all fossil fuels and atomic energy. We'd find then that all the big businesses, all the big governments, all the big religions, are founded on the basis of the fundamental inadequacy of life support – you join our party and we'll give you a better chance – we can't guarantee anything – but you'll just live a little better. So we're at a very critical point where if we use our minds, we'll exercise our option to make it. There's ample to take care of everybody. We really have four billion billionnaires. As far as technology goes, as far as knowledge goes, and we are not exercising that, (we're really beginning to practice how to make scarcities and how to keep manipulating humanity), if we don't find a way, as human beings, by being really very intelligent and looking at what we really do know, then we can't ever become comprehensively literate about what our chances are, realize we do have an option that we may exercise. I've now been around the world 46 times. I've been at over 500 universities and colleges around the world, so I know my young world very well. I find they're not interested in nations anymore – sovereignties. It's like blood, and with 150 nations we have 150 blood clots making it impossible for us to have a circulating system. In ten years we're going to have to give up all the nations, all the sovereignties, or humanity is probably going to perish. ESSENTIALLY, ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC?

I'm not optimistic or pessimistic. I'm really a very hard realist. I am an engineer, I have over 300 geodesic domes around the world today. I am completely familiar with the problems of research development, getting things going. So I'm not optimistic, though I think optimist or pessimist is off-balance. And as I say, I'm a very hard realist and as a hard realist I know we have an option, and I know that because I am an engineer, I am able to deal with the invisible technology and understand the way atoms are behaving, so that to know that we have an option is not to be pessimistic. I'm famous for being mistakenly called an optimist because I tell people they have an option and they didn't know they had it. So they say they feel better in my optimism, it's absolutely touch and go as to whether they're going to make it



Proposed air-conditioned Geodesic Dome, two miles in diameter

HOW CAN ORDINARY PEOPLE GET A REALISTIC WORLD VIEW, A COMPREHENSIVE WORLD VIEW?

I don't think you can reform the concepts and opinions of humanity. I'm now 84, I want you to understand how I was brought up. I was seven years of age when the Wright brothers first flew. I was brought up to think that it was inherently impossible for a man to fly. How crazy can you get they thought, man will never get to the North Pole or South Pole. All those things, all of them completely wrong. Now, each child born successively is born in the presence of less misinformation, more

farsighted. My vision was thereafter fully corrected with lenses. Until four I could only see large patterns, houses,

trees, outlines of people with blurred coloring. While I saw

reliable information. The young world is more and more aware of the invisible reality of electronics, things that the older people can't see and tend to ignore. The kids are very aware of the invisible reality. I'm getting letters, not many of them, but they do come, from eight and ten-year-olds that have been born after humans got to the moon. How they find me to write to I don't know, but they do, and their syntax is perfect for grown-ups. They say that if man can do anything he needs to do, why don't we make this world work. It's coming through, a young world that sees these things. So what you and I talk about is going to be heard by that younger world and really not by the older world.

IS THE BASIS OF MOST OF YOUR WORK MORE AND MORE FOR LESS AND LESS?

The very essence of it. What bothered me back in World War I was to learn that the working assumption was that it had to be you or me. Every one of the ideologists says the following: 'You may not like our system personally, but we're convinced we have the fairest, most logical, most ingenious way of coping with less, inadequacy of life support on our planet. Those who disagree diametrically with our method of coping can only resolve by trial of arms which is a fit test to survive.' We've spent over 6 trillion dollars to buy the human capability of expert destruction. What hit me, and hit me so hard, was the lesson of doing more with less, the capability which the public didn't understand because it was invisible. Some day we might do so much with so little, we might be able to take care of everybody. Infact, we would find that ideologies would become obsolete and it would not have to be you or me, there would not be the ideology of war ever again. We would not have to ever again rationalize selfishness, my family is depending on me, it is right for me then to cheat this other family. All that would be completely unnecessary to really demonstrate to man that there is enough. My statistical experience suggests that it is now feasible to take care of all humanity with a design revolution to be accomplished within ten years.

IF YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE HIGH FRONTIER PERSONALLY TO GO INTO SPACE, WOULD YOU GO?

I'd like to point out to you that we've never been anywhere else, we are on a spaceship a very tiny little one, going around the sun at the rate of 60,000 miles an hour and in our galaxy we're revolving in a spiral at almost 750,000 miles an hour. We couldn't be more in space young man than we are. We've got this egocentric idea that we are the centre with the sun going around us. We are not standing still, we are a little tiny, beautifully equipped spaceship. We are always in space.

WHAT IS ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY?

Electronic democracy is the following. The Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, one of the most powerful committees we have, met in full and asked me what kind of world government we would have. And I said we will not really have a world government, we will have something like city management, not elected posts but people who want to be in management of affairs, who are doing it pretty well voluntarily and have to compete in order to qualify to be in that kind of job. The Russians and the United States are now being extraordinary in the satellites. They are equipped with sensors to spy on one another, we have a sensor which can differentiate at 100 miles out between a goat and a sheep. These sensors will be used. We also discovered most recently that the brain gives off electromagnetic energy. We know today that every human being has an electromagnetic field, and this field, unconscious to you and I, is dominated by the positive and negative. If we dislike what's going on we feel very uncertain and fearful, we have a very negative field. If we're feeling quite delighted because something is just right, we have a positive electric field. You and I can't see that, but it can't be deceived. One may say I'm going to do this 'cause I know what my boss wants, but that's not what I really feel. The field is telling you what you really feel. We're then going to have propositions made to humanity. Now this is what we're going to do and is our plan regarding this energy problem. There'll immediately be reaction around the whole world. Sensors on satellites will pick up their response and will know immediately what the majority of humanity would like to do, whether they're for it or against it. We will then do whatever the majority says. Unquestionably, the majority makes some very bad decisions, but within a very short time everybody will see that it was a bad decision, the readout will be humanity changing its mind. This is like cybernetics, there's no such thing as a straight line, physics has found only waves. Steering to the right, steering to the left, and gradually beginning to steady as we're better informed by having humanity able to consider total humans, total universe. We'll gradually realize this is the only way the thing works.This is what I mean by electronic democracy. It'll be the first democracy in the history of humanity.

HOW DOES ONE PERSON WITH THEIR OWN NEEDS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACCEPT THEMSELVES AS ONE MEMBER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY?

Number one, by saying we are in this invisible world but the truth is not invisible. The truth is the truth, whether it's visible or not. If humanity really has an integrity, then once humanity's been successful and we're willing to share with others, really motivated more by love, then everything will be independent of political systems or anything else. Political systems are not being tested, private enterprise is not being tested, humanity itself is being tested right now.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT CYBERNETIC DEVELOPMENTS, THE DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

I think humanity long ago made a great error in what they call animate and inanimate. Both were physical. This game says inanimate is cold, hard as stone; animate is beautiful, warm, soft flesh. Everybody would agree that the atom is completely inanimate. What is inanimate is getting clearer and clearer because they are now saying you consist entirely of atoms and atoms are completely inanimate, so you have nothing to do with the life of those atoms, they just happen to be arranged as a very beautiful piece of apparatus. What we now know is the physicists at the beginning of the century said physical is all energy, and energy is associated with matter, and energy is associated with radiation.Whatever is physical will move a needle either electromagnetically or gravitationally, whatever is not moving a needle must be metaphysical. We've now discovered whatever life is, it doesn't move any needles, in other words life has never been physical. It is metaphysical. It is concepts,life is an awareness and the awareness is an utterly abstract affair. We've been making a mistake, assuming that we were physical. I'm going to give you an example of something that you and I often experience. We have a friend who says they have another friend just like you, you'd like each other very much. But somehow he can't get you two together. There comes a day when your friend says "I'm going to call up my other friend and introduce you on the telephone." He does that and you like the other person. She calls you, time goes on, and it turns out that the girl you have never seen is in the same kind of activity you are. You call her up, you get to be more and more friends. Years go on and you never see each other. Finally other friends all die off and your greatest friend now is this person you've never seen. In order to be sure that nobody gets in the way, you have a separate telephone, a red telephone called Joe. That's all you ever saw. Every one of us is really a self-rebuilding, transceiver device, we never were physical at all. We are utterly metaphysical, that's why our minds are everything. We're dealing entirely in pure principles all the time.

CAN WE REPLICATE SOMETHING THAT IS METAPHYSICAL? CAN WE CREATE AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, EVEN IF WE CAN'T GET A HANDLE ON REAL INTELLIGENCE?

No, there's no such thing as artificial intelligence, if nature permits it, it is natural – it may be unfamiliar – but if nature doesn't permit it you can't do it. Certainly as you know and I know, we can put information in the computer and receive it. To put in a whole lot of information and put in patterns of information is not artificial intelligence, we use our mind to put it in.

DO YOU ENVISION THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INFORMATION MARKETPLACE?

Of an information what?

MARKETPLACE?

Marketplace?

YES, A MARKET PLACE WHERE INFORMATION IS BOUGHT AND SOLD AS A PRIVATE GOOD?

Well, they do exactly that today and some of the big corporations have been able to monopolize a great deal of the know-how. For instance, all the atomic bomb development originally in America got to the point where big business was able to persuade the American Government that they, that Government, had the duty to protect big business, and they had the Government turn all of the atomic business over to them. They probably didn't understand anything about it. So that big corporations were able to monopolize the nuclear scientists, they've been able to monopolize a great deal of what you'd call know-how, and they sell that know-how to the Government one way or another. You could buy this guy to reveal a secret or something very, very important, so in effect they've been marketing and dealing in the metaphysical as a commodity for a very long while. You pay a university so many thousands of dollars a year now to be able to give you some information.

CAN YOU ENVISION THE OPPOSITE OF THAT, IN WHICH ALL THE INFORMATION IS FREE?

All the really important information always has been free, but humanity takes that which is free and turns it into something you market. We all have this ingenuity – how to exploit. What's the newspaper doing? It's exploiting the know how that is the news.

WHAT IS ART?

I call that an opinion and I'm not really very respectful of opinions. I have a definition for the word science – science deals with experimental evidence. I like the following definition given by Eddington, that science is the earnest attempt to set in order the facts of experience. Now when I talk about art I don't know how to express that in the sense of experience. I really don't know. I like e. e. cummings, he said poetry is not what you think, it's not trying to talk. Everything in life is trying to make you say things the way everybody else says them. He said poetry is what you feel, not what somebody else said. But the point is that it's the most difficult thing to do, to get down to how you feel, so poetry is very much part of art. You don't even have to use words other people have given you. Ralph Waldo Emerson has said that poetry is saying the most important things in the simplest way. What cummings is saying is something very different – how do I say to you something about how I feel? It has nothing to do with how anybody else feels at all. What is the absolutely unique experience that I'm having? So that's the nearest I can get to really talking about art. It's really not what the subject is, or what the artist's painting is about, but rather how he feels about it.

O.K. THE LAST QUESTION I HAVE FOR YOU ISN'T REALLY A QUESTION, IT'S A TOY. THIS IS A TOY CALLED SIMON.

Yeah.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY WITH IT?

No. I haven't got the slightest interest. I really don't. I don't really like that kind of stuff. I don't like card games either. I don't like games. I find life is so much more interesting than games. Nobody can invent any game that compares with life. For me.

or a teardrop or a human hair until I was four. Despite my

new ability to apprehend details, my childhood's spontaneous

CONVERSATIONAL MACHINES

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL PANGARO ON GORDON PASK

JUDITH DOYLE

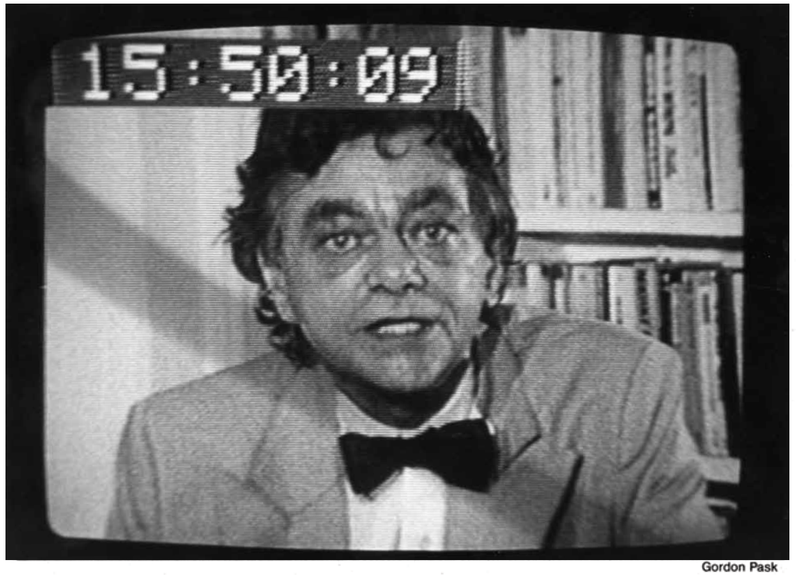
Gordon Pask is an independent inventor and 'general systems theorist'; without fixed academic or industrial affiliations, he develops 'conversational teaching machines' in his British Epistemological Laboratory. His models 'do fundamentally different kinds of calculations than current-day digital branching computers', and could result in 'more useful conversational partners, as well as, perhaps, intelligent machines'. The emphasis on computers is a convenience, for Conversation Theory is a machine-independent; what is crucial is the imposition of a mechanism between conversational participants. Working through the devices, participants exchange skills and concepts and come to agreements, while maintaining their autonomy in a network.

Paul Pangaro spent seven years at MIT developing applications for computer graphics. These 'simulations' were often derived from mathematical and neural theories – computer-animations for 'seeing' systems, exact enough to constitute mathematical 'proof'. Now Pangaro lives in New York City, constructing, demonstrating and purveying potentially revolutionary ideas by Gordon Pask. Along with teachers and academics, possible customers include 'government, military, and funding agencies'.

* * *

Pangaro says he's 'somewhat nauseous with technology. Even electrical clocks are beginning to bother me'. Inside digital toys, input moves through a series of logic gates, so that a 'transform' comes out, based on a sequence of fixed rules. 'As the football games get more and more sophisticated, the public is unable to discern the actual primitiveness underneath what the device *is*. It's very deceiving when you see eight-year olds in department stores going bananas for those two-inch toys with five LED's and two size-C batteries inside churning out nothing.'

The problem is 'it's fixed. What the device is and does cannot evolve.' To make serial programs for computers, what the device is to do must be broken into a hierarchical sequence of minute steps. Stored information fits a place in this hierarchy. 'A trivial example is a flow chart. The reason why flow charts sound trivial is because they are, and most programming languages provide environments where flow charts are easy to implement; even then, they're not implemented as flow charts, but as these lengthy, contortional, syntactical linguistics called programming languages, which are just horrendous, and nowhere near how I'd like to organize my thinking. Hence, this translation process like shoving your brain through a sieve is going on. You expend an enormous amount of energy just to do a simple thing with this highly sophisticated information processing device.'



Gordon Pask

'Current, existing digital, serial machinery as conceived of and perpetuated in the Post-Victorian age is exactly what it sounds like – a single locus of control', hence, 'incapable of being a system which has more than one locus of control, more than one goal, more than one intention, because it contains only one. I'm the personification of many, many at once.'

Against these serial limits, Pask has a new model where concepts are spread across an interconnected network with two levels – on the bottom, a modelling space where things are done, and above it, an entailment mesh of relations between topics. On the 'doing' level, dynamic concepts or skills consisting of a cluster of interdependent procedures are presented as inexplicitly as possible. These clusters occupy the learning domain as stable, independent universes; like riding a bicycle, they are skills to be 'learned and relearned' when actively employed in particular circumstances. In a brain or language, Pask believes these constructive concepts reproduce themselves like cells. A Conversational Teaching Machine may be a collection or population of digital processors, each functioning differently and autonomously, with non-hierarchical connections.

The limits of serial computation can be particularly problematic in military technologies, and new parallel computing systems are being developed there. Al Hopkins' 'fault tolerant' computer network is designed for jets, where one rupture in the automatic controls could incapacitate the whole operational series. The 'fault tolerant' network is composed of isolated control and observation nodes – if one or more break down, the remaining nodes examine and vote on what to do, and can even recognize parts of their basic instruction algorithm.

Pask's Conversational Systems are built from the 'doing' level up; rather than voting, his autonomous nodes construct, then compare constructions. In itself, each agreement is a construction by debate. A highly stable skill, like riding a bicycle, is highly adaptive, and we can come to agreements about different modes of execution. What we do in fact agree about is contingent on what the immediate goals are interpreted to be. 'In order to model intention, and in order to make distinctions between your intention and my intention, we do the following – we make an icon – we're separated by this line which is actually a recording interface; if there were an observer, all he could know about us was what went through this interface. He has to get out of us things the interface can record.' This recording interface doubles as a modelling surface. By constructing models, conversants can examine and compare conceptual 'versions', and agree on analogies between them. What the observer sees are agreement 'events' distinct from the actual constructions agreed upon. 'I could be talking about lifting this box with the intention of taking it off the table, or I could be talking about this box with the intention of opening it and eating its contents. They're separate intentions, they may be the same intention at the same time; nonetheless, I'll distinguish between my intentions and what it takes for me to do it.'

Pask's Systems stratify language into doing, and moving through the Entailment Mesh of what can be done. When agreement is reached, the agreement constitutes a topic. As conversational events, topics have individual character, rather than a character of general truth in fixed order. An 'Entailment Mesh is just an inter-relationship – it's a map – it's a graph that has arrows on it, and I can show you many of them; the point is, each one corresponds to the ability to *do* something down here.', or as Pask writes 'complements exist in the domain of action'. The crucial and innovative act is the juxtaposition of at least two distinct perspectives, and their subsequent 'abductive' or separate-but-analogous resolution. The resolutions coalesce into a mesh of entailments.

'Things become so bound up, so self-reproductive, so ossified, they either burst or else they reach agreement, literally, coherence, agreement, with some other entity. When we're making the other entity, we're allowing them to burst.'* Without distinctions, there could be no 'information transfer'. Here, we might compare the information transfers which are registered in the Conversational Systems with the information 'transform' of a serial computer. In the serial transformation, certain rules cause input to smoothly change – the process appears reversible. On the recording surface of the Conversational Machine, an agreement is not retractable, though this event can be rendered inapplicable by changeing circumstances.

* * *

Pask has an interesting justification for fast machines built on Conversational Theory. '. . . supposing the time gets down to 5 seconds, or 1 second – then, after all, we don't have time for debate. We have no opportunity for that luxury. We have to leave it to the artificial, or is it really artificial, because it contains so much of our psyche, contains so much of our other thought. It goes on its own because it has to, and there's no time for discussion. That's why we need intelligent machines.' Pask's conversational theory comprises an epistemology for embodying the mechanics of conversation in pieces of hardware. He reads time as 'a local synchronicity between systems otherwise a-synchronous' – as events. A break or catastrophe is an event which 'forms independence (not just *parts*).' Pangaro compares this to cell division; a system becoming more organized by breaking apart. This apparent paradox is negative entropy, or syntopy – a less negative term.

There are some elegant bilogical solutions for problems which defeat serial technology. For example, it might take years of the worlds' conventional computing time to find the best design for an unusually-shaped tent. Certain measurements would be programmed in, 'minima' and 'maxima' established, then the computer would systematically check every possiblity within those limits. In the biological model, the over-all area of the tent is divided into a grid. A few tent poles are stuck up a bit, and each grid unit calculates how much additional fabric it requires, then adds that fabric on. Quite simply, the tent is grown.

In order to be highly responsive, Pask's teaching machines are heavily armed with adaptive tracking, surveillance, and recording hardware. The more familiar applications of adaptive tracking technologies can be understood 'in trivial analogs to shooting missiles down, or the tunnel sequence in *Star Wars*'. Pask has used them in typewriters and musical keyboards to monitor learning patterns, and structure exercises accordingly. It is significant to note these responses are not pre-designed on the basis of advance analyses of a student – all data is accumulated in the conversation; hence, the programs are 'self-organizing'. Here, delineation between the individual and the event becomes fuzzy, leaving the individual free for certain experimentation in that regard.

Programming these systems is complex. It involves slowly distributing all the necessary topics for a subject across a mesh, then selectively 'pruning' and checking individual units for coherence and stability. This Entailment Mesh is tied into a Modelling Lab, where the user answers by constructing something. Learning is a two-part process of constructing, or doing, and fitting the construction into a larger, entailment picture. The point is 'you don't have to have a beginning to have a mesh. Someone can point to something and say "what's that?", then point to something else and say "teach me that".'

One of the difficulties building these machines is 'trying to write software for serial machines which exist now, rather than taking important ideas about a-synchronous systems and putting them on a chip. The next step, the other exciting thing to think of, are extrapolations into new semi-conductor materials that do fundamentally different kinds of calculations than current-day digital branching computers.' Pask's research, and research in related biological and cybernetic fields point to new conceptual structures and new basic materials for conversational networking machines.

NOTE: The quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from Paul Pangaro.
* Gordon Pask.

A SHOWING OF RECENT ART ACTIVITY BY THE EXPERIMENTAL ART FACULTY OF THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF ART FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 13, 1980. *GALLERY 76 76 McCAUL STREET TORONTO*

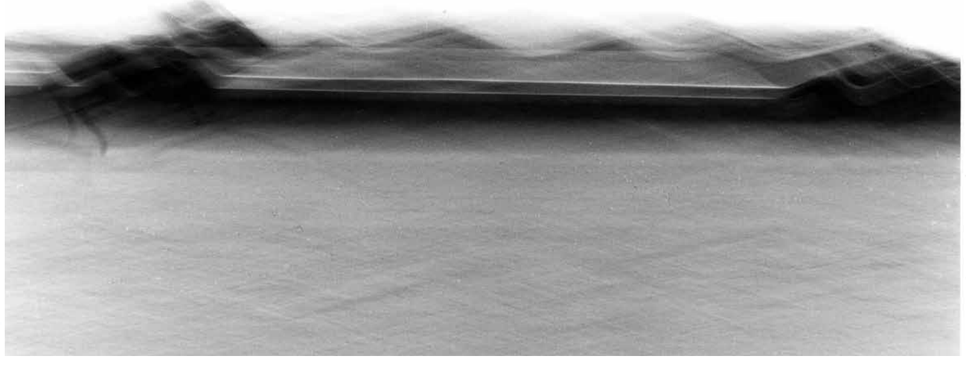




Photo: Eldon Garnet

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BOB COLACELLO

Bob Colacello, Executive Editor of Andy Warhol's interview, was recently interviewed by Eldon Garnet in Toronto. The interview began in the lobby of the Windsor Arms Hotel, and continued throughout a tour of the city conducted by Michael Budman, the man behind Roots Shoes.

BC: Well this is exciting, sitting in the lobby of the, what's this place called, the Windsor Arms Hotel, seeing Elizabeth Taylor's son and J. Paul Getty's grandaughter, together . . .

EG: What was that story about J. Paul Getty's will

BC: Well, according to *Newsweek,* there's a clause in his will that leaves 2 million dollars a year to each grandchild, provided they don't marry before the age of 22. She's only 19 and she wants to marry Christopher Wilding, but they're going to have to wait for three years so she's being forced into an immoral relationship ironically, because of this antique clause in her grandfather's will. You just missed Liz Taylor's son with J. Paul Getty's grandaughter. All the most attractive people I've seen in Toronto seem to pass through the lobby of this hotel.

MB: You could make a film, more people just sit in this lobby and make deals than in the Polo Lounge.

BC: That's what it is, the new Polo Lounge, the Polo Lounge is filled with tourists now.

MB: Yeah, that's what's nice in this city, there's not that real touristy thing.

BC: It's a fascinating city because it has the feeling, I get the impression just being here one day, that something is about to happen, that it hasn't quite yet, but people believe it's going to happen, so they're pushing for it to happen, therefore it probably will.

EG: It still has to open up some more.

BC: What do you mean by 'open up'?

EG: People in general here are still too tight.

BC: You know today on the news, they were saying that the morality commission is investigating Heaven disco because some couple took off their clothes and were dancing naked. I mean people have sex in discos in New York, we don't have a morality squad, I don't think.

EG: How did your affiliations with Interview *begin?*

BC: I graduated from Georgetown School of Foreign Service in 1969, and I couldn't get into the foreign service because they weren't giving the admissions exam that year because too many people had gone in the previous year to avoid the draft. So I came back to New York, where I'm from, and to kill some time while looking for a job in the international department of some bank which is more or less what I was trained to do, I started taking art and film courses at Columbia Graduate School of the Arts because I felt that was one area of my education which had been neglected at Georgetown. One of my teachers was the film critic for the *Village Voice,* and he started publishing my weekly homework assignments as reviews in the *Voice.* One of them was a review of *Trash,* in which I said that Andy Warhol was the most Roman Catholic artist of our time, that *Trash* was proof of the Mary Magdalen theory of Catholicism whereby, you know, Catholicism is the one religion that believes that no matter how low you sink, so long as you confess and say you're sorry you can still get into Heaven provided you're Catholic of course. Well Andy read this review and sent it to Paul Morrissey and Paul called me up and said 'You understand our work, do you want to come and work for us?' So I said great, and I got there and they said you start at 40 dollars a week. I said what?!, and Andy said 'Oh, it's part time', so I said I guess it'll be a few hours a week, but you know, there's no way you could work a few hours a week for Andy Warhol, you work about 48 hours a day.

EG: How old were you then.

BC: 22.

EG: And that was around what year, would you say?

BC: '70.

EG: What was your chief function at that time?

BC: At that time? I went to work on *Interview.* They started it in '69, they'd done about 8 or 9 issues and they'd had about 7 or 8 editors. Andy felt that the fact that I lasted 2 issues was an accomplishment, and I got them out almost on a monthly basis, which was also a major accomplishment. The magazine was being printed in Chinatown then, five thousand copies a month. About three thousand would end up being thrown out because they'd have too much ink on them, and I couldn't communicate with the Chinese printer to tell them to put on less ink. The other 2000 would be given away at museums and underground film theatres.

EG: So when you first started, you were the editor?

BC: I was editor right away, then what happened was Fred Hughes, who's the president of Andy Warhol Enterprises, took me under his wing a bit. I travelled with him and Andy. Andy is constantly travelling around the world having exhibitions, and opening movies. Other people ran the paper, and I spent 3 or 4 years doing nothing but being sort of social secretary for Andy and Fred, following them around. I took over the paper again personally in '76. I stopped travelling with Andy and Fred unless there was something in it for *Interview.*

EG: What's your title?

BC: Executive editor. Robert Hayes is the managing editor. Titles, what are titles, like every magazine it's a group effort. I think that I'm the person who tries to co-ordinate what everybody else is doing, because Andy has lots of ideas, but unless you're with Andy at 3 in the morning at *54* when he gets the good idea, it'll slip by. And someone has to explain to the staff what Andy means, what he wants. I feel that I'm sort of a go-between. But I do make the final decisions on everything.

EG: Design and editorial?

BC: If I don't want a story in it it doesn't go in, and if I want a story in it does go in. I'm not a dictator, if I don't care about a story that much, and someone else thinks it's important, we do it. I believe a magazine is a group effort, and so long as somebody is enthusiastic about something, unless it's really terrible, we put it in. I approve all the layouts, and help place the ads, make sure that *Roots* gets a good position. Oh, and I write a column.

MB: I read your column last night.

BC: Like Diane Abramson, oh God, that was the worst party I ever went to. Baryshnikov and Barbara Streisand and Dustin Hoffman just walked in, took one look at it, were invaded by photographers and walked right out. But my favorite piece in that column was my luncheon at Alfred and Betsy Bloomingdale's where I became overwhelmed by the luxury of their garden and their servants and their food – Mexican food that was practically French it was so good. I found myself on the verge of endorsing Ronald Reagan who's their best friend. If you lived like the Bloomingdales, of course you'd be for Ronald Reagan.

MB: There are so many contradictions, so

many different scenes you're popping in and out of, the funky scenes and then the Bloomingdale's . . .

BC: I think that's what life is about. More and more the world is becoming smaller, it's becoming more international. We have to learn to mix not only nationalities and races but also professions and classes, and for me that's the only thing that's interesting. If I only saw artists, or I only saw rich people, or I only saw musicians, or I only saw other journalists, I couldn't take it, I need variety.

EG: You need the input, the stimulus.

BC: Right. That's what's great about working for Andy, you start off already being in the art business, film business, publishing business, you have a big variety of different worlds. I think everything is getting mixed up. For example, fashion and music influence each other so much. Look how disco influenced fashion. Disco brought back dresses. Girls look best dancing in short dresses. Sequins and glitter, all that comes out of a disco thing because that stuff looks great under the lights.

MB: And men have shaped up a lot more because of going out. They're much trimmer . . .

BC: Sports has also influenced fashion a lot. Sports uniforms have really become fashion, designers are using good fabrics and trimming them up a bit. In LA everybody you know is wearing jogging shoes, even if they don't jog, and I hate jogging shoes just because everybody's wearing them.

MB: People are attractive in LA but really their style bothers me.

BC: The thing about LA is . . . I was sitting on the surf one day in Santa Monica, and all the surfers were there with all their girlfriends who all had long, blonde hair. It really is like Hitler's master race exists on the beaches of California, not to say they're Nazis at all, but just the idea of this aryan master race existing in California, everybody looks so blond and beautiful. Great bodies. You don't care what they wear really, in fact the less they wear the better. I think LA is the future.

EG: I always thought that Japan was the future.

BC: God forbid.

EG: What is New York then, the past?

BC: I think New York is the present, it's definitely the capital of the present. I call it the capital of Capitalism in my column a lot because all the biggest capitalists in the world are putting their money into New York. They're buying up businesses in New York because they're afraid of what's going to happen in Europe. It's really a self-defeating thing in the long run because Capitalism needs to expand to grow, not to contract. What you have in New York is this great moment of everybody being there, but I don't think it's the future.

EG: Don't you ever get bored going to all those parties all the time?

BC: Definitely. I have two fantasies now when I go to parties, since I go to so many. It's like when you have too much sex, and it gets more and more fantasy. The first fantasy I use a lot is I see myself as a movie critic or an art critic and I feel I'm there to review the party. Then since I spent four days in Washington last week, I have this new fantasy – I'm running for Congress from the silk stocking district which is the east side of New York, and I just go to parties and try to shake as many hands as possible, and smile at everyone. The thing I picked up in Washington this last visit was you never say to anyone 'nice to meet you', you say 'nice to see you again' even though you haven't but just in case you have, you never want to offend anybody's feelings by not remembering them. But you have to run away from them real quick after you say 'nice to see you again' because they might ask you where and then you're really stuck.

EG: It helps to keep it superficial.

BC: You just shake hands, smile, and go onto the next one, collect



the votes . . .

EG: Do you find yourself using the same conversations with five people in a row?

BC: What I say to people is: 'good music', or 'nice decor' or 'pretty good party isn't it?'

EG: In-depth conversations with all your friends.

BC: I find most of the in-depth conversations take place in the bathroom.

EG: What's the hardest question anyone's ever asked you?

BC: I haven't been interviewed that much, to tell you the truth.

EG: Do you feel Andy gets all the PR?

BC: I think Andy has a very strong personality, in its passivity it is so strong, and so fascinating, and he is so peculiar and different that naturally he gets a lot of press. A celebrity/star on Andy's level has 20 or 30 employees, so you can't really say Andy doesn't share his publicity with everyone else. To support a business that big you have to have a lot of people working for you. I think people get publicity either because they really go after it and pay for it, or because they have really good personalities.

EG: Did you come from a lot of money?

BC: No, actually we were poor when I was first born and we worked our way up to upper middle class which is still poor after you pay your taxes. My father's vice-president of a coffee importing firm, and my mother works at Saks Fifth Ave. in Garden City. They play golf all the time at the country club.

EG: In your column, many of the people mentioned are princes and princesses.

BC: Titles are a dime a dozen. I've met all those people through Andy, that wasn't the sort of life I was accustomed to at all. Everybody in Italy and Spain has a title. I just think it's funny to use all those titles, and sometimes I give people titles when they don't have one.

EG: What was Andy's last movie?

BC: *Bad,* which wasn't that good.

EG: It wasn't that bad.

BC: That's the problem with *Bad,* it wasn't bad enough. It had some scenes that were really a riot, like when the baby got thrown out the window.

EG: The finger in the ketchup bottle, I never got that, where did it go?

BC: I never got that either. There were a lot of things in the movie that I never got, and I saw it about 10 times.

EG: What's Andy's involvement in a movie like Bad, *I know his name's on it, but how much does he really do?*

BC: He goes to the set everyday and tortures everybody for a few hours. The whole thing was based on an idea of Andy's, which was to take the most lurid, sensationalistic *Enquirer*-type crimes, mother throws baby out window, and somehow string them all together into a story. Andy had the final say in casting, the script was written by two longtime employees with Andy talking to them everyday over the phone because they were working at home. During the shooting he went to the set everyday and conveyed his opinions to the director, the writer, and the actress.

EG: So it's his movie.

BC: He's a producer, an active producer. He's not a director, he doesn't set up shots, but he expresses his opinions and helps shape the whole movie.

EG: I guess that was the same with Frankenstein *and* Dracula.

BC: *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* were made in Rome, co-productions with Carlo Ponti, so Andy was only there half the time. They made the two films in 8 weeks, back to back, which is incredible, especially considering the first one, Frankenstein, was 3D. The 3D camera, if you move one inch it goes out of focus, so it's really slow going.

MB: How do you like being interviewed?

BC: I talk all the time anyway. When you're around Andy, the tape recorder is always on, you don't think about it that much. I personally don't tape record that much, it's bad enough Andy showing up everywhere with a tape recorder. If I did people would really start to get paranoid. He's had some pretty funny experiences with that tape recorder of his. Like the time Betty Ford sat on it. She didn't sit right on it. It was at Halston's house and Andy had set his bag with the tape recorder and camera under the banquette. Andy was going crazy to get it so he could tape-record and photograph, but he didn't know what to say to her, excuse me my tape recorder is under your dress.

EG: You seem to basically work by taking small notes.

BC: For my diary my secretary calls me up every morning, and I just tell her everything I did and then I sift it down from that, which takes a lot of sifting because when I'm telling her in the morning I'm not thinking in terms of publication. I'm thinking in terms of gossip or something, or my own life. I tell her every lurid detail. Sometimes I'm surprised she doesn't hang up on me. Then I have to try and convert ths into a gossip column called *Out.* That's what I'm going to have to do this weekend when I get back to New York.

* * *

BC: Andy wants to do a perfume, called Stink, it's going to be a mixture of Halston, Oscar de la Renta, Opium, Estee Lauder, Cinnabar, Bill Blass, Pierre Cardin. But seriously, I wish Andy would put out a disco record, called Oh Wow. You don't have to do anything. You just go into the studio, they do it all for you, he just has to go, 'oh wow, oh gee, oh golly.'

EG: Good idea.

* * *

BC: Rome to me is what I imagined Hollywood to be, starlets sitting in outdoor cafes with Paparazzi chasing after them. I love the Italian Paparazzi magazines. All these photos taken through telephoto lenses of Sophia Loren nude. They're constantly exposing people. Or they'll have a double page spread of a clinic in Switzerland and an arrow pointing into the window where the King's mother is dying. That's their idea of news, they pinpoint the window. They make up stories completely. One time Andy had lunch with the ex-empress of Iran at the Grand Prix in Monaco, he was put at her table. They got the pictures of her and Andy sitting there at lunch. A month later these magazines arrive with the story: Andy Warhol rapes the ex-empress on the Marbia golf course in Spain. He lands on the golf course in his private helicopter, can you imagine, rapes her in the bushes and then flies her off to a love weekend. He's never been in Spain, let alone the Marbia golf course, and he doesn't have a helicopter.

EG: I don't think he should try to hide it.

BC: At the end of the article they said that she finally decided to get rid of Andy when he tried to charge her $25,000 for a polaroid that he took of her, which was probably the only piece of truth. Andy probably did try to sell her a portrait over lunch which is based on polaroids.

* * *

EG: I was never afraid of flying, but it seems the more I fly now, the more I think about it.

BC: I fly so much. I think about it more now, there seems to be more and more crashes. Ever since my liver went bad I think about dying all the time. I really have the choice. I could kill myself very easily by just drinking. It would be so easy to just drink and die.

EG: That must be hard, being on the social circuit and not drinking.

BC: I actually like it better now, because I remember everything everybody says.

EG: I would find that disconcerting if I were one of the socialites.

BC: Doesn't everybody go out every night? Nobody wants to sit home and eat dinner alone. If you're married and have kids I guess you have to stay home, but Michael, doesn't everybody you know go out every night?

MB: Every night.

BC: At least almost every night. It's not being a socialite, it's just if you live alone or if you're married or living with someone, and you're both young and don't have children to keep you home, it's more fun to eat dinner with friends, than alone, or go to the theatre or the movies or a disco or listen to some music.

EG: You don't work at night?

BC: No, I can't work much later than 8 o'clock. When I was younger, I had this romantic idea that all writers wrote in the middle of the night when they got really inspired. You can't even type, let alone write when you're in that shape. I write best early in the morning if it's sunny, facing the window. That's when I enjoy it the most. I have to go out tonight.

ZERO TIME DATA HIDEOUT: ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET INTERVIEWED



circa 1971

Contributing editor Willoughby Sharp interviewed Alain Robbe-Grillet recently in New York City. M. Robbe-Grillet is one of the chief spokesmen and originators of the "nouveau roman." His prolific writing has included criticism, film scripts, *Last Year in Marienbad*, and the influential novels, *The Erasers*, *In the Labyrinth* and *Jealousy*. His most recent novel translated into english is *Topology of a Phantom City*.

WS: Your work is based on a totally new conception of matter. Not any Freudian conception, or any Newtonian conception. Your intellectual conception is more derived from modern art and science, more specifically, contemporary physics and cinema.
(laughter)
I want to start with that reference to physics and cinema.

AR: Well, we'll talk, and when we talk, we'll see. Barthes said that. If you need any explanation, you'll have to go to him. The word 'truth' in art cannot help but shock me. There is no such thing as truth in a text for example. When someone comes to see me and asks about the truth in one of my texts or movies — what does it mean? — I cannot answer those questions. Because I question the very notion of truth. The fact that Barthes said that is very interesting. But I don't have to bother with whether it is truth or not. On the other hand, this was written quite a long time ago — 25 years ago — and I don't know whether Barthes would say the same thing today. I don't think so anyway.
I have a scientific training. My training isn't literary at all. I was trained in math and biology.

WS: In Paris?

AR: Yes, in Paris, but not in the Paris University — in a State school. As you may know, in Paris, we have Superior or State schools which produce state engineers. One of these is the *Institute Agronomique*.

WS: What year was this?

AR: I wrote the entrance exam in 1940-41, then I stayed and studied there from 42-43. My training was entirely scientific. When I graduated, I was hired as a *Charge du Mission*, a research position, at *L'Institute National du Statistique*. I was in charge of agricultural statistics. I worked there for three years, then I moved to another job — in an agronomical research institute, on tropical fruit diseases. This is also based on statistics — all that biological research is based on statistics too. I worked for them in Africa, in Martinique, in Guadalupe, and I was especially responsible for the banana tree diseases. So I only began writing much later — I was already 30 years old when I started to write, which means that, quite suddenly, I abandoned my job in order to write novels. I don't know why, really.

WS: Was that in Paris?

AR: I was then in Martinique. I went back to Paris

WS: You went back to Paris in order to write — you chose Paris to write?

AR: Well, I chose Paris for various technical reasons. My parents were living in Paris, so I could have a room in their house — things like this. It was more convenient that way. But I also stayed in the country not far from Paris.

WS: At that time, did you have any friends who were writers?

AR: No, none at all. All of my friends were scientists, so there was absolutely no group pressure.

WS: What did your friends say about your starting to write?

AR: I don't know, really. I must say something. I was a very good engineer. I was very interested in all of those problems, and I had embarked on a very good career. I would probably have become a famous researcher. On the other hand, the tropical climate did not agree with me, so people said I came back home because I was sick.

WS: When you began to write, did you have something special in mind to write, something specific, or did you just want to write?

AR: I didn't have any literary training. On top of that, I didn't know the ideology which was then in power in the field of literature. By which, I mean I didn't know what was expected from a novelist. I had no idea. I had read, of course, a certain number of books, which fascinated me. Kafka, Faulkner, Joyce, but when I started to write, I thought I was writing a kind of literature which could represent, for the twentieth century, (for the nineteen-fifties), what Joyce and Faulkner represented for the 1920's and the 1930's.

WS: You had a very great ambition.

AR: Well, of course. But there was something I was absolutely unaware of — it was the fact that the literary critics in power in France at the time, (I'm not speaking about Barthes, who wasn't anything or anyone at that time), the critics in power, the people writing in papers, reviews, etc. All those people were expecting from me — from anyone, from a novelist, from any kind of writer — something completely different.

WS: What were they expecting?

AR: Nineteenth-century type literature. My ancestors were Joyce and Faulkner. They wanted my ancestors to be like Mauriac, that is to say the novelists who were still writing the type of literature of the past century. And it was only after I had published two or three books that I was able to understand more precisely the difference between my projects and what society expected of me. It was then that I wrote some theoretical essays in order to explain myself. Not that the other writers were mistaken, but they were the guardians of a certain order, and I was there to upset them, not at all to please them. Then, everybody started to talk about my scientific training. People said, well of course, it's because he's a scientist...

WS: Yes, but is it true that you started with the idea of reforming literature.?

AR: No, not at all. I didn't even know that literature had to be reformed, since the French writer who fascinated me then was Raymond Roussel. I didn't know that he had no public at all. I didn't know that he did not belong to the literary milieu. So, I was reading Raymond Roussel, and for me that was French literature. I was writing as his descendant. And this appeared to be pre-revolutionary, precisely because all those ideas had been refused in France by the critics in power. After that, I realized what I was doing was not only being a descendant. But of course, for me, those novels of the 1950's are descendants, descendants of the type of literature which came just before me. Starting in the 1960's, 1970's, I think that a far greater revolution happened in my writing. Unfortunately, my best-known books are those of that first period, because they are more easily re-integrated into the history of literature. For example, *La Jalousie*, which was totally refused at that time. Now, you can see in this book a treatment of the psychology of the jealous person. Do you understand? It's possible now, but then...

WS: Yes, I read the book. Is it being re-issued, is there a vogue for the book La Jalousie?

AR: Oh yes, it has been reprinted.

WS: Yes, together with the article by Barthes, which is also included.

AR: I haven't seen that. But, what is even more bizarre is that the article by Barthes was written later, and on something else, something called *Les Gommes*. Of course, the article is very important. But, you know, Barthes didn't like *La Jalousie* very much. (laughter). What he wrote on *Les Gommes* — he doesn't think it really applies to *La Jalousie*.

WS: He said somewhere — I can't find the exact page — that your work of 1967 was completely destroyed by the critics. He said that they rejected everything.

AR: Oh yes, yes. Take this book *La Jalousie* for instance. It was published in 1957, and it was completely refuted by the critics. I was of the impression that I had produced a very firm text, a strong text which would convince everyone. But it was refused. It reached a point where all the articles written about it were against it. There wasn't a single one that was for it, and the book did not sell at all. I was already a well-known writer, and the book sold only about 500 copies in one year. but this book made its way after that. From year to year, it won a certain public. Now, several prints have been made — in the U.S., in Germany; it's been translated into 30 languages and in every country it keeps selling. Right now, in France, they sell 10,000 copies a year. But only 500 copies in the first year. (laughter).

WS: Do you think this book becomes more contemporary every day?

AR: Well, this book created its own public. It was geared towards a public which didn't exist yet, so it had to create its own public. This is very important to me. I think that a modern work must create or invent its own public, not address itself to an existing public. The work is a creation — a new creation of the world.

WS: Who is doing that? The artist or the work?

AR: Both, but mostly the work. This creation of a public is also a sort of recuperation, which means that the book now is explained, it has lost some of its violence. It's much less violent than it was 25 years ago. Stendhal never had a public in his time. He hasn't got a very big one now either. Anyway, he said 'I'll be understood in 30 years.' And this seems strange to me, because 30 years later, Stendhal's work has lost most of its initial violence. I think the big moment for a book — for a work — is the moment when it upsets people, when it displeases people. It's at the time of its creation, when the book is not liked and cannot find a public. 30 years after, as Stendhal said, it has a public, but by then the work is already digested. My new novels, for instance, are rejected again. Like *Souvenirs du triangle d'or* for instance. This is a new novel, to which I give a lot of importance. Well, it was refused by the critics. I even got abused in the papers for it.

WS: Has it been translated into English?

AR: No, not yet. But there is a contract for it with my publisher, Barney. He's a very good friend of mine.

WS: You're quite satisfied with him, aren't you? Has he done a lot for your career?

AR: Oh yes, he did a very important thing for me. He maintained my book in the bookstores. Do you understand what I mean?

WS: Yes, I understand. He made sure, on an everyday basis, that your books were there on the shelves.

AR: Yes, that's it. He made sure they were there, and reprinted when needed. I can go to any bookstore — well, maybe not all of them — and look for my books, and they're there. And this is very important for me, 'cause I can see what happens to some of my friends like Butor or Sarraute who were published by other publishers — something strange happened, and their books have disappeared. And they were all published at the same time. My friend Barney was very useful to me, and to my friend Beckett because he maintained our books in shops even at a time when they were not selling well.

WS: I'd like to ask you a question about your movie Marienbad. *Do you think the public appreciated the movie as a complement of the book?*

AR: At the time, the movie wasn't very well liked. The public didn't understand the movie, they couldn't understand what it was about, so I would like to speak about the movie a little bit. About the movie, and about the book. This movie was made in 1960-61, and at this time what we call in France the *New Novel* had already appeared, which means that I already had a kind of success with my book *Dans le labyrinthe*, Butor already had quite a bit of success with his book *L'Edification*. By then *Nouveau roman* had become something fashionable, but it didn't sell as well as it does now. I can say that it was a fashion, but a fashion without readers. More a newspaper fashion. Some kind of an intellectual fashion. Anyway, it was mentioned in fashion magazines like *Elle* for instance. So, when the movie *Marienbad* came out, something funny happened. Nobody wanted this movie. The distributors said that they would never show it...this movie was really cursed. I think it stayed in its box for about one year. Nobody wanted to hear about it, and then suddenly it appeared.

WS: Did it happen in the States?

AR: No, in France, I'm not sure when it was released in the States. But anyway, for the first year, it couldn't be seen. Then, quite suddenly, it became something fashionable. For instance everybody was playing the little game with the matchsticks.

WS: Why, how did it happen?

AR: Well, it happened for many reasons. For instance, in Paris — but also in New York — fashion is something very important. I think that it was Cocteau who said ''Great poets need fashion'', or maybe he said that ''Great poets need snobs.'' Yes, I think that's it. So, it became important that it became something fashionable. Because, even if the public doesn't like it, people will go to see it because it is fashionable. And this is very important.

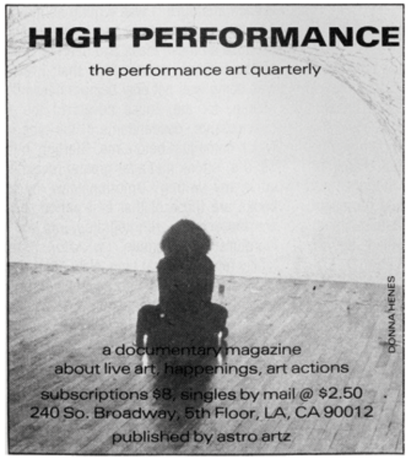
WS: As a writer, how do you spend a typical day?

AR: I work for the whole day, and for several days in a row. I can't work in a coffee house or a bar. I can't work early in the morning, like for instance Faulkner, who would write in the morning, very early, then have the rest of the day for other things. I have to work in the country, I won't see anyone for days and days, and then I spend the whole day writing.

WS: What about the telephone?

AR: Almost nobody knows the telephone number for my little house in the country, so there are very few calls.

WS: Do you write everything by hand?



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AR: Oh, yes. Everything by hand.

WS: Have your recent movies been seen in the US?

AR: I've shown one recently here in NYC. And one is in Los Angeles. But they haven't been shown commercially. This photo is of a movie I made in 1974. It is of a woman breaking eggs on top of a picture by Yves Klein. So, you see, it's a tribute to Yves Klein. (Laughter).
I'm also a painter.

WS: When did you start painting?

AR: Oh, quite a while ago when I was a young man. but I don't paint enough now, I really paint very little.

WS: How did you start Marienbad*, your first movie?*

AR: Well, it wasn't my first movie. It is the first movie which was filmed, but before that there was another project called *L'Immortelle* which was filmed in Turkey, well before *Marienbad*. But *L'Immortelle* was delayed by a revolution in Turkey, the president of the council was hanged. I think this was in 1962, so while I was waiting for things to improve, I started working on *Marienbad* with Resnais. It was only after that I finished filming *L'Immortelle*. If you wonder why on earth Alain Resnais asked me to do Marienbad with him, it wasn't him who asked me, it was a producer. Then, everything happened very fast. Resnais decided I should write, not a screenplay, but what I call a *decoupage* — a shooting script. Resnais accepted it.

WS: Was it based on something you had done before?

AR: It was completely new. As you know, I never make any movies from my novels. I've always refused to do it.

WS: Why?

AR: For me, a novel is made of words. And a movie is made of images and sounds. A completely different story. Other film directors and producers wanted to work with me. For instance, Antonioni, Rousseau. But they didn't want to accept that I worked with a script. They wanted a story. Then, they would have cut that story and made a script from it. I completely refused. I want to write directly with the script, I want to work with the camera, editing, I want to do the cutting myself, etc. And Resnais agreed. He said he was very open but even if he respected that, I must say he put a lot of his own personality into the shooting.

WS: In what sense?

AR: In psychology for instance. The character played by Delphine Seyrig in the movie, is not like any female character in my novels.

WS: Were Delphine Seyrig and Alain Resnais lovers at that time?

AR: Well, I don't know, if they became lovers, it doesn't seem very well chosen for them. (laughter). These people have very strange sexual habits.

WS: You yourself. You're married aren't you?

AR: Yes, of course. I was married in 1957, the year I published *La Jalousie*. And we still get along very well together, though I must say she has a very independent life alone. I must also say she has an independent sexual life.

WS: Is she a professional?

AR: What do you mean, a professional?

WS: What does she do? What's her business?

AR: She's a photographer. She takes photographs during the shooting of movies. She took all those photographs I showed you.

WS: It seemed that your career started with a big boom, then you became a little less active. But after having talked with you, I think that it is quite the opposite.

AR: Of course it's the opposite. I became more and more active. There was quite a lot of scandal during my career, I must say. But, I can explain. I know why you have this false impression. It is because at that time in France, from 1955-1965, people were talking a lot about the artists. Every artist. In the movies, let's take Godard. Everyone was talking about Godard. Now, Godard would like to make other movies, but is not allowed to.

WS: It's difficult for him isn't it?

AR: Yes. That period (1955-1965) was a very favourable period, for invention, for subversion, for innovation. Revolution was quite fashionable at that time. That ended in 1968. What we call the 1968 revolution in France was not a beginning. On the contrary, it was a conclusion. This conclusion, in fact, was the end of the interest society had in us, for those new experiments. but, this is on a superficial, journalistic level. On the level of the general public, as I said, I sell more books now than I did then.

WS: You appear to have a very regular progression ÷ one movie every few years.

AR: Yes, but I must say that there were movie periods and novel periods. 1974-75 — two movies. After that, one novel in 1976, one novel in 1978...novel periods and movie periods usually don't overlap. The more recent films have quite an important public in France — there was some scandal in those movies; in the US, there is no cinema for that type of movie, so even if famous actors perform in those movies, or if they are produced with a lot of money — those movies make the money afterwards. There is a public, in France, in Italy — but in the US, the distribution system is not made for such movies. Either your films are commercial — which is strictly story-telling, or you have the 'underground' movies. They're shown in galleries, clubs, universities, museums...In France, we do have an intermediate category, where you can see Godard, or myself, or even Marguerite Duras. They are produced in a commercial ways, and can be shown in the same commercial theatres, but they do not respect the same rules, they do not tell the same type of story. They are in the type of cinema we call *Cinema d'art et essai*. Let me give you an example. There was a young man, German-Swiss, by the name of Schmidt. He made fantastic movies. One was called *La Paloma*. There, it was shown in regular theatres. Here, it couldn't be shown.

WS: What are you planning for your immediate future?

AR: The last movie I did was in 1975. Since then, I've published three novels. I think one of them was translated into English — *Topologie d'une cite fantome*. You can find it. If you read that book, you'll see what I write now. This type of book is even more bizarre than what I did before. Why am I less popular now? Why are people talking less about me now? It's because I've become some kind of a classic. As if I already belong to the past, as if I belong to the history of literature.



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photo Peter Noble

JOHN LYDON GETS HIS PALM READ

PETER NOBLE

The date is Monday, April 21, 1980 and somewhere in New York City Public Image Ltd. have agreed to talk to Impulse. It's lunchtime and John Lydon wants to eat some curry food. Warner Brothers publicity representative, Stacey Green, decides to make reservations at *Gaylords*, a fashionable restaurant specializing in Indian cuisine.

Throughout the meal Lydon makes various comments about the food such as a) "I don't know what that is." b) "I'm fucking not trying it." c) "What the hell is that?" d) "You know what that looks like..." As we make our way to the serving of dessert and tea, a polite indian host introduces himself to our party and it goes something like this:

Palm reader: Ladies and gentlemen I have probably not met you before. I am a palm reader and I read the hands of many people. I wonder if you would be interested in having a thought of concentration and diversement — insight and wisdom. And I promise you definitely a palatably revealing journey into the subconscious mind.

Lydon: *How much does it cost?*

Palm reader: Oh! You've asked me a very interesting question.

Lydon: *Can I go first?*

Palm reader: What is your date of birth?

Lydon: *January 31, 1956.*

Palm reader: My dear you do have a long life. You will definitely live to be over 89 years of age. You will never have any kind of serious sickness or ailments. Your trouble will be mainly mental rather than physical. You are a very ingenious, versatile and a very talented young man, but remember, every man of this nature is a little bit crazy!

Your greatest trouble in life is that you cannot fit in exactly with the plans and ideals of other people. You run your life in a very independent direction. You will always try to introduce a new system of government...a new way of life, at work, at home and everywhere you go. You are very domineering and dictatorial. You have a lot of people and friends that are close to you, but, at heart, you feel lonely.

I do have a feeling my dear that you are a very crafty type of person. If somebody shows you how to do something at one time, the next minute you'll do the same thing with precision and accuracy in a much better sense of judgement. Excuse me, but you are such a crafty person, just like a monkey.

I find here that you have the wonderful gift of the gab. Everything to do with the artistic world, presentation, communication and the people around will have you coming out on top with flying colours. I do believe my dear that you are going to come into two opportunities very soon from now. You are going to take the first opportunity, not the second one. However, the second one will seem to be very tempting. I also see you getting a very important document.

I do have a feeling from 1975-1977, a period of two years that have been very struggling for you. Yet, you managed to stand up on your own feet. Your face looks like your mother's, but she is a very conservative woman. You'll find it difficult to get along with this woman again.

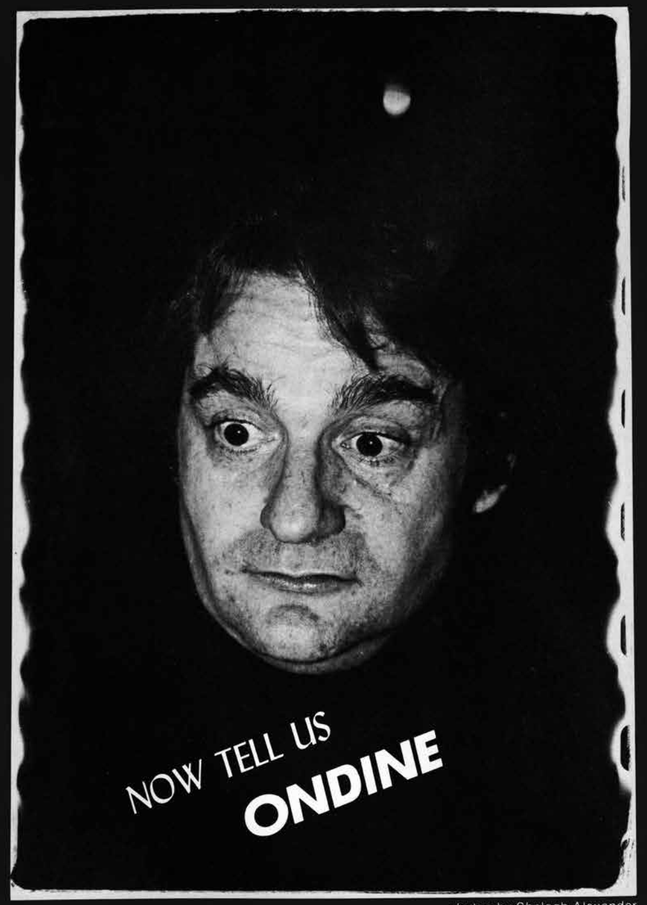
Lydon: *Seeing that she died last year, yeah.*

Palm reader: I do have a feeling you are a very calculating man. You had a very difficult time last year. However, you had been picked up as a man of choice by some powerful and influential people who had proved very helpful to you. Last year you experienced a time of disgrace, disloyalty and complications. People had promises that they did not keep. You suffered on account of that. Fortunately, 1980 is the year that will be a most prosperous one.

You definitely and positively have been a silent sufferer for a while. Excuse me, but you are a very crafty type of gentleman...very improvising and ingenious. You are going to compromise some relationship with some people that you would not have done in the past. You used your tongue to negative means last year. As a result, you lost some friends and suffered into secret jealousy from that, but you're going to compromise this year, which is going to give you the success that you are looking for.

I am through with the reading. Thankyou.

Lydon: *God, that was some speech.*



photos by Shelagh Alexander

Eldon Garnet, Shelagh Alexander, Ross McLaren, Anna Gronau, Jerry Tartagua drank and listened to Ondine, star of ***The Chelsea Girls, Vinyl*** and ***The Loves of Ondine*** and co-author of ***A***. He left Toronto with bronchial pneumonia from which he is currently recovering in Pittsburgh.

EG: Have you been in any films recently?

O: I don't get offered films that I want to do. I really want to work with artists. When I worked with Warhol, he was an artist.

EG: Isn't Warhol an artist anymore?

O: He's not my kind of artist. A lisp of his former self. Basically I'm a performer, I'm not into discovering lyrical possibilities, I'm into narrative performance and the truth that comes through what I say. I'd be dead if I were a mime. The point is I'm not involved in poetry or lyricism in any way, so it's hard for me to work with film poets. Warhol was a filmmaker, because he made films like he'd make shoes, but he's not a film poet. I just don't fit in with lyricism.

RM: Seeing **Vinyl** is like seeing a lot of the video tapes that are currently being shown.

O: Doesn't **Vinyl** look like everything you've seen from the new school? Isn't **Vinyl** just pure punk, I mean its even purer than pure, because it doesn't take itself too seriously, it's kind of a joke.

RM: A lot of the filmmakers working now don't appear to have a sense of history, to be aware of the developments. They have the TV format, but they're all wearing leather.

O: It represents to me an attempt to make films which are commercially viable for a very small commercial audience, which doesn't make any sense to begin with. Why, if you're going to make a commercial movie, limit yourself to an audience of about ten people?

RM: Was Warhol thinking in terms of mass distribution or mass audiences?

O: Warhol worked the film co-op so completely to his own advantage that **Vinyl** was always out, it was always being rented. And I think he got the idea that if he kept making films that dealt with sensational matter that he would eventually get to an audience that was much bigger than the small avant garde group that he apparently doesn't like. What he did with me he did with everyone, he made them prototypes for what everybody in the sixties was supposedly screaming about: individuality, freedom, taking drugs, being disgusting, being as obnoxious as you could possibly be and getting away with it. There were some parties in the Factory which were unbelievable. Judy Garland would come up and we'd ignore her, Montgomery Clift would stand by a wall and nobody would speak to him, who the fuck was he, and that was a real trump. That was the field day, the street had its revenge.

SA: Did you know Edie Sedgewick?

O: Very well, I was her french maid. Three days a week I'd go and wake her up, she was so barbituated that I was the only one who could ring her bell and get her up. If you've ever heard me ring a doorbell you'd know why. I'd give her some speed and she'd be right on the track again. I loved her. She was really ill. You should have seen Andy and Edie in Philadelphia. They went to visit one of the museums there and the crowds were outside holding hands chanting: Edie Andy Edie Andy. And that power went to her head. She said, 'my God, I don't believe it, the people were actually trying to tear down things just to see me.' And she couldn't deal with it. Lester Perskey told her she really belonged in Hollywood and that Warhol was trying to make her look terrible in all his films. She was such a weak type and they played on it to such a degree, they thought she was going to be the next star. Maybe two years after this she wanted to get back and make a film with Warhol, but she couldn't hold a glass in her hand. She managed to get silicone breasts before she died, she always wanted them. Nelson Lyons said she looked like a spinach with headlights.

AG: You said something before about Warhol being...

JT: ...the ultimate fag sellout. He was in a position of power in the art world, he had made contacts with all of the elements of the power structure, he capitalized, but he had no sense of politics after he got his bucks, which is the ultimate sellout. If you're in a position of power, then you open your mouth and speak.

O: If you have something to say.

JT: He has a lot to say.

O: But I don't think he thinks he does. At one point in San Francisco we were on this tour, and we had this big party at Trader Vic's. All the ex-Warhol stars were there. This is Haight Ashbury in '68, some of them are barefoot, and a few of them are stoned, and the woman who ran his tour wouldn't let a couple of them in. I got really pissed off. I told him, 'I want you to take the car and drive me back to Haight Ashbury right now, because I might not continue the tour.' I was screaming out the window 'Judas Judas.' So he came to the house and he sat there and he listened to me tell him that he was in a position that nobody previous to him had ever been in. Especially seeing the fact that he was gay and the fact that he had so much power. I said, 'you could shit on the floor and people would buy it. You could bring people into Trader Vic's with no shoes, no clothes, you could have them eating shit on the table, they'd love it, and you tell me you're letting this woman run your tour. You are the original American genius, you are the embodiment.' He gasped, and my girlfriend said, 'Ask him for $50,000.' I said, 'This is the wrong time,' but she was right, I should have asked him then. He said he was terribly sorry and that he would never do it again. But it struck me as being so implausible that I should have to tell him who he was. To me it means, he's vapid. Warhol couldn't give a flying fuck about his fellow man, and that's what struck me as so amazing.

GT: If that's true, it means the aesthetic in film that grew out of his so called aesthetic is equally as immoral and equally devoid of political content.

O: That sounds like the truth. They called Warhol the father of structuralism. What is structuralism? Very boring movies, I mean really boring movies, boring to the point of headache, boring to the point of nausea, you want to die. If Warhol is the father of that, it's vapid. I show the movies now because it's a way of making a living without actually going out to work.

EG: Do you make a living at it?

O: Yea, of sorts. He gave me the movies. The movies are nice, I dare say that they would be just as good without me, but with me talking about them they are a lot more alive. I'm really sick of attributing anything to Warhol beyond the fact that he's a vapid commercial pig. That doesn't mean I don't like him, and that I wouldn't work with him. I think he's a marvelous person to work with because he leaves you alone and gives you a lot of freedom and if you have an idea, he'll use it. That's genius.

RM: What direction would Warhol give?

O: It depended on who the person was in the film. In **Vinyl**, he told Gerrard Malanga he had to memorize the script, but every time Gerrard went to memorize the script he sent him on an errand. Gerrard had to look at the script with his foot. To me he said, 'Ignore it, do whatever you want, if you want to burn the set up, burn it.' He let me go. We had freedom. Even though he was vapid, a sellout, when he was shot it was horrifying. It was really a shock. I went into a complete fever, I had a 104.9, they came down in the Mercedes Benz and brought me home, because I was raving. I said 'the mafia is after us all, we're all queers, they're going to

kill us, they finally saw **Chelsea Girls** and we're going to get it.' So I'm sitting up, sweating, and I hear that Robert Kennedy has been shot. My fever broke. I felt it was in the air.

EG: Warhol says sex is boring.

O: I've seen him get very unbored about sex, but he doesn't publicize that stuff. As far as I could see he had a very active sex life, with some number called Rod la Rod. Enough said about Rod la Rod. In San Francisco, Warhol said, 'Stay in the hotel with us,' I said 'no, I'm going to stay with my friends in Haight Ashbury,' and he said, 'look at all the amusing people who are coming in.' He had people walking in with names like Clark Kent and Lois Lane and they'd take off their clothes and become super man and shake their dicks at him and everything. It was as though the human race was nothing but a group of objects. Just a group of turds.

EG: Did he pay anyone for participating in his movies?

O: He eventually paid everyone $1,000 for **Chelsea Girls**, and I got all the proceeds from the book I wrote with him.

EG: That was **A**. *Was that transcribed by highschool students?*

O: One of the girls ran away with the tape because it was so filthy. She heard the tape and it was talking about assholes, going in and out, big brown eyes, she went augh...and took the tape out and ran away. We had to fill in with a half hour conversation about assholes. You really have to admit it's amusing if you're into that anihilistic way of thinking.

EG: You couldn't read it.

O: It's hysterical. I couldn't read it, and I was the one who was there for 24 hours. Some of it is very funny. Warhol sat over those galley proofs night after night with a flashlight while the Velvets were playing at the Dom. He'd read it over, laugh, and say it was great art. He read it over and over and over and over, I mean I couldn't read it once. Warhol is the most boring person I've ever met in my life, which is gigantic plus. He always got what he wanted.

EG: What do you mean?

O: If he wanted you to make a movie, he made you do that movie no matter what.

EG: He has a certain charm.

O: Charm! He's a brat! He jumps up and down...'you got to make the movie, you got to make the movie, please, you have to.' He'll do anything to get what he wants. You can tell I was amused by him, he was very funny. I don't



really think of him as a poet, poet is a title I give to very special people who see the world in a universal way. The universality he sees is so anihilistic that I can't think of that as being poetry.

EG: Why were all the people attracted to him?

O: You had free access to his place morning, noon and night, and when you're running around the streets of New York City on speed, it's nice to have somewhere to go at 4:00 in the morning and play opera till the cops come. And he allowed all of that. He paid the rent, he paid our bills. We didn't have any money but we'd eat at Max's every night, and his bill was $3,000 a week, which he paid off by painting. So actually he didn't give you money, but what he did was keep you in style. If you wanted anything you could go to him and he'd give it to you.

EG: What were the drugs?

O: Heroin would have produced a lot of zombies. Speed produced a lot of activity. I made my own for a while. I can't take amphetamine anymore, it's bad for my complexion. I have a stronger constitution than most, but speed got me a couple of times. I did it for 12 years, I shot it. Five or six times a day, I would shoot it till my eyeballs would turn in my head then I'd fall on the floor and get up and take another shot. I wanted to be in that state constantly.

SA: Speed has disappeared.

O: I know, most of the people died. Only Vikings live. That's how **A** starts, Andy says to me, 'Do you want some pills?' and he hands me five Obetrols and I swallow them, and he says, 'Ohhhhh, that's a 100 mg.,' and I say, 'So, it's going to be a 24 hour book isn't it,' and he says, 'Oh God.'

EG: How'd you first meet Andy?

O: He was at a party, it was an orgy and there was this thing hanging in the background, this grey presence. I asked the host of the party, 'Who the fuck is that,' and he said 'That's Andy Warhol,' and I said, 'Get him out of here, either that creep has to join in or leave.' So they told him to leave. And he met me on the street the day after and he said to me, 'You got me thrown out of that party, no one's ever done that to me before.' I said, 'Oh well, now you'll join in.'

EG: Did he join in later?

O: Never. So we became very bad friends.

EG: Do you ever see him anymore?

O: How could I ever see him, do I look like I wear jeans by Murjani?



FASHION DESIGNS LEIGHTON BARRETT **EXCEL** 1240 BAY STREET TORONTO

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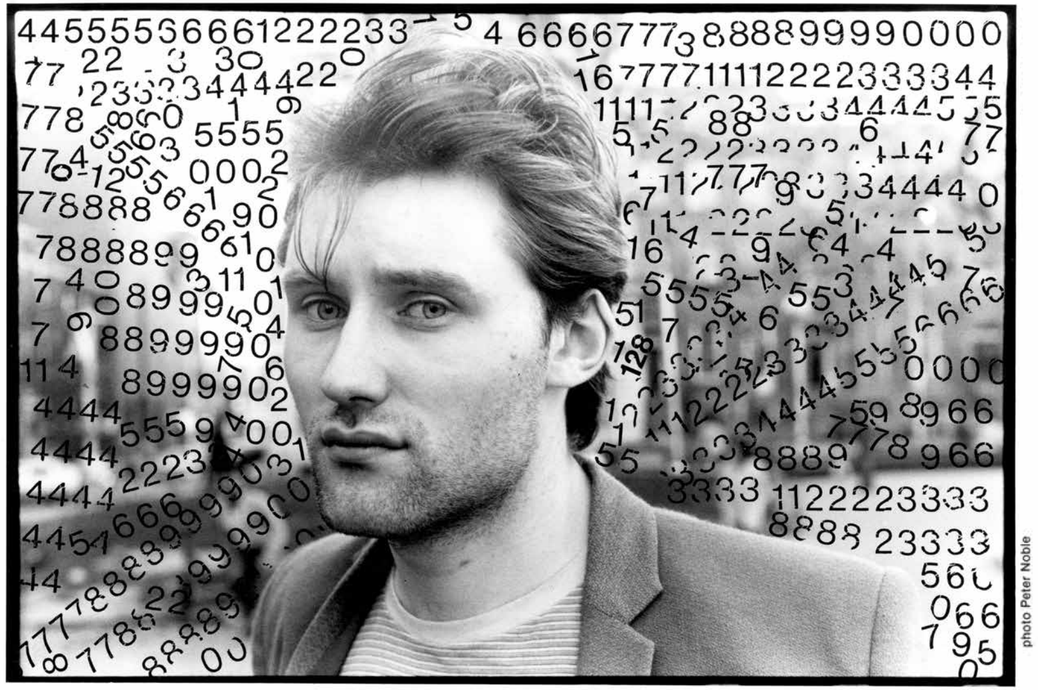


photo Peter Noble

JAH WOBBLE OF PiL

PETER NOBLE

Impulse: Is PiL the ultimate anti-image?

Wobble: We came up with that particular name because we wanted to go all the way. We call ourselves Public Image because we don't have one. Attack is the best form of defense. We're attacking by going all the way with it. As you've already noticed, we're very difficult when it comes to dealing with the record company executives. When we walked off the stage at the Palladium gig in New York (April 20th '80) we felt really tensed up. Warner Brothers were saying, 'Look, we've got some people who want to talk with you.' And like....we just don't want to know and they couldn't understand why we felt that way. When we played in Boston they brought down the Cars to meet us. Christ, it's got nothing to do with me. 'So and so is in a band.' Big deal. I won't even talk to people in punk groups just for the sake of it so why should I talk to the Cars? When they entered the room we said 'hello' and then we left the building. It's an unrealistic situation. Just because I play in a group doesn't mean I'm going to hang out with that particular social set.

I've got no interest what new bass guitar is on the market. The one I've got is functionable and it does the job. That's enough for me. I'm into talking about other things, and music is a reflection of the other things that I'm passionately into. I've always been into theories, concepts and abstracts. Why do people conduct themselves the way they do? I've always been fascinated with people and how they shape their own mental conditions.

Impulse: When you undertake a lengthy tour, do you feel there is enough room for self-expression?

Wobble: I don't think it's healthy to tour for long periods of time. When the band is in England we don't see each other. We only get together if we have recording work to pursue or if we have some live gigs lined up. The entire PiL thing is really quite weird. We're not a rock'n'roll band because we feel that kind of music cannot progress. Instead it is a regressive institution which manufactures variations of the same musical styles and structures that have already been accomplished in the past. Out of all the new groups I'd have to say that I admire *Fad Gadget*. It's good synthetic music that's got some soul. I dunno, I guess I'm into soulful things. I like people who can portray, in a very unpretentious manner, what they're taking in and giving out. I don't think there's anything called self-expression. The media and one's environment...everything is an influence.

Impulse: Asking John about the songs on the *Metal Box* album is like talking to a wall....you can't get a straight answer out of him. I'm extremely curious about the contents of *Careering* in particular.

Wobble: People ask John what some of the songs are about, but he's notorious for not explaining it as it really is. *Careering* is basically about Northern Ireland — a gunman who is careering as a professional businessman in London. Careering! Isn't it amazing how one word can have more magic than an entire opera? It's such a beautiful word that sums up so many people who are, y'know, careering. It's really strange because we'd be playing it on stage and I'd look towards the side and I'd see somebody from the record company...and like...he or she would be careering.

Impulse: I was quite surprised about PiL's performance at the Palladium...I'm specifically talking about John's idea of having a good time. I was shocked at the crowd's positive reaction... Wobble, do you know what I'm getting at?

Wobble: John likes to get some of the people on stage to sing and dance around, y'know, that's kind of nice in a way, but last night he even left part way during the show and went back to the hotel with our guitarist, Keith. Martin Atkins (the new PiL drummer) and I were left on stage and we couldn't leave because people had paid good money to see a full performance. Martin and I played for the remaining twenty minutes by improvising and jamming rhythms. We couldn't cover it up and say, 'Oh yeah, John had a headache.' I mean he's just the way he is and there's nothing you can do to change him. It's a bit unfortunate at times. There we were, trying to get this serious musical thing together and he just makes it into a pantomime. John's got this worked out formula for absurdity, disappointment and disillusionment. If I would have been one of those people in the audience I would have said, 'Why the fuck are they doing this? It's not funny.' Inviting people on stage is nice in a certain way, but most of those people only go up so that they can be noticed by their friends. I usually identify with the people who are sitting at the back of the venue because they're the ones who are totally into the music.

Impulse: I once read somewhere in the British press that PiL would never attempt to do a North American tour, but now I'm talking with you in New York and you're in the midst of that very tour you said you'd never do.

Wobble: We did say that, but what can you do? We are signed to Warner Brothers in America and they want us to tour in support of the *Second Edition* album. When we said that at the time none of our work had been released in North America. Our debut album *First Issue* was considered unsuitable for an American release so we didn't feel it was necessary to tour. Anyways, I want to get back to London as soon as possible. It's not that I hate touring, but I'm tired of PiL being the centre of attention. Everybody's making such a fuss and we can't even go for a walk without being hassled. Knowing the fact that I'm going back to the hotel and people are going to be waiting in the lobby...well, you know what I mean.

Impulse: Don't you think Pil would be less exploitable, commercially speaking, if it had control over its own independent recording label?

Wobble: I've been asked a lot about the independent labels in England and people tend to say, 'What do you think of *Rough Trade Records*?' I don't want to keep knocking them, but I don't really agree with their amateurish attitude — they've always had this guilt complex over making money. Why bother making silly records? It's so non-essential and I've got no interest in it. Those people get taken very seriously in England, but it doesn't make any sense to me. There are some independents that I have some respect for and *Factory Records* is one of them. I'm really into this entire independent thing and that's where I differ from the rest of PiL. I'd like us to have our own label, but they don't want to have anything to do with it. I don't think an artist has that much control over his work if he's signed to a major company. If an independent does become successful and slowly grows into a major company then there's nothing wrong with that. It's bullshit to resent the money aspect of it because it's an inevitable reality. The main objective is to have control over bringing new sounds to an interested audience. I live for the benefit of turning people on to something that's real and interesting. I guess I'm a corny entertainer. I enjoy being on stage and playing...that's why I get upset if the show isn't as good as it could be. I just want to play the songs with feeling...change people's lives a little. Maybe if they get into PiL they'll start to pick up on some of the other groups that deserve the attention. Music is a strong force...a necessary function. Maybe it could change their attitudes.

Impulse: One of the things I admire about PiL is that it is a limited company. You are your own managers and you have no need for any well known producers. As a company I realize that PiL is prepared for undertaking a variety of business ventures, but I sense that you are much more interested in the music itself.

Wobble: PiL talks about being involved in various business ventures such as video, but I think it's bullshit really. This video geezer comes up to us in Boston and says, 'In this day and age we should not neglect the eyes from the senses.' Well, look...I'm watching these trees and I'm not neglecting that sense, and my ears are hearing the music that's around me now. I just think video discs are complete and utter bullshit. I don't want to see

moving pictures of the band. I do enjoy looking at photographs of bands, but when I'm subjected to watching them on video I think it's so sterile. I told that video guy that it would take your imagination away. He said, 'No...you can always turn the vision off.' I just looked at him and said, 'That's bullshit. People won't.' It's the same with the whole television syndrome. People don't want to turn their televisions off. People should learn to see the pictures in their fucking minds in abstract terms, but they're like sheep. It's sad.

Impulse: I think everybody wants to be so modern...there's never a time when people can remain satisfied where they are. People feel the need for constant change and advancement.

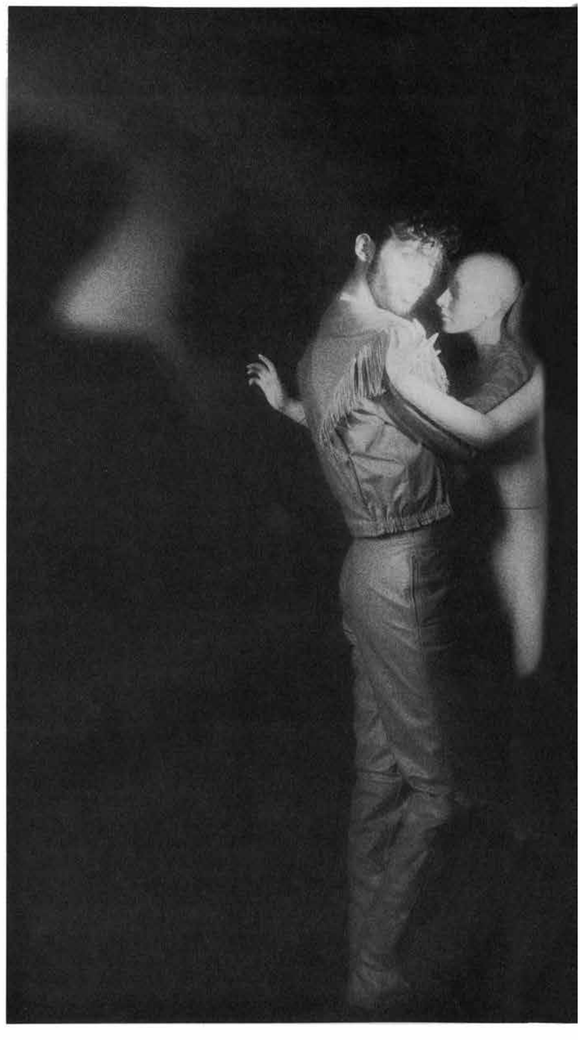
Wobble: It's possible in the musical climate to do something in a small way and make a living off of it if you organize. You don't have to have some bullshit manager ripping you off. You can go to some small label like *Factory* and get by. People say I purposely go out of my way to attract a sense of status, but it's not true. I'd rather attract a small group of people who understand and appreciate what I do. Big audiences have to have everything spelt out for them and I don't think I'd be able to adapt to other people's expectations. We manage ourselves and do our own producing. We have no need for parasites. That's why I don't agree with blindly saying, 'Yeah, all producers are shit.' There are some producers who can bring out certain aspects of your music that you couldn't do.

Impulse: Do people go to a PiL concert expecting to hear the Sex Pistols?

Wobble: We've been playing hard as we always do and people have been getting off on the rhythm of it, and they're not shouting out for Sex Pistols numbers. All of these kids are totally into it, listening to Public Image. At our concerts we never work out set lists. We just go out on stage and see what happens. I'd like to have an organized set list just once, for a laugh. You've got to understand that we're not a rock band. PiL is a limited company and somehow in this crazy day and age we manage to get by — and we do it without playing rock music. I think a lot of the time we underachieve what we're really capable of. PiL underachieved during last night's performance at the Palladium. The thing that got me was all of these people saying, 'Oh wow Wobble, that was a great show.' I mean we fucked up and they thought it was hip to like it because they felt it had been all planned. It's crazy! All of these people were coming up to us and saying, 'Great ending. Good idea.'

Impulse: I'm surprised the audience didn't lynch you.

Wobble: Our music isn't the hardest to play anyway. I just find it easy playing loads of rhythms. Ummm....there's no reason why we should ever do a bad gig. I hope everybody in the band stays on stage without walking out tomorrow night. It would be nice. I don't like to see people who have forked out 10 - 15 dollars for a ticket and then become cheated. The way Keith and John conduct themselves is sometimes dubious in a way....I mean they don't go around picking up groupies, taking heroin and bullshitting, and they will call spade to spade, y'know, they'll say the truth straight out. I'll tell you one thing though, John's whining for attention is really going to do me in on this American tour. It's getting to me already. When we're on the airplane all you can hear from the back is (in a baby's voice) 'I want a cup of coffee.'



ANDREE GAGNE, PHOTOGRAPHER, TORONTO
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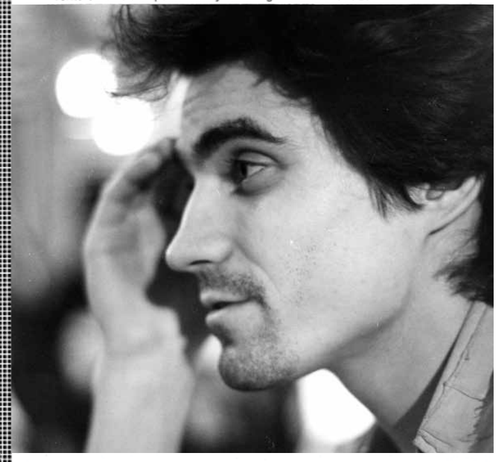
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INTERVIEW BY LISA BAUMGARDNER-BACHNER

LK = Lech Kowalski
DT = Diana Tobarina
LB = Lisa Baumgardner-Bachner

LK: (eyes very red) Hi, have you been waiting long? I was sleeping in the screening room.
DT: Um, no, not long. Lech, this is Lisa Baumgardner.
LB: Hi! Pleased to meet you. Do you sleep on the floor?
LK: No, actually I was sleeping in the chair. God, I'm wasted. I've been up for days.
DT: Would you mind terribly if I turned off the TV set?
LK: Yeah, it's really annoying, turn it off. It's good to sleep with it on, though.
LB: No! It's terrible to sleep with the TV on! Please don't turn it off, though, I want to watch something. This porno film actor I know is supposed to be on the CBS channel. What time is it?
LK: 7:30.
LB: Which is the CBS channel in New York?
DT: Channel 2. Which show is he on?
LB: It's called "To Life." I've never seen it. I don't own a television set.
LK: Neither do I.
DT: Ugh, this show looks awful. Must you watch it?

LB: Oh, please, yes. Do you really mind? I promised him I would try to watch it if at all possible. Look! It's that disco in Brooklyn where they filmed SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER! Oh God! Male strippers! How tacky!
DT: Morning television is wonderful. One talk show after another, each with a subject more depraved. For instance, the first show sill discuss child molestation. Another will discuss homosexuality. Ugh, I just saw one with two lesbians. But the thing that was awful was that one was very butch, and they had gotten married and the femme had been inseminated by the butch's brother. Such unfortunate stereotypes!
LB: Oh, that's quite common.
DT: And then the next talk show discussed a horrible operation a doctor performs to supposedly improve women's sex lives. It rearranges EVERYTHING down there. Sounds like mutilation to me.
LB: I met the guy on TV two years ago at a modelling session or something. He loves being a skin flick star! Oh, really, this is too awful. I'll turn it off. Sorry.



LK: Do you like to snort speed?
LB: Um, actually...
DT: Lech, Lisa is the wrong person to ask that to.
LB: ...but I have been trying to avoid it. Would you rather smoke a joint? I've been behaving lately.
LK: Oh, no, I don't like marijuana. It turns me into an idiot. And at this point, it would make me pass out.
DT: It makes me so paranoid!
LB: Really!? How unfortunate. I like to swallow hashish during breakfast. It makes the subway ride in the morning so pleasant! Except, a few weeks ago, I got on two totally WRONG subways and ended up in the Upper West Side. It was hard to explain.
LK: Where do you work?
LB: 65th and Madison Avenue.
LK: Subway rides are too exhausting when I'm stoned. I don't like it.
LB: Tell me about your film project!
LK: I'd like to show you a sneak preview of some of it. We remix the sound next week, then it will be done.
LB: What is it about?
LK: Basically, it's about the whole 'thing' behind rock'n'roll.
LB: How long have you been working on it? Where have you been filming?
DT: He began about the same time I began my rock'n'roll documentaries here in New York. Early 1978?
LK: I began in January, 1978. Wasn't the Sex Pistols' American tour then? That's when I began. We filmed all over America, and were in London for about a month...Europe...
LB: What's it called?
LK: DEAD ON ARRIVAL, or D.O.A.
LB: You shot in 16mm? How big was your crew?
LK: Yes, 16mm, to be blown up to 35mm. My crews? Sometimes as large as 20...
LB: And sometimes as small as just yourself.
LK: ...Exactly, no, really, about 4. God, I'm tired...
LB: My God! How many feet of film have you shot?
LK: At least 100,000 feet!
LB: Who PAYS for this?
LK: (evasive) Um...I do...
LB: Where were you born?
LK: London, England.
LB: How old are you?
LK: 28. (Long pause.) And I'm a Scorpio. God, let's get that out of the way, I hate being asked what sign I am. Would you like to see some footage of Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungeon? I interviewed them in Sid's apartment in England.
LB: God, would I!
LK: ...in his bedroom that they had painted black. They are both about to O.D....
(We go the the Steenbeck room and watch a few minutes of Sid and Nancy. Nancy is clad in a tight, shiny black rubber outfit. Sid has sunglasses on to conceal the fact that he is obviously nodding out. They are sprawled across a bed.)
Nancy: Sid, will you wake the fuck up?! You're unintelligible! C'mon, this guy's not here to interview just me!
Sid: Mmmmm...wha-?
Nancy: He's been so sick! On the road for 3 months straight. I've been trying to feed him good food. Look at that poster on the wall! Sid's yellow! SID, WILL YOU WAKE THE FUCK UP?! D'ya want me to make you a cuppa coffee?
Sid: Mmmmm....
(Nancy gets up and staggers off camera. She returns, puts a lit cigarette in Sid's mouth. He almost drops it, then tries to put it out on the bedspread.)
Nancy: What the hell are you doing?
Sid: Mmmmm...ashtray...
DT: How soon before their deaths was this filmed?
LK: About 6 months. Wanna see some Sham 69 footage?
(An ugly lot of youths is shown being arrested at a rooftop party, then performing before a mob of crazed, throbbing punks. The lead singer pleads in a heavy accent, "Will ya stop FUCKIN' FIGHTING out there? C'mon, every time we play I gotta make a fuckin' speech! STOP FIGHTIN' and 'ave a fuckin' GOOD TIME FOR A CHANGE!")
LB: This is incredible!
LK: It's an exhausting film to watch. It's like, S and M.
LB: How long will it be?
LK: 100 minutes. You wanna get the hell outta here?
LB: Yeah. How about Chinatown?
LK: ...um...Christ I'm spacing out. No, Chinatown's too far from home and I might pass out on the way back. Do you like pierogies?
LB: Oh, God, yes! Where do you want to go?
LK: Um, do you like the Veselka on Ninth Street? Or the Kiev?
LB: This is great! I can never get anyone I know to eat Eastern European food! How about the Ukrainian Home on Second Avenue?
LK: Better still! I eat there twice a week! Can we please take a cab? A subway would kill me.
LB: The RR is so close...
LK: No, please, a cab.
LB: People in college used to make fun of me for making homemade pierogies.
LK: You're Slavic?
LB: Yes, half Slovenian, half German sort of. There are so many Slavic people in New Wave!
LK: Really! The titles for the film will list a crew with almost entirely Polish or Slavic names! It's amazing! You know, four people involved with this project have died so far.
DT: I have a premonition of death and I think working with Lech will be the cause of it.

BOOKS BY ARTISTS

An exhibition of over 60 artists' books from the collection of ART METROPOLE, curated by Tim Guest, will preview at the gallery of the Metropolitan Toronto Library, November 20 to December 24, 1980.

ABRAMOVIĆ, Marina/ULAY
ACCONCI, Vito
ANDERSON, Laurie
APPLE, Jacki
APPLEBROOG, Ida
ART-LANGUAGE
BALDESSARI, John
BARTOLINI, Luciano
BEUYS, Joseph
BOETTI, Alighiero
BROODTHAERS, Marcel
BROUWN, Stanley
BURDEN, Chris
BURGIN, Victor
BYARS, James Lee
CAGE, John
CARRION, Ulysses
CLEMENTE, Francesco
DARBOVEN, Hanne
DE JONG, Constance
DUCHAMP, Marcel
EL LISSITSKY
ENGLISH, Rose/Jacky LANSLEY/Sally POTTER
FULTON, Hamish
GENERAL IDEA
GILBERT & GEORGE
GREYSON, John
HILLER, Susan
KNOWLES, Christopher
LE WITT, Sol
MACUNIAS, George
MERZ, Mario
MURRAY, Ian
NANNUCCI, Maurizio
NAUMANN, Bruce
ONTANI, Luigi
OPPENHEIM, Dennis
ROSLER, Martha
ROT, Dieter
RUSCHA, Ed
SCHNEEMANN, Carolee
SCHWARZKOGLER, Rudolf
SNOW, Michael
ŚWIDIŃSKI, Jan
TOT, Endre
ULAY / Marina ABRAMOVIĆ
VOSTELL, Wolf/Dick HIGGINS
WARHOL, Andy
WILSON, Robert

CATALOGUE AVAILABLE

A catalogue, including critical essays and a guide to the exhibition, will be available from mid-November. Germano Celant's important 'Book as Artwork 1960/72' text, long out of print, will be reprinted here in French and English.

For information on the exhibition or the catalogue contact Tim Guest, Art Metropole, 217 Richmond Street West, Toronto, Canada M5V 1W2. (416) 977-1685

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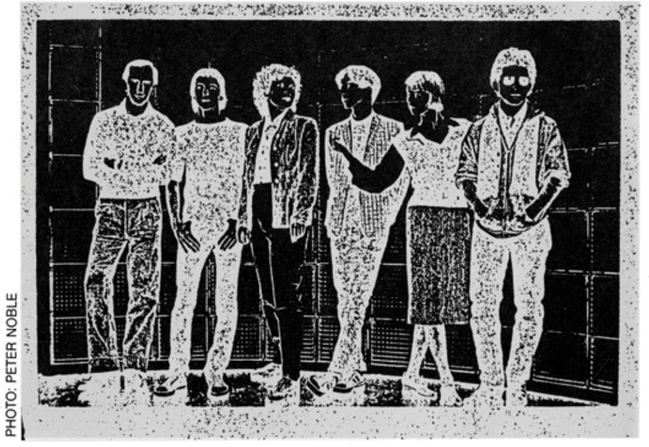


PHOTO: PETER NOBLE

MARTHA AND THE MUFFINS

PETER NOBLE TALKS WITH MARK GANE AND MARTHA JOHNSON.

Noble: In July you finished recording your second album *Trance and Dance*...sounds like a pretty psychedelic title to me. *Luna Park* reminds me of *Echo Beach* because you have chosen yet another setting for the song-title and you've written a lyrical scenario around it. Yet, whereas *Echo Beach* was an imaginary setting, *Luna Park* is in fact a place that actually exists.

Gane: Did exist. There's a lot more fact in *Luna Park*, although, when you read the lyrics you'll probably say, ''Fuck, this stuff is crazy!'' I bought this book entitled *Delirious New York* about a year ago. Actually it stemmed from this show that I saw at the Guggenheim done by the *Office for Metropolitan Architecture* (OMA). It was a collection of architects and conceptual artists and they put out this book which primarily dealt with the history of New York through the means of architecture, as seen through the eyes of political and sociological theorists and behavioral psychologists. Basically their theory about New York was that it was originally a huge laboratory for experimentation using architecture as the catalyst. There's an entire section dedicated to Coney Island at the turn of the century, which apparently, for a very brief period of time was technologically the most advanced place on earth. Everytime something new was invented like the electric light bulb, they'd say, ''Great, now we can have bathing at night.'' Any technological inventions, the telephone, the lightbulb or the skyscraper, were incorporated into this amusement park called Luna Park, which used to be a part of Coney Island. Apparently, this is the amazing

thing, all of that was destroyed. Coney Island still exists, but all of those other crazy and magnificent things burned down years ago. The song is just about a laboratory condition in terms of a very experimental time in human history when the industrial revolution created things that people could immediately react to. So there's this incredible amusement part using the latest in technology, and people are walking around saying, ''Holy fuck, look at this stuff!''

Noble: The Muffins have always provided non-commercial B-sides on their British single releases. *Saigon* had the double-grooved instrumental entitled *Copacabana*. One groove would play the song forwards, but if the needle landed on the alternate groove, the listener would be able to hear the same instrumental recorded backwards. *About Insomnia* had an experimental instrumental entitled *146* (one song for six people) which was based upon a random number system (rhythm-wise and beat-wise). What can we expect from the next single?

Gane: The next single in Britain is going to be a re-recorded version of *Suburban Dream* and we wrote a B-side called *Girl Fat*. I was actually going to write a song a long time ago based on the theory that girls have an extra fatty layer under their skin so that they can swim a lot longer than boys because they don't get as cold. Girls are generally better swimmers I think, and a lot of it has to do with girl fat. Tim and Carl went into the studio and provided a drum and bass line. I went in afterwards and laid down some guitar, prepared piano and other noises. Andy and Martha Ladly played sax and trombone. Martha Johnson made up some lyrics on the spot. It starts off sounding like a really great progressive rock number, but then it slowly degenerates into sheer idiocy.

Noble: Has the group ever encountered any strange incidents whilst gigging on the European continent?

Johnson: I remember one time we were driving from Manchester to Norwich. While we were on the motorway our tour manager Jerry forgot to check the gas level. All of a sudden we stopped dead on the spot. He had to get out and hitch-hike back to the town about three miles up the road. While we were sitting in the car this woman drove up and parked in front of us and we thought, ''Oh she's probably come to see what's wrong.'' She got out of her car and continued to walk right past us. Andy rolled down the window and said, ''It's really okay because somebody has already gone for help.'' She didn't even acknowledge him. There was a dead cat behind the van so she picked it up. Rigor mortis had already set in so it looked like a really stiff cat. She picked it up, threw it into the bushes, walked back to her car and drove away. Everybody looked at one another with the kind of expression that read ''What?''

Noble: How was Paris?

Johnson: The place we played in Paris was called the Bains Douche. We couldn't believe it, but it was a converted bathhouse. It had a pool and everything. They were filling it up with water.

Gane: It was really weird. Did you ever see the new version of *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers?*

Noble: Yes.

Gane: Do you remember those mud baths where there were these plastic curtains hanging down? Well, it was sort of like that. It looked really creepy. There was this huge pool in the middle of this particular venue. It had this giant hose. For some reason they spent two hours filling it up with water. Nobody fell into it because it was located at the other side of the room beside the wall.

Johnson: We were afraid that we were going to get thrown in the pool because it was the very last night of the tour. Last nights on tour are notorious for having the roadies play tricks on the band.

Gane: The only thing they did was take away the most important drum cymbal without telling Tim. During *Echo Beach* he went to hit it and it wasn't there. I was playing and all of a sudden I heard the drums going really crazy. I turned around and he's sitting there with this completely shocked expression on his face, flailing at the air, 'cause the cymbal was gone. The people were enthusiastic, but the sound was just horrible. The concert was also broadcast live over Paris radio to about 600,000 people.

Johnson: We were warned about playing a club in Amsterdam called the Milky Way. It's a notorious hangout for stoners. They have an entire area which is padded with mattresses and oriental rugs. They're really filthy! People lay all over these things and they get completely stoned out of their minds. You can buy chunks of hash over the counter, it's just like ordering beer. Everybody told us this particular audience never gets excited, they're really laid back, stoned and they don't clap much or anything. Well, when the time came to get on stage everybody in the audience went mental. They got up, jumped around and fell on top of each other a lot.

Noble: Have you been rubbing shoulders with the rock elite?

Gane: When we first toured England back in February of 1980 we went to the BBC radio station to do an interview and Rick Wakeman was walking out with what I presume to be his manager. Rick Wakeman's much taller in real life as compared to his photographs. He was really tanned and he had this enormous fur coat on. He looked rich, that's for sure. His manager was considerably smaller and had dark hair. This DJ introduced us to Wakeman and Martha Ladly asked, ''Oh, which one's Rick Wakeman?'' Wakeman and his manager started pointing to each other and saying, ''That's him.''

Noble: During your first visit to England the group lip-synched *Echo Beach* on the popular BBC music show 'Top of the Pops.'

Gane: It felt like a Fellini movie because the Top of the Pops set was this huge room that contained about a dozen different stages. They've got all these bands setting up at the same time because they shoot them one after another. The U.K. Subs (when they were still together) were across from us. Down at the other end of the set were The Beat. It was just a big room filled with all of these tacky stages. They give you these plastic cymbals while you're lip-synching so that the drums won't drown out everything. They also put covers over the drums so they don't make a loud noise, which, in effect, enables you to hear the song being played back on the tape. It takes an entire day to lip-synch one song because you have to contend with soundchecks and rehearsals, and then when the evening rolls around they finally tape the show. They fill the studio with a few hundred twelve year old kids and they herd them around depending on what band they're shooting at the time.

Johnson: They didn't really know who Martha and the Muffins were because we taped this show a few weeks before *Echo Beach* hit the Top 10 on the British AM charts. It was actually pretty funny because a lot of the kids wanted our autographs, but they didn't know who we were. I can remember we were on stage in between takes and some of the kids came up to us and said, ''Can we have your autograph?'' After we finished signing our names the kids took the paper, looked at it and then they looked back at us and said, ''Who are you?'' Everyone in the band looked at one another and couldn't stop laughing. I was trying to keep a straight face by saying, ''Oh... umm...er...we're Martha and the Muffins.''



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NINA HAGEN



PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD ARMAS

INTERVIEW BY PATRICK MATA AND CECE COLE

Nina Hagen has emerged from behind the Iron Curtain to rock 'n' roll stardom throughout Europe. The striking twenty-five year old singer/songwriter is now a citizen of the free world and has a West German visa. But her home, she says, is ''Not on this earth.'' With record sales of over half a million in Germany alone and two lps for CBS International, she is planning to conquer America.

Miss Hagen speaks English with a thick accent, and she began talking about her early days in the East.

''I was twenty years in East Germany. In school I had lessons in Marxism and Leninism, powerful lessons in Communism, in our history and that the Soviet Union is our Big Brother. It's really fucked up. It's a very schizophrenic feeling for the children, that they have to be very revolutionary and part of this organization where you learn to sing songs about the Proletariet Revolution. It's a little bit of madness.

''Television is very much public relations for the old country. The films are always propaganda. There is no art and there are no New Waves, never.''

Nina however, is definitely of the New Wave variety. Her shocking pink hair is a mess of dreadlocks and her fashion is a mixture of second-hand, military and Woolworth's. Hagen gained her liberty soon after her stepfather, a famous folk singer, was banned from East Germany.

(Of her real father, Nina says only, ''He is a sleeping pill addict. In the War he was always in Nazi prisons because he's half Jewish. I have no contact with him.'')

''When I was ten,'' she recites with deliberation, ''there came a man into my mother's life and his name was Wolf Biermann. He was a political enemy of the country and he was very critical of the whole system. He made theatre pieces, songs and records, but he was not allowed to release them in the East. So he made them for the West and everyone was knowing him, East and West.

''One day it was possible for him to perform a big concert in the West for CBS. Every station was carrying it ant it was going for over six hours. On the next day the East German government wrote in their papers that he was not allowed to come back in their country anymore because he is destructive. Too revolutionary.

''It was November '76, and I started to write a letter to the government that Biermann is part of my family and that he is very important to my profession as a singer. He is my idol. And I told them they have to let me go. If they didn't let me go, I would become the second enemy like him.''

Nina was already famous in East Germany. She had been singing around in different groups and writing some commercial songs, hoping to get a chance to go to song festivals in West Germany or Switzerland. ''This letter was my big chance. I was allowed to go. Many of my friends did the same thing and they are all out now.''

Free in West Berlin, Nina joined a political rock/theatre band. Together they toured for half a year and made her first album, 'Nina Hagen Band.' She soon became dissatisfied with the group, ''They had some good ideas and I thought it was possible for them to come on a new trip with me. But they couldn't change and they couldn't follow my ideas.''

The second album, 'Unbehagen,' (which means Ill At Ease) with the same band, was made largely to fulfill her contract and she split from them shortly thereafter. She explains, ''I had to make the best of it. I had to follow them because it's a male chauvinistic musician trip and I wasn't strong enough.''

Both albums are sung in German and contain high-energy rock and roll, some operatic ballads and a touch of reggae. Nina's vocal quality can change at a moment's notice from the harsh gutteral orders of a Fraulein Gestapo to ethereal highs of a mad angel in some heavenly choir. ''I am a good imitator,'' she says, ''so I found out this opera voice very early.''

Nina is not shy about expressing herself. In a song called 'Bow-wow' she growls: I'm your doggie/bitecha in the leg/and in the balls/piss all over ya/shit on ya too/shaddup!/.

'Nina Hagen Band' has a version of the Tubes' classic 'White Punks on Dope' called 'TV Glotzer,' which means 'TV Glue' and is about Hagen's experiences in the West.

''I freaked out about what they have here,'' said Nina. ''Chewing gum and rubber candies and the whole thing. Of course I was smoking a lot of pot and things like that; and so, I freaked out! I started to be a television addict because it was in colour. I was twenty-one. In the West, I found television in colour, hashish, marijuana, and candies and I became very fat. I moved to London where I met Arrianne (lead singer of the Slits) and she was treating and fascinating me so that I would stop eating and stop this lazy trip.''

''Then you got into aggression?''

''No. That was coming later in Holland, where cocaine is so easy to get. It's an addiction too.''



While Nina was in Amsterdam looking for new band members, she made a film with Hermann Brood, her ex-lover and Holland's hottest rocker, and Lene Lovich called 'Cha Cha.' ''It was a very funny time and I was very happy, but the film is not so good. It's about Hermann Brood. It's his story and it's his film and I just play a part in it. The film is very heroin lazy because he is....an addict.''

Nina gazes at Ferdinand, who has been seated across the table. ''I like Amsterdam, something happened. Amsterdam is a very holy town somehow....In the way that you can hear them...and feel them.''

''Who?''

''Your friends from home. The voices from the Twilight Zone,'' she said seriously.

(Not Rod Serling?!) I started singing the show's theme song.

''No!'' Nina interrupts. ''Not them. Not the bloody ghosts! The real angels. You hear them! You can speak with them in Amsterdam sometimes.'' She giggles.

Dutch born Ferdinand Karmelk is Nina's beau of one year and guitarist of their new band. He formerly played with Hermann Brood. When he and Nina met it was love at first sight. They tattooed each other's names on their arms, and then took off to the Residential Treatment Center at Broadhurst Manor. There Ferdinand was able to kick a junk habit of five years through Neuro-Electric Therapy. Now the two of them are in the U.S. putting together a band for Nina's first English language record.

''What would be the greatest thing in the world for you?''

Nina answers without hesitation, ''That I could have a small talk with Jesus again.''

''Again?''

''My fist meeting with Jesus was on my first LSD trip. I was in Poland illegally. I was pregnant in the fourth month, and I was taking my first LSD trip because it was destiny. It was just the right moment, otherwise it wouldn't have happened because Nature brings you things. Nature also brings you bad things, but it's always good from Nature. Otherwise, everything would be hell...and that's madness! So anyway, I was eighteen and I took it with some friends from Poland and then, I was going mad after a while because I had pain in my stomach and it was going up to the brain and back to the stomach and there was no help. It was just madness. It was just hell and I thought this was forever. 'Now I am in hell forever!' This was really terrible and it was too bad. It was painful and I was alone and it was madness. And Jesus was calling my name,'' she said with the utmost sincerity.

''NNNNiiinnnaaa, NNNiiinnnaaa....I'm coming!'' Ferdinand teased.

''No!'' she exclaimed. ''He was saying 'Nina,' just like that and I was hearing! Aha! There is somebody, thank you! What can I do, What can I do? And then He said 'Just die, give it up. Otherwise you will never lose this pain.' And I said 'Zank you! Okay, I'm gonna die!' And then I was afraid when I die...when I'm dead. But I was in hell and dying was the only way out. And I was just relaxed, because He was there and I was feeling Him. There was such a strong feeling of love, I never had before, and this was the solution. The answer to everything, of my whole fucked up existence. And then I died, and I turned around and I saw Him sitting there, in the corner. He was so happy that I found Him and it was too much! I felt this big, big love for me and for Him, and it was the love between a brother and a sister. He was sitting there flashing love. It was not sexual, it was free and wild. And I could ask Him all that I wanted to know. He was showing me very special things. I was asking very many questions and I was getting answers to things I didn't know before.''

(Maybe she knows something..).. ''Will there be a big war soon?''

Nina raises her fist. ''Africa must be free! That is why I have dreadlocks. To show that I am part of them.''

''What are your political beliefs? You've said you're a Communist.''

''Yeah. I think Communism is paradise. Because there is no money there is everybody on the same level, and you can only be there and stay there when you have no private thing. When you are the whole thing. When you are them all, when you are not anymore part of the universe, when you are the universe. At this point you give up your whole ego trip and identity.''

''But is there freedom for rock and roll in Communism?''

''In paradise, yeah.''

''Is it possible?''

''That Communism is paradise, yeah.''

''But does it exist?''

''Noooo,'' she moaned. ''Yeah,'' looking up, ''Up there....at home. But not on this earth nowhere.''



HAZEL HENDERSON



HAZEL HENDERSON IS A SELF-TAUGHT ECONOMIST, BORN IN ENGLAND IN 1933. SHE HAS BEEN THE ADVISER TO MANY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, INCLUDING THE CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT. SHE IS A DIRECTOR OF THE COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC PRIORITIES, NEW YORK CITY, AND THE WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE, AND IS A MEMBER OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S ECONOMIC TASK FORCE. HER FIRST BOOK, A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS, CREATING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, G.P. PUTNAM, 1978, HAS GONE INTO SEVERAL PRINTINGS. EARLY IN 1981 ANCHOR/DOUBLEDAY WILL PUBLISH HER NEW BOOK, THE POLITICS OF RECONCEPTUALIZATION (EDITED BY BILL STRACHAN).

WHAT PASSES AS FUTURISM IS OFTEN A FORM OF CORPORATE PROJECTION: "FUTURISTS" ARE HIRED TO STUDY HOW INSTITUTIONS IN POWER CAN MAINTAIN THAT POWER IN THE FACE OF WIDE-RANGING INTERFERENCES. ON THE CONTRARY, HAZEL HENDERSON, BELIEVES THAT THE STRUCTURES WHICH GIVE RISE TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARE LEAST EQUIPPED TO SOLVE THEM. IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH WILLOUGHBY SHARP, SHE DISCUSSES HER ALTERNATE MODEL, BASED ON BIOLOGICAL CHANGE, AND ACTIVATED BY A COALITION OF CITIZEN'S MOVEMENTS.

INTERVIEW BY WILLOUGHBY SHARP

W.S.: What would you say is the major single problem confronting us in the New World today?

H.H.: The whole idea of there being a major single problem doesn't fit with the ecology of my ideas. In my model of what is happening on the planet today, what we see is a whole set of sub-systems on the planet earth all going into crisis together, whether it's the additional emission rate of carbon monoxide into the atmosphere, or the accelerating arms race, or the accelerating gap between the rich and poor countries, or the crisis of the monetary system, or malfunctioning technologies, or pollution. There is no way that you can prioritize any one of those issues, but there is a model of change that comes out of the biological sciences, called ''morphogenesis''. I insist on using long words because we're all going to have to learn the word ''morphogenesis''; it simply means the process by which a chrysalis turns into a butterfly. All of the sub-systems are going critical at the same time, and we must look for what is being born and what is emerging out of the disillusionment with the ligaments of the old structure. This is a much less frightening model of what's happening; that yes there is a breakdown of old structures but there is also a breakthrough which is much more difficult to understand unless you're looking for it. It may be a butterfly, that's one metaphor for it, but something is being born.

W.S.: Can you be more specific about the model you have constructed?

H.H.: One very important characteristic of the models that I use is that you cannot infer from any of the existing variables or states of the model what the

new state is going to be like. In other words, there's no reason for the chrysalis to know that it's going to become a butterfly, the primary characteristic is uncertainty. Change is one of the basic laws of the universe, you can expect surprise, the model is completely interconnected which is why it is so dynamic...

W.S.: What do you mean by "completely interconnected"?

H.H.: The interconnectedness of the planet that we are beginning to understand, at the political level, the technological level, and the social level; interconnectedness in ecological terms with the recycling of all the elements of the biosphere. We also see the interconnectedness at the sub-quantum level with the new physics.

W.S.: How do you see the interconnectedness at the sub-quantum level?

H.H.: The most basic rule that physicists have been working with and still operate within is the idea of discreet local causality; in other words, you can isolate what's happening in a certain place in space or time, and things don't affect each other at a distance unless there is some intervening medium. The last paper that Einstein did is now being criticized by the physicist J.F. Bell who theorized that either the mathematics of quantum mechanics is wrong, or that phenomenon can affect each other at a distance. The implication of this is that the interconnectedness of phenomena at the sub-quantum level is a basic characteristic of the universe, of the planet we live on, of us, our social systems, and of the eco-system. These are the kinds of models I use out of which you can expect change, you can expect surprise. "Morphogenesis" is governed by positive feedback groups which will take an initial deviation and amplify it; the amplification will push it over the threshold to a new state: a new structural state.

W.S.: How would that work?

H.H.: That's what I visualize citizen's movements as being. The citizen movements that are growing up now in industrial societies based around the problems and the anomolies, for example pollution, that are affecting people at the threshold of their sensory awareness. No expert can dissuade them that these things aren't actually happening because they can see the polluted air, they can see the urban disorder. At the point when the anomolies have reached this level, people begin communicating their private perceptions that something is very strange. They communicate with each other and then suddenly there is some type of political movement; at that point you get the model of the women's movement. Up until 1963 there were a lot of women in their little suburban kitchens in suburbia feeling that they were somehow inadequate. Then there was a catalytic analysis by Betty Friedan with a different image of what actually was happening and millions of women read that book and said, "I'm not crazy, it's a pattern and it's the society who is sick." Then they got together, communicated, and out of that came a citizen's movement. Now I remember experiencing the same thing myself when I was living in New York City, working on the problems of air pollution. In the 1960's the majority of people had never heard of such a thing as pollution. There I was in New York living by a power plant chimney, and I found that I was sensing this phenomenon but nobody else was. There was no amplification in the media so I had this gut desire to communicate; if I couldn't communicate this concern I would have had to admit that I was a hypochondriac or maybe even crazy. I sensed that my mental health and equilibrium required me to test around, write letters to people. I wrote to the mayor and said that I thought the air was very bad in this city, and he wrote back to me and said no, it was the mist rolling in from the sea. This didn't deter me because it was not a suitable explanation, and so I began knocking on politicians' doors and finally I formed a group of friends called "The Citizens For Clean Air". It was a wonderful catharsis; we all got together in a room and began embracing each other saying, "Thank God I'm not crazy." This is the process by which these new privatized perceptions can turn into social change movements. The other movement that I've been involved in is the "Movement For Corporate Accountability".

ALL OF THE SUB-SYSTEMS ARE GOING CRITICAL AT THE SAME TIME, AND WE MUST LOOK FOR WHAT IS BEING BORN AND WHAT IS EMERGING OUT OF THE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE LIGAMENTS OF THE OLD STRUCTURE.

W.S.: What is that exactly?

H.H.: Well, I began to realize, out of my concern for air pollution in New York City and the United States as a whole, that urban air's worst problem was a result of automobile exhausts. There I was trying to fight city hall and I realized the problem was in Detroit. I got together with a bunch of young lawyers from Ralph Nader's operation and we organized the "Campaign to Make General Motors Responsible". It was great fun. Social change is primarily for your own mental health, it's better than sitting around feeling frustrated. Then you learn to enjoy the chess game, so we all sat down and devised schemes to make this huge corporation listen to us. We tried a campaign with a proxy staked into it, and the proxy was sent out to the shareholders. We bought shares of stock and then we decided we would go around and try to collect big blocks of stock, sort of a wholesale operation. The company was not going to allow us to use the proxy machinery, and we discovered another interesting thing; the proxy fighting firms on Wall St. that work with mergers and acquisitions won't work with dissidents who want to put social issues on the proxy statements. We identified big blocks of stock and I found someone in the insurance business who had been helpful to me in my air pollution fight because air pollution was causing a 700% increase in their disability claims due to emphysema, and days lost from work. I took my Nader lawyer friends to see the presidents of some of the biggest insurance companies and they were very polite after the initial shock. We said, 'Look, you have 200,000 shares of General Motors and we want you to support our campaign mainly because it's your financial responsibility.' They were taking their policy holders' money and investing it in stock of the company which was producing 35% by tonnage of all of America's air pollution, causing these same policy holders losses. We said to them: 'you're violating your trust, your're financial trust with this money.'

W.S.: And they had not even considered that before...

H.H.: No, they hadn't considered this so we had a little reality theatre in the board room, and then they said they would bring it up at the next board meeting. I had a lot of gusto, I asked them if they would call up the presidents of other insurance companies that I didn't know so that I could go to see them, and I think they felt that as long as they were having to deal with me, they might just as well inflict the same misery on all the others. They made these appointments for us to go and see all these other insurance companies. General Motors management began to get these very nasty concerned letters from other corporate executives holding big blocks of their stock saying: "Why are you making it so difficult for us to hold General Motors stock?" We went to the shareholders meeting; we kept the president of General Motors on his feet for six hours and they were shocked enough at this whole thing that they did appoint three public relations directors. Not the ones we wanted. They appointed a black leader who had been working in the Philadelphia ghettos and other people. These kinds of campaigns are what I would call the "Each one teach one" model. People in citizen's groups are teaching each other about ecology, they're teaching each other about social injustice, and the impacts of large corporations. The interesting thing is I never went past high school, and even if I had wanted to go to college and learn all of this stuff properly as it were and get myself a degree, there were no universities offering courses on global resource problems, pollution, and corporate accountability. There was no other way to teach myself except by doing it. During the late sixties until the mid-seventies I was organizing social change groups. I organized a group called "The Public Interest Economic Center" so that we could get volunteer economists to do the sort of things that Ralph Nader's lawyers were doing to help citizen's groups. I then organized a group with friends called "Environment for Full Employment" because we got so angry at the way that large corporations were portraying their sets of options as the only possible choices; 'either you like our nuclear power plant or you freeze to death in the dark', and we were saying 'no that's absurd, we have a whole range of options.' I was organizing all those kinds of groups and where my future was concerned, it meant being a social change activist. Then I decided that the budding futurist movement that I saw developing wasn't very realistic. They had a lot of Buck Rogers press releases that were coming out of General Motors, showing a lot of clunky hardware with a lot of tinker toy stuff about the way the future was going to be, spaceships etc., and I thought that this was the height of unreality. They had a lot of biases, technocratic biases that they weren't really examining.

SOCIAL CHANGE IS PRIMARILY FOR YOUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH

W.S.: What specifically?

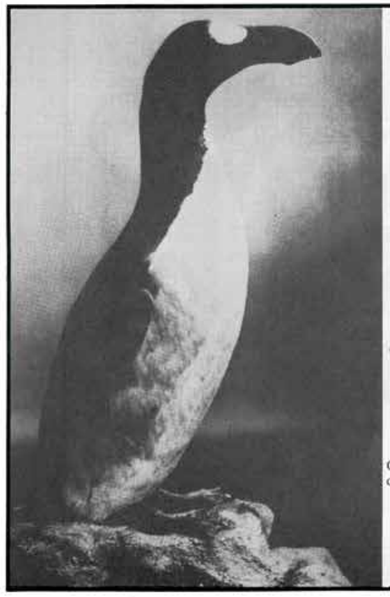
H.H.: Well, specifically the idea that the future was a new configuration of hardware, and I'd always been much more interested in the software, the value systems, and the people's goals.

W.S.: Isn't it the hardware that changes the software possibilities? If you are to produce a new technical facility, then you change the very possibilities of life. Television for example.

H.H.: That's true, but then again it's not 'either/or', it's both. We build our buildings and they shape us, we shape our technology and then it shapes us, there is always an interplay between those two things. What I saw was a seeding of technological determinism. There was a seeding of the human will toward some sort of technologically determined future which upset me a great deal. There seemed to be no exploration of other visions, of alternative futures based on other sets of values, other sorts of ideas. I went to the futures gathering that they had in Washington D.C. in 1975 and immediately organized a Third World forum with one quarter of the whole enrollment of the conference (2,000). There were Third World people, women, blacks, gays, and everybody whose future visions were being totally denied by technocratic determinism. All the panels were dominated by white middle-aged male

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bureaucrats within corporations or government agencies. We held our alternative thing, we recycled a lot of the programs, and opened the discussion by pointing out that visions of the future are all based on one's value system. Apparently it was taboo to discuss value systems, but of course we felt that this was the only ballgame in town. After the frustration on the second day, I was sent off to speak at the plenary program by the Third World forum. I was enormously nervous because the other five men on the panel had very careful presentations, charts and graphs and all the rest of it, while I was thrown up there with just a few scribbled notes. I just made an impassioned, emotional rejection of what I called the whole cartesian trip. To my utter amazement, when I had finished my presentation a thousand people in the room got up and cheered. I thought I must have been validating some other form of reality that wasn't being expressed. It was from that meeting that I began to consider myself a futurist and I will only continue as such if I can keep the tradition alive within future studies, that there is such a thing as right brain futurism that deals with visions and values. Envisioning visible alternative futures and then acting in the present to work toward those desirable alternatives is really the very essence of futurism.

W.S.: How exactly do you want to shape the future of futurism?

H.H.: Of paramount importance is the danger we have now with the imbalance between the have and the have not nations. If we don't deal with the basic danger of imbalance in resources, we're going to have to deal with the danger of war which is much greater. If we can mitigate the danger of this imbalance, that in itself will do the most to mitigate the

... AND MORE BUREAUCRATS IN WASHINGTON WHO ARE IN EXISTENTIAL PAIN.

dangers of war. We need to supplant the old competitiveness in institutions, the fragmented institution of partial visions and narrow intentionality, with a much larger and more comprehensible model of what's happening. This model is more explanatory and therefore more attractive. People are attracted to it. What I have discovered through my work in Washington in the last five years, (as a member of the advisory council for the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment), is that there are more and more bureaucrats in Washington who are in existential pain. They see this much more comprehensible model, they see that there is no place for them in the existing system, and they're having the enormous courage to drop out. We in the citizen's movement are saying, 'we are the safety net, come and join us.' A friend of mine did a study when he was working for the Department of Energy on an alternative solar energy based scenario and he was told that it was unAmerican. He called me and I told him we were a safety net and that we would publish his work, but that he'd have to accept half the salary. He did jump, and after three long years, he's back on his feet with a small consulting firm. He's published a very successful book called, ''The County Energy Plan Guidebook'', a recipe book with which citizens can map the resources in their own county to a county energy resource plan without having to deal with Washington.

W.S.: Do you see these citizen's groups as forming any sort of political party or do you see them as being independent forever?

H.H.: That is what is so exciting about all this. At the moment we do have a winning coalition but it needs to be introduced to itself. It's comprised of holistic health politics, alternative energy politics, corporate accountibility politics, environmental and consumer politics, worker, ownership and self management politics. The job is to introduce these people to one another and say, 'hey, we're different facets of the universal gem.'

W.S.: If this groundswell of citizen's participatory coalition groups were to get itself together on a national level, could they provide a political alternative, a third party to take over the existing mechanisms of government?

H.H.: I think they could, I expect some sort of viable third party to emerge out of this coalition. We're discovering the machinery, we're flexing our muscles, putting together the little neural network, and we're linking people into these possibilities at local levels.

W.S.: Would you say that one of the reasons that there hasn't been an acceptable high profile female political candidate is because of woman's hate for woman?

H.H.: No, I think it's the woman's inherent distaste for the male patriarchal, hierarchal structures. I think women really like heterarchy, information sharing, women have a different leadership model, not the 'do as I say' but the 'not as I do' model, leadership by example. You must 'be it' and I believe that's one of the reasons why women don't come forward, they have this inherent distaste for this kind of authoritative power. They don't believe in it. They don't think it's the way you do things. Women work through inciting enthusiasm around new visions, developing loyalty.

W.S.: Do you see the possibility of a woman president in the next twenty years?

H.H.:Yes I do, but the system will be changed by it. I've been pondering on some of the women leaders who have been emerging in Europe. The Margaret Thatcher type of leadership, imitative, climbing up through the male hierarchal ranks. She's the best goddamn man in the cabinet, she loves to be called the ''Iron Lady''. We all know this lost generation of women in the middle.

...FOR PEOPLE LIKE US TO GO INTO POLITICS WOULD BE LIKE TRYING TO GET DECK CHAIR SPACE ON THE TITANIC.

WHAT WE'RE DOING IS FURNISHING THE LIFEBOAT, GETTING READY FOR WHAT'S BEING BORN.

W.S.: It took a lot of courage for them to do that. They're softening up the system.

H.H.:Yes and so you have that lost generation that breaks the ground for the next wave of woman's leadership, a direct communication.

W.S.: Do you have political ambitions yourself?

H.H.: No, luckily I don't believe in structured politics. What I'm doing is what I call politics by other means.

W.S.: I think you're naive if you don't see that you have a constituency and you may not have any choice but to be forced into taking a political stand.

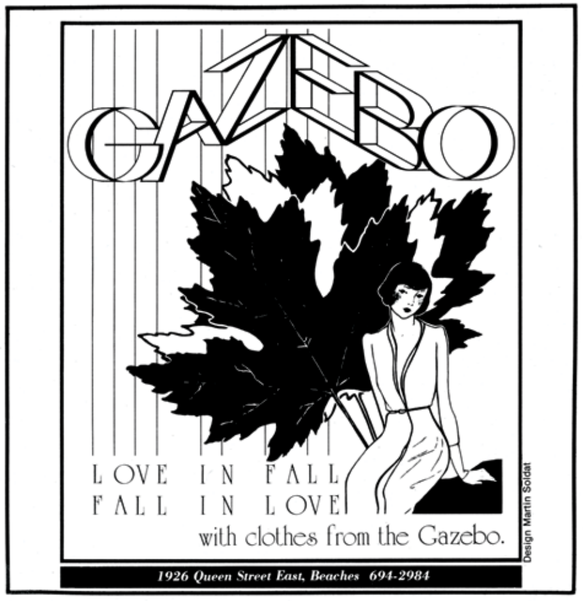
H.H.: No, I don't think so because my understanding is very similar to that of Ralph Nader who I consider a kindred spirit. He has no political ambitions at all and he's much, much better known than I'll ever be. We both understand that for people like us to go into politics would be like trying to get deck chair space on the Titanic. What we're doing is furnishing the lifeboat, getting ready for what's being born. I would cripple myself going into one structured political situation, one of those old slots in the old game. What I want to do is to continue to communicate alternative visions of what I think are desirable futures.

W.S.: After we've set up these systems which you're advocating, won't you at that point want to put people like yourself in power?

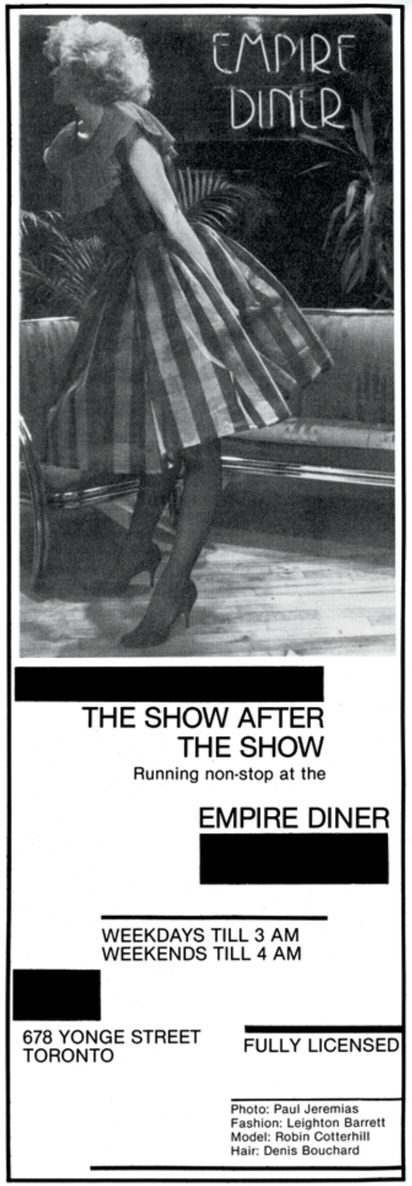
H.H.: Yes, I'll vote for people who I think embody these ideas; I might suggest them for appointments or commissions.

W.S.: Are you optimistic about the future?

H.H.:Yes, very much so. I think if you have the morphogenetic model of change that I was talking about, then more and more people who are acting on their own experience and their own senses of what's needed can reach the level of a critical mass — everything would change in the twinkling of an eye.



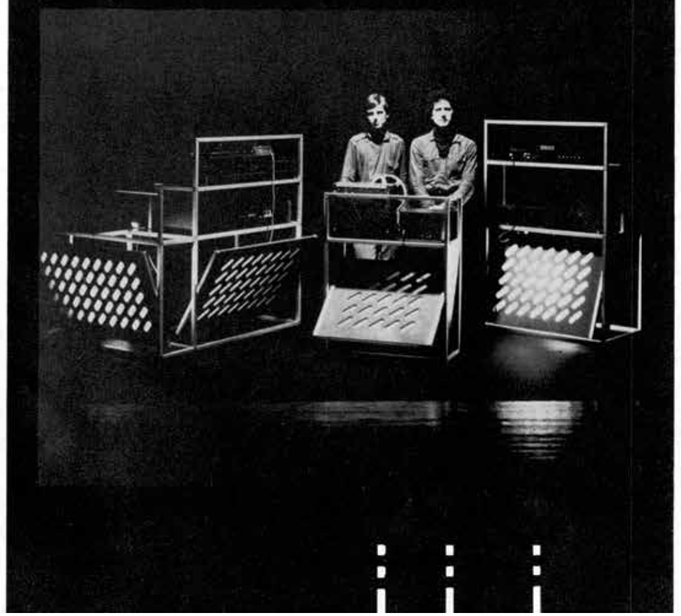




FADS FADE

AN INTERVIEW BY STEVEN DAVEY

Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, the foremost progenitors of electronic pop in the UK at the moment, are a synthetic Liverpool duo comprising Paul Humphries and Andy McCluskey. OMITD's most recent chart topper was an ode to the bomber that immortalized Hiroshima, *Enola Gay*. Impulse contacted half a Manoeuvre, Andy McCluskey, at home near the mythic Mersey.



dialtone....

STEVEN DAVEY: Operator, I want to call Liverpool, England. I have the number, I was just wondering how you go about it?

O: To dial it direct, you dial zero one one four four, which is the code for England, five one which is the code for Liverpool, and then the number...

dialtone whirr click etc...connection: click

ELDON GARNET: It's clicking through...

ring ring

EG: It's ringing...

SD: Hello?

ANON: Hello?

SD: Is Andy McClusky there?

A: Half a sec, please. Hello? He's not here. I'll go and get him.

SD: I'm calling from Toronto.

A: Right. I'll go and get him now. One second.

SD: I've been put on hold transatlantically!

EG: That's pretty good. He's probably taking a bath.

ANDY McCLUSKEY: Hello?

SD: Hello, Andy. This is Steven Davey in Toronto at Impulse Magazine. Polygram has set up an interview for us. Are you available?

AM: Right.

SD: What's doing in Liverpool?

AM: It's approaching Christmas and full of Christmas shoppers. I've been shopping today.

SD: It's similar here. The plazas are ablaze in red and green. I wanted to start with some technical information for our readers. A discography of sorts. The first single was on Factory Records...

AM: Yes, that was *Electricity* and *Almost*.

SD: Was that the first recorded appearance of Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark?

AM: On the *Street To Street* Liverpool compilation LP there was *Julia's Song*. That's when we were *The Id*. The song was written by Paul and myself and a young lady. It didn't actually come out until after *Electricity* although it was recorded eight months before-hand.

SD: What was the Dalek I *connection?*

AM: The *Dalek I Love You Group*, as it was called at the time. There were quite a few people in Liverpool who became involved at various stages. It was in between *The Id* and *Orchestral Manoeuvres*, but I left to start manoeuvering. Eventually there were only two people left in *Dalek*. And then David Balfe left to start *Zoo Records* and join *A Teardrop Explodes*. It's quite incestuous.

SD: When you signed with DinDisc, *you built your own recording studio. It's in Liverpool?*

AM: That's where I am right now. I've just been playing something at the moment. I've left all the synths on hold, they're playing themselves.

SD: I hope you don't lose their memory.

AM: *Gramophone Suite*, it's called. It's a sixteen track facility. It's reasonable stuff. We invested as much as we could afford to. There's just the two of us. Paul and I need the studio to work in. Most of the second LP, *Organization*, was recorded here in demo form and then re-recorded in larger studios. *Echo And The Bunnymen* were just in doing demos.

SD: Orchestral Manoeuvres *has been tagged a technological combo.*

AM: For a so-called technology band, we use quite simple equipment. Mostly small Japanese synthesizers — Roland and Korg and a Prophet 5. It's a godsend because it's programmable. Paul doesn't have to mess around with it onstage. He has so many other things to control. The tapes and so on. There's four of us now. We've added a drummer and another synth player, but we've been spoiled by the tapes. It's still an important part of our set; there are things only the tape-recorder can do. To set-up a sequencer in a live situation is a bit hairy, really. Using tapes has given us a greater versatility. When we were still a two-piece, it was a bit confining, but now with the four of us we can use rhythm machines, syn drums, acoustic drums, tapes and just about anything we can get our hands on.

SD: Peter Saville has designed all of your sleeves. His cover for your first album was quite clever.

AM: When Paul and I went to *Factory Records* they told us they had this great guy who would design our sleeve, and that was Peter. He did the *Electricity* sleeve. It was black on black with really nice thermo-graph writing. You couldn't actually see it. Like Braille — you could only feel it. He's the house artist at *DinDisc* now. He had a hand in designing our live show. We're curtailled by finances, so we've yet to present the kind of program we'd like.

SD: Is it true you use Astro Turf?

AM: We do! The whole stage and the risers are covered in it. Unfortunately, the road crew has taken pieces of it home to carpet their bathrooms. We'll have to get some new stuff in. Could you hang on a second? The doorbell's ringing...

SD: Has success surprised you?

AM: Well it has, but it's such a cliche. We never anticipated this sort of thing. Paul and I started playing our music because we were fed-up with collaborating with other people who didn't want to play the songs the way we wanted them to. So we struck out with our tape-recorder because it couldn't argue back. For quite a long time, over a year, we played support to anyone who'd let us. Nobody seemed very interested. *Electricity* came out, and writers started calling us electronic pop music. They all said it was going to be a big hit and we believed them. When it wasn't, we thought we were right all along. We were going nowhere. And this year in Britain, electronic pop has really taken off. It's an amazing turn of events, especially when we were never trying to be commercial.

SD: Two of DinDisc's *other signings are Torontonians,* Nash The Slash *and* Marth And The Muffins. *What are your impressions of your labelmates?*

AM: I've only seen Nash once, so I can't really comment on his music. I like *The Muffins* when they're writing pop tunes, that's what they're best at. When they start getting experimental, it doesn't really work. Martha Ladly has left *The Muffins*, of course, and has been over here in London recording with some session musicians. She and myself and Peter Saville are thinking of putting out a ten inch EP. Peter has the idea for the sleeve. *Martha and McCluskey*. We have quite a bit in common. It should be amusing.

SD: Any other projects?

AM: Because of our concern for the music, we won't be touring much. We'll remain locked away in a studio in Liverpool, quietly keeping the music together. *Orchestral Manoeuvres* is launching off in a new direction. Our second album confused the public. It was different than what they expected. But we'll be changing again. I get bored very quickly.

SD: But you'll stay with electronics? Or is this just another novelty?

AM: The synthesizer will be with us for a while. We have enough of them hanging around! Musicians have been using synthesizers for quite some time. Electronics has a big image thanks to the Gary Numans and the John Foxxes. It is a fad and it's already showing signs of fading away. The synthesizer will triumph in spite of people like them. Technology is taking over in the studio. It's cultural change that will continue until we run out of electricity.

SD: What are your impressions of The Human League?

AM: One of the things I dislike about them is their total concern with electronics; they have this thing about playing synthesizers and nothing else. A bit narrow-minded, I think — putting blinkers on. The synthesizer is a versatile instrument, but others exist as well. They've cut off their noses to spite their faces by restricting themselves like that. They deserve to be huge. Phil Oakey should be the next David Cassidy.

SD: Everyone's copied his haircut.

AM: All the little girls will love him. He'd be a wonderful pop star. He's got all the visual makings. He just needs a couple of catchy tunes.

SD: Orchestral Manoeuvres *has a tailored non-image.*

AM: It was intentional. It didn't seem right to have a pop-star image in 1980. It is so unnecessary. We need more ordinariness and reality. So we look modern and tidy, but it's backfired. The non-image has become an image. White shirts and ties and sleeveless jumpers. Dressing-up was alright in the decadent 60's and 70's but we need to be more real today.

SD: Spandau Ballet *plays the image completely over the top in the opposite direction.*

AM: My attitude is who needs to dress up like a load of hair-dressers? They're welcome to look the way they like...

SD: It's the perfect way to grab media focus.

AM: Yes, they've done quite well in England, but they could be another three minute fashion. They are very, very strong visually. Whether they have the music to back it up is another thing. I think their name is great, though.

SD: You must be bored with people asking you the significance of your band's name. The New Musical Express *ran anagram contests.*

AM: It was carefully chosen. When we started as two guys and a tape-recorder is was rather unusual, so we chose a name that corresponded. It was the name of a song and one day we were scanning our memories for a suitably odd title. Some have read in to it — In The Dark and all that.

SD: Is there a school of silly names in Liverpool — A Teardrop Explodes, The Bunnymen, Wah!Heat, Pink Military...

AM: Everybody wanted to be different. And they wanted a title that showed that they were doing something strange.

SD: Liverpool bands must feel overawed by the shadow of The Beatles.

AM: It's something we try to ignore and shake off. *Orchestral Manoeuvres* are not from Liverpool but from the other side of the water. Outcasts, sort of. The posh side...

SD: Do you take the ferry across the Mersey?

AM: I have been known to in the past! As soon as the new Liverpool bands emerged, the press dashed north on the train looking for the new Merseybeat. We went on a nationwide TV program with Gerry Marsden, of all people, and tried to convince him that there was no such thing as the Merseybeat...

SD: And at the same time explaining it to a Mersey icon.

AM: In the 60's there was a similarity, but now all the bands sound so individual. There is a Liverpool scene but there is no Liverpool sound.

EG: Do you have any general impressions on the effect of technology throughout the world?

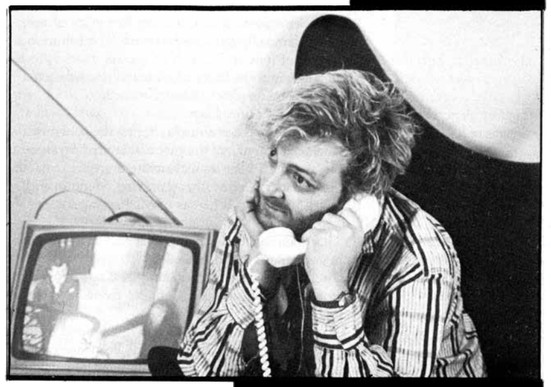
AM: Recently I've been concerned about its application. For logistical and financial reasons, technology is seldom in the right place at the right time. We have amazing capabilities, but it's used so uneconomically. I don't mean that in a financial sense. Technology is wasted, all the money spent on arms infuriates me.

EG: How do you see solving this?

AM: As for solutions, we can't even begin to talk about it on the telephone. It's a hell of a situation, really scary.

SD: One other point from my notes. The music that's coming out now seems to have a glitter influence — people like Bowie, Roxy Music, even Gary Glitter. You do a cover of a Lou Reed song. When you were fourteen, was that the music you were listening to?

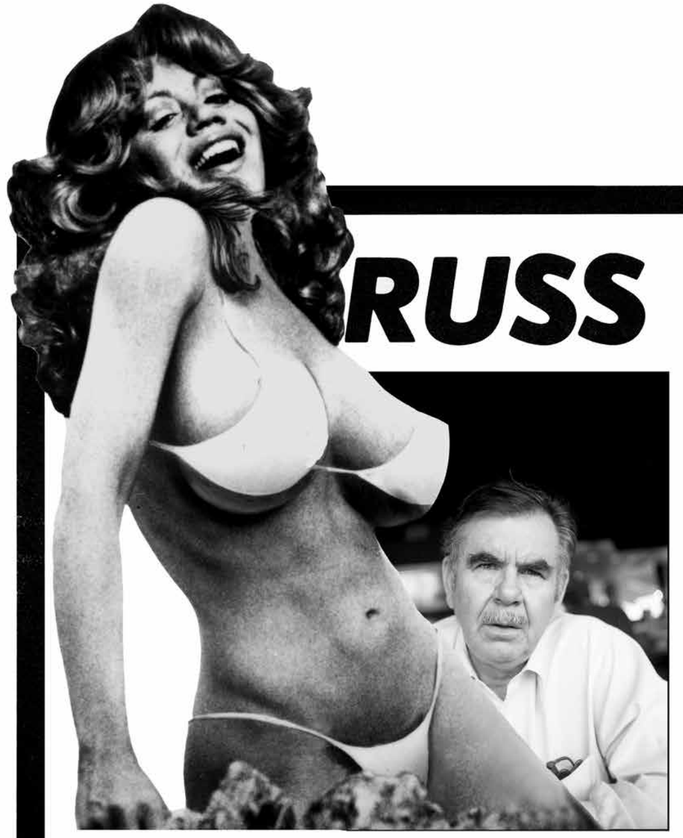
AM: When I was that age, I wasn't interested in music. I always thought pop music was a bit beneath me. It wasn't until I started writing it myself that I really became interested.



See for yourself

* Drawings by Alfred Pellan * until 18 Jan. 1981 *
* Reflections in a Quiet Pool. The Prints of David Milne * until 11 Jan. 1981 *
* Gifts to the Photography Collection * until 1 Feb. 1981 *
* Heritage: The Henry Birks Collection of Canadian Silver * 23 Jan. - 19 April *
* Masterpieces of Canadian Prints and Drawings * 10 April - 14 June *
* La Pierre Parle: Lithography in France 1848-1900 * 1 May - 14 June *
* Photography in France 1843-1920 * 16 April - 14 June *
* Greg Curnoe * 26 June - 6 Sept. *
* Echoes from a Roman Villa: Pompeian Mural Painting * from the collection of Dr. Elie Borowski * 3 July - 30 August *
* Bolognese Drawings * 11 Sept. - 8 Nov. *
* The Comfortable Arts: Spinning and Weaving in Canada * 25 Sept. - 22 Nov. *
* David Heath: A Dialogue with Solitude and SX 70 Work * 14 Dec. - 24 Jan. *
* Shanghai 1945-1950: Photographs by Sam Tata * 21 Nov. - 3 Jan. 1982 *
* From a Mighty Fortress: Prints, Drawings and Books of the Reformation Era in Coburg Collections * 4 Dec. - 31 Jan. 1982 *

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RUSS MEYER

INTERVIEWED BY
LORNE FROMER

My mind was swimming with images of amazing women; outlandishly endowed, aggressive, predatory, and never satisfied. The films surpassed my wildest fantasies — a cinematic smorgasbord of erotic delights served up piping hot on the silver screen.

Norm's is a typical California coffee spot, one of the worst places I could imagine for an interview. I'd envisioned myself sipping a drink beside a pool in Beverly Hills, admiring 'The King's' taste in exotic scenery. As soon as I entered the restaurant I recognized Russ Meyer — a husky-set man in his mid 50's, with a set of bushy eyebrows that set him apart. I introduced myself, and Russ began to apologize profusely for missing yesterday's appointment. We found a table and before I could even press RECORD...

RM: I'm working on an autobiographical film titled *The Jaws of Vixen*, using cuts from old films edited and juxtaposed. It will provide lots of sex and violence, in a tongue in cheek manner. Hopefully the audience will find it amusing, rather than looking upon it as some sort of documentary of what my films were about. The danger one faces with a film like this is to be personally gratified. I'd much rather approach it on the basis of where I fucked-up, my frailties, and shortcomings. I think people are interested in where others have stumbled and where they have failed. In spite of the success I've achieved in the film community, I'm looked at askance. That was overcome to a large degree when I went to Fox and made a couple of films there. It was delightful to have gone to the mountain, you know, at Zanuck's request.

LF: Which films did you make at 20th Century Fox?

RM: *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* and *The Seven Minutes*, based on Irving Wallace's novel. *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* turned out to be quite the cult film, despite the lack of support

from Fox, who were very much ashamed of it. I find it amusing, and at the same time sad. You make a film that the public wants very much to see every time it's shown. Even though the prints are terribly scratched, they keep turning out in hordes. The basic reason that it's held in contempt by Fox is that it had an X rating ... and that's a no-no ... it's just beyond the comprehension of those people.

LF: Russ, where do you find those women for your films?

RM: There's not that many of them around. Most of them are strippers. Almost every girl I've used is what I call a premiere stripper — a girl who made a lot of money ($2,000 - $3,000 per week) stripping.

LF: So these girls have already had a lot of experience in show-biz?

RM: They've fucked a lot! They've fucked a lot of men, and they know how to fuck. That's the main reason for their being in my films, aside from their large overbodies. They've been with all sorts of lousy shitheads. Their whole life has been provoking men. They're bright women, ringwise like a fighter. They've had a lot of knocks, been taken advantage of, and they've taken advantage of a lot of men. They're cockteasers, *provocateurs*. They make a production out of fucking.

These types of women really appeal to me, and I think other people have the same fantasy. That's what gives me the courage to go on. I live my fantasies with my films. To be competitive with major films should cost millions of dollars, so competing with them in the same marketplace is gratifying ... and now with the newest film going on television ... right in Hollywood's backyard ... all those big tits and olympic fucking ... I can just see it in Beverly Hills.

LF: Do you see your films as a carry-over from Vaudeville?

RM: I see them more as an extension of the comic strip. I suppose if Al Capp had his say, he would have made films somewhat like mine; with dumb muscular men with I.Q.'s of 37, and outrageously cantilevered ladies, who are the smart ones, and the sexually-aggressive partners in any relationship.

LF: Do you get a lot of flack from men about that?

RM: From men? Oh no, I think men like sexually aggressive females.

LF: Don't men object to being portrayed as dumb hulks? Women react when they are portrayed as the dumb broad sex-object.

RM: It's unfortunate that there isn't more reaction. I would welcome it, because reaction like that breeds controversy.

LF: Do you receive strong reactions from feminists about the way that women are portrayed in your films?

RM: Not enough! I do everything I can to bait them, but by and large they all like my films. They realize it's all a big put-on. But I remember one college screening where quite an attractive woman ran screaming down the aisle shouting, "You ought to have a stick of dynamite shoved up your ass". The whole audience erupted, and she ran out sobbing. That was the most dramatic encounter I've ever had. I reached her, I really got to her. I remember going to Yale with a friend of mine. We tried to get some feminists to debate with us. We finally had to hire them at $100.00 each.

LF: Was Beneath the Valley of the Ultra Vixens *the first film where a narrator was used extensively?*

RM: I've always had a summation at the end of my films, to point out where all the characters went wrong ... not where they went right, but where they failed. Too much good is a bad thing! In the film *Lorna*, for example, everybody has a hell of a good time sinning and funning, but somewhere along the line they have to pay the piper. In those days it wasn't really the censor you had to worry about ... but the legal bodies and church people. This was an opiate that the Church just couldn't handle. So we made a morality play out of it. In the end the girl would turn into a pillar of salt for having turned around, and looked back ... and there was the chorus and the righteous preacher who would thunder out invectives. And she died, you know ... so it was all right. Now today, if I did the same film I would have her cheat, and debase, and have great fun throughout the film. If the husband was a cuckold to begin with, he remains so till the end — fucking around and having a good time. You can do that today, but back in 1960 you would have had problems. So I've always chosen that recapitulation at the end: always tongue-in-cheek. In the picture *Cherry, Harry and Raquel*, I added a great statement on the evils of dope. I don't know if you saw *Reefer Madness*, but they intentionally set out to make that film as a serious statement about the evils of dope, realizing that they were also exploiting it to make money. In *Cherry*, we came right out thundering about the proliferation of dope in our society, dragging the young people down. That's an example of where you can make a statement and immediately draw gales of laughter from the audience ... the demon weed!

So my point is this: there are times when one has to be his own censor. There was one case that was so ludicrous ... whenever a girl's pussy was in a scene, we used a motorman's punch to physically eradicate it. We did it as a joke, but that's how the film was released. When you punch each frame you can't be that precise, so you end up with this white hot ball of fire on the screen.

LF: Was Vixen *actually shot in Canada?*

RM: No. In the beginning I went up to Canada and shot totem poles and seaplanes landing, but most of the film was actually shot in Northern California.

LF: I remember that wonderful short scene of the Mountie putting his pants on after a roll in the grass with Vixen. How did the Mountie enter into the story?

RM: Oh, we thought it was a good sight gag. They objected to that scene in Canada, and wanted it cut out. The Mountie represents such purity, I thought he deserved a good shot! Why not? The RCMP wrote to the FBI requesting the scene be cut ... not an official request ... but we stood fast.

LF: How would you evaluate today's market for independently produced, sexually-oriented material as compared with the 60's?

RM: I don't think there is a feasible way of working in these days of multi-million dollar hype and television rights. The market has been shot down by increasing pressure from newspapers, local censors, and official bodies. The most damaging are the newspapers that refuse to print an advertisement for x-rated or non-rated material. I'm glad I was able to get in there when I did and make my name and my money before they realized what was going down. I think very few people will be making films like I make — buffoon-oriented, tits and ass, jokey sex — simply because the market isn't there any more.

The thing I have to fight now is becoming establishment. Unless sex becomes something very special ... why should anybody go see it? What is changing is the cassette market, cable television and the videodisc phenomena. We've just concluded an arrangement with ONTV to broadcast *Beneath the Valley of the Ultra Vixens* and *Cherry, Harry and Raquel* at 3:00 AM. So we're now hitting peopole who would not normally go to the theatre, people over 33 who are now buying cassettes. However, I don't think that filmmakers can shoot strictly for the cassette market. I think a film has to be a box office success to be a success in the cassette field.

LF: What about your infatuation with women endowed with such oversized bosoms?

RM: Obsession is better. They're the kind of woman that I like personally — my hang-up, my fantasy, my perversion, my obsession, my shortcoming, and my fortune. The basic trademark of my films.

LF: How would you describe the most influential woman in your life?

RM: Well, my mother has been extremely important to me. She allowed me a tremendous amount of freedom in everything I did. I can recall the days when I was using the family bathtub to develop the girlie pictures I was working on. Of course she had an enormous bust ...

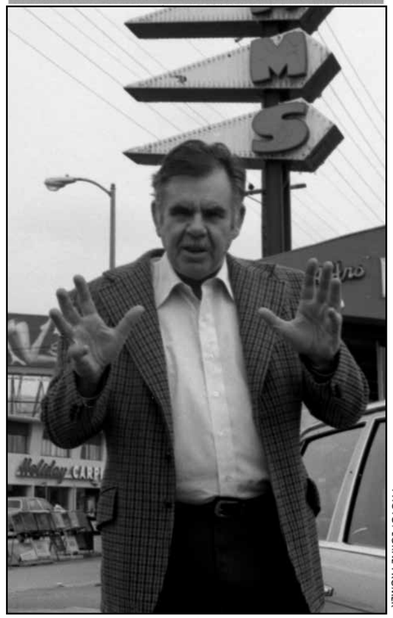
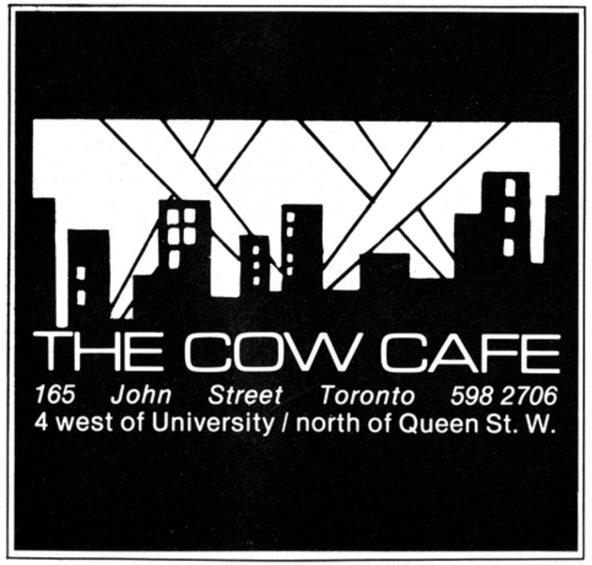


PHOTO: LORNE FROMER

Even though Russ kept talking, for me the interview was complete.

Russ Meyer is composed of the fibre success is made of. He has pitted rugged individualism and perseverance against the moral structure of our society, and can walk away a winner. He has climbed to the peak of the mountain and amassed a fortune ... all at the service of his lifelong fantasy — to make films with the most gorgeous, buxom actresses in America.

... if I wasn't so crazy about big tits I might have made the definitive art movie ... but in the final analysis I've had more fun.

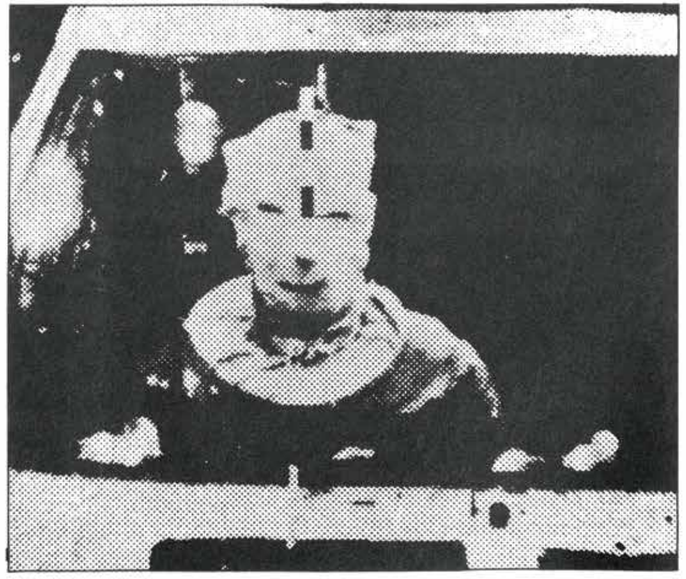






TRANSCRIPT

JUDITH DOYLE



The funny thing is, you can remember right up to the last split second before; I can still see the other car at the moment we must have been hitting it. Then maybe the second before the impact hit me and nothing after that. It's strange, it's just not there.

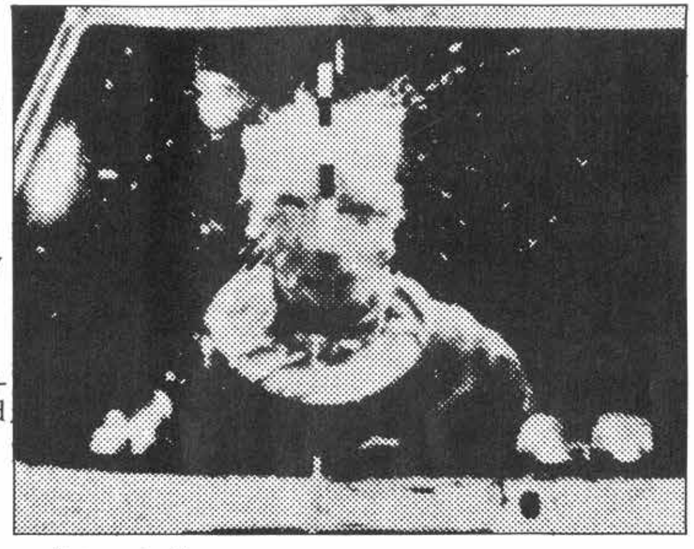
Immediately after the impact I was unconscious for about half an hour; I know that just from being told. I woke up, and I knew that my back was broken but it was a 'no', not a feeling of nerve pain. That all comes later cause you're in shock. You wake up, and you know that you have pain. You don't feel pain, but you know you have pain, and can tell where it's coming from. I knew it was my back. I held my hands in front of me, because I had tunnel vision. I moved my fingers. Then I knew I was paralyzed. The feeling was not pain.

It's very distant, it's not as painful as if you had pain right now, like if you smashed your thumb in a door. You know what it's like to be around someone who's in pain, you think 'Oh my God, I've got to do something'. It's not like that.

It's like knowledge, like there's someone in California right now who's in real pain. It's sad — but I don't feel any urgency to rush out and do anything. The first thing is that under shock like that, you really differentiate yourself from your body — your body's just this toy, and it's too bad it got mangled up. You do and don't feel pain, I don't know how it works but you know that you're in pain, and you can also guess pretty well the degree of the pain, whether it's intense or not. I knew it was intense. But it's not happening to you directly.

Because of the shock. However your body mechanisms work, the pain's rerouted so that it's very distant. Like a memory or a dream; it's close to a dream. Except not that strong.

Partly because of the shock and partly because of the tunnel vision, the air, for a certain margin around you, has exactly the same amount of pain as you do. It's peculiar because it's the only time in my life I've experienced that. It's like the pain was in a certain physical region which you could put on a map; because my body had been put into that region, there was pain in my body. But it had very little to do with my body, perhaps nothing at all. The exact feeling is like having your body wrapped in cotton, except it wasn't restricted to my body alone, it was also that region of air. It's a very precise region, slightly larger than one human body. You might even be able to fit two in there.



You go through your body bit by bit, first you locate where the pain's coming from, if it seems to have a centre, if it doesn't, what must be causing the pain. First you find that problem then you check out other parts. I could feel that one leg was worse than the other. It didn't feel more painful, just more distant and more like air than the other leg. My hands felt least like air, my hands and head. The brain was organizing things. Very slowly and calmly. Totally calmly.

You learn 'this is leg one, this is leg two' — there's a difference between them now. There's a very extreme difference between the legs and the hands. I could tell exactly where my back had been broken; it tapered off the further away you got from that in any direction. You distribute your body, but now according to a different way. The pain was already located, and it becomes the principle for your life, for your body being there, for all your knowledge. Your narrative story.

When I got put in the ambulance they drove me to an intermediate hospital and, because of the distancing thing, more than anything else, it all happens like a movie — it's exactly like a movie. The way that colours in a movie are stronger than they are in life because there's nothing to compete with them. The mood especially of movies seeps in, almost as strong as a dream. This thing is happening, but it's not really happening to you, even though it's filmed from the front seat of a car and it's driving fast and you can feel those sensations. You have a problem with whether it's happening to you or whether you're watching it. The colour goes into you, in an odd way. You have tunnel vision in a movie theatre and you have tunnel vision when you're in shock. There's a cone-ness. It might be a foot wide, and infinitely long. On the other side, it's just like a film theatre — it's black. Your sight — I don't know why it closes down. Your sight also loses intensity. Right now, when I look at this wine bottle — I fasten on it. You possess it, you grab it or something. The gaze you have then is very non-committal. It moves across all things equally — your own body, the ambulance, the RCMP guys, the gravel. It's like being bored.

All things are equal. Being here as opposed to being there makes no difference. And it's a beautiful feeling. It's like gliding.

They took me in for X-rays at this intermediate hospital and it was still like being in a film. All these machines are moving over you — your relationship to technology is just fabulous. You see these mythical machines and they're doing all kinds of things. You don't know if they're going to save the patient or not. You're not even as excited as watching a film where you want the patient to live, where you're pulling for him. In this case, you move over all things equally and the patient will either live or die and the machines move and they X-ray you....

When you're in shock, it's like one of those really rare moments you have. It's abstract, and very pleasurable. Later on, you don't have a body, you just have a knot. It's like a muscle. You just have this intensity of pain and that's all you've got. Eventually your whole body is destroyed except for this little bit up in your brain where the pain seems to be emanating from.

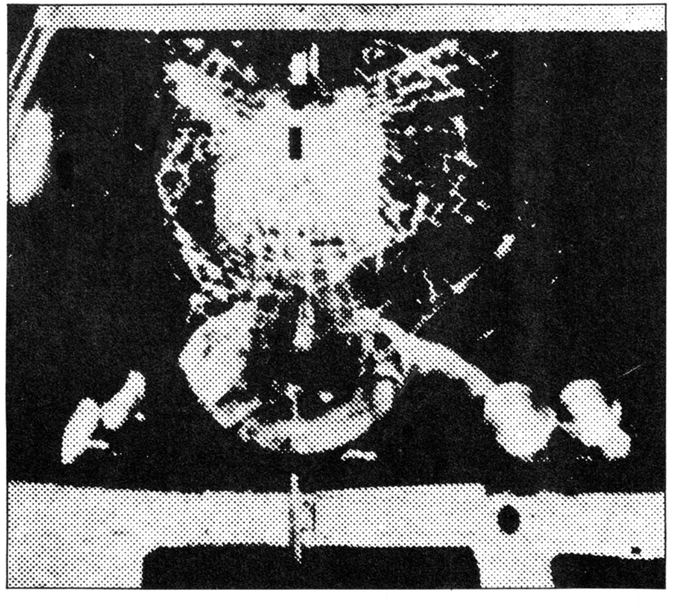
In fact, it's not the case that people deal with you, and people deal with you through machines. It's people deal with you and machines deal with you. Machines are much nicer, much more like when you have shock. That's exactly the sort of intelligence they have. It's not that they couldn't care less about you, it's just that they don't particularly care. They're more pleasurable, their motion over you, they're more gifted, they're less involved with you, so you don't have to be as involved with your pain either.

I recall that the most when they did some sort of X-ray that had video display. I was looking inside my body by looking at the video screen. That was the most nauseating, amazing moment because I didn't expect them to show me that. The Doctor said 'do you want to have a look?' so naturally I just turned. You turn and you see a video display of inside your body, and they're moving around, up different routes and things. It was a canal system.

With the machines, it's like you being already a drawing. I saw a lot of the X-rays they took of me. That's not as interesting because there's nothing going on; there's just the data. But it's like that, it's like you're already an X-ray.

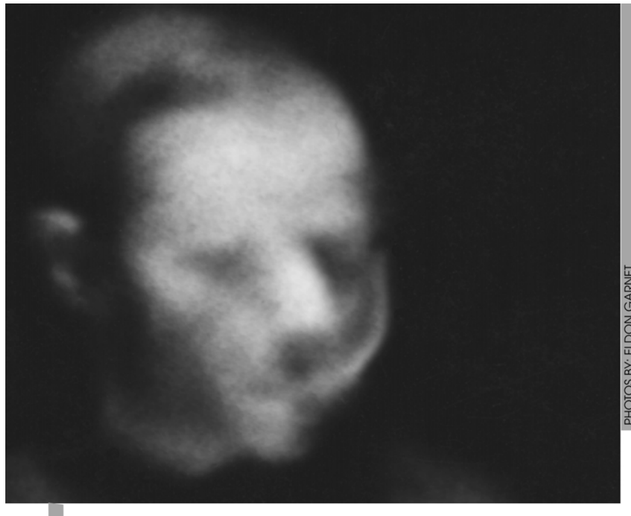
As the shock wore off, the pain would come back more and more intensely. Time would slow down and become really irritable. Everything grated — the existence of a chair as separate from you, or a fly on a window, the sound of air in the room — was all pain, everything was pain. Everything having a separate existence of its own was a pain.

People totally disappeared when I was drugged. They came back as the drugs wore off, then as the pain got very bad I couldn't keep them in existence any longer. I had to use all my power to concentrate on holding back — no, that's not right either — on staying organized. It's not that you can block out the pain, but you can keep yourself organized. You can hold onto a self or something. It seems to have to do with discipline, just the form of discipline, not discipline toward any goal. I guess that when you're helpless, you're passive and it washes over you. When you have the discipline — even when what you're organizing is not the substantive content that you want — you still have a measure of authority.



The funny thing is that even when you're helpless, you're not. Even when it knocks you right down to the floor and you've got no more resources to draw on, you wind up still having a something — it's not really a self, but a discipline. Even when you're helpless, *you're* helpless. The pain always inhabits a particular body and a particular person and I always felt at those points, if I could only totally destroy my name, I would destroy the pain too. But you can't. There's just no way you can get rid of your own history no matter how badly you try.

FROM *TRANSCRIPT*, A PERFORMANCE AND FORTHCOMING HARD PRESS PUBLICATION.



PHOTOS BY: ELDON GARNET

KRAFTWERK

Andy Paterson, Eldon Garnet, Fred Gaysek interview Ralf Hutter

AP: I've followed Kraftwerk for a number of years, and I've always thought that architecture was in your background. I can tell you used to listen to the Beachboys and the Doors, but what music do you listen to now?

RH: Anything. We listen mostly to ethnic music from anywhere in the world. And we listen to machines. Sometimes we just switch on all our musical machines, and we listen to them. Then we walk away and keep them running. We go somewhere else.

AP: You've got the tape running?

RH: Sometimes, but not all the time. We don't record so much; we only record when we feel like recording. In 1971 we set up Kraftwerk and Kling Klang Studio. We rented some space in an industrial centre in Dusseldorf, next to a railway station, and we soundproofed it. We can work 24 hours if we wish. We started there with a small Revox recorder, and over the last 10 years we have developed our equipment. But we record very little.

FG: Is that because it is so easy to program the equipment?

RH: Yes, but it is also psychological, because we only record when we feel like recording. It is more like a state of mind. Otherwise you end up with a load of tapes. Tapes are historical. The moment you finish recording them, they become historical. You end up with too much of an historical thing. We try to forget a lot of the music we play.

AP: That contrasts with what many other people do, which is to run up backlogs of tapes and keep coming back to them, saying, "Maybe I can edit that into this." That is a different form of production.

RH: We are more interested in the new blank tapes we just purchased. They are really blank, and it gives us much more space to make something. Some of the music – we find, like the pocket calculator thing – we found them at Christmas when we were walking in the department stores. We bought some, went to the studio and plugged in, and it came very quickly.

AP: The pocket calculator overdub on that particular track is quite authentic. The Japanese version of that is very big in New York. A far cry from the last album, which, underneath it all, was quite Italian.

RH: Italian? Yes, why not? Red Brigades also.

EG: Why Red Brigades?

RH: Because we are the musical Red Brigades. I think we have a very determined point of view. We find the musical world is very history oriented, laden with history, with tapes. We want to project a more anarchic activity. That is why we have our own studio, right from the beginning and now.

AP: I think you use history very nicely. Again, that comes back to referentialism.

RH: Yes, but the projections that we pick up, again from Italy, the Futurists, or the futuristic Germain Bauhaus type of situations are concerned with technological activity, rather than artistic fantasy. We are more into industrialized productivity. We work in the studio every day. We don't always make music, and I said we record only when we feel like it. But we work at it because we make our own instruments and our own equipment: which you will probably see tomorrow night. ,

AP: You will install your studio on the performance stage?

RH: That's right. We have our studio broken into its components and we bring them on stage. We actually play studio. We never say we play music. It is more like German sound.

EG: What is your view about your current place in history? You seem to have specific ideas about the historical and political context of your music. Where do they fit in?

RH: Into, I think, anarchic politics.

EG: I don't really see it as being anarchic, because of its definite structure.

AP: Well, to me, pop music is very rigid and I frankly find it a fascistic form.

RH: There are many forms of music. There is not one music. In Germany, when our culture was finished after the war, British or Anglo-American culture was brought in, and only now in the 70's or 80's is there a new renaissance of German identity and culture. The reference point is more to electronics and classical music than to what you call fascistic rock music.

FG: What about romance in your music?

RH: I think it's more a technological romance, especially with computers. We work with video as well as audio tape. We also have computer tapes, computer programs, all kinds of things.

AP: To me a monophonic synthesizer, because it is dealing with one note, by necessity implies rigid things like chords, as opposed to a patchwork synthesizer where you can make, say, pure noise.



RH: But music is just organized noise anyway, so it makes no difference. There is no difference between music and noise. Like a tuned car symphony. Autobahn is like cars in tune.

FG: Do you think you're giving the correct picture when you take industrial noise, machine noise, or the noise of the autobahn, and throw it back in an organized manner — a drone? Perhaps it is replacing something, a perception perhaps, in the German culture that was destroyed after the war?

RH: It is a romance, of course, a romantic thing, and at the same time it is pure because of experience. We've done over 300,000 kms while touring from one city to another city, as nobody. That's actually my gray Volkswagen on the cover of the album. So it is a mixture between realistic things and romance. We always fluctuate — sometimes we stay very realistic and sometimes we get carried away.

FG: I find there is so little that is emotive in the music. The choice of sounds, for instance, are bald. They are not resonant sounds. You know the kind of richness you can get out of some synthesizers.

RH: We never go for that. To us it's over the top. It's done by people who actually empty themselves and who want to protect their own emptiness with overindulgence. I like people who can play one note. We cannot always do it. I'm not saying we are very good at that, but we try to say as much with as little notes as we can.

FG: What about the human voice in your music? In Computer World that broken voice at the back of the cut was very clever. Human qualities, yet a talking machine.

RH: We have a voice computer, we have automatic singing. Florian does a lot with that; he works with a mathematician who we took away from a big company. On the weekend we took him away from that, and now every weekend he is doing certain things with us. That is an artificial voice, and then I do the human voice, then we are also using language translators and all kinds of things.

FG: What about using more language in your lyrics?

RH: We always write everything in German first, of course. We are very much into internationalistic language. We do it like in films — a synchronized version. Because we record on only 16 tracks, we leave 3 tracks for different languages. We record German first and then we make synchronized versions. That leaves 12 tracks for the music, because 1 track is for computer programs. We had some Russian and Japanese for the first time. When we were back in Dusseldorf, we recorded in Italian because we toured in Italy.

FG: Do you find you attract political interest in a country like Italy?

RH: Of course. Everywhere — in Germany, France, especially in Continental Europe. Pop music is fascistically controlled by Anglo-American music, and Continental Europe gets a whole new aspect of itself through our music or European music.

EG: What do the German people regard you as, politically?

RH: Oh, we are close to what is called the anticulture, or anti-authoritarian culture, unofficial culture, whatever you might call it — as opposed to the opera houses which are state controlled.

AP: And yet the name Kraftwerk means power plant.

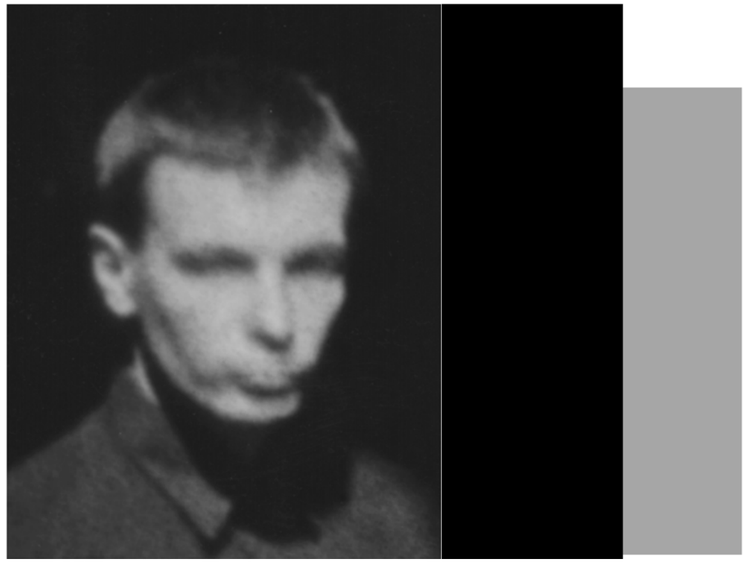
RH: Yes, or electrical energy.

AP: I find the music to be in favour of the work ethic. Putting your albums on and going about my business. You make good music for phone calls, typing, whatever. The content of what I say or type is entirely up to me; it isn't dictated by your music. I use your music like a drug, a little bit of stimulus. There is no ideological content in the pill; the pill is a mere energizer.

RH: We are very much into energy. If it makes you do certain things, that is a compliment to us. We also know that certain music, especially electronic music, can make you very sleepy and lazy.

EG: Do you want your music to direct people, to

motivate them in some way?
RH: Not in any way, like do this or do that, but we are certainly into positivist energy.
AP: At the best of times, your music, by using a surface familiarity, stimulates productivity, as opposed to music that people sit around listening to, under the delusion that they themselves are doing something new. All they are doing is listening to somebody making a few million dollars to say absolutely nothing.
RH: We also get this feedback from England with all the new electronic groups coming up, and in Italy, Germany…
AP: All these Neo Romantics would not exist without you.
RH: In Germany there's a lot of new groups, and they started electronically. We started as young boys with classical music, because of our German bourgeois background, but today they are starting directly. The first instrument they ever play is electronic, and I think that is what we predicted.
FG: You used the word anarchic, but at the same time you say you feel yourself to be building as opposed to tearing apart or removing. I wonder if that is a correct self-perception?
RH: Maybe the word has a different context here in North America. Maybe we shouldn't use that word because it has been over-used. We never use the word love, for instance. Constructive is much better, and productivity. That is what we come from, productivity.
EG: There hasn't been much anarchy in Germany; in the North American view, Germany has been fairly clean lately. Has it become more controlled, or is it loosening up?
RH: I think that there are two things at the same time, two lines going simultaneously and in conflict. Germany is not a uniform country, so certain things are going on in Bavaria and other things are happening in Berlin. Germany is very schizophrenic. Law and order is very strong on one hand, and yet there is much initiative on the other. I think we are facing a very difficult future.
EG: What type of future do you see?
RH: I think the conflict is getting tighter and tighter. I see a lot of things happening in Germany, and in England it is going on all the time. A lot of people in England said it would never happen there because of the Queen, which is ridiculous.
AP: What forces do you see clashing with each other?
RH: Those who are in control — and the individual, self-organized, constructive, living organisms, or whatever you call them.
EG: Your music seems to be a combination of both.
RH: We look to this conflict. It's in everybody, even ourselves, because we can get easily seduced, like you said, by fascistic tendencies in being part of the music business. When you see four people on stage and 4,000 people in the audience, it is basically Nuremburg. There is no question about this.
EG: There is also the dehumanizing element. In your stage presentation you're not there a lot of the time. Do you find this dehumanization positive, or is it undercutting the individual?
RH: We are more into realistic things, or the uncovering process. Those songs that we wrote on robots or showroom dummies or models are about our own self-existence.
EG: So the robot becomes the projection of the human?
RH: It's a certain aspect of our existence, it's very robotic. The word robot comes from the Russian robotnik (worker), and that's exactly what we are. It's our existence and context. We don't put values on it, like in school, where you learn 'this is correct'.
AP: You want us to do the thinking.
RH: In a way, yes.
EG: The robotic mentality can be a positive, futurist view of the world.
RH: It is just our existence. We are working like sociological scientists; the robotic existence is really what we feel, what we are doing, and what we are. There is a certain aspect of black humour to our whole thing.



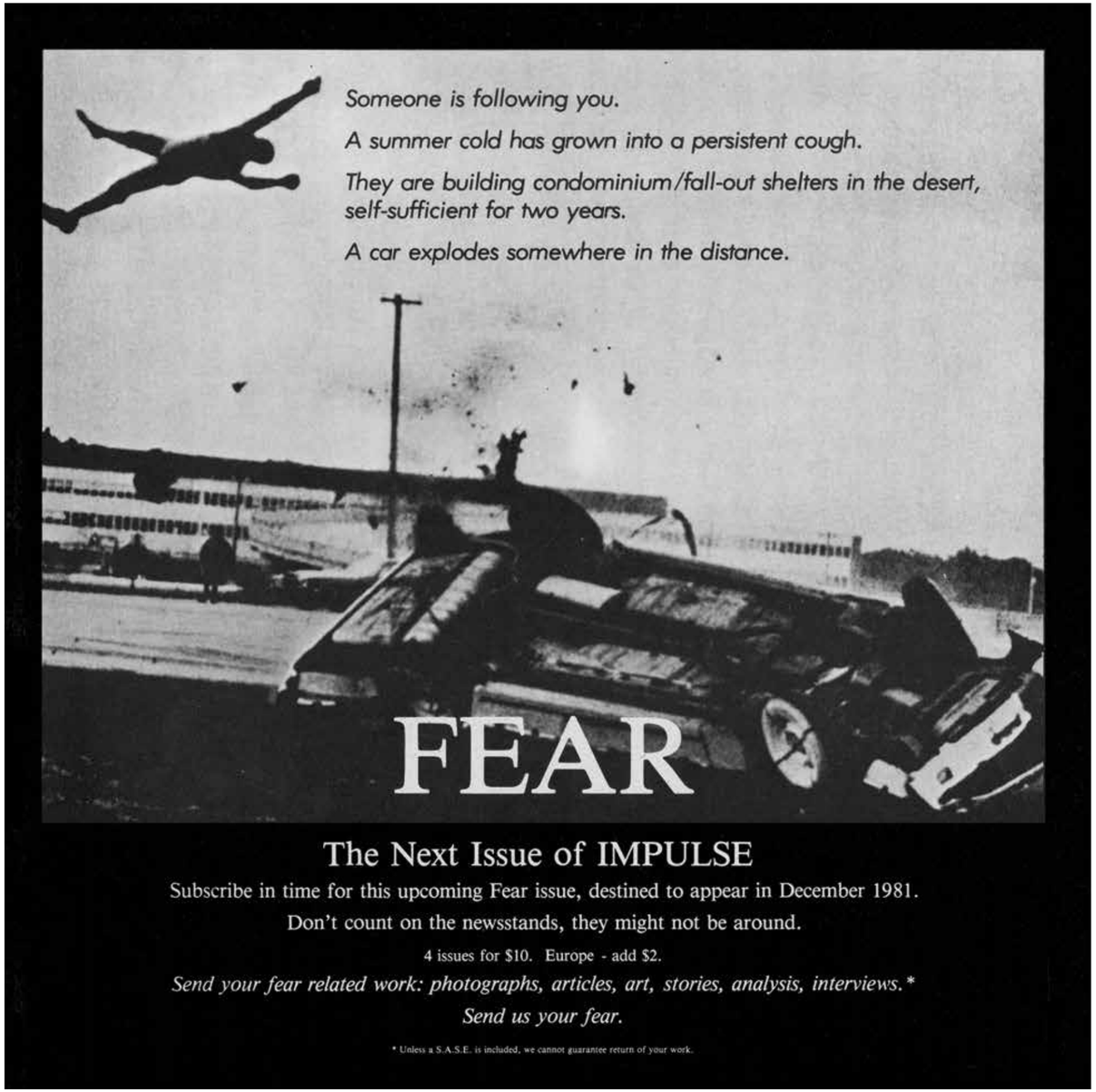
EG: If a robot takes over a factory job, it makes it more human. It frees the human for other functions.
RH: That's the point of view of control over the robot.
AP: Whereas to give the robot helpful suggestions might be better than control.
RH: Right. We are co-operating with our machines — a friendship. Like small children we take them to bed with us. We spend so much time with them and they are our friends. Otherwise, we would not be able to do it. By treating machines friendly, they treat you friendly. They give that back to you.
EG: So in your stage show, the machine becomes a personification of you?
RH: We are all together — it's a man/machine — it is not man and machine. It's very hard for me to say all these things with words because I find words so historical. We work so much in sound and vision that I have difficulty with words. Saying what is really happening. You know Faust from Goethe? "What you have written in black and white you can take home." But that is incorrect. It's like tapes — what you have done on tape you can rely on. But that is not true.
EG: I see Kraftwerk as being the successful electronic band; I don't know where you started from, but now you have this elitist position. You are on top. Do you have that sort of feeling, that you are now on top of something?
RH: On top of what?
EG: In a sense you consider yourself a worker, but in another sense you are bourgeois. Look where you are staying — in this hotel. I wonder if you worry about these contradictions?
RH: In a way, yes, but in a way no, because we don't care. It doesn't mean anything to me if there are mirrors on the wall here or not. If it is important to you, we could go somewhere else. If we play tomorrow in a concert hall, I don't care.
AP: But the concert hall has to be able to hold al I the equipment you have.
RH: Yes, but we can always change that. It's just a temporary thing. When we started in Germany we had a Revox machine, a cassette recorder, cheap things. In



Germany, there was no music business, so we did everything ourselves. We drove into a youth centre somewhere, and we carried our stuff with our own hands. I drove my own Volkswagen. It's only now, at this moment, that we have a special physical manifestation of what we do. But we are not into the equipment or anything like that. We are not into hardware, machinery per se.
EG: I think you are like a cultural establishment. Do you see utilizing your position for political action, in any sense?
RH: Yes, I think so, I think you can make something from nothing. We come from Germany, which is like a musical nowhereland.
EG: Could you change things in Germany with your music?
RH: Yes, I think we do. I mean, not 'I', but things coming up, it's more like, biologically, small things coming up everywhere — people taking over houses, people taking over music, people taking over culture.
AP: How would you feel if I told you that I constructed a new neutron bomb with your music in the background.
RH: You didn't!
AP: No, but I think I could. Not that I have that scientific knowledge, but when I'm typing overtop of you, frequently it doesn't have that much to do with what I'm typing. Once in a while I hear in your music something that might sort of influence me, like, "Oh, The Model is the best Doors song I've ever heard in my life." And maybe I'll reflect on a period out of which the musical language you're using comes from.
RH: The Doors took a lot of their music from Kurt Weill, from a German reference, and we are more from the cultural blank. At one point in Germany, we had an everyday cultural thing happening: this was in the 20's, after that the people who were involved were either communist, socialist, or Jewish. These groups had to go, so Germany suffered a cultural backlash. After the Nazi period, even the right wing or the middle had to go, and there was nothing. We refer more to the first group. We grew up without any older people at all to ask for anything. We spent a lot of time talking to records.
FG: Now that you've accomplished a certain amount of work, you're getting the equipment that you want, you're getting exposure for your work, you're getting the technical expertise to assist you in making what you need, do you feel that your responsibility is increasing?

RH: Definitely, and sometimes I don't know what to say. I don't want to appear as somebody who knows everything. We want to appear as people working in electronics.
EG: You keep talking about the individual making small changes, like citizen groups.
RH: That is happening in Dusseldorf, Berlin, and at the same time corporations get more and more corporate. It's scary sometimes, it can be very violent, it's close to a civil war situation.
FG: Do you feel any need to express your personal fear in your work?
RH: Maybe in the next album, it is coming up very strongly again…
FG: Don't you think that eventually you are going to have to commit yourself to using language to make a very specific statement, very specific points.
RH: We do that.
FG: That is difficult for me, as a listener, to agree with. If I were to have a criticism of your work, it would be that it is not specific. It is minimal, the tools you use, the texture — I can sense a determination at work, but a specific content or a specific statement, aside from making a romance of the machine or expressing a positive attitude, is not there.
EG: It's like a building. What kind of building do you want to build?
RH: I couldn't build any buildings because I care more about what is happening on the inside of the buildings than setting up another one. People are always asking, "Is this pop music, is this electronic music?" They are into categorization, and we are more into sound.
EG: You aren't using your responsibility properly then, because you say you are interested in sound and not ideas.
RH: I don't know the words. It is more psychological dynamics that put you in a state of mind to do something. We are not telling somebody to stand up, sit down, go left, go right. If I want something, I can make it. I don't listen to music, I make music. That is another attitude that we want to project.
EG: So the attitude is to do things. When people listen to your music, they want to do things.
RH: I am very flattered that that comes across, because we actually never said "do". I think that by saying certain things, there is a tendency of, "Oh, yes he said it, and that's done already."





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Lounge Lizard Lingo

Peter Noble spoke with Lounge Lizards sax player and founder John Lurie.

Lurie:

When I was going to high school I formed my very first blues band. We called ourselves Crud. We were the meanest band that ever came out of Worster, Massachusetts. I picked up on the harmonica about ten years ago. I can remember playing with Canned Heat on two occasions — once with John Lee Hooker and the other time with Mississippi Fred McDowel. My first major influences were the Chicago Blues. From there I started listening to Jimmy Hendrix, the Beatles and, eventually, a lot of jazz. It seems like a very long time ago when I look back on it now. I mean I haven't listened to any jazz in five years. We used to play records by Ornette Coleman, Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Thelonius Monk and Johnny Hodges; all the typical jazz greats. I worked on a style which was parallel to someone like Cecil Taylor. On different occasions I would play by myself. Solo concerts were attempted but I think they were more like performance pieces than anything else. I performed with some of the avant garde jazz fusion people in New York like the Revolution Ensemble.



I don't know how it happened, but at one point in my life I started making my own films. The funny thing was I didn't know anything about making movies. I became involved with a number of interesting underground film artists in New York — such people as Eric Mitchell and Becky Johnson. I really wanted to make a serious movie because my first two were complete jokes. The first one was entitled *Men In Orbit* and it was about a simulated Apollo space flight with Eric Mitchell and myself as the astronauts. During the second half of the movie we take LSD in the form of Macdonald's Quarter Pounders with cheese. It was quite ridiculous; I directed it but I was tripping out of my mind. It was filmed in Super 8 and we transferred it to video.

The second movie was called *Hell Is You*, a fictional interview with James Chance. I portrayed Tom Snyder with this shit-eating grin and James played Patti Smith. The second half is a remake of *The African Queen*. I played Humphrey Bogart and my old girlfriend Mary Lou Fogerty was Katherine Hepburn. I had a boat set up in my apartment. We were rowing down the river and I had to get out because the boat was stuck. Do you remember when Bogart got out of the boat and all these leeches started to attack him? There's a great line when he says, 'If there's one thing I hate it's leeches!' So I get out of the boat and James Chance attacks me — he plays one of the leeches. He wore a plastic bag on his head. He looked rather believable in a plastic bag kind of way.

I wanted to make a real movie, one with passion, intense drama and suspense. It was going to cost quite a bit of money. I was writing the script and the soundtrack and all of a sudden somebody came up to me and asked what would be an appropriate band to open up for the Love of Life Orchestra on a Monday night at Hurrah's. Naturally not having a band I said, 'My band!' Arto Lindsay started jamming with me even though he was still playing guitar for DNA. He brought in Anton Fier who played drums for The Feelies. We rehearsed for six hours and when it came time to open the show everything came together. Before that time I had given up the idea a band could ever work.

I was the first person to call our music 'Fake Jazz' and somehow I wish I had never come up with such a silly term; all the critics are taking it so seriously. I knew the traditional jazz critics were going to come down on us. None of the Lizards are trying to compare with the best sax player or bassist in the jazz field. We have nothing to do with that scene. In terms of jazz I don't give a damn who has the best chops. I mean, chops is not an appealing feature; I don't care for musicians with chops. Chops is a jazz term which represents technical proficiency. I want to be technically proficient but chops indicates that you have to be technically apt in a specific mode. I decided to call our music fake jazz because it's supposed to be meaningless. If you analyze it for thirty seconds it loses its validity. When all of these articles came out describing what fake jazz was I was no longer interested in it as a term. Surprisingly enough, only about 25% of our audience are hardcore jazz fans.



I guess I play the frontman. I tend to talk to the audience between numbers. We make a certain demand on the audience. It's not so much show business as it is a musical performance. We've no use for any gimmicks and neither does the audience. Most bands do the same act night after night and all the stops are planned out. It's just like acting in a movie, everything is scripted. We try to attain new heights everytime we play. Basically we've been successful except for when we're totally exhausted. Mistakes are actually the best part of the show; how we get out of them proves to be somewhat rewarding. At one point this whole thing is moving along and then suddenly something falls out and then the entire band sways along to catch it. That's the most exciting thing, really. I enjoy it when something goes completely out of wack, it enables us to remove boundaries we might have created for ourselves. I think about 95% of our audiences don't have the vaguest idea of when we were good and when we weren't.

I have a lot of affection toward Thelonius Monk. His compositions work out to be incredibly harmonically modern. Sections of his songs can be distilled into a very contemporary sound. We did renditions of two Monk classics on our album. I think we were much more successful with *Epistrophy* as opposed to *Well You Needn't*.

I can't believe this quote I was supposed to have said but our record company has tagged it onto our bio: 'When it comes down to the end of the day I don't want to become another piece of product. Whatever else happens I'm determined to stay raw.'



Between what the record company thinks you should be packaged as and what the media take you for, there are a whole range of misinterpretations. You try to convey a total philosophy, there's a concept behind the music sociologically.

Forming a band is a juvenile activity. The five of us try and maintain an adult approach to it but it leads to all these petty arguments. I'd as soon be a composer as be in a band. We have to go on tour to support the album but we're not making any money. We actually lose money with this band because of the way our record company, E.G. Records, has misled us. Everybody thinks E.G. has a good reputation because of Fripp and Eno, but I would really like



to dispel that. If the Lounge Lizards break up it will be because of E.G. Records.

I have had offers to act in movies, and I have had offers to do soundtracks for movies, and that's what I really should be doing. In order to do that I have to stay in New York and hustle about. Instead I'm putting all my energy into the Lizards. I lent out all the money that I have to the other members of the band. E.G. has given us absolutely no tour support. They did let us open for Robert Fripp in England and when we blew him off the stage, E.G. treated us as if we were upstarts. We got all of this press coverage and we thought they would finally invest a little money in promoting our album. Polygram has proven to be more supportive than the E.G. people. They distribute our album and they seem to be really enthusiastic. E.G. hasn't even put a single penny into the band. They actually *loaned* us the money to record the album. It's become a personal vendetta between the Lizards and E.G. Records. I guess it began the second day we were in the studio. They came up with this contract we had to sign without our lawyer being present. They told us if we didn't sign it they'd sue us for the studio time we had used, plus we'd lose our producer Teo Macero. It was Anton's idea to get Teo as our producer. Teo was great. He's the only person I've met in the music business who actually knows what he's doing. He saved the Lounge Lizards. We never would have been able to record in the amount of time we had if it wasn't for him. Six of the thirty hours of recording time we were allocated were spent on the phone with lawyers and the record company. We ended up recording about one song an hour. We had less time to do the final mixes. I just couldn't believe it! As far as E.G. is concerned, I hate them. If I see Mark Fenwick or Sam Adler I don't know how I'm going to refrain from hitting them over the head.

Five or ten years ago there were these two guys at E.G. who were very wealthy and very brilliant. They did a superb job promoting Fripp, Eno, Ferry and Roxy Music. Now these two morons have taken over the company and they're only interested in being hip. They've got this little English social club of 35 year olds who take a lot of cocaine and act like idiots. If they were just the coldest fucking cats you ever met, then that would be fine with me, if they were just doing their job! Like our album cover. I made a cover and it took me about a month. Evan put together one in six weeks. They were really effective covers. E.G. led us to believe we could make our own cover but at the last minute they said, 'This is your record cover', and handed us this sterile piece of shit designed by Peter Saville.

They can't accept the fact that we're smarter than they are and if given the time we'd be better businessmen. We could package the Lounge Lizards a hundred times better than they've done. Anytime there's a photograph that we don't approve of, they send it off to the papers. Take the photograph on our album cover for example. I was in Paris when that was decided on. There was a whole contact sheet of photos; I circled 15 out of 40 and told them that the ones I had okayed could be used. When I returned to New York they had used a photograph for the cover that I didn't approve. That album cover makes me feel ashamed of the record. Saville got word that we couldn't stand the cover so he phoned Evan. Evan said, 'Well did you listen to the record at least?' Saville said no. The cover should have been dirty and sleazy. It should have had some balls to it or some mystery instead of this high-tech sterility — fine for people like Eno — but not the right thing for a group like the Lounge Lizards.

We have had our drug problems like any other band, but we've managed to curb them. The individuals who were in trouble made herculean efforts to get off whatever they were hooked on. We've had a bad reputation in New York — a couple of us were supposed to be doing heroin all the time which isn't really true. One guy got strung out and he almost had to quit before we went on tour. I think he should be carried on the record company's shoulders for going through something like that and then being responsible enough to be able to go on tour without doing dope. He's fine now.

New York has had it as far as the clubs are concerned. People are doing too much heroin. Half of my friends from two years ago are strung out in one way or another. The clubs have had it. They've been overwhelmed by people from New Jersey. The club owners have been snorting too much coke and they're virtually losing their marbles. Most of the good clubs have folded. The Mudd Club, which was the only one that was exciting, is more like Max's Kansas City now. Maybe it's just my attitude that's changed. There are a lot of smart people in New York and they're very critical in a productive way. I'll always have an apartment in New York no matter where I move in the world. If I lived in Toronto I would never take the kind of drugs I take in New York. When I'm in New York I overload on drugs. I think you need to take a lot of drugs if you live in New York. It's the only way you can hack it. Maybe if I was a lawyer it would be a different story.

I'm never going to perform in London again. I'll go to Manchester, Wales, Scotland or Ireland but I'll be damned if I ever set foot in London. They think they're the only people who have discovered music because they've produced people like Adam And The Ants. I mean they just sat on their hands when we played London. I admit the Beatles were great but the Sex Pistols were more of an attitude. The rock business...I don't know how the hell I ever got myself involved in it. It was never my intention. Why am I suddenly having to deal with things like New York Rocker or record company people? I mean, I'm poor anyway. I'd rather be poor than be associated with the slimiest people on earth.

I'd like to meet people like Malcom McLaren. As far as rock is concerned I think someone of McLaren's stature is where it's at. He made it all happen. He took these kids by the hand and the rest is history. He's doing it again but this time it's Bow Wow Wow. That's what's interesting to me — the business of how things work. It's not a bad thing if you can do it with flair. What I'm finding is the incredible incompetence of lawyers, managers and others in all walks of business. When I was in high school there were intelligent people who were going into other walks of life. I wonder where those people have gone because they're certainly not in politics, and they're definitely not in the music business.

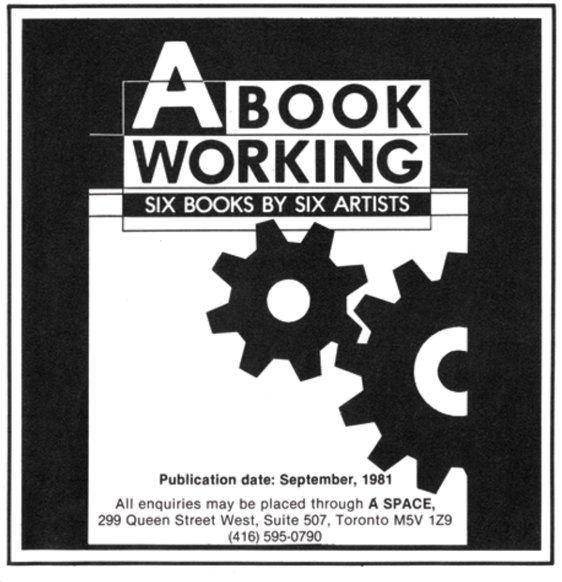
I hope the music that the Lounge Lizards have to offer will develop into the classical music of the '80's. I think it'll come into effect around 1983. I just don't think it's arrived yet. I want to get as far away from the rockiest element as possible. I even want to get far away from the jazz element. I want to create a sound that's sort of a primal caucasian music. What Balinese music is to Bali, what Tibetan music is to Tibet and what African music is to Africa — I want to create that music for New York. A real ethnic gutsy type of music. I don't want to be too intellectual. The kind of thing you can't write about is what I want to make. Something that's magical, has real power, has a life of its own and cannot be described. I think we've reached that point a few times.

I'm not interested in rock'n'roll. It's music for little kids. I would like to reach people who are forty years of age but I don't know how they're going to find out about us because they're never going to come to the kind of places that we play. In a way I want to be taken seriously. I'm also interested in the humour element — when we played in Northern France the audience was in hysterics the whole night — it was great. They were laughing with us. It was as if the whole thing was one big joke, and in one way it was. Arto played guitar like he was sticking his tongue out at the audience. It was extremely primitive at times. Our new guitarist, Dana Volcek, picks up on that tradition. It makes the guitar obsolete.

In another way we don't take ourselves seriously at all. Here we have five guys dressed in suits and ties, which I think looks very nice, but I don't really think it means anything. It's ultimately absurd on one level. I don't know why it's so funny. I once said somewhere that it's the same reason Jayne Mansfield's breasts, being so big, were funny.

I would like to stick with the Lounge Lizards intensely for the next six months. Then I'd like to pursue my acting career for about two years. Maybe I'll even go back to school to study composition much more thoroughly. I'd love to compose music whether it be for film or theatre. When I reach 45 years of age I think I'd like to try my hand at directing movies. Who knows? Maybe I'll even end up having control over my own album covers. ♫

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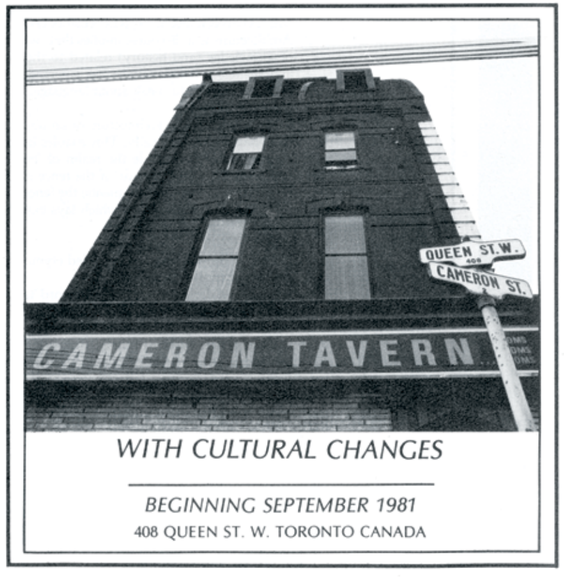




PHOTO: E. GARNET

CRONENBERG

ELDON GARNET and JAMES DUNN talk to DAVID CRONENBERG.

David Cronenberg is a Toronto filmmaker with an international reputation for making horror films which are cinematically artful, thematically insightful, and very scary. He has been described by John Carpenter (The Fog, Halloween***) as being "better than the rest of us put together." His early features —*** Rabid *and* Shivers *— established him as a director who could succeed at the box-office. His more recent films —* The Brood *and* Scanners *— have been included on the Top Ten lists by two critics from the* Village Voice. *Cronenberg's latest film,* Videodrome, *which he is currently editing, is scheduled to be released in August.***

EG: What's your fascination with genre?

DC: Well, I'm not particularly fascinated with genre. I don't go to see every horror or science fiction film made. It's just that when I start to write, that's what comes out. The fact that most of my films are in the horror genre is just an accident. It's just what happens. I don't know if *Videodrome*, which I just did, is going to be classified as a horror film or not. I don't think of it as a horror film at all, but it does have particular aspects of horror. I like other kinds of films as much as I like sci-fi or horror films. It's not like a John Carpenter situation, where he wanted to make science fiction and horror films since he was two years old. For me, it just seems to be what happens when I sit down to write.

EG: Where do you get your ideas?

DC: I think they come into my typewriter. It's a very valuable typewriter. They claw their way out.

JD: Do you think all your ideas come out of personal experiences — a fear that you have, or something that's inside you?

DC: Well, not necessarily fears. All my films are very personal. When I was a kid there was a magazine called "Fantasy and Science Fiction," and I preferred it to "Astounding Science Fiction," which was really hard core sci-fi — very technology oriented and interested in extrapolating future trends in science and technology. That never really interested me. I always liked the other magazine better because it was on more of a fantasy level. By fantasy I don't mean Tolkien and the *Lord of the Rings*. I mean worrying more about the metaphorical value of your imagery rather than worrying about whether it was likely to be accurate. It turns out that a lot of the things which I've invented are things that in fact are being developed. But that wasn't my intention, and I'm not the kind of person who in 20 years would say: "See, in *Rabid* I anticipated this kind of plastic surgery." That is not what I am trying to do. So when I talk about the genre — and we are talking about two that overlap, science fiction and horror — it functions on a level of imagery and metaphor that is very deep, very primal. And by its very nature, the audience goes into a horror film with this willing suspension of disbelief that you don't get if you go into a film which announces itself as being very realistic.

EG: When you write, do you develop your metaphors to control the audience, to control their psyche or their emotional state?

DC: I don't really do anything with that sense of control. I am not a very calculating filmmaker. It is exciting when the audience jumps when you figured they would and when they laugh at a joke. But to me, that's not any more calculating than a poet who seeks to evoke a response, however ambiguous it may be. So I really don't think of it in terms of calculation. To me that's too mechanistic.

EG: So you're not that conscious of evoking fear in the audience?

DC: No.

EG: Carpenter uses music very heavily to evoke certain emotions.

DC: If you saw the two of us in separate editing rooms or separate mixes, I'm sure you'd hear us say: "I want a heavy music sting on here because there isn't enough punch on the screen, and I think a little sting would give it a little jump … a little punch." That's the nuts and bolts of making a movie. I mean, you use music to evoke different dimensions in a scene, and by putting rock music on one scene and orchestral minor mode music on the same scene, you get a very different scene — that's craftsmanship, that's something else.

JD: Do you think that your process is always visceral? Music might be craftsmanship, but it also seems visceral.

DC: No, I am talking about knowing how you're making a film. I think I am very intuitive and visceral in my approach to filmmaking. It doesn't mean that I'm not interested in the more technical aspects of filmmaking. I was just reading a long interview with Paul Shrader, who wrote *Taxi Driver*, and his approach to writing is astonishing. First he breaks down his film in page numbers — "Okay, these are the characters. This is the information we have to convey. I think that is a page and a quarter." And he gets his whole script that way. But it is a strange approach for me. I've never written anything on demand, so I wouldn't know how I would react under those circumstances. For me there must be that visceral, intuitive, instinctive connection or else it's just not right. And it's very tangible, it's not at all abstract. When it's not there, I feel it.

EG: Do you allow your personal feelings to dictate your metaphors, or do you let the incidents in the film dictate the metaphors?

DC: It all works together, and at different times different things take precedent. You try to think of the film as a whole, finally. Even if the film started as just one image, you may end up with a film that may no longer include that image. That's very conceivable, because somehow it has taken on its own life, and it has squeezed out the original image. It turns out that the dynamics between the characters and the narrative have carried you somewhere else. For *Videodrome*, I'm not perceiving the editing as a process of sticking the stuff together that I shot. I'm still writing the film, I'm still creating it as I edit. It can end a lot of different ways in the editing room.

EG: Do the metaphors in your films become an analogy for political content or for some other type of statement?

DC: Not consciously. No. I've talked about myself as being very apolitical, but in a sense I'm not, and in fact some of the amusing political interpretations of my films by French critics turn out, in a strange way, not to be inaccurate. For instance, *Shivers* takes place in a very middle class hi-rise where this disease first starts to spread. So they said I was talking about the malaise of the bourgeoisie. At first I laughed, and then I said, "Well, they're not wrong." Experientially, when I lived in that same tower, I felt the sickness and I wanted to get out. We all hated it by the time we finished shooting, and it made me want to run screaming naked through the halls and attack someone, just to shake up the incredibly stifling claustrophobia that was there. So I would say that there are political dynamics to my films, but in terms of politics as I think of it, which is, "Who do you vote for?" I'm not political. They still involve concepts like fascism and democracy but more on a personal level rather than any larger order.

JD: What triggers the ideas for your films?

DC: The films start in many different ways, sometimes literally from a dream image. *Videodrome* started from a neat little plot possibility, and then it went totally bananas from there into some totally different space. Even I didn't anticipate where I was going to end up when I started it. It started with a very straightforward little movie of the week premise — it could have been a neat little thriller if we had taken the opening premise and followed it somewhere else. So it doesn't seem to matter where it starts.

JD: Your method seems very suitable for horror in the sense that it is a subconscious means of filmmaking. As opposed to Costa Gravas, who starts out with a conscious political premise, any political statements that you make seem to come out of your subconscious dealings. I get the same feeling from Romero. I'm sure he never thought of the shopping mall in *Dawn of the Dead* as an overt political symbol.

DC: He has a very practical, pragmatic approach to filmmaking, and I don't think he thought of the shopping mall as an attack on the consumer society until afterwards. I don't have much respect for the other way of going about it. If you are going to illustrate a point, I think a documentary film is the way to do it, not a fiction film. And even Costa Gravas isn't making those films anymore. I heard that his last film was a romantic comedy.

EG: Did you ever consider making a musical?

DC: Not a musical.

EG: What are your fantasies, then?

DC: I'm making exactly the kind of film I want to make right now. I have a musical number in *Videodrome*, a stage show with six dancers and costumes, which I enjoyed doing. But you'll eventually see that it is thematically tied in to the rest of the film. There is a lot of humour in most of my films, and in *Videodrome*, particularly, there is a lot of humour that isn't even black humour, as in *Shivers* or *Rabid*. I really like this movie. I think it's going to be really good. And rather than thinking of it as a genre piece, I think that it is going to be very hard to categorize, because it is so sexy. I think it's nice to evade the genre.

JD: Do you see a difference between sci-fi and horror?

DC: Oh yes, there is a huge difference between sci-fi and horror. Science fiction is concerned with anticipating future trends in technology, sociology and psychology.

JD: Where does a film like *Alien* fit in?

DC: *Alien* is a horror film. It is not one iota a science fiction film. The fact that it has space ships means nothing. That's all art direction. It's basically the ghost in the haunted house or the monster in the boat. It's an old, old story. The trappings are different, but it's not anticipating the future. *Alien* is a horror film as far as I'm concerned.

JD: Recently it has struck me that science fiction seems more concerned with societal problems, whereas horror still seems more rooted to the individual. It seems that horror always fixates on the point at which the body becomes separate from the mind. That's why it hits us at a gut level.

DC: Yeah, that's pretty broad, but I suppose it's true. I think sci-fi is an entire approach that's really different. Even a movie like *Zero Population Growth* is a classic example of taking something that everybody was talking about in those days and saying, "Well, what would happen if it suddenly became law that you couldn't have children. What would that be like?" That's very much a sci-fi approach to that kind of material. You could take the same material and make a horror film out of it, but I think your approach and your concerns would be very different.

EG: Are you afraid of death; what are your fears?

DC: I'm afraid of just about the same things that most people are afraid of. I'm not particularly paranoid, but I think most people look upon aging and death with some apprehension. Actually, aging so far hasn't been too bad at all. I've rather enjoyed it, but I can see where it might get to the point where I wouldn't. And death ... I think that philosophy, religion and science all devote a lot of energy to death. I worry about the future of my children, and other very middle class things.

EG: No heavy nightmares.

DC: No, very rarely.

JD: So many people have written, "Well, Cronenberg's making money, but is he making art?"

DC: That's been turning around lately. There is a certain



critical recognition that's coming down. It's hard, but if you have to choose between: 1) critical recognition without being able to make any more movies because you can't find backing for them; or 2) some kind of commercial success first and critical recognition later, I'd rather do the latter. As someone said about acting, "If you're not acting, you're not an actor." I don't feel quite the same way, because to take on a picture for me means a year and a half to two years, especially if I'm writing it myself. I make sure it's something I can live with for that long, because if I don't enjoy it and don't have any feeling for it, I'd have to make an awful lot of money to make two years of wasted energy worthwhile.

EG: Do you feel you might compromise and change your films in any way to make them more commercially viable?

DC: It depends. Here you are, you're going to show your movie to an audience — after all you are making a movie for an audience — and you sit there feeling that the pace is wrong, that it's really slow and boring in the middle. As soon as I feel that, I want to do something about it. It's not directly related to money, although the end result is money. Once you've shot it, you lose your objectivity, and you then look to an audience to give you a response so that you can re-experience the movie. If somebody comes up after a screening and I ask, "Did you understand this," and they say, "No, I completely missed that," then I get worried, especially if it's someone who is not an idiot. So you have to ask, "Is it my fault or did this guy fall asleep? Why didn't he get it?" And that's where the nuts and bolts come in. If one of my movies doesn't work to my satisfaction, I try to make it work better. I've never felt that I've compromised myself in any of my movies. If some of them aren't good, then it's my fault.

EG: Do you ever feel you have a social responsibility to include certain notions or ideas in your movies?

DC: Never. To me that has absolutely nothing to do with making movies. In fact, I went on CBS to talk to some Moral Majority types about responsibility as a filmmaker — "Do you think your films are making people depraved and psychotic?" I wish! I only wish they were that effective. But in fact, as a filmmaker and an artist I don't feel that I have any social responsibility whatsoever; I think the two things are totally antithetical. As a citizen I have social responsibility. As a parent I have social responsibility. As a filmmaker I have social responsibility, but only in the sense that I make a contract with Universal Pictures to deliver a picture at a certain time, and I have to fulfill that contract. As an artist, I have no social responsibilities of any kind.

JD: What about the people in New York who made snuff films? Wasn't that the point at which the question of social responsibility became very clear to a lot of people.

DC: No, I don't think so. In the first place, it's very interesting because *Videodrome* is about snuff TV. At least, that's what the opening premise is all about. But in fact, I've never met anyone who knew for sure that he had seen an actual snuff film, because how could you really tell? I mean, I could make a film, and I would defy you to tell me that it is or is not in fact actual death that you are seeing. So how do you know? I think the original snuff films were fake. Of course, if you kill somebody, that has nothing to do with filmmaking. You've killed someone. You're a murderer. And that has nothing to do with art or filmmaking. So to me, that's a whole other question and one that comes up a lot with documentary filmmaking. The morality of documentary filmmakers has been called into question from time to time. I read an interesting article about a film in which the cameraman actually gave the order for execution. He said, "'Wait a minute, don't shoot that guy," — this is in Africa during some war — "I ran out of film. Wait till I reload." So the guys waited, he reloaded and said, "Okay, now shoot." So that takes you pretty heavily into the realm of morality and social consciousness. But in making a fiction film, your relationship with your actors and what you ask them to do — your morality as a voyeur while you are on set telling people to do a mock or a real love scene, or asking an actor to do something dangerous — functions on a different level of responsibility, one that is unconnected to the effect which a film has on society. To me, when you're talking about a snuff film, you're talking about a film that knows that it is showing sexuality and death together as something which people want to see and may possibly want to emulate.

JD: That charge of emulation has been thrown at you.

DC: I'd like to see somebody make somebody else's head blow up just through his own use of mental ...

EG: I'm getting a headache already.

JD: I like your defences against those charges, specifically, your notions about how horror films function socially, confronting people with the things that really bother them, their most disturbing fears.

DC: Technically my position is that I feel I don't have to defend my films in terms of social responsibility. Beyond that I do feel they have a function. These dark things of human nature will be expressed in one way or another, and film is one way to do it.

JD: It seems that horror is a way for people to work through things for which there is no other outlet other than to kill somebody or to go through something really horrible.

EG: Basically, your question is, "Is the film catharsis or emulation?"

DC: Well it's obviously not emulation because ...

JD: People don't go out and suck other people's blood after seeing vampires.

DC: No, people don't do that. I think the question of emulation really has more to do with children, and that is a whole other area. I don't believe in censorship for adults who are not insane and who are therefore licensed to drive cars and other potential instruments of death. I think that there should be categorization, and that there should be censorship for children partly by the state and partly by parents. Yes, I think there are movies that should be banned for children, but there's got to come an age where you can see anything you want and society doesn't tell you what that is. I just can't see Mary Brown telling me what I can't see. All those arguments are so ludicrous. It varies so incredibly from country to country — the things that are censored and the things that are considered dangerous.

JD: What about catharsis? Do you think your films



really work that way?

DC: Oh, yes.

EG: Is it personally cathartic or is it cathartic for the audience?

DC: Both. It's cathartic for me in the sense that any creative act is cathartic by its very nature. Making my films is certainly cathartic. But it's not an obvious thing, because there are a lot of people who work in the film business to whom it's just work.

EG: In some of your movies, like *Scanners* and *Shivers*, you seem to have this force coming from within that motivates and drives your characters.

DC: I think in some ways I'm trying to deal with the nature of the life force and what it is to be human and alive. Therefore, in art and fiction you are interested in the extremes, because they illuminate things even though you might not want to live in those extremes. That's why I'm interested in people who are obsessed, or who drive themselves to extremes, even though I don't feel that I'm obsessed. I'm obsessive from time to time in my work, but there are a lot of accountants who are obsessive, so that's not necessarily creative. I think of human beings as being a strange mixture of the physical and the non-physical — both of those things having their say at every moment that we're alive, both of those things always in play, completely intermixed in some ways. I start thinking that what I'm doing isn't really a horror film at all. It's some kind of metaphysical passion play or something, and that's why I don't think of it as necessarily being part of a genre. The approach of people like Carpenter or Romero, I think, is much more down to earth and pragmatic — to make a movie and scare people. That's fine, but it's not the way I approach it. I don't set out to make a movie that is going to scare people. I've never done that.

EG: You don't set out to manufacture fear?

DC: Never. Not at all. I didn't think of *Scanners* as a scary movie. People were really freaked out by its overriding paranoia, but I didn't think *Scanners* was either suspenseful or scary in that "jumping out of the corner and making you twitch" sense.

EG: What about *The Brood* — those growths that appear outside the body?

DC: It's hard to show growths inside the body unless you start cutting people open. I think that people alter themselves. It's in the nature of human beings to try and change themselves and to change their environment when there is no natural human environment. Downtown Chicago may be man's natural environment. It's not the woods, I'll tell you that. Go out in the woods and see how well you like it; as soon as you get there you start to make changes, you make clearings so that the insects aren't there, you try to do something so you can be warm when you want to be and cool when you want to be. Humans are unlike most animals in that we not only alter our environment, but we alter ourselves, our bodies, our minds, our modes of perception. As one of my characters mentions in *Videodrome*, "There's nothing real outside our perception of reality," which is an old philosophical saw, but it turns out to be true. Humans are constantly altering the world, so I'm taking it to extremes to illuminate it. I show what happens when people start to change their bodies, growing new organs that do other things. When it goes wrong, these things are pathological; when it goes right, it's like *Scanners*, where you have new brains that can do new things that the old ones couldn't do.

EG: Your films themselves seem to be working towards altering our mode of perception.

DC: Well, that's an interesting point, because when people ask me what I'd like my films to do, or what I would like to contribute to film, I tell them it's my own sensibility. I'd like to crystallize a sensibility which would add a different response to social situations and phenomena in general — a Cronenbergesque, Cronenbergundian sensibility.

EG: What would that be?

DC: It's still developing; it's not over. Certain friends of mine cut clippings out, and they say, "This is definitely a Cronenberg situation or a Cronenberg image." That pleases me, because it means that it is possibly happening. When you go with your little creative threads, your vision starts to emerge, and it's a sort of undervision — a force that makes things coherent in a way that they tend not to be in the real world.

JD: Do you ever worry about inhibiting or incapacitating people with your films?

DC: Desensitizing them you mean?

JD: No. But instead of confronting people with their innermost fears, you end up inhibiting those fears that, if untouched, will explode in some form or another. For myself, I find that there are certain fears that are so latent in me that I find it hard to even watch horror movies.

DC: Yeah? What?

JD: Mostly fears about myself. I think the monster is

never really something outside ourselves, as a lot of people like to think. It's something inside of ourselves. I fear a lot of qualities about myself, and those qualities manifest themselves as monsters. For instance, a psychic once told me that I was really a person of excess and that I had learned to control that. So all my fears of the monster are really fears of being innately greedy, totalitarian, or other horrible things, and horror movies bring out a lot of those fears for me. I think there's always a fine line between where fear is freeing you and where it's imprisoning you. *Repulsion* is a good example of that. A lot of women who saw *Repulsion* couldn't stay alone in their apartments for years afterwards, because they'd see hands coming out of the walls. To me, that fear had become incapacitating and, thereby, destructive to them.

DC: That's like people saying that they couldn't take showers after they saw *Psycho*. That's a small price to pay for the liberation of the unconscious. No one ever said that art wasn't dangerous. And it's the same with psychology. One of the things that Jung always stressed was that Jungian analysis was a dangerous thing; that it could, in fact, lead you to some very dangerous places, and not everybody should go there. It's the same with a horror film. Robin Spry is a Canadian filmmaker who says he can't see my movies, though he really wants to, because he gets too tense. Well, I don't tell him he should, I don't say he must. When people tell me, "I can't take horror films because I get too tense and they make me crazy," I say, "Great, don't see them." That's why I say censorship is ridiculous, because I know very few people will walk into a film that overwhelms and shocks them. I don't think anybody walked into *Scanners* thinking they weren't going to see violence or were going to see a movie that didn't involve tension and angst of some kind. I think it's important that films be advertised honestly in terms of what they are. Given that it says, "Warning, this film has violence and bad language and sex and rat fucking," you know not to see it if you don't like those things. Everybody is different, and there's some people whose sensibilities are such that they can't cope with the energy that's released in a horror film. It's certainly interesting that it raises questions for you, but I wonder why contemporaries of yours have no trouble.

JD: I think they must be more at one with themselves, somehow.

DC: Maybe, but I've gotten much more sensitive to movies involving children in peril since I've had kids. I used to be able to take that very easily, and in *The Brood* I do it myself. But I'm much less likely to watch something that deals with children in peril now, as before I was not crazy about movies which put animals in peril. I'd find it easier to see a movie in which a psychotic killer slashed up teenage girls than one in which a psychotic killer went and killed dogs because of the reality factor of animals. Animal actors are not the same as human actors, who supposedly know what they're doing. Right now, I'm just not interested in confronting my fears about my children's well-being, because I'm aware that I'm worried about violence being directed towards my children. So even though I don't expose myself to it, it's not that I can't accept it.

JD: I think that extreme empaths tend to have a great deal of trouble with horror films, because there are so many tense and disturbing situations created. All their channels get overloaded.

DC: Sure. If you come out of horror films with your ulcers bleeding into your shoes, then I don't think it's a very good idea for you to see them.

JD: What kind of an effect do you want your films to have on an audience? Do you want them to somehow become liberated from a particular fear or phobia?

DC: I don't know, my reactions while I'm making a film are very complex. Even in the creation of something horrible — something that would be terrible if it happened to me or to someone I knew in real life — there's a certain delight in creating something because it's for a film. Mark Prent must have a terrific high when he's creating his monsters, because it's a creative act and it's exciting; that in itself is a lot of positive juice. I think that people should come out of my films exhilarated — not depressed. I've seen the odd, strange film that wasn't depressing, yet was a bad film because it was just such a downer. *Day of the Locusts* was like that for me. It was a bad film, not because it was depressing, but because something about it made me not want to see films or make films anymore. I've seen films that are depressing yet exhilarating, for instance *The Holocaust*. For me, something that's really powerful and artistically right is somehow never totally depressing. Tragedies were never depressing, and they were also supposed to be cathartic. Technically, that thought of *Hamlet* or *King Lear* is real depressing, from beginning to end it's just bad stuff piled on bad stuff. When my films are working right, there should be a lot of juice and exhilaration being generated. I think that's true of the genre as well.

EG: I can't see musicals myself.

DC: I hear *Pennies from Heaven* is a very depressing musical. I want to go see it.

JD: I have trouble watching melodramas lately. I get too tense.

DC: The news really bothers me. I try not to read the newspaper, because that really gets me down. That's not redeemed by artistic merit of any kind.

EG: So what's your next movie?

DC: I don't know, but I can feel it bubbling away inside of me. It's a very exciting phase, because I have no idea what it is at all. I just know there's something there.

JD: Thinking about the hi-rise in *Shivers*, it seems to me that the rationale behind that film is to shatter middle-class complacency. I think that all the great horror films, such as Hitchcock's *The Birds*, have keyed in on this.

DC: I don't think that's unique to horror. I think it's just the tone of horror which is unique. Any artist is always pointing out that the emperor has no clothes, or saying, "This is reality as I perceive it." I think that's one of the general provinces of art to do that.

JD: It seems one of the particular elements of horror is to try to control our emotions in society — certain emotions are appropriate in certain places. The whole reason for needing a Frankenstein is that we have a raw emotional being inside of us who doesn't work by logic — who is purely emotional — and we're very afraid to let that Frankenstein out. Horror films force us to confront that emotional part of ourselves.

DC: What did you say your upbringing was? One of the things that horror reveals is the reality of death. I think art in general reveals things to people which either they don't perceive themselves, or would not perceive unless it's crystallized in one object, whether it be a sculpture or whatever. It's not necessarily negative stuff, but horror does deal with negative stuff because that's what it's about.

JD: Do you think it would be possible to make a positive horror film?

DC: Sure. Far be it for me to say that death has no positive aspects. I think that death has some very positive aspects.

EG & JD: Like what?

DC: Well, it's one way of getting away from it all. People do commit suicide and there's reason for it. I find suicide fascinating because it's an interesting decision in terms of what to do with your life. I don't know that I would want to live forever. Imagine what a problem it would be if people lived forever, aside from all the silly stuff about over-population and not enough food. I think there's reason for constant regeneration, including the human race. When you have children you notice it — you're not as afraid of death when you have children. I'm not thinking of immortality here, but it was always interesting to study history because of the way kings and emperors were always totally obsessed with the question of the succession of their blood. It seems that Shakespeare's tragedies never end with death, but with some sort of renewal and regeneration. So it is that the new king or new order always gets a little bit to say before the play is over and gives you the feeling that things are going to continue, having been cleansed. So while death is not completely negative, it's a huge reality that people have to deal with. There's that whole mystic idea that life is nothing more than preparation for death, and there are some societies and cultures in which the way in which you die is extremely important. In North America, this approach seems strange, because it is such a death-denying culture. To a North American, Japanese culture seems very death-obsessed. But then you start to realize they're not wrong; that there's something to that which is innate to human beings. It's not such a strange way to approach life at all — to be that concerned with death. There are a lot of mysteries to be dealt with.

"Then came the 80's and people welcomed change, we found people, people found us, they enjoyed living with our hair. We enjoyed being part of their total look."

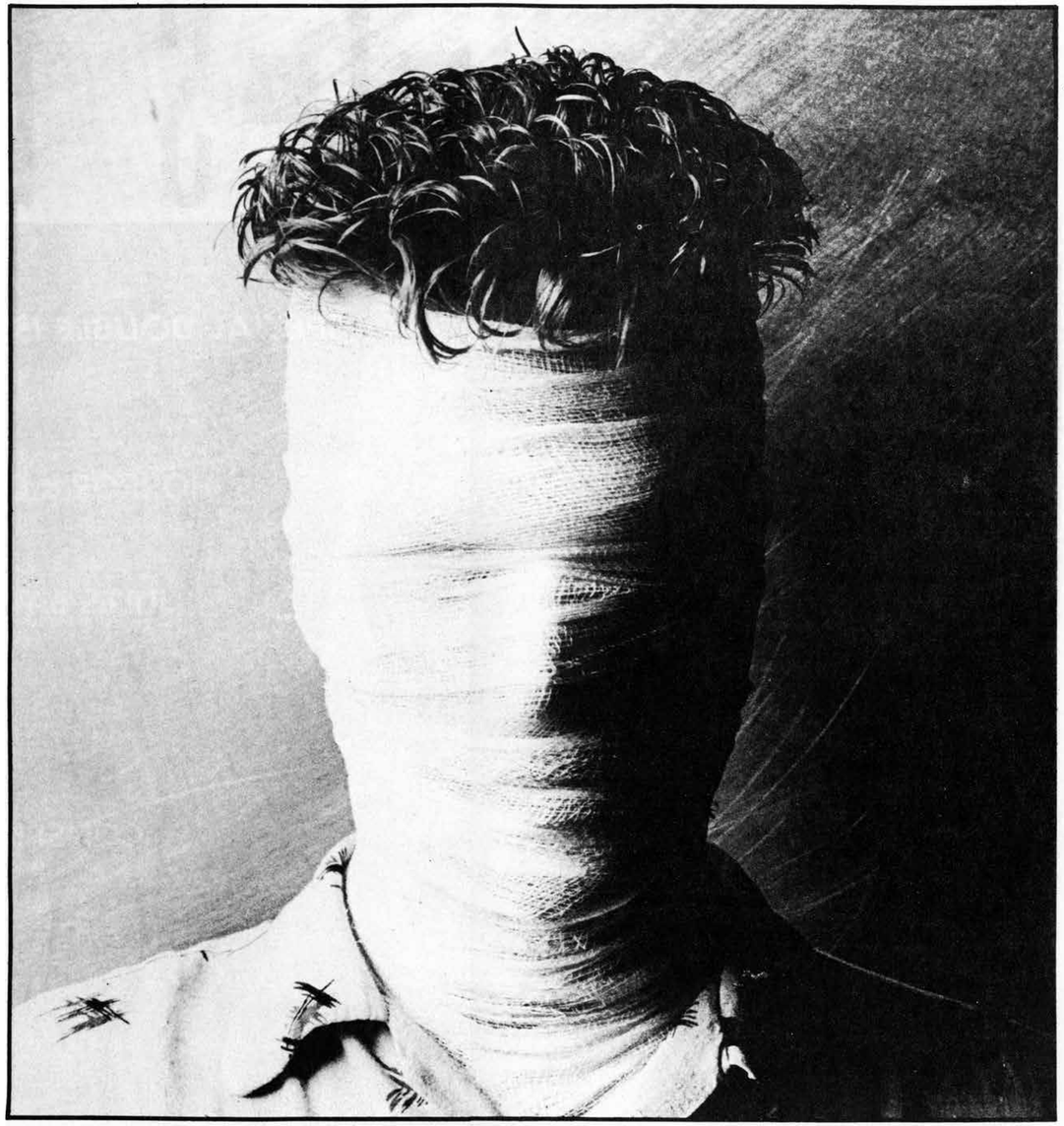


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GLENN BRANCA

ANDY PATERSON

Glenn Branca and Jules Baptiste have both been central figures in the New York art/music milieu for some time; now both of them are developing bandleader/composer reputations extending well beyond New York City. Branca has just started his own label – Neutral Records – and one of his first signings is Jules Baptiste, who currently fronts *Red Decade*. Baptiste played guitar and bass on Laurie Anderson's original recording of "O Superman," while Branca has recorded the 12" single, "Lesson No. 1" b/w "Dissonance," and the recently released LP, "The Ascension," (both on the New York-based label – 99 Records). He previously recorded with the *Theoretical Girls* ("U.S. Millie" b/w "You Got Me") and *The Static* ("My Relationship" b/w "Don't Let Me Stop You"). Both Branca and Baptiste are concerned with the natural acoustic and percussive possibilities of electric guitars run directly through clean-sounding amplifiers. They each write and perform instrumental music which they feel could be more clearly articulated by working in conjunction with another medium, such as cinema, dance or verbal/textual arrangements. A.P.

AP: We were just listening to some of your new album. How do you feel about it?

GB: I like some of it, depends on what mood I'm in. I'm not that happy with it. I'll never be happy with anything. It doesn't quite get there yet. We're working on it. I think it won't be too much longer till we get something that works.

AP: Are you going to record with 99?

GB: I'm not sure. I just got a commission from Twyla Tharp. If we get a good offer from somebody else, we'll probably go with them. I'm not that happy with Ed. This record has been out for about a month, but he's only been able to move about 2700. That's really pathetic and it's partially due to the fact that he's not really as behind it as I'd like him to be or as behind it as he is with "Liquid Liquid". So if he was, I think I'd be willing to stay with him even if there were some other offers. At this point I don't know. I might put it out on my own label. You know I'm starting my own label.

AP: I heard that.

GB: It's happening. The first three things on the label are going to be Sonic Youth, Jules Baptiste and the Scott & Beth B sound tracks. At the moment, Sonic Youth and Jules are getting really hot. Jules just did a gig at the Mudd Club that was very successful. All of a sudden we've got this very hot label on our hands. It's incredibly exciting. At first, it was more of a vehicle to get out some of the music that isn't usually heard. But as it turns out . . .

AP: You might be creating a bank account.

GB: That's right.

AP: Do you fear the label or yourself being misconstrued as something other than what you are?

GB: I have a lot of fears, but that's not one of them. I know that's exactly what will happen.

AP: I'm totally paranoid about that myself. I began to feel that I was being misinterpreted as being for views that I was opposed to.

GB: My attitude has always been that there are certain people who are going to understand what you are doing and there are others who aren't. There's nothing much you can do about the ones who aren't going to understand, and you just take that into account and figure that you're doing it for the people who do understand.

AP: But you want the other ones' money.

GB: Not necessarily. I think there are enough people out there who can get into something like this. The other people can keep their money. I don't need a lot of money, just a little bit. Anyway, I've been getting positive press lately, but it's often not accurate press, which is disturbing. But I wouldn't say it really scares me. There are a lot of other things that scare me.

AP: What are some of those things?

GB: Oh, jesus christ, these are a little more difficult questions than I'm used to getting. Well, I'm scared of fucking everything. I wish you had gotten me in a more paranoid state of mind. You should have called me last night at about two o'clock in the morning. I'm trying to remember a dream I had the other night that was really bad, really horrendous. It was something bloody, I can't remember what it was. Recently, I've found myself going along with dreams that I know are bummers and that bothers me.

AP: The fact that you go along with them?

JULES BAPTISTE

P.L. NOBLE

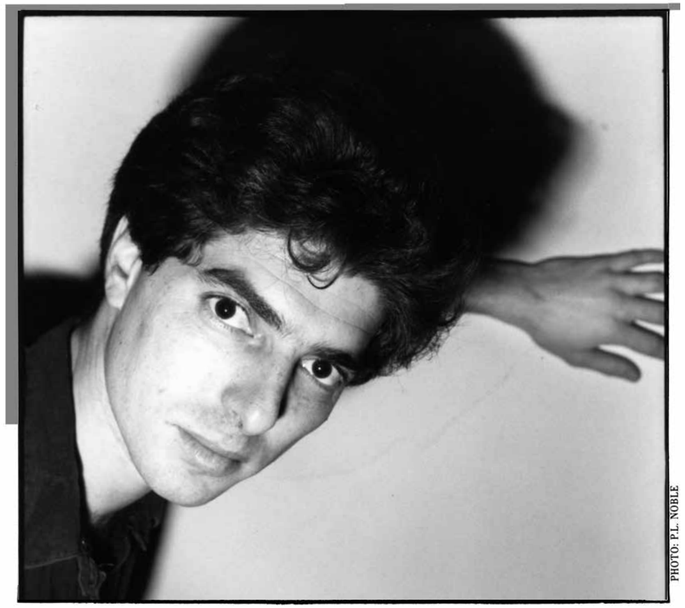


PHOTO: P.L. NOBLE

I was having an argument with someone a couple of weeks ago, and I said, "Everytime I hear people say how fantastic New York is I tell them to shut up. I don't want them glorifying it and having another wave of fresh faced, toe-headed art students from the middle of nowhere flocking to New York and picking up guitars. There's this whole scene in New York right now where everyone's from out of town." This person turned around, looked me straight in the eye and said, "You're just jealous because having grown up here all your life you don't see it as an incentive. You almost take it for granted." Maybe I do, and quite often I can get very snooty about it. I walk around the streets of New York and say, "This is my town, and I can say what I want." I've always felt like I was king of the playground, even when I didn't have a dime.

I did not grow up in a poverty-stricken environment with 9 brothers and sisters (what's a bed?). I snorted junk once, and it made me totally nauseous. It got me about as depressed as I'd been when I was 19 — when I didn't need drugs to get depressed. There are so many junkies falling over each other's shoelaces in N.Y.'s music scene at the moment. It's the same old story for people like myself who hate the sight of needles. I've lost 2 friends and 1 cousin because of junk. I can drift out of touch without that poison. If I'm in a good mood I'll drift and I'll write music. If I'm in a bad mood I'll go to bed.

My parents got divorced when I was 2 years old. I was originally born in the Central West Village, but when I was 16 I moved to Texas with my father's family. I took violin lessons when I was a kid, and so naturally I played in a lot of loser bands. I can remember playing in this cover band called Legacy. We toured the Southwest, and boy, was it ever boring. In 1973 I moved back to New York and became very disillusioned with the music scene. I worked in a number of restaurants and played guitar and sax in my spare time. Suddenly Jules Baptiste had to make a decision about what he wanted to do with his life. Did I want to work in restaurants for the rest of my life, or did I want to make music my main occupation? I decided to return to school at the ripe age of 23. For the next 4 years I went to the Hunter College of Music and learned how to write music scores and understand theory. Come 1980, I was 27 years of age, got heavily involved with playing the sax and gigged with a lot of bullshit jazz bands. I contributed guitar and bass on Laurie Anderson's original recording of "O Superman" and toured with her on several performances of *United States Pt. 2.*

When I was attending music college I fooled around with new ideas whenever I could find the time. People would constantly tell me, "You've got really interesting concepts. Why don't you pursue them?" Finally, one day I did. I stayed at home and wrote a lot of my own compositions. In school I learned to write string quartets, so I tried to make them sound like guitars and basses. At that point in time I met Glenn Branca and Rhys Chatham who had formed this performance group called the *Theoretical Girls*, and they were always hungry for fresh guitarists. Glen takes 6 or 7 guitars and tunes them all to one string, cranks the amps and lets it fly. He'll create heavy rhythmic counterpoints with the guitars. What you end up with is a psycho-acoustic phenomenon and a lot of overtones. When you hit strings that are tuned to the same note, you're generating incredible amounts of intense overtones as well as the original low note that you started off with.

Rhys Chatham works the opposite way. He takes one guitar, flanges it, cranks the hell out of it, uses an E.Q. box to select the overtone field that he wants and just repeats enough times that he can fill it up. When I played with him we would just stand there and hit only one note really fast. When you strike the back end of the guitar towards the bridge you get a twangy sound,

GLENN BRANCA

GB: Well, it's not that I go along with them. What's happening is definitely not on the up and up. Recently I had a dream that was very, very ugly, which I can't believe I had. It scared me and kept me up for two nights. It was violent. I guess I had a dream like this around the time I wrote that song *You Got Me* for the "Theoretical Girls" about four years ago. In it I say I'm really scared when I kill in my dreams. I hadn't been able to relate to that line for a few years until the other night when it happened again. Actually the scariest thing that has happened to me recently was watching a show on the Moral Majority. I know this is a pretty common subject nowadays, but I can't help being scared by it. I don't know when they're going to decide that the work I'm doing is not morally correct, and of course, the further you progress in the business, the closer you come to that confrontation. Especially if you're putting out albums that have potentially religious connotations.

AP: Yeah, I was wondering about the titles.

GB: The actual title of that piece is "The Ascension of Christ". Originally I wanted a cruxifiction symbol on the cover. I asked Robert Longo if he had ever done a drawing of Jesus Christ. The other image I had in mind was from a whole other perspective. I thought that two guys fucking would be a really cool album cover.

AP: That would get the Moral Majority quite quickly.

GB: Yeah, so Longo ended up with an image that had both religious and sexual connotations without really having either one. We were able to get it all without causing any trouble. There are some people who have been offended by the cover already, strangely enough. I'm talking about middle-american-type-people. Friends of mine sent it to their relatives who said, "It's two men dancing together. We don't understand."

AP: You should do a religious video tape.

GB: I don't know why I keep finding myself drawn in this direction. It scares me, because two, three, four years ago there would have been nothing about it that would have scared or excited me. To be dealing with any kind of religious symbolism or connotations seems dangerous now, but I can't help myself.

AP: Why do you feel the attraction?

GB: Just last night I was thinking that this might go back to an experience I had at a church camp when I was about twelve years old. I remember lying in my cot and thinking about god for the first time. I had let my mind wander on the subject and it started to scare me. I think that was the point where I decided not to think about it. I don't know why, but that memory keeps coming back to me.

AP: Do you have any fears about the actual record business? I have hundreds of them, but they all come down to the fact that I'm going to lose control of who I am and the ability to define who I am.

GB: I feel somewhat limited. I'm not as free as I was five or six years ago when I could do absolutely any idea that came to my mind which seemed relatively interesting. Now I'm restricted to some extent because of the image I've created. I can't just go out and do *anything* anymore.

AP: It's the responsibility to the image.

GB: Right. On the other hand, in some ways I feel it's good because I have to work a lot harder to do something which measures up to a certain quality. I have more freedom than most people because I haven't done anything just to be successful. I've certainly done what I've felt I wanted to do. My biggest fear right now is that I'm becoming a trend. The biggest problem with becoming a trend is that every trend has its end. Right now I have to decide whether I'm going to play a concert next month or whether I'm going to wait and not do any concerts until March when I do the next symphony piece. We just did a Mudd Club gig where they were charging $10 at the door, ripping people off at the bar and jamming the place absolutely beyond capacity. The whole audience was very uncomfortable and they wouldn't let us go on until very late because they want



JULES BAPTISTE

but if you strike the strings towards the head you get a jazzier sound. In effect, what you're doing is selecting the overtones that are present on the string by where you actually hit it. You're changing the length and how much the string is vibrating. It has absolutely nothing to do with putting your fingers down, you're working with open strings. If you repeat them enough and move up and down the neck as you pluck, you will hear the timbre and the colour change.

At 27 years of age I came to the realization that I could stand up on stage without peeing my pants. I'd often go home, and it was an impetus to get the things out that I was hearing in my head. Someone once said, "Composition is a method by which if you don't exercise it you'll go insane." Now I don't know if that's true of any artform, but if you have something that's driving you, and you don't express it to other people, it can be a very harrowing experience.

I was hearing a lot of repeating patterns and unusual sounds on my tape recorder. I tried to quit smoking by setting a tape to go off in the middle of the night, and it was supposed to tell me how terrible it was. One night I rigged it up, and by accident I put it into record. I woke up the next morning and discovered that I talked in my sleep. That day I went out and found that you could buy a voice-activated microphone for a mere $40.00. For the next few weeks I was hearing my dreams, breathing and garbled speech. It was a new experience for me, but at the same time I began to fear the idea of possible success. I feared the very thought of saying what I really felt and letting someone make a judgement on it. Maybe it's something all young composers experience?

I use the word "composer" because it has nothing to do with being a musician. A composer usually makes a decision to put his idea down on paper. Musicians are usually more talented players who often have more ideas. The only drawback is that they have great difficulty talking to me with their instruments. Maybe this makes me out to be a closet romantic. It's got no relation to the British term "New Romantic," thank god. When I see a "New Romantic" I automatically think of 3 guys who got together, bought out all the old clothes in London, and decided to re-sell them. It's making electronic music very palatable, but most of the people who are doing it don't have any imagination. You're talking about selling your imagination! You're talking about convincing the world that your imagination is viable and that just by expressing it you should be fed, housed and given a generous supply of drugs. Is that what musicians are concerned about? I don't think they've decided what they're saying is valid. I have. I'm a composer.

When I premiered my own band Red Decade in 1981 a lot of people were stumped, because we didn't have a vocalist. Red Decade was, and still is, a purely instrumental group which consists of alto sax, tenor sax, guitar, bass and drums. I hear voices just like everybody else does, but I don't hear a lot of words. I don't even hear any messages being sung out to people. There's no reason why a singer should have a bad mix during a performance. People usually just sit there and can't even hear the words. The singer probably doesn't think it's important. I don't buy that. Even if you can hear the vocals, but the words suck, what's the point? I'm not happy with the way life is, but I think it's stupid to write songs about, "Oh man, I can't hold my job, I can't hold my girl, and I can't hold my dick." Who knows? Maybe in a year's time I'll turn into yet another manic depressive and write a sequel to "My Way".

I'll never forget the time when I worked with this incredibly stubborn dancer in New York. We had been working on this particular performance for a couple of weeks, and all of a sudden this person wanted to cut

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GLENN

to make as much money as possible at the door and the bar. I have to decide whether I want to do that again or not. Even if I'm making $2,000, the people you're playing for are making 5, 6, $7,000. You're really giving the money to people who could care less about the music or the audience.

AP: I have a fear of audiences, but it's interesting to watch them develop and find out just who they are, and what they think you are, and what they think you stand for.

GB: One thing that's started to happeen is that the press — I never thought they would do it — have pigeonholed me. They've finally labeled me, but in a very strange way. They've got me down as being a serious musician and it bothers me. It's clear that people have been affected by it. It makes me nervous that people are deciding how they're supposed to perceive me when I've always tried to keep people as off balance as I possibly could.

AP: Oh god, sometimes I feel violent towards an audience, as though they're parasites.

GB: When I played in Berlin, the more I antagonized them, the more they loved it. That's what they wanted and I was in a mean state of mind that night.

AP: They've accepted a passive role from the beginning, it becomes masochism.

GB: You see it in New York occasionally. I suppose that's how James Chance did it when people actually came to his concerts to be antagonized.

AP: I don't know where you can go with that.

GB: I find myself wanting to make more of a statement. In my new piece — its a concert piece using maybe twenty musicians — I'm interested in working with words and images which work for and with the music, rather than being affectations. Getting back to the Moral Majority, I find myself heading in a political direction. It seems obvious to do. When you see these people on television it can be a bit scary because they're so ugly. I just saw Rex Humbard making his Christmas plea for donations. Christ, he was crying on television. That stuff is scary because you know it's working. This is big business. It's close to home — my sister and my family are into this stuff. I understand it from up close.

AP: It scares me that in a moment of insecurity I could be attracted to being someone's slave.

GB: Or being your own slave.

EG: In your orchestral work you want to make use of lyrics and images. What kind of political statement are you interested in making with the words?

GB: I'm not going to use lyrics, actually. I would use texts. There was an anarchist organization in Paris in the late sixies, I've read a number of their pieces. There's a book called *Pieces On Living For The Younger Generation*. It hits it on the head so clearly. It's only a bit of text, but it can give people some guidelines into the work. And I think they can start seeing it from a certain perspective. No one knows where I'm coming from, they have no idea what the work is supposed to mean. I want to give them an idea of my directions. I want to give them an idea of what goes through my head every day. I don't want to narrow it too much, but I see some of the work as anthems. Most people haven't gotten that quite yet.

AP: No, I wouldn't get that without a textual message.

EG: In this new work, is the music an outgrowth of the text?

GB: I see the music coming out of what I feel and the words coming out of what I think. I trust the way I feel. The next piece is going to be much more emotional. I'm trying to lay my emotions as bare as I possibly can, at least in some of the movements, especially the last. I'm in a fucked up state of mind at this point, and I feel that if I'm gonna be fucked up I might as well take it and use it to turn the music into this really fucked up . .

It's the only thing that keeps me going. I'm starting to get a little messy here. I mean, I've never done an interview like this. ✶

JULES

down my first major piece, Native Dance, from its original 28 minutes playing time. I was considereing retitling it "Native Glance". I knew it had to be cut, but I was going to be damned if some dancer was going to tell me how to write my own music. I can still remember telling the dancer, "So you like my music? You want to dance to it? It's yours. Is this part a little too long? Okay, I can cut that down. Do me a favour, don't do the frug when I go into straight 4/4."

Red Decade has played about 10 gigs in 1981.We opened for Bauhaus and DNA, and we blew them off stage. DNA had an off night. I happen to enjoy their music. We share an aesthetic, but we have a different texture in our sound. DNA's music is much more erratic. Red Decade is very smooth, just like peanut butter. My life is unbelievably chaotic, but my music is carefully structured. Just because we have 2 saxaphones in our line-up, everyone figures we're some kind of avant-garde jazz ensemble. Okay, so I grew up listening to a lot of big band music. I love jazz. My tenor player figured it out the other night. He said, "You're cheating, because you're just using me as the trombones and trumpets and Fritz (the alto player) is the reed section, isn't he?" Yeah, you got it! Listen, if you can't afford a big band, get a quintet.

I think some people might be afraid of what Red Decade represents because we are a fusion band in a sense. We take concepts of jazz composition and new music composition which implies a repetition a la Phillip Glass and Steve Reich, although I do not consider that I'm even putting a dent in the ground on which they have trod. In terms of harmonic theory and rhythmic complexity, I don't come near it. Red Decade is combining a minimalist technique of composition, jazz phrasing in rhythm and a rock'n'roll vocabulary. I've always enjoyed rock. When I was 13 my favorite song was "Kick Out The Jams Motherfuckers" by the *MC5*.

You can expect to see an extended play by Red Decade in the record stores this coming February or March. We've just signed a deal with Glenn Branca's Neutral Records. Everyone in the band is excited about it. Y'know something, Red Decade isn't just Jules Baptiste. When the rest of the musicians in the band perform they're adding their own little touches and influences into the music. They're obviously not staying with me for the money. The only thing I can promise them is future soundtrack work for films. I've already written scores for video artists and dancers, but now I'm beginning to get interested in movies. It's funny but quite a number of people have told me Red Decade's music reminds them of schlock or very modern movie music. I would say there's about 20 bars scattered throughout a piece that are, if not conscious, then they're unconscious lifts from t.v. melodramatic music. It comes out sounding kind of humourous and tortured at the same time.

Nobody has been able to pin Red Decade down, including me. What is that sound? Is it just a 5 piece band that generates instrumental music? How do you say what it doesn't sound like? I've been told that it sounds like Liszt, Zappa, Weather Report and early Talking Heads. There's this one section that we have laced throughout a piece entitled "Scars of Love", and my drummer thinks it sounds just like Cramps. Who knows?Maybe they recorded that particular musical arrangement first, but I don't think so. Some other asshole way back in 1959 probably recorded it on some obscure blues record. So what am I supposed to say about it, huh? Bartok took Hungarian folk melodies. I'm not proud. I'm acknowledging my roots. I may not have been brought up on the other side of the track like Johnny Guitar, but this is what I heard in New York, lying awake at 16, horny, listening to garbage trucks roar at 5:30 in the morning, hearing car accidents and people screaming at the top of their lungs. These are some of the things I try to express in Red Decade. I'm not going to walk on stage and put a lot of echo on my voice and start singing, "LIFE SUCKS!" Sorry, I could never provide that kind of catharsis for people. ✶

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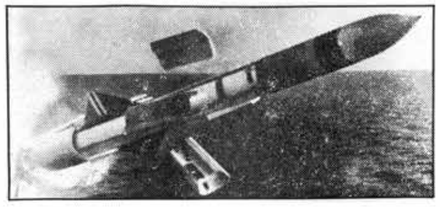


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THE SUICIDAL STATE



AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL VIRILIO BY SYLVERE LOTRINGER

Paul Virilio is an urbanist whose body of thought is attracting increasing attention on the other side of the Atlantic. His work includes Bunker Archaeologie *(Centre Georges Pompidou, 1975), and* L'Insecurite du Territoire *(Stock, 1976), out of which grew* Speed and Politics, *published in France in 1977. His last book,* Esthetique de la Disparition *(Balland, 1980), extends his preoccupation with speed and war to the realm of cinematic manipulations. This interview is excerpted from another volume by Virilio which will be published in the Fall of 1982 by Semiotext(e) as part of a new 'Foreign Agent' series.*

The translators are Silvia Federici, Jim Fleming, and John Johnston.

SYLVERE LOTRINGER: Your essay, Speed and Politics, *is the introduction to a new continent hardly touched upon by contemporary thinkers, the continent of speed. Your approach, however, is not philosophical in a traditional sense, since it confronts the war machine at work in our technological society. What happens then when speed imposes its law to the world of politics?*

PAUL VIRILIO: Speed remains the unexplored dimension of politics. From the very beginning, people have highlighted the link between power and wealth. In my opinion power is first linked to speed, and wealth comes later. It is true that power requires resources, which are obtained either through accumulation or exploitation or both. But the 'dromological' dimension is often forgotten. Every society is founded on relations to speed; every society is dromocratic. Until the nineteenth century very little speed was produced. Sailing vessels hardly evolved between Antiquity and the age of Napoleon; the horse even less. Of course, there were carrier pigeons. The only form of more sophisticated speed was the optical telegraph, then the electrical telegraph. On the whole, then, society was not founded on speed, but rather on restraints, restraints that were imposed by means of the senses, laws, regulations, taboos. All were systems of obstacles. Ancient society was a society of successive obstacles at the personal level, at the moral level, at the level of territorial definition. Whether we are talking about the walls of the city, taxes, or the bastions of nation-states, they are all part of a system of restraint. Then all of a sudden a great revolution occurred, commonly referred to as The Industrial Revolution and later as The Revolution in Transport. I call this the Dromocratic Revolution, because not only is it the invention, as has been said, of the possibility of multiplying similar objects (actually a very limited perspective) but it's also the invention above all of the means of fabricating speed — with the steam engine, and then internal combustion. In this way, it was possible to pass from the period of restraint to the period of acceleration. Power is now invested in acceleration itself.

It is well known that the army has always been where pure speed is utilised. The cavalry or the artillery always had the best horses. Today, it is still crucial that the military develop even greater speeds, whether in missiles or planes. Take the example of the conflict surrounding the development of an American Concorde. The project was dropped because a civilian supersonic of that speed would have been unacceptable to the military. Here we can see clearly that the hierarchy of speed and the hierarchy of wealth are equivalent. The two go together.

S.L.: Then the primacy of speed is simultaneously the primacy of the military.

P.V.: Absolutely. The military classes assume a function similar to the one of the feudal class in ancient society, but this time on a world wide scale. There is no political power to regulate the multi-nationals or armed forces which have become more and more autonomous. There is no power superior to them. The Bomb has replaced the monarch. Either one waits for the arrival of a hypothetical universal state with some Primate at the top, or one finally understands that there was no monarch ruling by divine right, no absolute monarch at the centre, but *an absolute weapon*. The centre is no longer occupied by a political power, but by a capacity for absolute destruction.

S.L.: The state, in which history crystallises, is now dwindling away, but simultaneously rises the absolute power of the instant.

P.V.: History is an extensivity of time, and the time which perjures, settles and develops, this time disappears in favour of the instant, as if the end of history was the end of all duration and the advent of instantaneity and ubiquity.

S.L.: But this instantaneity is another name for the nuclear.

P.V.: This instantaneity is linked to the centre, and this centre is the nuclear. The invention of the scientific surprise: the great surprise of Hiroshima, moves to the cente of the political debate. Actually, it liquidates it.

S.L.: In a political debate everything is always negotiable, but we are dealing here with something irreducible and irreversible, something of an altogether different dimension. One can negotiate around nuclear power, not with the absolute weapon.

P.V.: The most ominous aspect of the nuclear weapon is simply that it exists, and disintegrates by its very presence any debates on the evolution of society.

S.L.: The most deadly aspect of the absolute weapon isn't just nuclear fire, but what you call 'nuclear face'.

P.V.: The belief in salvation or peace by means of the absolute weapon is sheer idolatry, there is no doubt about that. Each functions like some unchallenged scientist-military cult, the cult which, in a strange fashion, brings back to the fore the question of the Holy War. Under the pressure of this 'Pure War' of armaments, of the ideology of an absolute weapon capable of ensuring the survival of the species, the debate, long discarded, is being reborn, that of the Holy War. The Holy War of Islam was the equivalent of the Pure War in the mind of the people. It was a total faith which worked in such a way that thousands of people could go to their deaths, being assured of their eternity.

S.L.: But there is another kind of faith, the belief in what is called deterrence.

P.V.: 'Nuclear faith' is the belief in deterrence, the belief that the presence of the nuclear bomb will prevent war, and thus has a 'beneficial' effect. What I am arguing is ex-

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actly the opposite. What is so curious about the weapon is not that it may be exploded tomorrow, causing five hundred million deaths, but that it is destroying society, and has been for the last thirty years. It's bringing about an 'endo-colonization', a colonization by the army of its own population; in short, the police on a world scale. The minimal State is the last phase of this absolute weapon, which is now leading to the suicidal State.

S.L.: So deterrence is a form of persuasion, but a sort of smoke-screen behind which something like the Final Solution on a planetary scale is put into place?

P.V.: Deterrence is the emotional phase of 'novocratic' powers, that is, the power to move, a kind of 'pro-motion'. This nuclear 'pro-motion' (the speed of ballistic missiles, or the laser beam) corresponds to an ideology: the nuclear face in deterrence.

S.L.: This is not so much the end of ideology, as the emergence of ideology in a deterrent form. The absolute coalescence of ideology is deterrence.

P.V.: It is the last ideology.

S.L.: But now deterrence itself is losing its logistic value, and a good deal of its credibility.

P.V.: We are presently entering the second phase of deterrence. After massive nuclear deterrence comes deterrence at all levels of arms, including conventional weapons. This is the more diversified form of deterrence. The generalisation of deterrence poses new questions. The present debate on the development of conventional arms or the exponential growth of military budgets — whether in the U.S., France, or the Soviet Union — hasn't touched the real issues. So far, the expenditures in question only contribute to the non-development of society. At the ideological level, however, this debate promotes the idea that deterrence must be generalised, and I don't think we have yet reflected on what 'generalising' deterrence could mean. I can only say that this would certainly lead straight to cultural suicide. And obscurantism is beginning to pervade at all levels of society.

S.L.: Perhaps this is a prelude to the disappearance of our civilization. Other civilizations have suddenly disappeared without explanation.

P.V.: That would mean to still believe in history, in the idea that there will be 'something' after, an extension into the future, as there is one into the past. I believe, rather, that the existence of the nuclear weapon is deterrent in the sense that we could all disappear, leaving a billion dead on the earth. This would indeed be 'something', but no interests would be served. The problem is rather that the weapon would still exist; it now exists even in the recipes of students who can assemble a nuclear bomb in a kitchen. All they need is some plutonium. The drama is the very fact of the bomb's existence. What could be done to kill the absolute weapon?

One could say the same thing about the events of 1789 in France. How can one get rid of the monarch after a revolution which has abolished monarchy? The monarch was killed, but he came back as an Emperor. So this revolution, though it was a bourgeois one, turned out to be more *military* than bourgeois inasmuch as it lead to the Empire. The military-industrial complex starts from there. Today's problem is therefore how to abolish the nuclear monarchy; that is, the presence by divine right of this weapon at the centre of our society. This is the real question.

S.L.: How to disarm then?

P.V.: The only answer I could give at this point is that somehow the question of speed is essential. I'm not alone in saying that. General Fuller, one of the greatest military historians, an Englishman, said that in the nuclear era speed is essential. That's an interesting statement, though it's not clear at first glance why. It means that the destructive power of the new weapon, the weapon of Hiroshima, isn't really the problem — speed is. It is certain by now that in the era of deterrence *something* has not been deterred. If civilian economies have been deterred to the point of being led tangentially to non-development, something has continued to be developed, and that's speed. It is the speed of the vectors which, in 1961, made it necessary to establish a 'hot-line' between Khruschev and Kennedy, and which is bringing about a quasi-instantaneity of delay in decision making.

S.L.: After all, deterrence is still a humanist category. It implies that there is still time for reflection.

P.V.: Right. There is no more time left for reflection. This is exactly what the power of speed is about. In a dromocracy — that is a society that relies on speed — human agency is no longer functional. Instead, we have instruments of information, of traumatic response, etc. Today there is little time to respond. In 1961, it was about half an hour. Brezhnev and Reagan only have a few minutes.

S.L.: A few minutes, that's what's left of man.

P.V.: That's what remains of his power. Of course, it still depends where the attack is launched from. After all, the orbital bomb can be launched from space, and therefore right above the United States. As for nuclear submarines, which are certainly the most threatening, it is sufficient to say that they can be stationed in proximity to the U.S. or European territorial waters. It has been estimated that the launch time is about a quarter of an hour for ICBM's, and two to five minutes for the maximum performance of subs or 'Unidentified Flying Objects'. Unfortunately, in the last ten years eighty per cent of military research in the Soviet Union and the U.S., as well as a little less than eighty per cent in France, has been devoted to laser weapons. And laser weaponry has the speed of light. It is measured in milliseconds. It's practically nothing. In essence it means that instantaneity becomes a fact. Between now and the end of the century the absolute weapon will move at absolute speed.

S.L.: To an absolute power of destruction will correspond the absolute of speed. At that point, there won't be any place whatsoever for man.

P.V.: Man won't matter any more; only arms, only weapons. There lies the real problem of monarchy, of nuclear monarchy.

S.L.: What strategies do you think one can devise to prevent this exponential growth of the power of destruction?

P.V.: An incredible amount of research has been done on the economy, on the question of production, on the question of wealth, in the generic sense (with Adam Smith, Marx, etc.). On the other hand, very little has been accomplished in regards to the economy of speed. This research has to be done. No answer is possible until speed has been thought of in political terms. Today's objective is to try to acquire the intelligence of speed, to understand what has happened in the last quarter of a century.

S.L.: This would amount to taking speed away from the military in favour of civil society.

P.V.: Yes. We should attempt to grasp what the consequences of speed are on social time, on the space-time of society. Take the crisis of urbanism in the U.S. or Europe, last summer's crisis. We are no longer dealing with the crisis of urban centres as in the 1960's. The crisis has spread to industrial centres like Liverpool, like Brixton in the periphery of London, or Lyons in France. We have seen this year revolts of a similar nature in England, and everything indicates that they will soon spill over into France as well. What does this mean? There are all sorts of sociological analyses — in terms of the ghetto, unemployment, etc. I would suggest an altogether different analysis, namely that we are in the middle of the process of dis-urbanization.

The city has always been used to map a political space within a given political time span. Now speed (ubiquity instantaneity) is about to liquidate, or rather displace, the city altogether. I would say that it displaces it in the space of time. What has become visible in the context of urbanism is already surfacing at the level of the neighbourhood, at the individual level, down to the level of aggression of the telephone. A kind of destruction is at work in the congestion of time, and this extermination of social temporality is obviously linked to speed. Nations used to be primarily geo-political. There were first of all territorialities — precise territorial considerations. These configurations are being liquidated by the deformation of what can be called a chronography, a geography of time.

S.L.: Meanwhile, the end of classical warfare paradoxically generates a kind of exacerbation of local conflicts. The end of the nation-state brings out all sorts of bellicose tendencies, archaisms, and terrorisms on the higher level, state terrorisms *as in the Falklands affair. Is this a passing phenomenon, soon evaporated, or a definite reversal linked to the disappearance of territorialities?*

P.V.: It is the definitive reversal. I believe we are headed towards universality; the universe-city, the universal city. Today there are still Yalta agreements and confrontations between East and West, whether NATO, SEATO, the Warsaw Pact; but in my opinion they've all been surpassed by a kind of universal State. We've moved from the State to the Pure State, which is a result of Pure War, that is, of the intensity of the means of destruction. The Capitalist and Communist ideologies are themselves in the process of being superceded by this vision of the world. The real enemy today is less external than internal: our own armaments, our own scientific power which in reality promote the end of our society. ⊢



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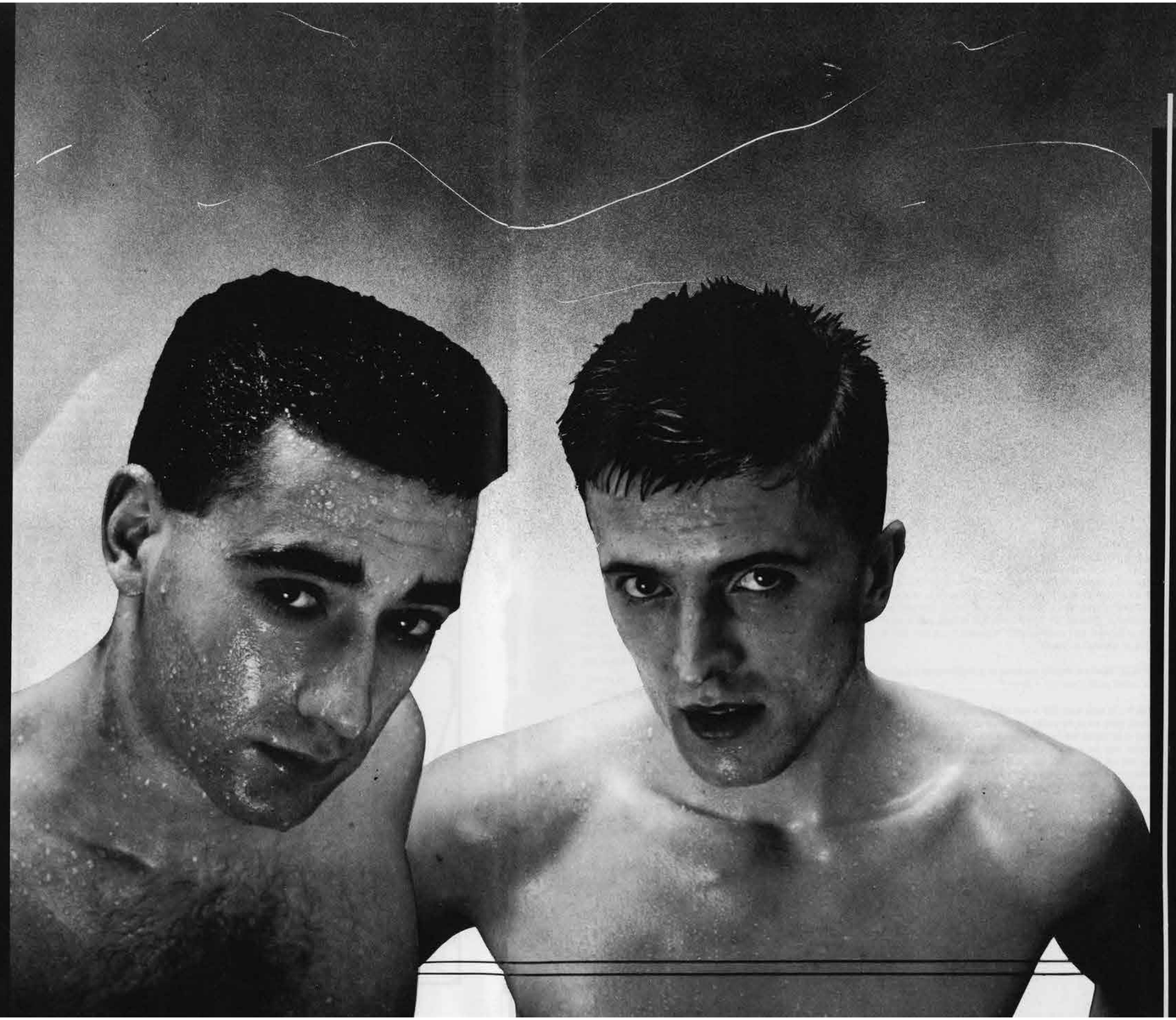
D.A.F.

D.A.F. IS A COLLABORATION OF TWO THAT FORMED IN A DUSSELDORF BAR IN 1977. IN 1980 THEY MOVED TO ENGLAND TO RECORD WITH MUTE ('KEBAB TRAUME'), AND LATER ENLISTED THE HELP OF PRODUCER CONNY PLANK ('TANZ MIT MIR'). THEIR INITIAL VIRGIN LP 'ALLES IST GUT' – SUNG IN GERMAN – BROUGHT THEM A SIZEABLE EUROPEAN FOLLOWING.

D.A.F. ARE ROBERT GORL (BAVARIA) AND GABI DELGADO-LOPEZ (SPAIN). D.A.F. ARE DRUMS (ROBERT) AND VOCALS (GABI), WITH THE OCCASIONAL ELECTRONIC BACKDROP. D.A.F. IS 'DEUTSCH AMERIKANISCHE FREUNDSCHAFT'.

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IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR D.A.F. ANNOUNCED THAT THEY ARE GOING ON TO OTHER THINGS. SOON AFTER, KEN BAIRD, JOAN BROUWER, AND ELDON GARNET TALKED TRANS-ATLANTICALLY TO GABI DELGADO-LOPEZ.



IMPULSE: We've associated your music with stripping down to basics. Since the old DAF won't exist much longer, is it possible you've reached the limits of this approach?

GABI DELGADO-LOPEZ: I think so. It's like painting a picture. When it's finished, anything else that you would put in is more harmful than good. We're now very successful in Europe. We've used the pop industry to reach a wide audience. If you feel responsible to the people you're playing for, you know when to stop, and when to start again. When you start a new thing, it's always more tense than just repeating the old thing. If DAF were minimalistic, then the new concept will be maximalistic. For instance, in a love song, if you work as minimalistically as DAF did, you can put it in a very tense, very direct, very concentrated way. But by reducing it to this concentration, then you lose the finer aspects. We don't want to change our spirit, we want to change our form. This new thing . . . in fact it's a secret. We don't like to speak about things before they are ready. Let's just say there were some things that didn't fit in the first concept of DAF . . . . We're going to be more lustful.

IMPULSE: I have a quote of yours from MELODY MAKER: *"You can fuck somebody and go to work, but you can't really love somebody madly and go to work."*

GABI D-L: Sex is work. Society has taken the erotic aspect out of sex. Sex nowadays is like watching TV or going to the cinema – more like a recreational activity.

IMPULSE: Is returning the erotic aspect to sex a political act?

GABI D-L: I think so, because the most important thing in society is productivity. And to consume, of course. There are certain things that are forbidden, because they harm productivity. It's forbidden to be mad, to be ill; it's even forbidden to die. The erotic interferes with production.

IMPULSE: How do you feel about cultural boundaries, given that you two are of different origins and both travel a great deal?

GABI D-L: I would say that at the moment there is no room for an international culture. For instance, in Germany we are importing American culture. It's cultural imperialism. As long as we Germans are not conscious of German culture there can be no dialogue. I think European nations especially must rediscover their own identities. It's already happening in Germany, not only in music but in cinema. There seem to be two different ways of spreading culture – one is the American way, with the MacDonald's attitude; and the other is to establish a real dialogue, where German cinema may influence French cinema. We think that Germany is a country in a very special situation, and our country's exper-







PHOTOS: ARNAUD MAGGS

Lothar Lambert makes films with his own money. *Nightmare Woman, Dirty Daughters, Fucking City* and each of the eight other features he has produced since 1971 cost between $2,000 and $20,000 to make. He is one of Germany's most popular filmmakers. His films run in independent cinemas until the prints fall apart. Without reviews or commercial publicity, every new film causes a line to form. Because his films are self-financed, he is free to focus on autobiographical and taboo subjects and subjective structures. Impulse interviewed Lothar Lambert while he was in Toronto for a retrospective of his films at the Festival of Festivals. *Berlin-Harlem*, which was to debut here, was banned by the Ontario Censor Board when the programmers refused to cut a 90 second scene of a blow job. Chief Censor Mary Brown claimed she demanded the cut for fear of police action. The police phoned to deny they had any intention of touching the Festival. Once again, the Ontario Censors took the law into their own hands.

Do you find it contradictory that you describe yourself as a hobbyist, yet you are viewed as an independent filmmaker?

If you make a film with money from other people and the money is lost, you have to give up. No one else will fund you. Because it's a hobby, I never had to give it up. Because I produce films with my own money, I'm independent, and it's a hobby, a passion. It's the one thing which makes me go on.

Film for me is something which has to deal with my life and with my friends' lives — a way of avoiding going to a psychoanalyst. When you make a living off it, if someone offers you a script, you do it — you're a professional, and you do it to go on. I don't say I wouldn't work commercially, but I haven't had the chance yet. I'm curious to try it.

Other people make shit and they get richer and richer and more and more famous. I was always the poor relative.

You don't have a script. What type of mental image of a product do you have before you begin?

"Fucking City" was supposed to be a totally different film. I wanted to make a film about two Turkish boys, one good and brave and sensitive who gets destroyed by society in Berlin, and the other one who is stronger, trickier, not so good, making his way through and surviving. We were looking for people who could play it, and I found no face which fascinated me enough to carry a whole film. I did some shooting, and this shooting is integrated into the film as it is. Now, the main character is a filmmaker, and he makes his films in the film. The story came together on the editing table.

My ambition is to use nearly everything I shoot. What isn't in the picture I use later in the off-takes, to get combinations, to use as a thread.

Focusing a camera turns your subject into a metaphor or symbol. Are you conscious of this process?

Later, when I see it finished. There's a puppet with a destroyed face in "Nightmare Woman." By shooting it, it becomes a symbol, but I found it by chance. Another person would have passed it by, or not seen it. By putting it on screen and giving it a close-up, it becomes a symbol.

When does the narrative emerge in your mind? When does the real concern become apparent?

It's hard to tell because I am a naive filmmaker. I find a song or a text which moves me or which works as an ironic commentary — all of a sudden, I have images, pictures, which work with the song — things which never originally had anything to do with each other get their new structure in editing. This is the adventure I like best in filming. I'm alone in my cutting room and I don't have to deal with the bad or good moods of actors or with the tricks of technique. Then I really do my job.

Do you believe that State funding has a repressive effect?

I think it creates self-censorship. Filmmakers know what themes have the biggest chance of getting funded, especially literary stuff. You say "I have a very good novel, and a good writer, and I want to make a film out of it." The people who sit and judge say "there's no risk. It will be good." Without a script, they don't know how to judge if it's good or not. If you say "I only have an exposé, my style is developing", they're totally helpless. If you want to get State money, you have to have a script. I tried it several times, they said "no", and I was too frustrated to go on. Many people stopped filming because they were so frustrated. I don't want to be frustrated — I want to have fun. My life is intensified by filming, not by licking asses. They don't like giving money to low-budget projects because they think "these can't be good films anyway." If you say "I have half a million here in my bank, please give me another half", they're ready to do it.

Where do you fit your filmmaking in relation to German feminists like Ulrike Ottinger or Margarethe von Trotta?

It's hard to say — when you look from the outside and try to be objective — looking at the values of their style and of my style — I cannot tell. I'm also a critic. I write film reviews. Somehow, I'm schizophrenic.

Berlin is not big enough to avoid knowing each other — but the situation in Berlin is very tough. Not that filmmakers help each other normally, but in Berlin, everybody is jealous of each other. This is caused by the system. Most people can only make films when they get support from television or government money. I was never successful, so I feel like an outsider between outsiders.

Do you know Rosa von Praunheim?

His style is somehow — immature — but on purpose. He makes films cheap to make a living on it. That's not my business, because I'm a journalist. Filming is a hobby, so I'm not concerned if a television station takes it, if it brings in the money which it cost. I don't need to be concerned if it's too far out — the sex. I do it in the style I like.

But he was so kind to one of my films, giving it a really good review. He said "the filmmakers who spend millions of dollars should learn from my little dirty films." Instead of money, I use fantasy.

Rosa always produced homosexual films for television — some parts of Germany didn't want to show them — and there was a big discussion about homosexual/political work, while I — I am also a homosexual, but I'm not militant. If you ask me, I'll tell you the truth, but I'll never advertise it. In all my films, homosexuality is integrated somehow but not presented as something special or exotic. I think it has to be treated like every other topic in a film. It has to become more normal and natural, not put out in an exotic way as Praunheim does. That's the basic difference.

As a film reviewer you look at work critically — does this influence your own work?

They're two different things. I have to forget that I make films myself when I look at films by other people. They don't like me because they think I say good things about people I like, and bad things about people I don't like — that I'm jealous. But I really try to separate it, to be objective. I try to be cool in my style of judging films. Because I'm an outsider, I can do this. Most of them are integrated: this critic mingles with this filmmaker privately — it's an incestuous situation. I'm a freelance journalist writing for several newspapers, and I have nothing to do with those people privately.

In your films, you have a sense of history, of personal history . . .

Unconsciously. I'm a child of Berlin. I'm very close to the city. When I was a kid, I was very happy about every new house which was erected, as much of the city was in ruins. Even if I say negative things about it, I have a strong relation to the city. The political situation influenced my childhood very much. All of a sudden, when they built the wall I couldn't see my grandmother for years. I suffered very much.

My old films, whether judged by critics as good or bad, after a while are documentary of their time. I try to have a realistic style, not theatrical. What is around me, whether political or social conditions — it's all in the film. Whether strictly political or private in theme. Every film is political, sometimes the most private film more so than the specifically political.

Would you call yourself a theoretical filmmaker?

What can I say? I have no theory. It comes out of my feelings, not my thinking. It's up to the people who look to put it in its little case. I cannot do that myself.

My way of looking at life corresponds with how I handle film. In the beginning of *Faux Pas de Deux*, there's a line by Henry Miller — "for those who think, life is a comedy. For those who feel, it's a tragedy." It often happens that one film is judged as really hard realism — brutal — by people who see life that way. Others see it as more ironic. A very funny comedy.

Which aspects of filmmaking give you pleasure and pain?

The conditions which limit you in film make me unhappy. It's two-dimensional. You can make a close-up, you can make a total, you can make a counter-shot, you can do your handiwork to say you know it, you can do it — but you cannot go further. There's a wall.

I don't want to use the medium only for fun, only for form, I also want to tell a story. But there's a limit. This is what makes me suffer.

Maybe the pleasure is also the pain . . .

Sometimes, I need horror and wildness, but only if I can come back to quietness. All the contradictions are in me. My editing room is my quiet room, and the room of my tortures too.

Maybe somehow it's masochistic. Fun is just to do something. Film is like dancing, or just living more intensively.

I like to go to every screening of my work here because of the different reactions. If you go one day, the public — on Saturday, they laugh. At eight o'clock, they laugh at different things than on Monday at the late show.

How do you cast your films?

It depends on the film. I made "Nightmare Woman" because I met Ulrike S. and I was so fascinated. Otherwise, I would never have made a film concentrating on one woman. I'm still fascinated by her. Now, she's not the main character, but I'd never give up my interest in her person. If we weren't friends anymore, I'd have no interest in putting her on the screen, however good or famous she might be.

People have to be demystified, and the medium does too. It has to be human, and the medium has to help people understand each other.

Some people are my friends first, then I have a strong wish to put them in my films. They are private films, and later I look at them like looking in an old photo album. On the other hand, there are some people who approach me



FUCKING CITY / 1981

because they're interested in the medium. I see they're good as actors, like this old lady in *Faux Pas de Deux*, who gave me some money and said "Oh, can I be in a film?". I got fascinated by the personality, by the attraction, by her star quality — and later she became a friend. It goes both ways.

How do you direct people?

It depends on my possibilities. First, I had a cameraman and editing girl, so my early films were more conventional in this way. This old lady wanted a little bit of script so she could learn her lines, so I had to deal with that. Later, I didn't have enough money to pay a cameraman. So, I learned everything — camera, editing. I created a new approach. By shooting without any sound (because the camera's so loud) and because I was shooting with thirty meter rolls — which make for a very quick cutting style — when we sat together and got bored, I'd say "come on, let's make a little roll". Then, we'd develop it together. I'd write down three sentences for one scene which I wanted to dub later. I'd try to get those synchronized, and the rest of the dialogue wouldn't be in sync — I'd just take faces. They'd look at each other and when I was alone I'd think "what can they say to each other?" You know Eisenstein's theory which says "if you shoot a face without any expression, if you show a sad image before, the face will look sad too. If you show something funny, you think the face is smiling." I work with this little aesthetic or trick.

Do you ever approach people you don't know and say: "I want you to be in my film?"

It happens sometimes. I found a girl who attracts me. She's a waitress where I always eat lunch. So far, I've never told her. Yet I'm sure that I want her, so I watch her all the time. It takes a long time, it doesn't happen quickly. I'm more sensitive in this way.

I hate people who want to use me for their career. It's not the right basis for the way I make films. It's OK for other filmmakers. They are sure these people will give their best, because they're ambitious. I want to be sure they like me. That's my motivation to put someone in. Even if they have no talent.

People say "in the next film, you must put me in again". I must be careful that the films do not become a show of little appearances of all the people. I have to make my choice and say "in this film, I'll only have you in a little role. In the next film, I cannot use you at all."



FUCKING CITY / 1981



DIRTY DAUGHTERS / 1981

Your actors sound like a repertory theatre company you use again and again.

It's comparable with Fassbinder. It's a danger, but it's also a quality. The danger of repetition. I don't mind repetitions in my life either. It gives me certainty.

It's easier with women, with girlfriends. With men, there's a fight to prove who is the stronger one. They are more inclined to revolt against me.

Faux Pas de Deux is slicker than your other movies, but I found it somehow more static. Do you think this will be a danger when you get better equipment and technique — that you'll lose the naivité?

There's a danger, but I'm sure I could deal with this danger because I'm aware of it. I made my first three films with a partner; this is the first film I made alone when he left me, for television. It was a big personal disappointment, and I wanted to do something on my own to show "OK. I can do as well alone."

I had to deal with this old lady and her old-fashioned way of wanting to be a film star. She had Greta Garbo ideas of what film is, and I had to tell her: "You have to look ugly also, if you want to be a good character. You can't always look beautiful." I didn't want to be violent with her, to force her to do what she didn't want to do. The film is therefore OK for her and her style. I like it also because it shows I can be conventional and function in the system. In other films, I go the other way, to the experimental stuff, my flipped-out needs.

I wait for more things from the outside to happen to me, so that I can go on, but the older I get, the more stagnant I feel. I want new experiences.

If reality becomes more boring, your movies will be boring.

I don't want them to be boring, so in the boredom, I try to find a reason, an aspect of boring things which is exciting.

You become more introspective.

In daily frustration, you find the most freaky things.

Such as?

Look at your own life.

Do gay filmmakers have a specific insight into strong sexual emotion?

For me, it's not a question of different qualities, only different quantity. Many heterosexuals, if they dare get away from conventions and bourgeois education, can be as far out as homosexuals, and many homosexuals are very bourgeois — married without being married. You can find all things everywhere in life and I don't like to say homosexuals are something special. They're not special. They're a minority, and minorities always develop strong attitudes toward the rest for defense. This is not an aspect of their character. In my films, I try to deal with homosexuality as one aspect among the rest, not a thing to break down walls between people.

Your films are becoming successful. You have a cult following. Are you going to give your audience a political message?

I can only say "dare to be yourself, and dare to accept people who are different from you. Then politics will go better."

Aren't you concerned with the nationalism, the present nazism in Germany?

Yes, but this has nothing to do with my private life. There are so many political filmmakers in Berlin — the academy school of political filmmakers. There is nothing new coming from them. They make very honest films, and they know in advance that the public will applaud them, good or not. It's not interesting to me.

Political films always have a message at the end — what you have to think. My films are open at the end. They force the onlookers to make their own sense out of it. They have to work with their own mind. That's the reason some people don't want to see my films. They don't want to think on their own.

The trouble my films have caused here with the censors is pure politics. I think morality is the biggest part of politics. From morality and double morality comes all the repression of the State and church.

Mary Brown (head of the Ontario Censor Board) refused to allow a screening of "Berlin-Harlem". Wasn't it because she wanted a ninety second shot of a blow job cut?

It wasn't my own blow job. It was between a black man and a white man — the white man was giving it to the black one. That was the worst part for the censor. She probably would have liked it the other way around.

The story is one which I'm very near to. I met a black guy, a U.S. soldier who was stationed in Berlin, who then decided to stay there. He's very sensitive, as a result of bad experiences he had being black in the States. He went back to the States for awhile, and was in R.D. Laing's clinic. Still, he always felt that people in Berlin didn't understand him.

I wanted to do a film inspired by him, and I spent a long time trying to find a suitable actor to play the part. Finally, I got up my nerve and thought "why not ask him to play the part?" Because he was playing this part based on himself, he took the work very seriously. Sometimes he'd say "I'm not going to do that, because I'd never do something like that" and then I'd have to explain "this isn't you. It's a part in a film."

A number of other Berlin filmmakers and artists are in the film, playing themselves. Fassbinder and his wife are in it. This was shot in 1974. At the time, the theme and the sex scenes were controversial, but now the porn issue just doesn't come up in Germany in terms of my work.

Why are your films so concerned with sex?

Sex is important in my life. Naturally, I cannot avoid this in my films. People say "this is speculative" but it's not. It's part of my life. Privately, I talk all the time about sex too. Many things which have nothing to do with sex originally all have to do with sex. That's what I think, and I want to show it in the films.

Sex is oppressed so much, it can never reach its natural meaning. I also believe there are sexual motives underlying all other actions. Sex I think is the broken thermometer I have to identify myself with.



BERLIN HARLEM / 1974

What would you do if you were an artist working in Ontario?

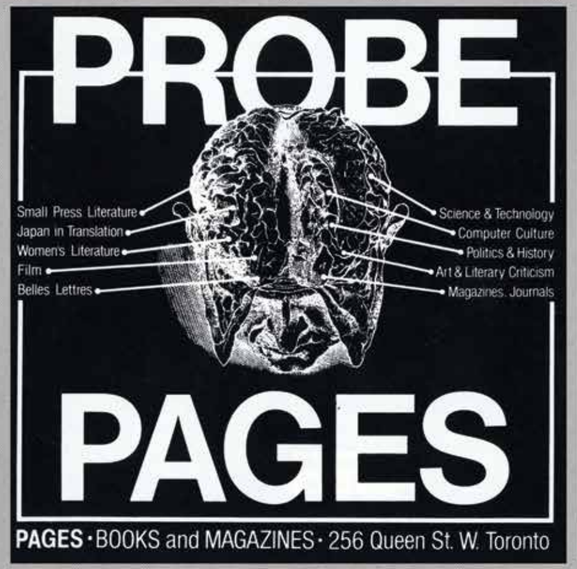
If I grew up in Ontario, I'd probably have internalized the repression and started censoring myself long ago.

What's your desire in the future?

I'm in a bit of a crisis now. After ten years, the style I've got has become routine. I cannot go further with the primitive technical things I have. I'm at a break. Something new has to come. It would be a new adventure to have big stuff, big money, to share responsibility with other people. With a one-man production, everything is in my hands — from the first idea to making posters and advertising, going into pubs and hanging it up — I have to do everything. One year for one film. I'm losing my power for that. Somehow I feel a period is ending. I'll stop now. I'll wait. I can't say anything.

At the same time, the theatres want all my films to make retrospectives. I have my camera with me, and I'm shooting a bit, but I tell my actors "Please, be careful. Maybe it will never be on screen." I'm very unsure. Wait and see.

I'm no monster. I'm a product of my time. Maybe a monster between monsters, but not an extraordinary monster.





DAVID CUNNINGHAM

David Cunningham is one of those people who inhabit the contradictory areas of culture and commerce quite naturally, and with real stylistic flexibility. His Piano Records biography is a list of skills: musician, producer (including work for film soundtracks, among them Peter Greenaway's "The Draughtsman's Contract"), and arranger of activities incorporating dance and theatre. Cunningham's production credits alone are a short history of diverse people doing diverse things: This Heat (this heat, 1979), Wayne County and the Electric Chairs (Things Your Mother Never Told You, 1979), Mo-Dettes (White Mice, 1979), collaborative stints with Tony Sinden, Steve Beresford, and Michael Nyman, and recent studio work with Palais Schaumberg.

Cunningham is probably best known for his contribution to The Flying Lizards, a three-piece organization who made a two-instrument hit out of the old song 'Money' in 1979. Money generated money, enabling Cunningham to continue non-pop pursuits such as a performance with John Cage and others at the London '82 Almeida Festival, some solo album work, and a contribution to the Tate Gallery's September 'Audio Arts' exhibition.

Eldon Garnet, Carolyn White and Waldemar Januszczak of the Arts Guardian visited Cunningham in London last summer.

Do you know what I do?

E.G.: I don't know what you do now. I know some of what you've done, the famous single "Money". What you are known for is taking a non-industrial record and making it industrial.

D.C.: That's not the way I ever looked at these things. I resent the fact that I got lumped in with all of those awful synthesizer groups. There is a point of view in that music which can lead back to Emerson, Lake and Palmer, a type of music I've always detested. Actually, synthesizer is the nearest thing I could get to punk music. The idea was to make a terrible noise that you could dance to.

E.G.: Do you consider "Money" an aside to your work?

D.C.: This is where you get down to the value of trivia. It was something that was done as a record to be released. It wasn't something I ever thought I'd make any money out of, apart from the 250 quid a record that Virgin used to pay me. It made a huge amount of money and paid for many other things which aren't necessarily more worthwhile, but much more obscure.

W.J.: I thought the most important thing about "Money" and "Summertime Blues" was that they were covers, in that they were records that had been pulled out of a fabulous pop past and in some way had been given a spray job like your American car and made to seem relevant for the 1980's. My definition of Post-Modern is treating the past as a vast supermarket where you can go with your trolley and fill it up full of wonderful things which have already been done, and guidelines to what you should do with your own particular form of culture. I think David's records were the first manifestations of that. You only have to turn on the radio now to see that the whole thing has gone mad because every second record is a cover version of something. On the one hand you have a disillusionment, a feeling that people don't think that they can do as well. People know they are never going to write "Walk on By" again, they know they are never going to beat Dionne Warwick. But, at the same time, people know they can take a record out of the past and do something with it that may be relevant to today. David took those steps, and they were very adventurous steps at the time. He revolutionized the idea of the cover, he changed the whole appearance of the piece of music.



KEN BAIRD

D.C.: When you listen to particularly American pop music, it all sounds exactly the same. Groups like Boston and Foreigner, you hear one record and you can't tell which group it's by. I suppose the only reason "Money" sounded different from what was going on in Britain at the time, was probably because you heard one punk record and they very much sounded all the same, and it was through a lot of considerations which made it sound different, which were basically done through ignorance or inability. The fact that the drums were recorded with particular sounds was simply because I didn't have any. I would go to one place and do a drum track, and then somewhere else to do the snare drum track. I didn't have a bass drum so I would thump a bass guitar with a stick, producing a very different sound. If you went into a 24 track studio and tried to rebuild that sound, it would take hours. If you had a drum machine it would probably be terribly easy, except you then loose all the mistakes.

E.G.: Yes, and this is where I disagree with Waldemar when he says that it's like spray painting the past, as with an old car. I think it's quite the reverse, more like sanding down an old car and leaving it unpolished. It was that rough quality of "Money" and its clarity which makes it work.

D.C.: Yes, it had a horrible, dirty sparseness, whereas modern records have a clean sparseness. That's what I don't like about synthesizers, it's hard to get a dirty sound out of them. I own two synthesizers, an old one and an expensive new one. I have to mutilate them both quite a bit to make them sound rotten. And "Money" was done with only two instruments, drums and a piano.

C.W.: That was a big inspiration to a lot of people, because "Money" was billed as a record that was more or less made in a basement, and in turn made millions of dollars. Consequently all the young, aspiring musicians thought that they could go down to their basements and make hit records.

D.C.: Yes, I'm still looking for a good basement.

W.J.: How much did it actually cost to make "Money"?

D.C.: Barring the fact that I have a lot of good tape recorders and that I stole the tape, it virtually cost me the bus fares going from the place that had the piano to the place that had the drums.

E.G.: In the established sense, you weren't trying to make a pop record.

D.C.: I was aware of what pop records were all about, and that seemed to be a lot of guitars and girly backup singers. There is a prepared piano in "Money" which is a direct steal from John Cage. I've been using prepared pianos for years because of their percussive tonality.

W.J.: What is a prepared piano?

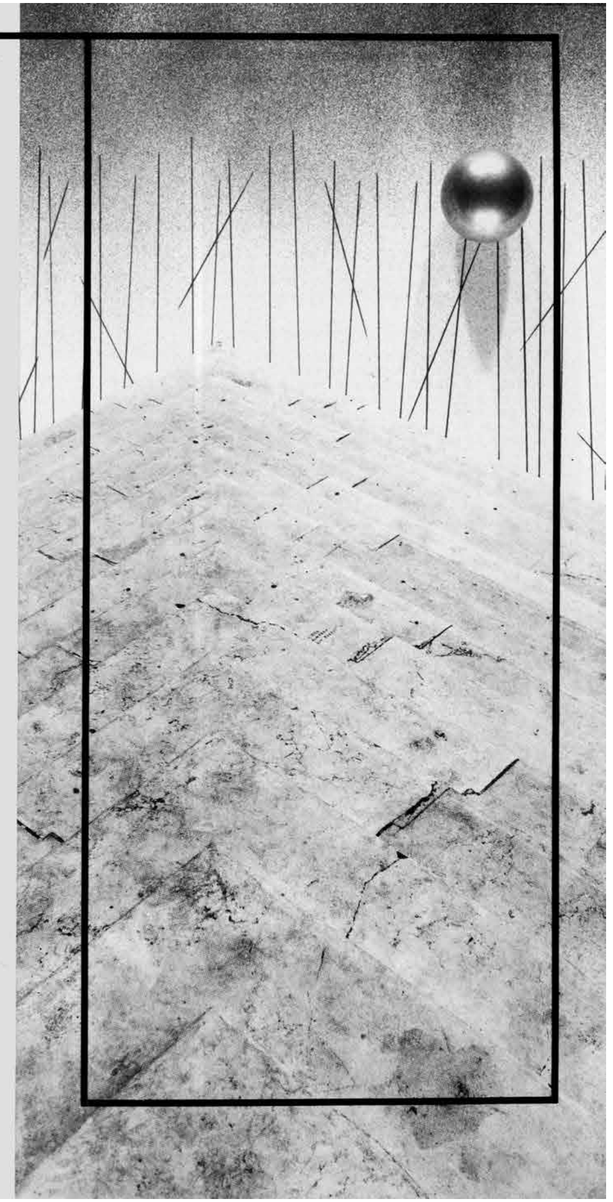
D.C.: A piano with things stuffed in between the strings, in my case, sheet music.

E.G.: What sheet music?

D.C.: Chopin.

E.G.: After your enormous success with "Money" in 1979, what did you go on to do?

D.C.: After "Money", a lot of groups began putting out cover versions of old songs done on expensive synthesizers with a very Human Leaguish sound. Most of the time it was just noise with the occasional lyric and a heavy techno-pop beat. I was so disappointed that these new groups could get away with what they were doing that I decided I would do another Lizards album, exactly what everyone said the first one should have been. Apparently



the first album was too arty for a lot of people, so you can expect an album of mutilated old songs in January.

W.J.: So you have decided to produce the kind of album everybody said you should have done at the time?

D.C.: Yes, but it's not consciously that, because I haven't recorded much of it yet. I've become interested in using those horrible synthesizers, but in a different way. Rather then having a digital computer sound, I'm going to program car crashes into it. I'm also working on a piece of serious music where I'm using a computer to drive African drums. It's part of pop music's continuing ethnic ripoff.

E.G.: What do you think of the pop music industry?

D.C.: It's boring and trivial, like a continuing soap opera. It used to interest me in that you could come out of nowhere and create a movement of sorts, but pop music has lost it's political development. It's not a revolutionary music in any way, even though it was identified as being that.

E.G.: Do you have any political interests?

D.C.: I'm really an anarchist these days and one of the reasons lives on Downing Street. It makes me sick what goes on in this country. The queen's bodyguard resigned because he was a homosexual, and plus the whole Falkland Islands thing. I was in Germany when that happened and it was strange seeing it from a distance, like being a third party with a neutral viewpoint, which I wouldn't have gotten if I had been in Britain. The basic problem about the war was that no matter what Britain did in terms of force, there was a major chance of sparking off a greater conflict between other powers, and eventually a potential nuclear conflict.

W.J.: Do you think your dislike of that whole struggle could be based on the fact that you are Irish?

D.C.: I've never liked the English, it's rooted in my past. All the top civil service jobs in Northern Ireland are occupied by the English. Not only that, but second rate English as well, because the ones that didn't jet jobs here, went to Ireland. It's like a cultural imperialism that's been going on for so long that the area doesn't have any culture to call its own.

E.G.: Would you somehow like to reflect those ideas in your music?

D.C.: Yes, but politics in the sense of looking at things. If I could make a convincing CND record, I'd go out and make it tomorrow. I just don't think I could, not in my terms. There used to be a thing called music for socialism, which was a bunch of jazz, classical and Maoist musicians, surprisingly no black people. They all got together to try and define what was socialist music, music for the people. It got to the point where one lot would say that the musical form didn't matter, it just had to say the right thing, and the other lot would say that they didn't use words in their music. I went through that whole area and I've stopped thinking about it in those terms. I don't believe in ramming things down people's throats, we've got television for that. I want my ideas for a piece of music functioning, in a way, as a piece of art. On one level, you can absorb it as something pretty, whereas if you have time, you reconsider and it will generate a way of thinking.

W.J.: I've never actually thought about it before, but when you put it in those terms, it's quite interesting that both "Summertime Blues" and "Money" could actually be seen as political records. Every group that came along in the 60's did a cover version of "Summertime Blues" until it's meaning got completely lost. When you sit back and listen to the words, it's actually a song about a lot of musical, back seat political thoughts. So is "Money".

D.C.: "Money" was written by Berry Gordy, one of the richest black Americans.

W.J.: Was he rich when he wrote it?

D.C.: No, of course not.

W.J.: In producing art records, which I presume haven't been selling, what sort of response do you get?

D.C.: They sell well for that area. In a sense it's interesting because I always find that they sell better than I ever assume they will. I made my first record in 1977, which I put out myself and sold myself. They were small, experimental, tape loop pieces which were meant to devalue the idea of the LP record as a kind of statement. Also, at that time, the small label idea was beginning to emerge, so consequently there were a lot of channels to plug into. There was an openess in 1977 with the punk movement, a lot of inept musicianship led to strange song shapes.

E.G.: Do you ever perform live?

D.C.: The Lizards' one gig came directly out of the 2nd album, about half way through the recording process. It was a complete disaster, we struggled through the music and it was only an approximation of what the record was like. I see it now in retrospect as an experiment saying that these songs work and these songs don't, and that was why there was another 6 months work on the record after that. I hated it, I felt really uncomfortable. But we are doing what we want, and it is just Deborah, Julian and myself who played on "Money". We just need to find a drummer because I can't play guitar and drums.

W.J.: What music should we be listening to at the moment?

D.C.: This is getting into dangerous territory, because Danny Baker of the New Musical Express interviewed me one day and asked me what kind of music I liked. I gave him a list of people like Thomas Tollis who wrote a lot of English, graveyard, choral music, and Danny slagged me off as having esoteric taste. I also went through a strange period of listening only to my own music. I find that quite embarassing to admit to, but I quite liked it. I was really listening to the details as opposed to just an impression of the music.

E.G.: Do you think anyone listens to your early records anymore?

D.C.: I think they probably listen to the early ones and say "I wish he'd do something like that again", which is the problem of the pop industry. Quite honestly the record companies are right when they say you should remake your first record 20 times. It's right from the point of view of trying to sell records but it's a bit boring.

E.G.: Isn't that, in a sense, your immortality? People would remember you if you kept repeating "Money".

D.C.: "Money" is getting a lot of airplay in America now, in fact it's coming out again on a K-tel compilation.

E.G.: Are you happy about that?

D.C.: I find it rather strange. I'm trying to get a hold of a copy to find out what else is on it, what kind of company I keep these days. I hope Diana Ross is on it.

E.G.: Do you spend much time thinking about death?

D.C.: The people who usually ask things like that in this room are little Japanese interviewers. They sit there in absolute silence for 5 minutes and then switch on the tape recorder and ask me what I think about Christianity. That's when I start twitching because it's not the usual question like, "What kind of fuzz pedal do you use?". Death? I don't think about it.

W.J.: Is this a Canadian preoccupation?

D.C.: I think more about suicide, the ultimate selfish act.

E.G.: I think that suicide is boring, I've never thought of it as selfish.

C.W.: I think that someone has to be very self-centered to commit suicide.

D.C.: That's why I've always hated Camus.

E.G.: Camus was killed in a car accident.

D.C.: That was partly because he drove himself into a wall.

W.J.: No, that was Jackson Pollock.

C.W.: No, Jackson Pollock was drunk and drove into a tree.

D.C.: I think suicide is politically incorrect.

W.J.: I could see you committing suicide. I'm not saying you will, but I could see it.

D.C.: If I had nothing to fight against then I'd probably commit suicide, because it would be boring otherwise. The fact that I can find a lot to grumble about is a positive thing.

E.G.: What are you going to do tomorrow?

D.C.: Tomorrow?

E.G.: Yes, anything particular?

D.C.: No.

E.G.: Just curious.

THE NEW ALLIANCE

An Interview With Félix Guattari By Sylvère Lotringer

Félix Guattari is an anti-psychiatrist and political activist whose writing helped register the impact of May 1968 in France in programming terms. Together with philosopher Gilles Deleuze, he published *Anti-Oedipus* (Viking Press, 1977), *Kafka and Rhizome* (Minuit, 1975), *Mille Plateaux* (Minuit, 1980). He also published *Psychanalyse et transversalité* (Maspéro, 1972), *La Révolution moléculaire* (Recherches, 1977) and *L'Inconscient machinique* (Recherches, 1979). Félix Guattari took an active interest in the Italian "autonomist" movement and helped initiate the wave of free radios in France on the wake of "Radio Alice" in Bologna. Deleuze and Guattari's *On the Line* (which includes "Rhizome") will be published in January 1983 by *Semiotext(e)* as part of a new 'Foreign Agents' series.

This interview by Sylvère Lotringer is the second of a series meant to explore "post-political" alternatives at a time when a potentially explosive international situation urgently requires new instruments of political analysis and forms of organization. Paul Virilio's "The Suicidal State" was published in our last issue. Jean Baudrillard will be next.

The translators are Arthur Evans and John Johnston.

I have never considered ideas, theories or ideologies as anything but instruments or tools ... As tools, they can be changed, borrowed, stolen, or used for another purpose.

Sylvère Lotringer: There's a lot of talk in France nowadays about the "end of politics" and the "end of the social."[1] But obviously the social has not evaporated, and politics continue each day to produce its effects. Yet there is a visible and growing disaffection with what until now has constituted the major political and ideological issue: the confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs. The antagonism is once again hardening up, but it's becoming increasingly clear for a great number of people that politics, in its best acceptation, no longer happens at that level. At what level, then, does it happen? And how can one reformulate political action in a time of decline for Marxism as an instrument of analysis, and in a time of bankruptcy for "real" socialism (socialism as it was implanted in the Eastern countries), as opposed to what some continue to call (optimistically perhaps) the "possible"-socialism?

Félix Guattari: I have never taken seriously the notion that we have outgrown Marxism and that we are now on the verge of a new political era. I have never considered ideas, theories or ideologies as anything but instruments or tools. Whence this expression, which has had a certain success and has since been used by Michel Foucault, that ideas and concepts are all part of a "tool box." As tools, they can be changed, borrowed, stolen, or used for another purpose. So what does it mean, "the end of Marxism?" Nothing, or only that certain marxist tools are no longer working, that others are in need of review, that others continue to be perfectly valid. Hence it would be stupid to junk them all. All the more so in that re-evaluating these concepts means re-examining them — exactly as a re-evaluation of Einstein's theories includes a re-examination of Newton's. One can't say that Newtonianism is totally dead. We are dealing here with a "rhizome" of instruments; certain branches of the rhizome collapse, little sprouts begin to proliferate, etc. For me, Marxism in general has never existed. I have sometimes borrowed or adapted some marxist concepts I could put to good use. Moreover, I like reading Marx. He's a great writer. As an author he's unbeatable.

SL: And is politics unbeatable?

FG: I've never confused politics with "politicking". So a certain bankruptcy of politicians' politics doesn't upset in any way what I had tried to designate by the concept of "micro-politics." Politics as I understand it, simply cannot be inscribed on the same surface at all. It concerns the relationship of large social groups to what surrounds them, to their own economic set-up, but it also concerns attitudes which run through the individual's life, through family life, through the life of the unconscious, of artistic creation, etc.

SL: The "post-political" era, then, is not the end of politics but rather its inscription on new surfaces.

FG: It obviously does not mean that there's no more politics. In the same way, when Jean Baudrillard says that there is an "implosion" of the social, I don't even know what he's talking about. Let's simply say, that the social no longer expresses itself in the usual configuration of forces.

SL: The confrontation no longer involves left and right, or the struggle for power between the workers' movement and the bourgeoisie …

FG: Let's not even talk about the workers' movement! The situation has become much to complex to conceive of it in these terms. We now have to deal with immense masses of people who have nothing to do with any definition of the working class. I don't mean that there are no more relationships of force, simply that the powers of the State, capitalism and Soviet bureaucracy can no longer handle the situation. We are currently in a phase of considerable turmoil, a phase one could call pre-revolutionary, although I'd rather define it as a "molecular" revolution where virtually no one can control anything anymore.

SL: What exactly do you mean by "molecular revolution"?

FG: Let's take as an example the period of the end of the Ancien Régime in France and in Europe. It's very difficult to get a clear picture of the situation. The fall of the Bastille is just the tip of the iceberg. The Ancien Régime was, and had been for several decades, a society well along the road to total collapse. A certain way of conceiving the law, religion, the body, filiation, the family, time, literature — all that was moving, changing, bursting at the seams. It took some time for the bourgeoisie to pull themselves together and redefine what could be their new grounds. And it took even more time for the workers' movement to find something around which to gather and to establish itself in a relationship of force.

SL: Now that the bipolar class relationships have ceased for the most part to be operative, and with them a good deal of the Marxist analysis of society, how does one go about recognizing the ways in which the molecular revolution takes form in our society?

FG: First of all we must stop claiming that there is no more "social", that it no longer exists and that nobody gives a damn. We should at least try to recognize the nature of the phenomena we're dealing with, try to recenter the focus where politics has migrated, where the situation has become critical, difficult to get a grasp on, to attach a meaning to. Secondly, we should put into question all of the so-called political instruments at our disposal, and that goes for the forces of world capitalism as well as for the forces of contestation still striving to establish another kind of society or purpose for life on this planet. What is complicated in all this, it seems to me, is that a sort of complementarity or symmetry has been established between a current of dogmatic Marxists and ossified social-democrats who are incapable of recognizing the radical change in the conditions of contemporary life on the one side, and on the other side a current that derives largely from the positions of Milton Friedman and others, and which tends to say, with the total fatalism of Voltaire's Candide, that things being as they are, they cannot be otherwise, and that in any case capitalism is a better world — an analysis that can be disastrous in its applications, as we have seen in Chile. As analysis, however, it is not without merit since it implies a re-examination of questions one had thought resolved, to wit-that the working of the capitalist market, in spite of all its trash and its horrors, is less catastrophic than certain centralist planification which lead to total failure. We have seen rich agricultural countries collapse into total famine. As far as I am concerned that doesn't mean, far from it, that we must choose between the two, but that capital itself doesn't go to the end of its potential. It's obviously not a question of making capitalism even more capitalist but of diverting and orienting in another way the powers of deterritorialization borne by capitalism. I am in favor of a market economy, but not one geared only on profit and its valorization of status, hierarchy and power. I am in favor of an institutional market economy, one founded on another mode of valorization. Instead of being more capitalistic, we want to make an anti-capitalism within capitalism. Thirdly, we should be ready to connect anything that could initiate a new sequence of events: snow-balling sequences, little glimpses of events which right away slap you in the face, like May 68 in France. Since no revolutionary war machine is at present available, and there is no way to get a good grip on reality, then the collective subjectivity is, so to speak, "tripping": from time to time it has "flashes". It sees things, and then it stops. There was the "autonomist" movement in Italy. Today, there is the collective vision of the threat of war facing Europe, of nuclear devastation. And then there is Poland — and we pass on to other things. But it's all going to come back. All these flashes don't mean that there is a total incoherence in this subjectivity, but simply that an effort is being made to perceive something which is not yet registered, inscribed, identified. I believe that the forces which in Europe now rally around the peace movement are *the same* which, in other phases, will rally around the ecological movement, around regionalist movements, around X number of components of what I call the molecular revolution. What I mean by that expression is not a cult of spontaneity or whatever, only the effort to not miss anything that could help rebuild a new kind of struggle, a new kind of society.

SL: Was the Italian experience only a "flash"?

FG: The Italian experience is linked to the fact that the structure of power in Italy was largely behind the times in relation to the other European nations. The economic integration has become so marked in Europe or in the world that the discrepancy with Italy became more and more striking. With the absence of a state economic policy, and the widespread embezzlement among Italian society, marginal sectors of the economy have paradoxically come to play a considerable role in the economic mechanism, including in the Italian balance of trade. Thus a kind of "society without a State," to use the formula of Pierre Clastres, established itself in the middle of structures otherwise controlled from the point of view of state power. On top of that, while the left has slowly withered away in other European countries since the Second World War, a very powerful configuration of forces in favor of the left has maintained itself in Italy — although it has been totally incapable of being anything else than an adjacent accomplice of the Christian Democrats.

In the meantime Italy has known a cultural effervescence without precedence characterized by an immense collective work of publication, of translations — which now make the Italians the most intellectual people on earth. It will take decades before we realize that our Age of Enlightenment is happening not in France nor in the United States or in Germany, but in Italy. And those people have a double-edged intelligence, both theoretical and practical, which consists of trying to grasp the seeds of mutation at work in this society. Instead of considering their situation from a negative point of view, as a step backwards, as a lack to be remedied in the wave of modernization, through the integration of up-to-date industrial techniques, the Italians understood that what used to be considered a social deficiency could become one of the most positive characteristics for the future. After all, why not consider that a certain kind of discipline, of separation between work and leisure, between intellectual and manual work, etc. — has become pointless? Why not envision instead another form of valorization, which they call "auto-valorization"? Of course, they collided immediately head long with all of the conservative forces, beginning with the most conservative of them all: the Italian Communist Party.

SL: The Italian experience has been rapidly sabotaged by the dogmatic one-upmanship of armed groups. It became easy for the Italian State to eradicate the *Autonomia* movement by accusing it of having been the "brains" behind the Red Brigades.

FG: These schemes of armed struggle have had a disastrous effect on the movement. They furnished the powers-that-be with a perfect pretext for eliminating those mass structures of somewhat vague outline which constituted "internal colonies" capable of surviving by practicing passive-active modes of resistance, such as the "auto-reductions."[2]

SL: Do you think that the autonomist "flash" can resurface elsewhere?

FG: It is bound to, for the need to reformulate the political stakes is felt not only within developed capitalist countries, but everywhere. In France, we've already benefited in small ways from the Italian experience: our fight for free radios took off directly from them. Union leaders in France learned from them that certain demands were no longer in tune with the present struggles … That the Italian Autonomy was wiped out proves nothing at all. From time to time, a kind of social chemistry provides us with a glimpse of what could be another type of organization, much less molecular, much less atomic, which would result in another type of equilibrium, very different from previous models.

SL: We also see this social chemistry at work in much more ambiguous situations, like in Poland, where paradoxically religion has become a motor for change.

FG: In Poland we are witnessing a violent rejection of bureaucratic society. People cling to religious ideologies — does that make it a religious phenomenon as such? Yes, but we should enlarge the definition somewhat. In other countries like Iran or the Middle East, such phenomena are expressed in other ways. For the moment, there is no common semantic feature through which these movements could recognize and support each other. I believe, however, that we should dare draw an "integral" for these various subjective movements in as much as the live forces of society are incapable of having a hold on the inner springs of change.

SL: For the moment, then, there are lots of molecules, but no revolution. And when a revolution occurs, as in Iran, it's once again somewhat "archaic" motives that mobilize the people.

FG: Solidarity isn't an archaic phenomenon, it's a new form of struggle. There aren't many countries where suddenly 10 million unionists arise out of the blue.

SL: Paradoxically Polish unionism surges up in the East at the very moment the trade union movement in the West is losing steam.

FG: It's not because Solidarity is called a union that it actually is one. It may be an altogether new structure, more apt to take into account everyday problems. If Solidarity had been a regular union Walesa could've worked out a compromise and avoided the mess. But it's a kind of union that cannot be manipulated. The people don't follow. That doesn't mean that it's an anarchistic organization either.

SL: It's a form of unionism which immediately asserted itself on the political level.

FG: On the global level, yes, but also on a micropolitical level. Solidarity takes care of what's happening in the street, in the food lines, etc.

SL: And the other elements of the Polish situation, the self-help aspect for example, doesn't that tie in with certain intuitions of the Italians?

FG: I certainly think so. But, from another angle, that ties in also with those weaknesses adjacent to all such intuitions. There's a lesson to be learned from the events in Iran as well as in Italy or in Poland, if one paradoxically tries to nail down the synchronic traits of these three situations: there won't be any lasting change so long as this type of struggle doesn't go beyond national boundaries. It may prove to be very hard and painful, but I always considered preposterous the idea that the kind of revolution which occurred in Italy could have drastically altered the power situation there.

SL: In a sense, the level of these struggles is always above or below that of national structures — in internal colonies and alternative networks, as in Germany,[3] or bigger, trans-national crystalizations.

FG: Yes, I agree.

SL: How do you think these extremes could connect?

FG: I'm afraid they won't until more drastic situations develop. I'm fairly optimistic about the prospects for political and social action: I find recent revolutionary crises much more mature and promising, much richer in possibilities of expression everywhere. I fear, however, we still have to go through catastrophic crises before we get there. I believe that both the East and the West are going to experience military dictatorships and very hard fascist regimes.

SL: Do you agree with Paul Virilio that we're now confronted with a tremendous growth in military power and a reinforcement of the scientific-military complex at the expense of civil society?

FG: Let's take a closer look at what this analysis seems to apply considering the deep crisis Russia's going through right now. Does it mean, however, that power in Russia is on the verge of falling into a kind of Bonapartism? Does it imply that the disarray of political structures in the USSR is bound to give the military establishment total control over Soviet society? The hypothesis could well be corroborated by spectacular events in Poland, but they are misleading. We're not presently witnessing a take-over by the military establishment, but a whole series of social forces and antagonisms which involve the Church and bureaucracies of all kinds.

I foresee in time (in a rather long time) a revival of the American-Soviet complicity and the rise of an international police force … American capitalism and Soviet bureaucracy have too much to gain by getting along and compromising.

SL: Russia has renounced developing its internal consumption for the sake of a protracted arms race — both in conventional and nuclear weapons.

FG: It may well be that the military establishment in the Soviet Union forms a backbone strong enough to withstand current crisis. China presented the same phenomenon with the Lin-Piao line. This line represented the minimal consistency of Chinese society at a time when Maoism was verging on total collapse. So it's true that everywhere, in Africa as well as in Latin America, the role of military establishments has substantially increased. Nevertheless, I don't believe that a mutation in the major developed countries (either capitalism or bureaucratic socialism) will put them simply and squarely under the aegis of military "machines". And therefore I don't believe that international relations will be wholly defined by this antagonism.

SL: But isn't Reagan himself busy dismantling the edifice of the "welfare" State while dramatically reinforcing the American military potential?

FG: In the USA, one thing is for sure: the Kissinger-style conception which envisioned relationships of power in international affairs as a function of local situations, contradictions and specific socio-historical "singularities," is progressively becoming outmoded. It's as if one sort of diplomacy was being phased out to make room for a purely strategic frame-reference — with a peculiar Manicheanism inherent to the cowboy mentality of Reagan and his cronies.

SL: This Manicheanism actually seems to serve everyone.

FG: Exactly. One could conclude that a true symmetry does exist between the two super-powers and that we are presently witnessing a profound change in the international situation. But I don't think so. At present, the movements of social transformation indeed lack coherent and collective political representation, but so does capitalism. International capitalism is undergoing a real trauma as well. It has a hard time coping with the consequences of its own structural crisis. On strictly

economic grounds (monetary, oil, etc.), it somehow manages to come up with solutions, however difficult or dangerous they may be but on the political level, it offers absolutely no perspective. In the final analysis, it has no policy whatsoever concerning the development of Third World countries, in Asia, in Africa, or Latin America. Countless disasters — human, ecological, etc. — now affecting entire countries do not really go in the direction of, nor benefit, an integrated world capitalism. International capitalism has not been able to manage the violent crisis which involves whole populations, masses, working classes, farmers, Third and Fourth World countries. As a result I don't believe that the current phase of American capitalism and Soviet antagonisms is anything else but transitory. On the contrary, I forsee in time (in a rather long time) a revival of the American-Soviet complicity and the rise of an international police force.

the population at a time when all the avenues of the future appear blocked by the maneuverings of the super-powers and by the muddle of the ideological options we used to depend upon. It's been quite some time since we've witnessed such a mobilization of energies.

FG: I also see emerging there an idea which, if it were to materialize, could yield enormous power — the idea that American missiles don't really protect us against Soviet missiles, and vice-versa. Politicians keep telling us: if you're not protected by the American nuclear umbrella the Russians will come. Let them come! They are already in such a mess in Poland, not to mention Afghanistan, that the extra burden of Germany, France or Italy would prove fatal. Fantasies keep piling up, and then one says: "Enough is enough."

... the Russians will come. Let them come! They are already in such a mess in Poland, not to mention Afghanistan, that the extra burden of Germany, France or Italy would prove fatal.

SL: Do you think that we'll soon witness the negotiation of a new Yalta?

FG: We'll end up with a new distribution of zones of influence, meant to force the planet into a North-South axis and soften the East-West tensions. American capitalism and Soviet bureaucracy have too much to gain by getting along and by compromising. That was also, incidentally, Schmidt's intuition which he shared with the social-democratic tendencies in Europe.

SL: Politics is also a way of avoiding war, or of pursuing war by other means. Human intervention and decision-making power however, are becoming more and more incapable of preventing a nuclear holocaust of a generalized conflict.

FG: I love science fiction and *Dr. Strangelove* schemes, but I don't believe at all in the scenario of a nuclear war. There's going to be a war, yes, but what war? The same war that we've known for thirty years. When you consider the wars in Chad, or in El Salvador, or in Guatemala, from the point of view of human suffering — wounds, torture, deaths from starvation — what is all that but war? Can we hope for a worse outcome? There's going to be wars like these, *but everywhere*. Fragmented wars, always ambiguous because they deal with local problems while serving the cause of an international police force. The example of Vietnam is spectacular. This interminable war which continues somewhere in Cambodia, at the outset it was a popular war, a war for the liberation of South Vietnam. But like all popular wars, it soon became the arena for the super-powers, and it was China and the Soviet Union who finally profited from it. The final outcome — the Pot-Pol experiment, monstrous, disastrous results for the populations — nowadays these wars are always won by the super powers.

SL: There are wars that cannot be won, even by super-powers. And that's a new phenomenon which shouldn't be ignored in spite of the increasing number of fragmented wars.

FG: Obviously there is a risk, and the unconscious collective sensibility which permeates peace movements does perceive the danger. But these movements today are quite different from pacifism as it developed during that magnificent period which preceded the First World War. Socialists then advocated the demoralization of the army — of their own army. If such an idea were to spread now, it could work wonders.

SL: We should not underestimate the — so to speak — "positive" effects of the nuclear threat. To begin with, the new movement isn't just backed up by the socialists or even the left. And it's not only fear — the great bourgeois fear — which is being called upon. In Germany the movement is already pulling together many heterogeneous, and often conflicting, elements — citizen's initiatives, leftists, Christians, ecologists, conservatives and conservationists. I perceive in it the loose contours of an original form of political action expressing in the collective unconscious a still undefinable, but very real, demand for another type of society. Also crucial is the fact that the peace movement, like the ecology movement, can snowball in no time, by-passing purely national boundaries. It took only a few months for the anti-nuclear movement in the USA to reach nation-wide stature. The doomsday vision probably ties in to a profound change in the political sentiment of

SL: For the moment, we have very few ways of putting pressure on the USSR. After all, dissidents there are being persecuted, and peaceniks prosecuted. In the Western camp, however, paths of action are not altogether lacking. In spite of appearances, and the policies of the Reagan administration, Europe may not be first on the firing line. Moreover, it's not certain that it is in Europe that the peace movement can exert the most effective pressure. If the movement were to gather momentum in the USA — where the military-scientific complex is much more in the open and information on nuclear weapons circulates more freely than anywhere else — if a real *political intelligence* were to shape up among the American peace movement, that could prove to be of paramount importance.

FG: I entirely agree. That would become possible when people would begin to realize that they have allies in Russia, in Africa, everywhere, and that a new alliance is possible because they have common enemies. It's that, I think, which is behind your proposal.

SL: The pacifist movement is actually a mosaic, a collage of many colors which doesn't fit into the traditional political mold, which doesn't follow the logic of partisan politics. That corresponds roughly to what you said about molecular revolutions, even if the modalities are somewhat different. This mosaic in formation keeps moving — elements form in one place, migrate elsewhere, reappear in strange new forms, contradictory forms even ...

FG: Let's do a little science fiction also, just for fun. Imagine Russia is in a mess, even ten times weaker than in Poland. The relationship of power would change entirely if everyone felt that the political and military-industrial structures of the Soviet Union were beginning to crumble down. Imagine they have two more Polands and two more Afghanistans on their hands ...

SL: Do you think this is likely to happen?

FG: The Russians have got themselves stuck in the same wasp's nest as the Americans in Vietnam. It's going to go bad for them. Further, it's not out of the question that an armed conflict erupts in Poland. No Eastern bloc country has yet been exposed to armed resistance. This is a crucial point.

SL: Solidarity always opposed armed resistance. Paradoxically the Church assumes a moderating role with regard to the deep aspirations of the population.

FG: Armed resistance may eventually flare up, and with it a lot of problems. I'm not saying that it's the solution, but we're getting close to the point where the crisis in the Soviet Union will become practically unavoidable.

1. An allusion to Jean Baudrillard's thesis as developed in *In The Shadow of The Silent Majorities*, Semiotext(e)'s 'Foreign Agents' series, January 1983.
2. See *Italy: Autonomia*, Semiotext(e), 9, 1980.
2. See *The German Issue*, Semiotext(e), 11, 1982.

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

The notion that one cannot have a bigamous relationship with several countries seems to me an inappropriate parallel to marriage.

*John Kenneth Galbraith was born in Southern Ontario and became an American citizen in 1937. One of the world's foremost economists, Galbraith's renown is due not only to his seminal published works (*The Affluent Society *and* The New Industrial State*) but to a remarkable personal history. A Democrat, Galbraith worked as presidential adviser to John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and wrote speeches for Adlai Stevenson, Johnson and the Kennedy brothers. In 1941, under Roosevelt's Office of Price Administration, he was responsible for fixing the price of virtually every product sold in the United States. An ambassadorship to India followed, after which came numerous prominent teaching posts. Galbraith is currently Paul M. Warburg Professor of Economics Emeritus at Harvard. David Lake conducted this interview at Galbraith's home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

What is your view on current economic relations between the U.S. and Canada?

G: I have no sympathy for the way in which American economic policy at the present time is affecting Canada and Western Europe. Our commitment to monetarism has caused a good deal of suffering here. The exportation of high interest rates causes problems outside the U.S. So, I have a good deal of sympathy for the way in which the Canadian government and the governments of Western Europe are protesting it.

Q: Your background gives you a certain historical overview — how would you compare FDR, JFK and Ronald Reagan?

G: The three are very different men. Roosevelt was a man of diverse capacity and intelligence whose reputation was made by the two great events over which he presided — the Great Depression and World War II. He was able to meet both those challenges because he had an enormously practical sense of action. He would listen to a wide variety of proposals but always settled on the one which had the greatest promise. This was true in the Depression and in the War years. He combined great responsibility and passion. I've said many times that Roosevelt envisaged himself as a landlord of a great estate who felt personally responsible for all living on it. That's how he saw the United States.

Kennedy was also a man of high intelligence and strong commitment. He became president at a time when government was large and presidential leadership had much less scope. Roosevelt governed as an individual, Kennedy governed as the head of a great organization. Both had a strong vision of what they believed the U.S. should be, and stressed responsibility with regard to the American relationship with other countries. It's not surprising that Roosevelt was as much a hero in Canada as he was in the U.S. Kennedy was also equally regarded in both countries.

I will not comment on Ronald Reagan at any length. I am not a supporter of Ronald Reagan. He represents a much narrower segment of American society. His government is less compassionate, less concerned with the individual. One of the basic policies of the Reagan administration is that the poor aren't working because they get

too much income and the rich aren't working because they don't get enough income. That's a proposition which I don't find wholly satisfactory. As we have mentioned, the Reagan administration's economic policies are causing hardship among our friends. Also, the confrontational tendencies with the Soviet Union frightens people, because it is altogether too dangerous in this day and age.

Q: What does a president have to know about economics?

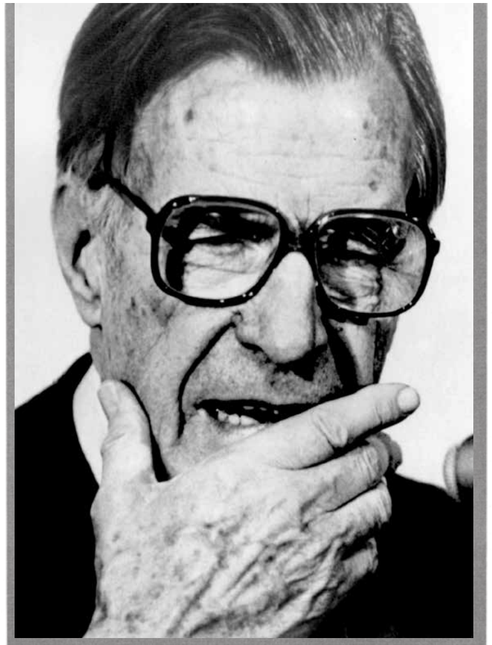
G: That varies. A president must have a sense of right and wrong — a sense of magnitude. Kennedy once told me that in scientific matters, including atomic energy, he didn't have to understand the scientific details but he had to understand enough to know whom he could trust. I think this is true of economics. Kennedy had knowlege of economics thanks to a good deal of reading and early study. Johnson perhaps had a better sense of it after years of exposure to the subject on Capitol Hill — he knew who to trust and who not to. I think it's fair to say that Reagan has lacked that sense, or he wouldn't have been captured by supply-siders and monetarists. He would have recognized the inevitable conflict between those who want to expand the economy by reducing taxes and those who want to control inflation by a monetary policy that works only as it contracts the economy. He would have seen that trying to combine the two is like trying to swim upstream.

Q: What about the impact of leadership on the economy? It often seems that economic theory dismisses psychology.

G: I have never doubted that the effect of psychology on economics is exagerrated. People talk about creating confidence when they haven't got anything else to talk about. When jobs are available and profits are likely, the economy will expand. If policies are not good, no amount of economic cheerleading will make them better. It is a myth, particularly with businessmen in government who are supposed to be hardheaded, that favourable speeches and forecasts with displays of enthusiasm will be self-fulfilling.

Q: Forbes Jr. of Forbes magazine has said this of economists: (they) "were immersed in their theories to a point where they were so happy with the way their theory worked that they lost touch with reality. If their theory didn't work it was society that was wrong, not their theory."

G: There is a choice between good economics and bad economics. Good economics respects history and circumstance. Bad economics pursues an abstract theory. It was an abstract theory that led the current government to believe they could control the modern economy and all its complexities by controlling the money supply. It was an abstract theory which led the government to



believe that by reducing taxation and restraints on the affluent they could get a big expansion and output. That was guidance by abstract doctrine.

Q: What are your feelings on the prominence of monetarists?

G: There is no question that Professor Friedman is one of the great advocates of all time. Monetarism is an attractively simple idea — leave everything to the Federal Reserve. It is an idea to which a great many people are susceptible; if something worked in the last century or the century before, it will still work. Monetarists have not accepted the changing role of large corporations, strong trade unions, farm organizations and OPEC in modern society, but they have the advantage of nostalgia on their side.

Q: To what extent should wages and prices be controlled?

G: Any sensible policy must be eclectic. You must keep a modest control on bank lending, which is to say you don't abandon monetary policy entirely. You must have a proper fiscal policy, and that means you don't have large deficits as in the present day. Also, you must put a restraint on the wage-price spiral. As far as prices are concerned, I would confine restraints to large corporations. With respect to wages, I would confine controls to large trade unions. That would set a pattern for the rest of the economy. Given this combination, I believe the modern economy can be made to work. The Germans, Austrians, Japanese and Swiss have shown that this is a perfectly plausible policy and have been following it in one form or another for years.

Q: Many economists subscribe to the theory that you can have unemployment and inflation together.

G: Stagflation is caused by excessive reliance on monetary policy. It works only as it creates idle capacity and unemployment and one still gets price increases. If you rely on monetary policy you are going to get some continuing inflation and some continuing unemployment.

Q: Some Canadian economists believe that nations overemphasize the need to control inflation. They are of the opinion that we should all inflate together.

G: The economy can accomodate itself to inflation increases more easily than is imagined. Yet, I have never been reconciled to the idea of having large degrees of inflation. Society should keep a contract with people who save and want to look after themselves in the future.

Q: In the post-Vietnam period it seemed that inflation in America just went out of control. But there were contributing factors which we have since been able to pinpoint, such as the advent of OPEC and the tremendous influx of returning Vietnam veterans into the job market . . .

G: Oh, I don't think that was a factor.

Q: OPEC certainly was one.

G: OPEC had a certain role. But OPEC was everyone's alibi. When people in modern government are trying to shift responsibility from themselves, their most wonderful discovery is OPEC.

Q: It seems we can't balance budgets anymore. Lately the argument has been leveled that our capital base is not sufficient to support social welfare programs and transfer payments. There's a feeling that we've been too liberal in the past.

G: I think capitalism has survived because it has shown a certain humane response to the poorest of its people. Once one has created the social welfare system one doesn't go on adding to it indefinitely. But the entrenchment of a sense of social responsibility for the poor reinforced by income has been one of the greatest achievements of modern times. No one should be apologetic about that.

Q: What role should government play in agricultural research?

G: A large amount of technical and scientific work must be done by government or it will not be done at all. One can rely on the telephone company to do research in relation to communications; one cannot rely on the average farmer to do the necessary research for improving agricultural productivity. I have long felt that the governments of the industrial countries, by putting a floor under farm prices, supply a certain measure of security for investment. This plays an important role in productivity. There is no industrial country which allows the free market to work for agriculture and I don't think there is likely to be an example too soon. But, I do not agree that the free market is the source of the greatest efficiency in agriculture. I believe the great agricultural gains in productivity have come from the security minimum prices provide to investment.

Q: In the last little while we have seen the emergence of the agribusinessman — the man who runs his farm in a suit and tie.

G: This has been going on for a generation or more as the scale of agriculture has increased. One of the notable manifestations has been large gains in productivity — much larger gains than those experienced in the manufacturing sector. The average farmer today is unquestionably a better businessman than he used to be.

> In our modern corporate economy people are brought to a high executive position when they have five or ten years to go before retirement.

Q: Russia is having trouble with agricultural productivity and, at the same time, is having problems with economic development. Is it possible for an economy to industrialize and provide consumer goods without having a solid base in agriculture?

G: Certainly. There are very successful industrial economies with little in the way of an agricultural base, including some — like Hong Kong and Singapore — with none at all. But I think it is fair to say that agriculture under socialism is still an unsolved problem. There is little doubt it works best when you have individual entrepreneurs who are rewarded by their own diligence and intelligence and are penalized by their own failures. But the collective and state farms in the Soviet Union have never been able to develop an incentive system comparable to that of free enterprise. The Soviets have also been slow in recognizing the extent of the fertilizer revolution — particularly nitrogen. They have a problem getting fertilizer into use at the right time in the right volume. Of all changes in North American agriculture the Nitrogen Revolution ranks as one of the most important.

Q: There has been a switch to superseed, which the oil companies have helped to promote. The world's farmers are switching to high-yield hybrids which may or may not be immune to plague, whereas past strains are more resilient.

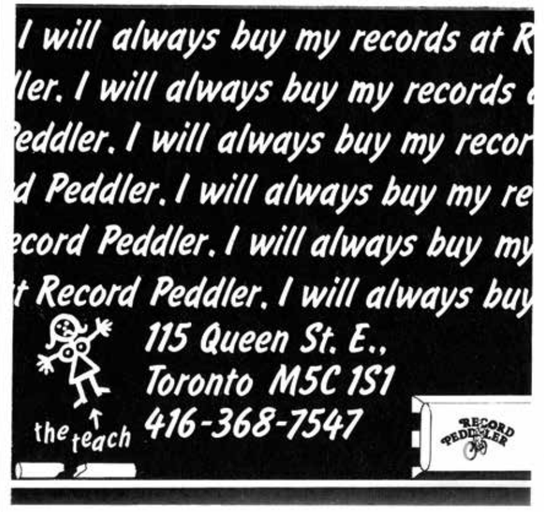
A: I suppose there might be risk there, but I would have difficulty agreeing. I've seen this problem at close range in India and I would say the newer hybrids' nutritional value is worth the potential risk.

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Q: Currently there is tremendous concern about the productivity of the North American worker. Two colleagues of yours, Messrs. Abernathy and Hayes, have written much about the drift of the American corporation towards the short term planning cycle. They feel long term commitments to quality and the development of the worker are needed before we can compete in world markets. How do you assess this situation?

G: Productivity will inevitably decline in the older economies such as that of the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Western Europe and eventually Japan. A preference for leisure develops, as opposed to a preference for goods. An old economy will never have the same commitment to work as a young one does. On the other hand, there are adverse factors that have had an effect on productivity. Production is reduced by a policy of controlling inflation by high interest rates — that's directly against investment — and a policy which involves idle plant capacity. With idle capacity you do not add new capacity and new capacity is almost always more efficient. Productivity is also impaired by short-term planning. In our modern corporate economy people are brought to a high executive position when they have five or ten years to go before retirement. The whole emphasis is on short-term, on the time they have to make their mark. Corporations are always thinking about the last and the next quarter's earnings.

Q: Is there any way around this?

G: Less reliance on monetary policy would obviously be good. Productivity would profit by a combination of high employment and stable prices. I would like to see an emphasis on long-range planning, where people are brought to executive positions at an earlier age and are responsible for longer.

Q: Economically speaking, the tremendous amount of money spent on American arms seems doubly dangerous: first, because it diverts money away from other areas of the economy, and second, because the outlay is inflationary ...



G: I would agree with the first. Certainly we have suffered in the past in comparison with Germany and Japan, because we have been using our capital resources for arms, while they were using theirs for civilian industry. This is a real danger as far as the future is concerned. It involves a further sacrifice of our industrial leadership. We get back to the question of productivity. I would be somewhat less concerned with the inflationary effect because this is going to be concentrated in a very narrow range of industries, where the economic effects will be limited. There will be inflation but it will be heavily based in the narrow sector.

Q: Everyone has a prediction as to when we are going to emerge from the mess: what is yours?

G: I don't have one. Economists answer those questions not because they know but because they are asked. It is essentially a political question. If we were to change policy in the next two weeks by banning further tax reductions, having a sensible military expenditures policy and getting trade unions to freeze wages while corporations freeze prices for a year, the economy would take an immediate turn for the better. However, I do predict that none of that will happen.

A.R.C.

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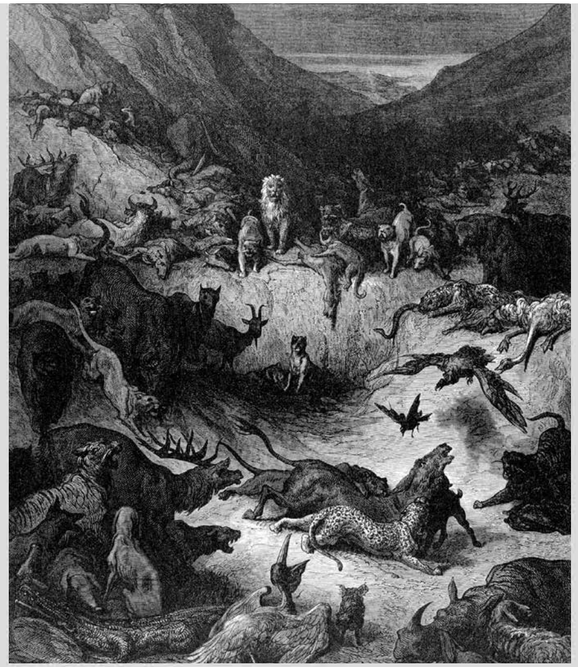
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HUMMER

"The equalizing of European man is today the great irreversible process: it should be accelerated even more."

— Nietzsche



Jean Baudrillard isn't a philosopher, not even a sociologist. Can you still call "sociologist" someone who wants to put the social to death? So who is the author of The Mirror of Production (Telos, 1975), The Political Economy of the Sign (Telos, 1981), In The Shadow of The Silent Majorities and Simulations (Semiotext(e)'s "Foreign Agents" Series, 1983)? Is he the dark prophet of the New Era or, as he ironically calls himself, a "metaphysician"? Metaphysicians don't usually spend much time reflecting on consumer society, on media, on terrorism or the nuclear threat. But the tendencies at work in our society obviously fascinate Jean Baudrillard — whatever tendency he himself may have to proclaim the end of what attracts his attention.

NUCLEAR IMPLOSION

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

Translated by Phil Beitchman

The nuclear is the apotheosis of simulation. Yet the balance of terror is nothing more than the spectacular slope of a system of deterrence that has crept from the *inside* into all the cracks of daily life. The nuclear cliff-hanger only seals the trivialised system of deterrence at the heart of the media, of the inconsequential violence that reigns throughout the world, of the aleatory contrivance of every choice which is made for us. The slightest details of our behaviour are ruled by neutralised, indifferent, equivalent signs, by zero-sum signs like those which regulate "game strategy" (but the genuine equation is elsewhere, and the unknown is precisely that variable of simulation which makes the atomic arsenal itself a hyperreal form, a simulacrum which dominates us all and reduces all "ground-level" events to mere ephemeral scenarios, transforming the only life left to us into survival, into a wager without takers, — not even into a death policy: but into a policy devaluated in advance.)

It isn't that the direct menace of atomic destruction paralyses our lives. It is rather that deterrence leukemizes us. And this deterrence comes from the very situation which *excludes the real atomic clash* – excludes it beforehand like the eventuality of the real in a system of signs. Everybody pretends to believe in the reality of this menace (one understands it from the military point of view, the whole seriousness of their exercise, and the discourse of their "strategy", is at stake): but there are precisely no strategic stakes at this level, and the whole originality of the situation lies in the improbability of destruction.

DROPPING OUT OF HISTORY



SYLVERE LOTRINGER INTERVIEWS / JEAN BAUDRILLARD

At a time when the French Socialists are finally back to power, it may sound inappropriate or unfair to talk about the end of history, or the end of politics. Are the French Socialists too exhausted or their hands too tied-up to measure up to the event? But what is an event in a history that is dropping out of sight? However paradoxical it may sound, especially with regards to Jean Baudrillard, a case could be made that everything of importance in French culture has originated much less from Marx and Freud, those great founding fathers, than from a kind of orphan of an event — obsessing and enigmatic: May '68. At last in the land of structure and of political centralism, the event preceeds the reflection upon it. Since then it has spurred much thought, of course, even if this reflection upon the event sometimes seems to turn its back on all that this revolution — which wasn't one — was supposed to have represented: spontaneity, anarchy, revolutionary romanticism.

May '68 took everybody by surprise. It swept down on France like an avalanche, and it disappeared almost immediately, mysteriously, practically without leaving any traces behind, consuming all the answers. But it has invented a new question. It is to this question that Jean Baudrillard, like some other French thinkers (with whom he is not always in agreement), explored to the point of putting into doubt all the certainties upon which we relied: our social system, the possibility of political action, our sense of history and even the very reality of our society.

How can an event escape the logic of politics?

JEAN BAUDRILLARD: Politics has functioned classically in terms of distinguishable contrasts: the left or the right, as elsewhere the true or the false, the beautiful or the ugly, etc. Now at a given moment the energy of a situation has ceased to depend on this kind of dissociation. It is no longer the dialectic of the two terms which organizes things, but the fact that the forms go their own way — but crazily. It is this which I call the "ecstasy of forms", their own self-enchantment: this is the truer than true, the falser than false. A form runs amuck in a kind of logic which precludes all reserve, retreat or recollection, like cancer cells shooting forth on their own organic course. This logic seems more interesting to me because it corresponds more to the evolution of things today.

SYLVERE LOTRINGER: And where do you see this logic currently at work?

JB: In the world of fashion which illustrates this phenomenon perfectly. Fashion depends on no aesthetic judgement. It's not the beautiful opposed to the ugly, it's what is more beautiful than the beautiful. The obese, that famous fat American, is not opposed to the skinny one. He is fatter than fat, and that is what is fascinating. Fashion is the ecstatic form of the beautiful, its absolute formalization. It functions by means of unconditional transmutation of forms. Ecstatic forms can be very static and cold; sometimes they can be warmer, more enchanting. Fashion can exude this kind of "hot" ecstasy. There is a splendor or fashion, beneath which we can see at work an uncontrollable, objective rule of the game. A rule which conveys the objective irony of fashion.

SL: Can fashion serve as a model for politics?

JB: Fashion has always been at odds with politics. The way it operates cannot be negated by any system of this kind. You can't oppose fashion politically to politics. It is a ritual which cannot be programmed.

SL: Must all political rituals necessarily be programmed?

JB: Unpredictable forms — forms that resist formulation and judgement — are of course much more fascinating, and therefore terribly dangerous for the powers that be, because they are no longer possible to control. These are what I call seductive forms. At a given moment a category or a form can no longer be articulated — that is, described or represented. It can no longer enter upon the scene of representation; it turns back upon itself and taking that turn its speed is vastly accelerated. Suddenly you have gone into a situation of weightlessness. Fascism was something like this, which is why it has remained inexplicable in political terms — as caused by the class struggle, capitalism, etc.

SL: Does May '68 partake, in its way, in this kind of snow-balling of forms?

JB: There is something in May '68 which escapes our historicity. I'm not saying that it came from another planet: it is a strangeness come out of the logic our own system generates, but not from its history.

SL: You often evoke the end of history, once in a while you also throw around provocative formulae: the end of production, of the social, of politics. Have we really reached the point where all these stakes have ceased to count? Has the time now come to consign everything that made up our reality to the wax museum? I've often felt myself that it's difficult to finish with anything. What allows you in the final analysis to say such things?

JB: I don't know if it's really an end. The word is probably meaningless in any case. For there to be an end, you would have to have linearity, and we're no longer so sure that there's such a thing. I would prefer to begin, even if it seems a little like science fiction, with a quotation from a recent work of Elias Canetti. It is possible, he said, and the thought is painful for him, that starting from a precise moment in time the human race has dropped out of history, that without even being conscious of the change, humanity suddenly left reality behind; in fact, we wouldn't have been able to be conscious of this event. What we have to do now, continues Canetti, would be to find that critical point, that spot in time that we have been blind to; otherwise we just continue on with our self-destructive ways. This hypothesis seems appealing to me because Canetti talks not about an end but about a passage, or rather what I would call an "ecstasy" in its primal meaning: a passage at the same time into the dissolution and transcendance of a form.

SL: Did May '68 succeed in transcending politics?

JB: It is a prodigious effect, a kind of pure object or event, the first event that I can think of that is situated on the other side of that crucial point Canetti is talking about. Past this point, you can no longer manipulate effects through causes.

SL: You can always manipulate causes among themselves. Nietzsche was well aware of this (and had to pay the costs of his insight) — that the cause of an event is always imagined after the fact. The cause is added to the event in order to regulate it, or regularize it — to keep it within bounds. After that jolly May, we were treated to the curious spectacle of causes racing after effects that had become ever more elusive. But no explanation has succeeded in diminishing one iota the pure surprise of the event.

JB: That pure event which comes like a fatality without explanation or referent. From now on you can no longer attribute things to clear causes. The event is an object which derives its overwhelming necessity precisely from its being isolated and disconnected, as is the case with a catastrophe. This is a necessity well beyond any rational finality. This kind of event, of word or being, which absorbs all attempts at explanation, which comes across as pure evidence, alien to any causal or final order, or which is more final than the final, that is *fatal*. May '68 is a fatal event. It is an event that we have been unable to rationalize and exploit — and from which we have been able to conclude nothing.

SL: It outraced everybody.

JB: When the effect goes faster than the cause it devours it. I could easily see the "speed-up" analyzed by Virilio from this angle, as an attempt to accelerate faster than linearity can handle. Speed is

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Deterrence excludes war — the antiquated violence of expanding systems. Deterrence is the neutral, implosive violence of metastable or involving systems. There is no subject of deterrence any more, nor adversary, nor strategy — it is a planetary structure of the annihilation of stakes. Atomic war, like that of Troy, will not take place. The risk of nuclear atomisation only serves as a pretext, through the sophistication of arms — but this sophistication exceeds any possible objective to such an extent that it is itself a symptom of nonexistence — to the installation of a universal system of security, linkup and control whose deterrent effect does not aim for atomic clash at all (the latter has never been a real possibility, except no doubt right at the beginning of the cold war, when the nuclear posture was confused with conventional war) but really the much larger probability of any real event, of anything which could disturb the general system and upset the balance. The balance of terror is the terror of balance.

Deterrence is not a strategy. It circulates and is exchanged between the nuclear protagonists exactly like international capital in that orbital zone of monetary speculation, whose flow is sufficient to control all global finance. Thus *kill money* (not referring to *real* killing, any more than floating capital refers to real production) circulating in nuclear orbit is sufficient to control all violence and potential conflict on the globe.

What stirs in the shadow of this posture, under the pretext of a maximal "objective" menace, and thanks to that nuclear sword of Damocles, is the perfection of the best system of control which has ever existed. And the progressive satellisation of the whole planet by that hypermodel of security.

The same goes for *peaceful* nuclear installations. Pacification doesn't distinguish between the civil and the military: wherever irreversible apparatuses of control are elaborated, wherever the notion of security becomes absolute, wherever the *norm* of security replaces the former arsenal of laws and violence (including war), the system of deterrence grows, and around it grows an historical, social and political desert. A huge involution makes every conflict, every opposition, every act of defiance contract in proportion to this blackmail which interrupts, neutralizes and freezes them. No mutiny, no history can unfurl anymore according to its own logic since it risks annihilation. No strategy is even possible anymore, and escalation is only a puerile game left to the military. The political stake is dead. Only simulacra of conflict and carefully circumscribed stakes remain.

The "space race" played exactly the same role as the nuclear race. This is why it was so easily able to take over from it in the 60's (Kennedy/Khrushchev), or to develop concurrently in a mode of "peaceful coexistence". For what is the ultimate function of the space race, of lunar conquest, of satellite launchings, if not the institution of a model of universal gravitation, of satellisation, whose perfect embryo is the lunar module: a programmed microcosm, where *nothing can be left to chance*? Trajectory, energy, computation, physiology, psychology, the environment — nothing can be left to contingency, this is the total universe of the norm — the Law no longer exists, it is the operational immanence of every detail which is law. A universe purged of every threat to the senses, in a state of asepsis and weightlessness — it is this very perfection which is fascinating. For the exaltation of the masses was not in response to the lunar landing or the voyage of man in space (this is rather the fulfillment of an earlier dream) — no, we are dumbfounded by the perfection of their planning and technical manipulation, by the immanent wonder of programmed development. Fascinated by the maximization of norms and by the mastery of probability. Unbalanced by the model, as we are by death, but without fear or impulse. For if the law, with its aura of transgression, if order, with its aura of violence, still taps a perverse imaginary, then the norm fixes, hypnotizes, dumbfounds, causing every imaginary to devolve. We no longer fantasize about every minutia of a programme. Its observance alone unbalances. The vertigo of a flawless world.

The same model of planned infallibility, of maximal security and deterrence, now governs the spread of the social. That is the true nuclear fallout: the meticulous operation of technology serves as a model for the meticulous operation of the social. Here, too, *nothing will be left to chance*; moreover, this is the essence of socialization, which has been going on for some centuries but which now has entered into its accelerated phase, towards a limit people imagined would be explosive (revolution), but which currently results in an inverse, irreversible, *implosive* process: a generalized deterrence of every chance, of every accident, of every transversality, of every finality, of every contradiction, rupture or complexity in a sociality illuminated by the norm and doomed to the transparency of detail radiated by data collecting mechanisms. In fact, the spatial and nuclear models do not even have their own ends: neither has lunar exploration, nor military and strategic superiority. Their truth lies in their being models of simulation, vector models of a system of planetary control (where even the super-powers of this scenario are not free — the whole world is satellized).[1]

Reject the evidence: with satellization, the one who is satellized is not who you might think. By the orbital inscription of a space object, the planet earth becomes a satellite, the terrestrial principle of reality becomes excentric, hyperreal and insignificant. By the orbital establishment of a system of control like peaceful coexistence, all terrestrial microsystems are satellized and lose their autonomy. All energy, all events are absorbed by this excentric gravitation, everything condenses and implodes on the micro-model of control alone (the orbital satellite), as conversely, in the other, biological dimension everything converges and implodes on the molecular micro-model of the genetic code. Between the two, caught between the nuclear and the genetic, in the simultaneous assumption of the two fundamental codes of deterrence, every principle of meaning is absorbed, every deployment of the real is impossible.

This is why nuclear proliferation increases neither the chances of atomic clash nor of accident — save in the interval where "young" powers could be tempted to use them for non-deterrent or "real" purposes (like the Americans did on Hiroshima — but precisely they alone were entitled to this "use value" of the bomb, while all those who have since acquired it are deterred from using it by the very fact of its possession). Entry into the atomic club, so amusingly named, very rapidly removes (like syndicalisation for the working world) any inclination towards violent intervention. Responsibility, control, censorship, self-deterrence always increases faster than the forces or weapons at our disposal: this is the secret of the social order. Thus the very possibility of paralyzing a whole country with the flick of a switch *makes* it impossible that electrical engineers will ever utilize this weapon: the entire myth of the revolutionary and total strike collapses at the very moment when the means to do so are available — but alas, *exactly because* the means to do so are available. This is deterrence in a nutshell.

Therefore it is altogether likely that one day we shall see the nuclear powers exporting atomic reactors, weapons and bombs to every latitude. After control by threat will succeed the much more effective strategy of pacification by the bomb and by its possession. "Small" powers, hoping to buy their independent strike force, will only buy the virus of deterrence, of their own deterrence. The same goes for the atomic reactors we have already sent them: so many neutron bombs knocking out all historical virulence, all risk of explosion. In this sense, the nuclear system institutes a universally accelerated process of *implosion*, it congeals everything around it, it absorbs all living energy.

The nuclear system is both the culminating point of available energy and the maximization of systems controlling all energy. Lockdown and control grow as fast as (and undoubtedly even faster than) liberating potentialities. This was already the aporia of modern revolutions. It is still the absolute paradox of the nuclear system. Energies freeze by their own fire power, they deter themselves. One can't really see what project, what power, what strategy, what subject could possibly be behind this enclosure, this vast saturation of a system by its own hereafter neutralized, unusable, unintelligible, non-explosive forces — except the possibility of *an explosion towards the centre*, or an *implosion* where all these energies are abolished in a catastrophic process (in the literal sense, that is to say in the sense of a reversion of the whole cycle towards a minimal point, of a reversion of energies towards a minimal threshold).

1. Paradox: all bombs are clean — their only pollution is the system of control and security they radiate *when they are not detonated*.

different from movement. Movement goes somewhere, speed nowhere.

SL: May '68 is an event that had no consequences.

JB: There is a certain power in the fact of being inconsequential. Behind the political, revolutionary, historical scene and also failure, there is the power of an event which manages to absorb its own continuity and makes it implode, which succeeds in swallowing its own energy and disappearing. We witness the annihilation of causes. Those kind of things alone are exciting.

SL: May '68 is an event without cause. As soon as the effect leaps the chain of causes, the event takes off. It outraces any effort to understand or to master it. At this point, its trajectory becomes properly *incalculable*.

JB: May '68 has remained indecipherable. It has been the forerunner of nothing. You might wonder then what remains when one has tried everything in an effort to explain it. Perhaps a kind of "secret" is involved here. There are fundamentally two kinds of secrets. The obscene form of secret involves a saturation of the event with explanations. The other kind of secret involves something which is not hidden, and therefore cannot be expressed directly in words. It is this second kind of secret which makes the event somehow innocent.

SL: There is also a secret of Fascism?

JB: Yes. The secret lies in this total autonomy of a story, a form, an event that can no longer be described in a logical, coherent and acceptable manner, but which runs totally wild. Past a certain threshold of inertia, the forms start snow-balling, terror is unleashed as an empty form. There comes about a swept-away effect, an effect that feeds on itself, and like Fascism, can become the source of immense energies.

SL: Fascism is, above all, an effect of panic. So it needed at once a scapegoat in order to exorcize the fear of the abyss.

JB: Panic is the catastrophic form of ecstasy. I say catastrophic in the almost neutral meaning of the word, in its mathematical sense. It is one of the effects of ecstasy, of the strange response of the object-world to the subject-world, of an utterly external destiny which comes as absolute surprise and whose symbolic wave collides with the human world. So what do you do with this kind of event? Do you allow your life to be changed? Ordinarily when something like this, something surprising occurs, you try to comprehend it as a subject, to fit it into your own subjective pattern. But here you have had to renounce precisely this quality to channel all your subjective energy back onto the object.

SL: The event becomes a reflecting object, an imaginary mirror sending each one back to his own fantasy without ever letting itself be touched. There are no children of May.

JB: The event has been eclipsed without leaving a trace, except this secondary effect of parody, this second or third hand product made to occupy a political scene that has been utterly absorbed and destroyed: socialism.

SL: French socialism has done everything to present itself as the heir of '68. But it is a cause without energy or vitality. It barely succeeds in being the parody of its own history.

JB: What is intolerable about May '68, its hard, indestructible kernel, is the event's sheer gratuity. It was produced like a destiny, beyond the point of political vacuum that socialism inhabits now with a commemorative ceremony at the Pantheon, a military parade of the 14th of July and all these thundering social measures that come 50 years too late.

SL: The ecstasy of socialism is a simulation that is ashamed of itself, a world without surprise or secret. History at last suited to itself.



JB: Yes. Nothing to do with the happy hyper-simulation of fashion. It's the cold side of ecstasy. Its ecstasy is to be truer than true. It creates a kind of dizzyness, an effect of escalated truth. As a model, it's pretty sad and tawdry. Socialism realizes, hyper-realizes a model which no longer has any veracity, or any original passion.

SL: The socialists are setting up a stage-decor in *trompe-l'oeil* to hide the fact that socialism has disappeared. Like history, it has no real substance, nor any particular meaning. It is no more than a shadow of itself. It is no longer seductive. It is no longer anything to worry about.

JB: History is now in a state of simulation, like a body that is kept in a state of hibernation. This is a kind of irreversible coma where things continue all the same to function, and eventually can even seem to amount to history; and then surreptitiously, as Canetti has it, it is possible that everything which has happened since that point in time would no longer be true. In any case, we would no longer be in a position to decide on its truth or falsity.

SL: The end you talk about then, that would be rather the end of all finality — together with its exacerbated, empty parody of a resurgence.

JB: I would prefer not to play the role of the lugubrious, thoroughly useless prophet. There is no end in the sense that God is dead, or that history is dead. It is not a tragic end, one that would be highly charged with emotion, an end that you could mourn — for in that case there would be at least something to be done about it. Things have just been progressing in a certain direction, then suddenly there is a curve in the road, a turning point. Somewhere in the historical, political, even psychological scene, the *real* scene, where you had rules for the game and some solid stakes that everybody could believe in, has been lost.

SL: Why was it lost?

JB: I'm not about to be explaining things. That's fiction. History has stopped meaning, referring to anything — whether you call it social space or the real. We have passed into a kind of hyper-reality where things are being replaced ad infinitum.

SL: Societies with no history have mythology; we, on the other hand, have turned mythology into history. If we now are able to cease believing in this history, if we can put its very reality into doubt, it may be because history has had a lot to do with faith.

JB: But what then does it mean to believe? To believe would be all the same, to maintain a kind of subjectivity that would guarantee the solidity of things and serve as a criteria for meaning. If sense is dependent on belief then we remain trapped irremediably in the realm of the imaginary. What interests me instead, but I'm not so sure you can still call it history, is the possibility of a pure event, an event that is no longer tied to the existence of a subject and hence is no longer available for manipulation, interpretation or deciphering by any historical subjectivity.

SL: Can the subject then be totally short-circuited by the event?

JB: The problematic of the subject involves the postulation that reality can be *represented*, that things give off signs which guarantee their existence and significance — in short, that there is a principle of reality. All of that is now collapsing with the dissolution of the subject. This is of course the well-known "crisis of representation". But just because this system of values is coming apart, which also supported the political and theatrical scenes — that doesn't mean that we have been left in a complete vacuum. My position is by no means a nihilist one. If you explore the terrain of value in order to root out its last vestiges, you are left, on the contrary, in a situation that is even more radical. The radicality is to arrive at isolating in things, all that makes for interpretation, all that weighs them down with sense, all that over-determines them with meaning.

SL: So then what is left, once you have gotten rid of this burden of sense?

JB: Much less than we would have thought. All the traditional systems of value in terms of energy, for example, now seem to teeter on the brink.

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SL: Your analysis recalls though in many ways that proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in the *Anti-Oedipus*; leaving representation behind, rejection of the dialectic, critique of meaning, etc. You part with them on the terrain of subjectivity: they fragment the subject, you abolish it; they make of desire the basis of becoming, you see becoming as involving the annihilation of desire.

JB: I couldn't care less about desire. I wouldn't know any longer where to put it. I neither want to abolish it nor to take it into account. What bothers me about desire is the idea of a force or energy which would be the common source of all these fluxes. Is desire really involved? In my opinion, desire has nothing to do with it.

SL: Well then what has?

JB: Things just don't happen anymore dialectically. These are no longer situations where a subject is involved: they happen all by themselves, without any mediation, by a sort of instantaneous commutation.

SL: Do these events respond to any objective criteria? What strategy could we adopt that would take into account these situations where the subject no longer has a valid place?

JB: A strategy of the object. A kind of objective irony. Do you know the story of Beau Brummel? He travelled a lot, always accompanied by his servant. One day he arrived in Scotland. There were many lakes, one more beautiful than the other. Brummel turned to his servant and asked him: "Which lake do I prefer?" Having to choose is really a bore. That's what servants are for. That's not what counts in any case. Power — Knowledge — Will, let those who invented these ideas take responsibility for them. It makes perfect sense to me that the great masses, very snobbishly, delegate to the class of intellectuals, of politicians, this business of managing, of choosing, of knowing what one wants. They're joyously getting rid of all those burdensome categories which no one, deep down inside, really wants any part of. That people want to be told what they want is certainly not true, that they really want knowledge is not evident either, and that they desire to want it is also by no means clear. The entire edifice of socialism is based on that assumption.

SL: The objective irony would be the careless manner in which the masses get rid of their responsibilities, turning power back to its fantasies, knowledge to its obsessions, will to its illusions. The silent majority, as you see it then, is not the accomplice of law and order. Its silence is rather a silence of death. The masses play dead; and this stubborn silence, this insolent reserve, would sanction the end — excuse me, the disappearance of the social.

JB: Exactly. No one wants to bother about these problems. The great systems of information relieve the masses of the care of having to know, understand, be informed, be up on things. Advertising relieves people of the care of having to choose, which is perfectly human and understandably a torment. As to power, it has always seemed ironic to me to delegate it to someone: this is like catching it in a trap, and this trap closes on the political class itself. I see all of this as a profound reversal of strategy on the part of the masses: they are no longer involved in a process of subversion or of revolution, but in some gigantic devolution from an unwanted liberty — with some evil genie behind all of this.

SL: Insofar as we can conceive of a reversal of strategy, the political stakes are not entirely a dead-letter.

JB: I see no strategy being possible, except that of an object which no one could claim.

SL: Do you see an object-strategy in the rising to extremes projected by Paul Virilio — the military class devouring civil society before disappearing in its turn on its suicidal course?

JB: The calculation of Paul is to push the military to a kind of extreme absolute of power that can ultimately only cause its own downfall, place it before the judgement of a God and absorb it into the society it destroys. He carries out this calculation with such an identification or obsession that I can credit him only with a powerful sense of irony: the system devours its own principle of reality, outbids on its own vacuous form until it attains to an absolute end or limit, to its ironical destiny of reversal. I myself am not so interested in military "hardware", in the "software" rather. It's rather in its form that his idea seems valid to me. I think the strategy of irony is to let the system collapse on the thrust of its own energy. Not being able to fight it directly, all you can do is rely on a logic of provocation.

SL: Dare the system to destroy itself! Politics in that case could only survive in its own disappearance.

JB: What I think will occur is a transmutation of all forms and the consequent unfeasibility of all politics. In fact, I don't even see on the political level what would be equivalent to forms running wild, except that we would probably have to construct another theory of the media as *agents provocateurs* of an oversupply of information, of an annihilating ecstasy making of the substance of traditional political debate a gigantic abyss.

SL: Wouldn't the critique of media be, in the final analysis, the ghost they carry with them, an echo of complicity which the media must utter in order to justify its existence? For there to be mystification there has to be somewhere a standard of truth.

JB: There remains behind all of this a certain symbolic claim to truth. The media are denounced as a fabulous distortion, but where does the distortion come from? If you put the media into the system will-choice-liberty, you can't do anything more with them. You can only say they push the political subject back into total alienation, say that it is power which manipulates, etc. Let's eliminate the idea that media mystifies and alienates. Enough is enough. ←



ETCHINGS BY GUSTAVE DORÉ

DR. HENRY MORGENTALER

VS.

DR. BERNARD NATHANSON













CHERINGTON: Dr. Henry Morgentaler, as a promoter of free standing abortion clinics across the country: you have been tried three times; you've been reviled and threatened; you've had a hell of a life for eighteen years. What drives you?

MORGENTALER: My abortion clinic in Montreal receives women daily who come from as far as Alberta and Newfoundland. Women who have travelled twenty hours on the train, twelve hours on the bus, fifteen year old girls who come with their mothers from St. John's. The suffering, the stress, the anxiety that comes knocking at my door. I have a clinic that provides decent, safe, medical procedures in an atmosphere of respect, of dignity, of competence, there are many women in Canada who can not get access to this. For every one who can come, there are three who cannot, who still have to use coat hangers, who have to go to illegal abortionists, who have to continue with an unwanted pregnancy. I am angered and outraged that this situation still persists in Canada and the ministers of health, whose job it is to protect the health of women, don't want to do anything. Two out of three abortions in the United States are performed in free standing clinics with a better safety record than that of hospitals, and I ask: "What's happening here?".
Yes, I've suffered for it, I've gone to jail for it. I know I can provide good, decent medical services. I don't see any reason why women across Canada should not have access to the same kind of competent, humane, compassionate care that they receive in my clinic — I want to achieve this for women across Canada. I have achieved it for the province of Quebec, where women have access to hospital abortions, free standing clinics, and to government sponsored and funded clinics where they receive abortions by doctors trained by myself. I don't want women to have to beg for a hospital abortion, to be delayed obtaining an abortion, because every week's delay increases the danger of complications by twenty percent. I want the protection of women's health, the protection of their dignity. It's as simple as that.

CHERINGTON: Thank you Dr. Morgentaler. Welcome Dr. Bernard Nathanson of New York. As a crusader, many years ago you marched in the streets, you carted along your three year old son, carried placards, presided over some 75,000 abortions, 1,500 personally. You've had a dramatic change of heart, and today you are prolife. When your book *Aborting America* came out three years ago, you still had some questions about the prolife movement, but now you are definitely prolife. What do you have to say?

NATHANSON: The core issue here is not really the setting up of supermarkets for abortion or a string of charnal houses across the country to do abortions on a clinic basis, but whether abortion should continue to be illegal. My conversion on this issue was not some kind of overnight occurance, but the result of working in the area of fetalogy from 1973 to 1977. Fetalogy is a new science that uses new technology such as ultra sound and electronic fetal heart monitors. We have opened up the life of the fetus for study, and these studies have culminated in a growing realization that the fetus is identical to any of us and is a member of the human community, and as a result, possesses all the rights, privileges and protections which we are afforded. The expanding study of fetalogy has created a serious problem in hospitals. There is a paradox in that on one floor we are now diagnosing the illness of the fetus, using technologies to treat it with medication, even performing surgery on it, while on the next floor down, that very same fetus is being casually destroyed for no reason whatsoever. This is creating an intolerable moral tension as the public begins to realize more and more through the media that fetalogy is giving us a new perception of the fetus. It is curious that in no other branch of medicine do we bring to bear expensive and sophisticated technology for the diagnosis of a patient's illness, only whereupon to eradicate the patient. This kind of moral tension is ripping apart various segments of medicine. In San Francisco there has been a concerted effort on the part of a number of nurses who will no longer serve in any abortion units in the hospitals. This is the direction of the future, we can only anticipate that fetalogy will continue to expand and that these questions are going to become more insistent.

CHERINGTON: But Dr. Nathanson, remember when you were amazed when your clinic opened and a rag-tailed army of female humanity descended upon you with rucksacks. Standing, waiting, sitting for days. What's to happen to them?

NATHANSON: You must understand that was the only functioning clinic in the Eastern half of the United States at the time; we were gathering all sorts of women to our clinic who couldn't get an abortion elsewhere. In 1970 when our clinic opened, fetalogy had not yet developed as a science, there was no countervail moral or ethical force in opposition to free or legal or casual abortion, as has developed. We are in a different quandary now. Those of us who practise obstetrics — Dr. Morgentaler does not practise obstetrics, he is not a fetalogist, he does not understand these things — are caught in a psychological and moral whipsaw. On the one hand we are treating the patient and on the other hand we are casually destroying.

MORGENTALER: I want to bring it down from the clouds and talk about real human problems. Dr. Nathanson knows like everyone else that unwanted pregnancies do occur, that they often occur as a result of contraception failure or because contraceptives were not used at all. They do occur as a result of incest or rape. Three days ago an Ontario girl, fifteen years old, who had been raped, was denied an abortion. I told the doctor who called me about it to send her to me, that I would do the abortion for free. She came to my clinic and I did the abortion. I want to know if you think that this girl had the right to an abortion, do you believe that abortions should be completely illegal, or do you see any reason why some women might still obtain an abortion by a doctor rather than by a quack, or by coat hanger, or whatever else?

NATHANSON: I think there is only one reasonable justification for abortion and that is when the mother's life is in imminent danger. Short of that, I do not think there are any other reasons for abortion. Let me turn to the question of rape. The problem here is — we have a child created under tragic circumstances, but those circumstances should not stigmatize the life of that child. Not everyone of us were conceived in the most ideal circumstances, many of us may have been conceived, unknowingly or not, in an act of rape. Unwanted pregnancy is a compelling and difficult social issue and it demands social solutions. It is as inappropriate to cope with this particular problem with a destructive surgical means as it would be to treat violent criminals with lobotomy, or rapists with surgical castration. Should we return to the 19th century practise of treating chronic masturbators with vasectomy? Vexing social problems call for imaginative and humane social responses, not surgical holocausts.

MORGENTALER: I've read your book, Dr. Nathanson and found it to be very inconsistent. First, you describe the suffering of New York women, poor women, negro women, with a great deal of compassion. You speak of women coming to hospitals after botched abortions, and how you decided you had to provide decent medical abortions for these women so you could protect their lives and their dignity. Suddenly, the conclusion of your book states that no abortions should be had by anyone.

NATHANSON: Except when a mother's life is in danger.

MORGENTALER: Yes, but that may be one in ten thousand cases. What happens to all the other women who do not have access to an abortion, what do you propose to these women?

NATHANSON: Those words were written out of experiences between the years 1963 and 1965. Contraception is much more common today; contraception education is much more widespread. The words which I wrote in those years were written with no moral countervailing force. We knew nothing of the fetus. When I went to medical school, the text we used had twenty seven pages on the fetus in 1949, the latest edition of 1980 has two hundred and seventy six pages on the fetus, one third of the book. There is a strong oppositional force to the abortion ethic which only those of us who practise obstetrics or fetalogy understand. The problem of the illegal, back alley abortion is gone. You and I both know that even if abortion were outlawed tomorrow in the United States and Canada, such abortions would no longer exist. What women would do is go to the drug store and buy prostaglandin suppositories under the counter, take them home, insert them into the vagina and have a quick bathroom abortion. There would no longer be any coat hangers, it is a symbol of the 1960's. It was very useful when I was in the political arena, we loved it, the bloodied coat hanger. It no longer is so, it will never be that again.

CHERINGTON: We seem to be at cross purposes here doctors. You, Dr. Nathanson are campaigning for the right to life of the fetus, and Dr. Morgentaler is talking about the mother.

MORGENTALER: I am talking about the freedom for people to make reasonable choices regarding their lives, their fertility, the spacing of children. I think Dr. Nathanson lives in a fantasy land where he says on the one hand that abortions should be limited to hospitals, but on the other hand that abortions, if outlawed, could be had by purchasing suppositories at the drugstore. It does not yet exist Dr. Nathanson.

NATHANSON: It is there, they are using them in hospitals all the time.

MORGENTALER: The work of Christopher Teetsa, who is the eminent biostatistician from New York, has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt at the Centre for Disease Control, that every week of delay in obtaining an abortion increases the danger of major complications by twenty percent and the danger of mortality by thirty percent. The Centre for Disease Control is a respected institution across the United States, they collect statistical data not only on abortion but all diseases. Since they have a stand which you suddenly don't agree with you call them proabortionists. Let's bring it down to real human problems that affect people. This girl that was fifteen years old and raped, would you grant her an abortion if you were able to do so?

NATHANSON: Absolutely not. I don't think rape is a sufficient reason to destroy a human life. The problem with this particular case is: "What was the motivation for the abortion?" Let's assume that if we could terminate this pregnancy by a technology in which the fetus would be saved, put into another life support system, would the parent or the girl consent to this operation? Is the purpose of that abortion to erase the external signs of a pregnancy or is it in fact to kill the hated child?

MORGENTALER: There is no child there yet. You are an expert on fetalogy, you know that up to eight weeks you can't even see the embryo.

NATHANSON: With ultra sound we can see it very easily.

MORGENTALER: Suppose an ordinary couple wanted to have sex, not to procreate but as an expression of love and affection. If the woman gets pregnant and does not want her pregnancy to continue, does she have the right to terminate the pregnancy before these few cells become embryo, a fetus? You even call it Alfa, a different term altogether.

NATHANSON: The term Alfa was used to neutralize discussion.

MORGENTALER: Because of the development of this Alfa, and the decision of the couple who believe they cannot provide the good care, mothering, a good home which a child needs, do they have the right? Do you want to subject them to unprofessional people at a greater risk of injury or death or whatever else was available before abortion became legal in the United States and parts of Canada?

NATHANSON: I think everything should be discussed on an unemotional and intellectual level. I think we should confine ourselves not to a lot of sobbing.

MORGENTALER: You are not a professor speaking to one of your pupils. You are evading the question. Does a woman have the right to terminate her pregnancy?

NATHANSON: A woman has no right to destroy a human life without the most compelling reason and a compelling reason is not that it is an inconvenient life. Being an unwanted child should not be a capital offence.

MORGENTALER: You believe then that any pregnancy that occurs, no matter under what circumstances, be it rape, incest, being twelve years old, being sixty years old, a couple already having three children, an unemployed husband, such pregnancies have to continue, no woman has the right to make the decision to terminate her pregnancy?

NATHANSON: They have no right to arbitrarily destroy the life of another human being regardless of how inconvenient that life may be.

MORGENTALER: What about menstrual extraction at two weeks?



NATHANSON: Whether you call it menstrual extraction, abortion, whatever, the destruction of an identifiable life must not continue.

MORGENTALER: A woman who gets pregnant and wants an abortion does not want these few cells to develop into a human being.

NATHANSON: You are not a fetalogist, you are not an obstetrician, you haven't seen the ultra sounds, you do not deal with these questions, you are an abortionist.

MORGENTALER: You are talking down to me from a high chair as some kind of specialist, whereas I meet people daily who come to me for help. Where is your compassion for real people?

NATHANSON: These are social problems that we must solve with social solutions. Let's take these women as children and educate them to their responsibilities, but let's not destroy any more human life. Twelve million lives have gone down the drain, let's call a moratorium. Let's work out a technology whereby we can take that fetus out of the uterus and put it into a life support system or another uterus. That way, everyone's rights and wishes will be respected. Until we arrive at such technology, it's already being done in veterinary medicine, let's stop.

MORGENTALER: I am citing cases of real people who come to my clinic. You have no compassion for the millions of women who need abortions. You are living in the middle ages.

NATHANSON: In the middle ages there was no respect for life. As we proceed through this troubled twentieth century we should continue the trend of more respect for human life. No capital punishment, no war, anything that destroys a human life.

MORGENTALER: I have tremendous respect for human life, I am a graduate of Auschwitz and Dachau, I know what it means to have a totalitarian system which exterminates people. I want Auschwitz never to happen again, I want children to be born into households that want them, so they will become loving, responsible individuals and not Hitlers, Stalins, or Mussolinis. When you say an unwanted pregnancy must continue, this is not a respect for life but an anti-human attitude, a destructive attitude that does not take into account the realities of life. People have to limit their capacity for reproduction to the point where they have the number of children for whom they can give proper care. If an unwanted pregnancy does occur, the woman should have the right to make the choice between abortion or continued pregnancy. If she has chosen abortion, I want her to have it by a medical doctor under conditions where her life, health, and dignity will be protected. You not only want to make abortions illegal in the United States and Canada, but all over the world.

NATHANSON: We sat down and constructed slogans and passwords which we knew would be the most effective political rallying cries, particularly for the feminists, but for America in general. They were very effective in 1968. The slogan "Freedom of Choice" only applies where alternatives in the choice are ethically acceptable. The alternative of either carrying a pregnancy or destroying it is not an ethically acceptable choice. The removal of the pregnancy without destroying it would be acceptable.

MORGENTALER: For you that is an ethically acceptable choice, but for the women who believe they have a right to terminate their pregnancy, this is freedom of choice.

NATHANSON: That kind of choice I don't respect. A choice that involves the destruction of an innocent human being is not ethically acceptable.

MORGENTALER: When does it become an innocent human being, according to your calculations?

NATHANSON: When it exists, there is no barmitzvah in the uterus.

MORGENTALER: You disagree with the position of the Roman Catholic Church which believes that life begins at conception; Dr. Nathanson, from the wisdom of his highchair as a fetalogist, has decided that life begins three weeks after conception.

NATHANSON: I did not say that, I said nine days.

MORGENTALER: Which means a woman should have the right to an abortion up to nine days.

NATHANSON: No, I said theoretically life begins at conception but in practical fact it has to begin when implantation occurs, because up until that point, we don't know it's there, there are no signals. "Wanted Children" is another phrase we concocted in the 60's as a very effective password, there are wanted pregnancies, but there are no unwanted children. There are a million couples in the United States that want a child but can't have one. Every child is theoretically an abortion survivor in America and every child is a wanted child. Why then has child abuse skyrocketed within the last five years when every child is wanted?

MORGENTALER: We live in a violent society.

NATHANSON: People setting up abortion clinics across the country is violence.

MORGENTALER: We live in a society where for years children have been abused. Many unwanted children have suffered physical and mental abuse and these children become the adults who abuse their own children. If we have a generation where family planning and abortion is available, a generation of wanted children, this generation will grow up to be loving individuals.

NATHANSON: More abortion will cure everything?

MORGENTALER: Dr. Nathanson has suggested that prolife groups publish the names of proabortion doctors in local newsletters. He highly recommends this action as it brings significant social pressure on abortionists and serves as positive encouragement for them to mend their ways. A doctor in New Brunswick has stopped providing abortions because of harassment, and because of this women from New Brunswick have come to my clinic after journies of fifteen hours on a train, exhausted, for a five minute procedure they should have had in their own communities. Dr. Nathanson's other advice to prolife groups is to obtain proof from abortionists, and he suggests stealing operating room sheets.

NATHANSON: I do not think that obstetricians who are pledged to carry on in the interests of both the mother and the child can be treating a fetus on one floor and simultaneously destroy a fetus one flight down. There is an unacceptable paradox here in which such doctors simply cannot be trusted to be acting within the customary confines of medical ethics. Doctors performing abortions should not be patronized, they are not trustworthy in an obstetrical sense.

CHERINGTON: You have both been accused of fanaticism. Dr. Nathanson you wrote, and I quote: "I plead for an honest and clear eyed consideration of the abortion issue, an end to blind polarity, the issue is human life."

NATHANSON: I wrote that in 1974, there is nothing fanatical about it.

MORGENTALER: Let's compare our positions. I believe every woman has the right to decide whether her pregnancy should go to term or not, I believe she has the right to say to a doctor "I want to terminate this pregnancy", to have her abortion under decent medical and psychological conditions.

NATHANSON: The rights of women must be respected, provided they do not trample the rights of anyone else. These patients in the uterus, their rights must not be trampled or trashed.

MORGENTALER: Can you not make the distinction between sexuality and procreation? Do you think that with every act of sexuality each person has to become a mother or father?

NATHANSON: I think sex requires responsibility and a sense of diginity.

MORGENTALER: But if a woman gets pregnant in spite of precaution, should she be obliged to continue with that pregnancy despite the fact that she is a minor, or sick, or simply not ready to care for a child? Do you want to impose your views on her?

NATHANSON: This issue is uncompromisable. If Morgentaler and I were locked in a room for six months we would still not reach a compromise. It is resolvable with the technology I have described, which will solve the abortion issue.

CHERINGTON: Dr. Morgentaler, you have faced some opposition from the Ontario Attorney General's Department about your plans to open a clinic in Toronto. Are those plans still probable?

MORGENTALER: Yes, the clinic in Toronto will open in a few weeks along with another in Winnipeg. We are also projecting a clinic for Calgary and St. Johns, Newfoundland. There will be freestanding abortion clinics across the country where women will be able to obtain safe, medical abortions without delay.

CHERINGTON: You don't think the abortion laws as perpetrated in Ontario are sufficient?

MORGENTALER: No, I'd like to have the same abortion laws as they do in Dr. Nathanson's country.

CHERINGTON: Will you fight McMurtry, he says no, nothing doing?

MORGENTALER: I have faith in the common sense of the people as represented by juries. Sensible people know that it is ridiculous for Ontario women to go to Buffalo or Montreal to get a medical service which they are entitled to in their home town.

CHERINGTON: Let's talk about the economics, it's big business.

NATHANSON: Abortion is a five hundred million dollar a year business in the United States, 90% of that money goes to the doctors, 10% to the entrepreneurs. The economics are so compelling that as I often say, it is very seldom that we see anyone try to assassinate Santa Claus.

CHERINGTON: There must be a tremendous amount of customers waiting if it's that big a business, Dr. Nathanson.

NATHANSON: It's a big business because the customers who have the abortions are so satisfied with the service that they just keep coming back. Unlimited access to abortion created more abortion. In 1973, the first year abortion was legal in the United States, there were 753 abortions performed. In 1980, 1.55 million. It is an industry riddled with deceit and corruption. If you must do abortions Morgentaler, why don't you do them for free?

MORGENTALER: As you know, to run an abortion clinic properly, you need machinery and staff, which costs a lot of money. I believe women should have access to free abortions under medicare.

NATHANSON: Medicare is not free but taxpayers' money.

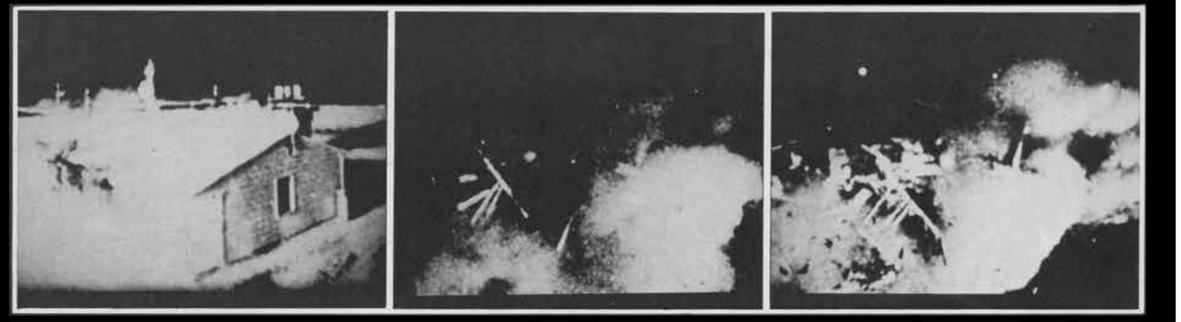
MORGENTALER: Somebody has to pay for it. The average doctor in the United States who performs abortions makes approximately seventy five dollars per abortion. That is not excessive considering the stress and responsibility a doctor assumes. I am willing to do them for free, I have done them for free.

NATHANSON: We must march ahead and develop technology, and until we do we should declare a moritorium on abortion very much the same way as we have on nuclear power. Such technology is available, we just don't know how to handle it yet.

MORGENTALER: The only way you can declare a moratorium on abortion is to declare a moratorium on sex.

ORIGINAL INTERVIEW: CHERINGTON SHOW, CHCH HAMILTON 1/21/83
Redacted by Carolyn White

Tony Brown



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JUDY EROLA

ARA ROSE PARKER HAS CHOSEN TO SPEAK TO THREE TORONTO FEMINISTS, AS WELL AS THE HONOURABLE JUDY EROLA, TO DETERMINE

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

September 19, 1983 House of Commons, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa.

The Honourable Judy Erola, P.C., M.P., Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, *also holds the title* Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.



Susan Cole, co-founder of Broadside, *a national feminist review, and founding member of* Women Against Violence Against Women, *is currently writing a book on pornography in Canada.*

Anna Gronau, Toronto filmmaker and former director of The Funnel, *is actively involved as a co-founder in* FAVAC (Film and Video Against Censorship).

Catherine Tammaro, artist and recent graduate of the Ontario College of Art where she co-founded the O.C.A. Women Artists' Collective, *is currently producing art for the* Birth Control and Venereal Disease Trailer *and is also active in the peace movement.*

Ara Rose Parker: Do you see yourself as a feminist?

Judy Erola: This question is asked of me regularly. Yes, I am a feminist. In fact, I find it just a little bit boring to have women come to me and say, "I am not a feminist, but. . .". Then I say, "You are not a feminist, but you want equal pay for work of equal value, you feel you should receive equal treatment, and you think that the equality clause should be part of our Charter?" Then they say "Yes", and I respond "Well, pardon me, but you are a feminist."

ARP: Placing yourself in terms of the women's movement, parliament and government, do you see yourself as a feminist first, or a politician?

JE: I am a political feminist. I don't think you can divorce the woman from the job and I think it is important for us as women, if we are going to be politicians, to bring that point of view into discussions. Too often, many women—although that has changed considerably—have felt that if you come into a political or decision-making body you must "think like a man". That is nonsense. Is thinking logically thinking like a man? Such a viewpoint is very artificial and silly. Women bring a particular view to discussions, especially in areas that have been traditionally male. Policies, decisions, legislations, are often taken without really thinking about their impact on women. They don't question whether there could be a negative impact on half the population, or in this case 52%. So I call those sins of omission rather than sins of commission. Sins of commission don't take place when there are women like my friend and colleague Monique Begin saying, "Just a minute, boys,. . . Faites attention!"

ARP: A discussion about wife-battery in the House caused several members of Parliament to laugh. What can you do in such a circumstance?

Ara Rose Parker: I have heard a concern voiced by some women art school faculty, that students feel they are now living in a "post-feminist era".

Catherine Tammaro: That is true. Unfortunately those women forget they can say that only because they are standing on other womens' shoulders.

ARP: Did the Women's Collective at the Ontario College of Art operate as a reminder?

CT: Not really, more as a resource centre, a place for feedback and support, and possibly as a place where women could come for direction in terms of sexual grievances or counselling. We also presented an exhibition of women's work, as there is definitely female imagery, imagery created by women. Imagery that supports feminism is female imagery with a political bent to it, and of course that should be fostered and encouraged.

ARP: How do you confront this idea of "post-feminism" in the art college?

CT: It's important to communicate to female students that even the changes we have made can be lost, particularly with the recent world-wide swing towards a new conservatism.



ARP: Now that you are a graduate, where do you see yourself in terms of the larger women's movement?

CT:At the present my concerns are personal, emotional and creative. I am very concerned with the woman's movement and have somewhat anarchistic leanings. I am afraid of one system of rules being side-swiped by another, particularly social rules. I have a problem with what is "politically correct, or politically incorrect."

Anna Gronau: Are you talking about dogma?

Susan Cole: Or a party-line?

CT: There is a whole set of rules. In the women's movement itself, there are so many rules about how to behave.

SC: My definition of feminism, in the women's movement, is so broad that it demands tolerance for different perspectives.

CT: I don't think that everyone shares that thought.

SC: Well, they are wrong. Feminists come in all shapes and sizes, and even though we have different points of view on individual issues, we should all agree on a fundamental feminist concern which is that there is some profound social change that can be effected if you change the status of women.

AG: I think most post-feminists consider themselves feminists of a sort. They figure the major battles are over; they just haven't looked. They believe in women's rights, but feel they already have them. I think this is our big battle.

SC: The women who are calling themselves post-feminists are trivializing feminist goals. To say that we've done feminism, 'thank you very much', is to ignore the fact that there is a 40 percent wage gap. It is to ignore the fact that we have virtually no reproductive rights, in that we do not have 100 percent safe—without side-effects—birth control. These are two basic issues: reproductive freedoms and equal pay for work of equal value. Women who call themselves post-feminists don't have any idea . . . they believe that because there are a couple of women in law school everything is handled. I think secretly they want to be men. They don't want to be bothered with this topic, it is getting in the way of what they perceive to be their own equality.

AG: There is also the fact that they do have more equality than twenty years ago. It's easy to say, "Look at how much we've gained, I can go to law school." Yet one woman I know flatly denies that she encounters discrimination of any kind in business! I can't believe that.

ARP: Perhaps it is true that she doesn't experience or see any discrimination around her.

SC: Still, you cannot determine you are in a post-feminist environment simply because of your own experience. We have to stop thinking our experience determines what the world is going through.

ARP: In Canada there is a Minister named Judy Erola, responsible for the Status of Women. There is also a Canadian Advisory Council on the status of women which compiles research and reports with recommendations to the Minister, along with a National Action Committee comprised of over 260 volunteer women who are watch-dogs over the various governmental and legal developments concerning the status of women. There are also many groups which are active concerning specific women's issues. Do you feel that the women's movement has become too divided in its organization by its various factions? How does the feminist who is not directy involved in these action committees relate to a movement on issues like abortion, wages, health, family allowance or peace? Is there still a need for a mass and collective movement?

SC: We should be everywhere. It is good that we have, on the one hand, people who are supporting an illegal abortion clinic, while on the other we have people who are trying to go through the mainstream political system. I feel it is better not to focus on one approach.

ARP: How is the movement here different from in the United States? How does the status of our new constitution as it relates to women compare to the issues raised by the E.R.A.?

SC: In the U.S. the constitution is important, it is everything the Americans know about themselves and care about politically. In Canada, it doesn't matter how many headlines the constitution grabbed as it was being formulated, it doesn't really matter to us yet. We don't even know how it can be used. It took five years, and they are still trying to get the E.R.A. ratified. In a year and a half, with more or less well-placed phone calls, because Parliament is supreme and our power is more centralized and it is easier to work with our governmental structures, we were able to have an equality clause in our constitution. Now we have to make sure it is implemented.

AG: Isn't there supposed to be a conference on implementation concerning that situation?

SC: The provinces have until 1985 to look at their legislation and see in which ways it does not conform to the constitution. If we leave it to the legislators, lawyers and professional persons to decide, because somehow we think they know better—which they don't because they have never had this document or anything like it to work with before—we are going to get screwed. Therefore a conference is being organized to address every piece of legislation and determine which are not in accordance with the constitution. There is some hard work to be done. The "boys" are not going to know this legislation, we are.

ARP: Susan, I first met you at a Women in the Media Conference a year ago. At that time you were expressing concern about the agenda of women's articles in the media. News stories related to women's issues still seem relegated to the back or "Lifestyle" pages of the papers. What role can women play in effecting change in the media?

SC: There's a role for a women's press. Which is what we are trying to do at *Broadside*. The dailies are a whole other thing. The "Lifestyle" section in the *Toronto Star* cannot be what *Broadside* or *Fireweed* or any other women's publications want to be. That is, to be a very clear-cut advocate for change in the status of women. Most of the research done by the Advisory Council is performed by academics and professors. They are just beginning to give journalists the time of day. It is like saying, "If we don't have letters beside our names, we won't be taken seriously."

ARP: Anna, as a filmmaker you have been very involved in the anti-censorship campaign. Does this present a conflict in feminist circles because of pornography?

AG: I am against censorship and I am against pornography. I have been against censorship for a long time because of my personal involvement; as an artist I find it a very terrifying prospect. With the way the law is written in Ontario, there is incredible potential for legalized surveillance which is what it amounts to. What the federal government is planning to do about the obscenity laws is shocking, they don't seem to get to the issue, which is how to prevent the propaganda of misogyny. What do they really mean by "undue violence", for example? It doesn't mean anything as far as I am concerned. Prior censorship is a real intrusion. Something has to be done about pornography, which is to target misogyny.

ARP: What do you mean by "targeting misogyny"?

AG: The problem is not a piece of paper that has a certain picture on it; it is the effect of that picture. In that light, it is propaganda, hate literature against women. Unless you put it into those terms, you have a law which isn't effective.

ARP: Are you trying to get the women's movement involved with the anti-censorship campaign?

AG: I am involved with a group of women who feel that we have a lot to lose by censorship, particularly prior censorship. We feel that violent pornography is harmful, but we also know censorship is harmful because we have experienced it.

ARP: How can there be censorship of pornography with no other forms of censorship?

AG: First we have to define pornography. It is an enormous problem. But there is a huge industry out there profiting from images of violence against women, which imply that women enjoy being sexually abused. This is very alarming. The actions of the Ontario Censorship Board, for example, do not seem to express a real concern for women. We hope to have a public forum and panel discussion which will examine these issues. In some ways, the more we study these issues, the more complex they become. For example, if you have a film which depicts abortion, does that mean it demonstrates violence against women? You have to think about the kinds of recommendations you could make. What we want to do is re-complicate the issue and start people asking, "How do we find a position in this very complicated issue of censorship and pornography?" This is a question which has brought both the art and political communities into debate.

ARP: Have you found women in the art community becoming more politicized as a result of this issue?

AG: The fact that people are beginning to define themselves as women artists is a political statement in itself. The Women's Cultural Building has been quite instrumental in this respect.

ARP: Do you see your own filmmaking as a feminist activity?

AG: Yes I do. I am interested in the issues of representation, along with theoretical issues concerning how art is perceived and fits into society. The mass media is very attractive, and embued with patriarchal values, and part of what keeps the women's movement going is also something very attractive; but in this case it is a sense of community and warmth. Like all successful revolutionary movements the women's movement needs to be attractive too. Why should the mass media have a monopoly on that? We have to find out what motivates people, what makes them want to change their lives.



ARP: Your interests in filmmaking, as related to an investigation of reality and representation, seem to be "art issues" rather than "feminist issues".

AG: Feminism has arisen at various points in time and there are always reasons why it does. I don't buy the argument that there has always been an underground feminism fighting to emerge. Women have bought into and out of the patriarchy at various times. The arts, at least for the last one hundred years, have been concerned with trying to come to consciousness, trying to achieve some kind of freedom. In many ways they have been blind to huge segments of the population and for that very reason they have to be overthrown. The Modernist tradition has to overthrow the previous Modernist tradition.

ARP: Some say that feminism occurs in waves; there are times when it is more in vogue than others. There is feminism and post-feminism, like Modernism and Post-Modernism. But where feminism is a cause, and you talked about "attractiveness" earlier, it is also marketed differently at different times.

AG: That is too simple. I am not trying to capture the latest imagination. I am trying to change it. It is not a matter of being in or out of vogue. It is a matter of various social currents that happen throughout the years which at certain times make feminism more possible than at others.

ARP: I wonder why the press chooses to cover women's issues one month and not the next. For example, is *Impulse* publishing interviews with women on women's issues as a reaction to the criticism of their last cover by Eldon Garnet?

SC: I was just looking at their cover photograph, at this piece of shit. I don't understand; somebody has to explain to me what this is supposed to be. There are a lot of artists that believe there is something mystical about their powers and that their imagination can know no bounds. I think you can make good art and still think about it beforehand.

AG: But Eldon Garnet's work is being produced within this community and it provides a very good forum for discussion

THE STATUS OF WOMEN INTERVIEW

JE: You can get angry. The laughter, the derision, which was partly in response to a comment which preceded the comment about wife-battery, received a little too much attention. I was in the House when that happened, and as angry as I was, I also knew there was a sequence of events. Not every man in the House laughed. There were a great number of men who were very supportive, who worked on the Committee on Family Violence and contributed superb work. I want to be very clear that we don't tar every male member of Parliament with that brush.

ARP: In the Caucus there is a majority of male representation.

JE: Yes . . . and it is my job to sensitize those people, to bring issues to the fore, and to make them understand. We have made tremendous progress in the last few years. I have noticed people no longer say "he", or "chairman", or "manpower". In everyday speech men are catching themselves and thinking "No, I can't say this." We hear them saying "girls" or "ladies" less and less, and find them saying "women". When you begin to change that thought process, in an everyday way, you know you are making progress on a larger scale.

ARP: When it comes to the formation of policy decisions in the Caucus, one must assume more women would be helpful.

JE: Absolutely. I would love to see fifty women in the House, or half our Caucus female. That is not to say the concerns of women are not being dealt with by our current Caucus, or that a man cannot be a valuable member. Some of the best feminists I know are male; in fact I have found a number of males who are much better feminists than some women I know. Let's not overlook the importance of having males who understand. In the case of developing policy at the federal level, just about every piece of legislation in place provides for equality. We have equal pay for work of equal value, which to me is perhaps more profound than any other piece of legislation. People don't know that equal pay for equal work is not the same as equal pay for work of equal value. It is a question of evaluating jobs which are traditionally female and pointing out that men are getting more money for traditionally male jobs. This is what we call systemic discrimination. In the federal government, all workers under federal legislation, all of our contracts, now call for this provision. Quebec is the only province that has this in place.

ARP: What strategies can the federal government design to affect the provinces?

JE: The Human Rights Conference organized two weeks ago addressed the problem with human rights ministers from the provinces. We discussed the problem of systemic discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value, and made great progress. People scoff and say, "Oh, sure, but it's not in place." Many had not even thought about this issue. We now have agreement from all of the provinces, and are going to look at equal pay for work of equal value. Meaning, the bureaucracies of those provinces are going to ask, "What is this equal pay for work of equal value? How does it affect us and what is systemic discrimination?" To achieve an understanding is step one, to act upon it is step two. There are glimmerings across the country, Ontario, already has equal pay for equal work.They have affirmative action programmes in place in government which are quite enlightened, as in the province of Quebec. These conferences we have as Ministers Responsible for Human Rights, and as Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, help bring these issues to the attention of the provinces, then the wheels slowly grind and churn out the legislation necessary.

ARP: In producing change in the status of women, do you think the government and legislation ultimately are going to have the most effect?

JE: No, you don't change attitudes overnight. But legislation provides the framework for that change. During the conference someone said to me that affirmative action is not really freedom of choice. At which point I disagreed. Without affirmative action you are preventing freedom of choice. It takes some thinking to get a handle on that process. Governments have to recognize they are the leaders and the proper legislation has to be in place. It takes a while for the thought processes of the electorate to follow, but it is coming. I am encouraged by the number of people who say, "Yes this has to be, there is a problem." In the case of such things as wife-battery, our hearings showed it was a terrible social problem and that one in every ten women was beaten. The changes in the last three years have been enormous—not enough, but there are now transition houses all over the country, including 165 additional units last year. Now that we have accepted the fact that we have a social problem, the next step is dealing with it and providing shelter. We must now convince the country that beating your wife is every bit as offensive as beating your neighbour, or a male. At a number of conferences the Attorney General and the Ministers of Justice would approach a table and ask "Are you, in your province, laying charges? We feel this must be done, we are doing it at the federal level; we are laying charges where federal jurisdiction prevails, where we are the policemen." Ontario has taken a great lead. Our Attorney General, Mr. McMurtry, has stated in no uncertain terms that wife beating was not to be tolerated in this province, in turn encouraging Manitoba to follow the same steps.

ARP: How does your department operate?

JE: It is a coordinating body within government which looks at all legislation and provides me with background material on any issue. At the international level we have a very good reputation. At the United Nations, through the Secretary of State, the funding for our Women's Convention—the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women—our response has been the best of any country in the world.

ARP: It has been stated that John Munroe, Minister for Indian Affairs, will be bringing legislation into the House to incorporate the equality clause into the Indian Act, meaning Indian women will retroactively have the right to claim their Native rights. Is this a result of your department's involvement?

JE: Yes. We have been lobbying for those changes and once we include the equality clause I will feel I can hold my head high.

ARP: There is an election approaching and many people, particularly the youth, and feminists, are concerned about issues such as cruise missile testing among many others. Consequently they might be inclined to support the New Democratic Party because of its stand on many of these issues. How do you see the Liberal Party encouraging support from this electorate?

JE: I say look at our conventions and look at our meetings. We have a number of youth and women in our party. We have a very active women's committee in the party made up, in a good part, of active feminists. We have a very good record with youth. You are going to hear that kind of criticism of any party in power. Only an election will tell.

ARP: What do you say to the women . . . ?

JE: "Look at our record. Look at our changes in maternity benefits. Look at our changes in income tax and child care. Look at affirmative action. Look at all the things we have done, and tell me, what have we done wrong?" These are the women who say, "But it isn't in place in my province." At the federal level—with the exception of changes to the Indian Act, which is taking place now—we have been looking at legislation. Sure I would like to see improvements—I am never happy. We brought in amendments to the maternity benefits which I think has improved the situation vastly for women, but I would like to see those enlarged even more. I would like to see the definition of day-care more clearly arranged. Many people who are experts in the day-care issue feel it is an extension of education and completely provincial. We then come into the area of constitutionality. Are we, the federal government, intruding into provincial affairs if we say we are involved in day-care? I would like to see this resolved before we go much further. Through the Canada Assistance Programme, as it exists now, we do have a role to play in day-care. We assist those families, and particularly single mothers who cannot afford the cost of day-care, by providing them with subsidies.

ARP: Couldn't the same be said about abortion and greater access to abortion clinics, that it is a provincial matter?

JE: The criminal code is there and the provinces have the opportunity to act on it. It is a very difficult issue. I think the 1969 bill is the best that could be offered in a Canada where opinion differs so widely on the issue. Abortion is available,even though it's availability is spread unevenly across the country. The political reality is that there are pockets of resistance in the country where community standards prevail. It is impossible for a politician to penetrate some of those areas, which is why I ask the women of the country, "What are you telling your local politicians, mayors, hospital board members, your local member, in addition to your member of Parliament?" So often I say to women,"Make sure your local member and aldermen know about these issues." Day-care centres are initiated by the municipalities, yet too often I have met mayors and alder-

and analysis for what these issues in fact mean. It is harmful for us to start attacking one another without understanding the intent behind the work.

ARP: It is true that his images are not for selling audio equipment on the sides of buses.

SC: If I have to think about this and wonder what the artist is up to, it is not a good piece.

AG: Provoking thought is one of the ways art should function.

ARP: You might want to look at the cover in the context of the other photographs from the series. I don't interpret the other images as attacking women.

AG:There is art which is pornographic yet has an important revolutionary function.

ARP: How do you see it as potentially revolutionary?

AG: All I may be able to do is give you examples. One is Hermann Nitsch, a performance artist, another is Georges Bataille, or Jean Genet, or even De Sade. All of these people dealt with pornographic content in terms of morality, making you question the whole structure of morality. This is very important.

SC: But you apply your own morality, Anna, by suggesting that De Sade was a dissident in any way at all. I think he is a perfect lackey of the patriarchy.

AG: I am not talking about him. I am talking about his work. In *Justine and Juliette* there is something extremely interesting about the fact that the moral heroine, who receives abuse, shows no moral fibre in opposing other kinds of misbehaviour. It is important for us intellectually to question sexual morality in relation to other moralities. Until we begin to see the flaws in our system of thinking, which happens to be patriarchal, we are not going to have any means to counter such issues as "post-feminism".

ARP: There is now an advocacy for pornography within the gay movement. How do you see this development?

SC: Lesbians really want to have an alternate sexual imagery. The issue could probably be simplified, or at least we might have less trouble with all the machinations of the state if they would dispel with their sex hang-up. The questions of morality and dissidence are questions of sexual liberation. The way the pornography debate has been formulated, since time immemorial—and it's changed only in the last ten years—is as follows: You have your Hugh Hefner type of liberation freak who is the hero of the piece.

AG: A dissident hero of the piece?

SC: Absolutely. A dissident, against authority and all kinds of restraints, fighting against some decency freak, usually male and a member of the church. They will argue as to whether a man has the right to masturbate to various materials available. That is the context for our obscenity laws—in other words Hugh Hefner lost and the decency contingent won—and none of that has anything to do with women, so the debate starts from scratch. Now when MacGuigan, the Canadian Minister of Justice, says to me, "I am going to add this bit about abuse and degradation", I say, "I don't want to know from you guys until we eliminate the entire body of jurisprudence that exists having todo with the undue exploitation of sex." The way it stands now, the only thing obscene is undue exploitation of sex or the undue exploitation of sex and violence. The undue exploitation of violence is not obscene. Meaning, it is illegal to depict a woman sucking a penis but perfectly legal to depict her sucking a gun. This is backwards. Even if you didn't want to reverse it you can tell that we are in trouble. All of our censorship discussions before feminism have had to do with whether it is permissible to show penises. In fact the only definition of undue exploitation of sex in practice is penetration. Everything else is perfectly all right as long as there is not a part of the body, or anything else, being inserted into an orifice belonging to a woman. You can put your finger in your ear, but no fingers in vaginas, no matter whose they are, no penises in vaginas, no cucumbers in vaginas, no coke bottles in vaginas; it is not allowed. The debate about obscenity would be much clearer if the sexuality matters were cleared up, then feminists could say, "We think that we should remove the anti sex parts of the criminal code, having to do with obscenity." That does not mean we are anti-sex. Once that is out of the way, we can then stick to the issue of violence.

AG: The context in which we want to discuss violence is still going to be violence against women. I do not know how to deal with that yet, it is still violence in a sexual context.

SC: Talking about abusive and degrading exploitation is getting closer to the issue, but obviously it is a question of taste. A lesbian separatist would say, "The depiction of fellatio is degrading". We could go on forever with this matter. There is a reason why people have thought the criticism of pornography is a criticism of heterosexual practice. That is why it is our responsibility to say . . . even, as a matter of personal taste, I have never found an image of a woman sucking a penis particularly attractive—I don't know a lot of women who do—what we are talking about is abusive images.

ARP: Are you curious about how the federal government, and Judy Erola relate to the provinces on issues of pornography and censorship, to abortion and daycare centres?

SC: One of the problems of the criminal codes—and this has to do with both abortion and obscenity—is that Parliament makes the laws and the provinces implement them. Roy McMurtry is the one who is finally going to decide what is obscene, not Mark MacGuigan who writes the laws with his cronies. It is McMurtry who is going to decide whether or not to prosecute. If the federal government comes up with abortion legislation it is up to the provinces to implement it. This is why it was the ministers of health who were always being lobbied to recognize certain clinics as freestanding abortion clinics. Lobbyists were asking the Minister of Health for this province to state, "As a hospital, you must have a therapeutic abortion committee, if not you are breaking the law." It is the Minister of Health who has to implement the law.

CT: You were asking about the relationship between the federal government and changes in the status of women. I attended a dinner on *International Women's Day*, where Judy Erola was speaking. Several women were boycotting the event. The feeling was that they saw Judy Erola, in her position as Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, as useless. Women seated behind me were shouting out and heckling her, while others were painting anti-Erola slogans on their wine glasses with the nailpolish they had given us as a gift.

ARP: What do you mean, they gave you nailpolish?

CT: They gave us nailpolish and perfume as token gifts on every table.

ARP: Who was invited to this, Mary-Kay cosmetic dealers?

CT: Some cosmetic companies had sponsored the event, yet it could have been put in those terms, cosmetic and very ineffectual. It was understandable why women did boycott the dinner. What offended me most was that Judy Erola spoke in terms of big bucks and business, she seemed to have no empathy with any of our personal concerns as women.

men who couldn't care less about day-care centres, despite the fact that these people were voted in by men and women of the community who want day-care. The public must be knowledgeable about what programmes were initiated by whom and where to put the pressure. The same situation occurs with the abortion issue. Women have to make their views known to those people who make the decisions locally, as that is where action begins.

ARP: The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women is an independent, but federally appointed, body. They offer recommendations to you based on their research, with most of the women on the Council being academics and professionals. Some feminists are concerned that there is the implication that women without academic qualifications are not qualified to speak on certain issues.

JE: There is a very good balance in the Advisory Council of academics, who are experts in their fields, and "Madame — tout — le — monde", as Lucie Pepin, who is the president of the Council, refers to them. It is important there be that balance. Not too long ago criticism had been there were not enough experts in the field, which is why I find this question a bit amusing. The Council is doing some excellent research, we do not always agree, but that is the way it should be. I know the Council has taken a very strong stand on abortion for instance, and I appreciate their stance. It is an indication, and perhaps some comfort, to those women who think the Council is not an independent body.

ARP: Do you see a role for a women's press in Canada, which is not an alternate press, aside from publications such as Chatelaine?

JE: I am reluctant to support something which divorces society. I believe that unless we women are integrated completely, there is really no advantage. In the area of affirmative action,yes,but only to make us more integrated and more assimilated. But I am reluctant to endorse anything which would ghettoize women, because God knows, we have been ghettoized long enough. I want to see all of these issues treated on a very equal basis.

ARP: What is the status of your suggestions on spousal allowance? There is a lot of support from feminists for these changes.

JE: There is support, but it is the kind of thing that will not materialize until there is total political acceptance. The practical politician in me says "It takes a while for these ideas to spread and take hold." It is my role as Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to put these ideas forward.

ARP: Would it be the same process for issues such as pensions?

JE: They are coming. But again, I caution women who seem to put all their eggs in the pension basket and feel access to pensions means everything. Yes, we must have pensions, but they are based on earnings, and if your earnings are low, your pensions are low. It is not enough to have a pension, you must increase your earnings so that when you are sixty-five a pension will be worth something.

ARP: Can we look forward to female leadership in the Liberal party?

JE: I think it is coming. I was recently asked by a rather prominent American feminist how we Canadians were able to secure our equality clause into the Constitution. There were numerous reasons, but I feel—and I feel it as a sort of gut reaction—it was because Canadian men are far more decent.

ARP: You don't think it was a result of our government being more centralized and that it is easier to lobby here?

JE: Partly, but the essential ingredient was that basic sense of decency which prevails. The Canadian man does not have a six-gun macho mentality. He is quite a decent man.





DEFRAMING DEATH

Photography has a unique relation to death since it can record the passing moment with a life-like intensity. What happens when death becomes the explicit subject of the picture? Does the function of photography become even more visible? How does the photographer react to the graphic presence of death? How does he frame it? Is the public taken into account as he positions his camera in front of the dead?
Fadi Mitri, a Lebanese photojournalist had just returned from Beirut with pictures from the Palestinian massacre when Sylvere Lotringer talked with him in New York. The first photographer present in the Sabra and Shatila camps, his pictures figured prominently in the international press coverage of the event.

SYLVERE LOTRINGER INTERVIEWS FADI MITRI

Sylvere Lotringer: How do people react to photographers in a war zone?

Fadi Mitri: Photojournalists are never popular. Imagine your own family: there's an air raid, there's shelling, you're trying to rush your child to safety, or take him to the hospital because he's been wounded, and you have a crazy photographer standing there, clicking with his motor drive.

SL: Exploiting the situation.

FM: Exactly. This is horrible. You've got to make sure that it does not affect your work, try to keep it aside. You're there to take the picture, not to be a Red Cross and help.

SL: Do people understand that?

FM: They will never understand.

SL: If your parents or your friends were wounded, would you take a photograph?

FM: I haven't considered it, nor do I want to. None of my parents or relatives have been wounded. There's been one incident where I knew a person who died. She was in pieces. I have a picture of that girl. I could only recognize her by her size, her clothing, her shoes. The top of her head-everything above the eyebrows-were gone. No head.

SL: How did that happen?

FM: During the early days of the invasion, for a whole month there were air raids by the Israelis. People were just driving on the main highway connecting southern Lebanon to Beirut, the capital. There were six lanes, three on either side. The Israeli jets bombed the highway. Each bomb makes a big hole, approximately 24 feet in diameter, 9 feet deep. If you were driving, and they dropped these bombs on you, you'd be plowed into the ground, as were hundreds of bodies.

SL: Your friend was driving?

FM: The whole family was in the car. The coastline was on the right, the mainland on the left and the highway in between. The driver ran toward the sea. The rest of the family ran toward



the mainland for safety. He was the only survivor. It was luck. You never know where they're going to drop a bomb.

SL: Did you take a picture of the family?

FM: I took a picture of the girl when she was pulled out from the rubble. I just took it and got out very quickly because they often throw time bombs which explode fifteen or twenty minutes later. So even after a big air raid, you have to be very careful if you walk around to take aftermath pictures. They use these bombs so they can kill more when help comes. These bombs-cluster bombs—are banned by the Geneva Convention. They're American—made, supplied to Israel, and they're being used in the war. What difference does it make if you kill someone with a cluster bomb or if you kill them with a 155 mm. Houser shell or phosporous bombs? When a phosporous bomb hits your skin, there's nothing you can do. You rub it, it burns more. You put water on it, you sizzle more. The Israelis used it on a hospital for the mentally retarded. Also on Mother Therasa's home.

SL: Do you think they did that purposely?

FM: It's never done on purpose. Mistakes do happen but it's crazy to use these bombs. There are pictures of mothers with their babies burning, running around in the streets. There's nothing like seeing your own baby burning in your hands. There's nothing you can do. It's a horrible thing, to see people close to you killed, and then to photograph them. Do you take the picture or do you help the wounded? You always wonder.

SL: Do you think that sharing the same danger makes it more legitimate to take a picture?

FM: No. I mean, you toughen up after a while. You don't think any more about your feelings. You're a photographer. You just go out there and you get the picture.

SL: What was you reaction when you took your first picture of wounded or dead people?

FM: I didn't feel anything. But later, it hits you—shit, this is a dead body. It was a human being just like me. Then you see lumps of meat being put on stretchers. You see hands, feet, heads. They try to match them, to see which belongs on the same stretcher.

SL: When you are behind a camera, do you stop thinking and just keep shooting?

FM: You frame the picture. When you look in your viewfinder, you don't really see what the picture is about. Very few people do. You have to rush back, process the film, and send them to the wire service.

SL: If you hadn't taken the picture, you may not have seen anything. But when you finally see the picture, do you actually feel the emotion you hadn't felt when you were on the spot?

FM: On June 6, I was driving with a photographer for SIGMA when the jets bombed the main highway. We saw it all in front of us. So we just ran. I tried to tell her to be careful. There are time bombs. She said: "I know what I'm doing." Then they pulled out the friend of mine, with her brains out—and she froze there, physically. I had to grab her by the arm or she would have kept on staring at the dead body. It hit her very quickly. If you want to do this job, never get your feelings mixed up with your work. You're supposed to be neutral. You're a photojournalist covering facts. You can't afford to build up hatred in your system.

SL: Do you think the effect on the reader is the same as yours when you first see your picture?

FM: Of course not. The reader sees it in New York, sitting with his coffee in the morning. You see it under totally different conditions, laying in bed or seeing it in real life.

SL: How did you manage to be the first photographer on the scene after the massacre?

FM: When we went to the camps on June 16, we didn't even know there had been a massacre.



...you toughen up after a while. You don't think any more about your feelings. You're a photographer. You just go out there and you get the picture.

SL: Was it the first day of the massacre?

FM: No, the second day, early in the morning.

SL: Were the Israelis outside?

FM: They had arrived on Thursday the 13th. On Tuesday the President of Lebanon was assassinated. On Wednesday the Israelis invaded West Beirut in order to hit the leftist-terrorist bases. On Thursday and Friday, they took up positions around the camps, as did the Phalange—the Christian militia which took part in the massacre. They were surrounding the camps and wouldn't let anybody in or out. There was a curfew in the area. Nobody could wander around.

SL: Could they possibly not have known what was going on inside?

FM: They're one of the smartest nations. They know how to handle things. They must have realized. And it would stink very soon.

SL: How did you get in?

FM: I just walked in from the back. There was nobody there. There were lots of land mines all around. It was like a ghost town walking through there. You had to go down by the stadiums, then downhill to Shatila, then up to Sabra camp.

SL: What did you see first?

FM: I saw the bodies of two elderly men, one shot at close range in the head—big holes—the other in the back. And they had booby-trapped the bodies with hand grenades, so if you came to lift the body it would explode.

SL: Do you think the Israelis had anything to do with that?

FM: It's a very confusing situation. You don't go around shooting a woman, tying her hands up, maybe raping—she had nothing under the belt—and then slaughtering her. Just putting a blade in and cutting her neck. You don't do this.

SL: I doubt the Israelis would do that.

FM: You doubt it. I also doubt it. There's more hatred from the Phalange. Everyone is blaming the Israelis—there's no reason why they shouldn't have taken part in fighting the Palestinians. But the Israelis didn't do the dirty work. They got someone to do the messy part. They sort of stood there and shot flares in the air. Then they opened the camps, and they let bulldozers in to pull down all the houses. You could see bodies just hanging between the rubble, women, children in their own houses, cars upside down. They didn't care. Then they gathered them outside the houses and they just gunned them down. Everywhere there were heaps of bodies.

You have to be in between, indirect. You have to make death glamourous. You have to make it look good and attractive, even the goriest part.

SL: Was this still going on while you were there?

FM: No. It was all over. The blood was still red. It was Saturday morning.

SL: You were the first one to get there.

FM: The first. The second journalist arrived around eleven o'clock. People were afraid because the Lebanese army surrounded the camps and didn't allow anybody in, not even the experts. So it was very difficult. If you took pictures and got them out of the camps, then you had made it. I never knew there was a massacre there, I didn't know what a massacre was, even when I had photographed all these dead bodies. To me they meant nothing. Then three days later, after I read about massacres, it hit me: this is a massacre. Have you ever seen one yourself?

SL: No.

FM: You see, I don't consider that I had seen a massacre. A massacre we read about in books. I just saw the aftermath.

SL: You saw it as a series of isolated incidents.

FM: The first day I stayed for an hour, walking around on my own. For three days I kept taking pictures of the aftermath.

SL: Was there anything there that you didn't want to photograph?

FM: No. I did the opposite. I wanted to know how these people died. I got involved in it and I started lifting up this woman's body. She was shot in the back. I had to see it. I couldn't believe all this violence.

SL: Did you find anything too gory to be photographed?

FM: I went too gory sometimes, but it was there. If the neck is broken, you take close ups. You have to shoot a lot because you don't know what people want to see out there.

SL: You knew that some pictures were not publishable?

FM: I knew very well that these close-ups would never be published. The aim is to put the message across to the outside world that war is gory, without showing the gore of it. That's the challenging part.

SL: Without showing the gore—why?

FM: People don't want to see gory things. They won't absorb it. They won't understand it. They cannot accept it, cannot take it. They keep the idea out of their minds. Then, as a journalist, you haven't succeeded in putting your message across. You have to be in-between, indirect. You have to make death glamourous. You have to make it look good and attractive, even the goriest part. People hate to face the facts of life, people dislike that. If you beat around the bush slightly, you get them where you want.

SL: As soon as you make it look glamourous, it's not the fact anymore. It becomes information. Then any picture would do.

FM: Still photography is difficult. You don't have sound or movement, as you do with films. In a war, you have the destruction factor in the background. The foreground is the human factor—the typical shots: a man running with a baby in his arms, dead bodies piled up in front of houses or people living for weeks outside their bombed houses.

SL: Whenever I look at pictures of wars in Afganistan, Lebanon or El Salvador, they always seem to come up with these typical, interchangeable shots.

FM: It's always the same thing. That's the human factor. You're not making the woman run with her baby; you don't ask the jets to bomb that area to set people in the right kind of motion. Things are really happening. But it's up to you to choose the right subject, frame it right, with the right angle in order to put it across to the outside world. The picture has to explain.





SL: So shooting a wound from up close wouldn't do.

FM: No. It wouldn't be a human factor. A close-up of someone's slaughtered body doesn't tell anything. It could be anyone, anywhere.

SL: Do you know in advance when a picture is not publishable?

FM: Yes, often. It depends what your market is. It depends on the editor. A leftist magazine, or a rightist paper will publish arms, limbs just lying on the pavement, burned up babies. But an international magazine like Time or Newsweek can't do that.

SL: Even if it were the Russians who had committed a massacre in Afganistan?

FM: A gory picture will never be shown because it doesn't sell.

SL: You'd anger the reader because you'd force him to react?

FM: Yes, I suppose so.

SL: Does the reaction vary according to the culture or the situation? In Lebanon, for instance, is the degree of tolerance to violence higher?

FM: In Lebanon they publish very gory pictures.

SL: They're not afraid of seeing wounds?

FM: Once you've seen one . . . A few days ago I walked into the Burger King on Lexington at 2 a.m. A man walks in and has an argument with someone else. He grabs him by the neck, lifts him up, sticks a gun in his waist and shoots him. In New York. The guy goes poof, falls back, there's blood everywhere, everybody panicking.

SL: Did you take a picture?

FM: No.

Alan Bolt

INTERVIEW

By Judith Doyle

Alan Bolt is a Nicaraguan playwright, theorist, and dancer and is a founder of *Nixtayolero*, a theatre co-operative consisting of five men and two women, 16 to 25 years of age, who have worked together for four years. They live at a workshop on the outskirts of Matagalpa, a city in the north-central mountains of Nicaragua. Theatre co-ordinators from Popular Cultural Centres across the country and representatives from the mass organizations, including the Women's organization, Sandanista Youth and the Association of Farm Workers, come to the the workshop to study methodology and techniques for developing theatre in the regions and organizations.

Nixtayolero travels a great deal to remote parts of the country, often to areas threatened by counter-revolutionary activity, performing for campesinos who have never seen theatre before. They present song, parables and farces, influenced by traditional festivals, music, dance and storytelling. Other times they present plays developed collectively, written by Alan Bolt.

At times the group splits up, and one or two members live on a farm or in a community for a month or so. They research the important problems, stories, gestures, celebrations and religious questions of the community. When they return. this inventory of verbal and gestural material is shared. To develop a play, the actors attempt to simplify these elements and conflicts to their most essential. It is through this process that it is possible for *Nixtayolero* to give the sense of an 'extraordinary reality' in the theatre space.



PHOTO OF ALAN BOLT BY CHRIS BROOKES

THEATRE OF extraordinary REALITY

was born in the mountains near Matagalpa in 1951. In those days, it was four days by mule to the town. I studied there with a very old woman until my parents took me to Matagalpa. But I didn't like school; I wanted to be back in the mountains, where I could run and search for animals. So I was sent far away to a boarding school where I couldn't get out. We call the students "internos."

People who spend the whole year in school, and only go home for vacations. I was there six years, the dullest of my life. Afterwards, I went to Europe. To Spain and Germany. I tried to study some things, but really I was trying to find out what I wanted to be. I was trying to discover why I was looking for something in Europe when where I really wanted to be was in the mountains.

I returned to León, where I worked in the university, organizing theatre groups, to fight the dictatorship. I joined the Sandinista Front in 1971, and between 1971 and 1974 I tried to make some propaganda works and organized unions in the Indian communities. In 1974, I went underground in Masaya. In those days, we were dreaming of the insurrection. We knew we would need very strong mass organizations in order to fight the dictatorship, and my work was to build up the web, if I can speak so-the communications, the military school, the collaborators - people who would give money, cars, trucks, food, information, land for military training and especially safe houses, secret places.

At the same time, my greatest interest was in the popular theatre traditions of the Indians in Masaya, Granada, Curazo, Rivas and Monimbó. I studied their popular traditions in order to create a different theory for theatre in Nicaragua.

I began working together with the Indians, making workshops, and began building up the theory. I learned to dance with them, the methods they used, and the significance of theatre in their society. I also learned what they really wanted to say with this tradition. What they were presenting was something like a collective memory about the struggle of the oppressed against oppression: Indian culture against European culture. After so many years, it was not a real Indian culture anymore, it was mixed, but still a culture of the oppressed against oppression.

We started some theatre groups, and one was especially active in Rivas, in the south of Nicaragua. It's name was *Frente Sur* South Front. With *Frente Sur*, I was trying to put into practice what I had learned with the Indians. I think most important in the theory was the role of theatre in society, the use of dance in the preparation of the actor, and use of representation in acting not living a part but representing it.

What I mean by representation is this. Normally, we have read or learned that an actor should live his or her role in order to made good theatre. But in the Indian tradition of Nicaragua, the actors of popular theatre used masks and dance movements to perform. They didn't try to create a sense of normal reality for the audience. They tried to give the audience something which I call an 'extraordinary reality'something on another level of reality. In order not only to fight the oppression, but at the same time, to present a way of understanding the oppression, they didn't need to live the roles; rather, they needed to show the more essential movement of reality, the essential points of conflict. They used dance and masks, and when they moved on stage, it was as dancing. They didn't try to be a mirror of reality, but rather to show its essence using music and dance as a means to the extraordinary reality which theatre is.

For example, if an actor had to represent a giant in a very old Indian play, and this giant would be dead at the end of the play, from the beginning the mask was marked with blood all over the eyes, mouth and front. Everyone knew the giant was alive, but would die at the end, because they saw the mask with blood all over it. Everybody knew it was a convention, a treaty between the actors and the public; it was just an actor representing a role. They didn't try to create a sense of reality of a shop, for instance. They tried to show the social role, and nothing but that. To do this, they use magic, because the stage is a magic place where everything can happen.

We believe that the most important points for the theatre instructor in this Indian tradition are the conception of time and of the space as a magic stage; and the sense of another, extraordinary reality. An actor shouldn't live a role because it isn't his reality, it's another reality, and he is doing a job. He's just representing the story, telling us a story, showing a story; he's not inside it, he's critical of the performance. The traditional theatre has a lot of magic in it. The dancers were always special people within the community. It was said that a dancer was an interpreter of the rhythm of the universe for the community, but at the same time, an interpreter of the feelings of the community before the universe-an important role.

In order to change the reality of the dictatorship and neo-colonialism, we based our work in the symbolic language the Indian gave us as an inheritance. At the same time, we needed to do something different, because we aren't Indian communities anymore. We had television, we had the market, we had the hunger, oppression and poverty. So, we gave our work as actors a traditional base, but at the same time we tried to show some elements of this new reality of neo-colonialism, poverty and the struggle against the dictatorship.

Before the triumph over the dictator, our intention was to give consciousness through theatre to call people to fight together against the dictatorship. I think with all the failings and weaknesses we had, it worked. But today, after the triumph, we have learned that consciousness is never developed through theatre performance alone. The actors develop a better consciousness of reality through theatre,the audiences we have don't. The development of consciousness depends not only on performance, but on a very complex praxis of changing society, and a complex reflection about this praxis. So, we've been changing a lot of things in our method of working.

We have more need again for the Indian tradition, for collective creation in theatre, and for theatre as a celebration in the community. Also, we are discovering that this celebration for the people today in Nicaragua is quite different than in the time of the dictatorship, or 400 years before.

We think that, even when theatre is a means to changing society, it is always a celebration of uselessness. I don't know if you understand the idea. Art is useless. Art is for nothing. We, human beings, fight for this, for beauty, not only for what is useful. We need a chair, but not just a chair, we need a beautiful chair. We fight not only for the chair but for its beauty. All human beings have this need for beauty, the need for theatre. We make theatre because we need joy, the sense of human beings celebrating life. But this celebration here, fighting against the counterrevolution, against sabotage, against the CIA, against the menaces of invasion, and against poverty, this celebration is quite different than the celebrations during the dictatorship, or during the preColumbian Indian times. We are quite different men and women.

THE *WORLD* THE *DEVIL*, AND THE *FLESH*

I wrote *El Mundo, El Demonio y La Carne* (The World, The Devil and The Flesh) because of something that happened here, in a program, in one of the ministries. A man began to create a very uncomfortable situation. He was acting like a little Machiavelli in order to get power for himself, to become the most important person in this ministry. I knew the problem, and became involved because they asked me to be a witness. He was trying to destroy a peasant, and thought that I would help him. I felt very sick about the situation, and I knew that it wasn't the first time it had happened, and wouldn't be the last. This is very common: some people believe that opportunism is a better way of life. That's why I wrote this play.

The play is also about criticism. This man called himself a revolutionary, the only revolutionary in the program. But when he used criticism, he was actually trying to destroy people. He never understood the weaknesses, the problems, the complexity of the situation for the human beings involved. He just wanted to win. That is why I wrote this play about criticism as well, against all the little Machiavelli's, the little dictators.

Sweet Tongue is portrayed as a homosexual because the real man is a homosexual, that is the only reason. In the play, the other characters don't tell him to feel ashamed because he is homosexual, but rather because he is handling his sexual life badly. He feels ashamed of himself. He tries to destroy peasants, and he's not enjoying his sexual life, his life in general, or his work, because he feels discriminated against. Maybe, having been rejected at some time, he tries to get even with the others. He thinks the other peasants are happy, and because he's unhappy he tries to hurt them. In working on the play, in the discussions inside the group, we were very clear amongst ourselves that any kind of sexual activity is respected. Sex is something like the result of a beautiful friendship between two peasants: it doesn't mean one person owning a peasant.



Ahmer is the singer, the dancer, something like the spirit of the body. Just one more person but, at the same time, he's exceptional: Maybe he's more sensual or more beautiful, more attractive. That's why Sweet Tongue comes to him, because he's more beautiful.

"Macehual" means "common man". That was the word the Indians had for the people who were not part of the nobility. The character Macehual, for me, represents wisdom. Not very deep wisdom, like a wizard, but the practical wisdom of a man who understands the weaknesses and mistakes of the community. He is a member of the community, but sometimes it's necessary for him to be hard. But he isn't always wise. His wisdom comes from learning from his own mistakes.

We took the play to the Havana Theatre Festival, between the 19th and 29th of February, 1984. It was a success, but a very polemical one. One question was "Why are you talking about these little Machiavellis inside the state? Couldn't that be bad propaganda for the revolution?" We answered that to talk about the truth is never bad propaganda: if we recognize our problems, our mistakes, our weaknesses-the truth-then, when we speak about the good we have here, people will believe what we say. Another point of discussion was our use of music and space, because we didn't try to give a sense of normal reality. We are working to create an extraordinary reality with hanging cottons and empty space. Some people said this was too avant-garde for normal, uneducated people. But we said that this is the normal way of performing in the popular traditions of Nicaragua; we weren't trying to be avant-garde. Another point of discussion was Sweet Tongue's homosexuality-some people said we were making propaganda for homosexuality. We said that we weren't, but that we didn't condemn it either. We were just presenting a particular story, nothing more or less than that.

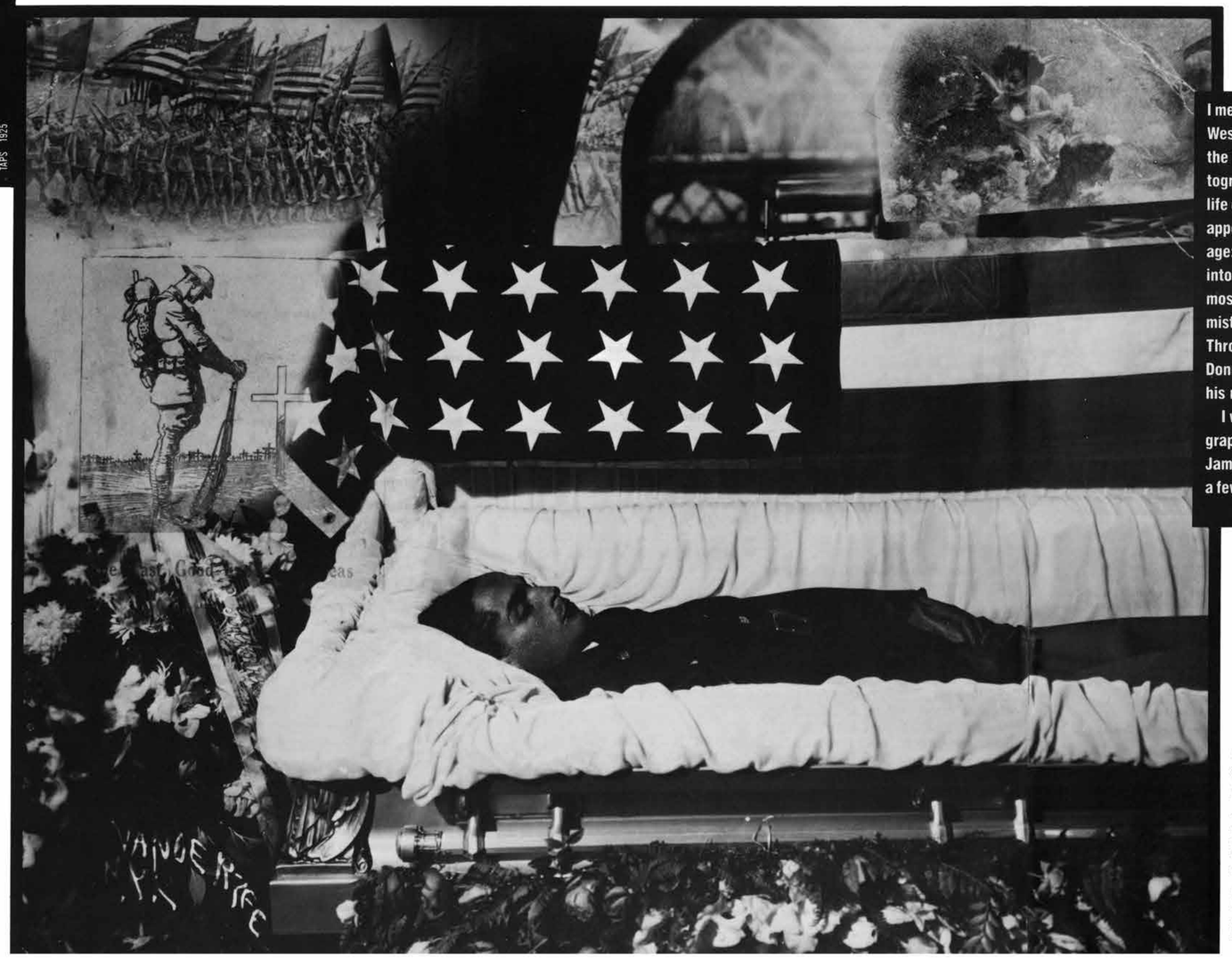
THE *NIXTAYOLERO* THEATRE COLLECTIVE

Nixtayolero and I have been working together as long as the group has existed. We don't like to be separated. In the beginning it wasn't easy. Somehow, because of the opportunities I'd had-and they hadn't had-I became like a father to them. They were dependent on me. Another problem was that they didn't have enough education. So, our goal was their independence-their emotional independence. We set up a programme for reading and studying, and we tried to get more money, through the Ministry of Culture, so that each of the members could have a salary.

It hasn't been easy to learn to live together all the time, and to work in the same place we live. The money is never enough for our needs. We have to look for support everywhere, and this economic problem of ours and the actors' families has had an effect on the work.

The dictatorship set the pattern for the family life in Nicaragua-the father first, then the mother. We in the group needed to give each other affection and understanding, consideration, and also to develop our consciousness of these problems and this complex reality. We are something like a new kind of family, not a blood family, but a family of friends.

JAMES VAN DER ZEE



TAPS 1925

I met with James Van Der Zee at his Upper West Side apartment in New York during the month of April, 1983. The famed photographer whose pictures chronicled the life of Harlem for more than half a century appeared in good shape considering his age: 96. Although he would discreetly fall into quick cat naps, Van remained for the most part alert and responsive, an unmistakable glint of humour in his eye. Throughout the interview his young wife Donna remained by his side, refreshing his memory or prompting an answer.

I wanted to discuss with Van his photographs of the dead. I didn't know that James Van Der Zee himself would die just a few days later. This is his last interview.



LITTLE ANGEL 1930

SYLVERE LOTRINGER: *I had heard that your maternal grandfather was working in a graveyard in Lennox, Massachusetts, where you were born, or was he making caskets?*

JAMES VAN DER ZEE: My grandfather was a gravedigger in the cemetery up there. He was sexton of the church, and he buried the people. He used to dig up arrowheads and Indian heads in that burial ground.

S.L.: *Did you ever go with him?*

VAN: No. He'd put the arrowheads in a box, and we kids would follow him.

S.L.: *Death was not something foreign to you though. People today are very uneasy about death. We hardly go to cemeteries any more or have any contact with the dead. It's a fairly recent phenomenon. Actually, it goes back to the time when you started taking pictures. Do you feel any change in people's attitude towards death?*

VAN: Not that I see, no.

S.L.: *Was it in New York that you took your first picture in a funeral parlour?*

VAN: Sure, that's where all the pictures were made.

S.L.: *Were you free to frame the pictures the way you wanted or did you have to follow the family's instructions?*

VAN: I'd take a certain angle, yes, but it wouldn't be anything unusual.

S.L.: *Nancy Holt, a New York artist, made a picture book of her aunt's death in New England. She shows her lying in her coffin in her every-day clothes. People were very shocked. You can't be that casual about death. I notice on the other hand in most of your pictures a definite sense of ceremony. People are in their best clothes, and there is something official about them. Is it only due to the funeral parlour?*

DONNA VAN DER ZEE: I know from having spoken to Van an awful long time — he would tell me that people

DEATH OF THE FIRST BORN 1953



who had come to New York still had relatives elsewhere. This was one way of showing them that the person had been well taken care of, well put away. That's why there are a lot of flowers. The photographs were taken not only for people here to keep, but also to send away.

S.L.: *Most people today wouldn't have pictures taken at funerals, and they wouldn't send them to their friends.*

VAN: No?

DONNA: I don't know who would do that anymore.

S.L.: *Did you use insets of angels and cherubs in your death pictures from the very beginning?*

VAN: Oh, from the very first one I guess.

DONNA: I can believe that. "Memories", a photograph of two soldiers, had an inset back in 1916.

S.L.: *That's quite early.*

DONNA: That photograph was planned. It wasn't just an occurrence. So I suspect he'd already been using insets for a while. Van only came to New York in about 1905 or 1906.

S.L.: *The idea of adding something to a death picture or a dead body doesn't bother you?*

VAN: No.

S.L.: *You seem to have used more insets in the case of funeral pictures. Did you feel it was more appropriate?*

VAN: No. There are also cherubs in the baby pictures.

DONNA: I don't think any other photographers were doing that at the time, especially with funeral photographs. Double printing had been known before.

S.L.: *Were you doing mainly double printing?*

VAN: No. Sometimes it was double exposure, sometimes double printing. "Daydreams", that's double exposure. There were two pictures.

S.L.: *The two lovers don't belong to the same picture. Only his hand on her arm does. It gives the scene a definite surrealistic look. What about "Memories"?*

VAN: I inset a war scene in there, a wounded soldier and a nurse. I used double printing for that.

S.L.: *What was that picture about?*

VAN: These gentlemen fought with the French as a matter of fact. Those are French medals. Roberts and Johnson. They were World War I heroes.

S.L.: *Why did you put the inset in the middle, right between them?*

VAN: Because that's what they're talking about. They're talking about their overseas duty. That's why I put it in.

S.L.: *Here, in this other picture, you couldn't have put anything in. There's not enough space. The picture is taken differently. People are centred. In "Memories", there's lots of space. Did you plan it in advance? When did you decide about the inset?*

VAN: I just put it in there after the photograph was developed because there was space.

S.L.: *Did Roberts and Johnson like the picture?*

VAN: Sure they did.

DONNA: Look at this wedding picture with a baby inset. This is the outrage. Who wants to see a three-year-old girl in their wedding picture? I mean that is the ultimate. Van, what did these people say when you showed them their wedding picture with the baby in the corner?

VAN: I put that in there, yup. They didn't expect that. I made it and showed it to them.

S.L.: *Did they want a baby that badly?*

VAN: It's a future-coming event. "Future Expectations" is the title.

S.L.: *Did anyone every disagree with your choice?*

VAN: They all liked it. Not all the pictures I made were like that though.

S.L.: *Why did you do it with some pictures and not with others?*

VAN: I did it to put more in the pictures. I did the unusual.

S.L.: *Did you ever draw on the picture or scratch the negative?*

VAN: Sure, etching, retouching the negative. It was more easily done then because the negatives were larger. I was using 8x10 frames. With the 35mm now, you couldn't possibly do that.

S.L.: *Did you keep those large 8x10 frames all your life or did you switch to 35mm?*

VAN: I always used a large format.

S.L.: *On what other occasions were you asked to take photographs in Harlem?*

VAN: People want a picture of themselves in their car. Someone calls up and says the ceiling fell down; they'll want a picture of that.

S.L.: *That could be a record for insurance?*

VAN: Yes. And there were a lot of parades, church pictures, graduations.

S.L.: *Taking pictures was not that usual at the time. Was it done among wealthy people? What about people who didn't have much money?*

VAN: It was a business. Photography now is considered an art. But, in the very beginnings of it, I was making a livelihood.

DONNA: Van also took autopsy pictures. That was a different experience.

S.L.: *In the morgue the bodies weren't prepared. They weren't beautified. How did you feel about shooting pictures of people who had an accident or had been killed and were being opened up for an autopsy?*

VAN: They asked me, and I took the pictures. But I couldn't eat meat for a week after that.

S.L.: *Did you treat autopsy photographs differently?*

VAN: These were not artistic photographs. I didn't put any inset or poem in the autopsy pictures. They were just photographs.

S.L.: *Would you take more than one picture in other situations?*

VAN: On some occasions, yes. But I hardly ever took more than three photographs of anything unless it was a calendar portrait or something like that. People were a lot more conscious of waste then.

S.L.: *Quite a few of your funeral pictures also have a text. It makes them much more monumental, like creating a marble cenotaph for the dead. Now pictures are more disposable. They don't strive to produce that effect. Before they were meant to keep . . .*

VAN: Revere. Yes. What happened with photography is that everybody got a camera and the picture became less valuable. You didn't have to dress up, you didn't have to pay anyone to do it. You could get one instantly.

S.L.: *What about the photographs of parents holding their dead children in their arms? Who asked you to take them?*

VAN: The father and the mother.

S.L.: *I don't think anyone would do that anymore.*

VAN: Why not?

S.L.: *People don't seem to have an immediate relationship to the body of the dead as they did then. Were white people doing this as well?*

VAN: I don't know. I didn't make any for white people.

S.L.: *Do you think they would have wanted to?*

VAN: If a white person had died, and the family had asked, I would have done it.

S.L.: *I was wondering if in Harlem people felt more proximity towards the body. Puritans seemed to have had a hard time of it.*

DONNA: I combed my grandmother's hair when she died seven years ago. The funeral home didn't do her hair the way she would have liked it to have been done. The funeral director said, "Oh no, you can't do that." I said, "I have to." I went in, I proceeded to get out my comb and brush, and I began to comb her hair. The director expected me to pass out. When he saw that I didn't, he gave me her make-up too. What Van was doing was to make the dead person not unattractive, not offensive, not frightening by putting the inset, by arranging the flowers, by taking it at a nice angle, by being gentle with the whole thing.

S.L.: *Van, did you take that picture of a man lying on his bed, reading the newspaper?*

VAN: Yes, he's dead. That was a joke. Florence Mills had died on that day so I put the newspaper which showed one of my photographs of her on the front page — in the dead man's hands.

S.L.: *(Reading the headlines) "Death Mystery." Who is Florence Mills?*

VAN: She was the toast of London and Paris. She died in her twenties.

S.L.: *Any connection with the dead man?*

VAN: There is no relation.

DONNA: That was bad taste and bad humour (laughs).

VAN: (Looking at the photograph) Well, I don't remember if he's dead or not now.

DONNA: He's dead.

S.L.: *He does look life-like. It's uncanny.*

DONNA: Van, it's gotten to the point where you don't know if your people are dead or alive. See how well you did that?

S.L.: *The newspaper is also like an inscription. Sometimes you use a text for inset — like inscriptions that accompanied paintings in the Middle Ages.*

DONNA: Van did a lot with poems. The poem of the little boy — the little tin soldier — wasn't that used in a photograph of a little boy that had died?

VAN: No. He was alive in that photograph.

S.L.: *What about poems you use as insets in pictures?*

VAN: Those are my ideas. I took them from various books.I liked the wording — like this one with the widow: "I saw you fading like a flower. I watched you night and day and often with a broken heart I begged God to let you stay." That's fitting, don't you think?

S.L.: *The picture of the parents holding their dead child — I assume you wanted to give it a homey atmosphere. But did they want it to have that kind of look? The parents are smiling, and if I didn't know already, I wouldn't be able to tell from the picture that the baby's dead.*

VAN: That's it. You can't tell from the picture. I asked them to smile so it looked like the baby's alive.

S.L.: *Is that what people wanted — pictures of a dead person who doesn't look dead?*

VAN: Sure.

S.L.: *People who read the "New York Times" or "TIME" magazine want to see something sensational but not too disturbing. They don't want to confront death. They read the information. When you took funeral pictures, on the other hand, relatives didn't wonder who was there. They knew who the child was who had died. They didn't need to be informed.*

VAN: You're right. It's important: the fact that I was making it for the family.

S.L.: *When these parents hold their children, it's perfectly acceptable for them, more than acceptable, they want it. If you are the one who suggested it, they like the idea.They want their child to go on living. There's nothing shocking here. There's a contract between you and them.*

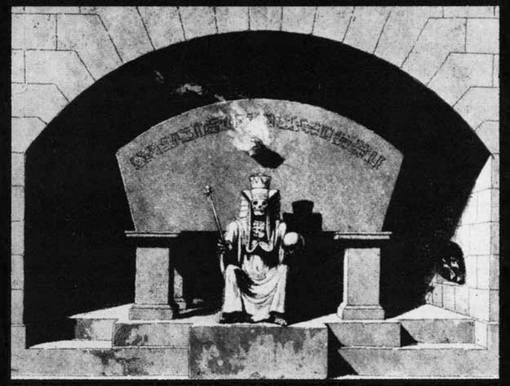
VAN: Right, something understood, agreed.

S.L.: *A photographer will send his pictures to an agency. It's anonymous to start with, and it has to reach anonymous people. For you to be able to tamper with the pictures without them knowing it in advance, they had to feel that they could trust you to do the best you could. They wouldn't question your motives.*

VAN: That's right. There was a certain amount of trust involved. After all, they are the ones who asked me to make the pictures for them.



FROM THE FAMILY 1929



THE CITY BELOW

ALAIN JAUBERT SPEAKS WITH JEAN-LUC HENNIG

The morgue, it's something that always haunted me. I often passed in front of it on the subway. It's a thing that makes everyone dream because it is, after all, in the centre of Paris, a fairly enigmatic building... we know that strange things happen there, though we don't know exactly what, nor do we know what it's there for. In fact, we think about it quite often, though never too seriously and since no one ever talks about it, we finally die without ever knowing what the morgue actually is.

ALAIN JAUBERT is preparing a film on the underside of the city.

JEAN-LUC HENNIG is a journalist at the Paris daily paper, *Libération*. He has published several volumes on voyeurism and male prostitution.

I expected the bodies to be white, waxen, and adipose, but they were extremely colourful: red, with violet tints, ruddy cheeks, gleaming — or, for example, an old woman who had been partially eaten by her dog: very lively yellows and greens. I thought right away of Cézanne's "Card Players," because while they looked a little like cadavers, at the same time their colouring is both sombre and violent.

I have filmed the depths, the underside of the city — everything that remains of the ritualistic or sacrificial institutions: the slaughterhouses where they quarter meat, the sewers, all the images of the evacuation of refuse. When I walked into the morgue, the first thing I saw, right away, was the cadavers, all naked in front of me. They had just arrived. I was a little shaken — I hadn't expected to find them there like that, right away. I had expected to go through offices, corridors, closets. They had just arrived, and they were there, laid out on stretchers, on the ground; they'd just been undressed. The first real sensation is the odour.

I can't seem to define that smell; it reminds me a lot of fish.

I could talk about it at great length — I'm a real nose person, like a hunting dog. It's the smell of decomposing meat. It's not very marine — the primary characteristic of rotting fish is somewhat sexual: there are a lot of amino constituents — trimetylamine, in particular, which is a product of vaginal secretion. It's an odour of decomposing proteins. There is something very violent about the smell of cadavers, though. For several days afterwards I couldn't eat meat; it reminded me of that smell. And it sparked visual memories in me, images I had completely forgotten — the dead bodies in the Algerian War. I spent several months at Oran, in Algeria, as a sailor. I was there at the time when they used to gang up on people in the streets. There were cadavers that they left on the sidewalk, often for two days, three days. And that smell, I relived it all of a sudden. It's an odour that one forgets, and it came back to me all at once, with very precise images — bodies spread out on the sidewalk hidden by newspapers, but whose odour I smelled in passing.

The smell revived another memory in me too: when I was ten years old I saw a drowned body pulled out of the canal. It wasn't in a very advanced state of decomposition, but enough to give off a smell — even when it was still under the water. It was stuck on a submerged stump, and the odour in the neighbourhood was very strong. These two memories came to me instantly, when I entered the morgue. Everything that I drank or smoked, afterwards, had that odour and that taste.

The second sensation was the colour. I expected the bodies to be white, waxen, and adipose, but they were extremely colourful: red, with violet tints, ruddy cheeks, gleaming — or, for example, an old woman who had been partly eaten by her dog: very lively yellows and greens. I thought right away of Cézanne's "Card Players," because while they looked a little like cadavers, at the same time their colouring is both sombre and violent.

When you open them up, it's red, it's canary yellow.

That was the second surprise. It's a strong yellow; the skin itself has a very surprising colour. The third really strong impression was the noise. There were alot of dead bodies — a hundred and sixty-four the day I went there. It was packed. There were even some lying in the halls, as well as the ones that had stayed in the emergency room. There were at least forty more than the normal 'fridges could hold. So there was a sort of fantastic noise — because all these dead people had surprising stories. I suddenly realized that it was like a marshaling yard, a place of transit. There was a man who had hanged himself because he had a horrible tumour on his face — he was twice disfigured, by the tumour and by the hanging. There was a whore whose pimp slit her throat. There were three gangsters who had escaped from Fleury-Merogis three days earlier, and had been beaten by the cops. And of course the little old lady who had starved to death in her tiny room and had her legs half-eaten by her dog. There was a little old man who had died in his garret. A drowning victim of whom it was first thought that he had been undressed, killed by a bullet in the temple, and thrown into the St. Martin canal, but he was drowned to such an extent that he was swollen like a hippopotamus and unrecognizable. An old woman they had not undressed yet but whose skirts had been lifted up, revealing layers of coloured slips. It was a symphony of colours in the middle of the cold storage room. There was a done-in Arab just recently riddled with knife wounds. All of a sudden it made me laugh.

And when I think the morgue was built in 1924, when I think of the registers and dossiers, what strikes me is the familiarity of these gestures, and how much totalitarian institutions have taught us about the way things are run. When a dead body arrives, for example, they take off all its clothes, which are then put in plastic bags and piled in a corner to be washed. That reminded me of the concentration camps — the piles of clothes, the anonymity, the naked bodies, with their rings and false teeth removed. Even the closets they lock the bodies in resemble the crematoria, those trays sliding on castors into the oven. It struck me that that year — 1924 — saw the birth of these ideas — camps, extermination, etc. Obviously, I can't push this parallel too far: the morgue comes out of the 19th century concern about hygiene — but then so does the concentration camp. There is a surprising uniformity in the way bodies — whether dead or alive — are taken charge of. Finally, you realize that it functioned in exactly the same way. Of course the morgue is less abhorrent because the bodies are dead, but it seemed to me a model of administration — an institution taking complete charge of a body.

I get the feeling that it's one of the few surviving models of 19th century urbanization in the city.

The cadaver arrives in this rectangular building, follows a certain circular path which covers one length of the building and returns by the other length. Ideally, the cadaver is put in cold storage when it arrives. Next it is sent up to the autopsy room, then back down into a 'fridge. Eventually it moves to the anatomy amphitheatre if it's an interesting case. When it goes out the door, it has travelled a horseshoe-shaped path; then the family takes charge of it for the funeral arrangements. A concentration camp is a bit like that: you enter from one end and come out the other as fodder or soap. What is striking is the embryonic automatism of the process, but in fact everything is done by intermediaries, who are men. They have to manipulate the bodies constantly; there is a human element that comes into play, and it's there that you find those characters who are the "identifiers."

You knew one of them. He is, after all, representative of a generation — the generation of administrators.

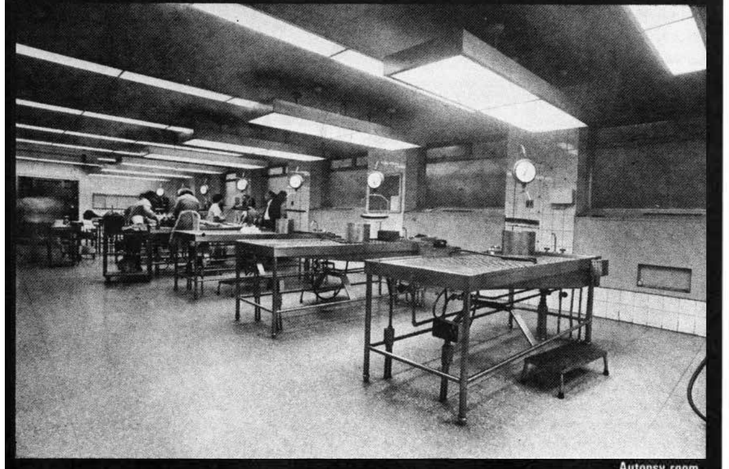
I can only speak of my personal experience. I had already had the unpleasant task of dealing with cadavers twice in Algeria, where it was really bloody and horrible. But here it's not the same thing — it's even more impressive, precisely because of the institution. What's frightening is not so much the cadavers as their handling — the labeling, cutting up, placing in boxes: the administration of bodies, the supervising authority that watches over them even up till their ultimate decomposition. What's frightening is that this thing we never speak about functions like some kind of sacred institution, with its untouchables.

The morgue comes out of the 19th century concern about hygiene — but then so does the concentration camp. There is a surprising uniformity in the way bodies — whether dead or alive are taken charge of. Finally, you realize that it functioned in exactly the same way. Of course the morgue is less abhorrent because the bodies are dead, but it seemed to me a model of administration — an institution taking complete charge of a body.

That's how it seemed to me — that these people are untouchables. They're vile. They're a particular caste, the only one that has the right to live in the morgue, to live with the cadavers. It's somewhat the same as the role the untouchables have in India. Butchers struck me in the same way: they perpetuate a very antique ritual — killing the sacred animal. It's a hard job, tiring and vile: killing animals hot, alive, enormous, bellowing, and transforming them in an instant into inert chunks of meat. They live and flounder in blood all day long, their profession is horrible, but at the same time they're very proud of it. They live in the night, never seeing the light of day. They are white, pale, and they are often dressed and groomed in a very ancient style — they are, for example, the last to grow sideburns down to there, or big French moustaches. They are from another era. And I get the impression that it's the same thing with the workers at the morgue. They can't practice their profession without immediately integrating themselves into a certain spirit of caste, a certain vocabulary, a certain secret society jargon.

There are gestures, there's a jargon and a ritual, which they don't speak about on the outside. They can only talk about it amongst themselves. The only interesting interviews I got were when there were several of them together; otherwise it's silence, or laughter.

Butchers are exactly the same way. They have an absolutely extraordinary aggressiveness, a violence with everything on the outside. They're often violent people. Obviously, killing an animal is an insignificant act, since, in our society, everything turns upon it, but even in rural life, where children are accustomed to seeing rabbits killed, a certain transgression is implied in cutting the throat of a living animal (you have to do it with one blow, because the meat has to be bled very cleanly).



Autopsy room

You agree to play a violent game, and you can end up by completely identifying with it.

You were always in the morgue at night. What happened when you left? The subway, the Bastille, the soldiers on leave, the lights . . .

The morgue was very crowded. When you walk out you feel a little drunk. When I took the subway I had the sensation that the first people I saw were — the same ones, only standing up and walking around. First, I bumped right into an Arab who had the same face as the one I'd just seen riddled with knife wounds. He had a moustache, he was nice-looking, big. Then, little by little, helped by the heat of the car, I wanted more and more to come into contact with them, to like them, to touch them.

The first time, when they opened the closets for me, I stood back ten feet, as though something were going to jump out at me. I was a little afraid of what I was going to see. Later I got used to it. The second time, I was able to touch them, push them, roll them on a cart. I think you catch on very quickly to the idea that they're nothing more than a bag of organs, that they're dead. It's true that you arrive with a lot of literary baggage — black novels, Edgar Allen Poe, etc. They try to scare you with the dead — you never have direct contact like you can have with a cadaver. Unless you've been to war, or been at some tremendous accident, everything is done to hide the dead. We rarely hold vigil over the dead, like they used to do in the country. So to see a hundred and fifty of them all at once has an effect of saturation. When I think about it, I've seen a lot of them, all my life, but they never struck me as dead. The only deaths that mean anything are the ones we are involved with in some way or another.

What struck me was the image that would remain. The mission of the embalmers is to eliminate that image. Most violent of all is the moment of death, the moment of the accident — the traces of the final impact are always there. The marks of that instant are there for all time.

It would be interesting to analyse what is so horrifying about the image of a cadaver. Cadavers don't horrify me; I wanted to see them, film them. I wanted to see how society lived with the dead, how the dead disappeared into oblivion, and who was responsible for them. It was mostly the untouchables that interested me — where could they ensconce themselves? There aren't many of them left — surgeons, scavengers, sewermen — those who work in the shadows to dispose of the flow of dead, of excrement, or to feed the beast.

Not the geneticist?

No, that's an image of science fiction. For the moment, they're in little laboratories; they don't manipulate matter that is living, nutritive, fecal. What's interesting are those who are at the entrance of the big floods, those who live at night, whose work is cutting up, excision, cleaning, nourishing. This all has to do with something I think about a lot — metamorphoses, the foundations of society, everything we eliminate because we don't want to look at it.

And the anonymous, the nameless, class X, those whose name death has lost? They would almost be the outlaws of the morgue, the last cheaters.

That is the most fascinating thing. It's a literary theme, totally thrilling. There are 55 million Frenchmen (give or take a few). There are people who drown themselves and get eaten by crabs or sharks. We'll never find them. But let them find one body they can't identify and everyone gets in on it — they'll try everything, all the methods of judicial identification. Up till the time of Bertillon the individual didn't exist in and of himself. Since the birth of the police and judicial methods of identification, though, we can identify anyone. There are signs, fingerprints, X-rays, dental records, a registration number at birth — about fifty particulars which allow us to identify a person, dead or alive, and these techniques achieve absolute perfection. There must be many people who are born without being declared; there must be a lot of bums no one can identify anymore. And then there are the people who arrive at the morgue absolutely unidentifiable, people who've been disfigured or drowned for a long time. What's extraordinary is the tremendous attention paid to these cadavers. The authorities lean over them, trying to locate some trace, something that speaks. They practice a sort of archeology on these disfigured or nameless bodies.

And paradoxically, they're the ones whose photographs we'll keep.

Yes, they're the ones we'll know the most about, without really knowing anything. There are the classic deaths. A prostitute stabbed by her pimp, for example. She arrives at the morgue, there's a police investigation, they notify the family. After the autopsy and the doctor's report, she's neatly sewn up, dressed and put in a casket for the family to pick up. And then there is the one who had her face kicked in, got thrown into a canal, and was found five months later, unrecognizable. She might stay six months at the morgue, decomposing in her closet (dead bodies turn black, decompose. They end up not stinking at all — they only smell of humous). She can stay there ten months, without their being able to put a name to her. They'll photograph her, people will make inquiries, the slightest mark — a trace, say, of an appendectomy scar — will be exploited, an earring. But sometimes these clues lead to nothing.

Another thing that fascinated me is the photograph of the body. Finally, it is the most intimate thing. An indentity photograph identifies, but at the morgue it doesn't identify anything. It identifies something that doesn't exist anymore.

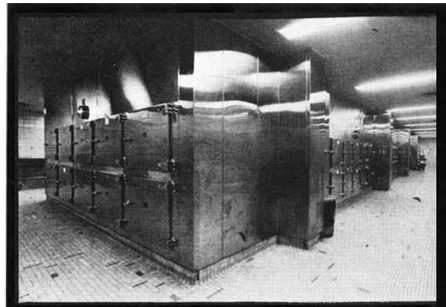
Remember that individual identity and photography were born at the same time. Niepce, Daguerre, Bertillon: between the first and the second thirds of the 19th century. One of the first major uses of photography by the police was posting photographs of the Commune activists. Photographs were also used to identify a lot of bodies in the Civil War.

What's important to know is that the cadaver, not really having a legal existence, is no longer a collective object, a ceremonial object.

Yes, but there's still something at stake. In the 19th century the stakes were police stakes: to establish a method of identification for each individual, in order to control the anarchists, the revolutionaries, the asocials, the immorals, etc. Later, they applied more sophisticated investigatory methods like morphology or the Cambroso techniques, some of which were absurd, others efficient, like fingerprints or palm prints. But photography seems the most logical. It's the flattest, most direct representation of reality; it's the first application we think of to identify people. Eventually they realized it wasn't entirely conclusive, and that thousands of people could escape: people who wore make-up, doubles, twins, etc. Later, the use of photography was reversed: the photograph was used as proof that someone was really dead. It's no longer only the police that are involved, but insurance companies, as well. This is clear in the case of airplane crashes: the insurance companies won't pay until they have proof that the people are actually dead.

Have you ever desired a dead body?

No, I have no erotic fantasies on that level at all. The only erotic fantasy is more general — it's voyeurism. What is thrilling about going into the slaughterhouses is that you are venturing into a forbidden zone. It doesn't compare at all to, say, hiding in the closet of a steam room to watch men or women, or to hide in a brothel to watch what goes on through a one-way mirror. The only excitement derives from its being a forbidden zone — exactly as if I were to go into the basements of the Banque de France and contemplate the tons of ingots, knowing it would be impossible for me to take them out.



Refrigeration room

There is no desire at all, but there is a sort of fantastic attraction. What I love about the dead is their exhibitionism: they offer themselves completely. The men's balls are hanging out, the women's legs are wide open. They seem to be saying, "Come on, take advantage of it; I finally don't exist anymore." But no matter what enticement they offer, you no longer have any desire for them. The attraction is more general: the pleasure of being in a forbidden area, the type of sensual excitement you get when you're torn between the transgression of an interdiction and the horror. It's like singing at the top of your voice range — you play with something dangerous. You know when you go in there that you may vomit, faint from horror, be overcome with uneasiness. But you do it anyway, asking yourself, "How am I going to resist?"

Did you touch them?

I think that I can touch them without any problem, because there is the cold, then the fatty, oily side. That famous grease of the cadaver that builds up, there's something very troubling in that.

What will the morgue be in twenty years?

I see the morgue turned into a modern hospital, with a chain of automatically manipulated rolling trays. In all the factories, whether it be books or bottles, there is automation, there are wagons that move on rails, that take the trays and carry them off. Something very sharp, very pretty, extraordinarily clean. A very cold thing, very neutral. But in the morgue, it's not at all neutral or cold, it's dirty, viscous; the refrigerating doors are greasy with traces of bloody fingers on the doorknobs, they turn brown. The grating of the elevator is rusty, the floor of the elevator is thick with layers of accumulated blood, and of sawdust that was thrown on it. It only works thanks to tinkering. The switches are maintained by elastics from the organ jars, other areas have been crammed with boxes of blood samples. It is not uncommon to enter an autopsy room that has been been thoroughly washed, only to see rusty instruments on a tray, with bloodstains still on the gutters that evacuate the water. You see the filaments, bits of debris that remain stuck. The whole situation doesn't correspond with today's hygenic exigencies, that hyper-realistic American current; they want gleaming chromes, sparkling ceramics, no trace. The back of the principal refrigeration room where the jars are stored is full of reddish drippings; you find there something akin to what you find in slaughterhouses; the accumulation of everyday matter ends up creating a sort of crust, a seasoning of the place.

TRANSLATED BY ILONA CHESSID

You arrive with a lot of literary baggage — black novels, Edgar Allen Poe, etc. They try to scare you with the dead — you never have direct contact like you can have with a cadaver. Unless you've been to war, or been at some tremendous accident, everything is done to hide the dead.

An Interview With **PAUL VIRILIO**

THE SPIRIT OF DEFENCE

Christian Mellon: *How do you see the question of the spirit of defence today?*

Paul Virilio: I start with the Roman adage that says, "Only the vigilant have rights." The spirit of defence is first and foremost *vigilance*. It's not primarily the courage shown by citizens in defending their borders, but the courage of being ready for every threat to your rights. Of course this means territorial rights, the right of one country to exist in a state of autonomy; but it also means the rights of the citizens within a society.

This relationship between *right* and *vigilance* is essential. Rights exist only so long as people are aware that they are always threatened: from within by tyranny; from without by aggressions; and today, in a new way, by technology. We forget too easily that certain technologies are direct threats not only to the environment, but also to the citizen's basic rights.

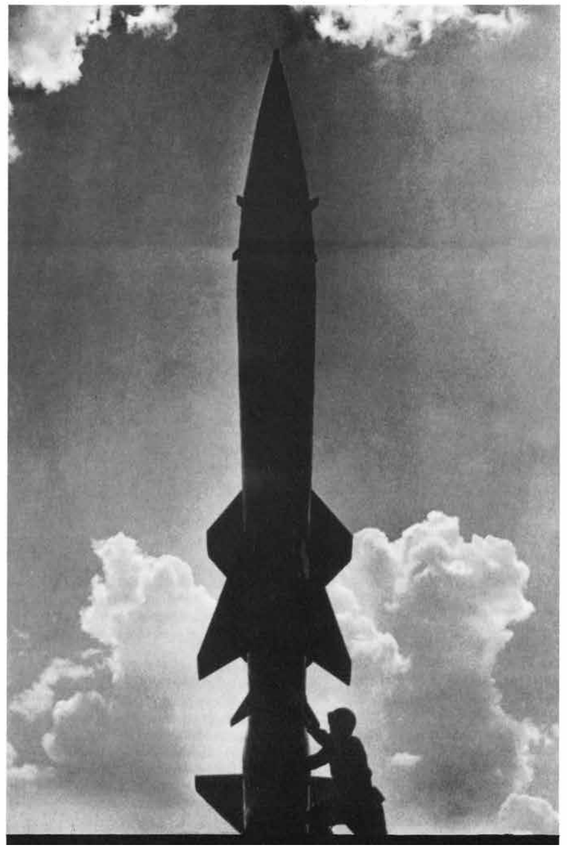
My second starting-point is our relation to death. As the soldier-citizen of Athenian democracy was about to leave to fight for his city, he chanted the *agon*, the song of the citizen-soldier. Now this *agon* is not a national anthem. It's the song of those citizens who recognize themselves as *dead* as far as their rights are concerned. It expresses the reality that there are only citizen's rights for those who have put their lives in the balance. We are ready to die, goes the song, because we are already dead for the city, for the rights of the city.

Citizen's rights means having to lay down your life. The city protects me with its laws; but I, in return, protect it with my sacrifice when called upon to do so.

Our relationship to defence is thus necessarily a relation to death. Now, the political materialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has overshadowed our culture's relation to death. Whence the decline of the spirit of defence. All the death rites (death, not *deadly*) have been eliminated — the last link to exist between the political state and death was capital punishment. I, like you, am glad it's been abolished. But we have to recognize that in so doing, they censored the relation that inevitably exists between political society and death. Now, we know that every state is founded on the power to put men to death — through the police, the army, etc. What a revelatory paradox that just when they abolish the death penalty for individuals, society as a whole should be engaged in a total and instantaneous risk of death by nuclear war!

CM: *When they abolished the death penalty, there was an outside editorial in* Le Monde *stating that this would harm the credibility of our nuclear deterrence: a president who flinched at the idea of executing one man would be less credible when he threatened to launch a city- wide nuclear retaliation!...*

PV: I would say just the opposite. It's because there is deterrence that the death penalty is no longer necessary! The death penalty has been *displaced*: from justice between individuals with rights and duties, it has passed on to a kind of "super-justice" or "non-justice," which is nuclear war. To take entire populations hostage is thoroughly unjust. Next to this mammoth injustice, the death penalty looks like a joke.



CM: *This link that you establish between the spirit of defence and vigilance with respect to the citizen's ever-threatened rights leads us to the question of* threats. *What today threatens the citizen's rights?*

PV: Let us recall the words of Saint-Just: "When a people can be oppressed, it is." The simple possibility of oppression is already oppression. The technology of war represents this perfectly: it is in itself an oppression. It's not by chance that the soldier- citizen has been progressively replaced by *machinery*. The decision is first given to military command, then to a single, supreme decision-maker (the head of state), then in the near future, because of considerations of speed, to an automatic decision-maker which will expel man from the system entirely.

We had citizen's rights when the citizen was at once *producer* and *destroyer*. He produced wealth and could defend his society. But technology eliminates the citizen both from the productive function, with the automation that produces structural unemployment, and from the defensive function, with increasingly automated arms systems. We could thus ask ourselves what will remain of citizen's rights? What happened to his vigilance?

The spirit of defence must question the *nature* of the threat. For me, the spirit of defence today is not only the will to defend ourselves against a Soviet invasion; it's also the will to defend ourselves against the technologies that are ousting the ordinary man from his responsibility in matters of defence and which, to boot, deplete the country's wealth by useless arms production. These technologies, tomorrow, will evacuate the head of state himself as the one responsible for making the decision...

The day we have laser weapons in space working at the speed of light, it is clear that everything will have to be automated. Political decisions will not be able to intervene. Arms systems become autonomous, independent of human will.

CM: *Could the elimination of the political decision be related to the overshadowing of death that you mentioned before?*

PV: I said that the decline of the spirit of defence has to do with the overshadowing of death brought about by political materialism. Let me specify: death is not so much overshadowed as desocialized. Man must face his own death *individually*, whereas, in ancient society, he faced it with the political and religious communities. Today, man is alone in the face of death. Ancient politics, by avoiding this solitude, gave credit to the idea of *collective survival*. The death of the individual had meaning with respect to the survival of the community's rights.

This solitude before death isn't easy to take — whence the recent revival of religious ideologies. Survival, eliminated from politics, can now only show up on the metaphysical level.

CM: *Could you explain further the relation that you draw between the social overshadowing of death and the loss of the spirit of defence?*

PV: Defence is the will to resist death inflicted from outside: physical death inflicted by an aggressor, social death inflicted by a loss of rights, etc. Defence is a relation to the death of a society, and to the death of an individual within this society. Now, death is no longer a political question. How many political parties do you know that talk about death? For me this is a quirk of history: how can we be surprised that there is no more spirit of defence if death has been eliminated from the political discourse? You must admit, it's a strange coincidence that this disappearance of the discourse of death should culminate just when our society has created a war machine capable of inflicting universal death...

This explains the decline of the spirit of defence in the citizen. He doesn't know what to do. He is no longer considered able to oppose an adversary himself, since he has been replaced by a machine. At no time is he invited to discuss collective death, whereas he knows very well that the technical instruments of collective death exist. In France there was no discussion of the choice of nuclear armaments. And yet it was a matter of collective death! Such a discussion would have posed the question very directly not of the acceptance of individual death, but of society's acceptance of its own death. It meant having the *agon* chanted, not by individuals ready to fight at the city walls, but by an entire society.

What families talk to their children about death? They talk of sex education, but never of death education. It's a basic problem. Let us recall what Lech Walesa said when he came to France before the tragic events of December 1981: "Maybe you're already dead..." If death is no longer a concern of ours, it's the sign that we no longer have rights as citizens. Of course we still benefit from certain rights, unlike the citizens of Eastern countries. But they at least recognize the necessity for these rights; we don't. We are no longer "vigilant." We have delegated our vigilance to machines: radar, satellites, the American "umbrella," French strike-power.



Barbedwire obstacles on the Normandy coast

Just as they believe that industry was going to be the happiness of the working classes (and we see the results!), they also believed that the very sophisticated weaponry would mean peace. Whereas peace and happiness depend on the man of good will, and not on the machines that man produces.

CM: *Couldn't we approach the question of the spirit of defence from another angle: territory? Historically, haven't we closely linked defence with the possession of a space of sovereignty, in such a way that the relative "de-territorialization" of our economic, ideological, cultural and other relations entail a fuzziness about the very object of defence?*

PV: Indeed. Let's start with the peasant proverb, "Whoever has land has war." There are no rights without a *place*. And this territory necessary to the citizenry must be defended. This is what politics is built on: the ancient city is nothing other than a fortress that accumulates a destiny of rights which is at the same time a density of defence of these rights.

One of the effects of technology is to de-territorialize the relationships between individuals. Time replaces space: when we realize that New Yorkers are "closer" to Paris than the Corsicans, we have to wonder about the meaning of certain regional *territorial* demands! Territoriality was once situated in metric or geographic space. But we have already gone from the kilometre to the kilometre-per-hour, then to the mach- metre... Add to this the effects of audio-visuals and telecommunications. All this creates effects of space-distortion that put the nation-state in a state of crisis today, as the city-state was at the end of ancient times. It is subject to two opposing pulls: one pull toward transnational entities (multinational corporations, military pacts), another toward internal autonomies (decentralization, regionalization). There is a rip in national citizen's rights; but no one has yet spoken of transnational citizen's rights, not to mention regional citizen's rights. The decline of the nation-state presents the risk of losing the rights linked to national territoriality. When I see people elected in Aix on the basis of being "Aix patriots," I get very worried!

What I find interesting — and worrisome at the same time — is to see that there is no spirit of defence linked to these new territorialities. They tell us to vote for Europe, when there is no European defence! How can we expect rights from a structure that isn't defended?

CM: *Couldn't we nonetheless say that certain regional demands can be interpreted as a reappropriation of defence on a closer, more concrete level?*

PV: I'd like that to be so, of course. I'm not for centralization, and I'd be very happy to see an evolution toward a more direct democracy. Unfortunately, I'm not sure that the present attempt at "decentralization" goes in this direction. For me, the lack of serious discussion on regionalization is as worrisome as the lack of discussion on defence. No one ever debates the basic questions! Nothing that concerns questions of power, in other words, of territory and the military, ever gives rise to debate.

CM: *For most people, the problem of defence is less related to that of rights than to the wish for peace: we have a defence to guarantee peace by force. Is this reflection on peace important for you?*

PV: What is peace? This term poses certain questions. I don't think that peace means simply citizen's *rights*. It means much more: the accomplishment of *justice*. But justice is not only a question of goods, of quantities to be apportioned, as materialism would have it. It's a question of *quality* as well, which is thus necessarily linked to the nature of technologies being used in a given society.

This does not mean that the new technologies must be refused, but it does mean that we must remain watchful of them, for they can create new forms of *injustice*. Nothing guarantees that they are a benefit, a "progress," as positivism believed. The euphoria of progress makes us forget the injustice of technology. Our generations have lost their illusions in this respect. We no longer "go along" with the idea of justice through machines. McLuhan announced that communications were going to transform the earth into a "global village." But this village has never been more threatened.

We must therefore always aim for a peace that accomplishes justice, but while making ourselves watchful for the injustices of science and technology. There are ideological totalitarianisms, economic totalitarianisms, and a new totalitarianism of technology. The automation of defence, like that of production, dispossesses the individual of his dignity, of his responsibility. In this sense, it is a system of oppression.

Under Stalin, the Soviet leaders said, "Comrades, you must die; the next generation will be happier for it!" And they died so that the next generation would be happy. We now see what this next generation has become! And today they're telling us in France, "You must accept unemployment to become modern!" It's the same sleight of hand.

If we admit that technologies serve as a vehicle for injustice, then rights are never acquired once and for all. They are constantly threatened, not only by enemies, but by new inventions. If this is not a topic for discussion, the inevitable consequence will be violent confrontations. And as a non-violent person, this worries me. Two years ago, I was invited by the Ministry of Industry to talk about automation, and I underlined the danger of social explosion if this automation were to be considered an uncontrolled "fate." I told them: "When everything is automated, you won't be able to walk in the streets without armoured cars and bodyguards. You will have to reinforce the doors of your houses and build — why not? — ramparts around the city." They laughed in my face.

As far as France is concerned, a further obstacle is presidentialism. The National Assembly is not a place for serious debate, no matter which party is in power, left or right. De Gaulle's poisoned gift to French society was presidentialism, and we know damned well that this gift is linked to nuclear weapons. Why have a reinforced presidential system, if not because we need a single decision-maker for nuclear weapons?

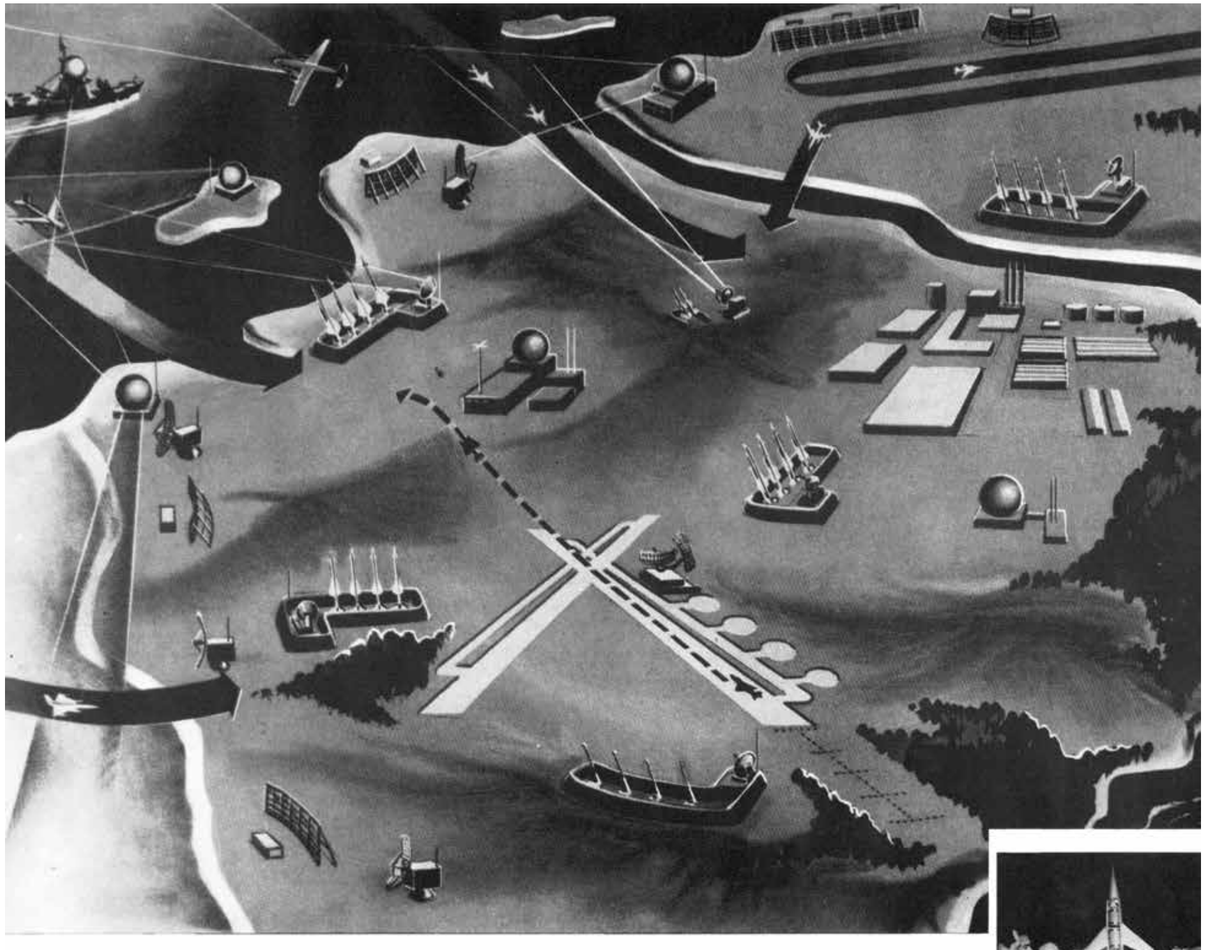
CM: *A true debate assumes that there is a choice to be made between various options.*

PV: We must indeed stop identifying current orientations with the idea of fate. As to defence, we agree: nuclear war is not an historical "obligation." There are other paths. But I would say the same thing for production. To me, it doesn't seem possible to say, "We must automate to the extreme, and later we'll take care of the unemployed." If political life is entirely determined by technological and economic "fatalities", we are no longer in a democracy: we are under tyranny.

The spirit of defence begins there: refusing to admit that a given discussion is without alternatives. The word "alternatives" is fundamental. A society that would exclude even the idea of possible alternatives falls subject to "fate." We could define politics as "the art of possibilities in the city." Now, in our society, we have lost the art of possibilities. There is a fatality of the impossible.

To get out of this fatality, we must once more and forever return to the essential questions of politics: what are we ready to live and die for? It's the same question as for the Athenian citizen. What "values" are so fundamental to my constitution that I would be willing to die in order to preserve them? This is a question that political materialism has completely censored. We no longer dare speak of "morals," nor even of "ethics"... We obscure these questions behind choices presented in terms of well-being, of consumption, of wealth... Political materialism consists in displacing the terms of the choice: no longer life or death, but sufficiency, comfort, consumption. May 1968 was the last great protest against this perversion of politics.

These fundamental questions are in the religious domain. But we



must absolutely avoid restricting them to religion. Otherwise we are going to see conflicts between those who have hope only in religion and those who have lost hope in politics.

CM: *It is not enough to state the urgency of this return to the fundamental questions. We must also indicate how they could be resolved on the societal level.*

PV: If you're asking me to "suggest solutions," you've got the wrong man. In none of my books do I give a solution. I am a man of questions. I would add that the "alternative" Anglo-Saxon milieux find my approach "positive." There comes a time when new questions are more useful than ready-made answers.

CM: *It's one thing to refuse to suggest solutions, another to say that there aren't any. And I sometimes have the impression that you're saying there's no hope.*

PV: Indeed, I would say that *for the moment* we are caught in a state of non-hope. But I'm not the one who has put us there, its the situation! I'm not satisfied with this situation. And I know I'm not the only one: many young people today feel the same thing.

If I saw important political movements heading in this direction, I would regain some of my political hope. Despite what they often say, it's those who fight for nuclear disarmament and local democracy who are the best servants of the spirit of defence. They contribute toward getting us out of the illusion of progress. Just as they believed that industry was going to be the happiness of the working classes (and we see the results!), they also believed that very sophisticated weaponry would mean peace. Whereas peace and happiness depend on the man of good will, and not on the machines that man produces.

Paris, April 1984

Translated by Mark Polizzotti.



There is a national organization working to achieve access to safe, legal abortions for all women in Canada. The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League advocates freedom of choice. Our aim is the repeal of all sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptive and abortion services, including appropriate counseling, across the country. Our support comes from pro-choice individuals and groups. We do not have government grants or wealthy religious organizations funding us. You can become a supporter for $10 a year ($3 limited income; $25 for groups). Please write to us at 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 310, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M9.

EXPO 1986

News of the forthcoming World's Fair in Vancouver has mainly consisted of fragmented rumours and newspaper rantings of projected losses. Curious about this major cultural event, Eldon Garnet and Carolyn White of IMPULSE spoke to James Wines of SITE – the New York based architectural firm selected to construct the "Pavilion of the Present". Still feeling there was more to be known about the quasi-secretive event, we contacted the Fair directly and interviewed by telephone Richard Blagborne, Vice President of Planning and Development. We have merely begun what we consider an important cultural dialogue.



HIGHWAY '86 – Processional, SITE's winning entry for Expo 1986.

JAMES WINES:

ON THE SUBJECT OF WORLD EXPOSITIONS

World expositions are, by their very nature, potentially cumbersome, exploitative, and pretentious events. At the same time, they represent an opportunity to advance idealistic causes, foster international scientific and cultural exchange, and increase human understanding and cooperation. At their worst they bankrupt municipalities, generate urban chaos, topple governments and corrupt citizens. On the other hand, they can enrich community treasuries, originate enduring city plans and public spaces, consolidate political cooperation, elevate popular consciousness, and advance the arts and sciences to new heights of development.

A triumphant exposition is, like a great achievement in the arts, the result of a magical fusion of ideas and vision, informed by a particular epoch. The mere assembly of ambition, talent, high purpose, and money cannot guarantee the magic will occur any more than investing these same elements in a work of art can assure a masterpiece.

Any discussion of a successful expo – particularly one like Vancouver's in 1986 – must be based on a speculative examination of its social, psychological, and political context, rather than on a survey of exhibition artifacts or high aspirations. All world expositions are motivated by both idealistic and commercial mandates, but a truly successful fair is far more than a collection of platitudes and real estate contracts. It is the product of utopian ideals and human imagination, endorsed by a collective international spirit, made manifest in the most relevant and providential form.

In terms of a triumph on every level, the quintessential international fair was the Exposition Universelle of 1889 in Paris. It succeeded on virtually every level – technology, diversity, spirit, romance, and charisma.

It was an occasion which elevated ideas and risked controversy. It demonstrated technological leadership, instead of resorting to passive convention. It experimented with the new, rather than the confirmed. This expo produced the Eiffel Tower, as a monument of lasting significance and a daring tribute to the emerging technological age. The 1889 fair also erected the awesome thirty-meter-high Gallery of Machines, sponsored the famous Oil, Gas, and Steam Pavilions, introduced Edison's phonograph, and generally launched the exploratory climate of the 20th Century.

The beginning of Vancouver's Expo '86.



ARE WORLD FAIRS OBSOLETE...?

EXPO 1986

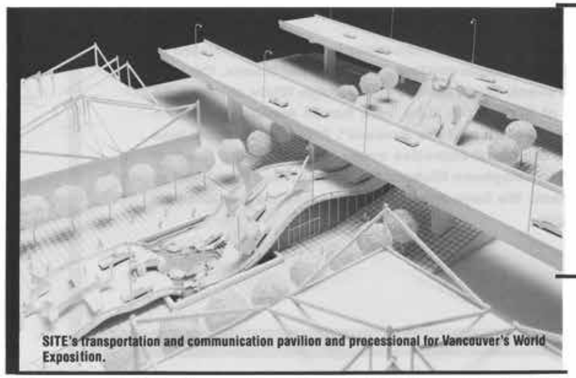


Overview of the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition.

Aside from being a commercial success, the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1892 was the bellwether for subsequent fairs and compared to the cultural/scientific achievements of the Paris event, the beginning of a cancerous tendency towards commercialism as a priority over idealism and educational value. The United States was clearly on the line to compete with Europe and lacking the Continent's cultural prestige, the organizers decided to exploit the virtues of America's strengths in mercantile capitalism. The result was a showcase of events that were safe and static in viewpoint, celebrated the "Classical Ideal" in architecture, and consecrated most of the occasion to the interests of private real estate. In describing these differences between Paris and Chicago, historian F. Kihlstedt wrote:

> "The earlier European expositions were more public-spirited and earnest. They were overt celebrations of peace, progress, and public education. They were like comprehensive museums for learning and inspiration (and left many permanent monuments in their wake). Twentieth Century expositions (especially American) were more commercial in outlook. They were fancy bazaars, often dominated by the products of large private corporations. Advertising overtook education as a goal."

It was Louis Sullivan, the great Chicago architect, who wrote the final epitaph for the Columbian Exposition when he observed that: "The damage wrought by the World's Fair will last for half a century, if not longer."



SITE's transportation and communication pavilion and processional for Vancouver's World Exposition.

In many respects this rather sweeping condemnation set the tone, or at least provided some cautionary guidelines, for the twenty-six expositions following the Chicago fair in this century. The majority of these fairs failed (sometimes disasterously) in financial terms and few remain memorable. It is difficult to trace the causes of these failures – it seems the more blatantly commercial the motivations, the more destructive the results. It is evident that people will simply not pay admission to witness real estate deals masquerading as public service events. The populace will also not patronize occasions which purport to be prophetic cultural/scientific compendia and instead offer only a mediocre substitute for Disneyland (or the Disney Industry's current headache, EPCOT).

The Vancouver 1986 Expo is arriving at the moment of a watershed in the history of world fairs. Most significantly, it follows on the heels of two American fairs – Knoxville and New Orleans – which are reliable checklists of what not to do if one wants to produce a successful occasion. In the case of the Louisiana Expo, the financial disaster was so great it literally shook the foundations of the state treasury.

It is unnecessary to identify the myriad mistakes made in New Orleans; but rampant real estate greed, a poverty of innovation, a lack of cutting edge cultural exhibitions, a minimum of international participation, a parochial attitude, and an ersatz Disney atmosphere do not add up to an irresistable box office attraction in the 1980s. When they are being invited to travel thousands of miles at great personal sacrifice of time and money, people want more – a lot more.

The most significant cause of the Louisiana fair's demise was its insensitivity to the ambient sensibility of the decade. It didn't address issues that captivate peoples' imagination today – it didn't capture the spirit of the 1980s.

From a purely tactical standpoint one thing which should be avoided is the tendency to mistake a world exposition for just another form of entertainment. An expo is a commitment to cultural and scientific achievement; to deny or dissipate these purposes is to confuse a world's fair with a carnival, a circus, a playground, a museum, a resort, a trade show, or a supermarket. A true international fair must delight and educate audiences on the highest possible level and appeal to their fantasies, but not translate into an indulgence of the senses on the lowest plateau of diversion.

If the success of the Exposition Universelle in 1889 can be held up as a role model, it is not because of its content, or particular physical manifestations in terms of pavilions and landscaping. The message of Paris is one of epochal relevance. For Expo 86, it comes down to the question of how to reflect the collective spirit of the moment and invest the occasion with that awareness.

Awareness of this spirit is the acknowledgement that technology and science still occupy a dominant place in human progress, but only if infused by a profound sense of their own limitations and a responsibility to humanitarian and ecological imperatives.

Post-technological society is a mental and emotional state of being in the 80s. It is a sensibility born from suspicion of voices of commerce whose every claim for the altruistic benefits of technology prefigures an announcement of some apocalyptic new weapon. Post-technological society is the collective voice of all civilizations, terrified by the implications and consequences of mindless productivity and the threats of nuclear war. This must also be the underlying theme of any universal exposition worthy of the name.

"One thing which should be avoided is the tendency to mistake a world exposition for just another form of entertainment. An expo is a commitment to cultural and scientific achievement; to deny or dissipate these purposes is to confuse a world's fair with a carnival, a tradeshow, or a supermarket."

In 1889 technology was equated with a better life and the Paris Fair was dedicated to this optimism. The 1986 Expo will take place in an era of disenchantment with the sciences, engineering and communications and will have to express these themes through people-oriented values. In 1889 communication through media was greeted like a new toy and applauded without reservation. In 1986 people understand the difference between responsible and destructive media, between truth and propaganda; therefore, the subject must be presented in the context of its power to foster international understanding. In 1889 the future was seen in terms of nationalism and territorial rights. In 1986 the future must be interpreted as a global and interdependent community. In 1889 the direction of the social order was perceived as formal and determinate. In 1986 the character of society must be accepted as indeterminate and pluralistic. In 1986 these ideals are less pretentious and more multi-valued, and might be better demonstrated as "anti-monuments" – or, in other words, tributes to a world of modest proposals, based on the human values of diversity, idiosyncrasy, personal identity, and a communion with people and the natural environment.

The image of the anti-monument, a tribute to a world of modest proposals, might be considered an appropriate iconography for an exposition given in 1986. It suggests an awareness that high ideals still prevail as a part of people's deepest sentiments, but it is also an admission that public symbols can no longer glorify irrelevant utopias. The anti-monument is a celebration of humanity's personalized control of tools, the ability to see technology as an extension of the will to create a better life, but also to see it objectively, with all its faults and virtues. The anti-monument signals a civilization where energy supplies are equitably shared, where cultural identities and resourceful living conditions are maintained, where the post-technological sensibility promises a more peaceful and cooperative life on earth. If there are lessons from this "century of progress" they are that profligate consumption and surfeit production are, contrary to the claims of commerce, more destructive than beneficial. The fact remains that the salvation of our global community is inextricably tied to reduced expectations and the intelligent orchestration of growth. This persistent message, however difficult for most industrialized countries to reconcile, is the true mandate of the 1980s and should be reflected in every aspect of Expo 1986.

IMPULSE: How did you obtain this commission?

SITE: It was a commission given by Expo 86 for design of the central exhibition space. The theme of the whole Fair is transportation and communications and this was the theme pavilion and processional. It was what they call a funded proposal: we were paid a certain amount to develop a design concept.

IMPULSE: The Paris World's Fair of 1889 explored important issues of its time, how would you compare this exhibition to the forthcoming Expo 86?

SITE: It obviously doesn't have the same charisma. To explore technology and the future in 1889 was to talk about something that was literally consuming the entire human race. At that time, for most people, it was a visionary, not a familiar subject area. Now every five-year-old kid is familiar with the technology. It no longer has that kind of charisma. I don't know what you could currently name to generate the same attraction. The media is so saturated with information that it's impossible to find a subject with which people are not completely familiar.

IMPULSE: Do you find the Vancouver theme of transportation an inspiring topic?

SITE: Insofar as we all benefit and cannot survive without it. We take it for granted. Could you celebrate agriculture? How could we exist without agriculture? It isn't the type of subject that generates instant excitement – like having the Rolling Stones to dinner.

IMPULSE: You don't find it to be an invented, artificial theme?

SITE: Unless you are going to approach a theme that suggests the end of the world, a nuclear theme of some kind. That immediately evokes in most people's minds something apocalyptic. That's a real issue. In a certain form it could generate a lot of interest. But it would be very hard to get people to pay admission to see the end of the world.

IMPULSE: Don't you feel that this fair is ignoring all of the important and pressing current cultural and social issues?

SITE: A fair is usually about issues that are somewhat optimistic and certainly universal. If you take abortion or women's rights you would in effect not only leave out, but you would likely render hostile, the entire Arabic, and Moslem community and you would leave half of the human race out of that dialogue. So urgent issues to us are not urgent issues to everyone.

IMPULSE: Are fairs obsolete?

SITE: In some ways they may be, but I think the fair theme should be universal. You have the emergence of the Third World and what it's really going to mean to the human race and to the high tech countries.

IMPULSE: Don't you feel that a certain risk taking, an absence of fear of controversy are elements which are essential to a successful fair?

SITE: We are making a comment on technology, an ironic commentary. Probably if the entire Fair took that attitude you might end up with a very interesting event. A playwright like Shakespeare could deal with tragedy and conflict and mount them in a theatrical context. In many ways he still dealt with these themes on a more optimistic and more theatrically attractive level than somebody like Samuel Beckett, but that doesn't mean Beckett shouldn't write plays. His plays are about the way the world really is, and I think the way the world really is has a lot to do with what makes it possible to give a fair any theme. I think the weakness of the theme or the lack of appeal – and I think you're right about it – has a lot to do with trying to find something optimistic in a nuclear world. It really is very difficult. New Orleans, for example, failed because it was just about real estate, they had no idealism at all. Nothing.

IMPULSE: Do you think there is a similar problem in this fair?

SITE: This fair is better. One thing which makes it much more appealing internationally is, for whatever reasons, Canada is looked upon fondly – like Switzerland. Canada could do no wrong. So they have almost a hundred percent subscription from all the countries. Which is very unusual. That alone, if it's really advertised, will be a major attraction. Providing the other countries, especially Third World countries, and China, Russia, and South America are involved and really do something that brings focus on what their contribution to the world community might be, or is, then it might be an interesting fair. But if they just come and try to show you South American versions of Porsches then it will be ridiculous. Who wants to see a poorly produced subdivision of some sort of technology. The Japanese have no problem. So they're coming in with the most high tech show imaginable. Their show is going to be dazzling. They have, for example, a train that floats on air. They are going to have a certain amount of fascination just by definition. I wonder what does a country like Thailand or India consider to be evidence of their strength and their contribution? The Third World could really be a leading force in the resurrection of things like human energy, diversified sources of energy. If the world had not all committed itself to fossil fuel, there wouldn't be a problem – if the world had diversified water power, air power, sea power. Nuclear power has proved to be really risky, dangerous. There are a lot of big questions that a fair like this can embrace, a technological fair. But I just don't think their thematic choice hits the jackpot. The Paris fair that was planned and cancelled was going to be much more idealistic. It was going to be on the fate of the human race or something like that.

IMPULSE: Why was it cancelled?

SITE: It was cancelled because they were expecting 80 million people to invade

Paris. They couldn't build enough hotels. It would completely destroy the city. World's fairs have to be given in cities or outside of cities as in the cases of Montreal and New York.

IMPULSE: It appears much more logical to have a world's fair in a Third World country which could benefit that much more from the presence of technology.

SITE: Canada isn't a bad place to have a fair, Montreal was the last great successful fair.

IMPULSE: The public spirit is obviously missing from this fair, which you yourself list as an important ingredient. The public hasn't been let in on it.

SITE: So many people in Toronto don't even know that it exists. The public relations of this Fair so far has been a disaster. I think they're beginning to mobilize. They'd better do it fast. And they'd better find some very provocative themes to push.

IMPULSE: The art community in general feel they have been left out. The prevalent feeling is that the competitions have been fixed. The beginnings of a boycott are already under way.

SITE: I don't know anything about Canadian internal politics so I'm not in any position to comment, but if they studied New Orleans and examined on every level what created that disaster, many of those things have already been avoided. New Orleans was the worst disaster of all, they didn't even celebrate the history of jazz and rhythm and blues in a constructive and intelligent way. The musicians were insulted by the kind of cornball crap the administration planned and projected along the waterfront. New Orleans was done during the summer, at the worst possible time to visit that town – during a heat wave.

IMPULSE: What the media is fixating on are the projected losses of the Fair. So what does that tell us – that the Fair is a failure from the very beginning?

SITE: There are a lot of shortterm and longterm benefits in giving any kind of fair. Identifying a community and putting it on the map. I think Vancouver could do with a little publicity at this point. Physically it's a beautiful city, particularly the mountains and the sea. They want to open up the city to the East. They already have attracted a lot of Japanese interaction, that is, trade. It's a logical inroad to the East for Canada. There are just so many reasons, why do people, for example, advertise? You often cannot trace sales specifically to advertising, although eventually it begins to pay off. I think it is going to be successful beyond conception if you compare it to New Orleans.

IMPULSE: Do you think they can engender a spirit at this point?

SITE: My feeling is there should be more than just the Disneyland type of fair advertising. They should find some provocative piece of information, in other words a discovery that you could make if you came to this fair. An experience you couldn't experience in any other media. They have to identify that and convince the public. A fair is cultural and scientific, that's all. And it's real information. If it isn't real information nobody will come, it's as simple as that.

IMPULSE: The arts and cultural communities have had massive cutbacks to their programmes because of the money spent on the Fair.

SITE: But we had to cut back too, radically, from our original budget. We had almost double the budget.

IMPULSE: But isn't the Fair supposed to be celebrating rather than cutting back on local culture?

SITE: A well-spent investment could get them the return. You'd get people to come there. If you really did a highly selective and extremely strong international cultural and scientific exhibition, people would come.

IMPULSE: What kind of intelligence is being exhibited at this fair? The fact that the Pavilion of the Future is a geodesic dome, I find completely embarrassing.

SITE: Because this interview is going to be published in a Canadian publication and I'm an American working for the Fair, politically I cannot comment on that, nor do I have a right to comment on how they do it. But, you have to have imaginative people planning all aspects. You can't create a great fair on just an Eiffel tower.

IMPULSE: What are your personal feelings on how you see the Fair being managed and how do you feel about being part of it?

SITE: From an architectural standpoint, looking at the architectural innovation evidenced so far, there isn't any. So if somebody were being asked to comment, if I were in the architectural profession I don't know whether I would come. You cut interest levels out insofar as you deny those interest levels examples which are the cutting edge in their professions. So every time you deny the cutting edge example of any profession, you deny the possibility of three quarters of a million people who might be interested in that subject ever coming. That's why it behoves a fair to have people who are at the forefront of knowledge and imagination in their professions, to advise what kinds of exhibitions, what kinds of people should be selected.

IMPULSE: What will happen to the Fair grounds after the Fair?

SITE: If they maintained the grounds as a public space and kept it as an event, it would certainly be interesting, and it could easily become a landmark. I know it is being given over to developers afterwards, that's what fairs inevitably do. Developers depend on a fair to put in the landfill and the sewers, and then they move in for the kill. I assume this is the same. That's how they recoup their losses. Economically, it's like a rolling over of money, it all comes out okay in the end.

IMPULSE: You often refer to the New Orleans Fair. How was it a disaster?

SITE: New Orleans was an unmitigated disaster from every standpoint. It had, without a doubt, some of the stupidest people conceivable running the fair. They were totally unencumbered with imagination, and everything about the fair showed it. So now they're being completely dragged up and manacled because obviously there was hanky-panky going on. There was talk of deals under the table, which is real Southern decadence anyway, and the whole thing, to put on a terrible fair, done at a terrible time, for totally banal and commercial reasons, and the worst piece of post-modernist shit ever done by Charles Moore. So what do you expect?

IMPULSE: Were you invited to contribute to that fair?

SITE: I was there, with Frank Gehry and a few other people, to quote "co-contribute" ideas and naturally they couldn't wait to get us out of town because everything we said was contrary to what they were going to do anyway. We were just there as some kind of token entertainment, for one night. They got what they deserved. There is no comparison between New Orleans and Vancouver administration-wise; they are some very nice people, well-meaning, intelligent, earnest and with not the slightest, at least as far as I can tell, of the kind of degraded sense I felt in New Orleans. I mean I hit town and I knew something was wrong, I smelled a rat – I mean the rat got bigger and bigger.

"From an architectural standpoint, looking at the architectural innovation evidenced so far, there isn't any."

IMPULSE: How do we save the Fair when we already know it's going to be a disaster? How now can we act as cultural producers to make the Fair work?

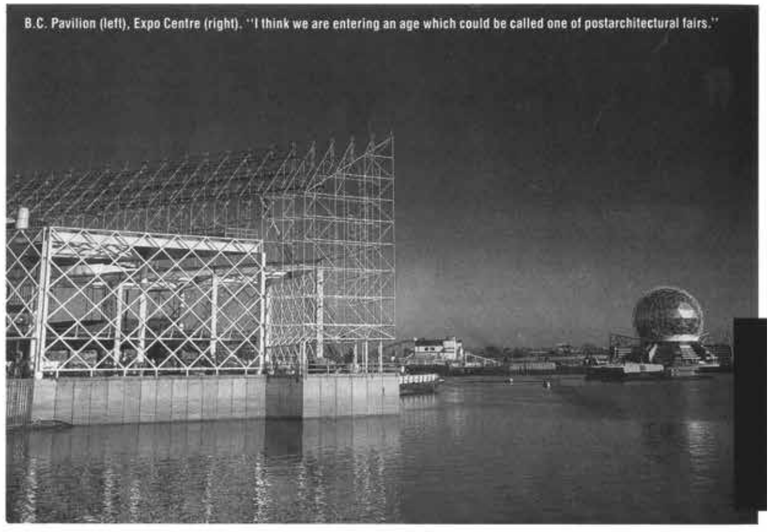
SITE: It's early enough to involve the arts, it's early enough to bring imagination to the Fair. We are expected to produce our pavilion in record time, and everyone else who would get involved could produce highly remarkable things in record time. This is a golden opportunity. I think there are a lot of people listening. We met some tremendously intelligent people. I think that New Orleans scared everyone, and rightfully so. There wasn't one single thing they did right. They even hired one of the worst architectural firms in the world. One of these big cumbersome politically connected monoliths, who belatedly discovered post-modernism. First they hired Charles Moore, whose only role in life is to make Venturi and Michael Graves look good, it's the only reason he's pacing the earth. Then you have the architects Prezes and Associates who are forty notches in talent level below that. So you can imagine the abysmal level of innovation, the crassness of this occasion.

IMPULSE: Do you actually think it's possible that if a group of cultural producers approached the World's Fair committee they would even pretend to listen?

SITE: If you went to them with a piece of tough literature under your arm they would be enticed. The only thing that is going to get me to the Fair, is if the Fair is interesting. What is going to provoke my interest? In my case it will be cultural, I'm really interested in cultural events, provocative, cutting edge. Anybody who is really familiar with culture, you don't want to see one more Mozart concert, you want a new music programme, or a new art programme, or a new architecture programme. Sure I'd go see a great classical show, but at the same time you want to see what's happening now, you want to see what's going on in the world. A fair is not a museum, a fair is an exposition of the future. So we'll see.

EXPO 1986

Richard Blagborne is Vice-President of Planning and Development for Expo 86, the World Exposition scheduled to take place in Vancouver, Canada May 2 to October 13, 1986. His responsibilities include the design of the overall Exposition, the design and contracting of all theme pavilions and theme plazas and their exhibits, planning the sites, and locating the pavilions.



B.C. Pavilion (left), Expo Centre (right). "I think we are entering an age which could be called one of postarchitectural fairs."

IMPULSE: Is this going to be a forward-looking, cutting edge exposition?

RICHARD BLAGBORNE: A forward-looking exposition attempting to present leading edge technology that is truly an international exposition, involving many Third World nations needs to take a somewhat broader view of technology. In the theme department we were very conscious of the fact that much of the leading edge technology is occurring in relatively few nations. In this particular theme, transportation and communications, it's the highly technically developed nations that have developed most of the leading edges. If the emphasis had been solely on leading edge technology, future technology, it would have created too great an emphasis on those nations and perhaps have inhibited our ability to have mounted a truly international exposition involving the Third World countries. Early in our discussions we decided that perhaps we needed a subtheme which would allow us to involve ingenuity of all types, even traditional types. In this division our approach is to try to celebrate man's ingenuity in terms of transportation. That approach allows us to encourage these other nations to celebrate ingenuity in things as simple as ox carts. It also allows us to celebrate their ingenuity in terms of application of existing technology, in applying technology which may have been developed by others in ingenious ways to solve their own particular problems. We were trying to broaden the scope, that is, not to emphasize leading edge technology alone, but rather to suggest this is a celebration of ingenuity in the theme of transportation.

IMPULSE: Don't you feel the choice of the geodesic dome as the architectural form for the Pavilion of the Future could be taken as an emblem of the retrograde nature of the entire Exposition?

RB: The geodesic dome was chosen not so much for its architectural imagery but rather for what goes on inside the building. The building was merely a functional response to that theme pavilion. One must keep in mind this is a category 2 exposition, it is not a universal exposition. I think we are entering an age which could be called one of postarchitectural fairs, where the emphasis is not on the individual architecture of the pavilions but rather the totality, i.e., the mix of landscape, architecture, exhibitry, entertainment and the spirit of the place designed as a whole. The approach we have taken is that we have a great deal of consistency in the modular system for the international exhibitions – which by the Fair's rules we provide – and it is punctuated by the diversity of the other buildings distributed throughout the site on the basis of trying to provide the variety in the right places.

IMPULSE: How are you attempting to involve the cultural community in this Fair?

RB: I can't say there is a special programme to reach out and involve image makers of varying cultural interests as part of the planning process of the Exposition. Rather, the mandate has been to focus on the visitor experience to achieve the spirit we are looking for.

IMPULSE: At this time how can the cultural producers of this country become involved in making this a better fair?

RB: At this time we are 95% committed in our design and we are about 70% committed on construction and we are on a very ambitious schedule to have the Exposition open in time. The biggest effort I am now involved in is the process of encouraging the internationals to improve the quality of their work. So a producer who was interested in spirit and wanted to manipulate the components would be too late. We're committed.

IMPULSE: So it's too late to rescue the Fair from banality?

RB: I'm very optimistic. I think there is a spirit of discovery. One of the things we are trying to do is to give the internationals, the corporations, all those who are doing exhibits an opportunity to present technology in a way that will make people feel good. People want to feel that technology is being used to solve real human problems, that it's not technology for technology's sake. So technology has to be seen in a context of cultural and the humourous and entertainment side of man. Technology should not be put on a pedestal as a thing alone, it has to be seen in a more integrated way. Which is why Site's *Highway 86* project is so appropriate, it has that ambivalence about the benefits of technology and also the problems of technology. It's right on target.

IMPULSE: The current advertising emanating from the Fair is reminiscent of Disney advertising from the mid-sixties.

RB: In the marketing section there is an emphasis on the entertainment aspect of the Exposition. There was an early decision that people who came to the Exposition would not only have educational experiences but would have a good time. Here in the design section we don't have the same emphasis, but we don't write the copy for the advertisements.

IMPULSE: Are you worried about the media fixation on the Fair's projected losses?

RB: We don't have time to be worried about those things, we have a mandate to do the very best we can and to try to generate the excitement which will make it a success; we can't stop to worry about projected losses.

China:

ARCHITECTURE

Wen is an Associate Professor of Architectural Design; she teaches in the Department of Architecture at the Nanjing Institute of Technology in the Jiangsu Province of the People's Republic of China. It is considered to be one of the top four schools in China. Larry Richards, Director of the School of Architecture at the University of Waterloo, Faculty of Environmental Studies, in an attempt to reinforce opportunities for teaching about the East was instrumental in organizing Professor Wen's visit to Canada for a year. Brian Boigon, who conducted the following interview, is an artist who teaches architecture.

BRIAN BOIGON: *What is your family background?*

WEN XIU: My father, when he was young, went to Japan to study factory management. There are seven children in my family; I have two brothers and four sisters, and all of us graduated from University. My mother was not an intellectual. She didn't work. She stayed at home.

BB: *As a woman, was it more difficult for you, thirty years ago, to enter the architectural profession than it would have been for a man?*

WX: No, I think that women had the same rights as men. It was 1951 when I entered University. At that time, the People's Republic of China had just instituted the two-year development program. So a lot of work had to be done in the country, both women and men were allowed to participate. Our class had seventy-eight students. Twenty-seven of them were women. This was a higher proportion of women than in other Departments of the University. When I graduated, I was sent by the government to the Nanjing Institute of Technology. In other Departments, it was difficult – but they still had some women.

BB: *Is it any easier for women to practice architecture now?*

WX: The proportion of female architects is in some places higher and in some lower. But I think the situation is just the same as after the Revolution.

BB: *Is there a set of prohibitions in the application of particular architectural styles or symbolic references in the School of Architecture in China? For example, can a student choose to design a building in, say, a western classical tradition?*

WX: In general, the students make onlyChinese designs. Sometimes, students read Western books, so they have an idea of western style. So sometimes they make designs with an International Style. I think, if the project is good functionally, and the structure is reasonable, I would accept it. Architectural design is complicated, a lot of elements must be considered.

BB: *If a student makes a building which does not look typical or traditional, would that be criticized?*

WX: They must do their creative work, not copy. But they must understand traditional buildings, so that the students will know their features. They have to be clarified in their minds.

BB: *In the West, in the 18th Century, and even before that, the practice of architecture was assisted by what is called a sourcebook. The catalogue illustrated various types of ornamentation, various stylistic principles for developing a particular appearance, building technologies that could be appropriate for a particular building. Do you give your students a sourcebook?*

WX: We introduce some designs to the students through such books. For example, Architecture Design students are required by their professors to read them. But in general, they find them by themselves.

BB: *Could those books could be from the East or the West?*

WX: Yes. In China now, the students use books from Western countries, from North America or Japan. They use periodicals. In our library, we have maybe 67 different journals from foreign countries and about 200 Chinese periodicals. Many students like to read the periodicals. They're popular.

BB: *Is there any period in Western or Eastern history that you cannot study in architecture?*

WX: I think that, now, it is all open. But in architectural design, students don't make Classical buildings of the West. I mean, the older, classical buildings such as the 18th Century or 19th Century. Only Modern Architecture, the International style.

BB: *Does China see the International Style as a style that could be appropriate for representing China's values?*

WX: We don't like the International Style much. But the students sometimes use International Style in their projects. But only in form. It must be built according to Chinese conditions and situations.

BB: *So the International Style has been in some ways modified to suit the Chinese program, the desire of the Chinese situation to make architecture.*

WX: In recent years, we've had some professors who've come from foreign countries. They often give lectures and introduce building design from other countries, such as 'post-modernism'. The students may be influenced by them. In our department, the history professors teach the architectural history of foreign countries, and introduce some theory and examples to the students. All of this influences the students.

BB: *In the West, the School of Architecture is often a very delicate institution, because there's a big debate as to whether architecture is ideological, or if architecture can be a political practice. Especially now in the late 20th Century, people borrow a style that might have meant something symbolically contrary to the ideology of the present situation. It's interesting how, in the West, we've come to empty meaning from specific historical styles and just take the form, without the ideological content. I wonder, if the attitude in China is like this idea that one can borrow anything.*

WX: I think that, in China, at the School of Architecture, they make design schemes which are a lot of different styles. But in general, if graduates from university work in an Architecture Design Institute they would be somewhat limited. In China, only some buildings are in the International Style. In general, they use the Chinese Style, but not Chinese classical buildings, because that type of building is very expensive. The structure is very complicated. For example, in Beijing, a modern hotel was designed by the United States, called the "Great Wall" hotel. It's in the typical International Style. But this hotel was designed in the United States. Another one in Beijing, is the Xiang Shan hotel, designed by I.M. Pei, who used some Classical Chinese style. These two hotels are different; one is typical International and the other uses some Chinese Classical elements. There are very few buildings like the "Great Wall" hotel in China.

BB: *So making reference to the Chinese history of architecture is encouraged.*

WX: This is a problem because China has a long history. In ancient times, buildings were pretty. But now this must be limited by some situations. So how to create a Chinese national style is now the problem. People like the Classical buildings. But, that style is so complicated. We can't build that kind of building now.

BB: *In the West, the conventions of architectural representation – plans, sections, elevations, exonometric projection, perspective – all these representations, historically, have also had a political attachment. At the School of Architecture here, we question why a student chooses a specific type of representation, to represent a building. What does it mean theoretically and politically. Do you give specific conventions, or do you leave certain drawings up to the students to decide?*

WX: There's a difference between the first and second years, and the higher years. In the first year, students generally have some art courses, to learn the principles of pencil drawing and watercolour. They learn graphic drawing and rendering. Rendering is a elementary requirement for every student. For example, rendering a pagoda, they use traditional Chinese ink. They render it in black and white. For other drawings, they can use colour. They use watercolour to render Chinese classical buildings. For this subject, the professor hands out one drawing to the students, then they go to the site to see the object. They make a sketch. Later, when they return to school, they have impressions and sketches, and they finish this rendering drawing. They can use different colours – some prefer grey, some use blue – but only one colour. Because, when they enter second year, they study watercolour painting, and at that time they can't use a lot of colours. This is our method, which is also the old teaching method. Our senior professors learned the North American method in the United States, in Pennsylvania during the 1920's. But this is the tradition and it continues. We still teach the first year students pattern design, for a book or for something else. I'm interested in this. Or furniture design. But in second, third or even fourth year, students aren't limited to one method of presentation for their design.

BB: *Has a student in the School of Architecture ever been legally expelled for practicing a radical architecture?*

WX: Sent away? No. Never. Some students may make strange designs, but we permit this. If a student has a strange idea, and he or she talks with the professor, we might help them to make reasonable progress with this. So finally, they'll improve. The design may be very strange, but if the function and structure work, OK, and the mark sometimes won't be very low. We can't give the students our ideas. They mustn't change their ideas to fit the professor's. We don't like it if they do. We consider the student's first idea to be very important. If they themselves want to change them, it's OK. But we never tell them, 'You must change your ideas'.

BB: *Where do graduate architects go after they complete their studies?*

WX: They don't find jobs by themselves. All of them get their jobs through the Government. In general, if a student has studied hard, they will leave for the architecture department of our Institute, or to another university in another city, to be teachers. A lot of students go to the Architecture Design Institutes to become architects. Quite a few students change to another department, but if the University knows the situation, we can write a letter and ask that department to change his job. So I think all of the students do sooner or later work in the field of architecture. We need a lot of architects, but we don't have very many.

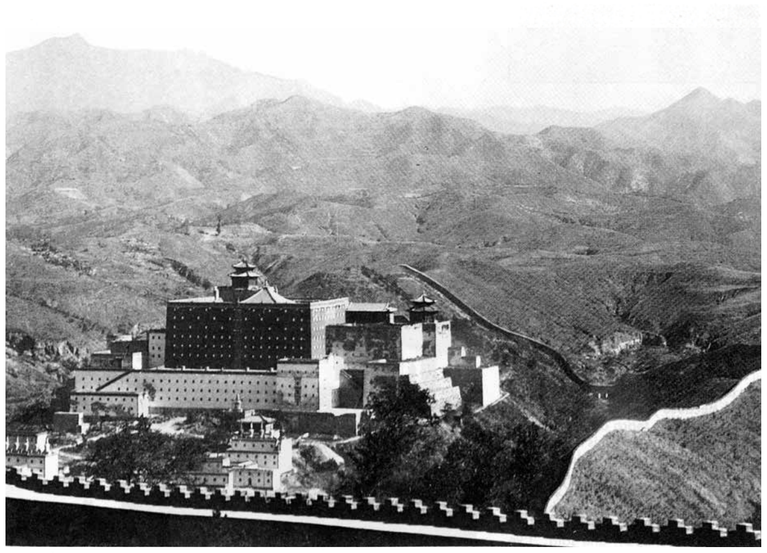
BB: *What was the effect of the Cultural Revolution on architecture? Did architectural style change?*

WX: I think so, yes. Chinese society has changed, and we are open to the Western countries. Over the last five or six years, and especially the last two, there's been a lot of foreign influence. We have visiting scholars, and send delegations to other countries. When they come back, they may have been influenced, particularly in technology and architectural form.

BB: *In the West, there has always been a struggle between architects and engineers. In the 20th Century here there's a blurry area between these two practices. It is feasible for engineers to design buildings rather than architects. Is this possible in China?*

WX: Not as far as I know. We've designed fairly simple structures, but the design is done by architects, not engineers. In China now, we have a shortage of architectural materials, such as steel structures or very complicated structural forms. The limitations of architecture lie in materials and technology; I notice the difference here in Canada. Our economic conditions are lower than in Western countries. We need a lot of housing, schools and hospitals. We must build these, but very economically.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID N. COHN



A Lamaist temple at Chengde, with wall in foreground surrounding Imperial Park.



Great Wall Hotel, Welton Becket Associates. ■

BB: *Do all the architects work for the Government?*

WX: Yes, almost. But now, in some cities, we have private design offices. These are just beginning. They've only existed for one or two years. Some architects and engineers have set up the design offices.

BB: *Do you think private architectural practice in China will become a trend?*

WX: Yes, but now there are very few such offices. Maybe the number will increase. But these offices must be approved by the government.

BB: *Who are the clients for the private practices?*

WX: In China, the factories and companies almost all belong to the government. They're nationalized. The clients are from among these nationalized companies, while the design offices themselves are privately-owned. For example, each design office must have a head architect, and several architect/partners and engineers. These people finance the offices by themselves. The clients must pay fees for designs.

BB: *And if they make a profit, do they keep it?*

WX: They must pay a lot of taxes to the government, but if they do a great deal of design, their salaries aren't too bad.

BB: *In the West, there's now a trend for architects to design the monuments for the city. This practice was lost in the modern period, it has been revived by architects, in conjunction with sculptors. Who designs and constructs the monuments in China?*

WX: Architects and artists, together.

BB: *And do you train students at the School of Architecture to design monuments?*

WX: Sometimes.

BB: *What kind?*

WX: Memorials...

BB: .... *to the revolution...?*

WX: Yes. But in recent years, this is not part of normal design work, only special projects. Quick design. This is the case in recent years because the program is only four years long now. But before, when the program was five years long, we'd spend several weeks making monuments. That topic used to be a big one. Now, it's kept simple.

BB: *So is the artist becoming more responsible for the design of monuments?*

WX: No. It's done by the teachers, the architects. But before, when we did big projects, we'd invite artists to introduce the subject to students....

Modern office tower at Yangtse River Dam, Hubei Province. ■



BB: *Do you have competitions?*

WX: Yes, in recent years, we have a lot of students take part in these competitions. The professors also take part. Sometimes, we have a prize for the winner.

BB: *Have you designed buildings yourself?*

WX: Yes. In recent years, I've designed ten buildings. Before I came to Canada, I did a project with another architect. I was the main architect, and another teacher designed the structure. We worked together. It's a high-rise apartment building. It's being built now.

BB: *Is there anything that you would like to add?*

WX: Yes. I've been here in Canada for five months, and this year I am attending the first year classes. I am very interested in your first year students, their design studio work, because this is quite different from our school. I appreciate your work because you combine literature, film and architecture. You don't teach a lot to the students, but you want students to learn. This is better for training. Also, I've seen how hard the students work. When I was in Quebec City, on the school field trip, I talked with the students. They liked Quebec City, and studied it in detail. I met a female student. She was looking at a very old church. There was no roof, only some wall left. She was very happy. She said, 'I've found my design site!' for this project. It was very interesting.



A pre-World War I building in what was, at the time, the Austrian concession of the port city of Tianjin. ■

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LUIS PUENZO ■ PHOTO: J. DOYLE

A middle-aged woman (Norma Aleandro) discovers her adopted child (Analia Castro) is the daughter of a "disappeared" couple. Photo: Courtesy of the Ontario Film Institute.

PUENZO

INTERVIEW BY

MIGUEL RAKIEWICZ

■ **As in other Latin American countries in the early seventies, the Argentine non-democratic left chose the path of urban guerilla warfare to achieve their goals. These guerilla attacks increased after the election that brought Juan Peron back to power. By a recent judicial estimate, the left-wing *Montonero* guerillas carried out over 2,000 attacks causing 500 deaths; many were civilians.**

With Peron's death, his widow/Vice President Isabel gained Constitutional access to power, adding ineptitude to the management of affairs of state. There was a wave of Peronist counter-guerilla actions, including homicides and terrorist attacks.

By the time the military coup took place on March 24, 1976, there was a wide consensus among the Argentine population that it was necessary to restore order. People like Liberal newspaper Editor and Publisher Jacobo Timmerman and writer Jorge Luis Borges warmly welcomed the coup.

Director of

THE OFFICIAL STORY

The military proceeded with a well thought-out annihilation campaign against not only the left-wing guerillas, but their civilian collaborators, sympathizers, and anyone suspected of leftist tendencies. Among the techniques applied during the repression was the "disappearance" – kidnapping, with no return – of thousands of "targets". A kind of twisted humanism lead some members of the repression squads to adopt the orphaned children of the people they had kidnapped, tortured and murdered.

In *The Official Story*, a middle-aged couple has adopted the small daughter of a "disappeared" couple. Director Luis Puenzo shows the wife's awakening to the horrors of repression, and the deterioration of her relationship with her husband. The film is a parable of the awakening of the Argentine people to their own guilty tolerance of repression. *The Official Story* received an award as "The Most Popular Film" at Toronto's "Festival of Festivals". For her role as the wife, Norma Aleandro received the "Best Actress" award at the Cannes Film Festival.

(Conversation before the interview.)

Miguel Rakiewicz: *By coincidence, the trial of the Generals in Argentina has reached its last stage this week.*

Luis Puenzo: Yes. I was at the trial several times...as a spectator, of course.

MR: *Why aren't there any explicit references in* The Official Story *to the urban guerilla violence in Argentina that finally resulted in repression against the left by the military government, and created a situation in which a majority of the Argentinian people tolerated that repression?*

LP: Because we made the film to be shown in Argentina, not as a way to tell the world what had happened there. We made it for a particular moment in Argentine history. At that time (in 1983), a majority of people living there knew what had happened very well; it was being widely dealt with by the press. It wasn't necessary to go back to the situation of ten years before the film, and to talk about the urban guerillas, because we Argentines knew what had taken place then. We felt that what was missing was a source of reflection integrating a number of the issues, such as the "disappeared", economic corruption, and the policies of Martinez de Hoz (former Minister of the Economy).

We thought all of these matters were part of one and the same problem, and that a lot of people needed to reflect about it; people who thought they could remain insulated from all the horror, or who denied that the horror in Argentina had in fact existed under everyone's nose.

Although it might seem incredible to people in other countries, there are people in Argentina who didn't know, and preferred not to know. That was the subject of the film. We're surprised by the repercussions it has had in other parts of the world. Maybe it's as Chekhov said, "*Paint your own small town*".

MR: *However, for people abroad who watch the film and don't happen to be Argentinian, or Uruguayan, it must be inexplicable to see apparently civilized people act in such an aberrant way, lowering themselves to torture, "disappearances", the kidnapping of children, and so on. It would seem as if all Argentines suddenly went crazy by some odd coincidence. But, in fact, there were reasons for what took place.*

LP: However, if we had taken the route of explaining the past, we would probably have had to go back fifty years in history, not just ten.

MR: *Maybe, but the people alive ten years later are those who tolerated the repression, the killing of children, the torture. They probably weren't around fifty years before.*

LP: No. But Argentina's historical cycle of coups and the advance of militarism over civilian life started, probably, in the "Tragic Week" (Semana Tragica) during the Thirties. I think that, if one makes a political analysis, one has to include the entire historical political development of Argentina. What you suggest would be like deciding, in an American movie about Vietnam, to explain why that war took place beginning with Nixon's policies, or going back even further. A people has its own memory, and in a cultural product such as a film, to explain everything would be impossible.

MR: *Here, in Canada, did Anglo interviewers ask you why the Argentine people behaved this way when military repression took place?*

LP: Why they kept quiet, looked the other way...?

MR: *Yes. Or said "Well, if those people were repressed, it must have been for some good reason."*

LP: Yes. What happened was because the Argentine people are not heroic. There is no such thing as an heroic people. What can be said is that Argentina got out from under the military without violence. Elections have taken place and democracy took power by pressure from the people. Now the people are putting the ones on trial who were their executioners for seven years.

MR: *Didn't anyone ask why Argentines didn't do anything when people were being taken from their homes at midnight?*

LP: I think to say people didn't do anything at all is an exaggeration. If there is democracy today and the military are on trial, this is an event with no precedent in world history.

MR: *Not in Latin America, but there was Nuremberg...*

LP: Our case isn't like Nuremberg, because Germany was a country that was defeated, and the trial was conducted by the victors. In Argentina, the people themselves have brought those who repressed them to trial. Probably, the only close parallel is what happened in Greece, where they tried their own military junta, and put the Colonels in jail – a much more important event than that of Nuremberg. I think that our trial of the Argentine military demonstrates that, in fact, something was done, because the Generals did not fall by chance.

MR: *But, if you consider what happened, the Generals didn't fall because the people "awoke" to the horrors of repression, but because the military failed in the Falklands war...*

LP: That was the straw that broke the camel's back.

MR: *But, if they'd won the war, they would still be around, and your film would not exist...*

LP: They might be. The film, however, would exist nonetheless...

MR: *Yes, but in Uruguay, Spain, or elsewhere...*

LP: In another form. I must say, however, that the Argentine people did what they could. It was very difficult to acknowledge the existence of the horrors. Outside Argentina, people had a lot of information about the repression, but inside the country that information only existed underground, and it was very difficult to spread it.

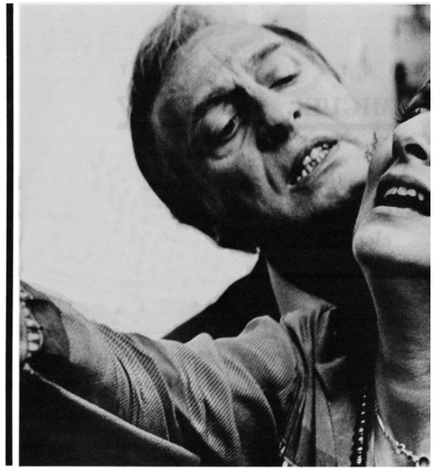
Six million Jews didn't want to believe what was happening to them under Hitler, that they were being carried away to concentration camps to be killed. But that's what happened. I think that this kind of phenomenon has occurred many times throughout history, and I believe that films like *The Official Story*, and other cultural products, can be useful in helping people understand how things took place. Think of what happened to the American people during the Vietnam war. They were better informed than we were in Argentina, but ended up involved in the war; only after suffering through it, they started to know how they were taken into it by their government.

It's true that the war helped in bringing down the military dictatorship, but it wasn't the only factor.

MR: *I would say the defeat was only second in importance to the economic situation of the country.*

LP: That's the point, because, as is shown in the film, the economic policies that failed were part of an all-encompassing project for the country. The military didn't act as they did because they went crazy, but to impose a clear economic project through repression. It was well planned, and imposed upon Chile, Uruguay and Argentina. It came from Milton Friedman's Chicago School (of economics), and required the same type of repression in all three countries.

MR: *We were talking, however, about the reaction to repression by the so-called average Argentinian, who was to remain neutral, or say, "Let them fix it among themselves." A point had been reached at which the left was murdering the right, and the right was murdering the left, in city streets. This was before the military coup in 1976. The average guy said, "Well, this is none of my business", and switched off his conscience after two or three years of continuous political shootings, killings and kidnappings. Thus, when the coup took place, people like Jacobo Timmerman and (writer) Ernesto Sabato were in favour of it. The average Argentinian was quite happy with the military coup, given what had been taking place before.*



LP: Yes, but you describe the coup as a "before-and-after" thing. In fact, in Argentina after Juan Peron's death, and shortly before it, Peronism decayed and was taken over by its extreme right-wing, which was in power when the coup took place. The government had debased itself to the level of gangster-fascism. At that time, the military had already been involved in the right-wing gangs that did the killings. It is now becoming known that there were agreements between them and the government. The coup was only a surface change, and did not represent a change of the ideology of those in power. It was not a clear break from what had been taking place before.

MR: *On the matter of people's feelings about the economic project you refer to, we know that there was a period during which people were quite happy with the way the military were running the economy. It was a period of apparent prosperity. Their humanitarian feelings about how badly some were being repressed only arose afterwards, when the economic situation got tough, unemployment rose and the value of the peso plummeted. But during prosperous times, the average Argentinian backed the economic project of the Generals, since he could then afford to travel to Miami to buy colour TV sets.*

TONY SCHWARTZ: *Electronic Persuasion*

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER: In just thirty-five years television has emerged as this country's primary and most powerful conveyer of information. The messages we see and hear are impossible to ignore. Advertisers spend a billion dollars a year to make us feel guilty about ring around the collar. It is why politicians will spend fortunes to show us a thirty second image of themselves walking on a beach. Now there are those who argue that a new sector of society, those concerned with social change, will have to learn to use media as well. That the old forms of social protest and organizing can't compete anymore. That every group, whether it is promoting clean air or the equal rights amendment, will have to get access to the media, even make their own commercials or else they will have to see their point of view obliterated by opponents who use the media more wisely. To begin our evaluation, a visit with a man who is on the cutting edge of media for social change, a central character in the evolution of television as the great persuader. In the media business the recognized master craftsman in selling everything from soap to candidates, is Tony Schwartz.

ELDON GARNET: *I'm interested in who you are, and what you have done.*

TONY SCHWARTZ: My name is Tony Schwartz, if the name tells you anything. I was born in midtown Manhattan sixty-two years ago. I studied advertising design. After the war, I got a job designing annual reports. A gadget hound by nature, I bought a wire recorder and started recording. It was 1945, and at that time there weren't many folk music records, so I would record stuff off the air. Back then, the only way a person could hear himself was to get a disc cut. It cost about four dollars. The average folk singer didn't make enough money to afford that. So, I began to record for musicians who wanted to hear the songs they were working on. I built up a collection of people like Burl Ives, Josh White, Pete Seager, Harry Belafonte – anyone I'd meet around. This gave me the idea of exchanging first wire recordings then tapes with people around the world. I put ads in foreign journals asking people to exchange with me. Eventually I collected material this way from about 42 countries. I made up my own programs in foreign languages. Later, I was a guest on a radio program, and I got a telephone call from a very wealthy man who, after he heard about my work, wanted to meet me. He offered to give me a few years off to do anything I wanted in sound. I decided to study the noncommercial musical life of my postal zone, New York 19, from the Hudson River to Fifth Avenue, 59th Street to 42nd Street. The music and theatre businesses, four of the five major record companies were in this area. The opera house was one block outside of it, and the largest church in the United States was across the street. It was a fantastic neighbourhood, with a tremendous amount of folklore, many national groups, children playing games in the street, street musicians, jazz clubs, and barkers. Folkways Record Company heard of my work and the first record I did for them was of *Children's Games of the Streets*. The art directors' club invited me to speak about my hobby. They'd never been able to use real children in commercials. They'd always used older women to imitate them. The problem was, they approached the recording of children the same way as adults. That is, you gave them a script to read – but kids couldn't read. I would take a child and say, "Let's play a game. You say what I say." I'd say a line and then he'd copy it and I'd get his charm. I'd have him do it four or five different times, and I'd cut out all his good lines, then call in an actor to read the in-between lines. Well, these commercials just blew the world apart. Overnight I was in a new business. I did all the Ivory Snow commercials, Johnson's Baby Powder, Band-Aids, everything with children. I was typecast as Mr. Children's Recordist. Later I began doing the sounds of places for Eastern Airlines, American Airlines, British Airlines and so forth. Within a short while I became known as America's advertising world's king of sound.

I had a reputation of being talented, expensive, and difficult. Which isn't bad, because when they came to me they were prepared to fight, pay money and get something good. I received a copy of McLuhan's book, Understanding Media as a gift. I don't think I finished more than twenty pages, but it just blew my mind. I instantly saw why I was difficult. The advertisers and I were both playing the same ball game but in different ball parks. They were playing in a print-oriented ball park and I was playing in a sound-oriented one. McLuhan knew of my records and he came over. He said he only had an hour to spend because he had to take a plane to Toronto, but he stayed three days. After meeting me, McLuhan said he had met a disciple with 20 years' experience. We became fast friends. He asked if I would teach with him for a year at Fordham University where he had the Schweitzer chair. I taught the classes here in my office and McLuhan attended all of them.

ANNOUNCER: Tony Schwartz's technique is to draw on people's passions and fears. There is no better example than the famous Daisy spot that he created for Lyndon Johnson's 1964 campaign.

TELEVISION AD

The Daisy spot shows a little girl in a field counting petals on a daisy. As her count reaches ten, the visual motion is frozen and the viewer hears a countdown. When the countdown reaches zero, we see a nuclear explosion and hear President Johnson say, "These are the stakes, to make a world in which all God's children can live, or to go into the darkness. Either we must love each other or we must die." As the screen goes to black at the end, white lettering appears stating, "On November 3rd, Vote for President Johnson."

PHIL DONOHUE: All of them trek to his door. He's got a little cubbyhole in New York that he never leaves. He's had Carter there. He's had Teddy Kennedy there. Talk about power. You're the mogul. You're the person, Mr. Schwartz, that America ought to be terrified of. You shape public opinion. You decide who's going to run.

T.S.: I have done over 400 political advertisements, and worked on five presidential campaigns. I have become very well-known in the political field. My area of expertise is radio and symbolic TV. I'm not a cinema verite person. I don't travel and I'm not a filmmaker as such. I basically deal with design and communication. I've written two books on this subject, *The Responsive Chord* and *Media: the Second God*. I feel, if we are working in politics and can affect people's thinking and behaviour to a large degree in a very short time with an electronic medium, why not use this for social purposes? So I started volunteering for things that I felt were meaningful to the community. I used media to make the behaviour of the police an open social contract with the community, to bring fire education to the public.

RADIO AD

MALE VOICE: A fire breaks out on the first floor of a two family house. The woman quickly leaves to call the fire department. And two people die upstairs overcome by smoke.

Do you know that a door is one of the best pieces of fire fighting and life saving equipment? And if you leave a room that is on fire, if you simply close the door it will help stop the fire and smoke from spreading too quickly.

T.S.: I studied the role of shame in primitive cultures and found that the same conditions exist today, in that shame works in closed communication environments, small villages. You can speak to anyone anywhere and everyone everywhere in this country in less than a a 60th of a second. We're in a national village.

You can actually condemn a man to death by shaming him. In oral societies, where the self, the individual, is defined collectively and where he derives his strength from the social structure, when he is denied access to that, cut off from it, he often dies. The secret of that is that they first condemn the man through ridicule, then everyone ignores him. Now, in primitive societies, you often find that there are individuals whose strength of character is strong enough to withstand the condemnation of society. But they generally flee. The result to society is then proof – no man is around who has ever defied the public condemnation. They are either dead or they are gone.

Edmund Carpenter, Anthropologist

I've used media to shame politicians into saving a school that was closed down by the state; preventing strikes by service unions, including firefighters and the police. In Massachusetts, when I heard that the federal government cut out student aid, I found the head of the Association of Independent Colleges and I said, "I'll do a campaign for you to get the state legislature to take over what the federal government cut out." We shamed the state legislature into it, saying that the schools were a major industry in this state that brought in much more money than the state would have to put in. The first year we received 38 million dollars. The second year we got an additional 50 million dollars. This year we're going for more. As my reward they gave me an honourary doctorate from all the schools in Massachusetts.

RADIO AD

Paid for by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts.
MALE VOICE: President Reagan, how would you like to make more than a thousand percent profit on every dollar the government invests? Well, your economists are throwing away hundreds of billions of dollars, yes hundreds of billions of dollars by cutting back on student loans. They seem to think that education costs. What every college student, even though he's not studying economics, knows is that education pays. The average college student earns three hundred thousand dollars more in his work life than a high school graduate does. The taxes that are paid on this income, directly and indirectly, would bring the government a profit of hundreds of billions of dollars. Now that's better than any other investment anyone can make. President Reagan, don't let your economic advisers make you look penny-wise and pound-foolish. Student loans are a small temporary investment that pay back hundreds of billions of dollars. Tell your advisers that education doesn't cost us money, it pays.

E.G.: *You didn't charge them for this work?*

T.S.: Nothing. I work on anything that I'm interested in and if I can get money for it I take it and if I can't… as long as they don't legitimately have it, I don't mind working for nothing. I'm doing work for the AIDS Medical Foundation. It's a tragic sickness, and people know very little about it. The afflicted are treated like lepers. I've done commercials with the top medical authorities on how you really get AIDS, what you have to be careful of, to remove the fear.



I find that advertising agencies tend to work in what I call "obsoletely the right way". They are using yesterday's theories and techniques for today's problems and technologies. They are dealing with the principles of perception in a field where you need to understand reception. They are dealing with learned recall. In reality what functions most in electronic media is evoked recall. The industry has its theories and it's stuck with them, stuck with certain habits of yesteryear. There is one approach called The Unique Selling Proposition. In print, if five companies make the same claim, each has a 20% chance of being perceived as telling the truth. Whereas if these companies all make different claims, then each has a a 50% chance of selling. So, there was an unwritten law preventing any two companies from making the same product claim. Now in electronic media it doesn't work that way because I could have five announcers read a piece of copy and you'll say, I like that guy best. There are other factors that affect you. So you don't need to go across to another position in electronic media, you can go deeper into the same position.

E.G.: *I'm interested in the specifics of some of your campaigns. You mentioned you used shame or guilt to initiate action. What was your first guilt or shame campaign?*

T.S.: The cancer society was always showing images of lungs affected by tar and nicotine. I felt that I could do a spot for them taking the "educational" area into a new ballpark of emotions by using what I've learned to be one of the most effective means of social control in our day and age, and that is shame.

ANNOUNCER: The frontier of electronic persuasion was first entered when anti-smoking organizations enlisted the media to fight cigarette ads.

TELEVISION AD

The audience sees two little children, a boy and a girl, playing in an attic. They are dressed up in their parent's old wedding clothes. As we watch them in this familiar bit of children's play, we hear the voice of the announcer saying, "Children love to imitate their parents...Children learn by imitating their parents...Do you smoke cigarettes?" The commercial concludes with the visual symbol of the American Cancer society.

ANNOUNCER: So twenty years later we have the Pope of all people doing the voice over on your anti-nuclear war commercial. How did that come about?

T.S.: Over the years people interested in the nuclear question, have come to me saying, could we borrow the "Daisy" spot to show? I preferred to do something new that could affect people today. How could I bring the feeling of the "Daisy" spot back? Who could be the narrator today? I thought the one person that knows how most people would feel, who would be dedicated to the human aspects of this, would be the Pope.

TELEVISION AD

Pope John Paul II: We are troubled by the development of weaponry exceeding in quality and size the means of destruction ever known before and the continual production of ever more powerful and sophisticated weapons. True that there is a desire to be ready for war. And being ready means being able to start it. It also means taking the risk that sometime, somewhere, somehow, someone can set in motion general destruction. It must be our solemn wish for the children of all the nations on earth to make such catastrophes impossible.
The wish of Pope John Paul II.
Brought to you by the United States Catholic Bishops.

ANNOUNCER: On June 12, 1982 there was an enormous anti-nuclear war rally in New York's Central Park. Should have the organizers instead put their money into television ads?

T.S.: They got millions of people to Central Park. They came from all over the country and it lasted for a day or two, and the cost of getting them there was close to thirty million dollars. If they had taken half that budget and put it into media, they could have controlled their communication. Twelve million dollars on television is as much as they spend on a presidential campaign.

E.G.: *Let's say I am a social organization coming to you for assistance. What would your relationship with these clients be?*

T.S.: There are all sorts of problems that arise. People have to know how to be good clients and many don't. An organization came to me when they wanted me to do some work, but they couldn't take the idea of really coming out and fighting. The worst enemies of this type of work are the lobbyists because their stock in trade is to be nice to people you want something from. They feel threatened, they don't want to attack, and in a social environment, the desire to avoid pain is much stronger than any anger.

TELEVISION AD

MALE VOICE: Take a moment to imagine that you're a New York City cop, all right? You've just been sent to an armed robbery in progress at a supermarket. When you get there a man comes running right at you. He has a gun in his hand. You have no time to take cover. You yell "Police, Stop!" His gun suddenly swings towards you. What do you do? You've got a life and death decision to make. Is that man with the gun the owner of the store? Is he an off-duty cop or is he an armed killer? If he's an armed killer will he drop the gun because he's been caught or will he kill you? Remember you have less than a split second to make your decision. Do you stand there and ask him to drop his gun or do you shoot him and hope you get him before he gets you? If your answer was 'Shoot', did you make the right decision or did you kill the store owner or an off-duty cop? Well you've just learned what a cop goes through. It's a decision he has to make in an instant and live with the rest of his life.
Brought to you by the Patrolman's Benevolent Association so the police and the public can better understand each other.

T.S.: I feel the quickest way to socially embarrass anyone is to make their behaviour public and ridiculous. You can go straight out and attack Reagan. I think Reagan ought to be attacked. He's a goddam liar. Now, it's dangerous to have a liar for a President and what's even more dangerous is to have a President that doesn't even know he's lying. I felt this last political campaign was a disaster, so I made commercials to show how I would have approached some of the problems.

PROPOSED RADIO AD

MALE VOICE: Brought to you by the Mondale for President Committee.
Now, an-off-the record comment of the President of the United States: "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I've found legislation that will outlaw Russia for ever. We begin bombing in five minutes."
Nuclear warfare is a joking matter to Ronald Reagan, but the rest of the world sees it as hostile to the U.S.S.R.. That's why we ask, is Ronald Reagan someone to lead us to nuclear peace, huh?

CAROLYN WHITE: *You weren't actually hired to do these ads for Mondale, you did them on your own. Did you send them to him?*

T.S.: I sent them to an assistant and they didn't use them.

PROPOSED RADIO AD

MALE VOICE: Did you pay your income tax last year? Most of us did. Who do you think paid more taxes over the last three years? A cleaning lady or five of the nation's top military contractors? Well the cleaning lady paid more taxes in one week than most contractors paid in 1981, 1982 and 1983 put together. It's hard to believe but they made ten and a half billion dollars in those three years. And you know what? They didn't pay one penny in taxes. Now that is a fact. You see, that is the real Reagan tax plan and we have lived under it ever since he's been in office. If you like the plan, re-elect President Reagan. If you don't like Reagan's plan, vote for Mondale.
This information was carefully documented, researched and paid for by the Mondale for President Committee.

T.S.: I just wanted to show the Mondale campaign what they could have been doing.

C.W.: *When you put one of these social ad campaigns together, it's obvious the concept is yours, but do you also select the actors and write the final copy?*

T.S. I do everything. I have an assistant who writes with me, who is learning my style.

C.W.: *Do you ever use women in your ads?*

T.S. Yes.

C.W.: *The voices I've been hearing in the selections you've played all have a very similar sound. Do you use the same actor more often than others?*

T.S. I use three or four people, but when you say similar sound, it's an attitude that's similar.

C.W.: *How would you describe the attitude?*

T.S. It's talking directly to people. It's not pontificating. People want to be spoken to just the way we are speaking to each other now.

E.G.: *How do you make people feel guilty, especially politicians?*

T.S. They don't need to feel guilt. What they need to feel is that people will think they are shits if they don't do this, or that what they are doing is anti-human.

E.G.: *Is the media pro-Reagan?*

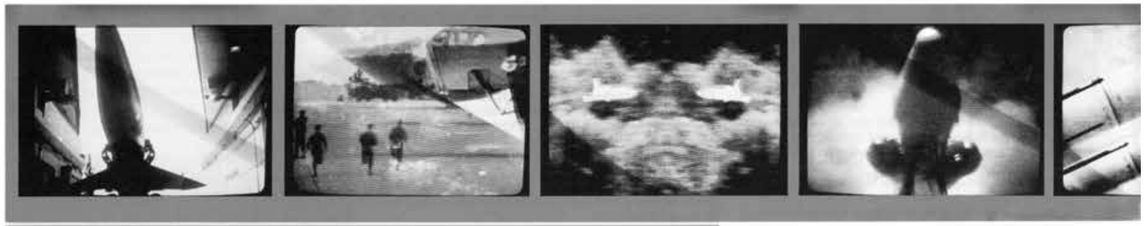
T.S. No. They're pro-stupid. They just aren't sharp. The media is very ignorant about many things. It took a while for the media to go after Joseph McCarthy. Finally Ed Morrow did, then everybody jumped on the bandwagon.

PROPOSED RADIO AD

MALE VOICE: Paid for by the Mondale for President Committee.

When Pinocchio told a lie you could tell. Every time he lied his nose grew longer and longer. But let's take a good-looking, friendly, humourous, rosy-cheeked fatherly man in his seventies who has years and years of acting experience behind him. If he tells a lie does it show? And how many people looking and listening to him are even willing to believe that this nice man might be lying? He said he never used make-up but his own autobiography says he did, so he had a little lie. He says he's cut government spending, but actually he's increased the national debt more than all our past presidents combined. So we have a big lie. Now we have to face two great dangers, the first, our President lies. The second, our kindly President may not even be aware that he is lying. Huh?

1984 • THE POPE SPOT



PROPOSED RADIO AD

MALE VOICE: Did you hear that Reagan commercial the other day? The one where he claimed he's cut spending? Well he has cut spending, for the hungry, the elderly, for dependent mothers, for student loans, and for cleaning up toxic wastes and things like that. And you know he takes credit for these cuts? But the other half is that we now have the largest national debt in the history of the United States and President Reagan has raised it more than all other Presidents combined. That's the whole truth about Reagan and spending. Brought to you by the Mondale for President Committee.

E.G.: *You tend to end your ads with "Huh?"*

T.S. I'm talking to people, I'm not selling something.

E.G.: *You are selling an ideology.*

T.S. I'm trying to communicate to someone. You can apply selling to anything. Teachers are selling when they talk to their pupils. I'm more interested in communication than advertising. People say you shouldn't sell candidates the way you sell soap. I wouldn't even sell soap the way they sell soap. I'm trying to affect people, and to use their existing thinking in the process of affecting them.

ANDREW PAYNE and
RICHARD WELLEN

John O'Neill is Distinguished Research Professor of Sociology at York University, Toronto, and an affiliate of the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He has written Sociology as a Skin Trade (1972), Making Sense Together (1974), Essaying Montaigne (1982), For Marx Against Althusser (1982), and Five Bodies (1985), as well as numerous articles, several translations and edited works. He has lectured widely in Europe, North America and Japan.

INTERVIEW

JOHN O'NEILL

John O'Neill: *Five Bodies* is, of course, a book with pictures. And it would be possible, I think, to treat it as a kind of iconic text. I had originally wanted Klee's *"Leaning Lady"* on the cover. (I see her body as a body in five pieces). But what I got instead was Leonardo's "well proportioned" man, who is, unfortunately, biphallic. Now I would have thought that the discourse of *Five Bodies* is anything but bi-phallic. I see it rather as a feminized discourse, feminized in the sense that it insists on a "gendered cosmology" as that which renders male and female strong together. It's the forces which divide us from ourselves, treating man or woman in isolation, it is these agencies which are criticized throughout the book. So the *"Leaning Lady"* was to be my icon. Now, she was to be played off another woman, Winston's "I smoke for only one reason" lady. You know what she looks like. She's very authoritative, well dressed, absolutely self-possessed. Anyway, the idea that she could have only *one* reason, (and that reason should be the equation of pleasure and reason, in defiance of our entire philosophical tradition – sending it up in smoke) – is what I find strange. Of course, her body is, if you like, disgendered. Her whole posture and language serve at once to exclude and to expropriate the male through the appropriation of a superficial confidence and assertiveness. She's a model of self-sufficiency, an icon of the consumer sovereign. Now opposed to this "consumptive woman", I also use the Christ. It seems to me the sort of solitude we see here in the body of Christ, or in the *"Leaning Lady"*, is very different from that loneliness which surrounds the consumer queen: it is a compassionate, generative solitude. The body of Christ is a composite body, enclosing the tree of life. Against this I also play off the transplant points of modern medicine's "prosthetic body". And between these two, we see the "body politic" – which is also a mystical body – finds itself translated into the body of the therapeutic sciences. So, as I said, *Five Bodies* can be seen as an iconic narrative, a history at whose far end stands the revisioning of our scientific imagination, and the re-inscription of the body in a socio-text which discourses upon its beginnings, ends and zero points of pleasure, pain, knowledge and ignorance.

"In 1982, TIME's Man of the Year was a computer. Despite the heralds of the communications era, I believe this is an age of ever deeper communicative incompetence, a speechless age."

IMPULSE: The analysis of *Five Bodies* is guided by a double imperative: you call for both a "refamilization" of the political community and a "radical anthropomorphism". Could you describe what these terms mean for you, what sort of projects they imply?

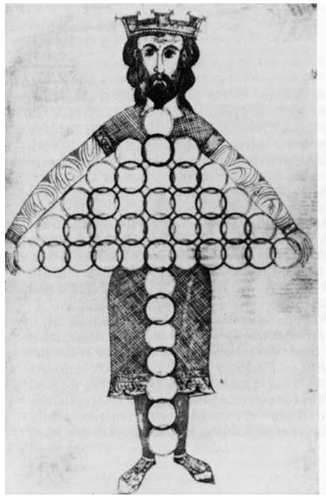
JO: The two notions of "radical anthropomorphism" and "refamilization" are condensations that speak to a desire to see ourselves as the ground and goal of institutions from which we are increasingly "read out". In 1982, *Time*'s Man of the Year was a computer. Despite the heralds of the communications era, I believe this is an age of ever deeper *communicative incompetence*, a speechless age. I believe the schools and universities must share the responsibility for the reduction of knowledge to information and for abandoning the humanist project of civic intelligence and public eloquence through which men and women achieve civility. Such a project is unthinkable in a society which idolizes the family, degrades parents, and seduces children with premature desires and opinions. Thus I believe all men and women should honour the family as a thinking and loving body whose critical intelligence and sensibility is a gift that cannot be contracted or substituted for except in the imaginery of the therapeutic state complex. Thus I am quite opposed to the alliance between feminism and defamilization because I believe ordinary people all over the world work hard to keep themselves together, paying a heavy price for their families which from generation to generation have contributed to our endurance. I cannot see how we would exchange the bonds of family for the bondage of neo-individualism.

IMPULSE: It's unclear to me how and why you equate feminism with neo-individualism, or for that matter, antifamilialism. Clearly, the most cursory examination of contemporary feminist discourse – and I think it is essential that we recognize the polyvalence of that discourse – would demonstrate not only that it represents a profound rethinking of and commitment to the problem of ethics, of community responsibility, but also that its stance as regards the state's absorption of a "care" of the body which heretofore fell to the family, is much less univocal than you seem to think. Far from contributing to that erasure of "embodied" and differentiated" history which you describe as the "therapeutic state", it seems to me that feminism, in its insistence that the political subject is a sexed subject, by definition, places an ethics of "difference" of "incommensurability", back on the agenda. You call *Five Bodies* a "feminized" text. Yet in it there are things which would disturb most feminists ....

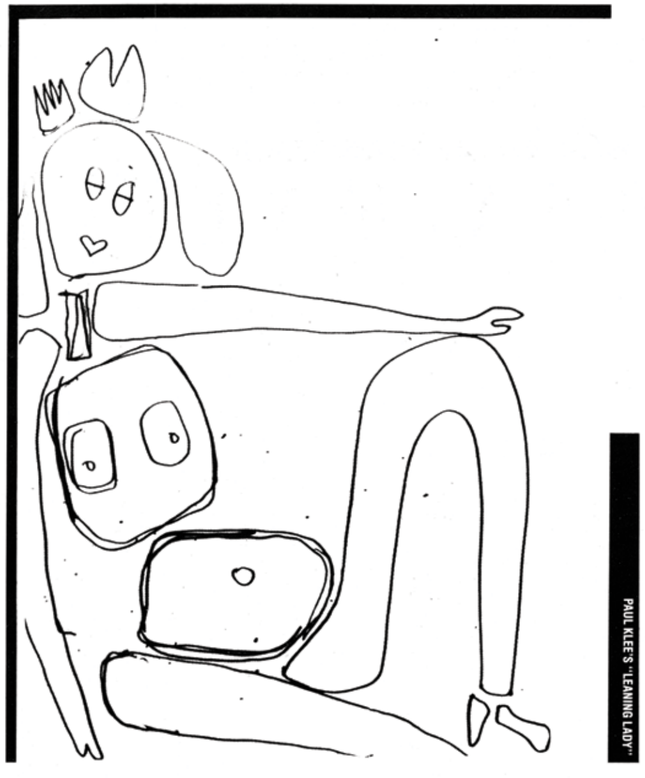
JO: Clearly, to say feminized is not to say feminist. I am trying to preserve a sense of the feminized as entailing a "gendered cosmology", a selective history, the sanctity of life's gift.

IMPULSE: By which you mean?

JO: I suppose I'm trying to preserve the sense that we get in Vico and in Durkheim, that no human being can think of him or herself as alone. Clearly, we live in a society that has lost its sense of polity, a society where individuals understand themselves or assume the neurosis of being independent of others. What I see feminism tending to do is to deepen the modernist project of perceiving ourselves as owing to nothing but ourselves, whether that self be male or female. And, of course, that cannot be done without trading on the surplus value of collective energies which brought us here by way of a long history, a history



MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION. CHRIST, c. 1341



PAUL KLEE'S "LEANING LADY"

which we disavow in the present care of the Third World and in those "familied histories" to which we owe ourselves. These "individualisms" only achieve their power by increasing the power of the liberal, therapeutic state, deepening the places where late capitalism is able to extract surplus value, is able to extract – through various therapeutic strategies – allegiances in the name of a liberation of individual subjects. If early capitalism extracts surplus value from labour, it seems to me that late capitalism extracts its surplus from language and life, its discourses are directed toward a reorganization of our lives – medically and so on. Now if the state wants to oversee and control the life cycle, it must separate male and female, while, paradoxically, rendering them equal; it must annul the family and have it buy itself back through those discourses abstracted from it by the therapeutic, professional complex in which feminists play a role. This is how I see it. Otherwise, we find ourselves in the position of saying that late capitalism has acquired a moral conscience with regards to child rights, abortion, equal pay, which places it on a level of morality higher than the world has ever known. Whereas, we know capitalism to be the society most exploitative of the human body and most destructive of the human species. If capitalism is able to reproduce life, it needn't reproduce the family; if it doesn't have to reproduce the family, it doesn't have to reproduce classes; and if it doesn't have to reproduce classes, it doesn't have to reproduce ideologies. … Such would be its extreme *telos*.

IMPULSE: So your task would be to "reinvent" a family which would not be a de-politicizing agent of socialization?

JO: Yes. In my opinion the family needs to be more intelligent, more political than ever before, because it's up against a state apparatus which is able to seduce families, to seduce men and women and children, to seduce workers and consumers more powerfully than ever before.

IMPULSE: And precisely by inviting them to find their freedom outside the family.

JO: Such is the wisdom of the eighties. It immediately feeds you back not to the family but into those professionalized discourses which sell you what, after all, you thought you already had. I think, then, there must be a shift away from the "neo-individual" towards the species as a locus of human rights. It is necessary to rethink the whole notion of rights and duties from the standpoint of the body politic, of an embodied politics.

IMPULSE: When you invoke the notion of "communicative competence", you are being careful, then, not to invoke a "contractual rationality" applied to the notion of justice … .

JO: Yes. This doesn't mean that in a particular institution there would not be contracts of a kind. But what Durkheim said about the language of the contract was that it only works when it presupposes the pre-contractual. Part of the argument of *Five Bodies* and my earlier book, *Making Sense Together: An Introduction to Wild Sociology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) has to do with the *gift*, the gift as that which is presupposed by the contract. And the gift really is the species or life. The gift is life, not the individual. But neo-individualism teaches us to live off the species' moral capital without returning anything, thereby diminishing both our past and our future.

IMPULSE: I guess that's something like Wittgenstein's notion of the conventionality and rules of language games – the idea that conventionality is a form of life.

JO: There are attempts in neo-Keynsian economies to evaluate the form of life. It's really very strange. With respect to, say, the problem of pollution, there are attempts to construct arguments that your right to clean air is something you might sell off. Now what's wrong with that is the idea you in any sense "own" your right to clean air. So with regards to the Wittgensteinian "limit", it's in places like economics that you get this attempt to absorb or transcend the limit. The other place is, of course, medicine, where it really looks as though man's life might be engineered throughout. Medicalized life, then, would not be a gift; it would be a contract, something to be negotiated. We already have the legal-medical discourse on that where we can look at life as a by-product, an extrapolation of well edited D.N.A. material. We already envisage legal suits by future offspring against parents who fail to check their D.N.A. endowment. Now the discourse of feminism, it seems to me, contributes to that form of life which would see itself as uniquely contracted, but from the state.

IMPULSE: Is that what you'd call "disembodied rationalities"?

JO:Absolutely. What I mean is, forget about the idea that D.N.A. engineering might include a better life cycle for someone – the right hair colour. It must mean that we include as a choice having been male or female. But more than that, it includes the possibility of saying, as Milton mused: wouldn't it be better if we lived in a world without women?

JO: I don't think I am indifferent to the so-called minorities you speak of. In fact, I am opposed to the current "coding" – as you put it – or therapeutic discourses which figure them as an alternate society. I don't believe that the state can liberate these groups while undermining the authority of the family since, in my opinion, it is only in a society where the family is a source of enlightened authority that we can work together without fear and hostility. Now, of course, my position sounds nostalgic – especially when statistics are invoked to tell us the family has disappeared – and the voice of secular rationality will appear more rational in contrast. But reason without nostalgia is no better than nostalgia without reason. I think the two are inseparable. But, remember, my position is not fashionable. It is, however, a common one; as such it can be articulated with critical intelligence. For this reason, *Five Bodies* is far removed from the current sexist ideologies.

IMPULSE: You resort in *Five Bodies*, to a kind of lapsarian model, a distinction between the properly "communicative" social body (distinct from but complementary with nature) and a second, "prosthetic" body which would bear within itself all the dangers of modern rationalization to which you refer. (Such a distinction is surprising coming from someone so attentive to the works of Freud and Foucault.) My question is as follows: would the constitution of the "subject" and the "social", insofar as it would bring into play the function of something like a model, a double or simulacra, would such a constitution not already have induced the problem of the "prosthetic", of let us say, a complication of proper and improper, subject and object, inside and out? Granted, your line of analysis does not represent an unequivocal condemnation of the "prosthetic" but rather a plea, if I understand you correctly, for the reintroduction of a human "decisiveness" and "common sense". But does this plea for a communicative ground – you make passing reference to Habermas – not already assume the integrity of those concerns which are properly human, already assume the possibility of isolating them from particular "empowering" technologies and tactics of articulation? And does such an assumption not elide the question – precisely the question posed by feminism – of who gets excluded from such a "commonality" of sense. Such exclusions seem to follow a logic which would warrant examination (we return here to the problem of the double – the double in its function as pharmakon or scapegoat).

JO: I'm certainly not anti-civilization. What I'm trying to defend is *precisely* the value of history, of the library, these incredible extensions of our humanity. In my own life, and in my work, I have a very strong sense of the way in which I owe to others. Now it's a sense of that which I want to preserve. So it's not prosthesis as such that is bad, rather it's the matter of not recognizing what you owe to others through it, as well as what we owe to future history. The problem comes when you use cultural resources and fail to restore them. What separates our prosthetic culture from that of previous generations is its potential for species destruction. But perhaps I might clarify this sense of debt, of owing oneself to the gift in institutions, by saying that for me it's the tradition which makes us radical. It's the only place from which we can re-vision ourselves. And this re-visioning is inspired by the gift. The gift is a double matter: it can overburden us or it can challenge and inspire us. And this brings the gift back to what I was trying to say about sexuality. Our sexuality is never our own, except when the anxiety of it overwhelms us. When we have a proper sense of it, *it gives us* away. It's this creative dispossession which must matter for us.

IMPULSE: Your discussion of the gift, as well as the destructiveness of modern prosthetics, is interesting in terms of both Rene Girard's and George Bataille's characterizations of modernism as a culture which has failed to find media of symbolic violence and excess.

JO: Girard and Bataille both address on the collective level the need to break into the endemic violence of the proprietary code by projecting its violence onto a sacrificial victim or scapegoat. Now what I have in mind is the idea that each of us must be that scapegoat.

IMPULSE: Isn't that precisely what for Girard separates the Christian from every religious or sacrificial economy? The idea that Christ would self-consciously take this sacrifice upon himself? (This characterization would correspond to the difference Walter Benjamin would recognize between Socrates' death and that of the properly tragic hero.)

JO: In the Christian West you have that iconology present once and for all. But what I'm trying to say is at the individual level each of us must be that sacrifice. In *Five Bodies* this comes up in terms of "charisma". The body is seen as "charismatic" – meaning not that my body or mind is a means to gain advantage over my fellow man, but rather that I owe the gift of my looks, skills or intelligence to others; I must return these gifts to the community when and where they are lacking. So it's not requiring – as in the liberal doctrine of "equality" – the members of the body politic be declared equal; but rather its' saying that the offering of one's difference, the gift of one's incommensurability, that this charismatic inequality must restore the body politic.

I think my fundamental vision is a working class vision. Not in Marx's sense of the working class but simply the idea that people see there's a job to be done and they do it … and they count on everyone else to do the same.

IMPULSE: Your sense of "community" would seem to differ from Bataille's or even Girard's insofar as they would both insist on an irreducible force or violence as necessary to the founding of any community.You seem to point to a less "agonostic" sense of community.

JO: I think my fundamental vision is a working class vision. Not in Marx's sense of the working class but simply the idea that people see there's a job to be done and they do it … and they count on everyone else to do the same. Anyway, in Bataille it's the level of the illness that is mined. I don't work off that illness. I think I work off the feeling of collective strength and the honour due to the labour of men and women anywhere. And I have a sense of working off the psychoanalytic self, but it's more a hermeneutical psychoanalysis, a question of self understanding and self making. The Germans have an expression, "Lebenskunsther", which is the idea that one can shape one's life, the way one might make, say, a pair of shoes. Now I think of those projects as doubly collective …

IMPULSE: So you start with the possible experience of oneself as …

JO: … *already at work*, and "already" in the way that my earlier book, *Making Sense Together* is full of sounds and rythms of occupations. I see myself as at work amongst bus drivers, postal workers, waiters, construction workers, jobs I have had. … and I see my work as owing to them. I would say my thinking of the body comes largely from the Christian tradition, from the mystical body, the parochial body as institution. I haven't thought of my body, for example, from the point of view of its bi-sexuality. As a working class kid, as someone over 50, I haven't had these discourses available to me at formative stages. For me then, there's the incarnational thinking of the Catholic Church, which I had to radicalize, and certainly, the writings of Merleau Ponty.

IMPULSE: A final question. The French philosopher Lacoue-Labarthe has phrased the paradox of late capitalism in terms of "disappearance of every 'political specificity' in the very domination of the political" (Le retrait du politique). It seems to me that a similar paradox bothers your own work and becomes, to my mind, most problematic in terms of your comments on feminism. On the one hand, you would berate feminism for its statism, for its playing into an economy of equivalence, while on the other hand, accusing it of a valorization of "difference", of a failure to honour the community exigency. If this communitary exigency to which you appeal in various ways (in terms of the interest of the "species", the gift, a Thomastic "common sense") would necessarily have as its telos a transparency of human relations, what Blanchot calls an immanence of man to man, how is it to be distinguished from that dissolution of the distinction between public and private which you call the therapeutic state? Would the community not have, as a kind of limit which it must endlessly restrict or contest, this apocalypse of the political, this nightmare of "care" and surveillance?

JO: I have been concerned with the way the multinational corporate agenda distorts the public and private realms by reducing the family world to consumerism and the political world to a docile citizenry. In my books I have developed arguments drawing upon the work of Hannah Arendt, Galbraith, Habermas and Foucault. In *Five Bodies* I think I have deepened their arguments by drawing attention to the new body-politics in which the state and the economy seek to reinscribe the body in an administered "socio-text". Against this I have appealed with such notions as "sociology as a skin trade" (my first book in 1972 bore this title), "wild sociology", to which I have referred, and now "radical anthropomorphism". The latter involves concepts of political agency and of counter discourses on the level of the familied body, the working body and love's body seen as fundamental dimensions of moral and political life. In *Five Bodies* I have developed a revised theory of the body politic which I have been working on ever since I used the notion in *Sociology as a Skin Trade* to give a positive conception of the political movements of the sixties. I should add that another aspect of my work is the determination to preserve the moral legacy of the sixties from its current political amnesia.

An interview with PAUL VIRILIO

by CHRIS DERCON

When we think of speed, we say it's the means of getting from here to there fast, it's the means of seeing the antipodes live when there's a game or of watching the Olympics in Los Angeles. But I say no to this. It's a milieu, and a milieu in which we participate only indirectly through the videotape machine after recording, through information, science and "robotized" systems.





S P E E D – S P A C E

Chris Dercon: An idea which comes up again and again in your books is that of the TV screen, the TV screen looking out on the world like a portable window. Enlarging on this idea, one could say the world is merely retransmitted by screens and satellites. What do you mean by this idea of the portable window?

Paul Virilio: I used this term in reference to architecture, because the problem in architecture is first and foremost one of doors and windows. It is not the wall which encloses, since a structure which cannot be entered is not a structure for man. There are three windows. There is the French window (door) which serves to effect an architecture, a place where man lives, be this a city or an apartment. There is the window which renders itself autonomous, the window as a place of light or looking – here we have an extraordinary invention related to a religious problem, the problem of the cult of light, through the claustra, solar calendars, etc. The third window is the television screen…

The image is sketched, then painted and coated, and it lasts because its medium persists. With the coming of photography, followed by cinematography and video, we entered the realm of an aesthetics of disappearance: the persistence is now only retinal. Despite the film used in photography and cinema, there is no longer any real "support."

…So when I speak of a window, I mean this third window. I am speaking also of another constructed space, that of telecommunications and the new techologies. Another point concerns cutting out: you only have an image if there is cutting, for nothing is ever seen in its entirety. Everything is always perceived through a frame, and it's certain this frame existed from the moment the first eye opened upon the visible field. This process continued with the framing of paintings, the frame of the photograph, and the frame created by the television camera eye. I believe when you talk of a third window, you are talking about a new frame, a side-real frame, since with communications satellites and live re-broadcasts, the problem of the window becomes a macro-cosmic phenomenon. But, this all stems from the very first window, the porthole drilled in the megalithic tomb. In these tombs there was a tiny hole to let the sun shine in. All this goes back to the beginning of time. That's why I call it the continuation of a story, the aftermath of that first sighting.

CD: The view through this third window might represent a catastrophe of perception, because as seen through it reality becomes blurred. We are living in this loss of the real, because we only perceive reality through images. How should we react to this third window, how should we question it?

PV: As a first step we spoke of space; I think here we should speak of time. The contemporary image is a time-image, even a speed-image. The first pictures were space images, and that's what I refer to when I speak of an aesthetics of disappearing. I think we may come back to that in order to answer your question, but it really won't be an answer. Until the invention of photography, there was only an aesthetics of appearance. Images only persist because of the persistence of their medium: stone in the neolithic era or in ancient times, carved wood, painted canvas.... Those are an aesthetics of immersion, of the appearance of an image which becomes permanent. The image is sketched, then painted and coated, and it lasts because its medium persists. With the coming of photography, followed by cinematography and video, we entered the realm of an aesthetics of disappearance: the persistence is now only retinal. Despite the film used in photography and cinema, there is no longer any real "support." The sustaining medium is retinal pesistency because there is a persistency of the image in my eye that is this image in motion. Let's never forget that. So I believe an aesthetics of disappearing is another world, another link to the real. It is a link to the real as fleeting, as uncertain. The real in an aesthetics of appearance consists of being the solid, durable, hard real - hard in both sense of the word, i.e., hard and aggressive. So I believe that reality was a reality of solidity, of real presence, as they say. With cinematography, with photography first of all and now with infography, reality is shown as fugacious, but I think that we, too are fleeting.

CD: You have mentioned fugacity. Another very important concept in the almost real functioning of the magnetoscope is that of establishing a program of absence. What is the relationship between the idea of fugacity and the idea of a program of absence?

PV: I think the old image, the old reality, was a reality which can be presented as a space-time reality. Man lived in a time system of his actual presence: when he wasn't there, he wasn't there. Today we are entering a space which is *speed-space.* Contrary to popular belief, the space we live in is a speed-space. This new other time is that of electronic transmission, of high-tech machines, and therefore, man is present in this sort of time, not via his physical presence, but via programming. We program a computer or a videotape machine to record a telecast in our absence, to be able to watch it the next day. Here we have, I think, a discovery: the olden space-time was an extensive space, a space where duration of time was valued. Whatever was short-lived was considered an evil – something pejorative. To last a short time was to not be present; it was negative. Today we are entering an era of intensive time: that is to say that new technologies lead us to discover the equivalent of the infinitely small in time. In previous times we were conscious, with telescopes, of the infinitely large, and with microscopes, of the infinitely small. Today, high-speed machines, electronic machines, allow us to comprehend the same thing in regard to time. There is an infinitely long time which is that of history, of Carbon 14, which enables us to date extremely ancient artifacts. Then, we have an infinitely short time, which is that of technology's billionths of seconds. I think the present finds us squarely between these two times. We are living in both the extensive time of the cities of stories, of memories, or archives, or writing, and the intensive time of the new technologies. That's the *"program of absence"* that's how we program our definitive absence, because we'll never be present in that billionth of a second.

No human being can be present in the intensive time that belongs to machines. Man is present in the average time situated in the long duration of historical phenomena and the short duration of his reflexes, of the "twinkling of an eye." We can say the same for the cinematographer. Beyond sixty images per second you can no longer perceive anything. Here again, you see, the problem of space is central. The new space is speed-space; it is no longer a time-space, a space where time is manipulated. What we are manipulating is no longer man's time, but machine's time, which I call speed-space, or the dromosphere, meaning the sphere of speed. In conclusion, from my point of view, speed is not a means, but a milieu - another milieu, and one that tends to escape us. When we think of speed, we say it's the means of getting from here to there fast, it's the means of seeing the antipodes live when there's a game, or of watching the Olympics in Los Angeles. But I say no to this. It's a milieu, and a milieu in which we participate only indirectly through the videotape machine after recording, through information science and "robotized" systems.

CD: You have spoken of the relationship between dromospheric space - of speed-space and an aesthetics of disappearance, in connection with *the machinery of war.*

PV: Yes.

CD: For you, one of the most important factors in this new time-space concept – let's call it speed-space – is the strategic or stratifying development of war.

PV: Yes, insofar as war has always been the laboratory of the future. Because of the necessity to survive, and to face the possibility of sudden death, be it in ancient or new societies, war has always been the laboratory of techniques, of mores. I really believe this, and we must not forget it. War has also been the laboratory of speed. When Sun Tzu, the old Chinese strategist of several centuries ago, said that "promptitude is the essence of war," he said it at the time of the cavalry. Now it is obvious that this saying is still true: witness the debate over euromissiles in Europe just a year ago. So, war is in fact the laboratory of modernity, of all modernities. And it is in this sense that it has been a subject of permanent study for me. It is also because I myself have experienced it. I lived through a war in my childhood, and it affected me deeply. Thus, war is not merely an amoral phenomenon, it is an experimental phenomenon inasmuch as it reverses productivity relations. War produces accidents. It produces an unheard of accident, which is upsetting the traditional idea of war. Substance is necessary and accident is contingent and relative! That is the traditional story of the return to the accident. In wartime the opposite is true. Here accident is necessary and substance relative and contingent. What are war machines? They are machines in reverse – they produce accidents, disappearances, deaths, breakdowns. I think war in this sense conveys something which at present we are experiencing in peacetime; the accident has now become something ordinary.

CD: You have spoken elsewhere of the relationship of cinema to modern techniques of war. As you know, it is said of Viverstein's films, and of all the products of Nazi cinema, that they were made especially for propaganda purposes. Is it not interesting to view these productions according to Jean-Marie Pienne's theory that technology is built upon the idea that there is no such a thing as death. So here's an immediate connection between technology and the idea of heredity. Let's not for the moment consider this idea of propaganda and this idea of the strategy of the image from the viewpoint of atavism. Let's say that there is a paradox: technology and atavism, an atavistic technology.

PV: I'm having trouble grasping your idea of atavism. I understand the word but I can't grasp what you mean by it. This being said, I think we can talk of propaganda. During the Second World War, the German army with the American army – the French army was less advanced on this score – was to develop the "Peca" companies, the cinema companies created to follow the divisions. Films were regularly brought into headquarters to provide a direct vision of the front. This was because television, though it already existed, wasn't ready to do this yet. The camera operators of the land army and air-force served as on-the-spot reporters where the war was actually taking place. But it is certain that the Second World War was essentially a radio-telephone war for the whole pop-

ulation. Nonetheless, we see Nazi regime dignitaries conducting research into colour as opposed to Technicolour. At the beginning of the war, agfacolour pictures were earthy and yellowish in hue, whereas Technicolour reds and blues were already bright. You have the Germans of the era saying, "Ah, those colours are distinctly better than ours, and we're going to have to get ours to look much more lifelike." I think this is important especially for propaganda.

CD: Is there a difference between the idea of developing the cinema and the statues of Arno Breker? Technology is based on the idea that there is no such thing as death. It's the same thing as Arno Breker's statues. At that point, technology becomes atavistic. There is a paradox in cinema production.

PV: Well, here I'll begin with an anecdote about General Macarthur. When he was leaving his post in Korea, because he had planned to use nuclear arms but was refused and demoted, he said in his last official words, "Old soldiers never die. They just fade away." I think this expression is very cinematographic and very "disappearance-aesthetic." It is true the new technologies allow the dead man to live again, allow the duration of what has disappeared. There is a sort of universal conservatory, when you watch an actor on TV. You can see Mussolini, Hitler, Jean Gabin, Claude Francois, live again. It is in fact a form of conservation. I've always been amazed to see to what extent cinema is a sort of temporal porthole, as if there were a porthole in time. To be able to write "War and Cinema," I was looking at the archives of the Army Cinematographic Services at Fort d'Ivry, and I had asked to see films of the 14-18 war. I was chiefly interested in the fact I'd be seeing soldiers of that war in their youth, in their vitality, in their illusion – and they couldn't see me. As if it were a time-porthole which reverses the arrow (the direction) of time. So I said to myself that now, perhaps, in looking through this lens, we'll see people who do not yet exist. I have to ask myself that question.

D.W. Griffith visiting the trenches of Somme, circa 1917. He was the only military filmmaker allowed to go to the front in order to make a propaganda film, Hearts of the World. But in the combat that he hoped to film, the soldiers rarely saw action and Griffith was discouraged.



Yes, I think cinema is a sort of porthole into the past, and this porthole is through the camera lens. Recording myself today is, I believe, to make myself particular to a time which will not be my own. Through this viewfinder, this porthole, people yet unborn will see me, but I have no way of seeing them. The arrow of time is reversed. And indeed we have here an event of the cinema, an event of this speed-space. We are no longer in time-space. It is, in fact, an illustration of what I was talking about earlier. We are in a speed-space: it is the recording capacities of a machine which will allow people of the future to see me. I had the privilege of seeing myself twenty years after, in my friend Eric Rohmer's film "Le Marbre et le Cellulo." I had been interviewed in 1965 and I saw a projection of this film in 1985. It had an awful effect on me, because to see this man who had existed twenty years before, to see him again today, was in a way frightful. It wasn't a problem of the beauty of youth, it was a problem of identity – it wasn't me. Not at all. That man quoted the word time-space continuum even, and that was the only word which allowed me to connect myself to him, for everything else – the clothes, the tie, the hairstyle – everything was wrong. If I had known twenty years ago, I would certainly have said something else!

It is true the new technologies allow the dead man to live again, allow the duration of what has disappeared. There is a sort of universal conservatory, when you watch an actor on TV. You can see Mussolini, Hitler, Jean Gabin, Claude Francois, live again. It is in fact a form of conservation.

CD: There is also another reversal, that of day and of night. Is there a link to be made between the day-night relationship and the night bombings of the Second World War and the idea of night as a black hole, in "Star Wars?"

PV: There is much to be said here. It is certain that technological war allowed us to continue to make war at night, in other words, we're performing theatre. Then, after that, in 1914, 1925, those same projectors were used to pick out the planes coming to bomb in order to shoot them down. So here we have a whole light-war; tracer-bullets will be used to make night time shooting possible, and flares to light up the troops' night chargers (flare revolvers and rifles). And I myself saw those special effects in the Second World War. During the bombings of the City of Nantes I saw those projectors, those tracer-bullets, those rocket parachutes tossed out of bombers to light up the bombing zone. It was a fabulous show of unheard of and even tragic beauty. It was Rome burning. So it's certain the use of new technologies extended war to the totality of time, not only as in the past wars in summertime, but also war in wintertime. In antiquity war was waged starting in March, and then stopped in September-October. The new technologies have allowed us to wage war year round. But up until 1914 no one made war at night, they stopped at nightfall. Now with the new technologies, not only do they make war all the time, in all seasons, but non-stop, day and night. We have a totalizing phenomenon that is also a phenomenon we experience daily with live broadcasts from the four corners of the earth, which allow us to watch a festival or a ballgame. There is therefore a cancellation of the daytime. In the same way that there is a cancellation of time-space, there is a cancellation of daytime as a way of dividing up time. Daytime is no longer the astronomical day, it is the day of techniques. With astronomical daytime, chickens went to sleep when Man did. Today, chickens continue to go to sleep when the sun goes down, but men no longer do. When the sun goes down, electric light and television go on. It's another time, another day beyond the solar day. I think that's new.

CD: Now that war takes place beyond the horizon, can we still speak of war or of a war?

PV: Indeed, now they are talking of a trans-horizonal weapon – the term is a technical one. But I believe that war has never been linked to the horizon. It always was, even when geographical, a war of time. Its territory was always temporal. When Sun Tzu said, "Promptitude is the essence of war," he meant war is not simply a problem of hills, valleys, and mountain passes which have to be defended, it's a problem of time; hence, the invention of the cavalry. Cavalry was its strike force, the strike force of that time. Afterwards, it was the artillery which replaced this strike force. Every war is a war of time, and I think there have been profound changes, changes which brought about the invention of new weapons and which today are reaching a limit. Star Wars is also a war of time, but it is no longer the time of decision. If you take the history of decision in war, war was first delegated to commanders, great captains of the Middle Ages, then afterwards, with the invention of headquarters, the decision was concentrated in individuals – the Ministers of war, chiefs of staff, who concealed the decision. There was a phenomenon of concentration – the dispersal, the diaspora of decision disappeared. Then, with the Second World War, there was the creation of the general headquarters, a headquarters of armies and groups of armies, whose great strategist was Eisenhower. Here again you had a phenomenon of retention of power over a chief of general headquarters who made the decisions concerning a half a continent or half a hemisphere. With nuclear weapons, this retention of the time of war, of the time of decision, became even more concentrated in one lone individual, the head of state. Presidentialism in France is connected with nuclear power, the strike force. Presidentialism in the U.S., is similar, even if its origin is not exactly the same. Nuclear weapons demanded there be just one decision-maker. This, moreover, is one of the major handicaps to the creation of Europe: if we want a nuclear Europe, there will be no Europe, because we'll never manage to agree on a President.

In fact, this moment is in the process of disappearing too. The supreme decision-makers, Francois Mitterand, Reagan, Gorbachev himself, are in the process of disappearing. Why? Because now with Star Wars, transhorizon, and transcontinental weapons, the decision-time to fire will drop to a few milliseconds. With laser weapons which work at the speed of light, 300,000 kilometres per second, there's no question of saying, "Mr. President, it seems that some rockets have taken off on the other side of the Atlantic." No, they would already be there before you could say so. So now the formidable idea is taking hold in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., around the Star Wars debate, of the automatic responder, meaning the idea of a war-declaration machine. Why? Because man's time is no longer the time of the speed of light. Man cannot intervene: he may have been elected and hold supreme political and military powers, but he does not have the power to act at the speed of light. Today a drama is being played out. But no one is talking about it, despite the demonstrations I participate in, despite Clifford Johnson's court case, which has been launched in the U.S. A computer expert at Stanford says, "the new concept of firing on alert is a mad concept, for it delegates the declaration of war to a machine." Now, constitutionally, the commander has no power to delegate. Reagan does not have the power to delegate the decision to declare nuclear war to a machine. For what reasons? Quite simply because a computer breakdown cannot be identified as the free act of an individual head of state. I think that between the commander of the Middle Ages and Reagan or Gorbachev today, and finally the automatic responder, it's clear that promptitude is the essence of war. That essence of war eliminates man from the system. First the big battalions are replaced by materials, then big materials are replaced by very small, sophisticated materials (satellites or MX missiles), and finally man, the supreme decider, is eliminated in favour of a responder which will of course be coupled to another responder.

German anti-aircraft searchlights. Second World War.



CD: Will the idea of speed-space instead of time-space influence the means of representation in the cinema and the artist's image?

PV: I think it's already had an influence. We witnessed the shift from extensive to intensive time with cinema. We experienced it first with cinema of 16 images per second, then 24 images per second, then tracks, then reels; we had films which lasted a few minutes – I'm thinking of Méliès' films, then we had films lasting half an hour, then films one and one half to two hours, which is the average length at 25 frames per second. With the new machines, today we are in fact playing with the subliminal. We are in the process of reducing the length of films to half or three quarters of an hour, but projected at 60 frames per second. We are going from the extensive films of Abel Gance and Eisenstein, whose films lasted up to ten hours, to the intensive film – the video clip or half-hour film. I think that there's a movement here; more goes into speed-space, 60-image per second films than went into time-space, 24 frames per second films, but we are at the limits of the subliminal. We know that beyond sixty images per second there will be no more viewers, since nothing more will be perceived. Here, again, intensiveness is confirmed – the shift from extensiveness to intensiveness. It's certain that artists, be they filmmakers or videomakers, use this. They play in this dromospheric space, in speed-space. I think special effects are one of the most interesting areas in cinema. I remember coming back when "Alien" was released. It was made and shown before "Star Wars." I remember viewers, young people, coming in and saying 'fasten your seat belts'. What they were coming to see wasn't a story. It was a movement. They wanted to be carried away in the special effects. They were disappointed. Though "Alien" is a good film, it's not one where you fasten your seat belts. It's another film which tells a story about monsters, whereas "Star Wars" was a film where you fastened your seat belt. Now it seems to me cinema is fastening the viewer's seat belts, via video clips, special effects, and through infography and synthesized images. We saw this in "Tron," and other films. There is a cinema beyond the 24 frames per second one, a speed-cinema, which is no longer a time-cinema, a tale. I don't think that's bad. What is bad is that we lack a Méliès. Méliès was the inventor of telescopic effects, of montages of different temporalities. Today, it is unfortunately too commercial, and I regret the lack of a Méliès of electronic effects.

CD: You say that we lack a Méliès, but the story has become less and less important. Therefore, we also lack a Roland Barthes, since without one, we can't go on telling tales. What are the consequences of this?

PV: That's the moral position I've always wanted to avoid. It's true that speed is a drunkenness, a drug – there's no doubt. It has the same effects. You vomit, you get a headache, just as when you get drunk or take other drugs. That's the negative aspect I've developed in my books. But I don't think that anything's ever totally negative. The world is not so simple. At one and the same time, it is dreadful, in that it causes us to lose the relationship to the subject. But it also teaches us about our fragility, our fugacity. That is perhaps the moral lesson of that which has no moral.

CD: Then special effects become a homeopathic means, a vaccine. Is that why special effects have been so exaggerated, and that an artificiality beyond artificiality has been created?

PV: For the moment, it's indeed the commercial system and therefore a system of facility. As for me, my preoccupation is that, behind speed-space, another relationship to the real is hiding. It's just as humanistic, just as moral or ethical as the other. Only no one has yet been behind the mirror, behind *that* mirror. For the moment they're playing the way they played with the first cinema, the first films. It wasn't cinema, it was effects, effects you'd see at a country fair. They showed films at fairs. I think this is just a stage.

CD: What remains to us is the idea of editing, of arrangement. The idea of original creation no longer exists, no longer counts. In that case, when we are editor-arrangers, do we have to create or exaggerate the artificiality, as we would the story?

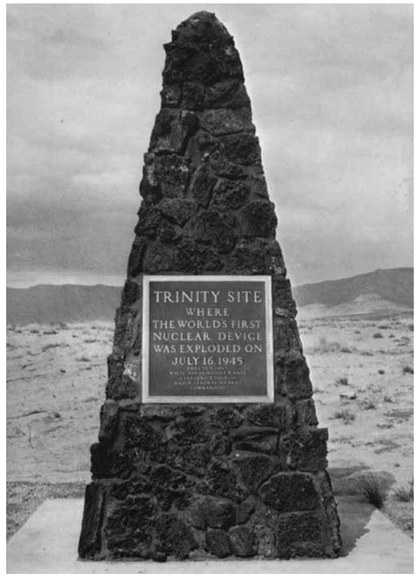
PV: The model is the speed composition. Now there is a very old model of speed composition and that's music. Music has confused speeds in harmonics in an extraordinary fashion for a very long time, to use only Western references. Speed-compositions were very well developed, through Bach, Handel, Mozart, etc., in the universe of sound. Intervals of time were extraordinarily well developed and utilized. In the optical system, it hasn't happened yet. Abel Gance hoped for it. He hoped to make the music of images, but I think the means of his time did not permit this. Transparencies and superimpositions were not sophisticated enough. Today I believe we are about to enter a time of compositions in optical speed and special effects. These are the rather spectacular aspects of this music of the eye. For the moment we just have vulgar things, but there's a possibility here, which will or won't be realized. We see the video clips being used for ads, and the films being made with fantastic special effects, but, alas, for the moment, we are not moving towards the realization of that potential. But it could happen, and I believe there will be a Guillaume de Nacho or a J.S. Bach able to do the same thing with pictures and light. The new techniques allow it.

CD: Another consequence: in video and cinema, we're seeing more and more violence and hard-core pornography. I'm thinking of the English expression 'nasty video'. Isn't there a desire for images which still have this notion of reality?

PV: Yes, absolutely. Pornography is an example of retrogradation. The body only appears through obscenity. Now there exists this retrograde vision of the body. Personally, I think the word 'obscenity' corresponds to its etymology, which we often forget is 'ill omen'. It is curious to see that Sun Tzu – who I quote a lot, as I believe his is the only philosophy of war – says 'weapons are tools of 'ill omen!' I'd like to say that through unrestrained pornography, there is a return to the body, which is a lost body. This obscene body is not a body to come, it's a lost body. It's the equivalent of a cadaver, the putting to death of the body. I admit it bothers me profoundly. What shocks me in pornography is that in it, boredom is weeping. There are the tears of boredom, not those of pleasure.

CD: Listening to you, you seem to be attached to the idea of the 'Immaterialists', of Lyotard – the possibility of developing a new idea of the material, of material representation. Do you think that the use of the term the 'immaterialists' is correct?

PV: I've used that term for a long time, saying that war went from the material of war to the immaterial of war. That seems completely coherent to me. I feel we have indeed tended to forget everything that's invisible. Now, with the aesthetics of disappearance, we are obliged to care about all things invisible. In the past, the invisible was present through religion and mythologies. When we read in the third epistle of St. Peter the sentence, "One day is…as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," we have a vision of relativity that was the



vision of the whole of antiquity. Even if here it is expressed through Christianity, this vision of relativity was present in ancient history – the invisible peopled the world. The invisible world was an important element of reality. With the onset of materialism, of the Age of Enlightenment, of the political history of the 19th century, the invisible was, I would say, censored. It signified the old customs; it was an archaic vision. The visible and the material were privileged to the detriment of the invisible, as the deeds of society are not all visible.

CD: This notion was aim to change the idea of the essence of being.

PV: Certainly. Besides, it isn't by chance that we are seeing a powerful return of religious ideologies. Personally, I'm religious, I am a Christian. You are obliged, as I've often said to non-believing friends, to reintroduce only the question of God, not the answer, which is a personal problem. If not, don't speak of the immaterial. You cannot speak of the 'invisible and immaterial' if you continue to censor the question of God. When you talk of the Big Bang, of the creation of time and space through the theory of the Big Bang, you're talking about the question of God. So, let's call a spade a spade: the Big Bang is about God who has come back among us. And in fact here I think it's one of the positive aspects of the new technologies. They reintroduce the question of God, and I mean The Question and not Khomeni's or anyone else's answer.

CD: You were saying that it's important to ask questions. When does one see this change of solutions toward questions?

PV: I think it's our generation. Our generation has to return to questions. Why? Because the preceding generation had all the solutions – the economic solution through capitalism and the consumer society; the political solution through Marxism or capitalism the military solution through dissuasion. All the solutions were there. Now we've seen the results and are experiencing the drama of these solutions, so I believe our generation must again find the questions, and that's not easy.

CD: The last question: what are the consequences of this dromospheric space, speed-space, for the workings of the city? I'm thinking especially of the difference between urbanity and suburbanity. Does it still exist?

PV: It's important to return to the city. To return to the city is to return to politics or to the political people. It's not by chance that in Greek the city is called the 'polis'. The city was created in a relationship to territorial space. It is a territorial phenomenon, a phenomenon of territorial concentration. Old villages are spread over a territory which is not a territory but a field, in all senses of the term. There is creation, from the old villages, through what has been called kinesis, of an urban territorial unit – the Greek citystate, to take a well-known reference. Since politics and the city were born together, they were born through a right: the creation of a territory or of an estate by right, being established, the right of autochthonism. There are rights because there is territory. There are rights and therefore duties – he who has land has war, as the people of Verde said. He who has rights in an urban territory has the duty to defend ft. The citizen is also a soldier-citizen. I feel this situation survives up to the present; we are experiencing the end of that world. Through the ups and downs of the state, the city-state, the more or less communal state, and finally, the nation-state, we have experienced the development of politics linked to the territory; always down-to-earth. In spite of railroads and telephones, we experienced a relationship to the soil and a relationship to a still coherent right. There was still a connection to territorial identity, even in the phenomenon of nationalistic amplification. Today, as we saw earlier with the end of time-space and the coming of speed-space, the political man and the city are becoming problematic. When you talk about the rights of man on the world scale, they pose a problem which is not yet resolved, for a state of rights is not connected with a state of place, to a clearly determined locality. We can clearly see the weaknesses of the rights of Man. It makes for lots of meetings, but not for much in the way of facts. Just take a look at Eastern European countries or Latin America. It seems to me that speed-space which produces new technologies will bring about a loss, a derealization of the city. The megalopolises now being talked of (Calcutta, or Mexico with 30 million inhabitants) are no longer cities, they are phenomena which go beyond the city and translate the decline of the city as a territorial localization, and also as a place of an assumed right, affirmed by a policy. Here, I'm very pessimistic. I feel we're entering into a society without rights, a "non-rights" society, because we're entering a society of the non-place, and because the political man was connected to the discrimination of a place. The loss of a place is, alas, generally the loss of rights.

Here, we have a big problem: the political man must be reinvented – a political man connected to speed-space. There, everything remains to be done, nothing's been accomplished. I'd even say the question hasn't been considered. The problem of the automatic responder we were talking about earlier, the legal action which Clifford Johnson is taking against the U.S. Congress, is in my opinion the trial of the century. The problem of rights there is the right of the powerful man, the last man, he who decides. Now, he too will no longer have the right, if he delegates his right to an automatic machine. We truly have here a political question and an urban question, because at present the cities are undone by technology, undone by television, defeated by automobility (the high-speed trains, the Concorde). The phenomena of identification and independence are posed in a completely new way. When it takes three hours to go to New York, and thirty-six to New Caledonia, you are closer to American identification than to Caledonian or French identification. Before proximity, there was territorial continuity. We were close because we were in the same space. Today we are close in the speed-space of the Concorde, of the high-speed train, of telecommunications. Therefore, we don't feel conjoined to people, the compatriots of the same people – the Basques or the Corsicans. We no longer have the time to go to Bastia, because practically, we are closer to New York, because you can't go by Concorde to Bastia. We have here a phenomenon of distortion of the territorial community that explains the phenomenon of demands of independence. Before, we were together in the same place, and could claim an identity. Today, we are together elsewhere, via high-speed train, or via TV. There is a power of another nature which creates distortions. We are no longer in space, but in speed-space. Because of speed-space there are fellow countrymen participating in the same non-place who feel close, whereas one's own countrymen in Corsica or New Caledonia are in reality so far away in speed-space, so beyond thirty-six hours or ten hours, that they are strangers and therefore desire their autonomy. There's a logic there, and it's a logic which poses problems.

It's true that speed is a drunkenness, a drug – there's no doubt. It has the same effects. You vomit, you get a headache, just as when you get drunk or take other drugs. That's the negative aspect I've developed in my books. But I don't think that anything's ever totally negative. The world is not so simple. At one and the same time, it is dreadful, in that it causes us to lose the relationship to the subject. But it also teaches us about our fragility, our fugacity.

translated from the original French by Daphne Miller

ZUZU'S PETALS

Bryan Bruce

As a purely theoretical entity, Zuzu's Petals was the ideal pop band: girls and boys, gays and straights, punks and nerds playing together in a Utopian fusion of alternative sensibilities. When theory inadvertently turned into "practice" (a word never to be taken too literally by this band), watching Zuzu's Petals perform was like an invigorating slap in the face - these are real people on stage, not Rock Superstars or aspiring household words, and they seem to be having some kind of fun. Was it possible that the weighty, politically cogent theory espoused by Bruce LaBruce could be made manifest in a "Family band" covering ground somewhere between the Shaggs and PiL?

The band in question was conceived one night as Rod and Laurel, watching an uncolourized print of Frank Capra's It's A Wonderful Life for the tenth time, keenly observed the Jimmy Stewart character pull the crushed remains of the flowers given to him by his daughter Zuzu out of the pocket of his crumpled suit and exclaim "Zuzu's petals" - proof that he had landed squarely back in the real world and on both feet. A band, in theory, was born, and graciously handed to Bruce LaBruce, who nurtured the idea into a concept. With his roots in the punk scene, he saw the chance to express the best of the punk sensibilities through Zuzu's Petals. The interchangeability of audience and performer; the demystification of Pop spectacle; the direct social and political intervention afforded by a daily living of theory. So LaBruce, a homosexual spurned by punks, a punk rejected by gays, sicked, with righteous ire, put Zuzu's Petals in the real world, albeit still on conceptual level, writing letters to various publications on behalf of a band that existed on paper to champion the rights of girls, gays, and politically savvy punks. No one was as surprised as LaBruce when his theoretical construct turned up on the stage of the Cabana Room one hot summer night in 1985.

R:Rod
L:Laurel
K:Kelly
A:Anne
BLab: Bruce LaBruce
B:Bryan Bruce
GBJ: Jones

B: I'll start off with the question I ask everybody first: have any of you been arrested?

BLaB: I was almost arrested last summer for possession of a deadly weapon. I bought this spiked bootstrap in the States and I'd been wearing it without incident for about six months until this one day I was riding my bike on Parliament St. and these two cops pull me over with the siren and the whole deal and they jump out and I had a mohawk at the time but I was wearing a hat so, uh, one of them swipes the hat off my head, I guess to see if I'm concealing any documents under it or something, and they both smirk at my shaved head and then they ask me how long I've been out of jail and accuse me of having stolen the bike I'm riding even though it's about 30 years old, an old beat-up blue schwinn girl's model with a bunch of Charlie's Angels and Three's Company decals on it. I bought this bike off a guy for, like, forty bucks but the officers are convinced it's hot so they turn it over to see if there's a serial number on it, and I'm going What's wrong, officer, was I speeding? and he tells me to keep quiet I'm in big trouble, take off the bootstrap, now! - and so it turns out it's illegal in Canada to wear spiked studs, they have to be flat and less than a quarter of an inch. So I start saying God, I didn't know. It's just a fashion statement to me, officer, blah blah blah, and they confiscate it and rummage through the bag I'm carrying, casually spilling the contents on the street as a crowd gathers and threaten to arrest me several times, but they didn't, I think because I told them I was a student and they called in and found out I didn't have a criminal record, otherwise they would have thrown the book at me. So as they were leaving I asked if they would take the studs out and give me back the leather strap and they told me I was pushing my luck.

B: Right, so...

BLaB: And then I almost got arrested a couple of weeks ago while shooting the blowjob scene for my next movie, but that's another story.

B: So you've never actually been arrested?

BLaB: No, but my ex-boyfriend was in jail for two years. Maybe you should interview him if you're so interested.

B: Okay, okay, let's move on to something else. Now, you mentioned making a film. Why don't you talk about how your band incorporates film in its live performances.

BLaB: Well, several members of Zuzu's Petals, Anne and myself, i. e., were already working in super-8 before we formed the band, and so we thought it would be fun to run movies before and during our shows...

A: Also to distract people's attention from how bad we were playing.

BLaB: I don't know, uh, bands that show film and video, like, in Toronto, Violence and the Sacred and Fifth Column, for example, just seem so much more exciting, like, there's so much more going on, you know, like the Plastic Exploding Inevitable or something. We're not purists, I mean, it's not as if pop music has to always be presented like four boys stroking their instruments and nothing else. We're very anti that.

B: Who are your musical influences?

R: Wham...

L: Rick James...

K: Captain and Tenille...

A: ...and Zamfir.

BLaB: PiL, Discipline and Punishment, Donny and Marie, Vic Morrow's head, Terry Fox's right leg...

L: Prince.

B: Do you consider yourself a hardcore band?

A&L&K: (together)Hardcore bubblegum:

B: How many of you are gay?

K: Only one of us.

A: Gay as in happy? Bryan, what does that matter?

K: Yeah, you're just trying to make a political statement.

A: Yeah, that if we're not gay we shouldn't be in the band, well then that just leaves you, doesn't it? (pointing to LaBruce)

K: You're the only Zuzu's Petals left, gaylord.

A: Just call yourself Zuzu's Petal.

B: From your lyrics I get a very strong feminist sense from the band. Is that intentional?

BLaB: Oh, yes, very much so.

B: Do you consider yourselves feminists?

K: Sure do. Right on.

A: And Rod and Bruce LaBruce are probably the biggest feminists out of all the band even if they're men.

K: Yeah, they believe in women's rights more than we do.

BLaB: Shut up, you guys. Feminism is part of the raison d'etre of the band. Like we say in our rap: 'Well we're Zuzu's Petals and we're here to say/ That we're championing the rights of the girls and the gays'.

L: He writes in a hot-tub.

B: What do you think of AIDS?

A: I think AIDS is absolutely horrifying.

BLaB: Oh, Anne. Don't be an alarmist.

B: Can you talk about the gig you had at the Quoc-te?

BLaB: Well I got punched in the mouth by a foot high mohawk GBH die-hard, and a skinhead who used to go out with a good friend of mine spit in my face and called me a fag...

K: Yeah, Anne and I left after 'cause we were too scared.

B: So you felt sort of uncomfortable in a hardcore venue?

K: Sure did, Bry.. It was an awful experience as far as I was concerned.

BLaB: I thought it was fun except for the anti-gay punks, who are too stupid and ugly and insignificant for words anyway. I mean, I couldn't believe my eyes.

B: So how do you feel about the punk movement in general?

K: Hate it.

A: All of them. All those mohawks.

B: Really?

A: Those mohawks are so fucking stupid.

BLaB: Not all mohawks are stupid. Look at ASF. And anyway, you don't have to have a mohawk to be a punk.

L: Well Rod has a semi-mo.

K: Well I had a semi-mohawk too.

B: Didn't Bruce LaBruce have a mohawk?

K: But we still like him anyway.

L: He used to wear a hat when he had it.

A: Listen, I don't care, these people (with mohawks) never ate Pixie Stix as small children.

K: I bought Anne a lot of Pixie Stix when I was in New York.

A: And that's why we're friends, because we like Pixie Stix, and these people probably don't.

L: You don't even like New York, Kelly.

GBJ: Ooooh. It stinks.

L: I had fun when I was in New York.

BLaB: I think New York Is fabulous. Except for the art. And the clubs.

B: Is Zuzu's Petals a straight-edge band?

L: What do you mean by straight?

B: No, straight-edge. No drugs, no alcohol.

K: No drugs, but lots of alcohol.

L: We do lots of aspirin.

A: We do lots of Christian Rock.

B: Are you with a label?

A: RCA...

K: MCA...

L: Virgin...

K: Am not.

BLaB: We're with an indie - Hide records and tapes.

K: I had lunch with Kevin Staples Friday from Rough Trade.

A: You did not! He was in the same fucking restaurant. There's a bit of a fucking difference between having dinner with someone and being in the same restaurant as them.

B: Do you all have day jobs?

K: I'm in advertising.

R: 9 to 5. That's the life.

BLaB: Unemployed.

B: How do you feel about Paul McCartney?

K: I love Paul McCartney.

GBJ: Didn't he die?

L: Well, he looks good for his age, but he's boring.

B: What do you think about the death of Andy Warhol?

R: He died?

L: Well, what about the death of James Coco?

K: Yeah. The man lost all that weight only to die.

B: I'd like to know more about your upcoming cameo in Gloria Berlin's movie.

L: Well, we're all looking forward to it. She's an auteur.

A: She's a courier de bois.

K: She's a voyeur.

B: What are your favorite TV shows?

L: Jeopardy.

BLaB: The All New Dating Game starring Elaine Joyce.

A: Little House Oh So Dreary.

BLaB: Highway to Hell.

R: I like team tournament weeks on any game show.

K: And I do like Moonlighting.

B: Would you consider yourselves a political band?

K: Yes.

A: No.

K: Yes because Anne slept with Brian Mulroney.

A: Yes, I balanced precariously on his chin...

B: Do any of you believe in God?

ALL: No.

K: I believe in Rod.

A: Maybe, maybe not. None of your bee's wax.

L: Mind your P's and Q's. We believe in group sex.

B: Why do you do the things you do?

BLaB: Why do we do anything? For effect.

B: If you could be anything else, or anyplace else, what and where would you be?

A: Dead. And in Hell.

HOLY SMOKE

An interview with Guillermo Cabrera Infante

Guillermo Cabrera Infante is the most famous Cuban novelist living in exile. His recent book Holy Smoke is non-fiction. He was interviewed on smoking, Cuba and life in exile during his visit to Toronto for the International Writers' Conference.

Lady Bracknell : Do you smoke?
Earnest : Yes.
LB: I'm glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind.
Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest

In the future, all men will be able to smoke Havanas.
Herr Doktor Schutt.

Light me another Cuba.
Rudyard Kipling, Departmental Ditties.

From Holy Smoke

Judith Doyle

JD: I can see this is a radical book. You're taking a stance in favour of smoking at a time when smoking is an endangered pursuit.

GCI: It's a book that shows the relationship between the movies, television, stand-up comedians - pop arts - and the cigar. Then, I had to speak about the history of tobacco. It's a long one, but I take everything with a big pinch of salt. There are hundreds - literally 135 quotes that have to do with cigars. Then, there are quite a few about cigarettes and the movies. If you read the book, you'll see the relationship between Bette Davis and Paul Hendricks is based on cigarette smoking. He lights up two cigarettes, and gives one to her. That's incredibly rare now.

JD: Don't you think there's a reappearance of smoking in film?

GCI: There is a reappearance of smoking in you - in young women everywhere in the world. I talk at length about that. But, you don't see representation of a character as it was in Casablanca. You see an ashtray and a chessboard. A hand moves a piece on the chessboard, then takes a cigarette. With the movement of that hand to the mouth of the person you haven't seen yet, is a pan to Humphrey Bogart.

After showing the history of tobacco, comes the history of the cigar. Cigars were not popular until the nineteenth century. The history of cigars reaches its culmination with the movies. Citizen Kane - the cigar is in certain, crucial scenes. It is there as part of the plot, as it is in for instance Dillinger. At the beginning a sheriff, a friend of Diego Hoover, is seen with a cigar. He is killed by one of the gangsters in the movie. Every time that this character, played by Ben Johnson, is going to kill a public enemy, he picks a cigar from the box and lights it up. I think that's a very interesting interior relationship between a given pleasure or vice, and the movies. You don't see that with alcohol. You see drunks or people having a good time. But you don't see that relationship of dependence between in this case a character and his cigar.

JD: A good cigar is something one identifies with Cuba, but nostalgically. When people think of Cuba now, they think of Castro and the revolution. But the Havana gone by was the source of cigars. Did you pick cigars because of Cuba?

GCI: I took up the habit a long time ago. In fact, it was in the exact spot where Columbus discovered Indians smoking. He regarded this as unimportant and he asked about gold, without knowing that he had in his hands brown gold, much more valuable.

There was a constant fear in my heart. My great-grandfather used to smoke cigars and my great-grandmother chewed tobacco leaves. Their children hated cigars terribly. Then there was my father. He's a non-smoker, he has never smoked, and was against smoking all his life, even now. I found myself identifying with my great-grandfather. At age 24, I began smoking and since then it's been nonstop, except for the fact that cigars are rather expensive, if compared with a pack of cigarettes.

There have been many misrepresentations of the cigar. For everybody except North Americans, cigars were only for the very wealthy. That was true of Europe, but not in Cuba. You could buy cigars in Cuba for a cent apiece. Everybody smoked, even Fidel Castro, who broke with the image of someone very wealthy or a general, smoking a big cigar. Certain foreigners like Che Guevara took to smoking in the Sierra, imitating Fidel Castro. The cigar myth became something else. Cigars were suddenly also for the guerrilla.

There is a connection between Havana and a certain nostalgia, what it meant to someone as alien as Mallarm who was a cigar smoker. As a matter of fact, Holy Smoke closes with a famous sonnet he has to Havana cigars. Even to this poet who understood cigars very well, Havana was something very exotic and remote. I think the spell was momentarily broken by the fact that both Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were heavy cigar smokers. I don't know how many pictures appeared of them with cigars in their mouths. But cigars are slowly being priced out of the market, so I think by the turn of the century you won't have people smoking cigars.

JD: Don't you think it has to do with illness?

GCI: It hasn't been proven. There was a connection between cigar smoking and cancer through Freud, who had cancer of the palate. He was diagnosed as cancerous when he was fifty, and lived for thirty years - until 81. So that's a long time for anyone to connect his cancer with cigar smoking. The problem with cigarettes is the burning paper. You inhale tar because of the paper, not because of the tobacco in the cigarettes.

JD: That's probably controversial, don't you think?

GCI: I can see that doesn't stop you from smoking. You're not hoping for cancer, are you?

JD: There's something contrary about smoking at this time. For me personally, it's defiance, combined with the fact that I like the gestures of smoking.

GCI: Yes, also, there's a touch of feminism there.

JD: Going back to when you were still in Cuba working on the radical arts magazine Lunes. What was the editorial position of the magazine, and how did Castro decide it was 'outside the revolution'.

GCI: The editorial position varied. In the beginning it was anarchic, then we had Trotsky and Andre Breton for our mentors. Anarchism doesn't present any kind of program for the arts or literature. But surrealism did, it was clearly connected with Trotsky in exile. At the beginning it was easy for us to take this stance, but it got harder as the revolution became more and more programmatic, going toward the Communist party. You must remember, the Communist party in Cuba was Stalinist, it never severed ties with Stalinism or with Russia.

We tried to behave in a political way. That led, unfortunately, to my brother making a movie together with Orlando Jimenez, who is now in New York. It was a very innocent film, 22 minutes of people having fun in bars, in cabarets, across the bay. It was titled 'PM' - for post meridian, but also because of the positive master, a technique they used to make the film. I personally gave them a sum - very little money, about $500 to print two copies of this movie. I did so with the provision that the program Lunes we had on television - called 'Lunes - The Revolution on Television' - was to show the movie for the first time, which we did. Then, the filmmakers went to the censorship board, which was exactly the same one they had under (the dictator) Batista. Instead of granting them permission to show the film in theatres, it was banned and the copy sequestered. So there came a big outcry from all the people connected with Lunes. We gathered around 200 signatures protesting the seizure of the movie. Then Fidel Castro intervened. There was going to be the first congress of writers and artists in Cuba, copied from the Soviet Union. The banning could cause an international scandal there. So he offered meetings between us and our enemies. There were many of them, and funnily enough, most of them are now in exile. But they were very Stalinist then.

Over three successive Fridays we gathered together in the hall of the National Library. We fought about the movie, freedom in the arts, and so on, and of course, Fidel Castro had the last word. That's where he said, 'within the revolution, everything - without the revolution, nothing'. But he kept the right to decide what was in and what was out. It was a completely Stalinist point of view. This has been appraised in certain democratic areas as something very sensible. It isn't. It's just as Joseph Stalin wanted it to be.

JD: How did you end up going overseas?

GCI: They were very shrewd, they know how to do things. Lunes was banned, of course, but not immediately. It happened three months after the National Library meetings. I was left without a job. Emilia Gomez (my wife) was an actress, and she was earning very good money, but I had nothing to do. I began saying things like, 'I was the first pimp under socialism'. My house became - every evening, there were friends and disaffected people coming and discussing things. So they found an official exile for me. They sent me over to Brussels. That was how I became a diplomat for a government I disliked intensely. For me in Havana, it was the other side of the world. I did that for three years.

'PM' was a totally a-political movie. In Cuba, the Film Institute owns all the means of production, they control censorship, and all the film theatres. For these people to have made a film which was so good with so little money, outside the Institute, was very frustrating for all of them. Also, this movie presented almost all black people having fun in bars or whatever. At the time, there was some kind of mob mobilization. It was Winter 1960, near Christmas. They didn't want to show black people doing this at the time. It was a racial thing and a political thing, against the movie and us. We gave them money, and supported them with everything we had, which was only Lunes.

For me, it would have been possible to remain in Cuba and go on writing if it wasn't a question of total censorship. In Cuba now, to be a writer you must prove you're a writer. To publish something, you must be in the writers' union. But to be in the union, you must publish something first. We take for granted here ribbons for typewriters. There, they are only sold by the writers' union and you must be a member before you can talk about getting a ribbon, let alone a typewriter. So, the censorship is really fierce in spite of the tropical atmosphere, the sun, the sky and all that. It's as fierce as it was in the Soviet Union in the 1930's. This of course was what sent somebody like Trotsky into exile, one of the men who made the Russian revolution, not to speak of myself, who wasn't important, whose only aim and source of joy in life was to be writing.

JD: During his trial, Herbert Padilla (the Cuban poet) was coerced into confessing that he had supported you and your work. He also said you were a known member of the C.I.A. when that happened. Why?

GCI: Padilla in this confession, accused everyone he knew who was abroad of being in the C.I.A. I have spoken with him many times since he came to the United States, but never about his confession. I know how it was done. I know he was interrogated for 29 days in the security headquarters. They made a manuscript from this taped confession. He had to learn it, and recite it at the writers' union. Don't forget that in the '30's, everyone who was accused of being a dissenter in the Soviet Union was accused of belonging to Trotsky's party. At the time, 'Imperialism' was France, England and the United States. Now, there is only the United States left. So, you are accused of that. This is how I interpret these words by Padilla. It's true that he publicly defended my book, Three Trapped Tigers, which was written abroad. I never requested that defense, I didn't want to be defended in Cuba from some imaginary or real crimes. I didn't care if the book was read or not, because I knew the book was already banned and only officials could get a copy of it.

I began writing that novel in Havana in 1961. A chapter of it was published in one of the last issues of Lunes. What I tried to do was write a 'PM', or do a 'PM' by other means - people having fun in a lowdown way, and the so-called 'lumpen'. I don't know if you know the word - it's an aberration of a German word for proletariat. The scum of society. I liked the way the scum behaved. Then, I began working with certain nostalgic material.

For example, Havana is surrounded by a sea wall. Along the sea wall is a long avenue or promenade. For me, it is emblematic. The moment I saw it in 1941, this ribbon of cars and tarmac was for me a leitmotif that I was not only thinking but writing about. This is one of the nostalgic materials, and certain people, certain gestures, certain attitudes which are obliterated by the translation - certain turns of phrase in Cuban.

JD: You said once that the theme of Three Trapped Tigers is a 'three-fold treason, in language, literature and love'. Tell me about these three betrayals.



GCI: The moment you write about anything, you are betraying it. There isn't any way you can put something on paper when it doesn't become fiction, something else. There is an element of betrayal, of illusions, in the whole book. There is a metaphor from The Magic Mountain, the novel by Thomas Mann, for the whole of life. It is that we begin with the greatest of illusions, we are full of energy and enthusiasm. And life keeps on deceiving you all the time. That is something which is very clear in the book. Life works for death and that happens constantly, no matter what you do, no matter what you think. Some people are walking, some

running, towards death. Illusions are broken on the way. If you don't see life like that, you are deluding yourself.

JD: The work relies so much on word play, and it works very beautifully in English, but there's no way I could see of there being a direct correspondence between the Spanish and English versions.

GCI: It is a correspondence between objects in a mirror. When you look in a mirror, you see somebody different, everything happens in reverse. That's what happened with Three Trapped Tigers. But, I can tell you something - English is such a marvelous language for puns and word plays. I was swamped by possibilities. But there's something missing here - the dialect. The Cuban turns of phrase. Cuban idioms, Cuban jargon, is gone. That part of the book was voices. You can translate text, but with voices you are dead. That's why with The Satyricon - a book which has been translated into so many different languages - the translators are always excusing themselves because we don't have Petronius' beautiful idioms and jargon.

JD: Is there a relationship between The Satyricon and Three Trapped Tigers?

GCI: It's a relationship only of intention. I've been obsessed all my life with The Satyricon because it's the first book I read which was true pornography, truly erotic. In Three Trapped Tigers, the three characters go everywhere in town with some kind of erotic intention, but it is never realized. It's just the opposite of The Satyricon where you see erotic acts right from the beginning, not erotic intentions. Everything was permitted to the characters. Not in my book.

JD: Do you, as well as talking about film, use elements of its structure in your writing?

GCI: It's impossible to equal film structure in writing. What there is in Three Trapped Tigers is an obsession with movies for one of the characters, sometimes using bogus filmmaking means to narrate a given moment. You must remember he says, 'I felt like a camera approaching a woman in this place, exactly as they do in the movies.' It's not an equivalent in terms of words. No, Three Trapped Tigers and Infante's Inferno are very verbal books. The opposite of the filmic. You may have a verbal director like Antonioni or Bergman - they are usually betraying the movies as represented by directors like John Ford, who is all movement.

JD: Why did you choose to live in England and not Spain or another Latin American country?

GCI: They wouldn't let me live in Spain - my political past followed me there. It was '65-'66. The Spanish police suggested - the way they are, very politely - that I not overstay my welcome in Madrid. A friend writing a script in London was having trouble and asked me to help him. He sent me the plane tickets. It was July '66, and the swing in London was in full throttle. And I believed both things were true and eternal. But the swing went out with history, the summer went away with geography, and I was stuck. I stayed, and I love it. Except for the weather, it's a great city. It's like Dr. Johnson said, 'Whoever is bored with London is bored with life.' I've never been bored in London.

JD: Is there betrayal in Holy Smoke?

GCI: No, and there is no betrayal in Infante's Inferno, just little games of love, that's all. All smoke, and none of it holy.

JD: Will smokers be vindicated by this book?

GCI: Some - like Groucho Marx. Others, like Fidel Castro, are truly panned because they are fake smokers.



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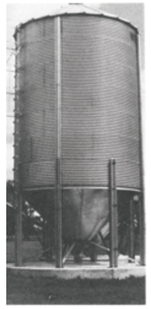
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ANDREA **WARD** SPEAKS WITH:

FREDERIC JAMESON

ANDREA WARD: *Do you think that postmodernism is a symptom of capitalism or a critique of it? Is postmodernism a fake or a front (a facade) in the sense that it is a reaction or a distorted reflection of modernity and the avant-garde?*

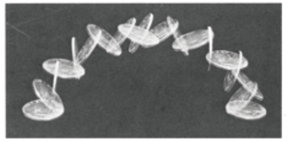
FREDERIC JAMESON: Well, if you put it in those terms, it has to be both. What one has to do initially is to get away from people's conventional idea of a power-based super-structure. That is one in which culture reflects a social base. This is implied in the word "symptom". You must imagine the socio-economic system as a situation in which culture is a response. It then becomes more interestingly complicated. But on the other hand, I think what still has to be maintained is the last tenuated form of the idea of the "autonomy of art". Culture is always to a certain degree distant from these things and therefore much of postmodernism, read differently, can be seen as an attempt to describe the situation, map it out. So the alternative depends on how you read postmodernism. It is a reading decision. It seems that it can be usefully examined as a sympton of late capitalism. However, it can also be looked at from other perspectives. I am not comfortable with the idea that it can be simply decided that postmodernism is good or bad / reactionary or progressive. There are never any final alternatives to these questions.

AW: *In September of 1912, "human character" was said to have changed. Is there any phase or event that can function as the beginning of the postmodern condition?*

FJ: Ah, that's interesting...architects say that it was the destruction of the Pruit-Igoe complex in St. Lewis. It was the suicide of modernism, its failure. There are all kinds of emblematic signs that one is tempted to cite as the beginning to this cultural condition. I have done a thing on the sixties where I talk about possible origins. However, relationship between postmodernism and the sixties is very problematic. I think that there is some clear ending of something around 1972-73 with the oil crisis and a whole range of other things from local politics to culture. It has a lot to do with Lyotard's "Master Narratives". People all of a sudden cease to believe in the master narrative of the myth of revolution. Talking in terms of disappearances is in itself symptomatic. And talking in terms of "appearances" is a very decentralized cultural phenomena. Nothing is enough to signify this "multiple coming into being". However, the modernist project has key gestures, key works or key silences or sentences that somehow are emblematic. But yes, the moment around 1972-73 is somehow a crucial fault line in the system if not immediately in the whole cultural realm.

AW: *Do you have a place outside of the culture of late capitalism? Are you "Inside or outside the whale"?*

FJ: The theory of postmodernism has to be seen within a theory of world-system-culture. And, like any system, it implies spaces "outside". In older forms of society there were whole nations within nations. Each class had its own apparatuses and developments within its organizations. At a certain historical moment, intellectuals found it possible to step outside their class-cultural domain. If a possibility of such a distance exists now, it is not so much a matter of class as it is of other kinds of cultural molding such as gender and race. For instance, Lukacs could declass himself, remove himself from culture and for whatever socio-political reasons, denounce it. Postmodernism simply implies that this critical distance is greatly narrowed. This is why I am so amused when people say that I am attacking or defending postmodernism. I do like it, I am inside of it. However, this does not mean that intellectuals are without new means and possibilities of critical distance. New kinds of thinking about this critical distance must be done. It is a great problem for the left today because "distance" is our only model of political critique. Often people use the word "subversive" and I wonder what subverting any of this would do. It is the hangover of an older modernist notion of critical distance. It needs to be reformulated.



"My work is meant to imply a whole series of levels of experiences in time, space, city, and the commodification of the unconscious. There is perhaps a certain novelty in the economic level of my analysis. However, there is a general resistance to talking about commodification and production."

Kansas, the land of theoretical silos, religious wrestlemania, and troops of voodoo-driven postmodern academic outlaws. I hauled Frederic away from yet another heavy delivery. Snuggled at the base of a thousand-foot oak table garnished with inset enamel American flags we poured ice-water into the frosted champagne glasses.



AW: *What is the relationship of your own work to the transcoding tendencies of postmodernist theories?*

FJ: We now confront a world obsessed and confused with abstractions. The dialectic is a way of going back to a form of experience. But, rather than producing something concrete out of the suffusions of generalizations or the suffusions of informations, we would like to create a multiplicity of codes. Our intellectualization is one in which a whole enormous range of private languages of ideological and philosophical codes become methodological brand names. One cannot simply operate or intervene by waving a banner. At a heavy theoretical delivery, a friend leaned over and said to me "Isn't Lenin enough?!" Even if one thought so, this would not be the way to handle this. One must fight all these battles with one's own weapons. Therefore I have this notion that our business as intellectuals is "transcoding". It is neccessary to learn all these codes to speak them. You have to learn what you can say in one language that you can't say in another and be aware of what overlaps there are and the points of linguistic precision that blur. This is a more effective way of handling language than a denunciation of it. In this situation the dialectic is one code among others. There is a sense of this in the Marxist intellectual situation where one produces elements of a code line such as reification and commodification. These rarely do perform "transcodings" that are not properly and adequately done in other codes. On the other hand, my thought is that the dialectic is and was never a "realized" thought or language. The dialectic is anticipation of a new way of thinking. A whole range of social conditions must change before a genuinely new kind of thinking appears.

AW: *Do you feel that the writing you do on postmodernism reaches a wider audience than your older work, for example "The Political Unconcious"?*

FJ: Yes, it would seem so because it intersects with this stuff I call "culture critique". It comes into being precisely because people feel an apprehension about what is happening around them. They want a diagnosis: "It's the me generation","It's narcissism". I think there is in this situation the possibility of historical thinking. Nonetheless let's say the spiritual body tries to remedy these chemical deficiencies by trying desperately to think historically. Culture critiques correspond to that attempt to get a historical handle on a situation in flux. Without my planning, this kind of writing seemed to cut across these kinds of issues. It addresses people's more general questions about what is happening to them/to us in a cultural and phenomenological way. My work is meant to imply a whole series of levels of experiences in time, space, city, and the commodification of the unconcious. There is perhaps a certain novelty in the economic level of my analysis. However, there is a general resistance to talking about commodification and production.

AW: *Do you think that the nature of "ficto-criticism" is successful in undermining the "corrective" power of criticism?*

FJ: "Ficto-criticism" makes a lot of sense to me. It is very clear that there has been a flowing together of theory and criticism. It seems that theory can't exist without telling little narrative stories and then at this point of criticism, criticism seems very close to simply telling stories. It is an advanced and energetic form of conceptual criticism.

AW: *How would you characterize the future of postmodernism?*

FJ: If it is defined as a style, we are going to get tired of it and look for something else. If we perceive it as a cultural logic, it seems less clear and more interesting. As far as modernisms are concerned, there are a vast variety of artistic strategies that culture imposes to back them up. Our situation may be similar to the situation of romanticism where there was a long, long period in which there were all kinds of interesting mutations and yet a fundamental logic remained. I use this notion of periodizing capital in "Mandel". It is sort of a third stage of capital that presupposes a series of mutations which are increasingly vast and global. These are all reponses to "crisis" in the system. If one can imagine a later crisis it is possible to imagine a restructuration in an entirely new system or a completely new kind of capitalism altogether. Maybe we can only imagine this as science fiction. At that point clearly we will have a new model predicated on the idea of systematic change and systematic organization.



JUDITH DOYLE

SPEAKS WITH

BRIAN WRIGHT

Brian Wright is 29. He was born in Kenora, a northern town with a pulp-and-paper mill, the tourist industry, and a big Native population. He travelled around, studied journalism and Fine Arts in North Bay, then came to Toronto. Now, he works as the National Office Co-ordinator for the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native People (CASNP). He is committed to educating people about Native culture and traditional values, combined with activism on human rights, treaty rights, and the environment. Judith Doyle talked with him at the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto.

JUDITH DOYLE: *Did you grow up on a reserve?*

BRIAN WRIGHT: No. I was adopted out when I was about a year and a half old. The family I was adopted into had a lot of Children's Aid brothers and sisters. The use of my own language was discouraged, and I didn't have a lot to do with my own culture until after I moved into the North Bay area. It was a long time of trying to find my roots. Once I found them, I started to realize who I was, and all the connections that has to being *Anishnabe*.* What that means is a connection to the earth, a spirituality. That's really reinforced my life alot, it's given my life some direction.

JD: *What was the attitude toward Native people in Kenora?*

BW: It was bad, though at the time I was young and didn't really understand it. The cultural base was never encouraged in the schools that I went to. There was always a tension in the form of racism. I know the family I was raised by wasn't racist. They claimed some kind of bloodline to the Indian nations themselves, but I think they were just as confused as anyone else was. If you were to put it on a meter, the attitude would always be going back and forth between two sides. They did the best they could, being a working-class family, and they understand more now. But the problem of racism in towns like Kenora is even worse now, because of the disputes over treaty rights, hunting and fishing rights. The colonialist attitude of changing people continues, supposedly under the auspices of betterment and civilizing.

Now, I understand the attitude white people have toward Indians because I was more or less raised by them. I can glimpse both lives, both paths. I think it helped balance out my life. I've tried to come to term, with my own racism - how I feel about certain people.

JD: *What were some of the traditional values which were important to you and still are?*

BW: The connection to all living beings, the sacredness of special things that connect us all. What the drum means, and the pipe, and the sweet grass and language. The values of these things aren't material, they're only representational of the true values. I learned about the importance of the generations, the older ones, younger ones, and the lives in-between. And the roundness of life, how there's no real beginning and no real end. It's given me a lot of peace in my life, and brought a lot of peace into my heart.

I was exposed to the Catholic religion when I was young. It was condescending, a guilt trip to convert people. There was never any guilt in the Native way to accept that path. It's there. If you're willing to take it, you will. I found it easier to accept the way of my ancestors. There is a lot of peace, understanding and balance in that system.

I always ran on Indian time and had my own attitude toward nature. There were certain things that ran through my head and my heart that made sense once I started talking to Elders. It's almost a genetic memory - feelings and philosophies that eventually explained and reinforced what I was thinking and feeling throughout my life.

JD: *Can you tell me why some Elders are reluctant to teach the traditional culture in the schools?*

BW: It's a way of life and you just can't do it like a part-time job. You can't pick it up for a while and put it down again. If you start doing that, you'll lose the most sacred parts of it. You have to learn the language, through the Elders, the trees and the water. All these things come through the Elders and come through the earth. It's that complete unity, that circle. For the Elders, to spend a lot of time with somebody who's just doing it out of curiosity must be disheartening. The Elders see this society as confused, and led by people who are confused, with a single-minded aim. It's something we have to come to terms with in a technological age and society, where new poisons are always being invented, without an understanding of the long-term ramifications.

Ronnie Reagan going over to Bitberg and laying wreaths on the graves of SS storm-troopers is evidence enough as to where they stand on racial policies. You don't have to go onto a reserve to find out how racist a government can be. It's ridiculous that Canada is willing to go into a free trade agreement with a government that has a history of making treaties, then turning around and breaking them.

JD: *Can you talk about the family values in Native culture?*

BW: The Elders are valued, you don't stick them away in an old folks' home. The younger ones are always there, you don't brush them off with one person. They're taken care of by everyone. There's a respect that comes from that, for each other and for age. Age-ism is one of the worst forms of prejudice. It's important to know your grandparents, because they've been around a lot longer and have things to say and teach. Especially if they know something about spirit and strength and unity. That's where we gain it from: the old ones and the children in their innocence. That circle is really strong and has a lot to offer. You begin to look at the world in a different way, and see the connections in things.

JD: *How are treaty rights, human rights and the environment connected for you?*

BW: The treaties were signed out of pure faith. No one knew a hundred years ago that we'd be getting ripped off for almost everything we had. You come to realize that, for the governments, their God is gold. The European Renaissance was built on the backs of Indian people. If it wasn't for the Aztecs and their gold, there never would have been a Renaissance.

It's an interesting connection now, with the Pope coming back and asking Native people to forgive the atrocities. Yet there are 11,000 traditional Navajo who are right now facing relocation and inevitable extinction. They are very traditional people, they're very close to the earth. They're dying off, day by day.

JD: *So it continues in the form of corporate resource exploitation.*

BW: Once again, the goal is to sever human beings from the earth, to make us forget. That's why we're bombarded with advertising for us to consume continually. We're bombarded in the education system to go to work and not really produce anything, just move paper around so we can earn large incomes. That's not our purpose in life and on earth. There's five billion people hiding out there someplace. The earth can't sustain any more corporations and what they're doing, and the neglect of human rights, the disregard for trust and love. There's too many distractions that we fall into : alcoholism, the entertainment industry, the stereotypes not just of Indian people, but of all people. I think that women have it the hardest, no matter what race or class category they fall into. Women are the strength of all the Indian nations, of the people. We Indian men have to start realizing this and stand beside them.

We have to put down a lot of things we've picked up. Even here in the city, there are ways you can survive without being citified. It's complicated and scary, and difficult to walk away from. It's not saying, "Stop the world, I want to get off", it's "Keep the world going, let's change it". We're like a big family that's fighting all the time. Somewhere along the line, people have to realize that we have to make sacrifices for all life to continue.

JD: *What does CASNP do?*

BW: We try and educate as many people as we can about what's happening with Native people and the nations, and bring together Native and non-Native people on human rights issues, the cultural aspects of Native people. Over the last two years, we've done a lot of support work for the struggle of the Indian people of Big Mountain to regain their sacred lands. I think those people, being as spiritual as they are, their prayers reached up here and were immediately answered. We try to make people aware of the connections with this technological age and the genocide of Indian people, so they'll stand with us and demand justice and fair play and equality. This is a country that's supposed to be so advanced and so outgoing. We point half-way around the world at some atrocity, and the same atrocities are being committed here, but maybe on a subtle level that the media never reports. The drum will go out, and we'll try and draw attention to these problems. We address the issue of apartheid. The people of South Africa live under a system that was copied from the reservation system here in Canada.

JD: *Can you tell me something about the Leonard Peltier case you've been working on?*

BW: Leonard Peltier was extradited from Canada under a Kangaroo court situation. The FBI and the RCMP collaborated to more or less kidnap him and bring him back to the United States from Canada to face charges where he was framed for the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge reservation. He was protecting cultural rights and values, working with the Elders and learning ceremonies and the language, and trying to get back to his roots. That was the price he paid. Leonard Peltier is evidence of how justice can be swept under the carpet for profit. But he's only one man facing multinational corporations and the United States government, two of the most powerful man-made forces on earth right now.

Jim Fulton is trying to get a private members motion brought to the House of Commons and voted upon and made into a bill to have Leonard come back for a fair extradition hearing. His case has a lot to do with human rights, and everything to do with treaty rights. It also has to do with the exploitation of uranium on Indian lands, the poison that adds to the arms race and nuclear facilities that so many people are concerned about now. The Canadian government is implicated as much as the United States government is. If there was ever an investigation, the true colours would come out. Leonard's case has brought a lot of attention to the struggle that Native people have to deal with to maintain the little they have left. If we win, we stay in one spot. If we lose, we drop back ten feet. This is a hard way to try and sustain a traditional way of life in a technological age that just eats its young continuously, day by day.

Ronnie Reagan going over to Bitberg and laying wreaths on the graves of SS storm-troopers is evidence enough as to where they stand on racial policies. You don't have to go onto a reservation to find out how racist a government can be. It's ridiculous that Canada is willing to go into a free trade agreement with a government that has a history of making treaties, then turning around and breaking them. Our tour with the South African representatives is a good way to address the injustices inflicted upon indigenous peoples around the world by the same corporations and governments. It's important for the world and the people of Canada to know what kind of situation we're in, because if they can do it to us - if they're bound and determined to exterminate us - then who's left to carry the drum and the tobacco, and the brunt of the battle?

CASNP has Native and non-Native people. I think it's a good structure to work together. A lot of people who've come into CASNP, and not just the non-Native ones, but the urban Native people as well, have learned a lot about the culture and roots. I've seen a lot of people grow. People get a little concerned sometimes when these political issues come up. But it's always political, it's always culturally-based. They go hand in hand. I was told once by a Pima woman from Arizona, that if you can't talk politics and religion, you don't have anything to say at all.

It's not necessarily revolution. Nobody's advocating that. CASNP isn't out to change the world. It's an educational process of identifying values, the values in Native culture, here on this continent. Many people are asking, and many are apologizing. In some ways, it's too late for apologies.

● NOTE : *Anishnabe* : In the Ojibway creation story, man was the last form of life placed on the earth, from whom the first peoples descended. *Ain* : from whence; *Nishina* : Lord; *Abe* : male. To discover one is *Anishnabe* is to discover one's relationship to creation. The word can be translated as 'original peoples'.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LORELLA ZANETTI

IMPULSE SPEAKS WITH

J.G. BALLARD

J.G. Ballard was born in Shanghai in 1930 and was interned by the Japanese from 1942 to 1945. Combining a visionary intensity with a powerful narrative flow, Ballard has been called the most imaginative living British fiction writer today.

IMPULSE: *Do you believe there is a conscious connection between nature and dream?*

J.G. BALLARD: Yes. I assume that it is no accident that human beings have been endowed with prodigious imaginations and a remarkable capacity to enter various hallucinatory or delusional states - as in dreams, hypnagogic imagery, flashes of deja vu etc - . Bearing in mind the difficulties that a wholly rational being would have in coping with a largely hostile environment, there must be enormous evolutionary advantages in possessing a powerful imagination, contrary to what one would assume, or the pressures of natural selection would long since have eliminated anyone handicapped by this confusing ability to invent an imaginary alternative to the world presented to us by our senses. And that, I take it, is the vital function which the imagination performs for the central nervous system and a brilliant strategem for dealing with crucial limitations in the brain's picture of reality. This would accord with the view of modern psychology that the brain presents us with only a ramshackle view of reality, a partial construct imperfect in numerous ways, from the more trivial - the geometry of the rooms we inhabit - to the more serious - our sense of time, memory, our hopes, ideals and private mythologies. The more we can engage our imaginations, therefore, the better, and the most important task for each of us is to test the imperfections of reality against the perfectibility of the dream.

IMPULSE: *Is nature, by its very essence, apocalyptic?*

J.G.B.: Yes. Everything is in a state of continuous tumult, and from the standpoint of the central nervous system the most commonplace acts describe a state of imminent crisis - does the angle between two walls have a happy ending ? Does the cheek placed on a pillow make time retreat from us ? Do the stairs to the next floor lead to infinity ? Are all the objects in our rooms a set of coded messages ? How does one decipher a chair, a ceiling, a mirror ? Only the imagination can turn these keys.

IMPULSE: *Do you feel that one method of transcending nature in a metropolitan environment is to immerse oneself in a subculture?*

J.G.B.: No. Each of us already forms a subculture of one. Add another, and you have, not a subculture, but a crowd - a far smaller entity.

Impulse: *Do you see any correlations between the extreme conditions of certain phases of your psychological life and the literature that you have produced?*

J.G.B.: I take it that the correlation is total. My novels and short stories constitute a series of snapshots of my central nervous system, a set of extreme hypotheses, a collection of documents describing a mysterious cerebral event .

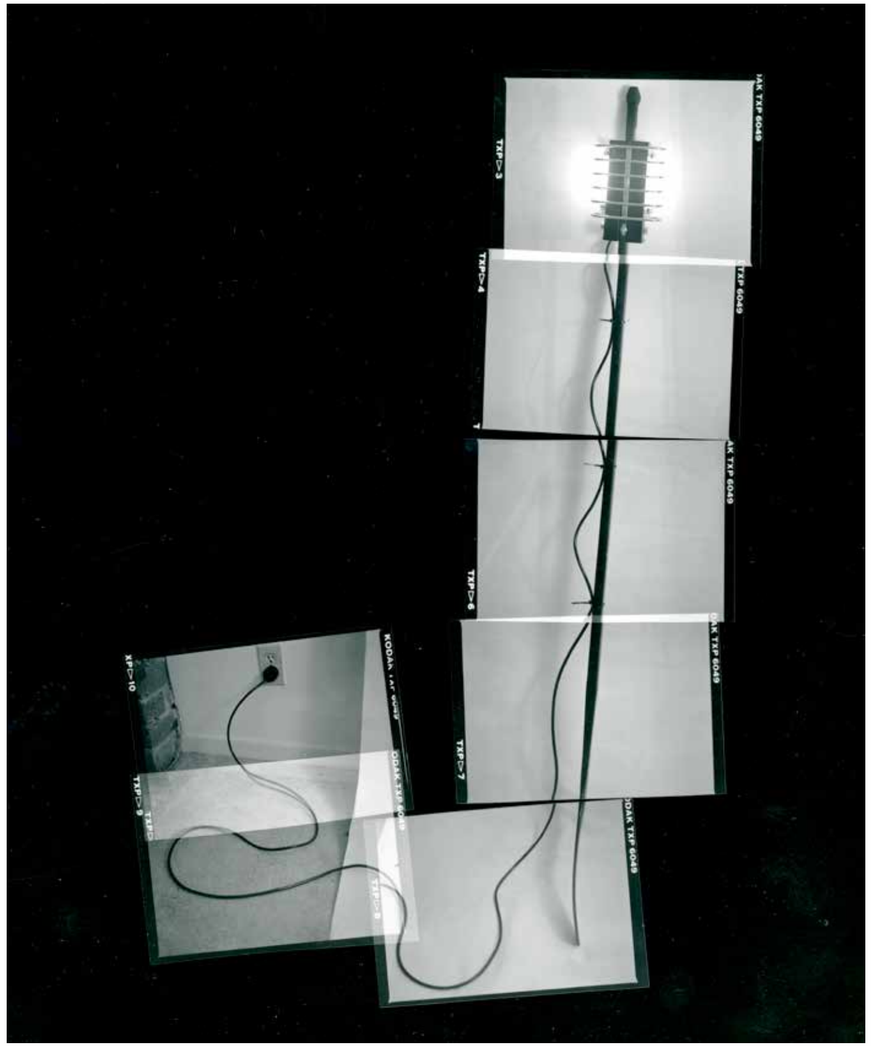
IMPULSE: *Do you have a moral stand or position? Your characters are fighting against forces so powerful that they seem doomed to fail.*

J.G.B.: No - in fact, in so far as my characters are true to their own imaginations, they are doomed to succeed - I can't think of a single one of my characters who is a failure - they all embrace the logic of their obsessions and pursue them to the end. That is why I think of myself as the most optimistic of present-day writers.

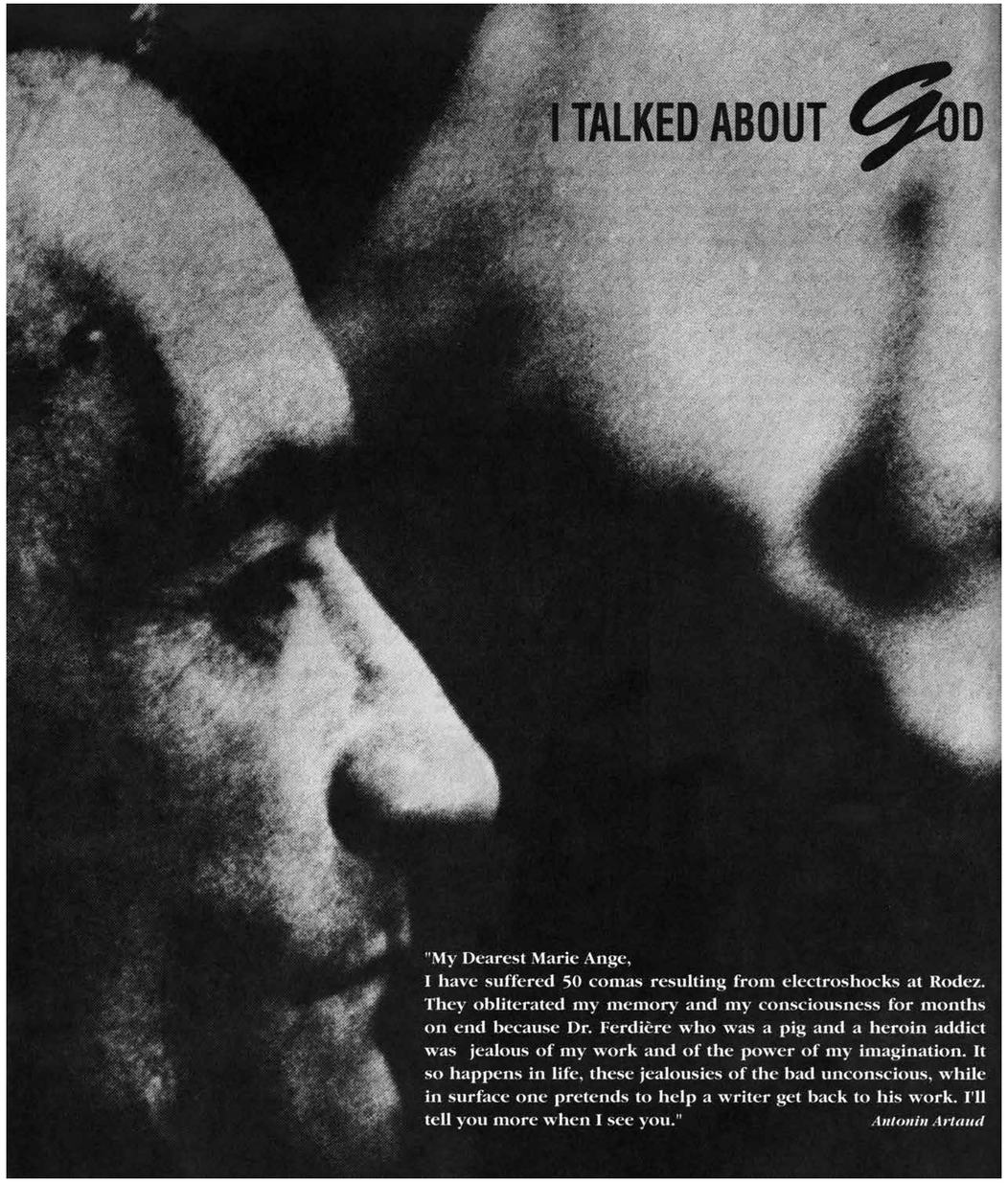
IMPULSE: Images of death have haunted your work; what is your relationship with death?

J.G.B.: A minor member of his family, who in due course will inherit a small share of his estate.

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I TALKED ABOUT GOD WITH ANTONIN ARTAUD

SYLVERE LOTRINGER *SPEAKS WITH*
DR. JACQUES LATREMOLIERE

"My Dearest Marie Ange,
I have suffered 50 comas resulting from electroshocks at Rodez. They obliterated my memory and my consciousness for months on end because Dr. Ferdière who was a pig and a heroin addict was jealous of my work and of the power of my imagination. It so happens in life, these jealousies of the bad unconscious, while in surface one pretends to help a writer get back to his work. I'll tell you more when I see you."
Antonin Artaud

DR. LATREMOLIERE: I must tell you that when you called to set up this meeting, I wasn't wildly enthusiastic. The idea of raising the issue of Artaud's life again, thirty years after his death, seems to me beside the point. For two years I was working with the director of the Rodez asylum, Dr. Gaston Ferdière. I was Artaud's friend. I'm aware that Artaud is being studied a great deal. It's too bad. Artaud had no message, never had. He was a distinguished paranoiac, with extraordinary ideas of grandeur and persecution. Those people he considered his friends were the ones he contacted when he needed opium. We never gave him opium, but he asked for it. We were his friends, but as soon as we were gone, we became his enemies. To me his written work is something of a cry. A cry of horror. Raised by a man who had no sense. No sense of other people. He placed himself at the centre of the world. You'll see. It was just him and little birds.

SYLVERE LOTRINGER: *Well, at least there were the birds.*

Dr. L.: In any case I find his fame a bit exaggerated. How is it that he experienced such different things at such short intervals? That really couldn't have been him. But as for me, I saw him scream, heard him scream. Not against me! Never! He only yelled at me after he had left Rodez, didn't he? So. I believe that people will find nothing in Artaud's work. It will not advance civilization. I believe that someone who cannot control himself can be of no help to anyone.

S.L.: *But the horror at the bottom of the paranoia, isn't that what makes his work important? His pain forced him to write what he wrote, then the writing itself made a shock.*

Dr. L.: I have here Artaud's complete works - have you read them? - and I've digested them little by little. I have the first editions of his books, haven't I? He gave them to me! Well, when you've read everything he wrote, you see there's very little that's understandable. Very little.

S.L.: *You know, it's no coincidence that everything important in modern art since the turn of the century looked towards primitive societies. Like Artaud. Civilization was already limping towards a loss of substantiality, things appeared and vanished at incredible speed. People needed to get back to the earth, to reinvent implacable rituals. And that's the theatre of cruelty. It took Artaud to Mexico and Ireland. Do you find that so weird? To me, Artaud is anarchistic like the dadaists. He's the echo chamber of this great breakdown that dada responded to - World War I, the first big bloodbath, this craze for universal annihilation. Artaud may be paranoid, narcissistic, megalomaniac, whatever, but it gives him a certain perception. Almost inhuman.*

"You don't understand what it's like to give electroshock. We see a dissolution of the person followed by a reconstruction. Every time we did it on Artaud we rebuilt a little more."
Dr. Jacques Latremolière

Dr. L.: If he's inhuman, how can he contribute to humanity?

S.L.: *But humanity is inhuman!*

Dr. L.: I can't believe you think Artaud was sensitive to civilization. I can guarantee he wasn't in the least. He was only interested in himself. During the whole time that I knew him he was Christ, the centre of the world. Don't tell me he has contributed to the progress of humanity, not in the least. He was sensitive only to his tremendous pain. And I studied his pain. With him. But his pain. His alone. So don't place him on a pedestal.

S.L.: *What was it like to be Artaud's friend?*

Dr. L.: Oh, we chatted a lot. For hours. About God. And God only knows, his ideas about religion were disputable. He fashioned a kind of myth at which he was the centre. So hey, let me laugh when they talk about his "message". There's nothing. It's hollow. Besides, it makes no sense. I was there.

S.L.: *Artaud thought he had a privileged relationship with God?*

Dr. L.: Privileged? He was to be the one in power before the last appearance of God on this earth.

S.L.: *Artaud may have thought he was the centre. He was in a way so absent; so lost in himself, so desperately deep into himself that he could connect to all despair. When you get to this degree of suffering, all the suffering in the world is a part of you.*

Dr. L.: I'm sorry, sir, but I've practised many years of psychiatry and I'm afraid I have to say that this notion of yours is romantically absurd. The more turned in on oneself a person is, the less open to the world ... to love. And that's why Artaud was junked. He was no longer socially viable. If we treated him -- which is what we've been criticized for doing all these years -- it was only to protect him from himself. And we saw him come around! He was able to write again, to draw, to talk with us. We gave that to him. All my life I'll remember my friend Ferdière saying, "If I had known what was to come, I would never have let him leave Rodez. I'm immensely sorry."

S.L.: *What seems important isn't to know whether or not Artaud deceived his friends. I'm sure he did, especially the ones who decided about his freedom. But look at what he wrote.*

Dr. L.: That is not great. That does nothing to advance society.

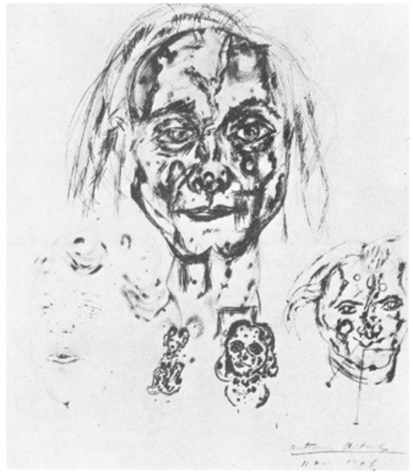
S.L.: *Then why does this thing we call literature exist? Why do people wrack their brains to say things indirectly? Why do they teach these things at school if people write only out of greed or eccentricity?*

Dr.L.: Artaud is hardly taught at school.

S.L.: *I teach him at Columbia! I'm not the only one!*

Dr.L.: Yes .. Well. I am sorry for your students. Because they are not happy in life. This sort of thing will not make them stronger. Oh no. It will leave them crawling on the ground.

S.L.: *One of the pieces on the Tarahumaras was written at Rodez in 1943. A sort of delirium on Christ and the Cross, which Artaud rejects a few years later as priestly bewitchment. But the ones*



ARTAUD'S SELF-PORTRAIT 1946

written in Mexico are very beautiful, crystalline.

Dr. L.: I don't know them.

S.L.: *It's an extremely serene vision of the world. Which is unusual with Artaud. Everything is in its place. God, men, stones. Men are no longer the centre of the universe. They're hewn in stone and the stones are gods. There's a sort of material harmony ... a rocky, primitive, organic feel for it.*

Dr. L.: You find an equivalence between stones and gods harmonious?

S.L.: *That's what the Greeks said. Why can we accept certain things from the Druids, accept their beliefs as legitimate -- but when someone takes himself for a Druid, and becomes a Druid again, we lock him up.*

Dr. L.: To go from Artaud to Christ himself then back to-the Druids is quite a feat.

S.L.: *We were talking about stones and gods.*

Dr. L.: Yes yes yes. I have not lost sight of our topic. Civilization at that time could allow itself to speak about stones, even to sacralize them. Why not?

S.L.: *The Stone Age isn't so far away. Anyway, when one thinks about it, 1500 or 2000 years of history doesn't amount to very much. And when one starts thinking about such things, one starts asking oneself what it's like to live, and to live in a society like ours when one no longer knows very well what a god is, when one is no longer in touch with anything, not even with stones. Doesn't this sort of question seem valid to you? I mean, that's what thinking is about. Or writing. Perhaps the function of literature is to imagine a world where men are like stones, and not only blurred images on the television screen.*

Dr. L.: If you'll take a look at my article, you'll see that in the end he found it necessary to emasculate ... man ... he commits ... impure actions. That's all he had in his head. Artaud was unhappy to be the way he was. Yes, unhappy. So he wanted others to be like him. In emasculating others, he wanted to reduce them to his own dimension.

S.L.: *In the 19th century, sexuality was a private thing. Right now it's so spreadout and widely advertised that you could see that as a kind of emasculation. Sex isn't very sexual anymore. Its on billboards, on TV, on the couch ... everywhere. Sex is society. You know, America isn't even America. It's the world ... just faster and more raw. It speeds things up. Brings to light things which elsewhere, here for instance, are still in the shade. A little like Artaud did in his head, in isolation, with his nutty notions ...*

Dr. L.: Your ideas about civilization are rather curious, Monsieur. Allow me not to share them. I talked about God with Antonin Artaud. I could only guess what shameful erotic manoeuvres his demons were exercising over him. Artaud thought his failure to uphold personal purity would prevent the Second Coming. Oh Jansenism, how much harm did you do? Artaud conceived of human love in a very strange way, turning the human pro-creative body into an object of abjection. I told him that the act of love was a giving up of oneself in abandon - a death achieved by thinking of the other's joy. Throughout the centuries, Christ has offered us a symbolic re-creation of his Creation. I tried to make Artaud perceive of abandon existing outside the sphere of sin by comparing it to his own ideas about art and death. But he was chained to a vision of a world repulsively organic and profaned. The virginity that he wanted so badly was outside of the body; he fled in panic and disgust when confronted by any living matter and saw only bestiality informed by horror. Artaud protected himself violently against any kind of true abandon, rallying only his darker forces at the expense of real creativity. I wanted him to see how much plenitude and joy he might find in God. Artaud pursued an evangelism devoid of love, the hero of a private drama. Sometimes I shudder at the mere thought of what might have happened had Artaud actually looked for disciples, who might well have been attracted by the magical quality of his speech and his inspired appearance. What would have been the future of the human race? Artaud was impotent, finally to conceive of Christian love and love itself. I felt obliged to make him understand the unorthodoxy of these views. In my letter of 18 July 1943 I offered him a few awkward and perhaps not very charitable comments suggesting that only the whole of a life turned towards the glory of God could stand up to diabolical possession.

S.L.: *When a crazy person writes and his texts are read and taught, they become literature. What do you do with this kind of literature? Why do you read it? Why shouldn't you read it?*

Dr. L.: Yes. Well. Artaud will be forgotten very quickly. I don't understand him anymore. I don't even feel like listening to him. He has nothing to teach me. Not about himself, nor about me, nor about man. Especially not about man. Artaud won't last.

S.L.: *Don't you even try to forget the man you've known when you read Artaud's texts? To read him in the same way you read Racine ...*

Dr. L.: Oh no! He speaks to me. He speaks to me anyway. He doesn't say much to me, but yes, he speaks.

S.L.: *And what does he say?*

Dr. L.: Oh! Images. He throws images around. It's pretty empty. I'm sure that in 30-50 years no one will remember any of this.

S.L.: *What writer of Artaud's generation will be remembered ... in your opinion?*

Dr. L.: I don't occupy myself with literature for my personal amusement. I hope to find an essential form of civilization ... that's all.

S.L.: *In literature?*

Dr. L.: In ... In life. I didn't do literature with Artaud, you understand. I had a first-hand experience with him. It wouldn't have meant much, if there wasn't so much controversy . But if you want to know what I got from it, it gave me a notion of normalcy, the picture of the normal man. I mean the man able to live in society.

"I tried to make Artaud perceive of abandon existing outside the sphere of sin by comparing it to his own ideas about art and death. But he was chained to a vision of a world repulsively organic and profaned."

DONNA LYPCHUK *SPEAKS WITH*

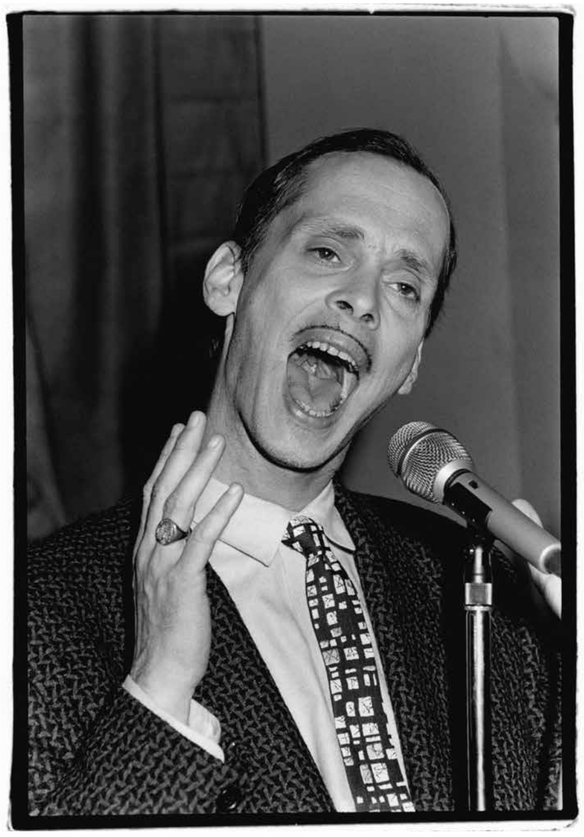
John Waters

The occasion: The night of the Toronto B Movie Festival' s *Tribute To John Waters*. The location: upstairs at Lee's Palace (Festival Headquarters) and later -- The Bloor Cinema where the tastiest part of this tribute to America's most "tasteless" of filmmakers was to take place in the form of a selected screening of three of his works -- *The Diane Linkletter Story* (1964), *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and *Polyester* (1981).

John Waters still resides in Baltimore, where he was born in 1946, and where on February 7, 1985, it was officially declared to be "John Waters Day". After being expelled from New York University's Film School, (a whole section of the speech he delivered was devoted to how much he hated film school), he "returned to the world of the theatre" and became a puppeteer for children's parties. His predilection for fake blood, however, soon got the better of him, and inspired by the gift of a camera from his grandmother, began his career as the unabashed *auteur* that to date has made over twelve films tantamount to the "Art of Trash".

Waters is also an author. His first book, *Shock Value*, (mandatory reading for all aspiring movie moguls), chronicles film by film the petty pragmatics of his early years as a film-maker as well as his stock fascination for sex, death and disaster. *Crackpot* , a collection of his journalism released last year, is like a "crash course" in John Waters type sensibilities that is chock full of observational humour vented upon a diversity of topics: The City of L.A, Christmas, Fame, Celebrity Burnout, and Jean Luc Godard's *Hail Mary*.

Highly respected as a writer and a film critic, as well as being an avid public speaker, Waters is primarily known as an independent filmmaker.



PHOTOGRAPHY . ROBERT BAILLARGEON

An atypical twist on the teenage "message movie" *The Diane Linkletter Story* marks Divine's screen debut as a "sweet young thing" on acid, who once confronted by her parents about her "bad attitude", becomes hysterical and "makes like a bird" from out of her parents' upstairs bedroom window. John Waters' other films include *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket* (1964), *Roman Candles* (1966), *Eat Your Makeup* (1968), *Mondo Trasho* (1969), and *Multiple Maniacs* (1970).

BAD TASTE

Making the kind of movies I do, you can only hope that what you do is in bad taste. How can you top Baby Faye with a monkey heart and all this medical stuff? I mean, I even felt sorry for Nancy Reagan for the first time in my life last week. A doctor who was about to take a journey up Reagan's asshole was on the news. That's much more tasteless than anything I could do today!

BESTIALITY

This is the first time I think, that an uncut version of Pink Flamingos has ever been screened. I think it's all about that sex scene to do with the chicken. I mean, people are always coming up to me and asking, "Do you eat chicken?" I mean, chickens don't just have a heart attack and die on your plate. We put the chicken in a movie, it got famous and it got fucked to boot! What do you want? We ATE the chicken at the end of the day. We didn't have caterers in those days.

MY TRIP TO JAPAN

I went to Japan this year, and it was very strange because everywhere I went, people would go, "Your name is John Waters?" and chuckle. I finally realized that my name translated there as john which means toilet and they thought my name was Toilet Waters.

His first major underground "cult" hit, however was *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and featured Divine in the final stages of her "drag queen evolution" as the "star persona" we are familiar with today. Infamous for its images of cannibalism (the Good Guys literally eat the Bad Guys at an out-door barbecue), incest (Divine gives her son a blow-job) and bestiality (a chicken is literally "torn between two lovers"), *Pink Flamingos* was followed by *Female Trouble* (1974), and *Desperate Living* (1977), both of which were notorious for their scenes of castration. In 1981, *Polyester* was released in "Smell-O-Rama". The audience was invited to "smell" along with the characters in the movie by scratching the sealed odours on a "Scratch' N' Sniff" card, whose numbers corresponded with those flashed in a corner of the movie screen.

In 1986, John Waters broke his own lifetime resolution and appeared last year as an actor (a used car salesman) in *Something Wild*. He also makes an appearance in his own, soon-to-be-released, first commercial feature *Hairspray*., another "Divine" comedy. Also starring a delightful pot-pourri of heavy-duty personalities including Pia Zadora, Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono, and Jerry Stiller, as well as Toronto's own teenage heart-throb, renegade stand-up song-stylist (and stand-in for Joan Rivers on *The Late Night Show*) Shawn Thompson.

DONNA LYPCHUK: *I'm just here to look at what you're wearing.*

JOHN WATERS: What were you expecting? A strait jacket?

SHAWN THOMPSON: *Donna is from one of those ART magazines ... you know.*

DL: *Is there a lot of art direction in your films? So much of what you do seems to be "cinema verite". Like filming wildly self-indulgent creatures in their natural habitat .*

JW: We have some rehearsal ... I'm fully of the school where you get it on the second take and if you like it -- you move right along. You know, I'm not of the Stanley Kubrick school of "those eighty takes of the exact same line" 'cuz I have a budget to work within, and everyday THEY (the producers) come to see how far you got. *Hairspray* came in right on schedule. Actually, it's the only movie ever made that came in a day under schedule and under budget.

DL: *What was the budget for* Hairspray *?*

JW: About two and a half million, but that's misleading because five hundred thousand was for music rights. Below the line, there's a million and two, and there's eleven hundred people in this film, so I still consider it to be a low budget movie.

DL: *What was the budget for your last film* Polyester *?*

JW: Three hundred thousand!

DL: *How about* Desperate Living *?*

JW: Sixty-five thousand!

DL: Female Trouble ?

JW: Twenty-five thousand! *Multiple Maniacs* ! Five Thousand! *The Diane Linkletter Story* ... Eighty dollars. It's not even a movie. It's a camera test. For Divine. But I'll show it. You got twenty-five bucks? You can rent it. Buys my cigarettes.

ST: *Are you going to do any more movies like* Polyester *with "Scratch' N' Sniff?"*

JW: Well, that was just a gimmick, really. It was sort of a homage to William Castle.

DL: *He's the guy who used to station nurses in the lobby and put joy buzzers under theatre seats ...*

JW: Right. No, I don't think I'll do that again. It's just too hard to show. I think, actually, that movie stars are the best gimmick. It's all in the casting -- the putting together of all of these names. With *Hairspray*, I want people to see all of these names together on one bill and go "Huh?".

DL: *How did you meet up with Shawn*?

JW: I met him through this good casting woman in New York. I never even read anybody else for the part because he came in and he was EXACTLY what I wanted. That never happens. I mean, he even had on the right suit!

DL: *What used to be thought of as underground is now considered mainstream. I was wondering, how, as an artist, you dealt with this change in the collective cultural psyche?*

JW: I think it's good news. I think the perfect example of how this affected my career was when the Baltimore Museum of Art in my hometown did a complete retrospective of all of my films. Black tie and everything! But I went, thinking, "These are the exact same films that I was getting arrested for in this same city ten years ago." What a magical change! It just proves how people's sense of humour has just drifted, not Right or Left, but Off-centre, certainly to the point where they feel they can laugh at terrible things now ... I feel sorry for the kids who are nineteen or so right about now. There's no way to rebel! What can you do? A mohawk means nothing. If you wore long hair in the sixties, people wanted to beat you up. What can you do now? If you kill your parents, they'll make a T.V. movie about it the next week. There's nothing you can do nowadays to make your parents insane. Except take drugs, and that's boring. In the sixties, people took drugs to change their minds. Now, they take drugs so they don't have to think.

DL: *Has your ambition always been to make funny films?*

JW: That's exactly what I've always wanted to do. To me, what's funny is not always everyone's opinion of what's funny. Yeah. I don't make movies to change America. If everything was about what's good and what's fair, I would have no subject matter left. I'm not trying to change anything specifically. I like everything that's wrong.

DL: *Let's talk about your little-known side. You are also a well respected American film critic ...*

JW: I write for *Rolling Stone, Vogue, American Film, Film Comment, National Lampoon ... Esquire*. It's hard, you know, because editors and publishers encourage me to be crazy. Editors always want to know about a film: "But will it play in Peoria?".

DL: *What did you think of* Blue Velvet *? (1986; David Lynch)*

JW: Oh! It was my favourite comedy of the year. I think David Lynch thought it was a comedy, too. Comedy is the deadliest weapon of all. It's worse than a gun.

DL: *What did you think of its mirror image --* True Stories *? (1986; David Byrne)*

JW: Yeah, I liked it. I thought it was fun. I liked some parts of it better than I liked others. David is a friend of mine. He's from Baltimore.

DL: *But didn't you think there was a deliberate pretension on his part that undermined the whole thing: to make a "cult" movie a la John Waters on purpose?*

JW: I grew up with David. I love the *National Enquirer*. That's the best barometer of Fame in America. You're not really famous until you're in the *Enquirer* -- or on television.

ST: *How do you feel about having this Tribute to you, here, in Toronto?*

JW: It makes me feel like I'm dead ... which I love.

DL: *What projects do you have planned after the release of* Hairspray?

JW: Well, I just signed this two book deal with *Vintage Books,* which is part of Random House. I have some appointments with some studios when I go back to L.A.. I have some ideas, but it's too early to shout them out loud.

ST: *Is that difficult for you? Being outside of the system, being an independent and then having to go into the Hollywood Studio System?*

JW: Well, *Hairspray* almost happened in the studio. It got up "two levels" and then, "what always happens" happened. The main producers come in and say, "Well, let's watch *Polyester*." Then, they watch it by themselves at ten in the morning and they are APPALLED! I mean, the fact that I made these movies gets me in and keeps me out.

ST: *What stage is* Hairspray *at now?*

JW: It's in a fine cut. It's in a test screen. It's close. It's ninety minutes. Every movie I've ever made has been ninety minutes and I really don't think a comedy can be longer. There's nothing worse than a long comedy. Long jokes are bad! All the best jokes are one or two words.

DL: *Have you ever considered writing a fictional book?*

JW: Yes. I know that's what everybody says in their lives. "Oh! I'd love to write a novel!", but that is, really, what I want to do.

DL: *There are a lot of vampires around lately. In* Dudes *and* The Lost Boys, *for example. Do you think it's because as an image they make such a good metaphor for AIDS?*

JW: David Cronenberg made the best AIDS movie years ago: *It Came From Within.*

DL: *So, has anybody called you a nihilist lately?*

JW: I've been called that, but I've been called worse. I don't think I am at all. My films are very moral. The Good Guys win.

DL: *Do you have a favourite "exploitation" film?*

JW: *Faster Faster Pussy Cat! Kill! Kill!* (Russ Meyer). I hear it's never screened up here. I don't know why. There's not even nude breasts in it. It was made in 1966, so it's not like there's "gore" in it or anything. Do they censor David Cronenberg's films up here? We had a censorship board in Baltimore and there was a lady there who used to butcher my films for years.

ST: *She sounds a lot like Mary Brown, a lady we used to have here ...*

JW: She was somebody who hates movies, basically. I mean, she'd hand me the scissors! I would take her in a brand new print -- and I wouldn't have a penny left and she'd say, "You can't have that! That's a vagina shot!", and I'd say, "That's a man." (Divine). I couldn't explain to her what a "cheater" was all about. She used to sit there and watch three movies at once, 'cause she knew all they were looking for is the sex, and shout, "Reel Two! Rear Entry!".
Rear Entry? What's that? I'd never heard that expression, before. This little, dirty old lady.

DL: *What's your favourite John Waters film?*

JW: Oh! *Female Trouble* , definitely. Did anybody here ever meet Glenn Gould? He's one of my idols. Talk about a gifted eccentric! I even rented Glenn Gould's *Toronto!* Who's the most famous criminal here? I mean, like a famous, famous, criminal? Like an axe murderer or something? There must be one! Canada isn't that civilized.

MY NEW FILM *HAIRSPRAY*

It's a satire on two of the most dreaded genres today: the Teen Flick and the Message Movie. I hope my version of an All-Star cast will pull 'em in. We have Shawn Thompson, who plays a sort of hill-billy Dick Clark. Sonny Bono's in it. I hear he's running for Mayor of Palm Springs and I can't imagine any "bigger pride" than going into a voting booth, pulling the curtain, and then pulling the "politically correct Bono Lever". Debbie Harry plays a hill-billy mom. We had to shoot Pia Zadora singing on location in the slums of Baltimore and she thought it was a set! I had to tell her, "No, Pia. People live here." Phyllis Diller's in it ... Jerry Stiller and Mink Stole. The star is a newcomer who plays a fat teenage girl, sort of a baby Divine. We auditioned every fat teenage girl in the country for this role, and sometimes we'd have to tell them, "No, you're just not fat enough," and they would break down sobbing.

THE BEST HORROR MOVIE OF THE YEAR

The *Whales of August,* of course, was the best horror movie of the year. The close-ups of Bette Davis were much scarier than anything I could have dreamed up.

NUDITY ON SCREEN

I love nudity on screen. I'm against it in real life.

NANCY SPERO



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CONVERSATIONS WITH

MARGARETHE VON TROTTA

EDITED BY JUDITH DOYLE

Margarethe von Trotta's film career started in front of the camera, acting for such directors as Fassbinder and her future husband, Volker Schlondorff, with whom she also co-authored four films and in 1975 shared the directing of *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*. Ten years ago, von Trotta directed her first film, *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages*, about a mother who robs a bank to support her alternative day care centre. It was part of the broad sweep that led the German cinema directly into political issues. That same year, she also worked on Germany in Autumn, a collective effort in response to the kidnapping and murder of the industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer, and the subsequent arrest and death of members of the Bader-Meinhof group. In 1979, Margarethe von Trotta directed *Sisters or The Balance of Happiness*, a film which explores the complex relationship between siblings. *Marianne and Juliane*, which is also about sisters, is her most highly acclaimed work. It won the Golden Lion award for Best Film in Venice in 1981 and the Golden Hugo award at the Chicago Film Festival the same year. *Sheer Madness*, her next film was made in 1983, while her current film, *Rosa Luxemburg*, is about the revolutionary cruelly murdered in 1919.

MARTA BRAUN



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How did you start making films and obtain financing? When I was eighteen years old, I went to Paris to study. It was the early '60's during the *Nouvelle Vague - the New Wave* - in France. I was supposed to study French literature, but I met many other students who went to the cinema instead of school. They took me with them and we'd stay all day long. In Paris, you buy one ticket and you can stay the whole afternoon and watch the same film three times. As a student, being very poor, that was a big advantage. It was the time of Bergman. He had already made ten films or more, and they were all being shown in Paris. It was a real shock for me, because at that time in Germany there was shit in the cinema - silly, stupid, sentimental films. We, as students, were arrogant enough not to look at these films. Suddenly, I discovered what cinema could be and decided to go in this direction.

I went back to university and took acting lessons. I don't know why. Now it's clear I had an intuition that I would someday act in film. In '65, the New Cinema started in Germany with a film by Alexander Kluge and Volker Schlondorff. But at that moment, I'd just had a baby. It was '68 or '69 when I tried to get involved as an actress. There was no possibility then for a woman of getting in as a filmmaker or director. So I worked as an actress with Fassbinder and Volker Schlondorff. I married Volker two years later and worked with him. He'd attended film school in France, and I never had. I worked with him on scripts from the beginning and stayed with him through the whole film. I was in the editing room more than he, because I wanted to learn it all. Little by little I became an Assistant Director, then with *Katharina Blum* I co-directed. By '77, I really felt I had to do my own work.

For my first film, I had difficulty getting money because they didn't trust me. I was an actress and a woman. Actresses in general are supposed to be stupid. And as a woman, they thought I didn't have enough authority or strength. I made the film in 16mm instead of 35mm, and blew it up in the end. The television co-producers were wary and hesitant, so my husband said, "If she's not able to finish it, I'll complete it for her." He didn't show up at all during the shooting. He just convinced them that it would work.

Aside from mechanics what other aspects of filmmaking did you learn from Schlondorff and Fassbinder? Fassbinder made films because he was obsessed by life. He had to get his obsessions out. His films were very autobiographical, though it might not be noticeable at first. Volker Schlondorff makes films mainly based on literature. I felt very close to Fassbinder's way of treating his experiences, his obsessions and power games. He suffered a lot in life, and he made others suffer. It's a Dostoevskian way of living. That sounds selfish, but often it's a sort of therapy to make films.

The number of women who are successfully making films in Germany is extraordinary. How are you connected to that group? We are very lucky now to have all these women directors. It started with the women's movement in Germany in '68 when there was a student rebellion. There were many women students, but they were used as secretaries to type speeches for the males. They felt they had to form their own groups. We as filmmakers found the courage to claim our rights too. We have a new law in Germany providing subsidies from the state and for co-production with television. Women are really visible in this scene, but nevertheless we have more difficulty getting money, and we're still making lower budget films, housewives' films.

Your work has been criticized for not having a radical enough formal practice. Yet because of that tradition your films have reached more people with your radical message. I'm attacked by male critics for being a feminist, and by theoretical feminists for not being a feminist. I have to live with that. Many other women filmmakers are coming from the real women's movement and from universities. I was an actress for so long and worked with male directors and learned from them. Also, the films I saw in Paris were all by men; I came into cinema in another way. Perhaps the style is not so radical or avant-garde, but I'm extreme in my thoughts. Many women can identify with the characters in my film. Therefore I think I have a larger audience than others.

My films are in a way realistic, and then not so. For me, reality is the life you are living in a conscious way, and also the dreams you have. The night dreams and the day dreams, your past... all your thinking.

Why do you think film is the appropriate medium for expressing the reality of dreams? Dreams are already film. You can do the same thing in literature, but I'm not a writer. I wanted to be a painter when I was young, but I wasn't talented. When I discovered film in Paris, that was the closest medium to painting.

You do, however, write your own scripts. Yes, but a script is just bones that become flesh during shooting. It's just dialogue and some descriptions of how characters move and what they feel. Then, it all comes through images, the silences in between, the looks from one to the other, with gestures. It's more an emotional atmosphere I have in mind when I'm writing. During shooting, I try to get the emotion back which I felt in the beginning, from the actors, the set.

***Sheer Madness* was called *Friends and Husbands* when it was shown in England. What is your perspective on women's relationships with men versus women's relationships with women?** I make films from life and my experiences. It's not intentional that I deal with women's friendships and experiences. In the old myths and traditions of our culture, there were always stories of male friendship, but never of women's friendship - the old heroes, fighting together. I wanted to develop the myth of women's friendships, which is probably a new phenomenon. We assumed women talked only about children, education, recipes. Now with the new consciousness, we are being creative and working together. A friendship emerges that men are not used to dealing with.

Will you make a film about women working collectively? Unfortunately, when you show women working as a community in film, it becomes heavy, didactic, or propaganda. I join other women in the streets to fight, but to show that in a film - I had a similar scene in *Rosa* and cut it out. It became ridiculous and annoying. I don't know why.

Are you aware of working as a woman on the set? My crew is mixed. It's very annoying to only work with women. We live in a mixed-up society. Why suddenly have an all women's team? I think it's unhealthy.

Do German artists find themselves working in the shadow of the Second World War? Brecht said that after Auschwitz, there were no more poems possible. But he wrote poetry nevertheless. It's a belief that with such a terrible past and reality, art is impossible. We were the next generation. We were not aware of it in the beginning because nobody told us. We had this feeling, like a leaden sky weighing heavily upon us. Only in the '60's, with the student rebellion, was the past dealt with. We asked the earlier generation 'What happened? Why did you do it?'. We felt a duty, a responsibility. You can look at the so-called *New German Films* - they are old now already - but our generation was dealing with that burden, because our parents hadn't. When you look at *Marianne and Juliane*, the main theme is that we have to remember and question. That's why we are making films, not only to satisfy ourselves.

How did you start working on *Rosa Luxemburg*? It took a long time. I first met her in '68 as a portrait being carried by students in the streets, together with Lenin, Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara. She was the only woman amongst all these males. Her photograph was so intense, such a sad face. I became interested and read her letters. She accompanied me all these years and when I started to make films, I had the idea of making a film of her life, but she was a person I respected, admired and loved so much, I didn't feel worthy of it. Fassbinder had a project on Rosa. It was his last one before he died. The producers offered me the film after his death. I was afraid but I spoke with my collaborators, and they said 'You have to do it because you're a woman. Don't be a coward, you have to do it now.' Peter Märtehesheimer had written a script

BARBARA SUKOWA AS ROSA LUXEMBURG



PHOTO: COURTESY ONTARIO FILM INSTITUTE

for Fassbinder and they proposed I do it. It was only the first draft, and Fassbinder used to edit alot. Nobody knew how this script would have changed. I felt I had to do it my own way, with my own version. So I asked the producers if I could write my own script and they agreed. I worked on it for a year and a half. I did the research, read all her letters. Two thousand five hundred have been published, and she wrote a lot more. I read all her political writings. Two volumes were still unpublished, so I had to go to the Marxist-Leninist Institute in East Berlin. I met two people who are still alive, both over ninety years old, and spoke with them about her. One was an old anarchist. He said that she was the most intelligent person in the Party at that time.

Rosa was a teacher in the Social Democratic school, and the other older person I spoke with was a woman, one of her pupils. She told me about Rosa's cat. She was invited by Rosa for lunch, and there were three plates on the table. This woman was astonished because the only people invited for lunch were Rosa and her. Then up came the cat, sitting like an adult, eating correctly at the table. I didn't find this detail in any biography, because historians aren't interested in these little things. For me it was a symbol, first of her love for animals, and for her solitude. She also gave me a photograph of Rosa dressed as a geisha, she said the Party had costume balls at the time. This gave me the idea for the ball which opens the film.

I chose to make a portrait, not a historical analysis. Now, after the film, you can find all the literature in the bookshops. That, for me, was a triumph. All I wanted was to give her the chance to be resurrected.

What bearing does *Rosa Luxemburg* have on life in Germany today? I tried to choose from her life what is still relevent, her speeches against war and militarism. We have a very strong anti-war movement in Germany. She spoke about the dangers of war as we do today. What's amazing is that she said it before the First World War. On the other hand, her struggles with the Social Democratic Party in Germany and the contradiction between reformism and radicalism are still a problem now. I concentrated on these two points.

How did you develop the prison scenes in *Rosa*? Rosa was in prison nine times. During the First World War, she was in prison because they were afraid she would protest; she had one year of punishment, then was held as a 'prevention'. I am often asked why she was allowed to have her own clothing and furniture in prison. It was because she was there on a preventative basis, not as a criminal.

My first title for the film was *The Serene Patience of Rosa Luxemburg*. I found she was extremely patient during her time of imprisonment. She didn't run out of hope or become resigned. Others writing from the outside lamented about history going wrong, and the times being so bad. I asked, how could she be so patient? I think she really believed in revolution, that in the end it would happen and the time would be ripe to change society.

She was also ill during childhood. When she was five or six, she was bedridden for a year because of tuberculosis. When most children are playing and moving with their bodies, she had to move with her mind, and exercise her fantasies and intellect. She learned to read and write very early. In prison, I think she remembered this time in her childhood.

Do you have a pessimistic view of the relationship between political commitment and solitude? I don't think so. It's still a matter of fact that if a woman is to become politically engaged, she has to give up any other desires in her private life. But it doesn't have to be like that. We in Europe are more pessimistic than North Americans. We have the missiles, in both East and West Germany. If a Third World War comes, all of Europe will be the battlefield. We try to work against this, but we are so dependent - East Germany on the Soviets, and us on the Americans. We feel a sort of helplessness and resignation, yet we try to rebel against this possibility of a new war. Today, we don't question feminism or male chauvinism, all the contradictions we lived out in the early seventies. Now, it's more a question of how to survive. This we have to do together.

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I don't know how to get rid of solitude. I accept it. There are so many different moments in my filmmaking. During the writing, I am alone. With shooting there's a whole crew, so many collaborators and you're always communicating. During editing you are more or less alone. With the screening you have to go public to promote your film. I like this rhythm - to be alone, then with others, then alone. It's like respiration.

How much do the actresses contribute? I write a first and second draft, then I give the script to the actors. If they feel there's something to add or change, we discuss it. If I feel they're right, I make a change. For example, in *Sisters or The Balance of Happiness*, I wanted a certain actress to play the Mother. The scene after the death of the one sister was not in the script. She said, 'I'd like to perform in your film because I like your work, but can't you add some more scenes for me?' So I did, and it's a very important scene. She was right, not only for her own pride and self-fulfillment. Sometimes actresses have very good feelings for the balance of power and dramaturgy. The actor is in the character so much, in the end he or she knows much more about the character than I.

I rehearse without a camera, but with the cameraman. The jealousy scene in Rosa was rehearsed days before, afterwards, I discussed it with the cinematographer. During this rehearsal, we changed some dialogue. I feel very free to do that. When you write your own scripts, you never have to ask the author's permission.

How has America influenced German cinema? Volker Schlondorff works in America. When you are in the film business, Hollywood is still a very vivid myth. We are so interwoven with American culture, you can't see the difference sometimes. But that's a world-wide problem. Wherever you go, even in the deepest villages of Africa, you have Coca-Cola and the juke box. That's the future, perhaps.

You are presently working on a collaborative project. The *Omnibus* project. It's called that because there are several women film directors doing a project together. It's a story about one man, in episodes, and we're all taking the same actor, and we'll each write our own stories of what could happen to him. Perhaps in the end it won't be a real character. I don't know if it will be done. I am working now on a script in the direction of *Sheer Madness*, about the relationship between two women and a man, but this time both women love the same man, though they were friends before. They hate each other. How to deal with jealousy and this hate, how to save the friendship in spite of the jealousy.

Questions have been edited and rearranged. Thanks to Lori Spring and Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.

William Gibson

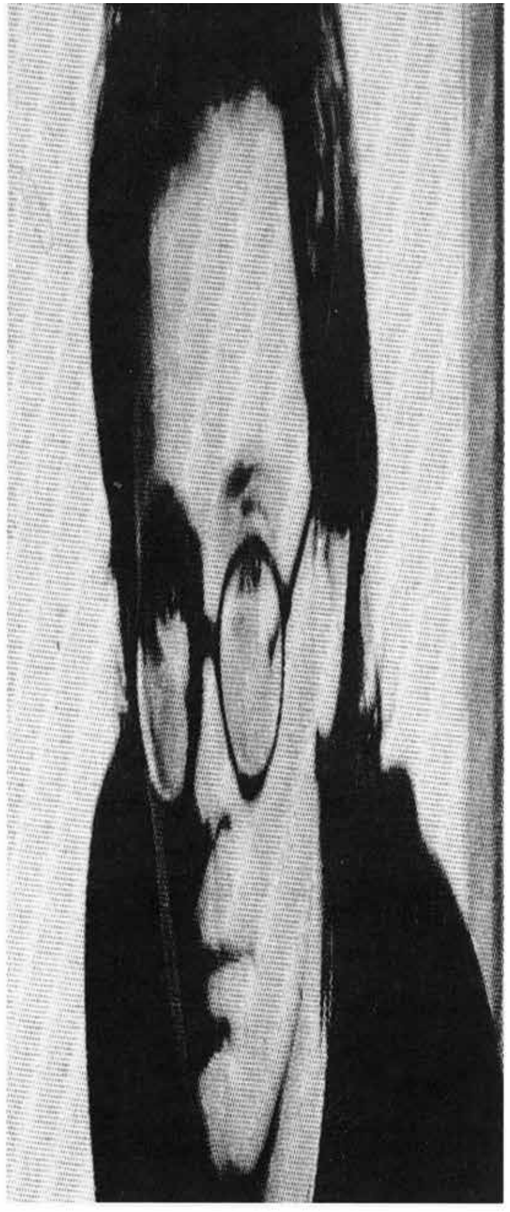
DOUG WALKER

INTERVIEWS

SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR



William Gibson was born in Virginia and moved to Canada in 1971. In 1985 his first novel *Neuromancer* won the Hugo, Nebula, and Phillip K. Dick awards. Gibson employs a taut literary technique reminiscent of roman noir style to describe a credible near future where media, technology, pop culture, and market imperatives have spun out of control "like a deranged experiment in social Darwinism, designed by a bored researcher who kept one thumb permanently on the fast forward button." Gibson's extrapolations become high-orbit metaphors mapping the dynamics of social change of the current condition. William Gibson has published three novels: *Neuromancer, Count Zero, Mona Lisa Overdrive* and a collection of short stories, *Burning Chrome.* Doug Walker conducted a written interview with Gibson at his home in Vancouver through the quaint and archaic medium of the Canada Post.



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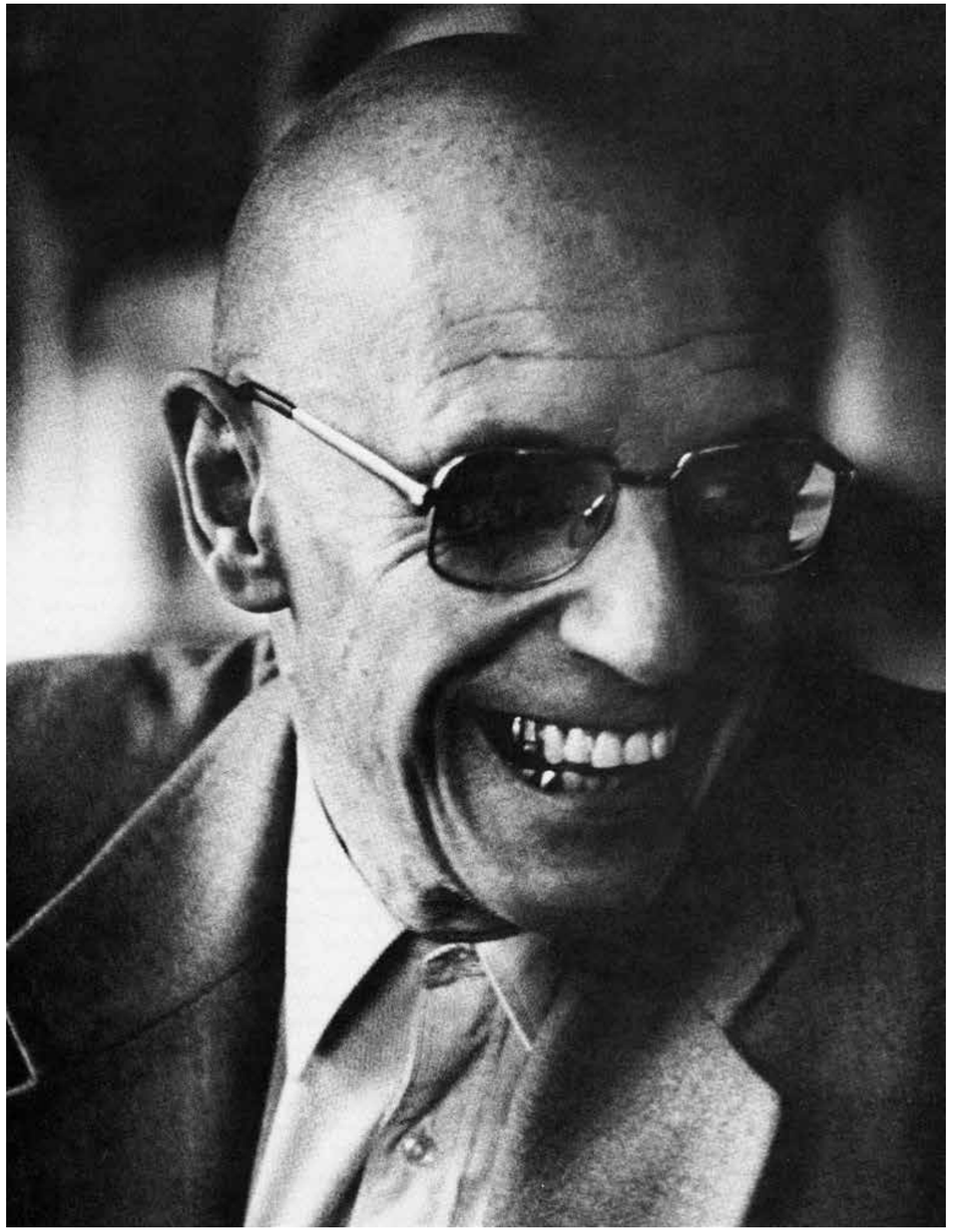


DOUG WALKER: How did you get involved in writing Science Fiction? Was it a conscious decision or has it always been a fascination? WILLIAM GIBSON: Neither, really. There was an element of real compulsion, though I didn't think writing Science Fiction was a particularly cool thing to do. Quite the opposite; it felt terminally geeky. It seemed to come from way down, though. Science Fiction pretends to be "about the future," but apprehending the present (AIDS, the greenhouse effect, bits of Chernobyl in your salad) seems to require the whole Science Fiction toolkit now. **The level of detail and technical information in the stories is extremely vivid and suggests you've done a lot of homework in this area. What were your sources?** That's just an illusion I'm apparently good at generating. It basically calls for the skills a clever English major employs to write an "A" paper about a book he hasn't opened. The literary illusion of reality, technological or otherwise, is just that. I don't think of what I do as "research." We're all living in this massive flood of information... For me, it's a matter of glancing randomly at fragments in the flow. **Has your work been influenced by any specific films?** The first ten minutes of John Carpenter's *Escape From New York* had some sort of influence on *Neuromancer*, but Heavy Metal comics were probably a more direct "cinematic" influence. So far I haven't been able to figure out quite what screenplays are actually for. They're totemic objects of some kind. It's very mysterious. I've done one for a sequel to *Aliens*, and I'm doing another, with my friend John Shirley, loosely based on my story *New Rose Hotel* for Edward Pressman. If that one rolls, it'll be directed by Kathryn Bigelow, who we chose on the basis of her film *Near Dark*. **You focus a lot of interest on subcultures in your novels. Is there anything that you find especially interesting in the subcultures of today?** I like the idea of subcultures generally. It makes things more interesting. Marginally more interesting. Though actually hanging out with anyone whose sense of identity is primarily subcultural tends to be pretty dull. **With the concepts of downloading hardwired personality constructs into mainframes and artificial intelligence acting as deities, you give the classic theme of immortality a contemporary edge. Do you have any speculations on how our society might react or adapt if downloading were a technological possibility?** The best book on the possibilities of "downloading" is Grant Fjermedal's non-fiction *The Tomorrow Makers*. (If you think downloading is spooky, this is the place to check out the possibilities of nanotechnology.) I'm not Isaac Asimov; I don't have ideas about things like that, not on an everyday basis. Whatever sense I have of these things emerges more or less exclusively during the narrative process. **Your description of the future has found a lot of favour with the intellectual avant-garde as a metaphorical illustration of certain key ideas such as simulation and cultural implosion authored by people such as Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilo, and Frederic Jameson. Was any of this "Post-structuralist" theory an influence on your work?** I haven't read them. **In our present society, the speed of information technologies seem to be eroding a sense of identity and cultural history. Do you have any opinions as to how the boosted information flow of the future will affect society and what the forms of adaptation to this condition might be like?** I think I had something like that in mind in *Count Zero*, with characters like Bobbby Newmark, whose sense of self, as conveyed in the narrative voice, is derived almost entirely from third-rate media. Or his mother, who literally lives in an endless soap opera called *People of Importance*. Jack Womack's *Ambient* is one recent novel that comes to mind as having dealt with this; his 21st-century proles subsist on a video diet of re-runs of *Leave It To Beaver* and *I Love Lucy*, without seeming to think of this stuff as being *old*. **As a writer you have been creating interesting characters for the public to consume and now with your success the public wants to consume you as an interesting character. How does it feel to deal with that shift?** I find that the shift frees me from feeling the need to be interesting. **A lot of the action in *Neuromancer* takes place in a high-tech bohemia where everyone stays up late, works hard at their chosen obsession, and can then go to an all night bar and talk shop with like-minded comrades. If you switch console cowboys with artists you've got a pretty good description of the "scene" of the recent past. Is there any connection with Case and his environment and your involvement with a "scene" and your personal development as an artist?** I think the main difference between the "scene" I imagined for the console cowboys and any art scene I've known, at least in Canada, is that the cowboys haven't anywhere to go for grants... I was thinking of criminals rather than artists, though "bohemia" is probably the right word here, because the "scene" in *Neuromancer* is extremely romantic and hasn't much to do with real criminality at all. (I try to redress this somewhat in *Mona Lisa Overdrive*.) **Has the experience of living as a Canadian in Vancouver made any difference in your writing?** Canada has always felt like an "alternate reality" to me. A not-quite-America. The America I grew up in largely vanished in the Seventies and Eighties, so that I experience the contemporary realities of New York or Los Angeles as some sort of "future." Which of course I find very valuable. The sight of homeless ragged people lying comatose on weedgrown traffic islands in West Hollywood still strikes me as unbelievable, something out of a cheap disaster film. ("The 1980s Considered as a Cheap Disaster film"...) **You make quite a few references to art in your novels, especially Joseph Cornell. I also understand that you are interested in the work of Mark Pauline and Survival Research Laboratories.** "I don't know much about art but I know what I like..." Cornell's boxes had always intrigued me, so I went after them in *Count Zero*. I try to do a similar job on Mark Pauline in *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, though I'm not as satisfied with the result. Pauline's art feels to me like an extension of screwing around with dangerous things in your back yard when you're sixteen, loading empty CO2 cartridges with the heads of kitchen matches... I like that. **It seems to me that one of the reasons your work is so popular is that you have a unique talent for creating images that perfectly articulate the beauty and strangeness of technological urban life in 1988. It's like technopoetry giving a voice to a huge reservoir of mute experience. The strength of your style seems to transcend the pulp genre and become something more. Do you see your work operating in this way? How does your work relate to genre Science Fiction?** Well, thanks, but you make it sound as though I just fell out of nowhere, fully formed, with all these tricks up my sleeve — whereas, if it weren't for the work of William Burroughs, J. G. Ballard, or for that matter of uncounted "genre" practitioners, I wouldn't be here. John LeCarré once credited Ian Fleming with having inadvertently created a "reverse market," with the Bond books, for LeCarré's work. I think what you call "genre" Science Fiction may have done the same thing for me. **What interests are you exploring in your new work?** I'm writing a novel, in collaboration with Bruce Sterling, called *The Difference Engine*, an alternate history in which the Victorians invent steam-driven computers. Cute as that might sound, it looks as though it's going to be a very dark book. **Do you have any plans to work outside a pop-culture format?** I like knowing that my text will be mass-produced. I like making money. I like seeing some crazed thing I wrote three years ago turn up in my local Safeway. It's a kick. Everything I've ever written has gone straight into print — generally into mass-market print. The idea of producing something in a limited edition isn't very exciting for me; might as well leave it in manuscript. I initially assumed that what I wanted to do *was* outside Science Fiction's particular pop-cult template... If I got to a point where I had to go elsewhere in order to feel I was "doing art," I'd be unhappy if I were still writing Science Fiction. As it is, it still feels like screwing around in the back yard, blowing things up.

MICHEL FOUCAULT

was interviewed on national French radio in the late seventies by an interviewer somewhat unfamiliar with his work, resulting in an often amusing yet revealing discussion with the famous post-structuralist philosopher and critic.

Original transcription by LISA WEBSTER. Translation from original French to English by RONALD B. DeSOUSA.



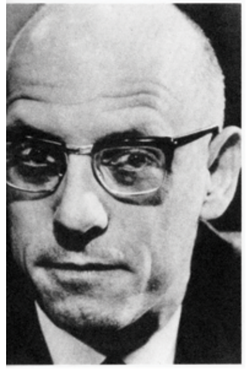
Michel Foucault, you are a Professor at the College of France, a philosopher and thinker. You are 48 years old. You are immersed in learning. How does one arrive at learning? MICHEL FOUCAULT: Arrive... you're born to it, you know. For someone like me, brought up as a provincial petty bourgeois, learning comes with your baby bottle before you even go to primary school. Knowledge was the rule of existence: you had to be first, you always had to be a bit better in class... So I've never arrived at learning, I've always been splashing about in it. **You were lucky.** MF: What's luck? When I say I've been splashing about in learning, actually it's because I would soon be rid of it. Since you can't do that, you look for a different angle, something that isn't part of learning but should be. Someone remarked the other day that May 68 was an insurrection against learning. But on the contrary, it was a rebellion against the kind of "learning" that amounted to a prohibition against knowing certain things. In fact, May 68 was a pulling down of barriers, and the intrusion of a new kind of learning. I felt rather at home in it, myself: I've always been interested in the underside, the "lower depths", as Nietzsche would say. **Still, you have a lot of diplomas.** MF: I suppose I do. **Do you find it unwieldy, that satchel-full of diplomas?** MF: The ones one hasn't deserved, one remembers with pleasure. The unwieldy ones are those one had to work for — after three years of cramming, your style gets cramped, you're stuck with ready-made ways of thinking, that's really tough to get rid of. **Do you teach?** MF: I lecture in a rather special place, the College of France, where my function is precisely not to teach. The normal teacher starts off with a dose of guilt: "There are things you should know." Then comes a dose of obligation: "I am going to teach you what you should know." Third comes the checking up stage: exams. A whole series of power relations! At the College of France, though, the audience only comes if they feel like it. Twelve times a year, it's the teacher who gets examined. At any rate, I get terrible stage freight before my lectures, just as I used to feel at exam time. I feel the public is coming to check up on my work: if they're not interested I get rather dejected! **Are there things it's essential to learn?** MF: The first thing one should learn, is that learning is something profoundly erotic. In fact it's quite an achievement, the way teachers manage to make learning unpleasant, depressing, grey, unerotic! We need to understand how that serves the needs of society. Imagine what would happen if people got into as big a frenzy about learning as they do about sex. Crowds shoving and pushing at school doors! It would be a complete social disaster. You have to make learning seem rebarbative if you want to restrict the numbers of people who have access to knowledge. **You've claimed one should refrain from thinking in terms of good and evil. How do you feel now about that maxim?** MF: All the people who say you shouldn't think in terms of good and evil are thinking in just that way themselves! **Nietzsche.** MF: Of course. Lucky he set the example! (laughter) Who was keener than Nietzsche on telling us what was good and what was evil? But to want not to think in those terms is really to want to avoid this or that *current* conception of good or evil. To undermine the barriers, to unsettle, to spread uncertainty, to foster osmosis, passages: I think that's what matters. **You often hover on the border of seriousness and levity. Sometimes, it's hard to follow you.** MF: It saddens me to be told that. My ambition is to write in such a way as to give my readers a kind of physical pleasure. That almost strikes me as a writer's politeness. **The book that launched your career was your *History of Madness*. Why madness?** MF: It so happens that for biographical reasons I was exposed to the true nature of asylums. I heard the voices of the hundreds of thousands of people who got locked up, fell in the hole, and suffered, and spoke out, and bawled. Like anyone else I was overwhelmed by those voices. I was about to say: like anyone except psychiatrists: not that I have anything against them, but to them, howls have become inaudible, because they come filtered through their institutionalized learning. **Do you still think of the asylum as your universe?** MF: No, not really. But it was the asylum that first set for me the problem that still haunts me: the problem of power. Knowledge and domination are intimately linked. I saw that most nakedly in the asylum, where the apparently serene and speculative learning of the psychiatrist is absolutely inseparable from an amazingly meticulous system of hierarchical power. That, in effect, *is* the asylum. One thing that particularly fascinated me was the transition from the vocabulary of *madness* to the vocabulary of *sickness*: it looks like a change in terminology, but it's really a seizure of power. And, in the end, this psychiatric power is all the more powerful when it spreads beyond its birthplace, the asylum: you find psychiatrists in schools, in families, in law courts and jails.... Psychiatry has become a general instrument of subjection and normalization. **In your book *Discipline and Punishment (Surveiller et Punir*, or literally *Surveillance and Punishment*. The English title misses the idea of surveillance, central to the book and to this segment of the present conversation) you analyzed the relation between crime and the methods used by society to punish crime. When did the institution of punishment begin?** MF: There is probably no human society that doesn't punish. But what's especially characteristic of our society is *surveillance*. As late as the eighteenth century, a huge number of people effectively escaped the law. The power to punish was discontinuous, full of holes. That's why, when you did catch a criminal, the penalties were awful: all the more so because of the need to "make an example". It seems to me that it is only since the beginning of the nineteenth century that society has sought to extend its power to punish so that, in principle, *nobody could escape*. The actual punishment could then be milder. Nowadays, of course, magistrates still punish, and punish heavily, but if you ask them to justify punishment they talk not about expiation but about correction: they think of themselves as engineers of behaviour. ***Discipline and Punishment* begins in horror, with a long description of the torture to death of the regicide Damien, witnessed by a crowd of happy spectators. Could that happen now, those happy spectators?** MF: That's a grave question. There's not the slightest doubt that if we left punishment up to what's called public opinion, the results would be frightful, frightful. **Surely we've progressed since the torture of Damien!** MF: Of course. You want me to say that we don't use torture any more. That's true, but only within the penal system. But torture has

"For someone like me, brought up as a provincial petty bourgeois, learning comes with your baby bottle before you even go to primary school. Knowledge was the rule of existence: you had to be first, you always had to be a bit better in class..."

"My ambition is to write in such a way as to give my readers a kind of physical pleasure. That almost strikes me as a writer's politeness. "

merely been displaced to another institution, an institution that dates from precisely the time torture disappeared: the police. You had to have the police as soon as the goal of the system was to punish everyone instead of making a few spectacular examples. But the police, as you know, use increasingly violent means to extract the truth. **But the West has no monopoly on the use of torture.** MF: The interesting thing is that the mechanism of surveillance has proved to be such a terrific invention that it's spread almost as easily as the steam engine. **Still, you won't stop people from thinking that a crime must be paid for by suffering.** MF: True, but that thirst for vengeance has been transferred to a social institution, and people don't recognize themselves in that institution. **Michel Foucault, do you have children?** MF: No, no, no. I'm not married. **Well if you did have children, and your children were harmed, how would you react? Did you think about that when you wrote?** MF: No doubt my book isn't clear... But it's absolutely wrong to see it as some sort of apology for crime! I don't say you shouldn't punish, I don't advocate giving murderers a crown! **You just want to humanize punishment.** MF: No! What I would like to show is that the way we punish nowadays is tightly linked to certain forms of power and political control, common to both capitalist and socialist societies. **Old-fashioned punishment seemed to answer to a taste for horror: rubbing salt into wounds... did that stem from ignorance?** MF: On the contrary, it was a very precise ritual, linked to another form of political power, exercised in the name of the sovereign in his physical person. You have to think of the great ceremony of public torture as a sort of political ritual, like coronations. In the body of the tortured, in his wounds and his screams, the physical power of the king was manifest in all its brilliance and ferocity. **But will there ever be a time when every citizen will be free to do what he wants?** MF: No! Individual relationships are also relations of power. If there's a polemical aspect to my writings, it's in my insistence that people have too often ignored those relations of power. In traditional academic philosophy, individual relations are viewed as dialogues: either you understand one another or you don't. On the Marxist analysis, they're essentially determined by relations of production. But it seems to me that our lives are plotted according to relations of power that are just as fundamental as economic or discursive ones. To reveal those relations of power, in my mind at least, is to try and hand them back to those who are involved in them. **You're very trusting: you think people can become better...** MF: Maybe not become better. But people must be able to increase the quantity of pleasure of which they are capable. **Is that a pessimistic diagnosis?** MF: You have to be pessimistic, in the sense that you have to paint things black if you want to make future possibilities more vivid. I'm vain enough to think that the fight I'm involved in, against the encroachment of psychiatry in our lives, is an important one, but my own contribution to this process doesn't strike me as very important. Nothing would change much if I and my books didn't exist. I rather like that feeling — I find it almost physically pleasurable to think of the causes I'm concerned with just passing through me, of thousands of people and books going in the same direction as me but ultimately flowing way beyond me. **Michel Foucault, I get the impression that you would like to get rid of your great burden of learning. I almost get the feeling you'd like to start over from scratch, elsewhere.** MF: Funny you should say that, because actually it's quite true. **And what about that "elsewhere": can you define it?** MF: Not at all! Anyway maybe I won't do it: maybe I'll just keep treading the same ground, fighting the same fight against the normalizations that confine us. Maybe I'm just more normalized than I think I am, or than I'd like to be. **We were speaking of power. Do you like to take orders?** MF: Even making love involves power relations, charged with eroticism. That hasn't been studied much. There's so much pleasure in giving orders: there's also pleasure in taking them. This pleasure of power — well, there's a topic for study.

"Even making love involves power relations, charged with eroticism. That hasn't been studied much. There's so much pleasure in giving orders: there's also pleasure in taking them. This pleasure of power - well, there's a topic for study."



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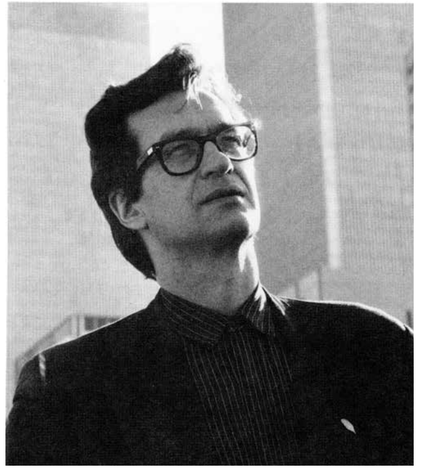
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WINGS
of
Desire
An Interview with
WIM WENDERS
by BETHANY EDEN JACOBSON

Bethany Eden Jacobson: Angels are supposed to be intermediaries between God and mortals. The messenger boys. Wim Wenders: In my film they're unemployed, not only don't they get the messages anymore, they don't get to deliver them, they're stranded. **Why are the angels out of work?** Because the boss took off. He left them alone. They have their former job and they like people, but they really are slightly frustrated because of course they can't do that much more about things, because their job of course depended on people talking to them, using them as messengers or people listening to them. People don't listen to the angels anymore, their angels, so times have gotten tougher. **What about God, what happened to him?** I don't know. She took off before I came in. (laughs) **Were you raised religiously?** Very much so. I was raised as a Catholic. I was going to say in my background story that the angels are out of work since WW II more or less. **You stated that Rilke was an inspiration for the story...** There are plenty of angels in his poetry. They wander around aimlessly. They're not religious. They are these strange, frightening and mysterious beings. Of course in the film they're the opposite, they're comforting. **Why aren't there any demonic characters in the film?** I had some of these demonic figures in the first outline. I cut them out. It was complicated enough without them. I scratched all the evil spirits and felt there were plenty of devils around lately. Seems like a popular character. I saw De Niro do one and Jack Nicholson also. **Marion defies gravity by being a trapeze artist and yet the angels don't fly in the movie...** Well the camera is flying enough for the angels. The idea of her flying is an ironical idea. He's challenged professionally as a guardian angel by this girl who has a dangerous profession, that she's flying in this costume with wings...I thought he'd be attracted to her. Doing it without a net she has all these superstitious feelings about doing it for the last time — so he knows as a guardian angel that he has to stick around. I also thought it would be great if her work had to do with kids and the idea of the circus. **Why do the angels only see in B&W?** It wasn't exactly in the Bible. I dream in B&W, but that's not the reason. It's that B&W represents a certain abstraction and I'm under the impression that B&W has a tendency to show more depth, with people, somehow showing us the essence of the thing or person much better than color would. And as the angels live in a totally spiritual world and can't lift something or know what the weight is...they don't know physical things, they know about the essence of things. There are two shots where the angels lift an object, but they lift the essence only. **The camera is almost always moving...it's a very choreographed film.** It's a moving picture. We tried to take seriously that the camera was the eye of the angel. However, the most important aspect was not that the camera was moving, being the eye of the angels, but that the camera liked the people. More important than the lack of gravity was that there was a loving look and you can't translate that by any particular movement. **The film takes a very loving look at Berlin. Do you know Berlin well?** I did my first film there in 1969, "Summer In The City" named after the Loving Spoonful song. It's about a guy who is coming out of prison and tries to see some of his former friends. Since then I try to spend a few months out of every year in Berlin, because I do my postproduction there. Even though my production company has been there since '76 I have always stayed in hotels until recently. I think it's a valuable point of view if you're familiar but at the same time curious. I was walking around Berlin looking for a story. **It starts with a person writing...and the thoughts seem to be recollections. Is that how it evolved?** I don't know how it evolved. It just came out of the idea of an angel who was sick and tired of eternity. It's either in heaven where you're singing all the time, which is boring or in hell where they're playing rock and roll all the time. Actually it's more fun in hell. The Christian idea that the soul is there forever...I couldn't overcome this when I was a kid, it scared me that there was no end. I was sure there were angels around me at prayer...I didn't envy them. **How long did you go to church?** Until I was fifteen. It's my theory about angels, that we have them within ourselves. You can listen to them, you can be in touch with them and my definition of the angel in ourselves is definitely the child we used to be. **Do you hold onto that?** I like to think so. Most artists have to be in touch with the child that's creating inside of him or her. That's what gives them a certain freedom to be playful. I definitely think that much of what we do is controlled from outside, by the conditions we live in, by the social context, by the information we get. **I find "Wings of Desire" particularly evocative, as if I were creating my own movie.** Yes, movie images in the past were constantly evoking other ones. And that is something that movies have lost or are about to lose thoroughly. Films have never been so defined. So, if you see an American film, you can only see that particular film. You have no other choice. You see what you see. There are no two ways about it. You can't see a different movie. You can't dream up another movie. **This seems sad since American cinema has had such an amazing history.** It's been the richest, most creative and the most inventive film language. It's almost like the language we use, the verbal language which is really deteriorating terribly and it's the same with images that deteriorate. It really comes much more from television. It's as if it was some sort of cancer that had eaten up film language from inside. **It's a newer technology...** It's not technology per se, but the ethics that come along with technology. For instance rock and roll though it can still set free creativity and energy, seems to far less in the form it's presented. More and more it comes along with images, the rock video culture...which makes rock and roll much cooler, much more controlled from the outside. The great thing if you were listening to Elvis Presley, the Beatles or Chuck Berry...from the very beginning it was advocative. Everbody who heard the same song that particular summer had the liberty to create their own images...now it's created for you and a lot of the playfulness and imagination have gone. You get used to seeing a stupid story with a song, so the song becomes its own commercial, its own publicity. **Is that why you introduce a language that is poetic and often complex...where sound and image can be in counterpoint?** Poetry is language at its best. At its most advocative and most complex and also at its most multi-dimensional. A poem is something that exists in an objective form and that is received by anybody who reads it in a different way. I like that very much and I think films used to have that quality. **Do you read much poetry?** I love to read in the original language. I studied Spanish and lived in Spain to read Lorca. But I've forgotten most of it. So I read mostly in English, French and German. I like the fact that when you read a poem you become in a way the author of it. I like that in movies. That you see, that you discover a world because you have to put it together in your head. You have to bring something of yourself. A lot of contemporary movies you don't have to bring anything, you are just a machine watching. Our eyes are shut so to speak. I like films that open your eyes. **When you first started watching films did they change your way of being in the world?** Very much so. I started watching films as a kid, but only when I was older did I learn there was a film language. I was actually a painter and that's when I came in touch with movies. I loved to draw and was studying etching in Paris for a year when I was twenty. I had this little apartment and it was freezing. I never liked to be there. The classes were only in the

morning so we were free the rest of the day. Movies were relatively expensive, so I found out about the cinematique in Paris, because it was a franc, which is less that a quarter for one show. It was wonderful to be among a lot of people and be warm. I realized that other people looked at the movies differently, talked about them as if there was science to them. The program at the cinematique was a sort of history book. I went more and more and it became an obsession. I'd see five or six films a day. I started to make notes, to buy books, film history and that's what led to my becoming a film critic. **Tell me about the transition from critic to director.** I never fancied myself as a film director. While I did go to film school in Munich in 1967 I went on working as a film critic. I made a few short films in school, but that was all baloney. The year was 1968 and it was the first film school in Germany. They didn't know what to teach us, so we took over the school. That was before there was any real film culture in Germany. I wrote for *FilmKritik*, a tiny magazine of 3000 copies and the daily *Suddeutche Zeitung*. I was lucky to make a first film and even a second and third. I thought this had all been a dream, an incredible piece of good luck and that eventually I would go back to writing. It couldn't be true that I'd be a film director, out of the question. Eventually, I took it seriously, the idea that this had become a profession. **What about actors?** My first films were about landscape. It was annoying if people went through the frame. It was basically a tripod and a 16mm camera with three minute reels in one shot. I didn't move the camera. **Were you aware of the structuralist filmmakers like Michael Snow?** I adored the films by the then called New York underground. Michael Snow was great. A film that I really liked and was the first I wrote about as a critic was called "Wavelength." I wrote about it because I was so impressed and got this little magazine to print it. **Is telling stories something you reject?** It was something I didn't believe in for a long time and questioned thoroughly because I thought it was phoney and artificial the whole idea of stories. "State of Things" says there is nothing left and the film that went out with that thesis was the best argument in the end for storytelling. "The State of Things" was the first time I started to realize the strength that a story can have. **But it came after "King of the Road" and "Alice in the Cities" and certainly the latter was a story, so where was the crisis?** These were not really stories. They were more starting out with an idea, just a beginning and then going on from there, living from one situation to the next and hoping that a chain of events eventually looks like a story. It happened sometimes and it didn't necessarily happen. The story line was the itinerary...the story was what happened on the map. **I understand there was no finished script when you started shooting "Wings of Desire?"** There were pieces of paper on the wall, an outline. I approached Peter Handke to write the script but he was exhausted because he had just finished a novel. So he sent me the three main dialogues of the angels, Marion's speech at the end and the poem about childhood and all the old man's thoughts except when he's crossing the empty lot. Those were his own memories. Peter Falk's interior monologues were all written by him when he was back in Los Angeles. I sent Peter Falk a few pages of suggestions. Everything he came up with was so much better than what I had originally suggested. **Well, it's ironical that you've chosen somebody who is a television personality and became famous for his role of Columbo considering your aversion to television.** But, I like him, I must say. I think he was almost the greatest exception to the rule. He transcended television. It was the only program I watched together with my parents and brother. That's the only thing that ever united us in front of the television. Peter Falk has a certain warmth, a certain human quality that totally exploded the medium for its time. His first film was with Nicholas Ray. I respect him not just for his work as Columbo, but much more for his work with Cassavetes which was really outstanding. With Nick he had a tiny part in "Winds Across The Everglades." He told me a story about how he was hired for the film and went to Florida and after a week his father called him to ask how it was going, to ask him if he was earning some money. He said, "I'm here for two weeks and they're still haven't done a shot." His father told him to come home because they're not serious. But he said, "They're serious...they're paying me."



In the Nazi war film set Peter Falk arrives and offers a German kid some chewing gum and the kid relates a story about there being two Hitlers. What was that about? The kid is reading this book the thesis being when Hilter died they replaced him with an actor. And Peter asks him if he thinks that's of value or all baloney and the kid says it's less baloney than the film we're doing. Peter says apologetically this film is just another excuse to tell a detective story and any excuse

Poetry is language at its best. At its most advocative and most complex and also at its most mutli-dimensional. A poem is something that exists in an objective form and that is received by anybody who reads it in a different way. I like that very much and I think films used to have that quality.

is good enough. Also in a way they're agreeing that it's fiction anyway. **I'm interested in the way you tried to deal with the Second World War and the aspect of Germany's collective guilt. How was this period dealt with in the school, especially the extermination of the Jews?** Not well. There have been two generations born after the war and in a way they had to deal much more with the guilt than the ones directly involved. It's always been this big silence. I have experienced it as this incredible silence and this inability to name it, talk about it or put it on the table. **Was your father in the war?** My father was a soldier and a doctor, a surgeon. He was certainly not a Nazi. He had a very Catholic background, he was in a Catholic youth organization that always had fights with the Nazis. They were outspoken against them and actually he had to become a soldier not to get into trouble. He was in prison twice. By becoming a soldier he avoided pressure from the party. I think he was in France most of the time as a doctor. I don't think he had any reproaches when he was a soldier. But, then again there was still this collective silence. **Did he talk to you about it?** Well, I guess they all thought these are kids and how would they understand. Most of the people thought it was just not true. This was just some incredible counter propaganda during the war. Very few people were informed. It was truly a traumatic thing to realize that it had been true, not only true, but worse than they could have ever imagined. And I think the big reproach that I made when I was growing up was not only was there this silence, but this

inability to look back, this incapacity to come to terms with something and as a kid you know something is wrong. Of course you know the facts, you never knew it because someone told you, at least I knew because I tried to find out. I read and went to the library. I remember when I was seventeen that we had to demand that our history professor really let history happen till then. In a way history ended with the First World War. It was as if there was a hole in history. There was no history book that dealt with the extermination of the Jews. I had to read foreign books. That was in the fifties which were a decade of cover ups. The feeling was that if we cover up, forget about it, it will disappear, which is the only way it won't disappear. The only way to deal with it is to have it out in the open. Berlin is the only city in Germany at least which deals with its past and its history. **Does the Wall serve as a reminder?** It's a strange thing about the Wall. Of course it was built in 1961, way after the war. Yet it feels as if it came right out of that time. It feels as if it were some sort of punishment. It creates an awareness if you live there, a heightened sense of freedom and of tolerance because it's endangered. **Is Berlin a very socialistic city now?** Much more than others. Right now there is a conservative government for the first time in the history of the city. There is a whole alternative city inside the city of West Berlin, which is called Kreuzberg, where a lot of riots took place lately. It's an alternative underground culture. You can't be drafted for the army if you live in Berlin because it's under the legislation of the Four Powers. It's not part of West Germany. So the Green Party movement and the ecological and peace movement have centered themselves there. There is also the Turkish city, with the biggest Turkish population outside of Turkey. **How did the Nazi war film within the larger story develop?** It came together with the idea of Peter Falk working on the movie. In the original concept I had the idea of a former angel but it was discarded. After two or three weeks of shooting I realized that I had discarded a valuable idea and decided to put it back. I didn't care that much about the film within the film but rather the idea that contemporary people find themselves in this old haunting place, a former air raid shelter. They couldn't get rid of it because it's too solid. To just be sitting there transported into the past by being extras in these uniforms of soldiers and Jewish people with the yellow stars on their clothes, just sitting there being confronted with this past. I liked that idea and didn't want to go into history, to recreate...especially as the documents from the time were so much more powerful than anything one could invent or recreate. I don't like the idea of recreating history in the first place. We see the past only because the angels could "read" people's thoughts. **The scene where Peter Falk shakes Damiel's hand as if they were allies seems like the handshake of the war, Falk as the American con man...especially when he tries it on Cassiel.** Yes, like a recruiter. It's meant to be ironical. **What about the role of the sage storyteller...was that in your original conception?**

I adored the films by the then called New York underground. Michael Snow was great. A film that I really liked and was the first I wrote about as a critic was called *Wavelength*. I wrote about it because I was so impressed and got a little magazine to print it.

When I went to Peter Handke with my first idea about the film I had the figure of the old archangel which I called the angel of storytelling, but Peter didn't relate to this so it was cut out. After we decided on a handful of ideas, Peter would send me dialogue, strictly dialogue, without description, because he didn't know where it would fit in. After he had sent everything he had promised, I received one more envelope and this had the part of the old poet, the old singer, or sage, that he called the eternal poet, he called the part Homer. He said, after all that my idea of the archangel didn't really work, but that he couldn't get it out of his system. **He seems like a historian.** We started shooting and we hadn't cast the part or know how it would fit in until I got to know the old man who was playing the part. Curt Bois was born in Berlin in 1901. He left the city in 1933. He worked on Broadway. Then he moved to Hollywood and made fifty films and eventually returned. He's lived in Berlin ever since and is a big figure in the theatre. He was truly incredible to work with and in a strange way represents what the whole film was about, Berlin and it's history. **Did you know it was going to be set around a circus?** The circus was one of the first ideas. It was to link Marion's work to the world of children, because the angels had this connection to children. The children saw them and took it totally for granted that they were around. In Berlin there's always a circus because there are all these empty spaces. At any given time you can be sure there will be a travelling circus. The circus is a very old tradition...something of the past, which you see less and less. The little ones are dying out. It's a terrible life. They can't compete with television and movies. Another art that will be forgotten. **It's not romantic?** It's terribly romantic, too romantic. The audience for the circus is children primarily and they've seen it all. They're not impressed anymore.

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It's like, it's like lookin' on, it's like lookin' on. You're in a big city, you're in an open city, and you're lookin' for work, and you had different hard times to go about here and there, and it's like freedom, to an open city, if you leave a city or go to another city, and where a lot of folk do, and they're in an open city, open, no where to go, and they do not know, a lot of folk do not know, all, any persons at all, where others might know other persons and all, and you try to, you're trying to get yourself further on to better things and better times for yourself, to help yourself better. And living, living on in stairwells and buildings and apartment building stairwells, office building stairwells. Times can go on hard for persons as they go further on trying to get things together. And to go in an open city, it's like all cities, if you have nowhere to go you're gonna try to find places to go, try to get enough coin together, get yourself organized that you can have an address. Then you'll get the welfare. Now, the welfare will help you out a lot, they help all kind of folk out. And a lot of times they want to be sure you have a place to live and all, that they want to be responsible for you, and that's what they at times, they put you through. And different folks that travel about, going to churches they get bugs in their clothes from layin' out in different places 'n' all that, not everybody, 'n' they might crawl, and go in somebody else's clothes. You know, like me, **I have no bugs 'n' all that,** no, but I am just saying, I try to live in clean areas until I can get a better clean place to live, an' the things are with myself that I try to keep further on and goin' on 'n' facing further on for better things and all that, like, going through hard times of life 'n' all this 'n' that I'm living, anythings can go on. Like, you have to have your rest, for number one thing, you have to have your rest. And you have to have a place to rest and get your rest, you have know, have a time, know what time it are, and I have a watch here I carry for sleep, I carry, and it's nothing expensive and all, I carry that **I can wake up in a stairwell** apartment building, or a office building stairwells, and the security can come on to you in many of those places, if they catch you, you can go right to jail, if they want to, they can make a big thing out of things, and I has got a watch, cheap watch, 'n' all, and with the watch I can look at it and know what time a day and night it are, if you in behind the walls in the stairwells, you haven't windows to look through, and you wake up from sleeping, check the watch and know what are go on. Now, **you need your rest now**. We know for everybody it's hard to live on the streets, I mean, I can live on the streets for years and years but it are hard to live on the streets, I mean lots of persons living outside on the streets with a blanket around them, they warm and all that, but they could be layin' down, you don't know who come, like you could be layin' down sleepin', I could come across like I'm stoned and put a knife right through you. Now, I'm panhandling for money, and I know that there's a lot, in a big city there's a lot of persons who know all this, and, I've worked at a lot of different jobs, and you do need, you do have to have your rest. You could be a hell of a nice worker, but you do have to have sleep. And you do have to, to work at some job and all, you do have to, to feel more loose and



Times can go on hard for persons as they go further on trying to get things together. And to go in an open city, it's like all cities, if you have nowhere to go you're gonna try to find places to go, try to get enough coin together, get yourself organized that you can have an address.

healthier. And at times I went on different jobs and no sleep, maybe a few hours sleep, I might feel a little tired, but I, at rest times I could rest a bit, at break times. You know, at some places they make a lot of noise, you know they're gonna make a lot of noise. But if you're tired you can rest, and if you have somebody that'll wake you up, that'll wake you up when the break is through. And so you go back to work. But it's better you, I mean, and you do this because you want to try to get enough coin, and build your coin up that you won't have to keep asking everybody for this or that. I had blisters on my feet not long ago wearin' my mountain boots. And the thing are with that are I never get blisters wearin' my mountain boots. I get blisters because I forget to buy insoles, and my socks were a little bit dust-sweaty. And that they rub and you do get blisters, you get your blisters, **you do a lot of walking more, 'n' weaving about**, an' I work at some job sometime, car-washing, with blisters on my feet, an' I try to make a few dollars an' that I don't have to work hard, don't have to work hard at a car wash. You know further on things are gonna, might get harder, and then easier, at, then, it's a, things work out better for yourself. You know like if you have a nice, if you're tryin' to face forward, and get things together and get a nice place to live 'n' all that, an' clean, things are going better for you. Now all you have to worry about, to live get all clean different clothing **make sure you have lots of soul food**, you know, food, lots of food, and a nice refrigerator to keep it you know, that it's fresh 'n' all that, and you're in a clean place, you do not have to worry about cleaning your clothes and leaving them in your place, they're gonna be clean, and this 'n' that. And you know to keep your place clean and disinfect it and perfumes 'n all that, you know, make the place nice. That's what I know to do, but I mean, lots of persons know to do that also. They know to live in a clean room or a clean place or a clean apartment, they know to perfume and disinfect and keep the place clean and nice. Now, if you do have a place like that you know you're gonna need all different types of shoes, all different kind of boots, you have a rack to put your shoes and boots on, make sure you checked them, clean the inside, leave them open, let the air hit them. Now, if you have clean socks, you always have lots of clean socks to wear, shower, you put a clean different pair of boots on, clean different pair of shoes on different times, you never have no feet problem, you're comfortable, you're not sweating, mucky, getting blisters, doin' a lot of walking, keep the shoes sprayed with shoe spray, nice clean, an' smell, clean nice. Like you if I wear, I wear these all the time, now I'm weaving about looking for places to live, and I'm wearing my boots and had blisters and they're to clear up a bit, but if I had a clean place I know to keep all different shoes 'n' that clean 'n' sprayed, and clean different socks all the time. If you do get blisters and you're on, you're on your own, I go to the showers on McCaul Street. I go into the showers on McCaul Street, the bath and the swimming pool showers. You can have a shower, if you want you can take a bath. You have to pay extra for the bath, hot water 'n' all that. Take a shower it's hot water then it comes a little bit kind of warm, but still it's, it's, you're clean. And you can soak your feet a bit from blisters, and then you have put clean socks on. You know, if you put the same dirty socks on until you get a clean pair been washed, and you can't be washing them, **'cause you have nowhere to**, you can't leave 'em there to dry. You can use the dryer to dry them but then you're gonna take longer time to go where you're going somewhere else. Now, if you wash them, then you try to wring them out, you put 'em in the bag, they're clean, but they're gonna be all mucky in the bag that you're carrying. And, and, then you've got to take them out, there's no air, no air hittin' them when they're in the bag, carrying them. I've watched people put them under, you know those vacuum hair dryers, for the hands and all that? Push them there and get them dry that way, do that, then put them in the bag, they're dry 'n' all that, but then you're taking longer, if you have other things to go about and go on. **My blisters are getting a little bit better**, I got, I had my boots in there, my black mountain boots. Now I didn't have any inside insoles. These have insoles too, I put insoles in these, they're more, more support, and I know to put insoles in there too when I buy boots, and then I have a corn on my toe, a little bit of a corn but it's clearing up now, it's coming clear, it's drying up. You know, 'cause I take showers a lot. But I'm going through some bad pain with that corn, trying to sleep in the stairway and feel the pain, 'cause of the sweat of my socks and doin' a lot of weavin' about. And then I felt pain under my heels and on my blister, and I still do a lot of weavin' about, lookin'. Now, I know that in that kind of conditioning, that I did work at jobs also, day and night doin' that, with blisters on my feet from not wearing insoles. And I know, and I know like lookin' further in life with the future, facing further on and things I think further on ahead that I can look on and know where I'm at, I can look on and know where I'm at. And I can face further on living in the city that, all persons have harder times and better times. And at times that they had the openings for themself as they're going about, and things get better, they can go all the better for this fellow but therein again if you do not, and you had different hard times of things 'n' all that, things can go harder. But you can try to get things to go easier by knowing and facing before this before time. Like look, I face before time and all, living in a, all big open city day and nighttime. And there are lots of folk that are, that have hard time, not only myself, I don't only think of myself, **I know that millions of folk have hard times**, thousands that live in the city, and then again lots make out and do alright.

ELDON GARNET

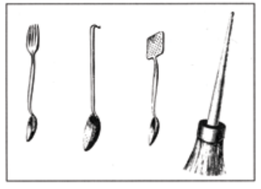


MICHAEL STADTLANDER

CHEF



Judith Doyle + Gerald Owen speak with chef Michael Stadtlånder about food, nature, bioregional cooking and ask the question, "Is there such a thing as Canadian cuisine?"



Examples of nineteenth century cooking utensils.

Judith Doyle: Where were you born?

Michael Stadtlånder: Just outside Lübeck. It's about sixty kilometers east of Hamburg on the Baltic, close to Denmark. I came to Canada in August, 1980.

JD: Not really that long ago. Why did you decide to come here?

MS: I think my desire to come to Canada started evolving when I was about seventeen. The idea of Canada wasn't clear at that point; rather, I felt an urge for the natural environment, something fundamental about that....

The way I grew up ... my father had a farm, pigs and chickens, geese. We grew our own potatoes, and the grain we fed to the pigs was grown by my grandfather. We fertilized the potatoes with manure from the pigs; there was that return. My father and grandfather would go, in two open vans with milk tanks on the top, to the outskirts of Lübeck to deliver milk house to house. There was a storefront where my mother sold eggs and chickens, dairy products.

My parents didn't have much time for me, so I passed the hours with my friends, fishing and rafting on the river. I was outdoors a lot. My early childhood was like Tom Sawyer's. Later, at fifteen years of age, I did my apprenticeship. Cooking is very much like field work. Food comes from the soil. The connection is there. After my apprenticeship, I went through my traveling years. I was seventeen, and in the mood to get away from Lübeck. My father during that time went bankrupt and our way of life was lost. I started searching for something new, but like the old. I wanted to keep floating down the river on boats, but in a different way. I started by going about twenty-five kilometers from home. I did a pastry practicum. After that, I went further, to Stuttgart.

The connection to Canada ... I saw movies, Canadian movies filmed in British Columbia.

JD: National Film Board documentaries?

Canada is not a "cuisine" so much as the source of products, although a crab doesn't consider itself a product. Rather, the creature of an island.

MS: Yes, and other ones. As a child, I always wanted to live in such a place. Germany is getting lost, the environment. You can't go out in it. So I started reading about Canada. I visualized being in a little country house, growing my own vegetables and raising my own animals, with a smokehouse. It was a whole dialogue between the soil and the person, taking from the soil and feeding other people. For example, not throwing the outside lettuce leaves away, but feeding them to the pigs again, the way I was raised. It hasn't worked out that way for me yet.



JD: Is that what you were trying when you opened a restaurant in British Columbia?

MS: Yes. We were on the ocean, surrounded by three gardens for the restaurant, and organic farmers were supplying us with carrots and leeks, celery. Our mushroom pickers went out in the forest, fishermen brought fish. We went diving for oysters and abalone. But the restaurant was really big, sixty people, with all the pressure to make money. We couldn't waste minutes, and were always pushing ourselves. I need more tranquility while cooking, to put things together.

JD: Do Canadians go to country inns? Were you able to build a clientele out there?

MS: Most of our customers were American, from Washington.

JD: There's less pressure here in Toronto at Nekah?

MS: It's more concentrated. There are only two menu choices each evening, geared to the interplay between courses. We don't prepare five starters and three soups, and so on. Nekah is more streamlined.

JD: Tell me more about the idea of Canada that attracted you here? We all have mental images formed in advance of the places we go to. Yours was partly from films and partly from fantasies, going down the river....

MS: In my head, when I closed my eyes, I saw a little house on a river bank where it feeds into the ocean. Not mountains, but a valley. Farmland, but by the ocean.

JD: How did the country differ from what you expected?

MS: Later on, you wake up. Acid rain, pollution. That's disturbing to me, like an insult to the earth. At this point, I see myself in brotherhood, trying to represent how beautiful it is. You see a soup bowl like a rock, it expresses this earthiness. Our mission is to say this is Canada, it's beautiful.

JD: The approach you're taking is very nationalistic. That's quite interesting given that you're not from here. I wonder if you find it exotic here?

MS: Oh yes, absolutely. I get frustrated when I hear people talking about French *minceur* and German, Japanese, Californian cuisine. Canada is not a "cuisine" so much as the source of products, although a crab doesn't consider itself a product. Rather, the creature of an island. For example, the fish you had last night. The salmon trout, the lobster and oysters, all came out of one area: the salmon from New Brunswick, the oysters and lobster from Nova Scotia. Our cooking techniques are based on classic French cooking, but then we go off to Chinese technique, many things.

JD: This country is large, with many different bioregions. So, it is not just a matter of including what is local to us here in Ontario, as might be the case in European regional cooking?



MS: Yes. First, you had the warm salad with the *maui maui* and *tippi tampe*. That's also Canada. The black community, the people from Jamaica. Kensington market is its own little

microculture. To get that straight, you don't mix it up with a rutabaga or potatoes which wouldn't be grown in Jamaica. I see the beauty in Canada of people living together, with respect for each other, compared to other countries.

I have always appreciated being in Toronto and its multiculturalism. Little Italy, Chinatown; these areas are great, each is like a different world. They all work together. I want to give people the idea that this is Canada.

Gerald Owen: Do you see yourself as being part of the creation of a Canadian cuisine?

MS: I don't think this way. As I was saying earlier, I'm sick of the whole trip about "California," "New York" -- my idea is to work together with people who have the same way of looking at food, the producers, and to bring it together and express myself, the way I feel. That is very much Canadian, though I'm not even Canadian, I'm a landed immigrant.

JD: Have you been influenced by Canadian literature?



MS: Not really, I don't read much. I was reading Goethe recently, and newspapers....

GO: The third aphorism of Leo Savaran's Physiology of Taste says, "The destiny of nations depends on the way they feed themselves." It seems a rather megalomaniacal thing to say, but I wonder if in a different sense, you see your role that way?

MS: When I speak with suppliers, they'll sometimes ask, "How much does your dinner cost?" I'll say, "Sixty bucks." For them, it's "Holy shit. This is a restaurant for the rich." You can see it that way, but it's not necessarily true. Seventeen or eighteen year olds save up money for a Camaro. This is not a restaurant where you come every Friday for dinner, though some people do. You come here to celebrate. The way I see it, I'm working to get more and more involved with people who grow their food with dignity, organic producers, winemakers. They're not rich. They're enjoying it and trying to get the best product possible. It's the same with us. We're trying to be the best we can.



JD: And to encourage the popularity of healthier Canadian products, though these may cost more.

MS: Food for everybody could be much cleaner and better. It's a question of childhood, the way you are brought up, what's put in your head about what is good. Though it's hard, I'm trying to get my daughters out of McDonald's. It's not just the food. McDonald's is chopping down the rain forests to put beef cattle down there. It's going to affect us, not just our stomachs, but in climate change. So food is a very big thing.

The soil becomes dependent on fertilizers. You've got to use more and more, it's like being an addict. The government is supporting a program now called Project 2005, to subsidize farmers while they use less chemicals, even if the yield is lower. They are replacing the worst chemicals with things which can help heal the soil. There's a huge demand right now for clean food. Loblaws cannot get enough clean meats. The government lost out six or seven years ago when the organic growers needed their support to streamline things, help with marketing. Now, the demand is big but the distribution is not there -- two or three health food stores and that's all. There's got to be a change, and we'll help there, by introducing people to this new food.

JD: What will you be introducing?

MS: In the next few months, we are going to get a pig which has been raised on pumpkins and goats milk. It's something totally different from what you get in supermarkets. People are seeing this and will ask for it, they won't be satisfied with what they find in ordinary shops. It's like waking people.

There is another aspect of Canada: the bigness, being majestic. I'm very interested in wild foods, even more than in gardening. Whatever you get from the wild is not grown for profit, so you take what is given. For example, I always prefer wild salmon over the cultivated kind, because the wild fish has eaten what it likes, while the cultivated one had no choice. Also, Canada is more northern. Fish in British Columbia are much better than fish from the Caribbean, because many fish that grow in cold water take much longer to mature, so the meat gets firmer.



JD: I can see why pollution is very disturbing to you, because as a fish matures, it builds up more toxins in its system.

MS: There is no regulation in salmon farming as to how many antibiotics you feed them. Producers can do what they want. I examined fifty or sixty salmon from an Atlantic farm, and some of the meat was yellow, not orange.

I've always been frustrated, when I go down to the water here, and see a "Captain Highliner" frozen food restaurant. What they're serving is clam chowder and salmon. My first thought is, what about lake trout, big mouth bass, small mouth bass -- the fish that are around here? We live in a big city and have one of the largest freshwater systems in the world right in front of us, yet we cannot go swimming. In such a short time, this system has been totally screwed up by water pollution and acid rain. If it continues, there will be no more maple trees. We are destroying the farmland around us, building over it.



JD: Do you take many field trips to find foods?

MS: I do in the summer. I've been introduced to day lilies and fiddleheads, cattails. It was an awakening to discover there is more than just chanterelles. When I was in British Columbia, I lived in a little cottage in the forest, ten acres. I could go out and pick my salad from what was growing around, wild celery, chickweed, miners' lettuce.

JD: Your restaurant, Nekah, has an Ojibway name meaning 'goose'. Are you exploring Ojibway or Native culture?



MS: Our idea, giving the restaurant an Indian name, was as a tribute. They were the first Canadians, the real Canadians. They are living in harmony with the environment, and are much more part of nature than we are. They are more evolved humans. I do not have a "back to the land" philosophy in mind, but rather to get food clean, and to respect the cycle, the rhythm.

JD: Do you think the animals we eat have spirits?

MS: If I get something out of the wild, a beautiful eel for example, I have unbelievable respect for it. I try to show this to my chefs. I'll say, "Look at this. Imagine it swimming, moving by the seaweed, hunting. It was doing that for ten years, and now you have it in your hands. You're the last source before the cycle is over. It's your job now to make the best out of this." I suspect you cannot cook like that if you cook with giant carrots, that have not been grown in a natural manner. Spirits -- yes. This comes over you as you eat more of this type of natural food.

JD: Traditionally, Anishinawbek people have ceremonies and make offerings in the spring and fall for different types of food they use, before picking wild rice or blueberries.

MS: I know that some of the Indians, when fishing, would leave tobacco in the water to share their satisfied feeling with the water spirits. It is, again, this circle. Sometimes, you are the moose, sometimes the wolf. These animals are like brothers, coming to you. It's not just food.

JD: Moose are actually supposed to be good at finding medicinal plants.

MS: It's too bad we can't serve moose. We could if it was farmed. But we cannot serve wild venison, any wild meats. The venison we buy has been raised on a big farm where it can roam. They just feed it a little bit, but it cannot do what you were saying, choose to go after medicine plants. We could buy deer or moose that were killed on the road, but we never have that much freezer space.

JD: Is there anything you buy from Native suppliers?

MS: Only wild rice. I haven't really made this connection yet. I worked on a benefit once for the Haida Indians. Trees were being chopped down, and



the Haida Indians protested. The Haida built a garden there, with wild plants that grow around the trees. Very sophisticated. We did a six-course menu, in a Kensington Market art gallery. There were thirty people there. It cost eighty dollars, and we served wine, all the waiters were from the restaurant. I would like to make more contact.

JD: It seems to me that, on the basis of treaty rights, Indians should be able to sell game from their own lands.

MS: That would be good. The law is to stop people from going out hunting to supply restaurants, to make a business going after things like bear testicles. People might think, here's a way to make money -- let's go for it. A slick operation -- why not?

I really believe there is a way we can live, not just in harmony, but in a productive contrast with the wild earth. I think people are getting to be more conscious about taking and taking from the earth.

GO: I haven't been to Lübeck, but I picture it, being such an old commercial city, as having been quite civilized for a long time. It's interesting that you're moving from a very humanized countryside to your interest now in a countryside some of which is totally wild still.

MS: What I would really like to do is have a little hotel, maybe ten rooms. We could call it a cooking school. That would cut around a lot of things. You'd stay there for a week and go with us into the forest gathering foods, or feed the pigs and chickens, then we'd prepare food together. I don't have it all figured out yet. I think what people have lost is a way to get back into a feeling for earth, what it is all about. You see people skiing and hiking with all this high-tech equipment, racing their bicycles in the countryside, but you don't see what the country is all about, the natural environment. The spiritual part is not there.

JD: Canoeists who go up to Quetico Park tend to paddle right by the reserve I worked at, without any interest, and find the laundry hanging on lines to be an eyesore. It interrupts the wilderness experience. So here we are on Wellington Street in downtown Toronto, dreaming of a country inn.

MS: These dreams are with us always. But meanwhile, I have a lot of fun with this. This city is also part of a natural environment.



GO: To go back to a point, I'm still curious about the pig in the forest raised on pumpkins and milk. Are you collaborating with a farmer there? It's not your own pig, is it?

MS: Actually, the woman who owns it is a writer, and she does this to support her way of living. She read one of the write-ups about Nekah in the paper, and wrote to me about what she was doing. She didn't want to sell her pig to a butcher, where it would just get mixed up with all the other meat. It's great when people come to me. I don't know where to go sometimes to make these connections.

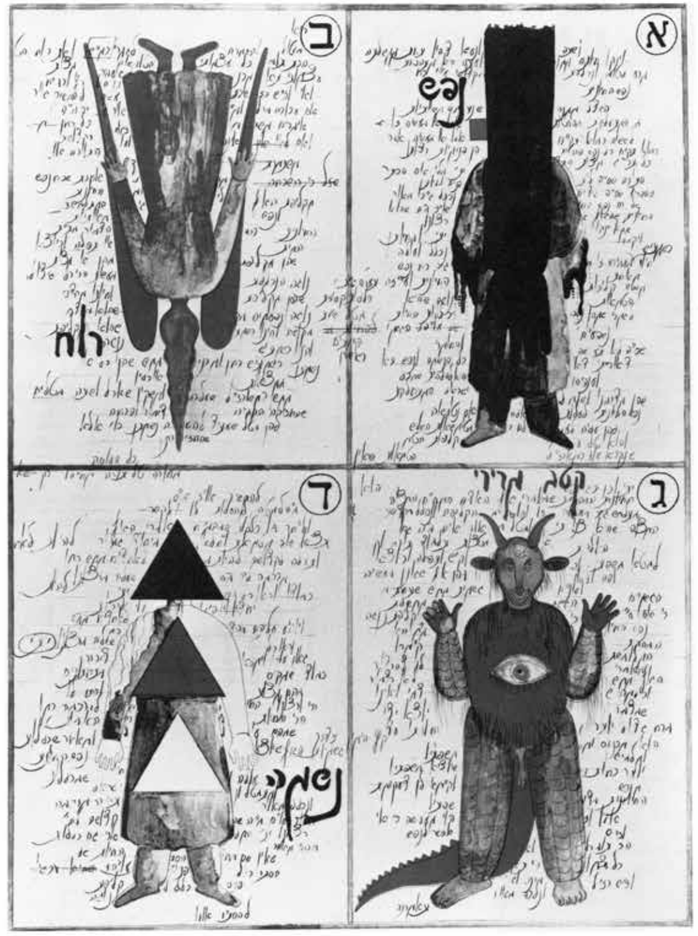


JD: You certainly have a farmer's hands.

MS: Yes, they're rough. I bashed this thumb gathering pieces of driftwood for the restaurant.

Our idea, giving the restaurant an Indian name, was as a tribute. They were the first Canadians, the real Canadians. They are living in harmony with the environment, and are much more part of nature than we are. They are more evolved humans. I do not have a "back to the land" philosophy in mind, but rather to get food clean, and to respect the cycle, the rhythm.

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Chicago International Art Exposition

Navy Pier

A project of the Lakeside Group

HYPER REBEL

SYLVERE LOTRINGER

Baudrillard picks me up at the train station....

"Would you mind putting your cigar out," he says, starting the engine. The inside of his Cherokee Jeep is like a cockpit: functional, immaculate. I shake the snow from my shoes and get in. He is a small, stocky man with the plain face and thick, dark-rimmed glasses. So this is Jean Baudrillard, the Prophet of the Post-Modern World. Green signals blink insistently on the dashboard. We put our seat belts on. "I can also go into four-wheel drive," Baudrillard says excitedly, pushing a lever. We drive into the night.

I don't know this part of the country. I've been to Russia to interview Gorbachev, and the Adirondacks aren't so different from what you see on the way to the Kremlin. Snow is piled up high on both sides of the road, but the surface is as smooth as a blade.

Winding our way out of the mountains, we pass Stony Creek: two country bars and an old grocery store, now closed. "We can have a couple of Genessees here on our way back," Baudrillard says. The words hang in the cold air between us like tiny snowflakes.

He is straining his eyes. "This is it," he suddenly says, brushing the frost from the windshield. There is nothing to see but an endless wall of pines shivering in the headlights. "It begins at the dirt road," Baudrillard added, as if we could possibly see anything under the thick coat of ice.

The Jeep veers abruptly and barges through the snow. A big golden retriever jumps excitedly alongside. Down the hill a small log cabin emerges from the dark. Baudrillard gets out of the car.

"My land," he says simply, waving his hand.

"Excellent," I say, trying to sound genuinely enthusiastic. I am racking my brains to find something to say that would remind Baudrillard he was the author of *On Signs*, a semiotic treatment of America often mistaken for a driver's manual. But everything here is hopelessly natural. A row of huge icicles are gleaming from the roof; the ramshackle woodshed at the back has a bunch of bird feeders hanging from it. I take a cigar out, then put it back in its case. "This is the primitive society of the future," I finally manage to say, alluding to an oft-quoted passage from Baudrillard's *America*. But the philosopher has already pushed the door of the future open.

And primitive it is. A single room, cursorily divided, with a kitchen in one corner and in the other, a bed beside a low coffee-table strewn with papers. A bare bulb hangs from the ceiling. There is no computer, no fax machine, not even an old-fashioned typewriter. The modern man *writes by hand*.

I look for the master's library. Not a single volume in view. The only shelves are packed with herbal tea. This couldn't be Baudrillard, I think, and suddenly the room seems colder. But then who is he? And what am I, Marshall, doing here alone in the midst of the great North American forest? Maybe the man is a *real* primitive. I try to figure out how long it would take to walk back to the station. My Italian shoes are already wasted by the salt. Will I get lost in the snow? I

surreptitiously size him up, although I am unprepared for physical confrontations.

The man is broad-shouldered but he doesn't look that dangerous after all. I'll stay long enough to be polite, and stage a credible retreat. I accept a herbal tea -- peppermint, thank you. The room is warming up; Baudrillard has been bustling about with armloads of firewood and a fire is going in the stove.

I relax in an armchair, the kind of well-worn piece of junk people in New York abandon on the sidewalk. It is definitely better than sitting on the floor, which hasn't been swept, it seems, for ages. My brain begins to unsieze.

Suddenly it dawns on me: this primal niche suspended in the electronic mental space, this is post-modernism. Nature, the last artificial paradise.

Baudrillard, obviously, had done it all. Like Howard Hughes, his mind had gone far beyond anything ordinary life could offer. The visionary was survivor. All that was left for him to do was hide in a pristine wasteland, the first

Like Howard Hughes, his mind had gone far beyond anything ordinary life could offer. The visionary was survivor. All that was left for him to do was hide in a pristine wasteland, the first technological monk of the post-historical age.

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technological monk of the post-historical age.

With this change in perspective, the simplicity of the cabin acquires a kind of grandeur. The thermal sheets, it is true, are crudely stuck to the walls. A lesser thinker would have winterized the place in the proper fashion, but it took an authentic genius to torch it like a hick. And who else but a man of Baudrillard's caliber would pile up all his belongings in plastic bags on the floor of the cabin? The gesture was so elegant, so hyperbolic that tears come to my eyes.

Baudrillard winks at me, as if he could read my mind.

"Do you see over there," he finally says, "right below the window, a tiny hole? When I first saw that little mouse hole, I thought it should be closed off. Then I contemplated it. Over a year later I took a cork from a wine bottle and shoved it in the hole. It fit just right. The mice eventually chewed up the cork and that went out. So there's a little bit of draft coming through it, and the mice keep coming and going, but is that so important?"

So tell me what's important, I ask him silently. There's no truth in America, no history, no reality. This is what you came to share with us: our fast-food, our suburbs, our cars, our cartoon-strip majorettes, our brutal naiveté. America has never existed. So what should we do with our lives?

"One of the most important things," Baudrillard answers, "is being able to sit."

"What do you mean?" He is sitting in this tiny cabin, in this old chair, in front of a TV playing with a small, drowzy cat. What is so great about that?

"I've spent a fair amount of time," he goes on, "over these years, crying. A lot of very deep feelings I don't always care to put words to. Sometimes I may know where they're coming from. For example I could see on a commercial on TV, people holding each other, and tears would come to my eyes. Since my wife and I broke up I've had new insights into myself. Two weeks before, I came home from work and I sat down in my favourite chair -- a recliner, foot-rest goes up. I looked around, beautiful fireplace, leaded-glass windows, and drapery, and carpeting, beautiful stairway, bannister going upstairs. That was a ten-room house, two-and-a-half stories, two-car garage, English Tudor, three-and-a-half bath, four-bedroom in Mount Vernon, just over the border from the Bronx. My mind was wandering around. I realized that I was going to leave it. Suddenly, my mouth opened up and right from the very bottom I heard myself making sounds that I had never heard in my life. Totally new sounds to my ears, from me. I could be anywhere, in the supermarket, wherever, and suddenly I'd start to break up. Of course I'd have to stop myself. People don't understand."

I moved up here lock, stock and barrel, so to speak, in 1980. A great deal of the time you can see me right where I am now. I sit quietly in this armchair and I look at my family pictures on the wall. Here's a picture I took of my parents...

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"Here, in this cabin, I'm safe. I can let those sounds come out. I can come back here and just be. And that's precious. I moved up here lock, stock and barrel, so to speak, in 1980. A great deal of the time you can see me right where I am now. I sit quietly in this armchair and I look at my family pictures on the wall. Here's a picture I took of my parents doing their chores. Dad's wearing my old corduroy coat, my brother's old navy hat; Mom has a windbreaker on, she's peeling potatoes, dishtowel is on her shoulder. That was just a couple of months before I was married. I took that picture behind their house. And here, next to it, is a picture of me, out of focus." He pauses again.

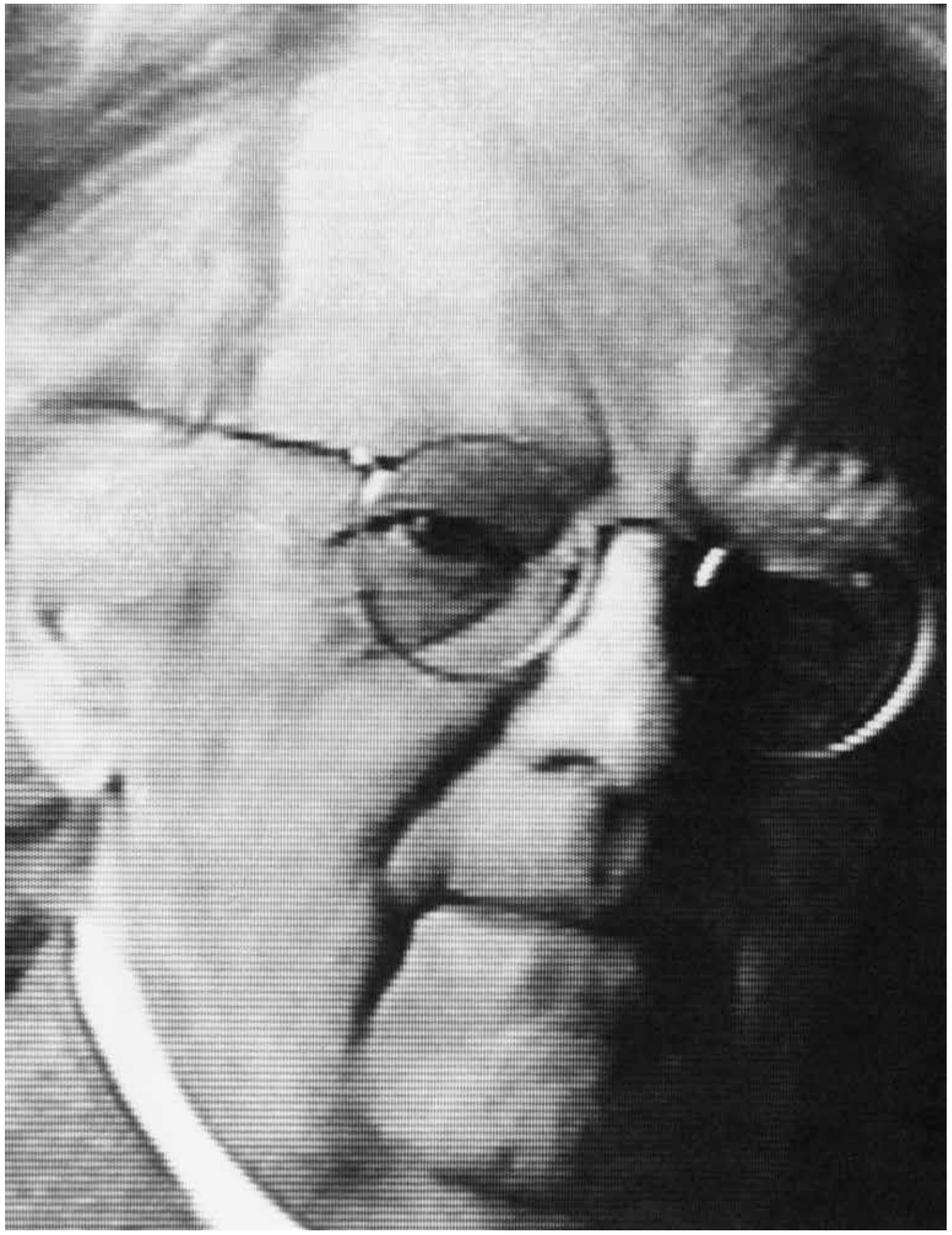
"Occasionally I play pool at the Inn," Baudrillard said softly. "We chat and we smile, but that's as far as it goes. I wish there was an interesting adult group around, maybe in Glens Falls, where people talk about the meaningful things in their lives. Something worthwhile. Nothing superficial. I hate superficiality...."

"There's so much I want. How much I long for a very loving relationship, which I've never had. I've never had it with my wife. Only had it in my head, really. Of course in Stony Creek there's not much opportunity. But that's where my life is. What I want to find is here.

"I know the kind of woman I want. I want someone who's just like me. (Laughs). I believe I do. That's an important thing I discovered since I'm here. I like myself. I believe I know who I am."

"And who is that, Monsieur Baudrillard?"

"I'm a rebel."



NORTHROP FRYE

Northrop Frye is a professor of English at Victoria College, University of Toronto. As a teacher and literary critic for close to five decades, he has achieved international acclaim. On the subject of nature, Professor Frye was interviewed by Christopher Webber and Stuart Inglis in his office at Massey College.

Professor Frye, what does the word nature mean to you?

• Traditionally, there have always been two aspects of nature: nature as structure or system in the environment -- the nature of physics, and the nature that is the force of growth in life -- the nature of biology.

As man did not make nature we therefore can not understand it. How has man dealt with this incomprehensibility of nature?

• Man looks at nature and finds it intelligible. How the intelligibility got there is none of his business as a scientist, but he does find that he can make a picture out of it, and that human picture is what we use for nature. We don't know what's behind the human picture.

You've stated that gods in nature are usually evil, and in the Bible we find nature symbolized by monsters like leviathan and behemoth. Why do we look at nature as a monster?

• In the Bible there is a strong polemical tendency to try to get the Israelites away from the nature cults of the peoples around them. The pre-Biblical religions were mostly cults of the mother-goddess, and the Biblical authors were afraid that as long as you have a mother-goddess representing nature at the centre of things, man will always be an embryo; he'll never be able to get out of the womb of the mother-goddess. The tradition that started with the Bible and runs through both Judaism and Islam, too, is to find man's salvation in human institutions, not in natural objects.

Is it related to death?

• The mother-goddess nature is both the womb and the tomb. She is the repository of all death as well as the fosterer of all birth, so she has a very ambivalent character.

Is the ambivalent character of nature the reason why we develop a cultural envelope, "a social skin that defines a boundary between us and nature"?

• Yes, man is not a noble savage; he can never live directly in nature the way the animals do.

As a way of coping with nature, early in Canadian history we tended to accumulate in small communities isolated from one another by natural barriers. The people living in this period exhibited what you've called a "garrison mentality": What does this term mean?

• In nineteenth century Canada where conditions were so frequently pioneering conditions, where small populations were isolated and cut off from one another, Canadians threw all their energy into the integrity of the human community.

What was the artistic reaction to this isolation within nature?

• The reaction was really a kind of intensification of the Biblical view that there is nothing worshipful or numinous in nature. Nature in many nineteenth century poems is rather sinister. Other poems which were composed in the summer take a different view of nature, but nature is very seldom thought of as something that really complements the nature of man. Everything in Canada suggests a dominating of nature by an intelligence that doesn't love it.

In this century our population has become concentrated in urban areas. Do our artists still work within the "garrison mentality" or has it metamorphosed?

• I think the contemporary Canadian poets tend to deal with the sinister elements of the natural environment more in internal terms. There is a sense

of psychological exploration of inner space, and that's where nature seems to have moved to.

In the past century nature was considered the enemy of creative forces. Do you see any new enemies to creative forces? Could it be the city?

• The city will always be an enemy because it's humanity in the form of a mob; the sense of the big city as being so full of violence and a kind of lawlessness that has almost got out of hand, and that is certainly an enemy of all creative spirits in Canada as elsewhere.

If you journey from Toronto to Ottawa by plane you're simply moving from one point of space to another and you're hardly conscious of the intervening land. The flight itself takes only forty minutes and you're sealed up in a tube. If, however, you find that you have to go by train instead, it's a hell of a long bleak journey through a great deal of landscape, but at least you're aware of the landscape.

Does the city offer any creative benefits that the countryside does not offer?

• Yes it does. It's the focus of the community and the focus of creativity. Culture is vegetable. It sends out roots and needs something with a limited environment. At the same time the city is your market, and also the place where you draw your techniques from. In nineteenth century Canada a great deal of culture was provincial because they thought of standards as something that were established elsewhere: London, New York, Paris. They also thought that it was important for Canada and Canadian authors to meet them. Well, you don't meet standards, you can only establish them yourself, but in order for that to happen you have to be in control of the international set up, or at least be in touch with it. And out of that, the region becomes articulate.

Would you explain how the airplane, television, and other communicative media have created what you've called an "obliterated environment."

• If you journey from Toronto to Ottawa by plane you're simply moving from one point of space to another and you're hardly conscious of the intervening land. The flight itself takes only forty minutes and you're sealed up in a tube. If, however, you find that you have to go by train instead, it's a hell of a long bleak journey through a great deal of landscape, but at least you're aware of the landscape. You can see that it is there.

Why does an obliterated environment cause "imaginative dystrophy"?

• Because there is no sense of rapprochement between a human community and the environment of that community. You're getting a self-contained community which never gets outside itself like those science fiction stories where people spend years traveling to the nearest star inside a spaceship.

How is the study of the laws of nature, that is, science and tragic drama related? And what effect has the theory of evolution and quantum physics had on tragic drama?

• The two developments of science which were contemporary with two great movements of tragedy were both discoveries of law in science. A sense of the immutability of certain processes, certain effects follow certain causes. The tragedians also worked out dramatic patterns that if you do A, B is certain to follow. With evolution in the nineteenth century and the quantum jump and the uncertainty principle in twentieth century physics, you have something which is not quite this cause-effect relationship, and consequently it causes a more ironic tone in the arts.

As the natural world disappears from our awareness along with it disappears the names of nature. If you took a typical youth of today into the forest and asked him to identify ten different species of trees, he probably couldn't; yet he could give you many names of things found in the cityscape. He could, for example, name ten "species" of cars. There has been a loss and a gain in our lexicon. What is the net effect of this loss and gain on symbolism?

• This is a matter of turning away from the physical environment into the human envelope. You give names to what you have priorities for. The Eskimos are supposed to have twenty-five names for the word snow because snow is very important in their lives. We have twenty-five names for different kinds of buildings because they are important in our lives.

The Bible tells of the divine act of making the world and our subsequent fall from it. What is the status of these two myths today?

• When you have a myth like a paradise lost in the past or a hell threatening you in the future, you have myths which are distorted by the anxieties of time. The great strength of myth is that it really has no past or future, everything is in the present tense. The reality of hell is the fact that we put it there, and the unreality of paradise is that we failed to put it there. If you transpose these past and future things into the present tense you have the genuine myth.

According to Christian theology, we are dominated by a sky-father not an earth-mother. This leaves us with a nature lacking in spirits and deities. How has this influenced our attitude towards nature?

• I think the Bible in insisting so much on the fact that there were no gods in nature, that all the gods discovered in nature are really demonic forces, and that man was to look to his own institutions for his salvation had an unfortunate side effect. The side effect was this dominating and the exploiting of nature which has reached a dead end now.

And what would be different if we adopted an earth-mother?

• We would have to rejuvenate her and turn her into an earth-bride, that is, as something which complements humanity. I don't know why we need fathers or mothers. They are symbols which are appropriate for childhood. I would think that the tendency was rather in the direction of the New Testament image where you have bride-groom and bride, where humanity is a male principle and the surrounding environment is female, or the other way around, it doesn't matter which. What is symbolically female doesn't have to be sexually female, and vice-versa.

Do our present artists reflect a sense of belonging to nature?

• They may have adopted a more complex view of nature. The whole abstract expressionist period of the 1950s and 1960s, for example, is an approach to nature which really sees it through a film of twentieth century physics, as well as various other human constructs, by which we make nature intelligible to our own perceptions, so that it is no longer a simple landscape. If you fly over a city at night in a plane and look down on the geometrical patterns of lights you can see why this is the century of Kandinsky and not the century of Renoir.

We really haven't felt in touch with our natural environment the way native Indians and Eskimos have. In fact, we have a history of not really being "in touch" with the native people.

The British and French white settlers in our country really did their best to obliterate the civilization that was in front of them. They regarded the Indians as some kind of blank in the cosmos, and unless they could be converted to the white man's religion

If you fly over a city at night in a plane and look down on the geometrical patterns of lights, you can see why this is the century of Kandinsky and not the century of Renoir.





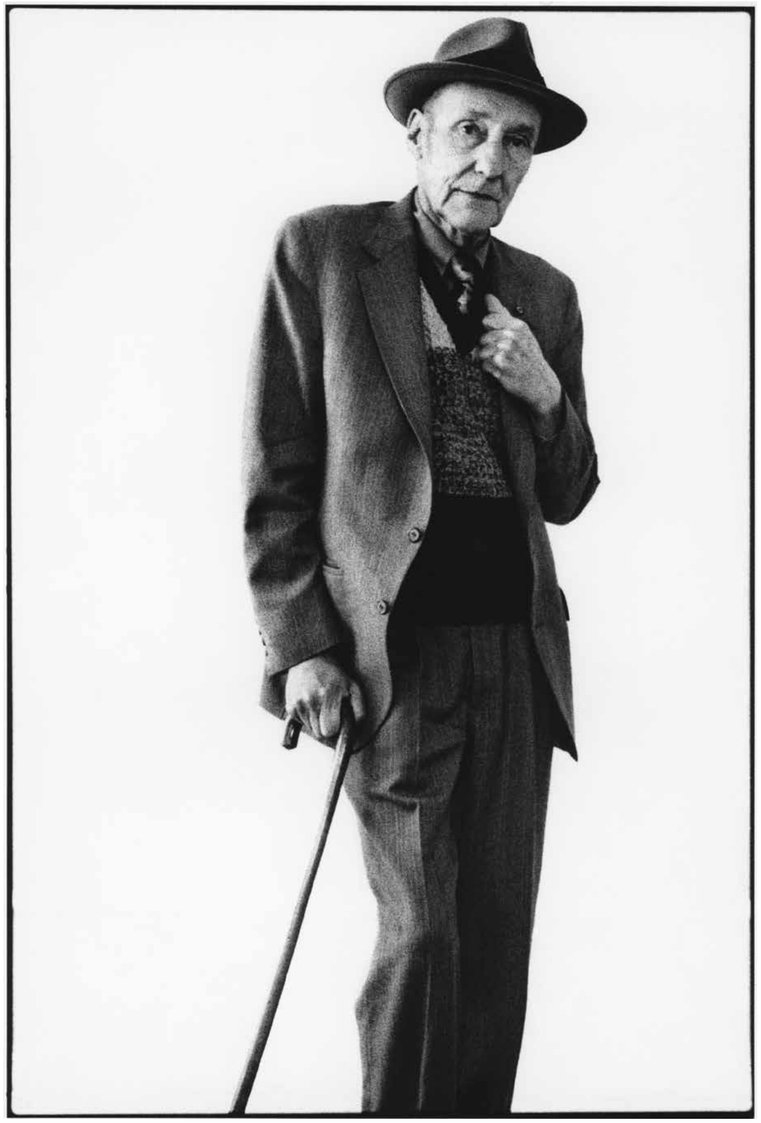
or way of life, they were simply not human beings. I think we have outgrown that. Our poets and painters, particularly, are looking for ways to establish some kind of continuity with the culture we have obliterated. Of course, when you do try to destroy a culture, or found a culture on the destruction of another one, it does breed guilt feelings that you are unaware of for a long time.

Will we ever learn to love our planet instead of simply imposing ourselves on it?

• ***I would hope that we will learn to love nature. That is surely what ecology is all about: a feeling that humanity and nature are interdependent, that man is a child of nature. Man sprang out of nature. He ought to have some gratitude to it for giving him his own existence. The only way to achieve a love for nature is through stimulating awareness. You said a moment ago that you cannot take a modern child into the forest and point out trees and have him recognize the names. That sense of a lack of contact with the physical world is the state of unstimulated awareness. Loving nature is a matter of the awareness of it being poured into our minds.***

PHOTOGRAPHY : ELDON GARNET





PHOTOGRAPHY : CHRIS BUCK

AN INTERVIEW WITH

William Burroughs

THE PRESENT

ELDON GARNET: How old are you?

WILLIAM BURROUGHS: Seventy-five.

E.G.: Do you think the future you wrote about in your early work has become our present?

W.B.: What do you mean by the future? It's obvious to me at the present moment that it contains both the past and the future.

E.G.: How so?

W.B.: Everything is there at any given moment. As Don Juan says, "Your death is always with you." Your death is always with you at all times and so then your future is with you at all times. And not that it has to be seen as predetermined but all that is getting into concepts that don't really mean much. See, I don't believe in cause and effect, I believe in synchronicity. If things happen together it doesn't mean that they're causing each other but that one is a result of the other.

THE AFTERLIFE

E.G.: Do you consider yourself an elderly person, that age has affected you in any way?

W.B.: No, I don't have any feeling about age. But the feeling of death is always with me. But I've never doubted the possibility of an afterlife.

by **Eldon Garnet**

"I feel that this life is sort of a penal colony, people have goofed or we wouldn't be here."

E.G.: If you beleive there's an afterlife, wouldn't it make this life less important?

W.B.: Not necessarily, it would make it more important, much more important. Because what you do now is going to determine what form your afterlife will take. What one does right now is the way one does everything. And if you're not taking, as it were, advantages of educational opportunities here, you're going to be in a much worse position. I think that what you do now is much more important.

E.G.: Do you find meaning in this life?

W.B.: Everything means something. You walk down the street and you see something, that's because you were there at that particular time and that has a meaning for you. A found meaning. I ask my students just to walk around the block, notice everything they saw, refer it to what they were thinking about at that particular time which is what I call an intersection point, then come back and write it down. Of course, they were painters and they would put it down on canvas. I was uptown and my downtown loft was far from a shopping centre, so I said I'll buy something up here that I needed like, milk and stuff. I ran into a young man coming around the corner going into the deli, got on the subway, he was sitting opposite me. Now my stop was Franklin street and I just knew that he would get off at Franklin street too. He had the same problem that the nearest shopping place was six blocks away. Now that's a case of what I call synchronicity, we were both there at the same time for the same purpose. Never saw him again. Now often people won't see him the first time, if you don't see him the first time you won't see him the second time. However when they begin to open their eyes and look around they get scared, they think this guy is following me. I think anyone who doesn't believe in ESP just hasn't opened his eyes. Good god, 'cause it happens all the time, it's not an unusual occurence that happens to a few people, it happens all the time. Anybody good at anything uses it.

E.G.: But ESP is different than the afterlife, it's a perception of this life, a hyperextension of it.

W.B.: Well, it extends into the afterlife as far as I am concerned, I mean the fact that everything I see has significance for me is an indication to me of a much larger perspective not afforded by this life. I feel that this life is sort of a penal colony, people have goofed or we wouldn't be here.

E.G.: When you were younger you were well known for your wild life. Is this going to make it more difficult in your afterlife?

W.B.: No, of course not. Experience is very necessary and it was experience that I needed to write and to think.

E.G.: So there is no real moral attachment to that thought?

W.B.: No, no, none whatsoever. If I had never been addicted to drugs, I doubt if I would have started to write. If I had inherited a large sum of money, say if the family hadn't been done out of the Burroughs adding machine stock by the executives. That would have been a terrific misfortune, I'm sure I wouldn't have written a line if I had eight million dollars. Show me a good writer, rich from inherited money, I'm not talking about people that made their money. The nearest we come to are the bourgeois of France, people like Proust. They weren't millionaires but they were very comfortably off.

AMBITION

E.G.: What motivates you now that you are monetarily comfortable?

W.B.: I'm always in need of money. I can use any amount of money often for good purposes. I just came back from North Carolina, from the primate centre, from the lemurs. I would do that on a much larger scale if I had more money, proportionately larger. And I would buy some animals myself, I'd love to have some lemurs, they haven't been released for private purchase yet.

E.G.: When people are younger they're very ambitious, as you become older do you become more sedate?

W.B.: No, I become more ambitious because there isn't all that much time, more ambitious, it's more present. If I was thirty years old and my painting career is where it is now I could afford to sit down, to sit back, wait and not do too many shows. I don't have time for a waiting game now, as I said, it makes me more ambitious.

E.G.: You have developed a particular style as a writer. Do you feel violated when you perceive other writers imitating you?

W.B.: That's fine, fine with me. Imitation is supposed to be the highest form of flattery. Imitation or outright theft. Writers don't own words, painters don't own colours. There's no reason why you can't, if it's appropriate, take something from someone's work or something very similar to it. Someone said Pollock was breaking new ground and that's the difference between me and Pollock. Well, for god's sake, there is plenty of ground. Back in the old days when I was painting cows in the grass, lots of cows, lots of grass, there was plenty of room for any number of painters. But now one guy will get one gimmick and that's his patch upon which he establishes a virtual copyright. I think this is ridiculous.

DEATH

E.G.: Does death disturb your sense of mortality?

W.B.: Of course it disturbs me. Everything makes a hell of a lot of difference, the form of death makes a great deal of difference, some of them are very unfavourable as the Buddhists point out. They shouldn't happen if the man is sufficently advanced, these unfavourable deaths will not occur.

E.G.: How would you like to die?

W.B.: It's not for me to decide because if I could decide, if you could decide how to die you wouldn't die. Death must present the form of surprised recognition, it's the last thing you expect to see and absolutely the most appropriate thing. It was a psychoanalyst who invented that, that certainly applies to painting too, that's exactly what I try to do, evoke a surprised recognition.

E.G.: Wouldn't that be any art form?

W.B.: Of course it would. It applies to any art form. That's what I try to do in painting. Klee said a painter strives to create something that has an existence apart from him and which could endanger him. Now the most clear proof of something being separate is if it can harm you, of course I don't say that's the only thing. But I do think all writers, Orwell, certainly many other writers and painters are trying to create life, something that has an existence apart from them, apart from the writer, apart from the painter. It would literally step out of the picture or the book. So all artists are trying to achieve what some people would say is impossible, that is to create life. Of course, impossible is a meaningless word to me.

HUNCHES

E.G.: Is there any part of your youth that you miss?

W.B.: On the contrary, I look back on it with horror. Just awful, that's all. Full of errors, stupidity and falseness. It takes a long time to have any idea of what you're doing.

E.G.: Are you sensing that you're younger than you were then?



W.B.: Well, if you consider that perhaps the future is contained in the present moment perhaps being really aware of this would make you younger, yes. You've read the Don Juan books?

E.G.: Yes, so you believe in that type of mysticism?

W.B.: Oh absolutely. I've seen things like that.

"I always pay a lot of attention to my hunches. Of course, scientists and academics live in such cloistered environments that they don't need hunches, they never endanger themselves. But anybody who doesn't pay attention to his hunches won't live long."

E.G.: Are those things seen through drugs or your own chemistry?

W.B.: Without drugs. I always pay a lot of attention to my hunches. Of course, scientists and academics live in such cloistered environments that they don't need hunches, they never endanger themselves. But anybody who doesn't pay attention to his hunches won't live long. I read a magazine article by a cop, an ESP cop, he called it his survival IQ. He stopped someone for a traffic violation, the man started reaching into his glove compartment, where people keep their papers, but he could see a gun in the glove compartment so he rushed over and dragged the guy out. He did have a gun and was a terrorist. Saved his life probably, being able to see a gun, a gun in a car through a closed door or closed compartment.

E.G.: Do you think your visual and verbal art has a sense of ESP in it?

W.B.: Oh god, yes, that's what it's all about. The way that clear representational objects will emerge from what would seem to be a random procedure. I once took a small notebook and put some red gouache on here and on there, it's an ink blot technique. I looked and there was a perfectly clear red pig, a wild pig, tusks, bristles, and everything. I find that more interesting than Wyeth's pigs. It came out of nowhere or somewhere, anyway but here it is, a pig. I also have a good photographer, I'll have sessions with him and I'll get into photographs, close-ups and things like that and then I'll use them in collages and other pictures.

AIDS

E.G.: What are your feelings towards the HIV virus?

W.B.: Twenty or thirty years ago I read a science fiction book but I can't remember the name of the writer or the name of the book. People were dying of colds and slight infections, at first they thought that these were mutated cold viruses then they found that the thing that united them all was the breakdown of the immune system. A case of the writer very accurately predicting. Apparently it's a very simple job of genetic tinkering. Tinker here and there and you got a human AIDS virus. A lot of people seem to think that it was deliberately released. You see the problem although there's no proof or evidence.

E.G.: Your writing would imply that AIDS is a government conspiracy. Do you beleive that?

W.B.: Well, sure, way back fifteen or twenty years ago, they were talking about selected pestilence that would attack only certain ethnic groups based on small differences, certain diseases that are largely Jewish, certain diseases that are black and so on. You just take those and develop more malignant or contagious strains. That was twenty years ago, I'm sure a lot of progress has been made since then.

E.G.: How evil could a government be that would initiate that kind of research?

W.B.: There's absolutely no limit to what the control mentality will do. A doctor in London said it was Soviet, somebody else said that it was the war against gays and blacks by the American government and then there was some scientific material indicating that it was an engineered designer virus. A simple job of genetic tinkering that any competent biogeneticist, any good team could do it.

E.G.: Do you feel threatened by this disease?

W.B.: Not unless it develops an airborne strain.

SEX

E.G.: Is sex no longer a part of your life?

W.B.: It doesn't interest me. I think that possibly sex and love, whatever they call it, requires a certain degree of self-deception which people may well outgrow, people may not be able to deceive themselves into thinking that it is pleasureable. I don't say that with any idea of criticism of anyone else's point.

E.G.: Is there a substitute?

W.B.: Your only substitue is whatever you do, your work. Have you read about the chimpanzee paintings? They noticed that when he painted he went into a sort of sexual frenzy and he had a very definite idea as to when a painting was finished. That was it, he wouldn't touch it after that, sort of lost interest. They were shown to Rothko and various people who thought they were creditable. I think it was Klee who said that the way a picture was produced was much more interesting than the picture itself. So you throw away the picture and keep the palette. Noticed that myself. I have a file folder in which I test colours and after I painted this picture over here, I sometimes found that this one was more interesting than the picture itself. Perhaps because it's more unconscious. In writing you cannot help but be conscious of what you're writing, that's implicit in the process of writing but I don't find that true in painting. I see with my hands.

CREATIVITY

E.G.: There is that creative jump. It comes out of everything and nowhere.



W.B.: That's exactly it. It comes out of nowhere, you have your hands and I have rather bad sight, with cataracts in both eyes, but so what. I'd like clearer sight if I could but you have to take things as they come.

E.G.: Your mind is still there, still active.

W.B.: It serves the body, it does what I need done. I like to row if there's an opportunity and I get out to target shooting every week, that's not much exercise but it gets me out. I hate games, I never have liked games, any sort of competitive sport or games. I never played them, cards too, I never played cards, a waste of time.

THE FUTURE

E.G.: Is there still a lot of work you want to create?

W.B.: A great deal. After all, I'm still trying to get it to move, literally move. Oh yes, lots of ideas.

E.G.: What are you planning to do in the future?

W.B.: A lot of painting and I also have some writing. I just finished a book, it all goes to chance, it's about lemurs and also about Christ. Well, that's some project, I finished that one but there's a lot of themes in there that I haven't explored yet. I have many ideas. I've tried various mediums; metal, glass I thought would be much more interesting than it is and mirrors. I find that some colours for me are easier to work with than others. I have a lot of trouble with blue, my easiest colour is the whole spectrum of red, russet, sepia, brown, yellow, that whole spectrum. Blues and greens I find very hard. Black, I find very good, black and white backgrounds, gold and silver backgrounds.

E.G.: You are a young artist.

W.B.: Exactly. Yes, I found this out and that out through various randomizing techniques like ink blots, the shotgun blast, drip canvases, dripping this way, dripping that way and so forth. But, of course a bag of tricks doesn't make a painting it's the painter that uses them.

E.G.: You were saying that the process was very important with the shotgun

paintings. Do you think it's just a gimmick?

W.B.: They're all gimmicks. In the old days somebody would get a little kind of varnish that would give a particular colour and that would be a closely guarded secret. All those tricks are known. People say that's an ink blot or a drip canvas or whatever. Of course, the shotgun blast exploding colour does add a new dimension. There's no way you can predict a shotgun blast. Random technique is to let the unpredictable factor in. The unpredictable, spontaneous, living factor, life in short, into what becomes a sterile lifeless process of replication. As Klee says, painters don't render nature, they render visible. They see something others don't see and by painting it they render it visible to others. That's certainly one of the things they do or attempt to do.



E.G.: Are your shotgun paintings a reverberation against the notorious action of fatally shooting your wife?

W.B.: There's no real connection. Sure, well, it can't be helped. It doesn't matter.

E.G.: Have you ever written about that?

W.B.: No, but I've given accounts of it. I told Ted Morgan what happened, that's all. Once and for all.

E.G.: Is that one of the moral accountabilities that might determine your next life?

W.B.: That would be putting it in a very simplistic way. It isn't a question of morality anyway, it's a question of where you are now, your synchronicity and how your actions affect your whole contacts, present, past and future. Contacts, there's no morality involved. I'm not following any moral law.

E.G.: The call of "moral" is very Catholic, very cause and effect. It's too easy.

W.B.: Exactly. Causality and the either or. Either this or that. They set up a false dichotomy which doesn't exist, very often it's both. That's the war formula, either or. It's the barber's formula.

E.G.: It's obvious you keep striving for more. As you become older, you become more ambitious. I find it inspiring.

W.B.: Yes. Absolutely, absolutely.

E.G.: You haven't laid down yet.

"I think that possibly sex and love, whatever they call it, requires a certain degree of self-deception which people may well outgrow, people may not be able to deceive themselves into thinking that it is pleasureable."

W.B.: Heavens no. Right now I'm collaborating on an opera called "The Dark Rider" with Bob Wilson. It's going to take place in Hamburg in September, I'm going to spend a couple of weeks there. It's an old German folktale about someone who is going to sell his soul to the devil for magic bullets because he has to pass a shooting test to win a certain position and also his girl. So he gets these magic bullets from the devil and of course, disaster. A devil's bargain is always a fool's bargain.



E.G.: Have you ever entered into any bargain like that?

W.B.: God no. I'm not such a fool. This old Satan doesn't take me for dumber than I look.

BLURRING IDENTITIES

A Session with D. M. THOMAS

By Antonino Mazza

D. M. Thomas, born in Cornwall in 1935, is the celebrated author of such novels as *The Flute-Player, Birthstone, The White Hotel, Ararat, Swallow, Sphinx* and *Summit*. But he is also the author of eight volumes of poetry, and has translated Pushkin and Anna Akhmatova from Russian.

In his latest publication, *Memories and Hallucinations, a Memoir* (Viking, 1988), the poet, novelist, literary translator — within the framework of a series of reconstructed psychoanalytic sessions — moves from childhood to adulthood to the present in an exploration of the illusive fabric of emotions that constitutes a contemporary sensibility.

The self-portrait, the identity, the life that emerges, aware — as the best writers always are — of the unfathomable distance between lived events and the language used to re-invent them, is at once vividly real and illusory.

This is why — in a lounge of the Harbour Castle Hotel, where D. M. Thomas was staying while in Toronto — the author asked, in earnest, if the published version would be a faithful rendition of this session! — As I pressed the record-forward of my tape recorder... Should I have been surprised?

ANTONINO MAZZA: In your recent book, *Memories and Hallucinations, a Memoir*, you characterize yourself as an anomaly in your family. Both your parents, and even your sister, with their hearty laughs, their love of song, emerge as very spontaneous people. In your case, even relationships between you and your own children are reticent. Your analyst calls the condition a "fear of closeness." I suppose it is the contrast between these controlled emotions and your desire for spontaneity that translates into that formidable undercurrent of emotional tensions that sustains the reader's interest so well throughout the book?

D.M. THOMAS: I think you are quite right. I think this is what I envied in my parents, what I envied about them. They seemed to do things in a reflexive way, and I don't, I can't. I have to reflect. I am left with the pain of being an intellectual, I suppose.

MAZZA: So, in your case, the working class enters the city as reticence, as reflection, as intellect. Would you say then that, given your background, that is, given the matrix of familial emotions you describe in the Memoir, there has occurred an anthropological transformation of sorts. I mean, writers of your generation, European, US, and certainly Latin American writers, often have rejected their learned intellectuality, have tried to relearn a primitiveness even, in an attempt to shed the "detachment" of middle class "modernist" civilization. In your book it becomes clear that you too struggle to experience acts of feeling in the raw let's say, but without much success.

THOMAS: Yes, and I think I probably never could. This is what in a way separated me in my childhood, that I was reflective. And in a way that was

totally contrastive with my sister, who was kind of an instinctual being with her innocent love affairs with Americans during the war, for example. I didn't have that simplicity, that spontaneity, and I missed it. And I focused very much on my experiences in Australia, when we emigrated there, when I was 14. And I know that in the south I withdrew a great deal. I lived an intense imaginative inner life, haunted by spiders, insects, and started writing stories, usually mildly erotic fantasies. I was experiencing, without being aware of it then, I suppose I am aware of it now, a period of separation. I was going into a state of being a writer. And later I felt the loss of the spontaneity, and I suppose the crucial moment, as I described it in the book, was when my father died, when I was nearing 50. Because in a sense he was my link with that working class. When he died, I had just moved away to teach. He was a very powerful presence; in the village where we lived he was important and they missed him. The village almost died with him. And I too. I felt that my link with my working-class background, in a sense, died with his death.

MAZZA: In *Memories and Hallucinations,* your migration to Australia plays a very central role in your imaginative development. How did that come about?

THOMAS: Well, my sister had married an Australian after the war, and she missed us, and was very homesick. Then my father had a disappointment at work. So for various reasons, probably mostly because they missed Lois or my father missed her, we decided to start a new life in Australia, and there was this month-long voyage across the world.

MAZZA: What year was that?

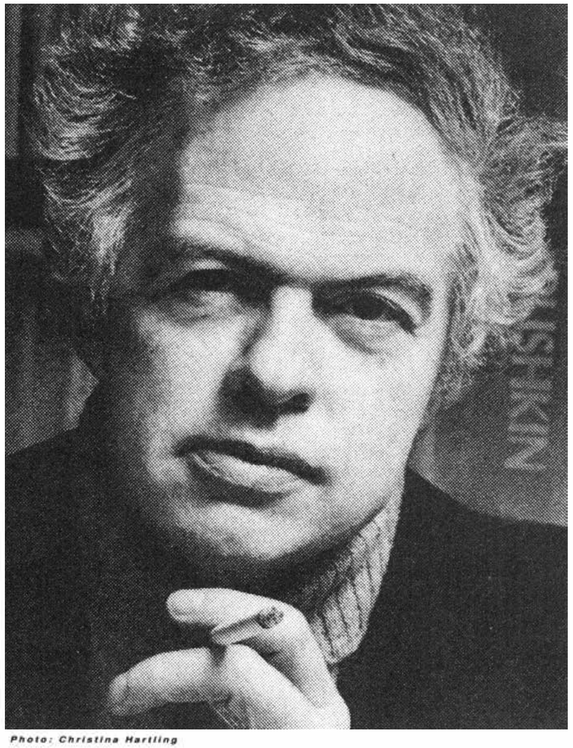


Photo: Christina Hartling

THOMAS: It was in '49. And I remember that I reached puberty on that voyage. I had my first wet dreams, first erection. And the combination of discovering sex and discovering the Southern Hemisphere was a huge experience. And I was left kind of psychologically tremulous in face of that. And also I myself was terribly homesick for a long time. So the combination of all this forced me in on myself, and I would withdraw into my bedroom every evening, and I would look at the sporting magazines, or the film-star magazines, and would fantasize, and write stories. I had all my first big emotional experiences, except actually making love of course, at that time. And I had my first experience of poetry in a Melbourne cinema, in a very lurid and poor Hollywood film called *The Blue Lagoon*, in which suddenly I heard, when it looked as though the hero had drowned, an actor's voice saying, voice-over over the sea:

> *"I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I,*
> *Did, till we loved: were we not weaned till then,*
> *But sucked on country-pleasures, childishly?*
> *Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?"*

I thought, my God, this is wonderful. This is poetry — not the stuff we had in school. And it was years before I discovered it was John Donne. And even more years before, as I say in the book, I happened to be in Ephesus, and someone said, that's where the seven sleepers' den is, in those hills over there, that's where the youths of Ephesus were brought up, it emerged again. Which was an extraordinary experience to recall. So I had my first poetry, first falling in love with a schoolgirl who never knew that I loved her, first music. My parents were tremendously musical — they sang Victorian ballads. And I started listening on the radio to the popular classics. Particularly, there was one theme which started the program which was the opening of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto — those thunderous chords reacted in my imagination everafter. It still affects me very strongly. If I play that concerto I go back to that stage where all of life seemed open, and all of imagination seemed open.

MAZZA: How long did this displacement last?

THOMAS: Well, it was only two years. But of course the younger you are the more time stretches, so that two years at fourteen are an immense eon, whereas now it's almost nothing. So I think, well I know that it changed me dramatically, and when I came home I felt totally alienated from the school that I had gone to before. And different, in that I liked poetry, and was haunted by Eros. I suppose that would have happened anyway, but maybe not with such powerful effect as having it while I was on this great voyage, which people no longer take, obviously, because they can fly.

MAZZA: It is not unusual for people who have migrated to have the experience of living, of growing up, in two places simultaneously, as if one would project oneself into the space that one misses, that one is absent from. Was this part of the experience of being in Australia for you?

THOMAS: I think it was. I kept thinking I wanted to come back home, to Cornwall. But then, by the time we were ready to return, I didn't want to leave. I burst into tears and said I wanted to stay. Although I now don't regret having gone home, there is still that sense of me growing up in Australia as I might have done. And I have a passage in the book where I imagine meeting my twin in Australia, who is very similar to me, but of course, he's had very different experiences: married different women, not learned Russian, for example. So that in a way my whole writing life would have been changed.

MAZZA: What would you have become had you not gone to Australia?

THOMAS: It's nothing one can say positively about this, but it's doubtful that I would have become a writer.

MAZZA: Can you give us an imaginative reconstruction, let's say, if you were to reflect on what you'd be doing today, had you not experienced emigration?

THOMAS: I would possibly have become a scholar instead. I would have presumably gone to Oxford, which was again another huge cultural leap for someone from my background. No one had ever gone to college at all. So I'd have gone there, and worked hard, as I did anyway. My unconscious told me that I ought not to stay on and do research, and that I ought to get out, and I think that was because I was saying I was going to write. And I had an experience in my last year at Oxford, which I describe in the book, where my first poem came to me from seeing a street accident. Maybe if I had not gone to Australia I would simply have done research and got a job somewhere in a university and written a book on Yeats or something. Perhaps not a very good one. Of course this is hypothesis.

MAZZA: Of course. And what about so far. Which of your books do you relate to most so far?

THOMAS: It is *The White Hotel*. I think that it is the book where I had the best idea. It all started from a metaphor,

which seemed to work, linking the hysteria of Freud's patients to the sort of living horror, the real hysteria, the real horror that came with the Holocaust. And where there was also a link between a very tumultuous poem I'd written, with the stark prose of the Holocaust. So that the two poles in me that are struggling, poet and novelist, seem to come together. And I think it was a plot that most deeply involved all of my interests and obsessions. Eros and Thanatos.

MAZZA: Well, you gave us this autobiographical work, and a number of novels, and poems of course, and literary translations of Russian poets, which is to say that the exploration of form, with forms, is quite an important preoccupation with you. What should we then be looking forward to in your next work?

THOMAS: I don't know. I think the *Memoir* was sort of a point of stopping and taking stock on my writing life. And also, I have recently moved back to where I lived, Hellford to Cornwall. And so there is sort of a new life starting. And I think, I hope, that my writing also will begin again from that. But at the moment I am just groping and searching. I don't know. I just have to try to keep on good terms with the muse and hope that she strikes.

MAZZA: One last question. Do you see yourself as a British writer?

THOMAS: No, definitely not.

MAZZA: Can you elaborate?

THOMAS: I don't see myself as an English writer, this is it. I'm a Cornishman, I'm Celtic. I see myself as somewhere between being a Celtic writer, with sort of an interest in mysticism and eroticism, the feminine being very important, much more so than in British fiction, which I think is very patriarchal. Even when there are so many women writers in Britain, the women writers are sort of relating to patriarchy. Whereas in the Celtic tradition, there is a feminine tradition. Somewhere between the Celts and the Russians, East European literature, that's where I see myself. And there may be some underlying link between the two, between the Celtic spirit and the Slavonic spirit.

MAZZA: And amongst other Celtic writers?

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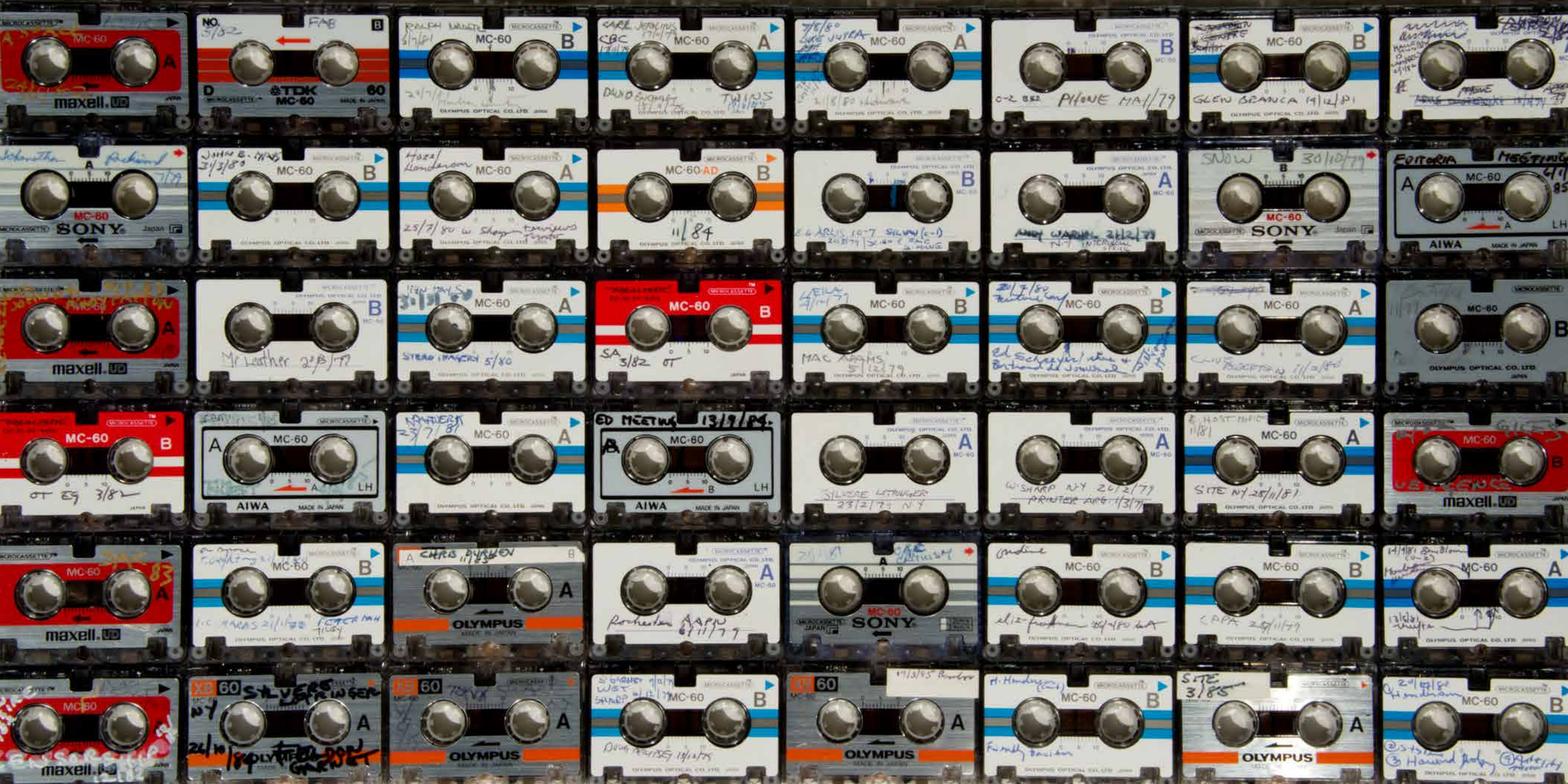
THOMAS: Well I wouldn't presume to compare myself with them, but Yeats supremely. I love Joyce, Dylan Thomas. But particularly Yeats and Joyce.

MAZZA: And why is it so important, besides the patriarchy, to define yourself as a Celtic writer, distinct from the English canon?

THOMAS: Well I suppose it's also a part of my struggle to keep a relationship with my background. Because having gone to Oxford, I was joining the public school young men who had their assumed English culture. And I never felt completely at home in it. What I struggled against is the way poetry and the novel are, for example, very compartmentalized in English fiction. You are either one or the other, don't try to be both. Hardy did it, but he is an exception. Whereas for example in Russian literature, it is the great writers, it seems to me, who are always veering towards the other form. Pasternak wrote a great novel. Pushkin wrote a novel in verse. Gogol called his great novel *Dead Souls* "a poema." So I like that blurring of identities.

MAZZA: Which is something that is reflected in many other literatures of Europe.

THOMAS: So I suppose I'm European. And yet it's all so complex because I don't believe in the European community, and when it comes to that I am as British as anyone. And I say it, we are a separate nation. But, artistically, I am definitely linked to Europe.


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