

EXCURSIONS



At the beginning

of the year, the United States withdrew from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and has since persuaded Britain to give notice of its departure at the end of this year. The US had contributed 25 percent of UNESCO's budget of \$187 million. Britain's share is currently 4.67 percent. (Canada's is 3.08 percent; these assessments are derived from a population/GNP formula. They apply uniformly throughout the UN system and correspond, in a rough way, to the number of posts a nation may expect within it.) The US withdrawal says something about changes both in recent US foreign policy, and, more generally, in international power relations in the last 20 years—a development that's usually talked about in terms of the emergence of the third world. In the 1970s, UNESCO came increasingly to identify itself as a place where subject peoples could conquer the speech of colonialism—if all too often still through a liberal intermediary, in this case the UN.

Western objections to UNESCO should maybe come out of the mouth of the State Department itself: 'UNESCO has extraneously politicized virtually every subject it deals with, has exhibited hostility toward the basic institutions of a free society, especially a free market and a free press, and has demonstrated unrestrained budgetary expansion.' A virtual new right manifesto, consonant with the rhetorical attacks on the welfare state we've come to expect from those nominally in power. Controversy is hardly new to UNESCO. What is new is the hypocritical lan-

UNESCO, DECOLONIZATION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Alexander Wilson

Illustration By Lillian Necakov

guage used in the attacks: let's cut the fat, the mountains of paperwork, the expense-account junkets; after all, we're living beyond our means. These are the same audacious metaphors we find used in the targeting of social services and public bodies here in Canada. The CBC and Via Rail are accused of mismanagement—as an excuse for removing their work from the public sphere. What are dismissed as junkets in the Canada Council used to be called juries—a mechanism for attenuating the imperatives of the state.

The Canadian government is sympathetic with the American withdrawal, as with so many other things these days. Two letters have been sent to the Director-General in the past year (one under the Liberals, another under the Tories) pressing for a 'zero-growth' budget, and an end to programming that's 'too political'. An example? Major Program 13: on Peace, International Understanding, Human Rights and the Rights of People. External Affairs says it's the wrong time for education programs in these areas; they're too contentious and time-consuming, and besides, they should be talked about in the General Assembly. The Canadian government is more interested in 'solid programming' that in many cases corresponds to the ear-

lier foreign-aid model of the organization: technology transfer, literacy campaigns, and so on.

UNESCO was founded by a small number of Westerners in 1945 with these words: 'Since in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.' The organization was of course political from the start. Throughout the early 50s, UNESCO supported US policy in Korea and Taiwan, and the US convinced UNESCO to replace its independent executive with government appointees, thus ensuring the kind of irrelevant politicization it was to complain about fifteen years later.

Under the 13-year tenure of René Maheu, power was centralized in the Director-General's office. As the organization's membership was broadened to include the many newly independent states of Africa and Asia, its mandate shifted from one of coordination of research to out and out development. Large-scale (and often capital intensive) projects were launched all over the place, and the Paris headquarters became increas-

ingly bureaucratized. In late 1974, UNESCO adopted a number of resolutions that the US interpreted as an attack on Israel: the intensive urbanization of Jerusalem was criticized, and concern was raised about the fate of Palestinian culture in the occupied areas. In that same year, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, a muslim and the education minister of Senegal, became Director-General. UNESCO's work—and budget—again expanded to encompass programs in oceanography, agriculture, education, hydrology, third world student scholarships, antiquities reclamation, desertification and communications.

It was a struggle around this last issue—communications—which precipitated the US withdrawal. In the late 70s, UNESCO commissioned a report on the possibility of reordering the entire global information network. The report was published by chairperson Sean McBride in 1980, under the title *Many Voices, One World*. Its call for a 'New World Information and Communications Order' (NWICO) summarized UNESCO's trajectory from a research institute to an active geopolitical agent. It also signalled its entry into American demonology. In brief, the UNESCO communications initiative attempted a critique of the ideology of freedom of information. Calls were made for a redistribution of news resources and information technologies, international understandings on satellite placement and usage, the encouragement of autonomous media production in the third world, the development of the two-way capabilities of communications technologies and networks, the adjustment of first world dominance of radio bands, and so forth. The NWICO initiative also called—unfortunately—for the centralized licensing of journalists in order to achieve 'objectivity' and 'truth' in news reporting.

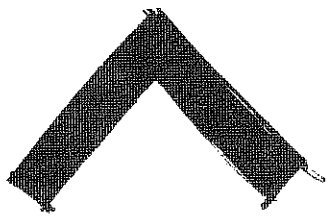
In spite of its occasional naivete (and there's plenty more of that in the UNESCO constitution), the communications initiative has been a big help in politicizing the entire discourse around new technology today. Needless to say, it was trashed in the Western press, reactionary and liberal alike. 'Censorship!' 'was the univocal response; none of the other aspects of the debate were taken seriously—when they were reported at all. The NWICO debate hasn't been entirely welcomed by the paper-shredder, however. UNESCO has set up another commission, this one called the International Program for the Development of Communications (IPDC). Its aim is to work toward communications self-reliance for member states. This is a project Ottawa looks more favourably on, for reasons that are maybe not hard to understand given its own penchant for interfering in US communications initiatives in Canada. The IPDC is cited by External Affairs as one reason Canada will stay in UNESCO—at least until the General Conference in Sofia this fall. (I should mention here some of the other UNESCO projects I've found interesting: a critique of tourism, a discussion about what constitutes 'cultural development', and the establishment of cultural heritage areas, such as part of the Haida lands in the Queen Charlotte Islands that the Soqreds are now offering to MacMillan Bloedel.)



The crisis at UNESCO is symptomatic of a general global crisis that can be read in a number of ways. Most obviously, it's part of a challenge to US hegemony by most of the rest of the world. Secondly, it's a function of the contradictory mission of the organization: independent institute and intergovernmental agency. It's also to do, I think, with a struggle around how to interpret post-war history. The balance of power at the UN shifted in the 60s as a result of decolonization. It was the moment, in Sartre's words, when the natives became human beings. A new politics of resistance emerged everywhere in the world, not least in the very colonial nations themselves. The attack on UNESCO today ought to be read, in part, as a trashing of the 60s, and as an attempt to reverse the cultural and political gains made here and elsewhere in those years. To be fair, those liberatory moments were often accompanied by systematic corruption and militarization, as well as by the entrenchment of neo-colonialist institutions like the International Monetary Fund. UNESCO by no means stands outside of this ambiguous and paradoxical history. It is a centralized, hierarchical and bureaucratized institution too often committed to large-scale projects that do little other than reinforce dependence on first world capital and expertise. There's not much attention given to what's sometimes called the fourth world—nations within nations, tribal and indigenous cultures. Neither is there, as far as I can tell, any recognition of the limitations of development and growth themselves.

But then again, UNESCO is probably not the place to look for the kind of autonomous politics I'm talking about. I still think it's important to defend the tatters of liberal institutions (and states) that remain, to refuse the language of the marketplace (if only, Reagan must be thinking, UNESCO could be made to turn a profit, like the Los Angeles Olympics). At the same time we have to continue to invent other public sites of political struggle altogether. What I liked about the information and communications debate at UNESCO was that it named a terrain of resistance that doesn't recognize national boundaries—just like capital itself.

Alexander Wilson is a Toronto journalist, broadcaster and horticulturalist. He works on the collective at **borderlines**.



SOME NOTES ON THE OCCASION OF A PERFORMANCE OF JUDITH DOYLE'S RATE OF DESCENT

Andrew
Payne



I felt not myself—but an example of myself.

Judith Doyle

Given the

ephemerality of a 'corpus' which has emerged, if not entirely, then at least most convincingly in performance, it might seem presumptuous to insist on Doyle's more 'literary' antecedents. Yet it is to such antecedents that the work sends us, and perhaps never so emphatically as when claiming for itself a certain 'theatricality'. Nor should we be surprised by this: for the question of the Book, of the history and traditionality proper to it, this question has always involved a moment of exemplary dissemblance, a theatrical operation whereby text and event have been made to communicate, but made to communicate across an abyss which forbids any simple resolution of one term in the other. If I will forgo a characterization of *Rate of Descent* as event, I do so then, not in order to minimize the performative aspects of the work, but rather to insist that the problem of the event, of its presence and performance, is never so easily localized. To reduce the question of Doyle's theatricality to proclivities of 'performance', as though the question of that performance were somehow incidental in relation to a task deemed inaugural, a task which would call itself writing, this would be to remain blind to theatricality's most profound demand, it would be to forget that mask from behind which silence, in order to give itself to itself, has already spoken.



Of course for the writer, or perhaps more properly, for the writer of 'modernity'¹, for the one whose 'work' is only ever authorized in the absolute coincidence of text and event, this speech must come as an indictment:

But this exigency which makes the work declare being in the unique moment of rapture—those very words: 'it is', the point which the work brilliantly illuminates even while receiving its consuming burst of light—we must also comprehend and feel that this point renders the work impossible, because it never permits arrival at the work. It is a region anterior to the beginning where nothing is made of being, and in which nothing is accomplished.

Maurice Blanchot

It would be tempting, and as the length of these preliminary remarks ought to indicate, not altogether incorrect, to locate Doyle within the 'epoch' of such an 'impossible work', to understand her performance as an extension of its rigour. Not incorrect, but neither entirely to the point. For rigour is precisely absent here. In its place we are treated to a voluptuous distraction, nervous, forgetful, but for that very reason, subject to surprise, to fortuitous encounters and identifications:

It was a fleeting allegiance, a second of total identification with a sentence, an idea—one I believed for a few moments explained itself completely. It was like seeing a stranger on a late street and making the kind of contact that evaporates in two seconds.²

These are texts which might properly be called 'amorous' and in precisely the sense that Barthes employed the term—given to phantasy, to identification, only reluctantly induced into the labour of the symbolic. Here writing moves away from thought, away from its agonies and labour, and towards the figure's repose:

My thoughts are not thoughts at all. They are images of thoughts. The odd moment of false luminescence, of false clarity.

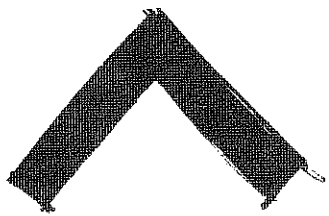
This 'amorous' disposition depends upon a notion of readership which is antithetical to modernity's utopian impulse (utopia meaning literally *no where*). Its point is always, and prematurely, to render desire's object, to make its other take place, established as the destination of the lover's address. Of course, in order for the lover to read his freedom there, this other, this object of the lover's desire, must prove an other subject. The legal analogue to this amorous expression is therefore the contract rather than law, its goal, persuasion rather than enforcement.



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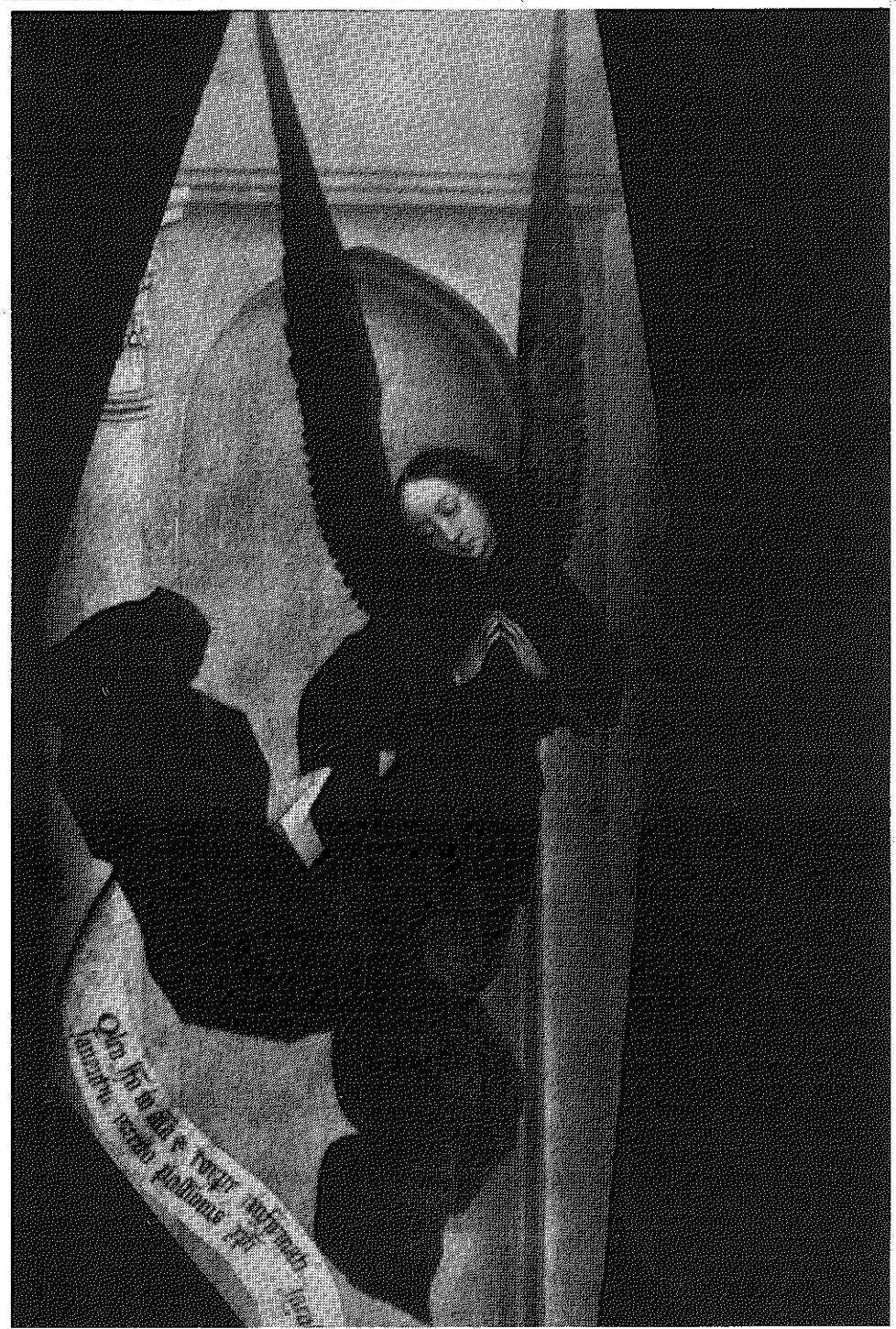


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If the modern must reject the terms of this loving contract, it is because s/he recognizes in the Other a demand more profound than that expressed in the relation of subject to subject.³

...the thing is the other, the entirely other which dictates or which writes the law, a law which is not simply natural (*lex natura rerum*), but an infinitely imperious injunction...

Jacques Derrida

Doyle in her own fashion also recognizes this deeper demand, this impossibility of the loving contract's ever fulfilling itself. If her works are about the ease with which the amorous subject avails itself of its imaginary pleasures (and what else are we to understand by that *grace* of which she speaks), they are equally about the disappointment which proves pleasure's concomitant. Hence the melancholy which pervades her writing, the sad inventory of

Capable neither of a belief in the work's ability to escape the exigencies of the social contract, nor of a renewed faith in the innocence of such a contract, Doyle's texts inhabit that space we have come, perhaps too glibly, to call 'post-modern'. If the term still designates for us a space of serious investigation, it will not have been insofar as it announces some definitive end of the modern. Such an end could only prove the most naive repetition of modernism's own eschatological aspirations. Rather its value will have been in raising a question as to what would mark the 'originality' of an 'epoch', in opening the modern up to that operation by which it will always have outlived itself. It is around this moment of decay, a decadence which Jacques Derrida has rightly called 'the period proper to all movement of consciousness', that Doyle's theatre is organized. If the dream (modern-



Photos: Pamela Gawn, S.L. Simpson Gallery

wounds, of places where fulfilment has just failed to find itself:

When I looked at my neck, there were marks all up and down it. I stood in front of a mirror and came to know each mark, the depth of the colour, and was surprised how perfectly I remembered the sense of each one of them.

The manner in which the work characterizes the fact of its own representationality is correspondingly ambivalent. Alongside the appeals to a discourse of love, of grace—what Brother Martin Shea in one of Doyle's transcripts refers to as an 'appropriation of suffering'—there is a keen sense of appropriation's other face, a sense that the amorous gaze must 'grasp at the death or immobilization of the lover' (David Melnik):

At the moment I want you most, you have the least individuality, the least singularity...

I wanted Anna fixed as a magazine picture, always in the same position and sequence. I want this mental picture absolutely clear...⁴

If you can get to know it enough, you can feel comfortable with it. There's a power relationship. You're having it, dominating it.⁵

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Thought remains, but it is just thought. Night is anxious, the broken thought of a city. I re-read this city and felt sad, as if I could never write something so beautiful again.

Andrew Payne



Notes

1. We should hesitate before ascribing to 'modernity' something like the originality of an epoch, a significance given to historical circumscription. If the modern will have resisted such a positioning, it is because that originality to which it lays claim—a claim to originality itself, to absolute rupture, revelation, to a voice whose nearness to itself would always be anterior to its having spoken itself, anterior to the distance from itself which is speech—such an originality will always never have occurred. And yet the force of this never, this less than the trivial, a *finest of the fine* as Derrida would put it, continues to leave its mark upon the question of the Book, a question to which we will have claimed some attentiveness. For the moment, a quote from Paul de Man might act as a provisional delimitation of a preface to (nor should we ignore the necessity of such an anticipation), this problem of the 'modern':

The ambivalence of writing is such that it can be considered both an act and an interpretative process that follows after an act with which it cannot coincide. As such, it both affirms and denies its own nature or specificity. Unlike the historian, the writer remains so closely involved with action that he can never free himself of the temptation to destroy whatever stands between him and his deed, especially the temporal distance that makes him dependent on an earlier past. The appeal of modernity haunts all literature. It is revealed in numberless images and emblems that appear at all periods—in the obsession with a *tabula rasa*, with new beginnings—that finds recurrent expression in all forms of writing. No true account of literary language can bypass this persistent temptation of literature to fulfill itself in a single moment. The temptation of immediacy is constitutive of a literary consciousness and has to be included in a definition of the specificity of literature.

2. All quotations from *Rate of Descent* unless otherwise indicated.

3. Gilles Deleuze in his introduction to *Venus in Furs* points to this rejection of a notion of Law based upon contractual consensus as characteristic of the modern:

Clearly THE LAW, as defined by its pure form, without substance or object or any determination whatsoever, is such that no one knows nor can know what it is. It operates without making itself known. It defines a realm of transgression where one is already guilty, and where one oversteps the bounds without knowing what they are, as in the case of Oedipus. Even guilt and punishment do not tell us what the law is, but leave it in a state of indeterminacy equalled only by the extreme specificity of the punishment. This is the world described by Kafka. The point is not to compare Kant and Kafka, but to delineate two dimensions of the modern conception of law.

4. Judith Doyle, 'Fading', from *9 Texts*.

5. *Ibid.*

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tics tend to assume that meanings and intentions can be simply 'read off' a work or its description. But to ascribe to David Tomas' recent work *Behind the Eye Lies the Hand of William Henry Fox Talbot* such a univocality of intention would be to contradict the work itself. Tomas' exhibition can be understood as marking a moment of uncertainty for such a collaborative position, a position that would leave unsolicited the relation of the work and its 'criticism'. I will therefore consider in some detail the problems and issues that his work raises in order to try and draw out a few of the unchallenged assumptions of the dominant view on art and photography. If I now proceed to do that which I have prefatorially warned against—describe the work—it is because, like Tomas, I too wish to contaminate the very thing that I am dealing with. For after all, to review a work, like reading a dream, is always to try and give it a sense and place—a secondary revision that Tomas' work would seem to want to obviate, or at least to defer. But if I am to move at all, I am, despite my suspicions as regards the interest of such an operation, obliged to employ a descriptive model.

Moving in and out of the gallery is a (child's?) train on tracks: a bridge that joins the inside of the gallery to its fenestrated extremities. There are video and photographic cameras, TV screens, a strobe that flashes intermittently and mirrors that are placed on opposite sides of the gallery. A variety of texts are inscribed on the walls and mirrors and there are others on the window which can be read from the street. Historical characters and anonymous and imaginary personalities mingle freely in this dense intertextual space: on one text Mayakovsky and Vertov exchange views on the *Kino Eye*, addressing me as third term, as cinematic spectator perhaps. There are impossible meetings, not to mention readings: Fox Talbot 'sits' next to Vertov; I read about 'Talbot the man' from a text that is lettraset onto one of the mirrors. This text is taken from a coffee-table book on Talbot by Gail Buckland who took an early calotype of Talbot's hand to a palmist in order to gain some insight into Talbot's personality. Here and elsewhere in the exhibition there seems to be a troubling insistence that the faith we have in our readings of images is problematic and blinding, an insistence that runs

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Artists and cri-

tics tend to assume that meanings and intentions can be simply 'read off' a work or its description. But to ascribe to David Tomas' recent work *Behind the Eye Lies the Hand of William Henry Fox Talbot* such a univocality of intention would be to contradict the work itself. Tomas' exhibition can be understood as marking a moment of uncertainty for such a collaborative position, a position that would leave unsolicited the relation of the work and its 'criticism'. I will therefore consider in some detail the problems and issues that his work raises in order to try and draw out a few of the unchallenged assumptions of the dominant view on art and photography. If I now proceed to do that which I have prefatorially warned against—describe the work—it is because, like Tomas, I too wish to contaminate the very thing that I am dealing with. For after all, to review a work, like reading a dream, is always to try and give it a sense and place—a secondary revision that Tomas' work would seem to want to obviate, or at least to defer. But if I am to move at all, I am, despite my suspicions as regards the interest of such an operation, obliged to employ a descriptive model.

Moving in and out of the gallery is a (child's?) train on tracks: a bridge that joins the inside of the gallery to its fenestrated extremities. There are video and photographic cameras, TV screens, a strobe that flashes intermittently and mirrors that are placed on opposite sides of the gallery. A variety of texts are inscribed on the walls and mirrors and there are others on the window which can be read from the street. Historical characters and anonymous and imaginary personalities mingle freely in this dense intertextual space: on one text Mayakovsky and Vertov exchange views on the *Kino Eye*, addressing me as third term, as cinematic spectator perhaps. There are impossible meetings, not to mention readings: Fox Talbot 'sits' next to Vertov; I read about 'Talbot the man' from a text that is letraset onto one of the mirrors. This text is taken from a coffee-table book on Talbot by Gail Buckland who took an early calotype of Talbot's hand to a palmist in order to gain some insight into Talbot's personality. Here and elsewhere in the exhibition there seems to be a troubling insistence that the faith we have in our readings of images is problematic and blinding, an insistence that runs

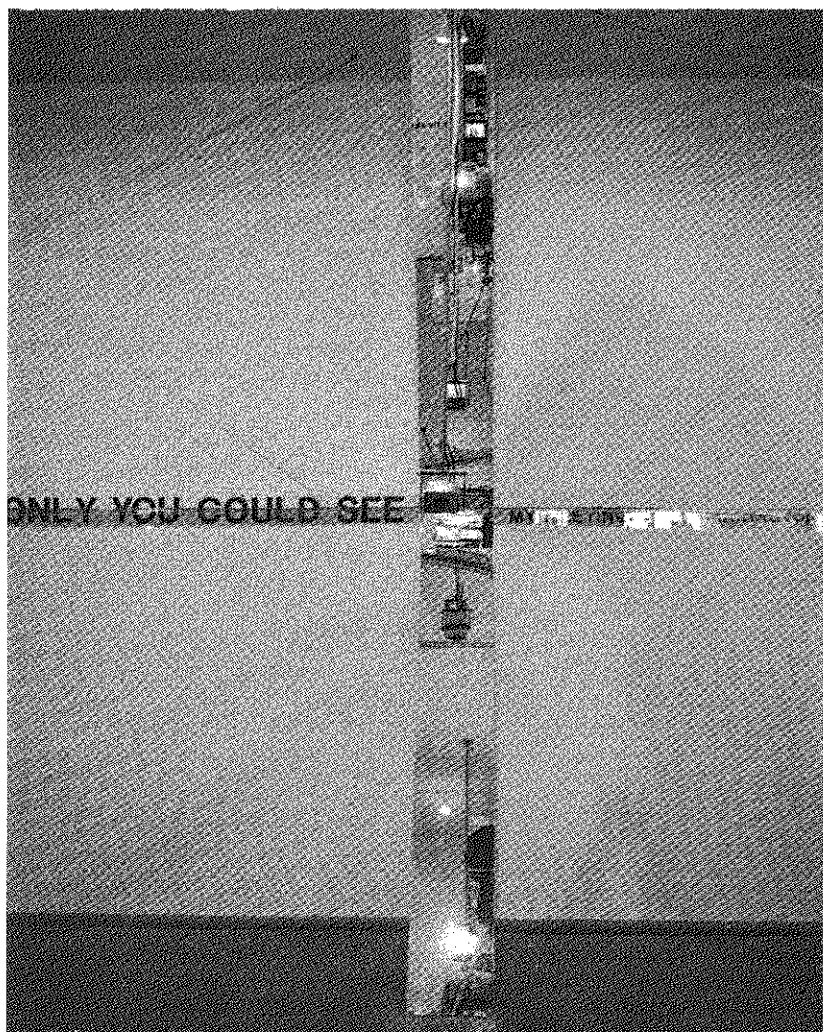


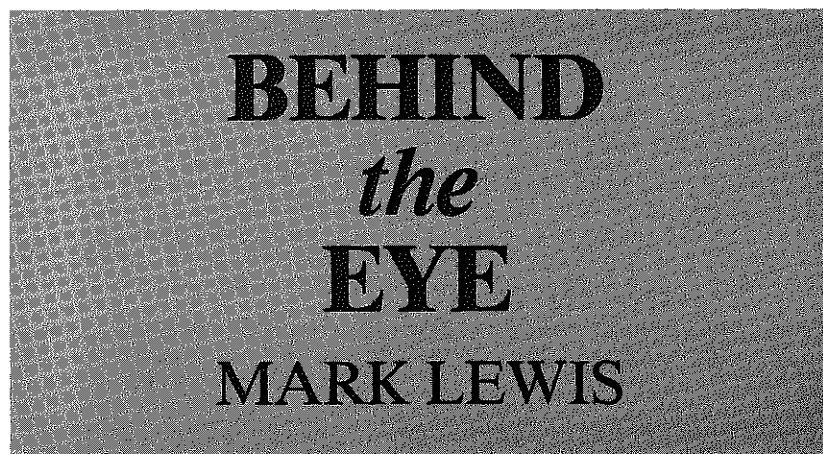
Photo: Alex Neumann, S.L. Simpson Gallery

absolutely contrary to Buckland's hermeneutical optimism (a faith in both the transparency of signifying practices and in the presence of the artist behind his or her images—hence the notion of a genius quite literally inscribed in the artist's hand.)

Tomas sits in the middle of this multi-media installation with a calotype photograph—of another palm—in his lap. The pencil that he holds in his hand marks a line on the image each time the train travels past where he is sitting. By the time that I had visited the exhibition a good deal of the image had been obscured, giving Tomas' operation the quality of an erasure. Tomas' eyes are concealed behind mirrored glasses. Behind and in front of him is the inscription: 'IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE (WHAT I HAVE SEEN) WITH YOUR EYES', a line attributed to Roy Batty, an android from the film *Blade Runner*. What seems to be suggested here is that though we see, we are in effect blinded by the familiarity of our object. Photography is normally experienced as an environment—we see it everywhere: in books, magazines, on the streets—and as such is unlike many other forms of imagery which require a conscious choice if they are to be seen. In this instance we do make a choice to see an exhibition on photography but Tomas fails to deliver the object as such; rather he presents it to us in its absence 'in a new semantic row; a row of concerns which (seemingly) belong to another category', to make, as Shlovsky would say, the familiar seem strange.

If I wish to make coherent sense of all this non-sense I quickly realize that this is an impossible desire: every time I think of something, I am forced by memory and association to think of something else, carried along vertiginous and uncontrollable routes. How else to think of Tomas' work except as a metaphor for the unconscious of art production, specifically photography! For Freud describes the dream—the 'royal road' to the unconscious—as a type of rebus where images and words mingle freely and where meaning is produced via the mechanisms of condensation and displacement.

By entering the gallery I pass a photo-electric cell and begin the train's repetitive passage across the gallery. The train's movement mimics my own as it passes another photo-electric cell starting a process that culminates in a line of erasure/covering of the calotype in Tomas' lap. The train and the calotype were developed more or less contemporaneously at a time when there were massive new productions of knowledge of the human subject. It was also a period, as Foucault has suggested, that involved a commensurate production in the forms of control and



surveillance. For Foucault, all knowledge is at once a knowledge of power and in this respect photography is no exception. We have only to consider its seminal role in the productions of the modern institution of the prison, the police and the psychiatric hospital, in order to understand how photography's claim to a truthful representation of the world is overdetermined by questions of surveillance and control.

The Panopticon—a utopian machine designed by Jeremy Bentham—is used by Foucault as a metaphor to describe the organization of gazes in the modern institutions of power. One of the interesting aspects of the Panopticon is that a subject need not actually be under surveillance in order to behave as if s/he is—the threat is enough. Tomas sits, his eyes obscured by mirrored glasses. Behind and in front of him is the inscription: 'IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE (WHAT I HAVE SEEN) WITH YOUR EYES'. Is Tomas watching me; am I watching him? The ambiguity is terrifying. We both imagine, I assume, that we are being watched and therefore behave accordingly.

There is a sense in which the work asks to be read in terms of a history of Museum works (Michael Asher, Daniel Buren et al), works that would make claim to a deconstruction of the gallery space. Certainly Tomas' exhibit performs some of the operations that have characterized this type of work: his train 'breaks through' a glass wall that separates the gallery space from the corridor and some of the texts and a video screen can be seen from the street. But for me this is the work's least interesting reading. In fact, the pretensions the work has to such a deconstruction tend to distract us from what I believe to be its more radical achievement.

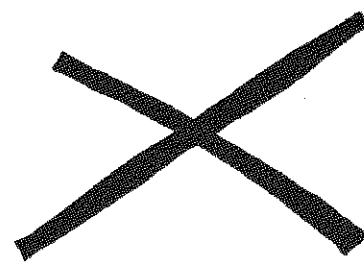
If we continue to use the metaphor of the unconscious, then the work can be understood as an attempt to locate another pleasure, a pleasure in the sense of experiencing a loss in centrality, coherence and univocal meaning. Tomas' work hints at—always partially, never conclusively—other histories of photography and art that have necessarily been repressed in order to maintain the solid-arity of the subject of western representation. These other histories can be glimpsed in those manifestations such as Vertov's radical notion of montage, Dalton's composite photographs, and in the question of alterity posed in the fictional Batty's imperative. However, they are more than just histories of 'other representations' for there is also a history that would include considerations of the relationship between photography and power, of the former's role in the emergence of the mechanisms of control, surveillance and discipline that characterize the modern state.

To move against fetishism, as Burgin reminds us, is to move 'beyond its fragments'. In other words, in order to disrupt dominant subjectivity and to produce others, it is necessary to work to undermine the 'lawfully' inscribed divisions of our culture: word and image, form and content, masculine and feminine, inside and outside, theory and practice, etc. I read Tomas's work as an attempt to negate some of those fetishisms in order to open up the art/photographic space to other histories, to other readings: readings of desire and the unconscious and readings of the social and the political, in short, readings that are no longer separate, outside and divided. In an earlier work, *Notes Towards a Photographic Practice*, Tomas repeats many times the words: 'TO BEGIN OVER AGAIN'. This statement should not be read as a myopic and humanist plea for a clean sweep of the *tabula rasa* history of photography; rather it seems to me to represent a desire to reinscribe these other histories in order to pollute and contaminate our extant subjectivity. *Behind the Eye Lies the Hand of William Henry Fox Talbot* continues and extends some of the more interesting recent work on representation that a number of artists have been undertaking—Barbara Kruger, Victor Burgin, Olivier Richon, Sherrie Levine, etc. In this respect the work can be seen at times to repeat familiar strategies whilst failing to confront the crucial problematic of sexuality, the spectre of which is raised both by the choice of objects in the exhibition—trains, electronic gadgets and, of course, the camera itself!—and also Tomas' own physical presence in the work. This would constitute another history, another reading of photography and as such could have been productively developed in the context of Tomas' project. For instance, it could be crudely argued that the camera as the quintessential voyeuristic tool is the perfected invention of masculine desire.

This quiet and thoughtful work poses the problem of the discursive formation of art and the construction of subjectivity; and this at a time when so much of the work being exhibited here in Toronto is busy recycling everything and anything at a hyperbolic rate in order to re-affirm the authority of the *salon* and the integrity of the artistic subject. Tomas' work resists the temptation to look south to the marketplace of art in order to remain very much at the heart of local production and therefore it allows us to reflect on the uncritical climate that prevails both in practice and in criticism; and herein lies its urgency.

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Dalton's composite photographs, produced at the very birth of photography, and Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, produced at a similar moment in the history of cinema, suggest that if 'dominant' production had developed along these lines of investigation and experiment, we might today be enjoying entirely different productions of subjectivity. *The Lie Behind the Eye* is above all else the repression of these subjectivities, these other histories of the artistic subject.

Thinking on art and photography has been characterized by its fetishistic quality: it lays stress on the object at hand as self-sufficient and therefore denies that there is anything lacking or absent in the visual field; and in so doing it guarantees the founding centrality of the artistic subject. The fetish is that which stands in for absence (of the Mother's imagined penis) in order to deny that absence, that lack of coherence and wholeness. Both Greenbergian Modernism and the recent affirmation in painting of the heroic artist's unique trace celebrate the fetish in order to deny the very loss that would provide the repertoire for that other pleasure which Tomas' work attempts to locate.

Earlier this fall,

at a conference sponsored by the International Society for Contemporary Music's 'World Music Days', Frederic Rzewski was invited to discuss the viability and necessary conditions for a new form of music-theatre. Rzewski bluntly called for a radical restructuring of the social conditions of cultural production. I will respond to Rzewski's position only indirectly, by considering his 'Antigone-Legend' (composed in 1982 and performed recently in Toronto at the New Music Concerts series) as his 'artistic' response to the questions posed during the ISCM festival. It is a response that generates and deserves further reflection.

The musical and theatrical rendering of the Antigone story using the Brecht text speaks to and from an immanent tradition: the conception of music-theatre formulated by Brecht in his collaborations with Eisler and Weill, and indirectly (and by implication) in the writings of Walter Benjamin. I want to point out the relevance of Brecht and Benjamin to the project of music-theatre Rzewski has exemplified in 'Antigone-Legend'. Of course this is not, nor should it be, the only basis from which to discuss the work. In this context it happens to be quite a fruitful approach if one is concerned, as Rzewski surely is, with articulating the contemporary possibility of music-theatre as an evolving question; a question whose evolution is expressible in an argumentative force and in a musical and textual vitality that is both immediate and potential.

A close reading of the work (score analysis) is unlikely to be of much value to the general reader. Nor would an intersemiotic translation from musical to ordinary language—a practice leaning too often on perfumy adjectives. I will instead focus on the trajectory of Rzewski's project of what I have liberally, *but not literally*, called 'misuk-theatre'. The term 'misuk' is Brecht's invention. By inverting the order of the vowels in the 'word' music he is advancing a conception which represents an inversion of the 'practice' music. Brecht was known to have been very disrespectful towards concert music and the formalism of the avant-garde. (See his conversations with Hans Eisler.) Misuk may be inferred to represent the fabric of our 'social soundtrack'. In his preface to the score (thoughtfully reproduced in the concert notes), Rzewski writes how he realizes this concept in 'Antigone-Legend':

A number of effects are used, such as the pianist's vocal sounds, knocking on wood, the singer's drum, a bell, and an optional tape recording of thunder at the end... These sounds are meant not so much as 'noise-music', of the kind frequently encountered in avant-garde concerts; but rather as a sort of pseudo-musical evocation of a corresponding dramatic situation, somewhat akin to Brecht's peculiar concept of 'Misuk'.

The music of this work cannot be subsumed by Brecht's concept of misuk—it is clearly not intended to do so. Only by virtue of its supporting role to the action of the text does its overall function come close to the 'idea' of misuk-theatre. Rzewski writes that the

RZEWSKI'S ANTIGONE- LEGEND AND MISUK- THEATRE

Nicholas
Kompridis

melodic and harmonic material was based on an all-interval tone-row. His treatment of the row however does not defer to serial practices, but rather, is treated as a resource scale or mode from which a variety of material (including non-western and folk-derived) can be developed. It is always interesting to hear a composer as sophisticated as Rzewski treat folk materials, for instance, in his piano variations on a Chilean folk-song 'The People United Will Never Be Defeated'. The inevitable issue is the resolution of the inherent historical and dialectical tension between 'art' and 'folk' music. This issue is re-posed and resolved in 'Antigone-Legend'.

Rzewski's approach to the treatment of the text provides an understanding of his attitude towards this problem. He writes:

The rhythms of the sung text are mostly written very simply with few melismas and even fewer large leaps, systematically in order to exclude both operatic and avant-garde clichés.

In effect, Rzewski is consciously resisting the instrumental tradition of vocal writing—a tradition that has been predominant in Western art music. This tradition has modelled vocal writing on the virtuosic tradition of instrumental performance practice. The effects of this in modern music can be heard in the preference given to the aural and sonic possibilities of the text over and above its narrative possibilities. The music of 'Antigone-Legend' retains the strophic structure of its 189 strophe text. Rzewski troped 72 textless strophes onto the original that are meant 'to serve as musical accompaniment' to the action on stage. Unlike the role of a film score (or rather, most film scores), which is to enhance and reinforce the moods and contexts of the action, the supporting role played by the music of 'Antigone-Legend' with respect to its text and action is a *relational* one, not a substantial one. It is wonderful music that can clearly stand on its own. But the project of music-theatre 'Antigone-Legend' represents what would surely miss its mark entirely if it were to become a 'naturalized' citizen of the reified concert music repertoire.

Importantly, Brecht's text reads like a story, not a play. It is a dry description. Like a sign, it 'points' to the action. The non-dramatic form it most resembles is that of storytelling. We can distinguish the actor from the storyteller: the

actor identifies with the action, the storyteller 'points' to it. In his essay 'The Storyteller', Walter Benjamin makes some relevant observations: 'Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn'. In choosing a text which Brecht reworked with the intention of recapturing its lost 'folk-realism' I believe Rzewski is attempting to evoke this oral folk tradition. It is also one in which his social and political concerns can be expressed undidactically.

An orientation to practical interests is characteristic of many born storytellers... In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers... counsel is less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding.²

Rzewski's response to the questions facing music-theatre offers counsel in the content of his chosen text (Antigone's story) and in his conception of music-theatre. It is a conception that does not depend on elaborate and expensive staging, large casts and other trappings of techno-lust. The staging of the text was done by manipulating costumed and masked figures representing the major characters. They were fittingly stark and simple.³ This music-theatre is one in which the 'production values' are internal to the work, developed from within, not superimposed from above. I am reminded of Stravinsky's strategy at a time when the social, political and economic crisis of the day (World War I) ruled out lavish works in the mode of 'Petrouchka' and the 'Firebird', resulting instead in works like 'Renard' and 'L'histoire du Soldat'. Works, one could argue, that have conspicuous elements of misuk in them. Although Stravinsky has been chastised in some intellectual quarters for not being politically correct (the conversion to neo-Catholicism), his turn to more humble forms is instructive. At a time when cultural production is constrained by another kind of crisis, Rzewski's *misuk-theatre* music-theatre is an exemplar for those with an interest to create and support a music-theatre with a practical intent.

Nicholas Kompridis

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1. Benjamin, Walter, *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken, 1969, p. 84.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

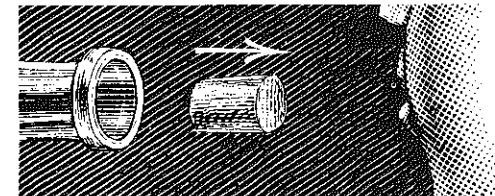
3. These large puppets supported on music stands were created and manipulated by Felix Murr. The actual division of labour in the work consists of a pianist, vocalist and a puppeteer. Those who might have been at the concert may realize how fragile the relationship between music, text and action can be in the course of a performance. Rzewski is a very physical and virtuosic pianist whose intense performance was sometimes as dramatic as the text. Vocalist Carol Plantamura responded impressively to the demand to match Rzewski's intensity and his volume. There were only a few occasions in which there was a mismatch in dynamics between piano and voice.

Laura Mulvey on the conference, 'Well, I look at it as a form of entertainment.'

If words there be, or body there be, somewhere there is a desire for dialogue, intercourse, exchange.

Jane Gallop

The Daughter's Seduction: Psychoanalysis and Feminism
p. xiii



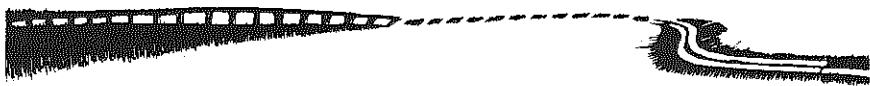
Like the Sphinx we are outside the gates, the archetypal feminine position: our position is mediated. However, we are inextricably locked in this circuit of pedagogical relations. The institutionalization of knowledge: possession, acquisition, consummation, consumption, lures us away from this feminine border. We give up our liminality, our state of crisis.

BAD SISTERS IN THE BIG APPLE: Feminist Film Theory

'How does woman evoke an image of herself?' Paola Melchiori, conference participant.

But what is not tight, what is open, unattainable, and thus infinitely desirable, are the films themselves. The feminine textual bodies of Ackerman, Duras, quoted throughout the conference. The slippery heterogeneity of these texts, which exceed critical discourse, mastery, closure. Our good objects, the desired bodies on which, the Italians claim, we relieve our unconscious atavistic bond with the mother.





STEREO

MOURNING



(ON NO LONGER)

RECEIVING

(CKLN)

Note, to begin

with, a program not embarrassed by its content, which takes, in fact, that content to be the local. This being the turning away from a convention (a repetitious force) whose agendas only ever recognize the local as an illegitimate distraction (where, here, the marriage which legitimates would be a contract that promises a place in an international market; an arrangement that is stipulated as proper and professional, and in the face of this, the illegitimate equals an amateurish impropriety whose appearance produces embarrassment, that is, distracts or stumbles a stride made sure by its commitment to its professional direction). And if such conventional agendas should find local non-contracted items to deliver, it would recover any discomposure suffered therein by offering said items under a banner of speciality; constructing a sophistication which plays to fashion-consciousness, underwritten by an adherence to the intelligent, and announcing such a commitment with a promise of the interesting. This is to say that face is saved by negotiating a contract. But it is not as if the alternative would not also trade off some idea of the legitimate; it is not requirement of contract itself that marks a difference so much as a clientele, as announced, and the articulated arrangements and stipulations. The difference pivots on a certain mechanism of patronage and an operation of magnanimity.

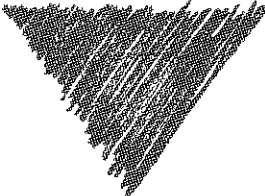
Note, second-

ly, a certain notion of the political, and particularly one which provides for a relation to an economy of explication, that is, a politicality that remains (always) to be revealed in conjunction with a composition and a composer (as explicators). And, here, a difference is already to be marked but within that very notion of conjunction; that the explicit is to be revealed by assuming a political relation in composing and in being a composer. A relation, then, that is accounted for by a commitment to the presentation of its issue. It would position itself as alternative to a choice of not dealing with such matters (for reasons which would articulate the matters as addendum). If it still suffers to designate the political as category, only this yime as category embraced rather than deferred, the question would continue to turn on a notion of the political as supplement, and also on a submission of the explicit as self-evident; a principle comfortable with the acceleration commensurate with its becoming implicit, its articulation already inaugurated and, thereby, as though unnecessary to repeat. For the categorical delineation retains a place for supplement inasmuch as its name could be a reduction and is thus available to challenge; whether its calling be cause to remedy or poison. This choice, too, serves to maintain a composure (a composing) again. It is for the sake of this further composition that a certain politicality remains, again, to be articulated.

Note, finally,

that this reception, given in the wake of reception lost, a loss mourned certainly, although not wholly lost as its resonance occasions this mourning and perhaps for some further notes, this reception, resonating, itself, if the acceptance of a certain calling to or of the alternative, finds itself entertaining such within a slight reserve, a reservation as it were, which both holds a place for and a distance from. In particular, that distance is to be registered against the sufficiency of a topic itself; against the acceptance of becoming political as itself already alternative, inasmuch as this becoming would undermine the explication of a relation which is already political (at the same time that this relation may bear its explication as inexhaustible) at the moment of situating its strategic specificity. If there was a question concerning closure, say, upon interpretation, by such a situating of a specific political strategy in regards to a composition, a question, then, of this as a finalizing move, this question becomes in the situating of an alternative a non-question. The alternative becomes a subversion of that question. And yet this is to repeat the move of its so-called alter. For, it is not as if this question is ever asked, but is itself situated as prior reasons for not allowing the presentation of that which would beg it; it is repressed, perhaps, in the face of its own inexhaustibility. It is this political move which continues to be covered and which serves to produce quantifiable differences while maintaining the same ground. If it is still refreshing, it is still contingent upon a reticent conjunction; a silenced 'but'.

MICHAEL BOYCE



TOWARDS A PEDAGOGY OF LIBERATION

An Interview With Henry Giroux

Peter McLaren

Illustration By
Michael Merrill

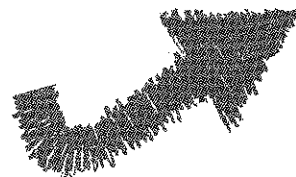
The appearance of the Bovey Commission in Ontario bears passing testament to late capitalism's—and late bolshevism's—onward rush to subject all aspects of education to the dictates of the market. If liberal capitalism at least attempted to preserve vestiges of the classical idea of education as the free play of ideas, as well as the critique of established moral codes, contemporary educational policy unites morality and pedagogy in one blessed tryst: the pursuit of ideas is at one with the worship of Mammon in league with a convenient God. There are no valid practices which are not economically useful, and there is no valid economics which does not serve the demands of the mechanisms of capital. Late capitalism—like early capitalism—sees the state as entirely beholden to the market.

borderlines will return to the theme of the educational crisis in later issues. Meanwhile it is important to record that counter-strategies cannot be based on preserving the order that is passing. Practice begins in the schools, in the community colleges, in universities as they are now. And these practices must be seen as inherently actively political, just as the policy-makers see their practices as passively (disinterestedly) political.

Ioan Davies

Henry Giroux

Giroux is the author of over 70 articles and seven books. Two of his books, Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling, and Theory and Resistance in Education were nominated by the American Educational Studies Association as Critics' Choice Selection, indicative of the most significant books in the field of education for 1982 and 1983. He has a forthcoming book, co-authored with Stanley Aronowitz, called Education Under Siege.



whether they want to be transformative intellectuals and fight for schools that allow them to act in that capacity, or whether they want to function so as to serve the status quo and maintain a safe position within the dominant traditions of schooling.

The point is that progressive educators can offer alternative discourses and social practices in our universities and public schools so as to provide the opportunity for students to rethink the nature of their own values and how they might operate through the conditions of their work. This does not simply mean that radical educators should write books and articles, it also means they should construct alliances with other progressive educators and fight collectively where possible to establish schools as democratic public spheres whose intent is to foster the ideals of critical democracy and civic courage; moreover, it means radical educators should develop organic links wherever possible with the communities and neighbourhoods that have a vested interest in public schooling.

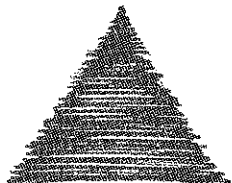
I'd like to ask you what you consider to be one of the most important tasks that critical and radical educators face in the future?

I think that critical and radical intellectuals need to develop a more dialectical notion of power and schooling. They must go beyond analyzing schools merely as agencies of domination. This suggests advancing beyond the discourse of critique to the discourse of possibility. One consequence would be that the notion of power and agency would take on a more strategic importance in analyzing the foundations for a critical theory of schooling. For example, power would no longer be defined as an exclusive instance of domination, it would also be seen as an affirmative and productive force. Posing power in a positive and critical way points to the need for radical educators to work actively within teacher education programs, with teachers in the field, with administrators and with parents so as to develop philosophical and programmatic changes in education in which we can imagine a public sphere where alternative changes in school organization, curriculum and instruction are seriously considered and proposed.

I want to stress that the language of critique loses its emancipatory character when it fails to embody the politically imaginative, the vision of what could be, a faith in people to remake their world, i.e. a language of hope and possibility. What this strongly implies is that radical and critical educators need to specify what schools as democratic spheres might look like. We need to link theory and action in the service of making, as Philip Corrigan has argued, despair unconvincing and hope more practical. This may seem like a utopian task, but it is a necessary precondition for any viable educational reform endeavour.

Peter McLaren

is a teacher at the College of Education in St. Catharines, Ontario, author of *Cries from the Corridor* (Methuen, 1979) and the forthcoming *Schooling as a Ritual Activity* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, to be published in Fall, 1985).



Behind the wall and the mirror, the hidden body is elided; in the thin space separating the mirror's polished, reflection-capturing surface and the opaque surface of the wall that catches only shadows, there is nothing. Through all these scenes glide similitudes that no reference point can situate: translations with neither point of departure nor support.

Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*
1983

REASON

INTO

PASSION

To interrogate

a history of representation is to wander into a world of refraction: it is to become lost in a simulation. Any attempt to retrace the specular maze, from destination to departure—from imaginary to real—will result only in artificial metemorphosis. Simulation as Baudrillard tells us, is a testimonial articulation of absence. Joyce Wieland's *Reason Over Passion* (Part II of a three-part political trilogy: 'True Patriot of Love', 1967-69), her most intricate and successful film, addresses this very absence.

Reason Over Passion undermines a predefined national/feminine typology, not by opposing a real to an imaginary, but by disrupting their hierarchical relationship. By exposing a double movement, real and imaginary collide in the speculum as contradiction, not as truth and untruth, but as negative truth: Absence. In unravelling the apparently seamless web of signification, 'process' is displayed as 'production'—the signifying practice is revealed as ideological operation.

This disjuncture is present as the film opens with Wieland singing a silent national anthem—a tight close-up amplifies her red lips as they move soundlessly; this is followed by the printed lyrics of the song. Moving through a dictated language, her silent feminine motion negates an overtly constructed idiom: the feminine subject. The juxtaposition of the printed lyrics frames the images within a historical pathology—prostrated patriotism—uncovering its ideological functionality: Silence. The dislocation of body and voice, the latter taking the form of the written word, effectively highlights the assumptions underlying female subjectivity; by severing the symbolic matrix the patriarchal bias of the anthem is exposed. Thus, those words so crucial to self-definition are dictated and imposed.

Images of Canadian landscapes (which are filmed through car or train windows) are represented in flux—vacillating, changing, mutable—they are vast vacant spaces

Janine Marchessault

waiting to be explored and filled with a new history. In conjunction with the previous images of the female body, this body of land is deprived of synchronized sound and is, in the same way, 'denaturalized'. Here, the myth of the 'untouchable landscape' (as manifested in our painterly and literary traditions) is transposed and transformed through the refractory movements of the camera. The hermetic landscapes are at times nothing more than a grey blur as Wieland occasionally waves her hand in front of the lens, postulating a (self-reflexive) gesture of negation in posing the problem of representation. The various windows, which frame and isolate us from the moving images, foreground mediation—emphasizing the subjective presence of the artist: the Real, which can only be defined through representation, is always a reification. (Wieland records an epistemological crisis.)

The frantic landscapes are frequently interrupted by scions of Canadian iconography: such as the Canadian flag (a maple leaf on cardboard), the national anthem (a distorted rendition accompanied by printed lyrics), the words 'REASON OVER PASSION' and a cameo portrait of Pierre Trudeau. Through pointedly worked distortions, these tendrils of the imaginary, come to resemble cheap souvenirs (product commodities) rather than national emblems. Like little soldiers deprived of their guns, these indices have been drained of their hermeneutic capacities. Such indices, when interwoven into the real moving landscapes, would have served to stabilize and anchor them with meaning. Instead, the cardboard flag, presented in all its blasphemous splendour, stripped of context and ritual, becomes a hiatus of ambiguity. In this way, the thread of signification between the flag and the oscillating landscapes is disrupted; the symbol—hollowed out—is swallowed up by the very movement it seeks to detain.

This erasure is carried further as the words 'REASON OVER PASSION' appear in 537 different variations superimposed over the

landscapes. At first, this imbrication appears as fixed slogan—the phallogocentric order of the Father, Pierre Trudeau: '*La raison avant la passion, c'est le thème de tous mes écrits*'. However, because we have neither the presentation of pure signifier (word), nor pure signified (image) a tension is created which prevents one from 'flattening out' the other. The appendage, no longer contained in its traditional structure, is set free to join the landscapes in movement; the letters become unhinged—spinning and changing over (and in relation to) the fluctuating images. They resist one position, transfigured from sense to non-sense, from reason into passion: working to formulate a new language, separate from the discursive resonances of the old.

The images of the landscapes are, for the most part, accompanied by a mundane monochrome sound device which, through its constance, delineates and fills in a specific space in time and like an alarm, carries with it an urgent temporality. Unlike the heterogeneity of the images, there are two possible variations within this continuum—non-silence and silence, with the former posing the stillness of the latter: Closure.

For Wieland, *Reason Over Passion* constitutes a last look at Canada—an epitaph. For us, however, such epitaphs (and others) should not be laid to rest, but rather should be opened up, (re)worked and (re)examined as means of uncovering and mapping out particularized strategies. Wieland's own idiosyncratic practices are based primarily on a negativity which refuses all that is fixed, resulting not in simple inversion but in ambiguity. It is precisely the ambiguity of these 'translations', which many have interpreted as naïveté, that allows for an increased awareness of cultural and economic historicity—towards a feminist praxis.

Janine Marchessault
is currently pursuing graduate studies in cinema at York University.

RePositioning,

The juxtaposition

Habit easily makes us unaware of profound difference between language as a system of signs and language assumed into use by the individual.

E. Benveniste
'The Nature of Pronouns'

Strategies of writing and of reading are forms of cultural resistance. Not only can they work to turn dominant discourses inside out (and to show that it can be done), to undercut their enunciation and address, to unearth the archeological stratifications on which they are built; but in affirming the historical existence of irreducible contradictions for women in discourse, they also challenge theory in its own terms, the terms of a semiotic space constructed in language, its power based on social validation and well-established modes of enunciation and address. So well-established that, paradoxically, the only way to position oneself outside of that discourse is to displace oneself within it—to refuse the question as formulated, or to answer deviously (though in its words), even to quote (but against the grain).

Teresa De Lauretis

Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema

of image and text in New York artist Barbara Kruger's recent works demonstrates the 'profound difference' of which Benveniste writes. Her work challenges our unawareness of how language forms the way we understand and perceive the world. In her photo-montage pieces photographs are selected from magazines, books and other sources, then reproduced, cropped, collaged, covered with text, enlarged and framed in red. The size of the works is significant; as large as eight by twelve feet, they effect an immediate response. The grainy textures and bold typeface bring attention to the fabrication of the image and provoke questions about the traditional values of fine art and photography and about our ways of perceiving their objects and contexts. Using the techniques acquired from design and layout work in magazine publishing, Kruger addresses how language and cultural imagery function in supporting and reinforcing social structures and systems of power and control.

The text varies from work to work. 'I am your almost nothing' is lost in a sea of hair and hands and one can barely discern image from text, while 'Your comfort is my silence' cuts boldly across a silhouette of a hatted head gesturing to be silent. The pronouns invite and address the reader but in an ambivalent way: by refusing a definitive subject-positioning of either addressor or addressee, the works open up to

multiple readings. The viewer is invited and provoked into the work in a way that demonstrates her/his own significance as a site where the production of meaning occurs. This recognition of the effects of subject-positioning inscribed in any reading suggests that such positions do not actually exist outside of discourse or social constructions.

Sexuality and capital, the power of patriarchy and the economic as determining factors, and the discourses of science, history and art are thus turned into points of attack; women's oppression, economic oppression, the subjection to gendered positioning, as well as the fetishization of works of art and other objects, can be understood as symptoms that must be problematized.

Kruger's work tampers with those signs active within these discourses that parade as 'nature' and 'reality'. By addressing stereotypic imagery and clichéd language, Kruger disrupts our usual relationships and responses to given meanings, and positions the spectator as an integral part of the work. No longer a receptacle of identificatory and programmed response, she/he is forced to re-think the meaning of these familiar images and words. In effect, detached from their usual contexts, assumed meanings become suspect. By inciting the spectator to re-think her/his presence within that 'social reality' she effects a disturbance in those constructions that work at keeping us all in our 'proper' places.

No RePose

You invest in the

a conversation with Barbara Kruger

Monika Gagnon: Could you tell me how you came to do your photo-montages?

Barbara Kruger: When I first entered the art-world I was producing paintings. I chiselled out a career for myself and was quite successful from 1969 to 1974: I showed at the Whitney and I had a gallery here in New York, but I had stopped painting because I was becoming alienated from my own production. I was writing at the same time and this became far more pleasurable for me. When writing I was on the tip of a very particular decision-making process, whereas it took me ten weeks to do each painting and it was all manual labour. Painting was an excellent career for the woman down the block, but not for me. As I proceeded, I realized a preference for combining my writing with photographs. I had studied photography with Diane Arbus and had always been aware of how images work.

I then left New York because I had no money and took a series of visiting artist jobs in California, Ohio and Illinois that lasted about five years. It was when I was at Berkeley in 1976 that I took the photographs that are in *Picture/Readings*. At Berkeley I read a lot (Barthes, Benjamin, etc.) and went to the movies all the time.

Right before I left New York I was part of AMCC (Artists Meeting for Cultural Change) which was composed of artists, writers and Art Language people who had become disenchanted with the art-world. It was a group that met every week for about two and a half years. For a woman it was an impossible context: we were totally absent in terms of speech—it was a situation that disallowed difference completely.

About five months ago, Artist's Space had their tenth annual show and they invited many artists who had exhibited there to show both old and new work. I exhibited a huge painting from 1974—an irregularly-shaped acrylic—and then made a small photo-work of a picture of a woman painting that said, 'YOU PRODUCE AN INFINITE SERIES OF ORIGINALS' and I hung it right next to the painting. Most people didn't know that I used to paint and I thought it was

Monika Gagnon





Put your money where your mouth is

important to show it because after all, I wasn't born with a pair of scissors and a photograph in my hands. I wanted to show how artists choose a way of working from an assortment of sanctioned modes.

In Laura Mulvey's article 'Kruger and Burgin' in *Creative Camera*, she talks about your and Burgin's work being at a juncture between aesthetics and politics. She also writes that both your works demonstrate that production at this juncture need no longer be as difficult or didactic as it was during the 1970s. Although one needs a theoretical background to read some of your work, a lot of it is quite accessible. Was this a conscious decision that you made?

People say that I came out of conceptualism, but by the time that conceptual work had peaked, I had only just caught sight of it since I was working in magazines and was totally intimidated by the art-world. When I did see conceptual work, it seemed like a pataphysical grammarian mania; this language that I didn't understand, it wasn't accessible to me at all. But now that I have learned the language, I appreciate and support this work. After doing the *Picture/Readings* photo-text work, I did the work with the black and white images which have one word over them: 'perfect', 'natural', which I showed at PS 1 in Long Island City. I think I'd reached a point where my relationship to the art-world had become very problematic. My need to be critical had become such that I really needed to be more explicit in how my language was being used with these images. That's when I started doing the work that's evolving now—late 1979/1980. It was also a time when I stopped

working for a while, curated some shows and wrote more criticism. My work is mainly informed, not only formally, but intellectually, by my job as a magazine designer for eleven years. The original paste-up stuff which is later blown up is exactly the same as the pages of *Mademoiselle*. As a designer, the type I used was mock-type, ABCD, and when I did layout it didn't say anything. I see my enterprise now to make meaningful precisely what those words did not say, to displace those dominant depictions. That's really the basis of my work.

In England, work on representation is dealt with much more critically than it is here. American work (my own included) is not textually informed in the same way. I have an interest in theory and I'm not defensive about it the way most American artists are. I think it's just some ridiculous Stanley Kowalski complex, this noble savage trip.

In Abigail Solomon-Godeau's 'Playing in the Fields of the Image', she concludes her piece by calling your work that of the artist as 'operator, producer, scriptor and pasticheur'. The 'I' in your text, although frequently engendered and emotional, manages to maintain an anonymous and collectivized character. Why, considering the distinct subjectivity of a lot of feminist work, does your 'I' remain so impersonal?

The reading of the work has to do with the construction of the subject. If I say that I'm interested in ruining some representations, it obviously doesn't mean that I'm only addressing women; or that the 'YOU' is always a man, either. It does mean, however, that there is an allowance for an Other, for different readings. The collectivity which you ask about has to do with the 'WE' which I'm using a lot more in my work. In the show that I did here in New York this year, all the work in the front room of the gallery was addressing some aspect of the economic. Interestingly, many people loved the back room about 'seeing' and 'looking', but somehow, the front room became a bit too much for them. It was important for me to show that it was possible to do critical work about financial expenditure in the midst of a dense market set-up. It was important to acknowledge and address this. Many viewers think that work is either about looking, sexuality or money. But I want to address a broad field, which is inclusive of all these issues and doesn't engage in repressive categorization.

What do you mean by saying it's difficult to do critical work in the midst of a dense market set-up?

Economic context determines production. In New York work becomes spectacular, taking on powerful accoutrements: huge scale, expensive production procedures, etc. In this way, it enters the market and the discourse. My work is for sale! And that's how I and a number of other women working have and will become present in an arena that we've been absent from; we're entering that particular discourse.

Cindy Sherman is getting a lot of exposure with her book; it's all over New York!

And the more places the book is the better as far as I'm concerned. I don't have any romantic ideas about the artist being pure. That's ridiculous, especially for artists who are working within forms that make broad distribution possible.

Doesn't it tame the work in a way? For instance, when a piece like 'YOU INVEST IN THE DIVINITY OF THE MASTERPIECE' gets appropriated by the very structure of the museum you're criticizing?

Let me tell you a story about that piece. The only time that I go to the Museum of Modern Art is to see the movies. One day I went to see this Werner Schroeder movie and I was standing waiting for the elevator for a long time. Right by the elevator, written on the wall, it said, 'masterpieces from the collection' and I thought, God, that's really calling a spade a spade. So I did 'YOU INVEST IN THE DIVINITY OF THE MASTERPIECE' and was very pleased that the Modern bought it! If I had the money at the time and if I'd known that MoMA was going to buy it, I would have made it a much larger work—it's 48 inches by 72 inches, it definitely should be much bigger. MoMA is exactly where the work should be, where it is the most effective in interrupting conventional art-viewing procedures.

The role of the critic is one which contributes to the exposure and legitimacy of certain artists and their work. You write as a film critic; what is your sense of this task and why are you writing about film as opposed to your own field?

I think that television and film are the way that images constitute social life. I'm more interested in the way that those pictures work than I am in categories of painting and sculpture. It doesn't mean that I don't think that critical work can be done in painting. I think it can, but I'm not particularly interested in writing about it. I like to write for certain films that I support. I write for *ArtForum* which is the only largely distributed art magazine that covers modern films at all.

I read a lot of newspapers and I watch the news every night because it enables me to understand how, for instance, the American electorate has become the dumbest electorate in the world; how the spectacle itself turns people into lobotomized, totally unthinking beings...how Ronald Reagan can be president! In short, how images work. Now I feel I can address this more effectively through how a film works than through a painting. And I'm not going to sit around every month writing about art and saying, 'I hate it! I hate it!' That's not the kind of criticism I want to write. In actual fact, I don't write criticism, I write reviews. It's basically journalism, which is a very neglected form. It can be incredibly powerful, but it's too often full of mindless, adjectival tirades. I guess reviewers have to be that way because they have a weekly deadline to become enthusiasts about everything.

Edward Said has addressed the power of journalism—how it is an area where one can effect political 'interference' at a more secular stratum than, say, university literary studies.

I would agree and add that the American public 'sees' what they 'know'. Even reading has become a peripheralized activity. All the more need for critical, transgressive work on the image.

Your work in poster form seems to be a move away from the tradition of 'framing' a work, keeping the work manageable and contained. Yet in the gallery pieces, you've framed the works in very bright red which makes a very strong overture. Could you comment on your use of the frame?

It's a matter of degree, of course, but everything that is offered up to the spectator and is retinally perceived has to have some notion of a semblance of beauty, of whether it works or doesn't work—Walter Benjamin talks about that. I wasn't going to hang the work up with pushpins because I'd been through the alternative space circuit and been invisible for long enough. The question was, how was I going to become visible? I had spent so much time and effort and pleasure in picking and cropping the photographs which had a lot to do with how things look. The frame was a device that allowed the work to enter the market in a particular way. I could have used plexiglass, but it wasn't the same semblance of beauty, it wasn't as powerful. If I was going to mix that ingratiation of wishful thinking with the criticality of knowing better, I had to somehow engage these two issues in the work. I wasn't going to make work that people weren't going to look at, what good is that? I felt that it was an ingratiating device that made it a package and it was also an entrance, a franchise. I wanted the work to be shown in places where the most people would see it, so that it would enter the discourse in the most visible way, where it would be the most effective, because if I couldn't be in these places I wouldn't show in galleries. I would just do the posters, which would get covered up in two minutes, I would borrow some money to do the billboard, do the movie and write criticism. Luckily, the gallery did work out the way I wanted it to, but I wasn't looking for a gallery. When I found a gallery it was when I had decided to stop looking. Consciously, I was getting tired of artists complaining about waiting to be 'done to' by a dealer or 'done to' by a critic. I realized that you have to understand some of that power and use that knowledge to displace that dominance.

That's how it works in film, too. You don't walk into the office of some barracuda at Fox or MGM in Hollywood and talk ideology. The failures and divisiveness of the left are all too often the result of its investment in its own ineffectivity. I'm sick of work that is all effect and no cause (grandiose mythic painting, Spielbergian polytechnics). But *I know* that it's important for work to be both effective and critical. To go back to American politics: the difference between the

Republicans' commercials and the Democrats', for example, is that the Democrats do not understand how to make negativity generative, which is what I'm trying to do in my work. There are ways of being negative which encourage thought, encourage criticality, encourage change. It's not some negative, cynical, self-righteous preaching that says 'this is the right way', but work that engages people. I think that is really important, and I certainly hope that my work conflates negations with moments of movement.



I am your

reservoir of poses

Monika Gagnon is a member of the border/lines collective and is currently pursuing graduate studies in the Department of Social and Political Thought at York University.

SOME

years ago *Maclean's* magazine ran a contest in which readers were invited to complete the phrase 'As Canadian as...' Entries ranged from the mundane 'As Canadian as maple syrup' to those which tilted at political icons or identified and lampooned our national character and foibles. Third place was taken by 'As Canadian as John Diefenbaker's French'; second place was awarded to 'As Canadian as a Royal Commission', but the first place went to the incisive 'As Canadian as possible...under the circumstances.'

Indecision and compromise are perhaps not the two most useful characteristics to be possessed by a people struggling to create a sense of identity and forge a spirit of nationhood. Canada faces unique problems in this regard. It is fragmented both linguistically and geographically and has as its neighbour a dynamic, culturally aggressive English-speaking country which outnumbers it by a ratio of ten to one. If English-speaking Canadians are to acquire a distinct sense of identity, to formulate their own images of their nation and the regions which comprise it, they must do so on their own terms, not in a cultural vacuum, but in a cultural environment protected in some measure from the onrush of attitudes, beliefs, values, and myths emanating from outside its borders, and principally from its great neighbour to the south.

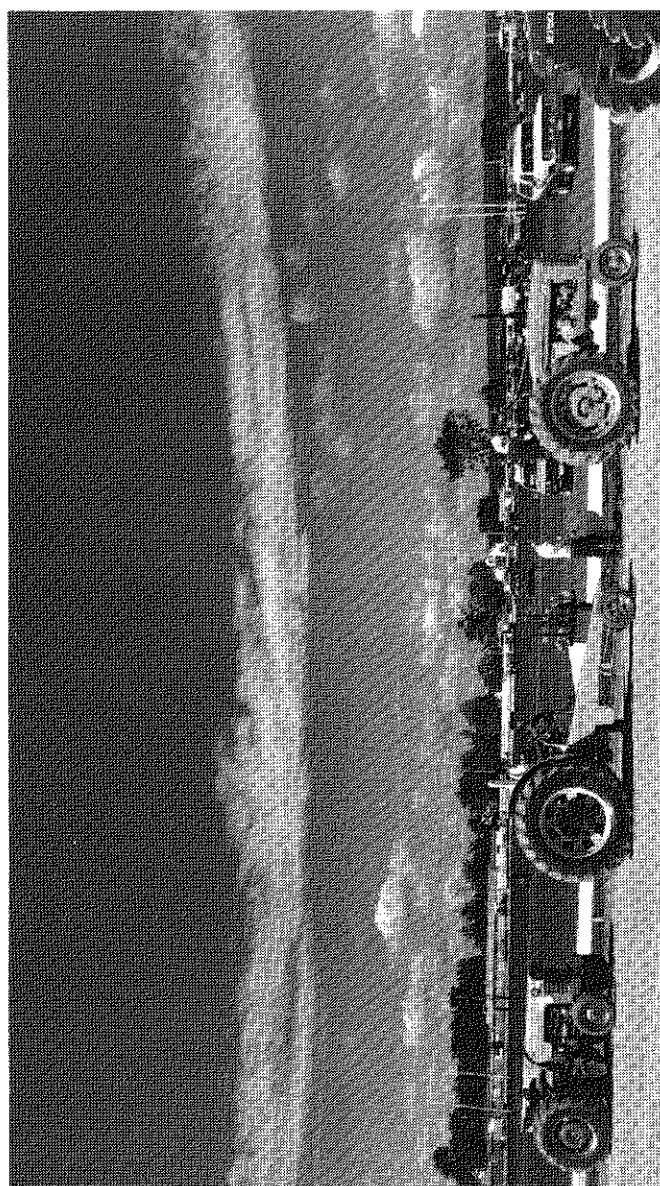
IDENTITY AND CULTURE

The process of building a sense of national identity is slow and uncertain. Its success depends on the ability of a nation to maintain a vibrant popular culture which furthers the development of a sense of place and fosters the evolution of those myths and images which are at the base of the identity, loyalty, and nationhood of all nation states.

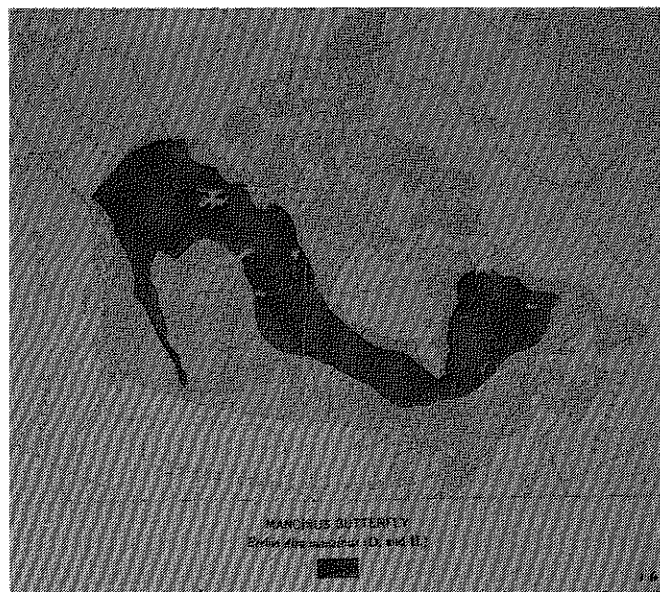
This has not been lost upon the guardians of Canadian culture. The role of popular culture as a vehicle for the dissemination of attitudes, values, and images which all contribute to the building of a Canadian identity, was clearly acknowledged in 1968 when the Federal government moved (once again) to obtain control of the broadcasting media. Under the terms of the 1968 Broadcasting Act it was stated that 'the Canadian broadcasting system (public and private) should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians so as to safeguard, enrich, and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada.'¹

This act established the Canadian Radio-Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) as an agency to monitor and regulate the amount of non-Canadian material broadcast by any Canadian radio or television station. Power to regulate the amount of non-Canadian material was bestowed through the control of licences to broadcast. Since 1970 the CRTC has insisted that granting of new, or renewal of existing, licences be tied to the attainment of Canadian content goals which it has established. In 1971, when the rules were last revised, the Canadian content requirement for AM radio stations was fixed at 30 percent of all broadcast material; for FM stations, each of which is treated separately, the percentage may be higher.² At present these regulations are under review and may be revised upwards.

To reduce the impact of American generated material and to increase the propagation of material originating in Canada, the CRTC required that 30 percent of all recorded music broadcast by AM radio stations meet the definition of 'Canadian' by satisfying any two of four criteria: a) the instrumentation or lyrics were principally performed by a Canadian; b) the music was composed by a Canadian; c) the lyrics were written by a Canadian; d) the live



AS CANADIAN AS POSSIBLE... UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES



REGIONAL MYTHS, IMAGES OF PLACE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CANADIAN COUNTRY MUSIC

performance was wholly recorded in Canada or broadcast live in Canada. It also required that either the music or lyrics of at least five percent of the music broadcast by a station between 6:00 am and midnight be composed by a Canadian.³

To ensure compliance, the CRTC requires that every station must furnish broadcast logs and tapes which it spot-checks for infringements of its content rules.⁶

Canadian content regulations in the broadcasting media are frequently justified on economic grounds. It is claimed that these requirements ensure that Canadians in the entertainment industry would be assured of exposure to the Canadian market. There would thus be a direct employment benefit plus incalculable spin-off benefits for Canadians at all levels: singers, musicians, songwriters, recording technicians, and recording studios. Nevertheless, it is abundantly clear that the CRTC was also motivated by a concern to nurture a fledgling Canadian culture. In 1970, Pierre Juneau, Chairman of the CRTC, asserted that:

Our mandate and our purpose is to ensure that Canadian broadcasting develops as a system for us to communicate with one another about our problems and the problems of the world; about our ideas and our views of the world; about our past and our hopes for the future, about our environment, about the quality of our lives, about our role in this area of the universe... There should be wide and free expression through song and drama... of our feelings of our joys and sorrows, of our worries, and our enthusiasms, of our angers and our generousities, of our hopes and our dreams.³

The aim was to further national identity, and as Alan W. Johnson, then president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, clearly thought, to erect a cultural barrier to hold back the waves of material spawned in the United States which reflect and propagate the values, images, and myths of American society:

We are in a fight for our soul, for our cultural heritage and for our nationhood. Without a culture there is no political survival and we are not a nation. It is impossible to calculate, or even describe, the devastating, cumulative effects of the self-invited cultural invasion of Canada by American(s)... We simply are different from Americans in our history, traditions, institutions and values... The timeless objective of surviving has been given a new imperative by the sudden awakening of the contemporary version of our Canadian crises of identity and nationhood.⁴

COUNTRY MUSIC

If there is one genre of popular culture which stands to be influenced by the Canadian content regulations it is that of country music. Modern commercial country music is a popular cultural form which has strong folk antecedents and distinctive regional origins and associations. Its lyrical content is rich in environmental, social, and spatial images; and, unlike many other popular musical styles, lyrics are important in country music. They serve more than to accompany the melody; they are the focus of attention in the vast majority of all country songs. In the same way that the true

folk (traditional) music of times past offers insights into the social and environmental attitudes of the common non-literate folk from whence they sprang, modern commercial country music through its lyrics similarly reflects the *Weltanschauung* of the functionally, but not actively, literate ordinary people of our present society.⁷

If the proliferation of country music stations and their estimated market share of the listening audience is any guide, country music is now an extremely popular musical form throughout Canada. According to the Country Music Association's 1982 figures there are now 147 radio stations broadcasting country music in Canada, 41 of them on a full-time basis.⁸ Over the past decade the audience for country music has expanded, partly as a result of demographic factors, since it tends to appeal to a more mature (25-55) population, and partly as a result of the erosion of the image of country music as the preserve of rednecks and country simpletons. All of this makes country music a potent agent for the reflection of the regional images and myths with which it is so frequently concerned. It is a powerful medium for the creation, dissemination and popularization of images of places, geographical stereotypes and regional myths. For, as Aida Pavletich has noted, song carries a message and it influences the thoughts of people far more than many are prepared to acknowledge: 'Songs may express a chic mentality of what people believe they are supposed to think. Song expresses also what people feel, which

The lyrical imagery of the broadcast material was centred strongly in the south of the United States, principally in the states of the Confederacy. References to 'the South', 'Dixie', the Appalachians, and the Ozarks were common and uniformly positive. Individual states were frequently identified by name and were attributed specific characteristics; Texas emerged as a kind of easy-going macho utopia; Tennessee was depicted as the guardian of the basic values of rural North America, a place of poverty maybe, but rescued by adherence to family and kinship; a place of tightly-knit rural communities, well-established social order, and serenity:

**In my Tennessee mountain home
Life is as peaceful as a baby's sigh¹⁰**

Kentucky, West Virginia, Louisiana and, to a lesser extent, Georgia, Alabama, and Oklahoma, all served as spatial metaphors for home, family, stability, and known trusted values. In all cases their images were strong and complex. Despite the stress on family, security, and order, there was a counterbalancing distrust of the official manifestation of the administration of the law clearly shown by the open expression of approval of the manufacturing of illicit liquor, the flouting of excise regulations, and of other perceived unwarranted intrusions into personal freedom.

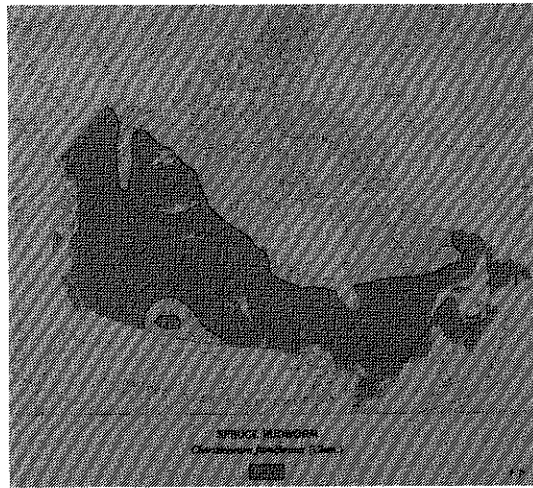
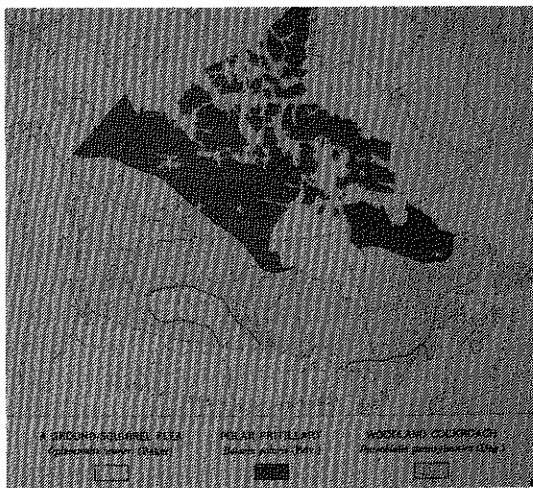
If the southern states were the sacred world, the northeastern industrial states were the profane. Portrayed as cold, in both the environmental and social senses, the northern

fact that at least 30 percent, and nearly 40 percent in the sample, of this material is considered to be 'Canadian content' and, as such, should reflect our view of Canada and ourselves. However, a consideration of the view of North America using only Canadian content material reveals that the basic structure of the mythology is little different. The same regions predominate, as attention is still focussed south of the border. Canadian content material accounts for practically all the references to Canadian places. Nevertheless, the balance is weighted strongly in favour of imagery drawn from the entrenched mythology of the regions and towns of the United States.

CANADIAN CONTENT AND PLACE IMAGERY

This preponderance of imagery centred in the United States found within Canadian material is caused partly by the structure of the CRTC regulations, partly by the origins of country music, and by the existence of a body of entrenched images basic to country music songwriting.

Since the CRTC's definition of Canadian content may be met by having a song with non-Canadian music and lyrics recorded in a Canadian studio by a Canadian singer it is quite possible for lyrics promoting strong images of the United States to be classified as Canadian. The case of 'When I Die Just Let Me Go to Texas' by Ed Bruce, Bobby Borchers and Patsy Bruce,



may differ from what they may admit to thinking.⁹ Furthermore, music, even without words, has the power to create, or to capture, a sense of place and to bestow special attributes to otherwise unremarkable places.

IMAGES IN COUNTRY MUSIC RADIO BROADCASTS

To assess the effect that the CRTC's Canadian content regulations have had upon the spectra of geographical images and settings referred to in the lyrics of country songs broadcast in Canada, I randomly sampled 24 hours of music broadcast by two Manitoba country music stations—CKRC 630 in Winnipeg and CFRY 920 in Portage la Prairie—over an eleven-month period from June 1981 through April 1982. Each record played was analyzed as to its Canadian content, lyrical content, references to places, environmental inferences, and action settings.

The material broadcast by the two stations differed in style, since CKRC is oriented towards the urban 'contemporary country' market and CFRY directed towards the rural 'traditional country' market. For both stations about 40 percent of all material met the CRTC's definition of Canadian.

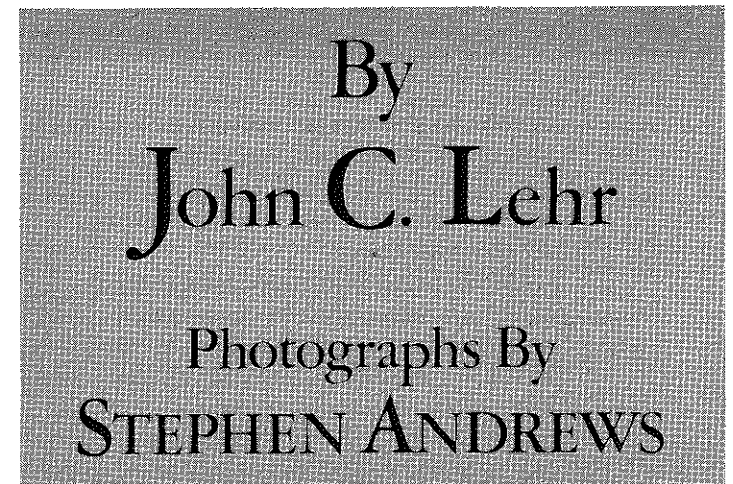
states were depicted as a Scylla and Charybdis for the migrant southerner:

**I've always heard a lot about the Big Apple
So I thought that I would come up here
and see
But all I've seen so far is one big hassle...¹¹**

California occupied an ambivalent position in country music imagery. On the one hand it was portrayed as the promised land of ease, wealth, and sunshine, whereas on the other it was the home of Hollywood, regarded as a latter-day Sodom, and used as a metaphor for shallow pretention and ostentation, the embodiment of all those values antithetical to the hard-working, unpretentious and self-effacing country folk of Tennessee.

From the sample material it became evident that country music reflected and perpetuated regional images and myths. In certain cases the regional images were sufficiently strong to function as surrogates for value statements: New York—profane; Tennessee—sacred; and the equally common country—sacred and city—profane dichotomy, the spatial embodiment of the prostitute-madonna syndrome so common in the portrayal of women in country music.¹²

There is thus a strong vision of North America purveyed to at least 20 percent of those Manitobans who listen to the radio. It is a distinctive set of geographical images which influence the way in which North American regions, cities, and towns are perceived by those who are exposed to country music radio broadcasts in Canada. It is a view distorted to some extent, it must be remembered, by the



is an excellent example. This song, recorded by American country-rock singer Tanya Tucker, enjoyed considerable popularity in the early 1980s. A 'cover-version' of this by the Canadian singer Tracy Lynn, produced in a Canadian recording studio in 1981, met the CRTC Canadian criteria and thus when broadcast was listed as Canadian. While the subsequent broadcasting of this version of this song no doubt contributed to the sale of Canadian manufactured records it is questionable whether Canadian self-images were much advanced:

**When I die, I may not go to heaven
I don't know if they let cowboys in
If they don't, just let me go to Texas
Texas is as close as I've been.¹³**

It seems evident that the promotion of distinctive images of Canada will come from Canadian writers and not from Canadian singers who rely upon American material. In this regard it is also evident that the structure of the Canadian content regulations as are presently in force cannot prevent the promotion of material with a cultural impact inimical to the philosophy of cultural nationalism espoused by the government from whence the CRTC derives its mandate.

MARKET FORCES

One of the realities facing the Canadian government in its attempts to influence the type and content of material broadcast within its borders is that a large proportion of the material from which Canadian recording artists may draw emanates from the United States. In country music the situation is exacerbated by two factors: the strong influence of a few powerful record producers who determine what is marketable and hence, by controlling access to the mass market; and the strong regional dominance in country music writers and performers. The latter prefer to deal with their subject in terms and in images



familiar to themselves and the bulk of their potential audience, and the producers, with an eye to market potential, tend to select songs with appeal to the mass country music market in the United States.¹⁴

Identification with place can be an important aspect of the success of a country music song, or any song, for that matter. In the early 1970s, for example, a Canadian country musician, Rick Neufeld, composed 'Moody Manitoba Morning'. He was pressed to change the title to 'Moody Minnesota Morning' to guarantee easy acceptance in the US market.¹⁵ To his credit he did not do so, but although his song enjoyed success in Canada it did not become popular south of the border. Neufeld missed the chance to earn thousands of dollars. The importance of place identification in market acceptance is also well-illustrated by the rewriting of the now standard 'I've Been Everywhere', popularized by Hank Snow. Written by an Australian, it celebrated Australian places; for the American market the lyrics were reworked to centre upon North American place names.

Concern for market acceptance and the financial rewards which attend popularity in the United States market thus acts against a Canadian writer employing Canadian images in song lyrics. Certainly the CRTC Canadian content regulations do not address the problem and the CRTC presumably rests content that unimaginative lyricists should promote an imported mythology lauding Texas and Tennessee.

PLACE IMAGERY AND CANADIAN WRITERS

Despite this failure of the CRTC regulations to actively promote the building of a Canadian identity of place, in the lyrical content of Canadian country music over the past decade there has been a strong sense of regional and national identity emerging in the work of some of Canada's most talented songwriters. Most notable are Ray Griff and Ian Tyson.

Griff, a former Albertan now living in Nashville, consistently celebrates Canada, Alberta, and his native town of Winfield in Alberta, in his compositions. His 'Canadian Pacific', which has been recorded by many established country music artists, centres on a three thousand mile journey from the Maritimes to Vancouver and democratically mentions each Canadian province. But though Griff's work is avowedly Canadian it lacks the powerful imagery of the songs of Ian Tyson, who, in his music, deals extensively, but not exclusively, with Canadian imagery.

Tyson has a rare feeling for sense of place and an unusual ability to evoke strong images of the settings he selects for his songs. In his earlier work 'Four Strong Winds' he wrote the first popular song which captured the vastness

and melancholy of the Canadian West. He later gave a graphic and emotionally-charged depiction of Vancouver, British Columbia, in 'Summer Wages', a song which reveals a deep understanding of the way in which physical and social attributes combine to create a unique geographical ambience:

**In all the beer parlours all down
along Main Street,
The dreams of the seasons are all spilled
down on the floor,
Of the big stands of timber, just waiting
for the fallin'
And the hookers standing watchfully
waiting by the door,
So I'll work on the tow boats with
my slippery city shoes,
Which I swore, I would never do again,
Through the grey fog-bound straits
Where the cedars stand watchin'
I'll be far off and gone, like
summer wages.¹⁶**

More recently Tyson has focussed upon the grasslands of the great basin and the Rocky Mountain foothills, seeking images of ranching life from Alberta to Texas. A product of this was what many consider to be the quintessential rodeo song, 'Someday Soon', and others which are less well-known but equally effective in their use of strong direct spatial imagery.

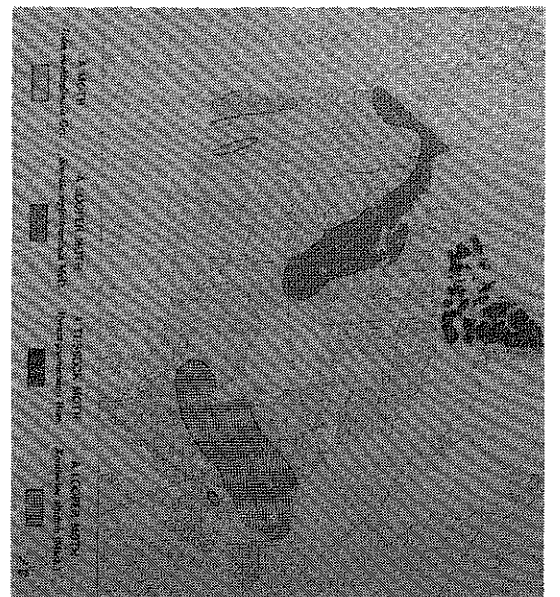
The natural lines of communication in North America run north-south, not east-west. Tyson's music reflects this, for it stresses the natural geographic linkages between Western Canada and the states of the Western Interior of the United States. The international boundary is artificial; politically significant, but irrelevant on a socio-cultural level. The West, to Tyson, is a region; within it are variations of climate and behaviour, but it retains a strong regional integrity:

**Well, them of' boys down in Texas
chew Copenhagen
Wash it all down with that Coors
Ain't a bit bashful about speakin'
their minds
They'll tell you what's theirs and
what's yours
There's Waylon and there's Willie,
they own about half the state
And sing of her glories all in song...**

**Well up north it's saddle broncs and
its hockey and honky tonks
Old Wilf Carter 78s
Dumb stuff like chores when it's 20 below
They're the things a
country boy hates...¹⁷**

Here Tyson is formulating a distinctive Canadian approach to regional imagery in writing music. The Nashville approach is to emphasize the north-south, industrial-rural regional model which fits the poor southern white migratory experience. This is inappropriate for Canada since the geographical relationships differ. In Canada real regional contrasts are intra-national—east-west—not international—north-south.

Furthermore, the direction and form of the migratory experience basic to country music



differs markedly between Canada and the United States. The model celebrated by United States' country music lyrics is that of the poor white rural southerner seeking economic benefits by migrating to the urban-industrial complexes of the northeastern states. In Canada the rural urban drift has been less focussed in a spatial sense. The recent migratory movements of the 1970s, spawned by the growth of the hydrocarbon industries in Alberta and Saskatchewan, saw a movement from the urban areas of central Canada and the small towns of the Maritimes to the resource frontiers of the West. For many of those involved this entailed leaving a major metropolitan centre such as Toronto, Ontario, and moving to a smaller urban centre such as Edmonton, or to the resource towns of the Rocky Mountain foothills, to the Peace River district, or to the boreal margins. The migration path was east to west and principally urban to urban, although the movement can also be seen as one from the metropolitan heartland to the provinces of the largely rural hinterland.

All of this is succinctly expressed by Tyson, who identifies the major components of this migration, creates new metaphors to convey its dynamism and social character, and builds towards the establishment of a regional myth of Alberta as wide open rural ranching frontier. Like all good country music images Tyson's image of Alberta is highly selective, with a blurred division of reality and fiction:

**It's wall to wall pickups in the parkin'
lot tonight
That 'Oh thank god it's Friday'
feelin's here
They got a line-up at the back door,
they got three deep at the bar
Just knockin' back the shooters and
drinkin' beer.
So gas up your old Chevrolet and
head'er way out west
To the land of golden opportunity
You'll get a first-hand education of how
the cowboy rocks and rolls
With that old Alberta Moon thrown
in for free¹⁸**

Not only is the feeling of rural small town Alberta captured but, with startling economy of words, the major socio-geographical regional differences between Ontario and Alberta are portrayed by the use of simple socio-spatial imagery. The implication is that Toronto is the urbane metropolitan centre but that Alberta maintains a sense of adventure and freedom:

**Toronto may be Rhythm and Blues, but
if you migrate here
You'll be howlin' at that
Old Alberta Moon.**¹⁹

Put more simply, the image is Alberta—sacred, Toronto—profane.

THE CRTC

Canadians have similarly made considerable contributions to the evolution of the imagery of country music in the United States, where they have been instrumental in fabricating some of the most enduring regional myths perpetuated through the genre. The image of the US southwest, for example, results partly from evocative country songs such as 'Tumbling Tumbleweeds' and 'Cool Water', both regarded by many as the definitive western songs, and both written by Bob Nolan, a Canadian from New Brunswick. Canadians are equally capable of creating similarly powerful and lasting images for their own country. Indeed, a brief presented to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee in 1981 by the (Canadian) Academy of Country Music entertainment argued that there is no shortage of Canadian-oriented country music written, performed, and recorded by Canadians.²⁰ Yet if the sample of broadcast material examined in this study is at all representative, there is not yet a distinctive Canadian exchange of images, analogies and metaphor being broadcast on the airwaves of Canadian radio stations, despite their adherence to the Canadian content rules of the CRTC. Clearly these regulations are ineffective in controlling the substance of the material broadcast within the nation. If, as Alan Johnson claimed, 'we are in a fight for our soul, for our cultural heritage, and for our nationhood,' the CRTC is fighting the wrong enemy with the wrong weapons.²¹

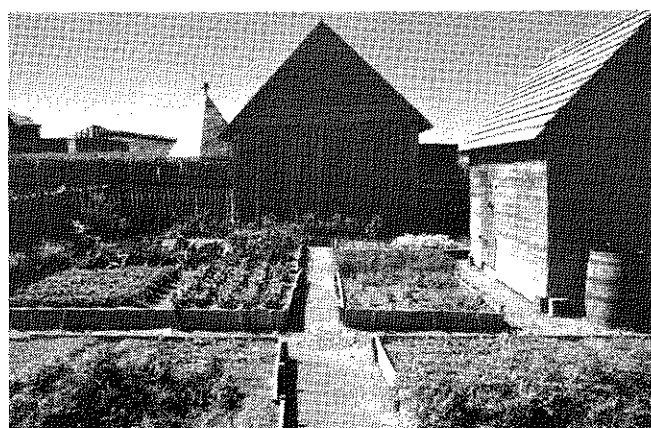
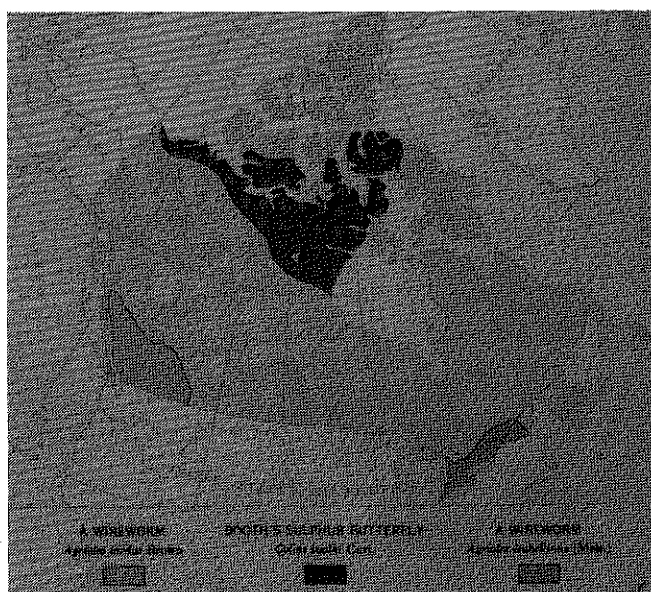
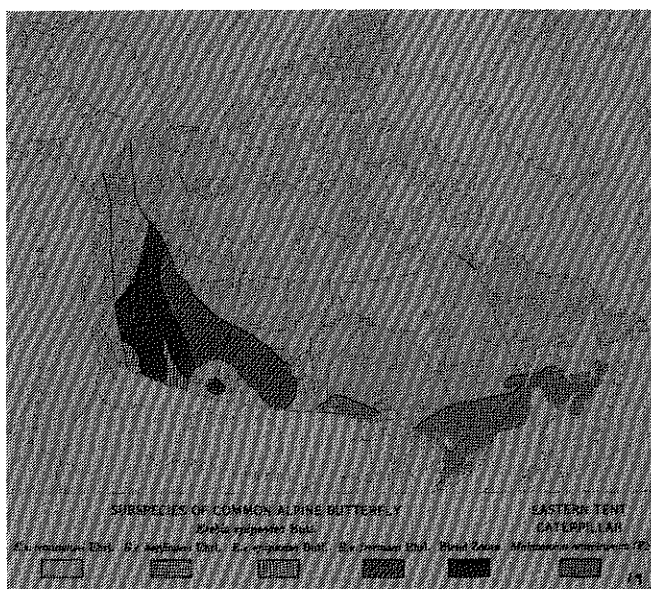
The CRTC does not appear to be concerned about the neglect of Canada as a setting for country music lyrics, yet many Canadian songwriters do have misgivings. In an oral presentation to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, the Academy of Country Music Entertainment let Canadian songwriter Wayne Rostad put their case for them:

We must look in our own backyards; we must not be afraid to name our cities, our towns, our people. We have to stop writing for that American hook, stop prostituting the art form, or the realism. In our own backyard there is a wealth of stories and happenings to tell (of) that will contribute our own unique (identity) to country music.²²

Market demands may argue against Rostad's exhortation. Commercial radio program directors are interested in selling air time to clients who wish to advertise a product or a service. Advertisers, in turn, demand a large audience which has specific demographic characteristics, a demand which has a major impact on the nature and content of music that is played. Ryand and Peterson have argued that a pursuit of a wider listening audience has led to changes in the nature of country music imagery, concluding that 'the interests of Proctor and Gamble, Burger King, and the local drugstore impinge directly upon the aesthetics of country music.'²³

In this Achilles heel lies the real opportunity of the CRTC to effectively promote a sense of nationhood within the country music field in Canada. Since programmers may be wary of songs with metaphors and images that are new and unfamiliar to their listening audience, and

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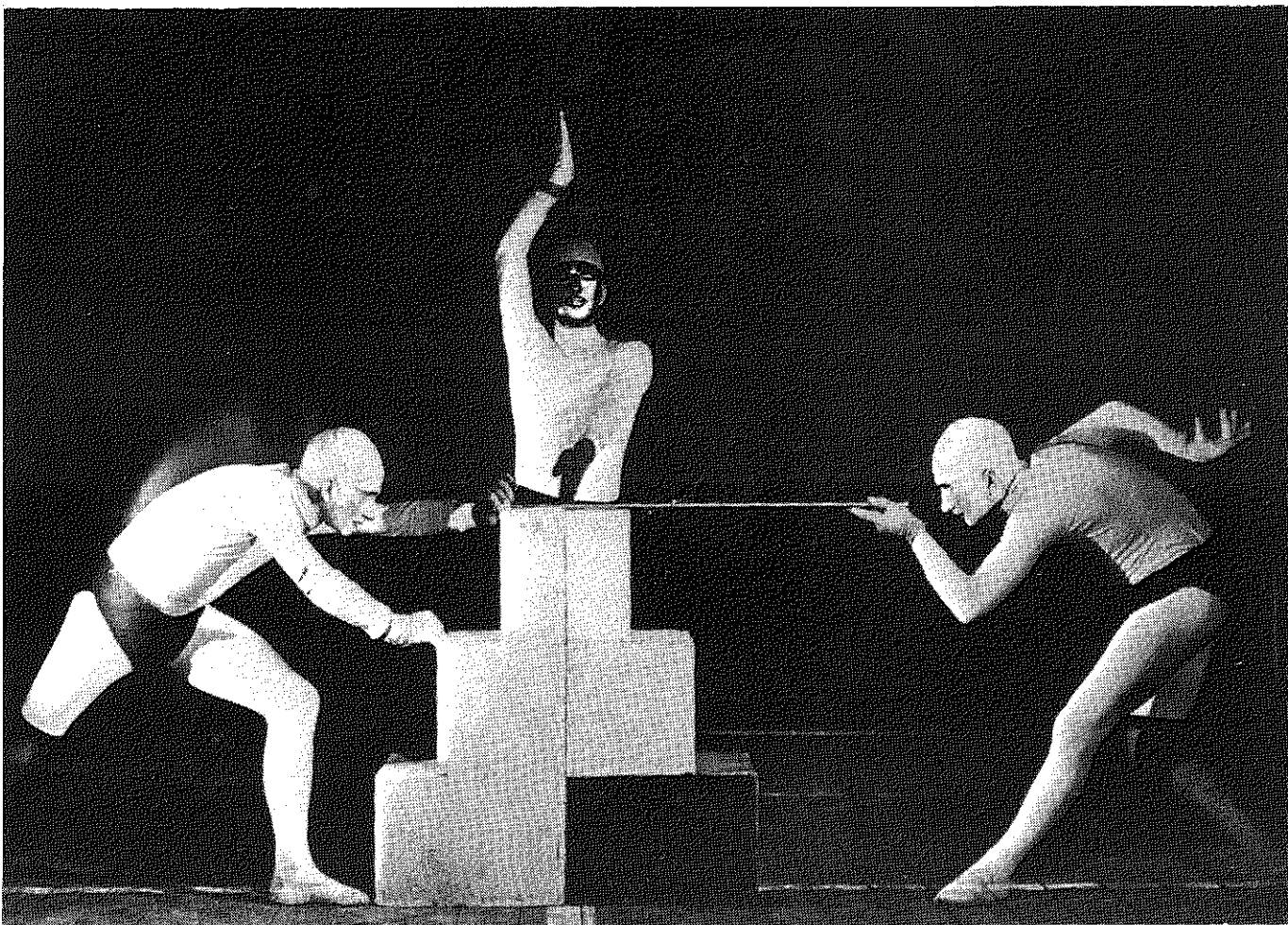
hence may prefer to rely upon formulaic repetition of old familiar images derived from south of the border, Canadian writers may feel pressed to deal in such images, knowing that market acceptance of their material is thereby enhanced. A rewording of the Canadian content criteria to acknowledge the significance of lyrical material treating a subject in Canadian terms might begin to counter this tendency and encourage the broadcasting of material by Canadian writers such as Tyson, Griff, and Rostad.

Until Canadian country music songwriters feel able to draw with equal facility for their images, analogies, and metaphors from within Canada as well as from the geographical mythology of the United States, they can do little to further the cause of Canadian identity. In the meantime, Canadian country music will simply have to remain as Canadian as possible...under the circumstances.

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John C. Lehr is an associate professor in the department of geography at the University of Winnipeg. His interests focus on cultural geography, especially those elements of the cultural landscape which contribute to the creation of a sense of place and help to build a regional or national consciousness. He also enjoys good country music!



The following is an excerpt from an interview with Steve McCaffery which will appear in a forthcoming issue of the Vancouver journal *LINE*. Much of the discussion focuses on a group of writers who were publishing in a magazine called *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* during the late 70s/early 80s. While these writers form a very heterogeneous group, they have shared for the most part an interest in the question of reference, of reference seen not merely as an aesthetic concern, but as a political one as well. In their essay 'Repossessing the Word', *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* editors Charles Bernstein and Bruce Andrews characterize this concern in the following way:

One major preoccupation of *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* has therefore been to generate discussion on the relation of writing to politics, particularly to articulate some of the ways that writing can act to critique society. Ron Silliman's early essay, 'Disappearance of the WORD/Appearance of the World', applies the notion of commodity fetishism to conventional descriptive and narrative forms of writing: where the word—words—cease to be valued for what they are themselves but only for their properties as instrumentalities leading us to a world outside or beyond them, so that words—language—disappear, become transparent, leaving the picture of a physical world the reader can then consume as if it were a commodity. This view of the role and historical functions of literature relates closely to our analysis of the capitalist social order as a whole and of the place that alternative forms of writing and reading might occupy in its transformation.

This concern with reference led these writers to an active engagement with both the corpus of late American literary modernism (Charles Olson, Louis Zukofsky, John Cage, Jackson MacLow) and with a number of French theorists writing in the wake of Althusser (Jacques Derrida, Philippe Sollers, Gilles Deleuze).

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E produced fourteen issues (not including two supplements, Volumes 1 and 3) the last of which appeared as a special issue of *Open Letter* (Winter 1982). More recently, Southern Illinois University Press produced an anthology called *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*. A forthcoming issue of *LINE* will also be publishing correspondence between several of these writers.

borderlines would like to thank both Steve McCaffery and Roy Miki for permission to print this excerpt.

Andrew Payne

Nothing is forgotten But the talk of how to talk

Steve McCaffery

Andrew Payne: Steve, about the *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* Group. I wonder if we might raise a question as to the sociology, or at least the sociality, of the production of literary (or language) works; a question of audience, of an intended political effect. I wonder if certain of these works don't evince a certain nostalgic desire for a situation beyond the sociosymbolic contract; a desire to establish themselves as what Kristeva would call a 'semi-aphonic corporality whose truth can only be found in that which is gestural or tonal'?

Steve McCaffery: I think it imperative not to institute a model exterior to the evidence of the texts themselves and what I've stressed throughout is an intense heterogeneity among the so-called *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* writers, a heterogeneity that possibly reflects the current 'Philosophy of Difference' (emerging on both sides of the Atlantic) and which Foucault announced in his introduction to Deleuze's and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* back in 1972.¹ Its theoretical and methodological thrust can be traced back to the pioneer deconstructions of Nietzsche and Marx (the latter of whose status as a 'deconstructionist' albeit limited and with strict reservations would nevertheless make the subject of a wonderful interview!), to the concerted demythologizing of numerous concepts to show their covert and irreducible basis in figuration.

The early works of Silliman, Andrews, Bernstein, and myself were overtly political and the Politics of the Referent issue of *Open Letter* (1977) still stands as a diverse position paper on our work and conclusions up to the middle of the seventies. The political thrust there was quite clear: towards a foregrounding of the reader-writer relationship as both a diachronic (hence changeable) relationship and as a fundamentally socio-political configuration. From this we worked by way of analogy and homology towards an exposure of fetishism and an operation within the domain of representation and reference and we attempted to return the scene of readership to the realm of semantic production. (How can we involve the reader in the making of meaning?)

In hindsight, I can admit to certain naiveties in that approach. This writing was all produced before any of us had discovered Baudrillard's seminal work *The Mirror of Production*² which challenged with an incontrovertible conviction the subliminal valorization of production and use value as a privileged positional opposition to consumption and exchange. In the light of the Baudrillardian 'proof' that use value is but a concealed species of exchange value, I would say now that the gestural 'offer' to a reader of an invitation to 'semantically produce' hints at an ideological contamination. I've also come to feel that the majesty of *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* texts yield great rewards from a double reading, that firstly announces them as a political gesture within the literary text, offering this inward sited-ness as a linguistic analogy to the political, which in itself matures as a statement somehow 'across' a distance; and secondly, from a reading that indicates their status, not as forms or structures, but as operative economies. Here, the notion of expenditure, loss, the sum total of effects of a general economized nature, would emerge to relativize the more 'positive' utilitarian ordered reading.

I would deny throughout, however, the appeal to a 'semi-aphonic corporality' or of any kind of nostalgic return to a pre-socio-symbolic matrix. If any area of recent text production is susceptible to such criticism I would say it is that variant strain of sound poetry that anchors itself in performance, supports the relegated status of the written text as an inert, secondary figuration of the 'breathed instant', and which draws as its ideological defence a certain strain of 19th century vitalism that persisted through dadaism and futurism up to the early work of The Horsemen and Owen Sound.

Among *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* writers there was a common feeling that the return of 'meaning' as a post-philosophic operation within the activity of discourse to a productive rather than consumptional zone of action, entailed a political gesture of the deepest and most contemporaneous urgency; that it effected a diachronic change in the reader-writer relationship (which, as a change per se, seemed to entail a political assertion of both roles being history specific) which opened up the possibility (appealing at the time and still appealing to many) of a rehumanization of the linguistic sign.

As to your point regarding a resistance to the symbolic. At no point do I feel that this has occurred or is occurring. What is resisted is the integrated, syllogistic momentum of the sym-

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bolic when that momentum is reinvested into compound meaning(s). And even further, the resistance restrains at the philosophic (metaphysical) notion of an unmediated, transparent connection with 'reality' at the other side of language. This, more than anything, has been the philosophical restriction upon language for thousands of years and whose complicity with the capitalist mode of production is evident in countless philosophic texts from Plato through Descartes to Searle and Austin. So the presence of a Politics of Discourse is everywhere present in L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing as a text-by-implication.

But what emerges strikingly in the work of Silliman, Bernstein and Andrews among several others is not the Politics of Discourse but politics as discourse. If there is to be a rhetorical imposition on all of this, it is to effect a political implication and not imply a political effect. As regards Kristeva's mention of truth in the citation, I would stress that the intention of contemporary writing must always be towards an utter dismantling of the notion of TRUTH as anything exterior to the signifying practice, and to suggest by this that truth is not the destination of a referential function in language, but a writing production, a writing effect per se.

To a certain extent we've already raised the problem with Cage and MacLow, of a fetishization of chance, of what we might speak of as a valorization of process, a writing understood as being without subject, memory, history... is this not, in a certain way, the same problem we encounter in Olson, or at least a particular reading of Olson, one which concentrates on, say, his objection to Milton's 'disregard' of syllabic quantity, or in his discussion of the sentence as the subordination of the individual signifying unit (word/syllable) to an abstract structuring? (This is, for instance, the general tenor of an essay that Don Byrd wrote for L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E³) It seems to me that this whole question of prosody/syntax needs to be thought more carefully, that what gets referred to as hierarchization imposed by grammar, the sentence, etc. ought not to be understood as some imposition alienating the word or syllable from the univocity of its appearance in the mouth or on the page through a process of abstraction, attribution of exchange value, whatever (and here what's being appealed to is, I think, a notion of syllable as a kind of pure idiom, an indissolubility of form/content), it seems to me that what goes unrecognized in this is the internality of 'coding' to the signifying 'instant', an internality which is responsible for the heterogeneity of that 'instant', the impossibility of its ever being present to itself.

Nor could this valorization of process be distinguished from a certain strain of American transcendentalism (from Whitman, Pound, right through to say Cage or Ammons). Here, the subject is understood as attaining to an absolute integrity, an identity of body/consciousness in each of its signifying instants.

The subject of history (its dictates and its availability to the act of writing) is a complex one with Olson. There is first that obvious sense of history at work in his poems, of history as 'fact', as document, to be worked with and turned over. This gives you the strong Comteian, strong positivist strain in his work. Document, in Olson (and perhaps more so in

Pound) operates as a kind of syllable, a unit of unmediated plenitude, reconnecting with a displaced present. This is decidedly not history in the way that Gibbons, Hegel and Marx are history. Olsonian history, this documentary-syllabic history traces back to Herodotus, the most notoriously 'unreliable' of Greek historians, whose sense of history was the transcription of 'hearsay'. Olson's attraction to Herodotus is an attraction to that same mechanism that Derrida exposes in Plato: metaphysics' appeal to a double standard of writing, to the lower, debased, materialist sense of marks on a page, which (in Plato) was submitted to a metaphoristic *aufhebung* that recast it as a 'purist' writing of truth's marks in the 'soul' and 'heart'.

Herodotian history is history that aligns itself 'innocently' with speech. I would say, in

I would stress that the intention of contemporary writing must always be towards an utter dismantling of the notion of TRUTH as anything exterior to the signifying practice

fact, aligns itself identically with the syllable, as a species of Plato's metaphoric 'writing'. But history's other presence, should I say, the other history's presence, is experienced through those grammatological notions of space, gap, deferral and trace structure. And this history locates in writing's debased profile, within the graphesis of its temporality and spacing. This space is the radical other to the syllable; it constitutes history's blank side, history's mutism, and precisely because it resists any logocentric appropriation.

Olson's affinities with certain theoreticians of German Romanticism has so far gone unregarded, but the following brief passage from Frederick Von Schelegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Language could have prefaced any anthology of projective verse:

Properly syllables, and not letters, form the basis of language. They are its living roots, or chief stem and trunk, out of which all else shoots and grows. The letters, in fact, have no existence, except as the results of a minute analysis; for many of them are difficult, if not impossible, to pronounce. Syllables, on the contrary, more or less simple, or the complex composites of more or fewer, are the primary and original data of language. For the synthetical is in every case anterior to the elements into which it admits of resolution. The letters, therefore, first arise out of the chemical decomposition of the syllables.⁵

We will trace this organicist metaphor, this appeal to aborescent analogues through Hamann, Herder, Humboldt down to Olson's 'dance of the intellect' and 'the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE/the HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE'. There are rich deconstructive pickings here in this particular style of reasoning which involves, as its underlying matrix of assumption, the privileging of all anteriority as a positive value and a binding of various satellitic terms and notions to this matrix: syllable-synthesis-origin-cause = speech-breath-presence-immediate-being-as-truth; set in opposition to the compound matrix of writing: letter-analysis-posteriority-mediation-imprint-corpse-as-death.

We would not wish to deny the intense and revolutionary polyphony of *The Maximus Poems* (Olson) nor *The Cantos* (Pound). But what needs address in these great works is the radical blind spot around the issue of vocalization per se, a primary absence of rigour at the

conceptual collision of text and voice. Behind his *Essay of Projective Verse* and the letter to Elaine Feinstein⁶ is a sense of something as still being exchangeable in nature. Something is transmitted and received, and writing's 'negative' relation to outlay and death is never admitted nor received. Olson seems oblivious to writing as a fundamental trace structure in which each 'syllabic instant' must always be a breached presence. For the presence that writing institutes is always a presence that announces an irreducible absence within the very system of the sign. This is the crux of representation and its current historical obliteration, that whenever a term (X) stands for (or represents) another term (Y), then neither term can be present. X is always standing for something else and so is never there, whilst Y, in being stood for, is always delayed, postponed and deferred from being there. After *Of Grammatology*⁷ (of which the above is an absurdly simplistic reduction) this irreducibility of the space, the gap, the breach, assumes a far more fundamental status than any pure idiom of the syllable.

STEVE

McCAFFERY

By Andrew Payne

as plurality will haunt, repeat and delete simultaneously the numerous eschatographies that inhabit and (at this historic moment) describe the act of writing as thanatopraxis. Against the post-modern valorization of pro-

The deepest implication in Freud, and the one which Lacan has best elucidated, is the radically textual nature of the psyche. We both inhabit and inhibit an unconscious that is structured as a language

To return to your earlier remark regarding a fetishization of chance, perhaps we can say that here the subject would master the other, master chance, by its very availability to contingency ('For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you', etc.). Hence, an ideology of **openness**, a failure to recognize the internality of death to the economy of production. I would want to hesitate then, before conceding to any simple characterization of narrative as surplus investment. (This refers to a remark made elsewhere in conversation.) In a way, yes. But then what else?

You've spoken elsewhere of two of your own works: **Panopticon** and **An Effect of Cellophane** as reinvestigations of both the sentence and of narrative. You've also made the comparison with Philippe Sollers whose novels Kristeva refers to as 'a listening to the time of Christianity'. I wonder if we are not still dealing with an Augustinian subject, a subject of 'memory'/subject of 'science' bifurcation... something analogous I think to the Freudian distinction between 'truth-work' and 'knowledge language'. So the subject of 'memory' (I who I am insofar as I have accomplished heterogeneity... I who am my Father in me, my true self) this impossible subject, this subject as eschatological object, at once organizes the order of the symbolic, of science, and at the same time produces it as an incessant rupturing. This subject, which is about a relation to Death, to Law, this subject is still in a way a subject of 'castration', of 'aufgehoben'... surplus investment?... maybe... let us say a necessary coextensivity of desire and its repression. Which is perhaps what Lyotard is getting at when he says 'the death instinct is the reason why machines can only work by fits and starts' and 'the "Ah, not to have been born"... is not merely admissible, it is a necessary component of desire...' or Kenneth Burke, more succinctly, in his misquotation of Keats: 'Beauty is turd, turd Beauty'.

The deepest implication in Freud, and the one which Lacan has best elucidated, is the radically textual nature of the psyche. We both inhabit and inhibit an unconscious that is structured as a language. This projected emergence of a post-Freudian 'textual' subject seems to be of critical importance. It puts the very notion of a 'subject' in doubt and, at best, poses that subject on the ruined concept of a Self. The latter being no longer tenable as a unitary whole, nor even as a memory/science bifurcation, I think we best look for a viable notion of subject in something like Kristeva's notion of a subject-in-process within an instinctual and symbolic economy. Part bound, part articulated by a verbal order (the self of the proper name, the name of the Father in the Son) and yet incessantly striated and (as you aptly put it) ruptured by instinctual drives that surge through the linguistic order and are felt in (but never identified as) rhythm, intonation, this Subject

cess it would offer the notion of a *complete dispensibility of procedures*. The subject in process is not to be identified then with the text as process. In the death of Modernism via Olson there has been a murder denied.

And to finally revert this to the sexual. Let us remember that the high priest of the syllable makes no mention of the woman in *The Maximus Poems*:

Being of language? It even calls on me to represent it. 'I' continually makes itself over again, reposit itself as a displaced, symbolic witness of the shattering where every entity was dissolved. 'I' returns then and enunciates this intrinsic twisting where it split into at least four of us, all challenged by it. 'I' pronounces it, and so 'I' posits myself—'I' socializes myself.

Kristeva

With the subject set in process (jouissance, death) we have lost the traditional sense of Self but gained a Text. And Text is a body.

Let me end this with a final quotation from Kristeva:

Remember Artaud's text where the black, mortal violence of the 'feminine' is simultaneously exalted and stigmatized, compared to despotism as well as to slavery, in a vertigo of the phallic mother—and the whole thing is dedicated to Hitler. So then, the problem is to control this resurgence of the phallic presence; to abolish it at first, to pierce through the paternal wall of the superego and afterwards, to re-emerge still uneasy, split apart, asymmetrical, overwhelmed with a desire to know, but a desire to know more and differently than what is encoded-spoken-written...

The other that will guide you and itself through this dissolution is a rhythm, music, and within language, a text. But what is the connection that holds you both together? Counter-desire, the negative of desire, inside-out desire, capable of questioning (or provoking) its own infinite quest. Romantic, filial, adolescent, exclusive, blind and Oedipal: it is all that, but for others. It returns to where you are, both of you, disappointed, irritated, ambitious, in love with history, critical, on the edge and even in the midst of its own identity crisis.⁸

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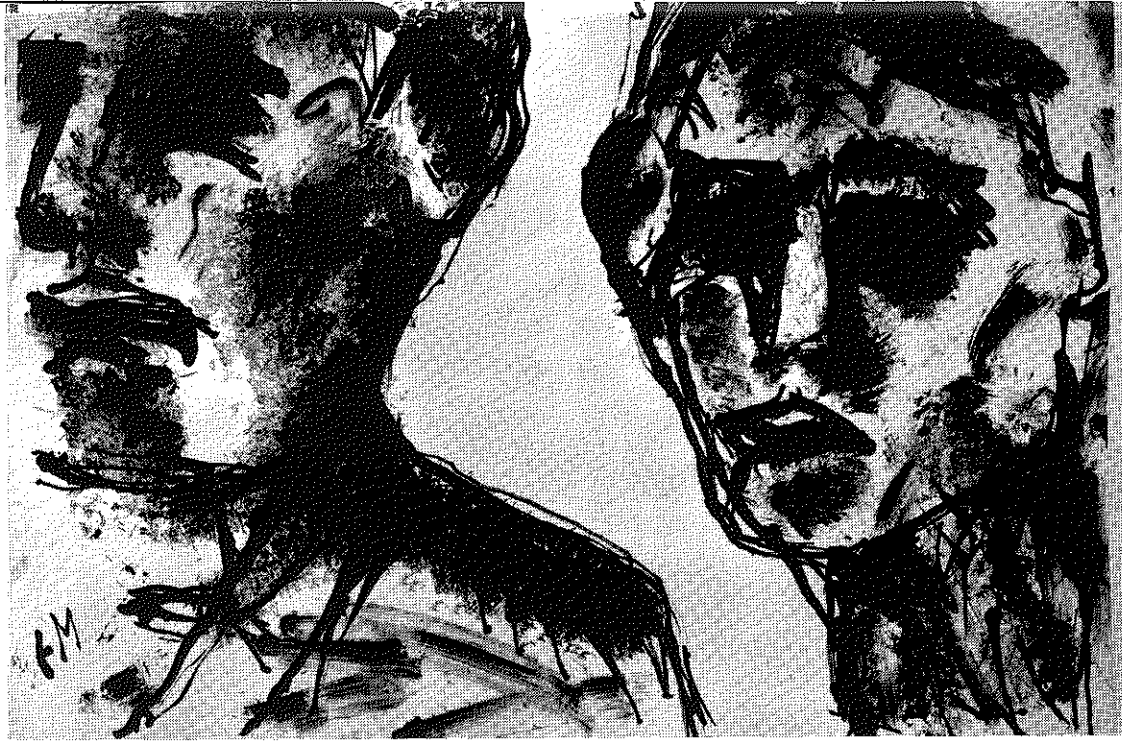
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SENTENCING

Isn't it funny how people keep things?
 People keep many things but one thing that creates a lot of peculiar moments is the keeping of secrets.
 Secrets of thinking and feeling are catalysts for drama.
 Many people like drama.
 Paul and Karen like drama and so they keep secrets.
 It's best that one of two holds the secret so the other can try to find it out.
 He held the secret.
 She wanted to know.

She asked him what it was.
 She asked him to speak.
 He told her that he had to leave soon and he didn't have time to figure out what she meant.

This is best for dramatics.
 If a secret is being kept then it must be with-held for the purpose of dramatics.
 Of course one can always change the mood to change the action.
 Moody people are often dramatic.
 A sudden change of mood is all a person needs to put themselves somewhere else.

They suddenly had the feeling that what was happening between them was unreal.
 They had to get out, go for a walk.

Did she forget about the secret?
 She almost did because the change was so powerful and seemingly magical.

She remembered the secret. She thought he might speak of it while they walked.
 They went for a walk.
 He did not forget the secret.

Would he tell her?
 Maybe.

He wanted to walk.
 He wanted some air.

This is something many people will say during a dramatic moment.
 Is getting air dramatic?... Perhaps...but what was important to him was that the air was outside and he wanted to be outside so he could walk. He knew that if you are outside walking it is easier to conceal a secret.

He wondered why he felt he couldn't tell her.

She asked him suddenly if he was afraid to tell her.
 He told her he wanted to walk and not speak.
 She did not understand.

Well, she did really, but never-the-less she still wanted to know.

She became angry and yelled at him to Speak! Speak! Speak!
 She said that he couldn't fool her with that innocent act.

That has been said many times, but often the question has been raised of the possibilities of innocence and it would seem that it is a hard thing to achieve, so it might seem an odd thing to say.

He thought so.
 He thought it was an odd thing to say because he did not understand what it meant, although he knew why she said it.
 He was like that.

Sometimes he separated the intention of a sentence and focused on the particular meaning. This is one of the reasons why he was easily distracted from drama.

They walked.
 They walked casually and quickly at first, but after a bit they slowed down.
 When they reached a park they walked around in it for awhile and then he told her his secret.

Often the telling of a secret can stop drama. Especially if the secret is not what is expected. If people are dying to know a secret, it is usually because they think it may concern them. If it does then the possibilities for further drama are many.
 The telling of a secret is usually exciting for all involved, but it is always exciting for one who has it.

To release a secret is to make a space available and simultaneously fill it up.

He told her his secret.
 It was not about her.
 She was not disappointed because she had not thought it would be directly about her but she thought it would concern her, in as much as she was concerned about knowing him.
 The secret was about himself.

He told her the secret, but he had many others he did not tell her.

He wondered why she didn't have any secrets. He could not believe it could be true. He thought everyone had secrets.
 He wondered if it were possible to have a secret and not know it.
 She told him that she tells him everything.
 He didn't believe that she knew what a secret was because otherwise he was sure she would say she did have one.
 He said he would tell her his secret but first he wanted to know what she thought a secret was.
 Although it usually annoyed her to hear him say something like that, she was too anxious to know the secret, so she sat down.

Michael Boyce

Drawings by Eric Miller



She said a secret is him.
 She said a secret is something unknown by her.
 She said a secret is a tempter.
 She said a secret is a daring-tease.
 She told him that a secret is something half-told.
 A secret is an invitation that has a condition of difficulty for being received.
 She did not make invitations to him because she had received him and never given a dismissal.

Maybe she was wrong.

He said a secret was a separation.
 He was afraid to tell secrets, he said, because he did not want to expose himself.
 He said he did not feel he was concealing absolute truths about himself; the truths were only fleeting and so ultimately irrelevant.
 He said that to speak even a transient truth about himself was to create an image that struck into the minds of others like a small incision that leaves a prominent scar. To tell a secret is to make a cut; to create a division, and yet also a binding. But the binding was a deception, he said, so the telling of the secret was futile, it gave nothing to the hearer but the opportunity for a response in that moment, it did not give a perception of an unchanging truth that could function as a landmark in the relationship.

She said the response was the important thing. She said the fear of the cutting could only repress the need for the division *if* the fear was in control. She said '*if*' because she felt that the fear was a response that was not invalid, in spite of the problems it could produce. She knew that as a response it was important. The response of the moment was the catalyst of movement; the agent of the gesture. That was her opinion.

She said that although she was aware of the temporal weakness of the secret she felt that he should know the secret was a strong medium for the expression of the sentence. The sentence and the gesture are very hard to make. The telling of the secret was almost always a gesture. She knew this. She said she knew it. She said a secret is a separation of the self for the sake of the communicative gesture. The nature of the gesture was the nature of the secret. Speak your secret to me, she asked.

She felt somehow that in all that, she had somewhere said a sentence. She felt excited and intensely attentive.
 She felt in relation.

He spoke his secret.
 His secret was about people who are mad.
 He said he believed that speaking with people who are mad is a very exciting and important experience.
 His secret was about how it came about that he spoke with a madman.
 He said he saw a man walking in a circle. The man was walking around in the park, the same park they were now sitting in. It was a week-day, so there weren't many other people there. But there were some who passed by and laughed because he was speaking-out very loudly.

People don't necessarily laugh if they see someone walking in a large circle, (maybe for a small one), but they usually laugh if they notice someone talking very loudly when they are alone.

When he noticed the madman he thought at first he wanted to speak to him. He was on his way to do something else so he only glanced and took minor note. But then he began to listen, and as he listened he thought about social commitments. He heard the madman addressing someone or everyone and he saw that no one was truly listening. So after he heard the madman say something about syringes in oranges, he called out 'Hey!' The madman stopped talking and walking so he asked him who he

was speaking to. The madman said he was speaking to nature and anyone who wanted to listen.

The madman started walking and talking again.
 He watched the madman and decided to join him and listen. He had decided but he hesitated, and as he hesitated he grew excited. He walked towards the madman feeling very nervous and anticipating something great to happen.

When he joined the madman, he heard him say 'Hi!', and as the madman turned and said 'Hi!', he was shocked to discover a madwoman.

He wondered if people are more inclined to laugh at madwomen than madmen.

As he walked and talked with the madwoman he discovered her speech becoming centralized.

This can happen when you are addressing a large group of people and then you address a single person.

He said the experience was amazing but the thing that really struck him was a sentence she had said. She said that people are afraid to be real. This struck him because he was thinking this earlier and it was the reason he went to join the madwoman. He thought that it was important to follow some impulses and intuitions.

The madwoman said many things to him about different topics. She spoke about sex, ecology, education and politics, but he felt that none of her opinions were so important as the fact that she had no fear in expressing them, and he felt that she did more than express opinions; he felt she exposed a lot of her true being. He knew that was a scary thing to do.

When he had said this about the madwoman he did not feel he had really told a secret about himself.

He wondered if he had told a secret or a story.

He wondered if there was a difference.

He was not sure, but he did feel empty. So in order to feel as if he really had told a secret, he said that he was afraid to show his true being.

She was mesmerized during the secret, but when she heard him speak of his fear she felt like responding. She was not sure what she should say so she hugged him and said that she loved him.

This made him feel something he could not quite define but he thought he expressed it to a degree by saying he felt centred.

He was not sure what it meant to be centred, or rather how he could articulate the notion of being centred because he chose the word so quickly.

No, he thought, he did not choose the word. But he wondered how he could describe the feeling further to someone else making the word 'centred' the pivoting notion.

Did words distract from feeling, he wondered? No, he thought, words create and *are* feeling.

Then he wondered if the description of the feeling invoked the feeling for the other.

In order to see if this could be the case he told her that he felt centred, and then he asked her if she knew what he meant?

She said she wasn't sure.

He asked her if she felt anything when he told her about being centred.

She said she did.

She said she felt like she was looking at something without focusing on it. She said her shoulders relaxed, but they tightened-up again when he asked her if she knew what he meant.

She said she was tense now.

She said the feeling changed when she tried to think what it was he meant by the expression.

He said that if he heard or spoke the name of a feeling he could feel it.

He wondered if thinking the name would invoke the feeling.

He asked her if she thought that one can think things as well as about things.



She was confused so he rephrased the question. He said that he wasn't sure whether one could only think *of* something or could also *think something*. He said that one could speak of love or speak love, that is, speak love as a noun or verb, but could one think love? Could thinking be a direct action, he asked? Of course, she said. She said that thinking was speaking. He agreed with her, but then asked if she thought one could feel *of* something. She said she felt that he was asking not so much because it was a concern as much as he wanted to raise issues. She said that she suddenly saw the social aspect of what was happening and that the issues weren't important to him; the conversation was important. The conversation had a specific style and thus the feeling of it was specific. The style of the speech was the feeling of the speech, she said, and she could now see it as the relationship between them. She said she knew there was no other way of expressing that style in the exact way that they were now doing and she felt aware that one had to take it seriously in order for the relationship to do itself. She said the individual meanings of the words were not so important as was the speech as a complete gesture. She said the gesture was a situation and that the situation embodied feeling. She said one could not have feeling *of* feeling because that would require one to feel something other to the feeling. She said that feeling could not stop and experience non-feeling because to experience was to feel. She said that feeling is consciousness but it is not reflective of itself. However, she said, when we think about a feeling, that is, when we think of the significance of its name we invoke the feeling, so that the feeling is reflected by the linguistic thought. She said that this was apparent because the thinking was an action that took place while it ignored the present movement of the world. In this sense, it made no gesture towards the world, only to itself, but it was betrayed by itself because the world could still see the body despite the fact that one had made the world invisible, so because of its stilted mobility, the thinking did not *do* the feeling but merely reflected it. This is the closest the body came to reflecting feeling upon itself. The feeling can't be done twice, she said, it is thought of once and it then echoes; reverberating in a semi-presence. She said isn't it funny that the linguistic can speak and speak of itself and then she fainted. He was amazed. He suddenly remembered he had to be somewhere soon and at the same time he quickly went to her aid. This simultaneity of intent created in him a great stress. He was primarily concerned for her, but he felt the other commitment nagging him. He ignored it. She could not wake up so he picked her up and started to walk.

To be or not to be.

Sometimes one must invoke the familiar to deal with the strange.

This is what he did.
He said to be or not to be.
He said it again and again.
To be or not to be.
It did not make things sharp, but it did make it easier to walk.
He felt himself carrying her and he thought that it was as if she

were dead. He wasn't thinking about what she had said. He was thinking to be or not to be and he was feeling that she was not there except as a weight. He could feel that she had been there. He said to himself she was present like a name in a book after it had been read. He did not say she was present like a *character* in a book because he did not think that characters existed. He believed that books conveyed meaning but not characters. Not very many others agree with him on that point. A friend of his thinks something similar. His friend thought that books personified meaning. He did not agree with his friend but he like the thought of meaning becoming a person and he felt it was better to speak in these terms than in ones concerning the notion of characters.

He remembered a woman who thought he was a character in a book she read. She went out of his life because he could not live up to the character. He wondered who could live up to a character. Although he felt Karen becoming heavier he still could not feel that she was there. Her name was there. What's in a name, he thought. A rose by any other name is still a rose. There is something wrong with that, he thought.

He had a friend who said that all the time. He used to write things while looking at paintings and when someone would ask him what he was doing, he would say that he was remaking the painting. They would ask how it was he could write the painting? How could he make the same thing in such a different way? Then he would say that a rose by any other name is still a rose. They would not think of the reply as a satisfactory answer but because of the power of sayings like that they would not say anything else, although they would think he was strange. Artists like people to think they are strange.

Sayings are powerful but he always questioned them. He was suspicious of sayings. He suspected that his friend did not know the nature of his own art. He wondered if she were still she by any other name.

He wondered if it was good to control oneself. He imagined her replying that it was obvious that some inclinations had to be controlled, specifically physical ones. He said words can sometimes be as brutal. She said of course, that's right, but she felt that verbal expression should not be repressed unless it was absolutely necessary, in fact she thought this was the case for all expression. He said there are no absolutes. She said but there are social standards. He said yes.

He stopped imagining this conversation and thought that he didn't realize she had so much power. Her words' strength seemed to be too much for her. Did she know she had such power? She seemed to be looking for the power of a sentence for a long time. She was always reflecting on sentences. Sentences are very important because they are meaning; deep expression. It wasn't *just* the sentence. The sentence was in tune with her expression. Her intention was the power.

Michael Boyce is a musician, a graduate student in Social and Political Thought at York University and a member of the *border/lines* collective. He has a book of prose-poems out entitled *Hit by a Rock*, published by Proper Tales Press.

READING DIFFERENCE: Views Of/From Québec

'The Novel of Quebec'
L'esprit créateur,
XXIII, No.3 (Fall 1983)

'The Language of
Difference: Writing in
QUEBEC(ois)'
Yale French Studies,
65 (1983)

'Sociologies de la
littérature'
Etudes françaises,
19, 3 (hiver 1984-5)

Barbara Godard

The study of Canadian and Quebec literatures is perennially accused of being parochial. While comparative studies of either of them in connection with other literatures have been few, most of the navel-gazing has been the consequence of a lack of international critical interest in them. Things have been changing of late on all sides of the relevant borders.

The title of a special issue of *Mosaic* edited by Robert Kroetsch in 1981 bore aloft the title 'Beyond Nationalism', echoing the standard raised in a 1977 issue of *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 'Minus Canadian' in the fight for literature *qual* literature that would leave behind a preoccupation with Canadian specificity. Notable in both cases was the introduction of structuralist and post-structuralist approaches to literature. And it is the impact of this newest of critical strategies that has also prompted the opening up of Quebec's literary frontiers. This happens from within in the issue of the Université de Montréal periodical, *Etudes françaises*, devoted to literary sociology, for here we find a number of contributions in translation from anglo-Canadians, even an article on the literary sociology of English-Canadian literature which, given the stated mandate of the periodical, constitutes a border violation of the first order. So too does the presence of Frederic Jameson represented by an article on mass culture which focuses on American culture. He appears also

in the *Yale French Studies*' Quebec issues wearing a different hat, as French scholar, in a study of Aquin's revolution which he perceives as staged within the confined space of a room within a room. In this guise, Jameson exhibits the other opening of the borders which has occurred in recent years as a result of the very active promotion of Canadian and Quebec culture abroad by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Quebec delegations. The Association of Canadian Studies in the United States is a flourishing affair. Equally active is the North East Council of Quebec Studies whose members have contributed both to the *YFS* issue and to *L'Esprit créateur*.

Both issues are designed to introduce Quebec literature to American readers, though the fact that all the Yale articles are translated into English will make its impact broader. A quick glance at them reveals that this opening of borders has occurred under the banner of post-structuralism, contemporary critical discourse making it both possible to *see* Quebec for the first time and consequently making its literature subject to the appropriation of criticism. The maypole around which the narrative strands of all three reviews weave themselves is the question of ideology and literature. Most brightly coloured of the streamers are those of feminism and of deconstructionism—two modes of difference. Strangely, though, given this optic, there is an unfortunate lack of attention to the present occasion, that is to the ironic situation of publication within an American periodical.

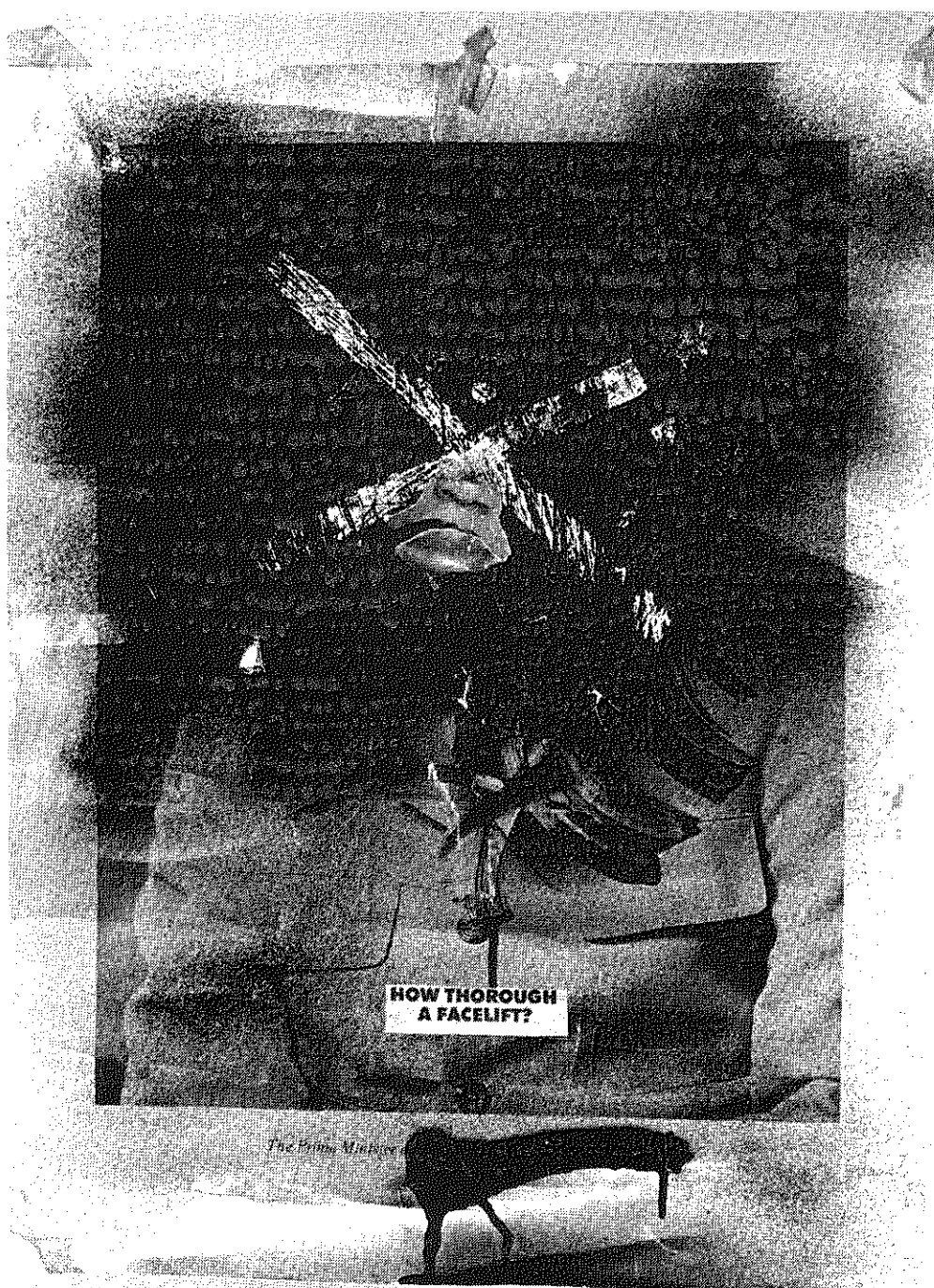
Indeed, the whole issue of American imperialism is left to the side in articles which address the difference that Quebec writing inscribes in itself with respect to that of France. Occasionally, there is some discussion, especially in the many essays on Hubert Aquin who emerges as the most important Quebec writer from these collections, of the power relationships with Anglo-Canadian culture. But of the United States, nothing. No essays on the American-ness of Quebec literature, on her lost son, Kerouac. These, however, as the teachers of Quebec literature in the United States will tell you, are the reasons that students flock to their courses, to reclaim their own Franco-American heritage. This atavism is deeply buried here, visible only in the geographical locations from which these Quebec issues have emerged, namely from the cajun stronghold of Louisiana, and from New Haven, Connecticut, home of the factories that made 'les Etats' into a 19th-century Eldorado for poor 'habitants'. At this juncture, I should like to reshuffle the paradox enunciated by two of the contributors to 'The Language of Difference', and turn it back on the irony of the present instance of enunciation. In her study of the language of Quebec writing, Lise Gauvin concludes:

Note that this literature began to be recognized abroad, precisely at a time when it ceased to define itself in terms of norm and distance. The recent reception of our literature, however, shows that exoticism is still expected of it. A whole study could be done on 'European readings of Québécois literature.' (p.48)

In turn, Joseph Melançon concludes his study of 'The Writing of Difference in Quebec':

With few exceptions, our literature has no status of its own since its mode of existence is French. Nor can our literature have a French status since France cannot see its Québécois distinctiveness. To write difference is to write this contradiction and to inscribe it in the form of writing used. The absurdity of it all is that this writing still reveals beneath the surface that it has been borrowed. Perhaps one day a literary work which accepts this absurdity and the consistency of derision will thus come into existence.

But what are we to make of the absurdity of this difference erased in translation into English? These questions are not addressed within the essays in the way Gauvin has pointed her finger at her European audience, listening to the first version of the essay. The study of the European reception of Quebec literature she advocates has been completed, and reveals the fact that the books published by Laffont and Seuil sell only a couple of hundred copies in France compared to the thousands sent over for the Canadian market. *Plus ça change, plus ça reste pareil...* Such a study now deserves to be made of the American reception of Quebec/Canadian literatures. Unfortunately, I shall not be able to fulfill such a mandate here. Several newspaper commentators (I'm thinking especially of Norman Snider in *The Globe and Mail*) have played the game of the Emperor's clothes and denounced the flimsy fabrication of the critical vestments in 'The Language of Difference', calling loudly in moral indignation against the Americans who have so distorted the literature of Quebec through their critical discourse as to make it unrecognizable. But his majesty's real nakedness has only been covered with yet another layer of insubstantiality. For the real truth of the matter is (at least in the version of the story I'm telling, and I could expand it with notes on the family or academic relationships of the authors) that most of the contributors to these issues are Canadians and Québécois, and not Americans at all. What we learn from these issues tells us more about the current critical scene in the Quebec/Windsor corridor than it does about American views of the north. Though it does perhaps indirectly tell us something about the United States. Despite the banner of deconstructionism being sent out from Yale, launched with the title of *différance*, there are no ideological lances left in its army once it has crossed the Atlantic. The pointed shafts are outside its borders, directed in, albeit very obliquely in the present case. The imperialist power, ideology being the preserve of anti-imperialists. For, as analyses of the



J. Samuels



Both issues are designed to introduce Québec literature to American readers, but the whole issue of American imperialism is left to the side in articles which address the difference that Québec writing inscribes in itself with respect to that of France.

discourse of power inform us, authority is maintained through singularity of perspective, while all that it excludes on its way to the unique point of view has the possibility of multiple perspectives, since this encompasses both the view of power and the excluded view.

What I have just defined is Bakhtin's concept of the monologic and the dialogic. And Bakhtin is the *éminence grise* hovering behind these three collections, explicitly brought into play in André Belleau's contributions, 'Carnivalisation et roman québécois: mise au point sur l'usage d'un concept de Bakhtine', in *Études françaises* and 'Code social et code littéraire dans le roman québécois' in *L'Esprit créateur*, and in *Yale French Studies* by Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed's 'The Unique, Its Double, and the Multiple: The Carnivalesque Hero in the Québécois Novel'. For what Bakhtin has done through his concepts of the ideologue and the carnivalesque is to introduce a vocabulary to handle the 'question of the interaction of the text, the author and the society', an epistemological problem that Lucie Brind'Amour, guest editor of *L'Esprit créateur*, raises as the contribution of Quebec literature in that special issue. However, Bakhtin's identification of specific literary devices for encoding ideological positions also replies to many of the criticisms raised by Marcel Fournier in his introduction to *Études françaises*, 'Littérature et sociologie au Québec', regarding the methods of literary sociology practised by earlier sociologists like Lucien Goldman. The deep structures sought by the latter that would link literary tradition and society need to be transposed into the relevant codes: his system founders on the question of homology, of identity intuitively perceived. A typology of codes is necessary to extend Bakhtin's work to Quebec fiction, something Belleau does in

his article where he explores the conflicts of codes through close textual analysis which leads him to study the dissociation of the knowledge to speak, the duty to speak, the power to speak and the desire to speak in Quebec fiction.

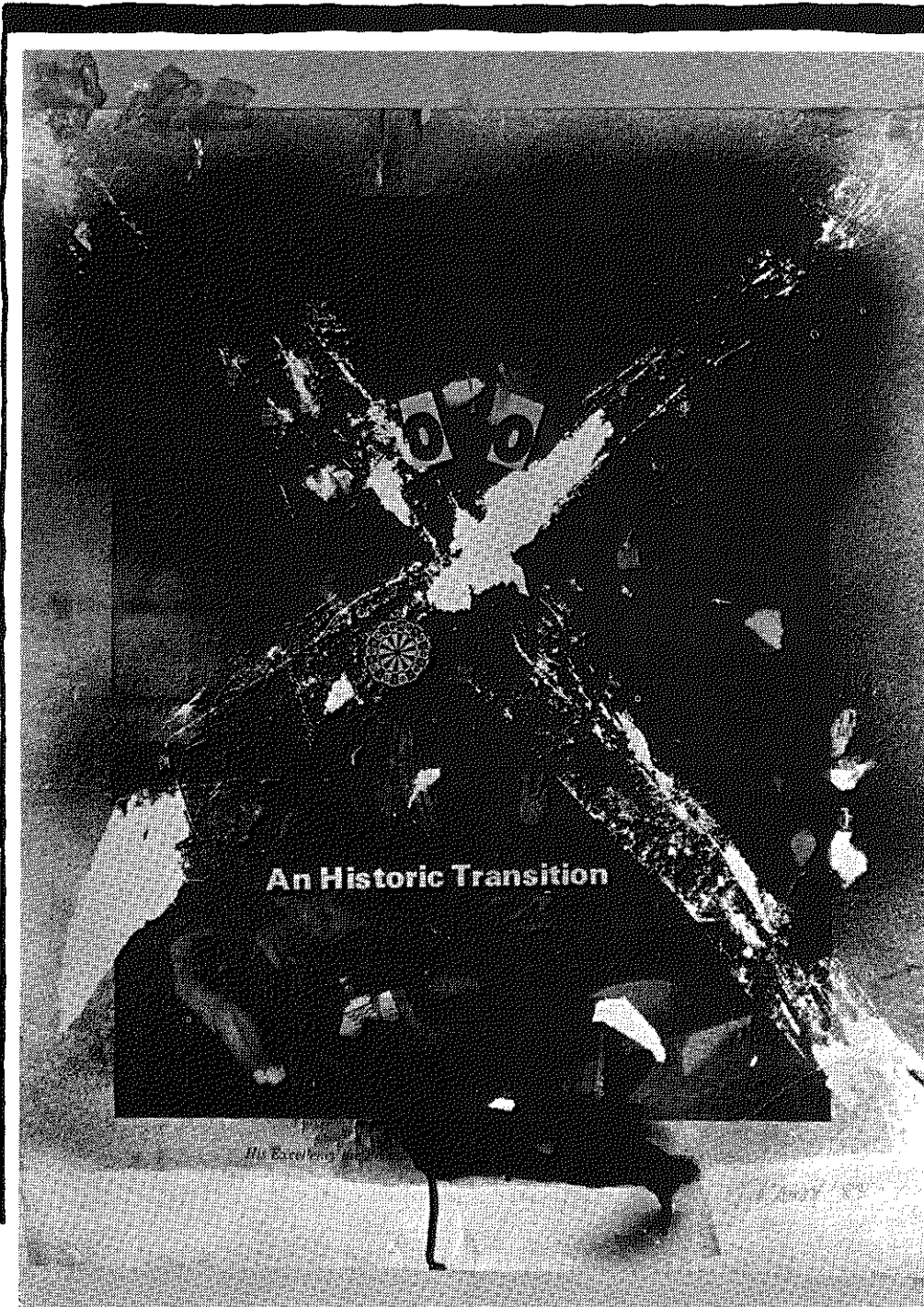
But as well as developing Bakhtin's theories, Belleau, like many of the other contributors to these issues, draws heavily on work in semiotics. As Ralph Sarkonak comments in his editor's preface to 'The Language of Difference', despite his own orientation of the problem evident in the title and the contributions of Melançon and Gauvin, already discussed, traces of Derrida and Foucault are less frequently inscribed in the texts than are those of Bakhtin and Barthes. And here the hegemony of Yale give way to that of Queen's and Toronto. The former hosted an international conference on Bakhtin in the fall of 1983 and will organize another in 1985. Toronto, in turn, is home of the Toronto Semiotic Circle and the International Summer School in Semiotics. Representatives of both are included in these issues: Pierre Gobin on the intertextuality of Michel Tremblay's drama and prose, Renée Leduc-Park on repetition in Ducharme, Gerard Bessette on his own writing—all in *YFS*—and Agnes Whitfield on the changing role of the narratee in post-1960 fiction in *L'Esprit créateur*; all hailing from Queen's: The Toronto group is represented by Janet Paterson on Anne Hébert's discourse of the unreal, Paul Perron on language and writing in Bessette's fiction, and Hadjukowski-Ahmed on the carnival. Bessette is a key figure here. As Sarkonak explains it, a semester Bessette spent at Yale in 1982 would seem to be the originating moment of the special Quebec issue. Its trace is to be found in the contribution of Jadwiga Seliwniuk, 'Gerard Bessette and His Dream of "Generation"' an essay for his course and one of the two American contributions to the issue. There is of course a great irony here for Bessette to become a major Quebec novelist when, as an intellectual, he has long lived in exile from Quebec in order better to foster a critical attitude to its discourse. Is this also Sarkonak's aim as a Canadian exile in the US, to establish his perspective through an emphasis on norm and distance?

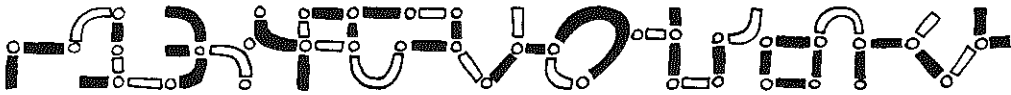
Concentrating on close readings of the texts in question and identifying the literary codes, none of these contributions heads for the regular and tackles the issue of transcoding, an essential element in the establishment of equivalencies between social and literary texts. Hope of such an undertaking is raised in *Études françaises* by Luc Racine's title, 'Symbolisme et analogie: l'enfant comme figure des origines', which in invoking figuration, especially symbol and analogy, promises to shed some light on the problematic relationship of author, text and society. This is later dashed by Racine's statement of intent to the effect that within his semiotic approach, he will be descriptive. A much more probing study of these issues

is that of Manon Brunet who, in 'Pour une esthétique de la production de la réception', in *Études françaises*, introduces reader-response theory to respond to fundamental epistemological problems in existing definitions of what reality is. Formalists and structuralists have understood the literary work as a concrete totality in its symbolic totality. To reconcile the two, to bring together diachronic and synchronic approaches, to conceive of the work dialectically, is her aim. Rejecting the efforts of both Goldmann with his structural homology and Tynianov with his theory of literary evolution, Brunet finds a model in Hans Robert Jauss' reader-response theory. In this, the literary work is made concrete in the moment of the actualization of a dialogue in the interpretation of signification. By adding to Jauss' analysis one of literary practices, she hopes to arrive at a history of the production of reception. To do this, one must explore the virtual signification of the work, that is 'the horizon of literary expectation', and also the effect produced by the work, 'the horizon of social expectation', that is the history of the different questions posed by readers at different historical moments and especially by those superreaders or agents of legitimation of symbolic goods found in the literary institution. Through comparative analysis of the meaning offered by different groups of readers she hopes to escape the possible intuitive or subjective implications of this hermeneutic. This is a relatively complex and flexible approach which takes account of the way individual read-

ers are positioned by social formations and, by shifting the grounds of the relationship between the social and the aesthetic to the activity of the historically-based reader, avoids many of the pitfalls of other sociologies of literature. Brunet's is the most forward-looking of the contributions on literary sociology, attempting to adapt the newest mode of literary theory to yet other uses, while most of the contributions are historical evaluations.

In trying to make a seamless whole of three different collections of essays, I have been doing some complicated feather-stitching to put this crazy quilt together. The order I have been constructing has its basis in the nearly simultaneous publication of these three periodicals and of their different implied readers. *L'Esprit créateur* includes texts from a wide geographical range, including French critics of Quebec literature, and more contributions by American writers than the other two periodicals. Consequently, there are more studies of specific works, fewer general studies, these latter presuming both a more knowledgeable audience but more specifically, a more widely-read critic. The introductory nature of this collection is implied by the first essay on 'Nationalité et nationalisme', in Quebec literature by Gilles Dorion which gives the venerable, though very necessary, periodization of Quebec literatures into the national novel, the nationalist novel, identity crisis, quiet revolution, autonomy reconquered. This is material for an introductory lecture on Quebec literature for undergraduates, not





intended for experts. The same is true of Madeleine Durocq-Poirier's 'Les romancières québécoises et la condition féminine contemporaine', which gives a brief historical approach within an outmoded images-of-women analysis, identifying a persisting image of alienated woman and a new group of feminist novelists. Happily this study is balanced by Karen Gould's analysis of Madeleine Gagnon which gives substance to this feminist writing. Here it surfaces in the archaic language of the maternal body, dream-like syntax and visceral imagery. While not as extensive as an earlier essay by Gould on contemporary Quebec feminist writing that appeared in *Signs*, 'Unearthing the Female Text', would do well in the collection 'The Language of Difference', where it answers the assertions made by Gauvin and Melançon that it is in contemporary feminist writing that difference has best been inscribed, not backed, however, by any concrete evidence within that volume. The close textual analyses of individual works in *L'Esprit créateur*—one on Hébert, three on Aquin, one on Ducharme—beg the question of the relationship of the aesthetic and the social by focussing on the former with generally satisfying results. However, Maurice Cagnon's supposed 'lecture idéologique' of Yves Beauchemin's *Le Matou* is disappointing—merely a plot analysis of the novel, lacking in critical sophistication on the question addressed. The unevenness in the contributions, as well as the use of both English and French in this volume, betray an ambiguous implied reader.

The issue of *Etudes françaises* on 'Sociologies de la littérature', is diversified in the range of its contributors and comparative in its format, as befits its analysis of the pluralist situation of sociological perspectives on literature. As a summary of the 'state of the art', it aims at a general—and mainly literary—audience. It includes specific textual studies like those of Jameson and Racine, as well as one on the city of Montreal in the novel of the seventies, 'La stratégie du désordre' by Jean-François Chassay, which treats the interest in fragmentation and the city as a new phenomenon of that decade, ignoring the earlier phases of accommodation to the city sketched out in work by Antoine Sirois and Barbara Thompson published in the sixties. The issue also includes a section of position pieces attempting to reconcile the traditional hostility of formalist and sociological perspectives on literature by outlining new inter-relationships between them. Among these are Belleau's development of Bakhtin's concept of carnivalization, Brunet's extension of reader-response theory and Greg Marc Neilson's 'Esquisse d'une sociologie critique' in which a model of 'homologie multidimensionnelle' is developed to account for interdiscursivity in the interaction of cultural praxis with the literary institution. By introducing the definition of the social discourse as everything that is said, 'the narratable and the argumentable in a given society', Neilson aims to move beyond Lukacs and Goldman's fetishism of the classics of a culture.

These new perspectives are placed in context by three introductory

essays, Raymond A. Morrow's historical overview of the critical theory of the Frankfurt school and John D. Jackson's review article on the sociology of literature in English Canada and Marcel Fournier's comparable overview of activity in Quebec. These latter two should be translated into English and published again as a diptych, for the perspectives they offer on their relative milieux are almost diametrically opposed. Jackson comments on the lack of interest by Anglo-Canadian sociologists in the sociology of culture and can cite only a collection edited by Paul Cappon, a series of articles by the Graysons—all shaped by the mirror metaphor, so strongly contested by formalist approaches—and his own work with the Concordia group on popular culture as a cultural practice contesting the social structure. Literary scholars following in the wake of Frye and Mandel have taken up categories such as the garrison mentality, the frontier, etc., drawn from the socio-historical context, and accepted as real facts. The question of why this particular option, why this debate, is never asked. And as literary critics have been crying out for a decade, such descriptive criticism is reductive of the complexity of both literary and social structures.

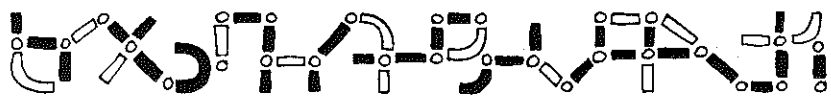
Against this depressing picture of activity in English Canada is the extremely rich history of literary sociology in Quebec in the last 20 years. Fournier's article refers back to the 1964 conference at Laval published by Jean-Charles Falardeau and Fernand Dumont which, despite attacks on the simplicity and rigidity of its empirical approach, provided a wealth of documentation on the material factors of literary production in Quebec and stimulated interest in the discipline. It had an impact on literary critics as evidenced in de Grandpré's *L'Histoire de la littérature française du Québec*, which avoided the extremes of a structuralist reading of the work or a reductive sociological one by placing the work of art and the artist in context. Fournier lists many examples of such analyses before the 1974 publication of 'Sémiologie et idéologie' in the review *Sociologie et sociétés* announced another shift in direction, the development of greater sophistication in both theory and methodology, direction that has marked critical essays in literary periodicals such as *Voix et images* and continued in the theoretical speculation manifested in the current special issue, marking a 20th anniversary. Fournier himself qualifies Belleau's optimism about the relationships of semiology and sociology, changing his term complementarity to complicity. In his conclusion, Fournier sketches in the grounds for evaluating the divergence of interest and sophistication in literary sociology in the two Canadas when he underlines the material conditions of Quebec literary production, heavily subsidized by the government, whether this be in the form of direct grants to artists or in the form of government authorized purchase of their works which

What we learn from these issues tells us more about the current critical scene in the Québec/Windsor corridor than it does about American views of the north.

have been placed on college curricula. The Quebec author knows that the act of writing in French is, as Hubert Aquin said, a political engagement. His alternative is silence and exile. But then, all Canadian writers are subsidized by the government. Why is this engagement not universally recognized as a political act? Echoing from the past are the traditionally different definitions of nationhood and statehood given by francophone and anglophone Canadians. For the former, the nation-state is perceived as the flowering of a specific culture. Anglo-Canadians, on the other hand, have viewed culture as an activity of the spirit divorced from the state which is conceived in terms of economic and political union of divergent cultures. Obviously, a much longer history could be written on this subject. But these two articles offer an excellent starting point for anyone interested in such speculation.

'The Language of Difference: Writing in QUEBEC(ois)', is, as I have suggested, an inner monologue by francophone Canadians which, written down, may be overheard by a wider audience. This dialogue with the self is ultimately what makes an interesting anthology, for the articles present something that has not hitherto been available to anglophones, critical articles which reveal what Quebec literary scholars think of their own literature. Much of what is published in English on Quebec literature is intended for the neophyte. Not this collection, which can be read equally profitably by the expert or the greenhorn in the field. It does attempt a range of coverage, by including essays by Laurent Mailhot on the essay, by Michel Van Schendel on 'Refus Global, or the Formula and History', by Valerie Raoul on the diary. While the focus is on contemporary fiction, Lise Gauvin's essay ranges back to Octave Crémazie and Guy Lafleche writes





about Ringuet's classic novel, *Trente arpents*. The theatre is represented in Pierre Gobin's discussion of Tremblay which explores the difference in his work between fiction and drama, while Pierre Nepveu looks at those between poetry and fiction in 'A (Hi)story that Refuses the Telling: Poetry and the Novel in Contemporary Quebecois Literature'. Then there is the historical survey Ralph Sarkonak offers as introduction. All together, the essays make this publication one with wide appeal.

But the impact it will have can be measured also in terms of the success with which it bridges internal and external approaches to the novels, synchronic formalist analyses with diachronic and/or social critiques. And the whole anthology does so effectively. Taken alone, Janet Patterson's study of Anne Hébert's 'discourse of the unreal' is an excellent close analysis from a semiotic perspective of Hébert's range of techniques for problematizing the 'real'. In the context provided by the opening three essays, this becomes not just a particular stylistic trait but one of the mutations of writing involving successive saturations which is a manifestation of contradictory forces brought into play in literary production itself. Like Melançon the reader of Hébert follows the trace of these contradictions in which 'difference is written as an expressive device of the semantic *différend*.' Hébert's textual subversion may also be read as an early attempt at the deconstruction of other cultural models—the full assumption of derision and absurdity—that is currently the work of Quebec feminist writing. Given the emphasis here, in Sarkonak's introduction, and Gauvin's general statements on language and difference, about the role of Quebec women writers in assuming the contradictions of writing against everyone else and for the splendours of the Mother Tongue, it is surprising not to find more analysis of women writers in this collection. We can read Mary Jean Green's 'Structures of Liberation: Female Experience and Autobiographical Form in Québec', but this is a study of the 'classic' women writers, Roy, Guèvremont, Claire Martin and Marie-Claire Blais. Like Paterson's essay, this one is suggestive, but stops too soon to illustrate Melançon's contention, ending as it does with prophesy by quoting the words of Nicole Brossard about these writers: 'How is it that women have played such an important part in our literature. (...)With what collective schizophrenia did their own phantasms connect? On what oppression did they throw light?' To follow this up with a study of Brossard herself, of her practice of *dérive* and *différence*, would be a logical development. But the ultimate flaw in the argument constructed by the anthology is that it fails to take this step. The lucky possessor of *L'Esprit créateur* can turn to

Gould's essay on Gagnon's female text, though its celebration of an archaic language is not the same thing as Brossard's careful deconstruction of literary and social norms and her assumptions of the nonsense of paradox, writing always acting out the adventure of language itself, the game of reading-writing-reading. In Brossard's work, a feminist critique of patriarchal ideology is married to a deconstructionist analysis of discursive formations and a Barthesian heritage of semiotics. The interested reader of French can pursue this question in the studies of Brossard and *La Nouvelle barre du jour* in *Féminité, Subversion, Ecriture*, edited by Suzanne Lamy and Irène Pagès. But the one who reads only English will be left with her hunger, though many of Brossard's creative works are available in translation.

So, while many intersections of approaches that emphasize the symbolic function of a work and those that emphasize its social functions have been mapped in these three collections, more work is needed to fill in the outlines. What can be perceived from them, however, is that the *Tel Quel* project of uniting Marx and Saussure, marxism and structuralism, is far from forgotten. It is alive and well and living in Quebec, a repetition with a *différence* that makes all the sense.

1. Jacqueline Gerols. *Le roman québécois en France*. Cahiers du Québec, collection Littérature (Montréal: Hurtubise, HMH, 1984).

Barbara Godard teaches English and French Literature at York University and is in the graduate program of Social and Political Thought.

Financial knife cuts into Canada Council

The blood letting begins

CUTBACKS EQUATED TO BEING TOLD TO 'WALK ON WATER'
Nov. 16, 1984 Globe and Mail

WOMEN WILL SUFFER MOST BECAUSE OF CBC LAYOFFS
Dec. 12, 1984 Toronto Star

CUTS 'DEVASTATE' YOUNGER PRODUCERS
Dec. 12, 1984 Toronto Star

CANADIAN CONTENT COULD BE VICTIM OF SLASHED BUDGET
Dec. 12, 1984 Globe & Mail

HEARINGS URGED ON PRIVATIZING OF CBC SERVICE
Dec. 12, 1984 Globe & Mail

A CRUEL CHRISTMAS AHEAD FOR STAFF ON CBC HIT LIST
Dec. 14, 1984 Toronto Star

CBC STILL SUFFERING FROM CUTS 2 YEARS AGO
Dec. 14, 1984

at CBC

CBC KNIFE LEAVES PRODUCERS WINCING
Dec. 14, 1984

UNIONS SAY 2,000 JOBS WILL BE AFFECTED BY CUTS
Dec. 14, 1984

Arts council lops \$1 million

UNDERFUNDING OF CBC-TV WILL AMERICANIZE OUR CULTURE
Dec. 16, 1984 Toronto Star

UNIONS CLAIM CBC S 'INHUMANITY' OVER LAYOFFS VIOLATED AGREEMENTS
Dec. 20, 1984 Toronto Star

WHAT A TANGLED WEB THE TORTES WEAVE
Dec. 20, 1984

'devastating' blow

Canada Council closing office in Moncton

CBC'S RADIO MAGAZINE PINCHED BY BUDGET CUTS
Dec. 28, 1984 Toronto Star

TYCOONS BID TO TAKE OVER CBC NETWORK
Jan. 12, 1985 Toronto Star

CBC REGRETS GOOD WORKERS HIT BY CUTS
Jan. 16, 1985

FRIENDS OF CBC STAND UP TO BE COUNTED
Jan. 16, 1985 Toronto Star

NOVA SCOTIA COALITION TO PROTEST ARTS CUTS
Jan. 19, 1985

ARTS LOBBY FOR CBC HAS NATIONAL DREAM
Jan. 25, 1985 Toronto Star

NATIVE AFFAIRS SHOW IS IN JEOPARDY
Jan. 29, 1985 Globe & Mail

WRITERS PROTEST CBC BUDGET CUTS, FORM COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT CULTURE
Jan. 30, 1985

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES GET NEW UNIFORMS WORTH \$5.5 MILLION
Feb. 8, 1985 Globe & Mail

Mass protest against spending cuts

Artists to march on Ottawa



FACING THE DANGER: Interviews with 20 Anti-Nuclear Activists

by Sam Totten & Martha Wescoat Totten

(Trumansburg, NY, The Crossing Press, 1984)

GREEN POLITICS: The Global Promise

by Fritjof Capra & Charlene Spretnak (in collaboration with Rüdiger Lutz)

(New York, E.P. Dutton, 1984)

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE: Music and the Struggle For Peace

edited by Marianne Philbin (Dedication by Yoko Ono)

(Chicago, Chicago Review Press, 1983)

The choice of interviewees does not adequately reflect an international peace movement: the activists all reside in the US, are mostly middle-aged, male, white and religious, with Christian religions predominating. For all its good intentions, Facing the Danger misses the reality of who faces the danger

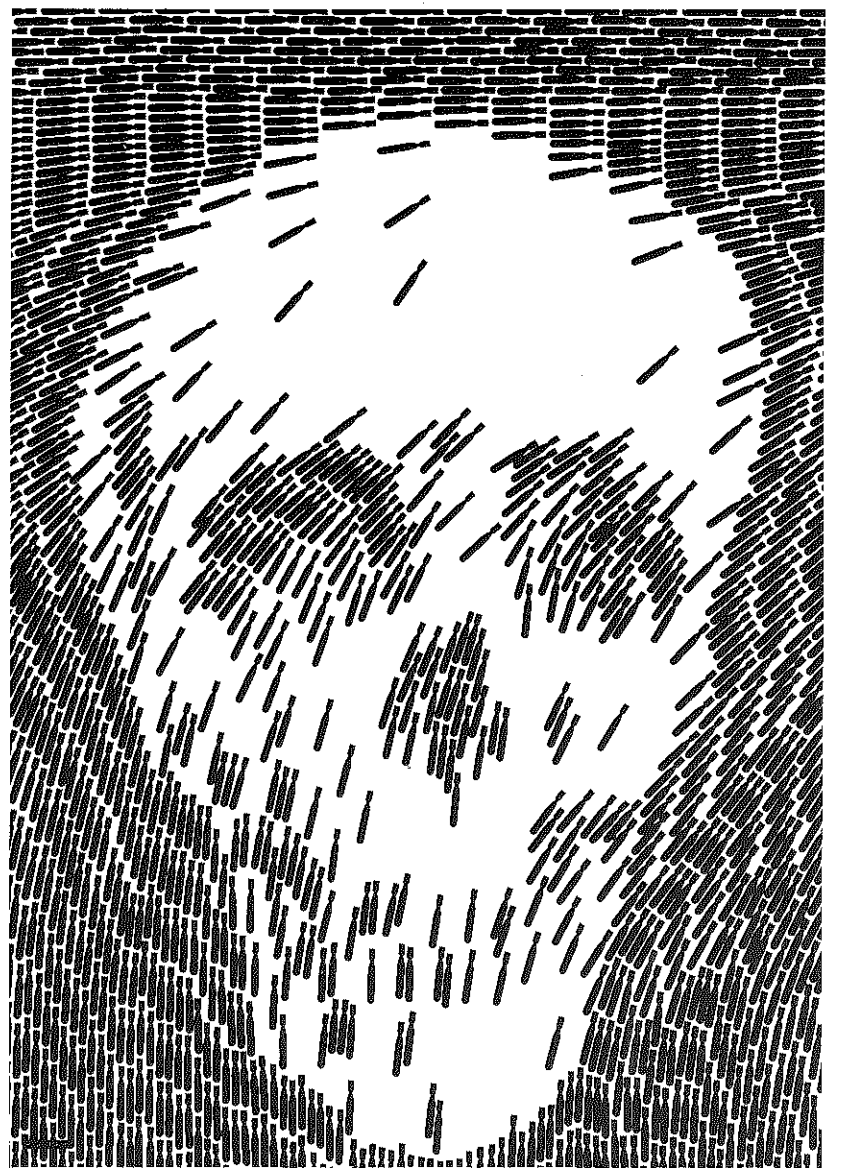
A 1984 survey of Canadian writing on disarmament and arms control* shows a marked increase in public concern, an increase which has been accompanied by a shift of focus. Where scholars and activists once stressed technological concerns—patterns, statistics and the hardware of war—they have turned to examining the psychological, medical and environmental impact of the politics and technologies of war.

Here are three books that reflect the same 'soft' trends, concerned with preserving sanity, the environment and the species. They encourage public participation and offer information about organizations and resources.

Facing the Danger is unified by the interviewers' search for the roots of activism. The Tottens focus on activist stars, although some names will not be familiar to some readers. An interesting alternative to the star system is found in Pat Farren's book *What Will It Take to Prevent Nuclear War? Grassroots Responses to Our Most Challenging Question* (Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman, 1983). Farren reminds us that 'among the contributors are very few famous names' because his goal was to discover anti-nuclear consciousness from below. His book is intended as a resource and a starting-point for classroom and community discussion.

There is little surprise in the revelation that Dr. Ernest Sternglass started with a 'concern for babies' or that George Mace's witnessing of 'over thirty-five atomic and hydrogen bomb blasts' stimulated his interest in anti-nuclear action. (One wonders why it took so many blasts to activate his consciousness.) Like their subjects, the Tottens work hard for a nuclear-free future. Yet their selection of activists makes me wonder who is to create, and who to enjoy, the future they seek. Of the 20 activists interviewed, eight are women. Given the consistent leadership of women in the field, the balance might have tipped in the other direction. The choice of interviewees does not adequately reflect an international peace movement: the activists all reside in the US, are mostly middle-aged, male, white and religious, with Christian religions predominating.

For all its good intentions, *Facing the Danger* misses the reality of who faces the danger. As well, it misses the vitality of the contemporary peace movement. It is directed too much to the old guard among the converted. It lacks the energy, depth



A poster by Shigeo Fukuda from *Art Against War*, by D.J.R. Bruckner, Seymour Chwast, Steven Heller (New York, Abbeville Press, 1984).

or breadth to inspire the newly conscious or the unaffiliated.

More successful is *Green Politics*, a lively discussion of Germany's Green Party that attempts to link Green consciousness on both sides of the Atlantic. Spretnak and Capra provide an intelligent and intelligible portrait of Green politics and personae. They admire the Greens but are willing to acknowledge conflicts within the Party. They don't try to whitewash the reality of the party.

The authors aim to demonstrate the possibility of translating Green politics to a North American setting. They point to various non-German influences. The Greens were influenced by the 1974 Club of Rome document *Limits to Growth*, by US economist E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, by Ernest Callenbach's futuristic novel *Ecotopia* and the works of Ivan Illich.

Teachers and religious leaders make up a sizable portion of Green leadership, in contrast to the preponderance of lawyers in the US political parties. The authors stress the wide range of professions represented in the Green Party, but there is little indication of a comparable range of class interests. We are introduced to young-to-middle-aged,

white, mostly Christian political activists who are often more concerned about 'spiritual impoverishment' than about solving specific economic or social problems.

The romantic attachment to native American spiritual/ecological traditions is not linked to an effort to incorporate the political concerns or leadership of contemporary native Americans into the Green program. The authors do include native groups in their roster of 'green' organizations, but there is no indication that these groups consider themselves 'green' or that the long history of political and economic subjugation is specifically addressed by Green policies in or out of Germany.

One of the Greens' strengths is their media wisdom, something North American activists could learn from. They have not only mounted effective grassroots campaigns but major national advertising campaigns in television and other media. Although the authors are quick to point out the abusive oversimplification that has plagued US media coverage of the Green activities, they note that the Greens have captured media attention wherever they have traveled.

* *Arms Control and Disarmament: A Bibliography of Canadian Research 1965-1984*, by G. Köhler and V. Alia, Second Edition (monograph), Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, 1984.

The book's appendices are useful. They include a summary of Green Party structure that demonstrates the party's dedication to decentralization. There is a list of addresses of Green Parties around the world, including the one in Vancouver but not others in Canada, and a list of one hundred 'Green-Oriented Organizations' in the US. Included are black, Latin-American, native and other groups in an impressively multi-cultural roster that emphasizes again the limits of the Totten's list in *Facing the Danger*. The 'danger' is here more broadly defined—pro-ecology rather than simply anti-nuclear; thus, the field becomes open to a wider range of concerns and people.

Despite its concern for the concrete, *Green Politics* remains more a collection of sketches and visions than a blueprint for green action. Trained in physics, Capra has made a career of other people's struggles. His mysticism, feminism and pacifism belong on the bandwagon, rather than in the frontlines. He does, however, project an earnestness and sincerity. The attractively packaged book, for all its flaws, remains a welcome primer on Green history and politics.

Give Peace a Chance documents the peace and anti-war music of several generations, including jazz, show music, the classical literature and the more familiar realms of pop, reggae, folk and rock. It is filled with high energy, good spirits and attractive photography. The focus on John Lennon and other superstars sometimes diverts from an enormous tradition that is better served by Clinton F. Fink's impressive bibliography/discography at the back than by the more striking material in front.

The volume documents popular involvement, especially in pieces like Sally Rayl's 'Peace Sunday: "We Have a Dream..."'. But it sells with stars. It was produced from a 1983 catalogue for an exhibition at Chicago's Peace Museum, curated by the author, Marianne Philbin. Founded by Mark Rogovin, The Peace Museum celebrated its third birthday last November.

Give Peace a Chance is filled with black-and-white and colour plates, including a photograph of the guitar with which Lennon recorded the title song. Lennon-Ono memorabilia abound; there are excerpts from *Rolling Stone's* coverage of the 1970 press conference and material on FBI surveillance of Lennon. There are also anecdotes and articles by Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Bob Marley, Stevie Wonder and others.

Green Politics is available in bookstores. *Facing the Danger* can be ordered from The Crossing Press, Box 640, Trumansburg, NY 14886, USA. To order *Give Peace a Chance*, write: COPRED, University of Illinois, 911 W. High Street, Room 100, Urbana, IL 61801, USA. COPRED, the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development, should have been listed among the 'peace' and 'green' organizations in the Totten and Capra-Spretnak books. A coalition with Canadian and international membership, it publishes *Peace Chronicle*, sponsors the journal *Peace and Change*, and maintains networks in many areas of peace action and scholarship.

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Toronto.



SILENCED

by Mikeda Silvera

(Toronto, Williams-Wallace, 1983)

The exploitation of non-unionized working migrant women of colour reveals how class, sex and race serve to marginalize minority women in rich, white nations. Accompanied by a brief introduction and polemical conclusion, *Silenced* is about West Indian domestic servants in Toronto. Based on interviews with ten women, it is an important first book by an activist in the West Indian community. As oral history, it provides an important forum for immigrant/migrant women to 'speak out' against low pay, poor working conditions, vulnerability to sexual and racist assault and the indifference of immigration officials. We also see the women begin a critical process of social and political organization.

Silenced is an exercise in feminist oral history, a powerful tool for breaking the silence of the oppressed and for validating women's subjective experiences. Here the researcher is the instrument through which women document and validate their own lives. Silvera created an intimate environment during interviewing and encouraged the women to participate in the editing process of the book. The author herself emerges as an impassioned/engaged eleventh voice revealing her cultural and political ties to the women. Yet the result falls short of the expectation. Although the interviews took three years to complete, each woman's interview emerges as little more than a static snapshot, as a short narrative seemingly suspended in time and place. We do not learn very much about how women, most of them single mothers separated from their children, have changed (or stayed the

same) as a result of the experiences they describe. Ultimately, there is no sense of dynamic exchange between researcher and subject.

Silvera presents a collective portrait of black domestics as legal slaves, as victims of manipulation and degradation, as lonely and isolated, as desperately missing their home and children. There are serious limitations. She stresses the powerlessness and passivity of these women to the point that it paralyzes the reader. What is never discussed are the numerous examples of the women's grim determination to save money, to complete a college course, to report their ill-treatment to the Immigration authorities. The very decision to take work in Canada represents a significant and decisive act born out of a determination to do something about one's poverty.

Nor is there much indication that these are in fact active women working out strategies to ensure their survival even under such oppressive conditions. Moreover, Silvera glosses over the differences among the women. While several older women tended to be defeatist about their predicament, talking in terms of venting their frustration peacefully by praying 'out to the Lord' during Sunday church service, many of the younger women voiced their anger over injustices and channeled that energy into productive avenues. They pursued education and applied for landed immigrant status. All the women at various times actively (though perhaps silently) protested against the conditions of work by quitting work and searching for another job. Even a painfully introverted woman who was raped

reported her employer's husband, a doctor, to the authorities. She was able to do so because of the support of another West Indian domestic she befriended in a park.

These issues might have been addressed. In spite of their isolation at work, these women showed a tremendous capacity for social bonding and mutual self-help. Through their connections with the local church, which for younger women performed a social rather than religious role, and also through community organizations, such as the Immigrant Women's Placement Centre and the Domestic Workers Group, West Indian domestics keep each other informed of new regulations and potential jobs. When unemployed, they are taken care of by friends until they find new work. Even those living in their employer's home offer to share their cramped living quarters. Indeed, initial contacts for jobs in Canada operate through networks of friends, family and co-churchgoers.

Too often in the literature on immigrant/migrant women, oral history replaces rather than enriches an analysis of the structural determinants of female migration and work. From the interviews we learn little about each woman's family and social and economic background. Some further discussion of the socio-economic and cultural realities of Caribbean society, with particular reference to the lack of economic opportunities for women and the predominance of single female heads of families, is needed. These women are not secondary wage-earners! Even in cases where women lived within a couple relationship with children, it was the woman who migrated to Toronto. We need to understand how economic compulsion for women may be governed by a different set of conditions than for men. Recent studies have shown that the penetration of the cash economy into 'peasant' societies often results in women, daughters and mothers becoming migrant workers earning cash abroad and sending remittances home for the family.

Silvera notes that not until 1955 did Canada consider the third world as a source of domestic servants. Recruitment then was rigidly controlled. Today, temporary employment visas ensure that women are recruited as a temporary solution to domestic labour shortages, part of a post-war trend to rely on increasingly larger supplies of cheap immigrant labour. These points are valid and important, although it may have helped to locate them within the larger historical context of Canadian immigration policy.

Silvera concludes *Silenced* with a black feminist polemic criticizing the women's movement for its failure to acknowledge European immigrant and migrant women of colour. As she notes, their struggles present a serious challenge to feminism and suggest the need to develop a more rigorous theory of oppression that integrates class and race with gender. Otherwise, the women's movement may have little impact on the struggles of non-white working-class women who (along with their men) occupy a minority position in a capitalist, racist patriarchy. As a feminist from a Southern Italian immigrant working-class background I applaud Silvera's motives, although I am bothered by the hostile tone. Silvera herself fails to discuss the nature of the relationship between the white employer/mistress and black em-

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The book's appendices are useful. They include a summary of Green Party structure that demonstrates the party's dedication to decentralization. There is a list of addresses of Green Parties around the world, including the one in Vancouver but not others in Canada, and a list of one hundred 'Green-Oriented Organizations' in the US. Included are black, Latin-American, native and other groups in an impressively multi-cultural roster that emphasizes again the limits of the Totten's list in *Facing the Danger*. The 'danger' is here more broadly defined—pro-ecology rather than simply anti-nuclear; thus, the field becomes open to a wider range of concerns and people.

Despite its concern for the concrete, *Green Politics* remains more a collection of sketches and visions than a blueprint for green action. Trained in physics, Capra has made a career of other people's struggles. His mysticism, feminism and pacifism belong on the bandwagon, rather than in the frontlines. He does, however, project an earnestness and sincerity. The attractively packaged book, for all its flaws, remains a welcome primer on Green history and politics.

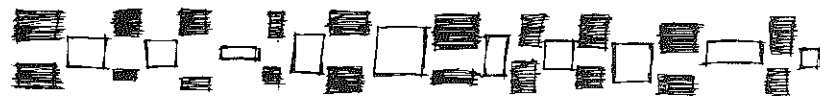
Give Peace a Chance documents the peace and anti-war music of several generations, including jazz, show music, the classical literature and the more familiar realms of pop, reggae, folk and rock. It is filled with high energy, good spirits and attractive photography. The focus on John Lennon and other superstars sometimes diverts from an enormous tradition that is better served by Clinton F. Fink's impressive bibliography/discography at the back than by the more striking material in front.

The volume documents popular involvement, especially in pieces like Sally Rayl's 'Peace Sunday: "We Have a Dream..."'. But it sells with stars. It was produced from a 1983 catalogue for an exhibition at Chicago's Peace Museum, curated by the author, Marianne Philbin. Founded by Mark Rogovin, The Peace Museum celebrated its third birthday last November.

Give Peace a Chance is filled with black-and-white and colour plates, including a photograph of the guitar with which Lennon recorded the title song. Lennon-Ono memorabilia abound; there are excerpts from *Rolling Stone's* coverage of the 1970 press conference and material on FBI surveillance of Lennon. There are also anecdotes and articles by Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Bob Marley, Stevie Wonder and others.

Green Politics is available in bookstores. *Facing the Danger* can be ordered from The Crossing Press, Box 640, Trumansburg, NY 14886, USA. To order *Give Peace a Chance*, write: COPRED, University of Illinois, 911 W. High Street, Room 100, Urbana, IL 61801, USA. COPRED, the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development, should have been listed among the 'peace' and 'green' organizations in the Totten and Capra-Spretnak books. A coalition with Canadian and international membership, it publishes *Peace Chronicle*, sponsors the journal *Peace and Change*, and maintains networks in many areas of peace action and scholarship.

Valerie Alia
is a free-lance writer living in
Toronto.



SILENCED

by Mikeda Silvera

(Toronto, Williams-Wallace, 1983)

The exploitation of non-unionized working migrant women of colour reveals how class, sex and race serve to marginalize minority women in rich, white nations. Accompanied by a brief introduction and polemical conclusion, *Silenced* is about West Indian domestic servants in Toronto. Based on interviews with ten women, it is an important first book by an activist in the West Indian community. As oral history, it provides an important forum for immigrant/migrant women to 'speak out' against low pay, poor working conditions, vulnerability to sexual and racist assault and the indifference of immigration officials. We also see the women begin a critical process of social and political organization.

Silenced is an exercise in feminist oral history, a powerful tool for breaking the silence of the oppressed and for validating women's subjective experiences. Here the researcher is the instrument through which women document and validate their own lives. Silvera created an intimate environment during interviewing and encouraged the women to participate in the editing process of the book. The author herself emerges as an impassioned/engaged eleventh voice revealing her cultural and political ties to the women. Yet the result falls short of the expectation. Although the interviews took three years to complete, each woman's interview emerges as little more than a static snapshot, as a short narrative seemingly suspended in time and place. We do not learn very much about how women, most of them single mothers separated from their children, have changed (or stayed the

same) as a result of the experiences they describe. Ultimately, there is no sense of dynamic exchange between researcher and subject.

Silvera presents a collective portrait of black domestics as legal slaves, as victims of manipulation and degradation, as lonely and isolated, as desperately missing their home and children. There are serious limitations. She stresses the powerlessness and passivity of these women to the point that it paralyzes the reader. What is never discussed are the numerous examples of the women's grim determination to save money, to complete a college course, to report their ill-treatment to the Immigration authorities. The very decision to take work in Canada represents a significant and decisive act born out of a determination to do something about one's poverty.

Nor is there much indication that these are in fact active women working out strategies to ensure their survival even under such oppressive conditions. Moreover, Silvera glosses over the differences among the women. While several older women tended to be defeatist about their predicament, talking in terms of venting their frustration peacefully by praying 'out to the Lord' during Sunday church service, many of the younger women voiced their anger over injustices and channeled that energy into productive avenues. They pursued education and applied for landed immigrant status. All the women at various times actively (though perhaps silently) protested against the conditions of work by quitting work and searching for another job. Even a painfully introverted woman who was raped

reported her employer's husband, a doctor, to the authorities. She was able to do so because of the support of another West Indian domestic she befriended in a park.

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Marlene Philip and Dionne Brand are feminist/activist poets. They capture in sparse haunting prose the frustrations and anger of being black women in Canada. In *Winter Epigrams*, Trinidad-born Brand reacts to the harsh realities of a Canadian winter, a coldness she associates with the stiff rigidity of Anglo-Saxon culture, with racism, with death. Yet winter also unleashes her creative energies as she defies the climate and seeks warmth (but is sometimes disappointed) in intimate relationships and in her work.

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In 1926 a young Leningrad pianist set sail for New York on a cultural mission. Not long after the first visits of American jazz bands to Russia, Leopold Teplitsky had been sent to the US to study the music, to buy arrangements and instruments, and to return to build a jazz orchestra for the city of Leningrad. His sponsor was the Commissariat of Public Enlightenment, headed by Anatoli Lunarcharsky, who had not yet decided whether the jazz being enthusiastically embraced by urban Russian audiences was a decadent bourgeois insect in the side of Russia's national culture, or the seeds of a genuine new popular form.

And so the stage is set. Meanwhile, in Canada (this is very much off-stage) no such emissary was needed. There were Canadian delegates in Washington in 1926, though. They were trying to negotiate regulation of radio broadcasting frequencies so that Canadian stations could broadcast over the interference from American stations pouring into Canada. While Canadian editorialists (and later, Royal Commissioners) pondered whether the entertainment thrilling Canadian audiences was antithetical to the national spirit of Canadian citizenship, no one was in a position to legislate whether such enjoyment should continue. Russians, however (we're back to Starr) would be intermittently paranoid, idiotic, totalitarian and xenophobic enough to try. They wouldn't succeed, however, for they had nothing better to offer.

This is the major distinguishing feature of the controversial reception of jazz in the Soviet Union, according to Starr, a specialist in Soviet history and amateur jazz enthusiast. His detailed account of the musicians, movements and ideological controversies punctuating the long history of jazz in Russia offers a fascinating portrait of the conflicts engendered in one country (there is no comparative perspective, which I think is significant) by the reception of the United States' foremost cultural export in the first half of the century. American jazz symbolized there, as elsewhere, more than a rousing new musical style: it represented a whole complex of cultural values and preferences, invariably infected with its Americanism, but also given life by the local pleasures and drives of musicians and audiences. That was true here, too. But Russia was then, as now, the United States' foremost political, ideological and cultural opponent. It's hard to tell where that is more evident: in the stories, or in the storyteller. We'll begin with the stories.

Jazz was introduced to Russia in the 1920s by Russians who had travelled to Paris, or Berlin, and had heard American groups touring Europe. Valentin Parnakh, Futurist poet and dancer, returned to Moscow in 1922 with a collection of instruments (saxophones, being rare, were important iconographic symbols for jazz; later they would be restricted by the government) and began a press campaign in praise of jazz music and dance. The Futurists initially adopted jazz as

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Jazz was associated with dancing, with working-class entertainment, and thus with popular emancipation; it was also embraced by more 'serious' composers, and thus identified with musical innovation and artistic freedom. But it was also attacked—at times with all the force the Soviet regime could muster—as an instrument of commercialization, Americanization and the corruption of popular working-class culture. To some extent these conflicts (as Starr points out) resonated with those being fought in the US: moral, sexual and musical degeneracy was debated by Americans with great intensity through the 1920s. But the Soviet orientation was different; it questioned the music as an exported (and not only that, but American) form, and interrogated it intensely in terms of its complicated effects on proletarian culture and the development of socialism. While some musicians were powerful (musically and strategically adept) enough to protect themselves and their audiences from such interrogation, there were periods, particularly in the late 30s and the late 40s, when the state intervened. Here the stories, not surprisingly, are pretty bleak.

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displacement of the classics (and of the economic security of contemporary classical composers and performers, as jazz musicians were then far better paid) didn't justifiably negate its power as a genuinely popular force and as a legitimate source for musical innovation. The two journals exchanged heated blasts; expressions of popular support for *Pravda's* position won some respite from the government and helped to legitimate the widespread political, economic and popular support for jazz during the war. By 1947, that approval would be withdrawn entirely, though later again the state effectively gave up its attempts to intervene.

Starr's accounts are fascinating to read; they are replete with excerpts from critical reviews, debates, letters and more recent interviews and, like other jazz writing, they tend to focus on the careers and cavortings of particular musicians whose work opens up, and speaks to, a kind of contemporary *Weltanschauung* in a way that no other art form can do (or could do, until it was displaced by other popular musical styles). This makes for richly textured reading, though every story seems to follow the same structural plot (happy genius meets underside of hammer of Soviet regime) in the long run. The 'plot' suffers more from what is left out. This is where the problem of the storyteller becomes crucial.

In 1945, Americans were humming to recordings (or visits) of the Red Army Chorus, and learning the tunes to 'Meadowlands' and other classics of Russian folk and political music. By 1948, American musicians, performers and artists who had shown sympathy to Russian culture had disappeared from the public sphere. In 1947 publication of the US's most popular book of folk songs marks the transition: readers are reminded that the songs made popular by the Red Army 'belong to no particular time'; subsequently they will disappear from the repertoire. And do you want to talk about censorship? Border crossings? Passports? Trials?

And so on. The 'unfairness' of Starr's account, which neglects this time to mention the precisely parallel, and similarly dramatic, rise and fall of cultural reciprocity in the US, that fountainhead of universal liberalism (i.e. birthplace of jazz), is empirically objectionable: there is no reference to McCarthy in this text. But behind this selection of facts hides (as always) an ideology whose perspective suffuses the account as a whole.

According to Starr, the Communist Party's crackdown on jazz after the war was due to the fanatical paranoia of Stalin, who imagined American popular music to be the tool of a deliberate conspiracy by the American government to weaken and disperse its enemies and to colonize their cultures. Starr can't help being amused by this xenophobic image of that spontaneous, apolitical, popular music and of the causes for its global dissemination by the American corporate empire. He thinks that such a theory can only spring from the terroristic paranoia inherent in the structure of the authoritarian mind. There may be something to this. He also thinks that Russia's real problem was a failure to produce an equally effective popular music because of its commitment to anachronistic and authoritarian politics. There may be something to this, too. Nevertheless there is evidence that the massive export of music and films after the war was part of a strategy of international dissemination of American culture that was officially sanctioned by the

US government, with strategic assistance from the CIA. If the effectiveness of this strategy (or the seemingly politically independent economic goals of the industries themselves, which are absent actors here) appear to absolve that government, this is only another way of saying that the American government, or rather capital, is the agent for a different kind of radicalism than that proposed by the Soviet Union. This radicalism continually produces (or rather expropriates, since the American government has not been known until recently for its kindness to popular musicians!) new symbolic forms that celebrate the destruction of those being replaced. For this reason, every political-geographic force active in the war used jazz to solicit popular support. None of this is examined by Starr, whose 'educators' were, of course coincidentally, staff



ing culture is no less partial than the officially sanctioned myths Starr attacks, and no less distorted in terms of analysis, though by placing the music within the contours of Soviet history it is all too easy to argue.

The analysis would be advanced by two streams of investigation: first, how jazz actually related to, built upon, found a response in, took the place of and in other ways affected Russian music itself; Starr seems incapable of moving beyond the essentially American concepts of 'sweet' and 'hot', and describes Russian syntheses and adaptations (or rather, refers to them) with barely concealed malicious irony, except where such adaptation are sanctified by the rubric of art (rather than that of na-

and the oppressive industrial individualism of western capitalism. Wallis and Malm's *Big Sounds from Small Peoples* (London, 1984) brilliantly analyses the effects of western music (and its technology and its money) on the musical culture of receiving nations. We might begin to surmise, on the basis of such research, that the Soviet musical 'vacuum' referred to by Starr to justify the increasing hegemony of American music was itself produced as an effect of the successful settlement of jazz and rock in Russia as in countless countries across the globe.

In short, Starr's account, while useful and moving, suffers from a radical lack of reflexivity. It reproduces a complex set of assumptions



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'Image-rich poster'

members of the Voice of America and the International Communication Agency, and who provides in the illustrations, as sole exception to the photographs of Russian musicians and jazz posters, said Voice of America representative.

These are important and indeed indispensable issues; but they don't explain why jazz was so warmly embraced by Russian (and German and Japanese and Canadian) citizens in that period, as rock was in a later era. Starr draws his own explanation from the work of the Leningrad philosopher and jazz enthusiast Efim Barban, and from Alexi Batashev's *Sovetskii dzhaz*, neither of which have been translated, and which Starr refrains from translating as 'many things had to be explained for Western readers'. Starr suggests, rightly I think, that jazz's appeal lies in its 'erotic and Dionysian element', its universality despite claims to the opposite by American black nationalists (though as I will explain this avoids the issue), and by its major assault on mainstream Western aesthetics and form. His opposition of jazz's 'individualism' to the bureaucratic monoliths of state-supported official culture is inviting, because it exposes the attractiveness of 'forbidden fruit' to the spirit of oppositional culture. But precisely there the missing link might be pieced together; the myth that jazz arises from a freedom-lov-

ing culture) which elsewhere he seems to dispense with.

Secondly, Starr's concept of jazz as a cultural force is unbearably romantic. It's difficult to understand the music without the social history. If it became a flag-bearer for American culture, it surely didn't start that way—American performers toured Europe because they couldn't survive at home, for one thing. But more fundamentally, the struggles between different cultural practices that took place in the arena of American popular music actually began at home. It is that struggle that makes the music work as effectively as it does, though the industry can be thanked for making its global discovery possible. Other views of history can be found in a number of texts not cited by Starr; for instance Francis Newton (i.e. Eric Hobsbawm)'s *The Jazz Scene* (1964), which offers a poignant political analysis of jazz within the context of American racism and economic exploitation; or, closer to the source, Jaros Marothy's *Music and the Bourgeois, Music and the Proletariat* (Budapest, 1974), which attempts a Lukacsian-Marxist analysis of musical history (with varying degrees of success) and which explains jazz as the product of an imposed confrontation between a historically collective black culture

about Western culture within which the dismissal of others is built in without even noticing—he even claims Russian appropriations of Mexican or Chicano songs as victories for American freedom and individual liberty. These assumptions are even less capable of producing an understanding of the traditions, structures or impulses of other cultures (i.e. the bad guys) than of critically deconstructing those of his own (the good guys). The reader is left with a series of vivid portraits and compelling tales. These remain to unsettle the imagination but fail to answer the important questions except in the most predictable and self-serving manner. The book also leaves this reader wondering what the 'International Communication Agency' or for that matter the CIA have on file about the Massey Commission. In 1951 (in a spirit of obvious xenophobia) the Commission expressed some concern about the cultural and ideological effects of American imports, and even deigned to talk about borders.

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MARXISM AND NATIVE AMERICANS

edited by Ward Churchill
(Boston, South End Press, 1984)

The genesis of this work is the editor's personal journey of discovery, a vision quest in native terms, the search for an 'American Radical Vision'. In the late 1960s and early 1970s this quest took him, seemingly, into every radical market where the thoughts of the many-sectored New Left were hawked with the turbulent exuberance which may well mark the spirit of the Vietnam age of American history. Here he found disappointment, for though New Left programs shared his concern for resisting and overthrowing what Winona Laduke characterizes in her preface as the 'synthetic culture' of North America, they had an artificiality of their own born from the fact that they were all imported wares, the product of a European synthesis, normally a Marxist one.

Churchill did, however, make one important discovery in his intellectual and physical wanderings. He discovered Indians and what he places before the reader is his central conviction that even if a unique 'American Radical Vision' must relate to the wisdom of Karl Marx (an assumption Churchill clings to but does not justify) it must begin with original Americans and their struggle to save a cultural identity by preserving a 'natural reality' despite the champions of synthetic culture—government and industrial capitalism.

It is upon this foundation (a quest in its own right), the search for a unique radical vision through the fusion of a native American reality with Marxist synthesis, that the book is created, its form determined. It is Churchill's intention that Marxist contributors to the book relate their theory to the issue of culture and that Indian contributors assess the Marxist paradigm.

For Churchill, and indeed for anyone interested in native revitalization and/or a broader resistance to industrial capitalism, the first round of this dialogue, Section I of the book, composed of two articles of note—one by Russell Means, the other by the Revolutionary Communist Party—is a complete disaster. Means, an AIM leader, rejects Marxism in the most complete and in the rudest fashion. Marxism, he argues, is 'The Same Old Story': it is nothing more than an extension of European thought and thus it is '... as alien to my culture as capitalism and Christianity'. It insists upon rationalizing human existence to industry whether it be in a pre- or post-revolutionary stage. Thus Indian resources and land, the target of capitalist cupidity now, would be equally exploited by future proletarian revolutionaries if then in the name of efficiency and equitable redistribution rather than profit. Means warns his pre-industrial fellow tribesmen that western culture is 'a business which regularly confuses revolution with continuation, which confuses science with religion, which confuses revolt with resis-

tance and has nothing helpful to teach you, has nothing to offer as a way of life'. There is, he explains, a fundamental difference between native and western culture. The difference can be drawn on a distinction between 'being and gaining'. Being is a spiritual exposition, a central ethic of Indian existence which rejects acquisition. Gaining is a material act—the core of western culture and Marxism, as the newest western shoot, is nothing less than the basis of a new European imperialism as Marxist policy toward aboriginal people in Russia, China and Vietnam graphically

the waste of capitalist economies and wonders, perhaps naively, that where there is common ground may there yet be a common ideology? Elizabeth Lloyd, in the most useful Marxist contribution, considers the Russell Means charge that Marxism, having a narrow European base, produced conclusions about culture which are inappropriate to third world applications. She argues, and demonstrates rather convincingly, that though Marxists may well have to plead guilty to ethnocentricism that Marxism does possess the conceptual tools which through proper application of dialectical methodology may lead to the 'articulation of a theory of social relations which includes cultures as its relational units'.

Unfortunately Lloyd's progressive lead, the idea that an evolved Marxism could develop an 'unusually broad conception of a truly universal social/cultural reality' is not taken up by other contributors. The article by Vine Deloria reverts back to stressing cultural distinctions and classes Marxism, as had Means, as the other unacceptable side of an unbreachable native-white wall. Deloria takes as

constructing a social theory that can bridge cultural boundaries hopeless. The RCP is not in search of a new theory. It is satisfied with an increasingly fossilized version of Marxism and thus it has been abandoned by thinking socialists. So too Indians are not represented in this book. What Churchill has discovered, and been captured by, is a rump opinion in his discovery of the American Indian Movement. Both AIM and the RCP are caricatures and thus their mutual condemnation is complete, comic and irrelevant. Churchill, found in Lloyd, Tabb and Robert Sipe socialist thinkers willing to grope their way to a new North American radical reality. He could have introduced us to more and he could have brought forward native leaders who represent the mainstream of Indian opinions. The Six Nations Elder, Ernie Benedict, for example, has rightfully rejected AIM's cultural retreat, writing 'You must camp where you are today not where you were yesterday'. Young natives in northern Saskatchewan communities have used a Marxist analysis of their relation with the south, multi-nationals and the

It is not beyond us to find common ground against a common foe through a revived Marxism that is culturally enriching for native and non-native alike

demonstrate Means, taking the moral high ground, will have no truck with the materialistic 'idiots' who one day will suffer the cataclysmic wrath of a Mother Earth they (missionary, capitalist, politician and Marxist) have collectively raped.

Fusion seems far from possible. The RCP article, a clamorous rejoinder to Means, agrees on this point at least. Means is (and by association so are all native traditionalists), the communists charge, ironically a product of the very western culture he condemns. He has imbibed the pap of bourgeois anthropologists that natives were noble savages, living in harmony with nature, with justice and liberty for all. Rather, the RCP argues, a clear-headed inspection of the native past reveals the oppression of women, the exploitation of nature and the evil of 'gain' played out in inter-tribal wars to acquire rich hunting territory, new technologies and wealth in all of its forms. The traditionalists call 'to be' is a retreat to a past that never existed and allows to go unchallenged the very oppressors that Means complains about and who are also the target of traditional Marxist condemnation. The way for all people, for we are all on the same path, must be 'overthrow of the existing orders'. Means and native leaders, it would appear, are dupes of the capitalists and thus are incapable of contributing to Churchill's much-sought fusion. They are the enemy.

The second section of the book lowers the temperature of the debate and is, in some cases, more scholarly and thought-provoking but it is no more successful in sketching out what might be a new North American radical path. The Marxists here are less didactic than the communists. Bill Tabb admits that Marx himself was a racist, believing that 'barbaric races' must proceed through the stages of historical evolution that brings them into brotherhood with the proletariat and hence to the socialist valhalla. That aside, however, he does mark out areas of common concern between Indian and White—the environment,

his subject the concept of alienation. Westerners, he notes, have historically devoted considerable effort to isolating the roots of alienation and to creating theoretical and institutional solutions to the problem. It is an essential part of a western cosmology while it is 'a minor phenomenon of short duration in the larger context of a cosmic balance for American Indians'. Marxism cannot therefore be relevant to native Americans for it is a 'western religion dressed in economist clothing... as it accepts uncritically and ahistorically the world view generated by some conceived trauma (the flight from the Garden) that our species is alienated from nature and then offers but another vision of Messianism and a solution to this artificial problem'. For Deloria Marxists are not only singing the same old song but are yet another 'group of cowboys riding around the same old rock'.

With the final native contribution the pretense of a dialogue dissolves again. Black Elk, on the basis of hearsay knowledge of Marxist theory, asserts a basic difference between native spiritualism and Christianity, Marx's opiate. Unable to explain the difference in any intelligent fashion he reverts to assertions promising that the Lakota will, as a superior people, 'assist their neurotically retarded relations to achieve a more adult and wholesome outlook on reality'. It is a relief to find that Marx is not the only racist here.

It would seem fair to conclude that this dialogue of discovery, despite a few bright spots, is a dark failure. It is so, however, not because a fusion is impossible. It is not beyond us to find common ground against a common foe through a revived Marxism that is culturally enriching for native and non-native alike. It is a failure because Churchill brings into the debate participants whose narrow views make

Canadian government as the basis for both the creation of cooperative economic organization and for the beginnings of a process of cultural revitalization.

There is a native voice speaking of advance responding to the challenge of Alberta leader Louis Crier:

In order to survive in the twentieth century, we must come to grips with the white man's culture. Discover, define the harmonies between the two cultures, between the basic values of the Indian way and those of Western Civilization—and thereby forge a new and strong sense of identity.

Marxism has a role to play in the process. The dialogue between real native leaders and Marxists is a method to discover the way forward. Unfortunately Churchill's book is a false start.

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Now 36 born and raised in Michigan, living in Canada since 1972, Tom Sherman is a fairly high-ranking official in the cultural branch of the federal government. He heads the Media Arts Section of the Canada Council.

Sherman is also a productive artist of some distinction within the orbit of Canadian video and performance art. How an artist gains distinction there remains a mystery since we have yet to read discussions of Canadian video or performance art equipped with the critical competence to grant artistic distinction. But that is another problem. Let it suffice that Sherman is respected by his peers and has succeeded institutionally. Gallery curators and journals devoted to art approve of him.

Cultural Engineering is a retrospective gathering of Sherman's writings between 1974 and 1982. The book is not intended to stand as a work of art

When playing SF dystopian ironist Sherman still cannot abandon his incurable fascination with the techniques of fiction-writing. This needs to be qualified, but let it wait. The trajectory of *Cultural Engineering* does take the reader to the high-tech frontier of 'My Brand of Video Aesthetics No.2' and Sherman's shopworn exercises in 'information theory'. However, the book is not schematic. In fact, mostly Sherman dawdles and the real interest in the texts lies in the importance dawdling has for Sherman's authorship. The essays, like 'Video Aesthetics' and 'The Rabbitt Theory of Data Transformation' and 'Videoactivity in Canada Killers' do get Snappish when they take on the velocity of logical argument. What is so interesting about the fictive texts is Sherman's devotion to a rumative rhythm, to depictions of solitary, directionless voices, to the *mise-en-scene* of aimless isola-



CULTURAL ENGINEERING

by Tom Sherman

Edited and with an introduction by Willard Holmes (Ottawa, The National Gallery, 1983)

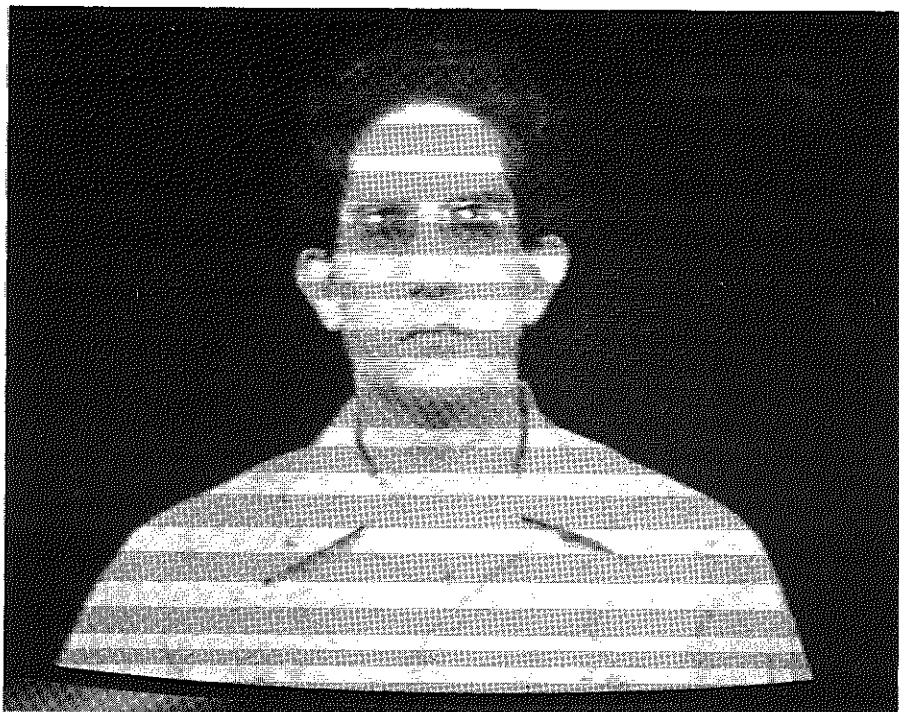
tion, are those of short-story writing. But the style in which these conventions are executed, Sherman's flat, literalist prose, is not that of a 'creative writer'. We are back again at the question of Sherman's literary writing. Let us sample some of this writing.

I'll have lunch alone today. I'll make myself a couple of sandwiches and watch some TV with a cup of coffee and a cigarette. Then I'll go down to the park and watch the ducks swim with the social life of my neighbourhood. Parc LaFontaine is full of young men and women sunbathing. The old men hang around and stare at the young women. It is basically a singles scene with plenty of overt exhibitionism and voyeurism. The men walk up close and look at the girls with binoculars. There are adolescent radio boys on bicycles and teenagers on roller skates. And, of course, there are dogs of all sizes and descriptions with their owners on the leash. There are a few portable TVs with the game on. The Expos are losing to the Dodgers 2 to 1 in the sixth.

The first-person narrator, of course, is an obvious short-story device, as is his solitude. Both set up point-of-view through a cheap pathos frequent in Sherman—the poor guy has to eat his lunch alone. The previous paragraph has just detailed his abandonment and looked to the past. Now 'I' looks forward to his afternoon. Suddenly, at 'Parc La Fontaine' the tense shifts to the present, at first apparently a 'frequent' but, by the end, a specific present of the ball game score. By that point, the character has almost vanished into an impersonal list of descriptions. The shifting point comes just after 'exhibitionism and voyeurism' and their tone of sexual resentment soon to be replaced by the presence of radios and 'a few portable TVs'.

Apart from the whining, sometimes a feature of Sherman when he wants to inject some 'psychology' into his protagonist, the prose here belongs to a diarist or essayist or plain note-taker. The composition, however, the structure, traces the action of a fiction.

Sherman makes him/her out to be an artist, a painter. Amid a shower of one-sentence stories, listings of the objects, etc., Sherman proves she/he cannot possibly be an artist but goes on asserting she/he is an artist. The joke is, of course, that the very idea of an artist is beyond Sherman's method of literal accounting.

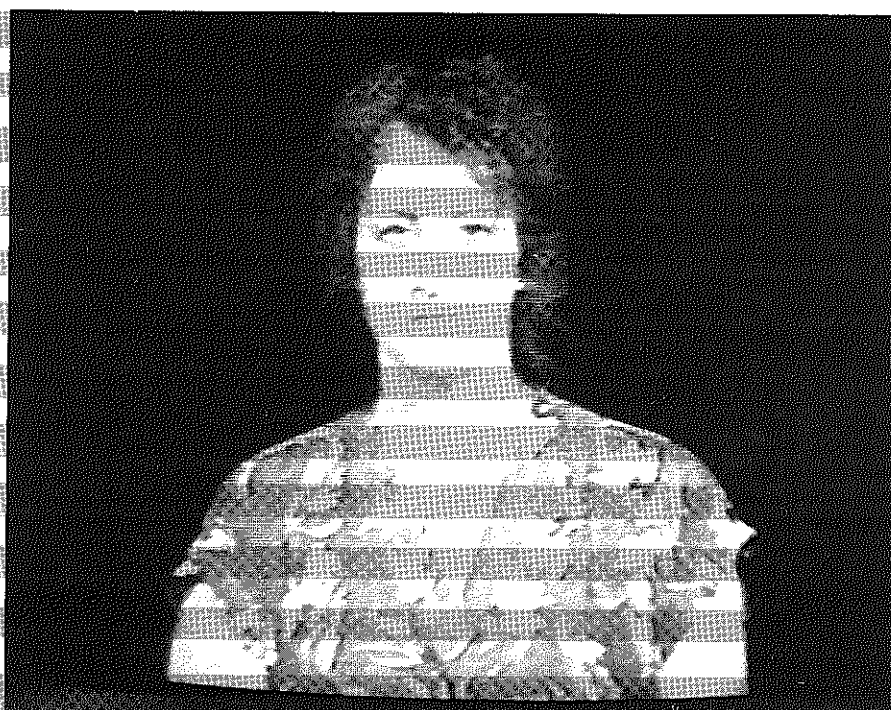


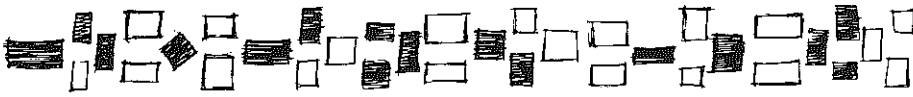
on its own, like a novel or a play. It is an anthology of texts accompanying Sherman's video and performance pieces accompanied by bits of criticism and some highly prescriptive essays on the destiny of Canadian video art. Most of the texts are a pleasure to read, frequently both diverting and amusing. It is useful to mention these impressions, first because Willard Holme's introduction is being going, dressed in the drab cover of a government report or policy statement and third because the illustrations, taken from Sherman's art shows, are set out with modernist pretension.

For as long as it can, *Cultural Engineering* avoids the sinister topic broached by its title. The arrangement of the texts postpones colliding with the idea that the traditional (i.e. Romantic) artist is doomed in a world of technological 'information' and is about to be replaced by the 'culture engineer'. Sherman does play cat and mouse with the artist-figure, depicting him as the slightly seedy outsider and using him as the protagonist of so many of the texts. The later pieces, 'More Dead Artists', 'The Artist Attains Ham Radio Status', 'A Statement from Inside the Cultural Industries Compound' and 'TBDF (Transborder Data Flow) by Andrew Czeszak', do turn to the issues but Sherman uses science fiction irony: his final tactic of postponement masking yet again the ambivalence of the whole book toward the question.

tion and the daily comings and goings of a banalized but sensitive and often witty persona. This persona, in equal parts TV viewer and protagonist, forms himself and reforms himself as the central character, the digressive presence really, through which Sherman's narratives pass.

And they are narratives. On first encountering 'How to Watch Television', 'Television's Human Nature', 'Picture Window View', sections of 'What Channel Are You Readers on Tonight?' and 'Time-Sharing Between Friends' (to mention the best things in the book) the reader might imagine Sherman is another autobiographical video artist. This is not the case. The voice that speaks 'I' here and the author are as distinct as they would be in Dickens. The fictional voices throughout *Cultural Engineering*, just like the book's economy of incident and metonymy of descrip-





In one of his essays, Sherman claims of video that 'besides writing, there is no better medium for telling a story'. He should also have added that English-Canadian video art uses images of almost no narrative force but relies instead on prose narrative not unlike his own. The disjunction of sound and image that results is of no interest to Sherman. In fact, one of the points of his video criticism is to complain about the failure of Canadian video art to tell stories. Of course, Sherman is aware that commercial television derives its narrative energies from aping the editing techniques of feature filmmaking and he does not recommend video art do the same. The strategies necessary for a narratively elegant video art are underdeveloped in his view because video art wound up as a branch of 'experimental cinema'. Sherman demands narrative come into video. Now, he does not call it 'narrative'. He calls it 'information' and dabbles a bit in 'information theory'. However, his illustrations are just good instances of 'suspense', a device—a rather vulgar one—of commercial narrative writing and film and TV. Sherman's own writings are full of suspense even if it is attenuated by verbal techniques of dawdling, though sometimes, as in the text cited above, the dawdling is dressed up in pathos followed by the quick cuts of exposition.

None of this should be construed as a complaint against *Cultural Engineering*. The reader should come to the conclusion, however, that as a video critic addressing his peers, Sherman talks through ill-fitting hats. Sherman's writing typifies a strong narrative-but-verbal tendency in English-Canadian video art. The obsessive narratives of General Idea, Derek Graham and especially Vera Frankel and Jane Wright (in *The Mississippi Tapes*) all exemplify that, even in the absence of a visual narrative style, Canadian video work is preoccupied with narrative modes. Sherman also typifies how such video narrative is constructed—on the soundtrack. Video script-writing emerges out of the conflation of traditional narrative structures of character, incidents, etc. taken from short story and novel forms, and the prose style from the stylistics of

essays and diaries. The results—a flat iteration, invariably delivered on tapes in tonelessly declarative readings—are at once literary (in what they basically do) and anti-literary in locution and rhetoric (in how they do it).

The process that generates this style of script has a great deal to do with the convention of the 'voice-over' as it has developed in video art in Canada. To a remarkable degree, both video and performance art have gravitated to the voice-over as the main vehicle of language and narrative. There is nothing new about this. Documentary films have been using voice-overs to this end for over 50 years. But this is not the source of voice-overs in video art. Rather artists' statements, language art and the anti-theatrical use of language in performance have provided the conduits that flow toward video voice-overs.

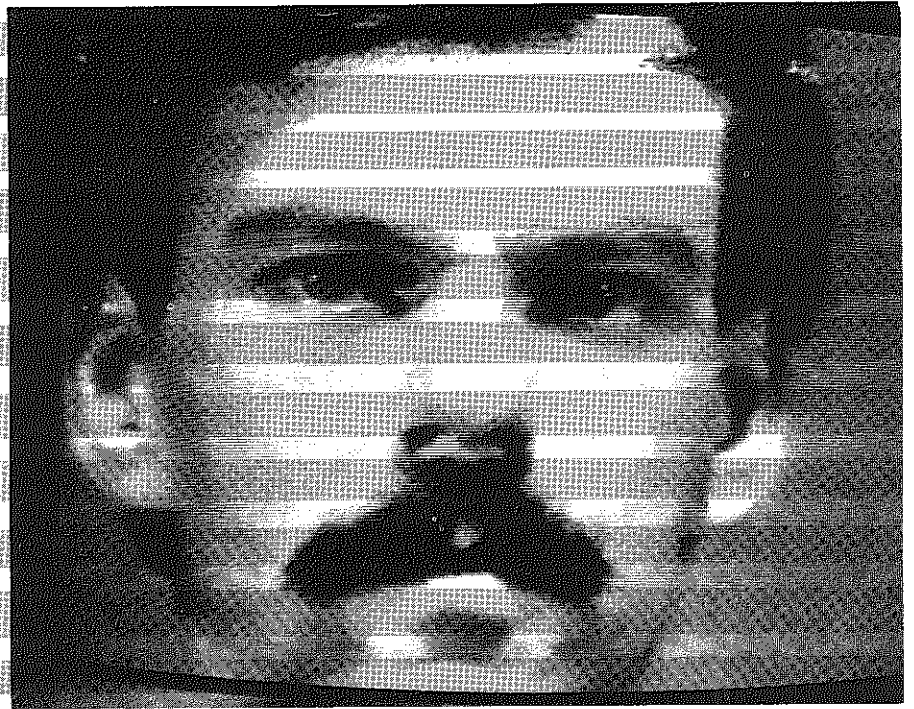
Now, the voice-over resembles the essay because it interprets in a narrow, literal way, weighing evidence and enigma around the play of fact and appearance. The voice-over is like a fiction because, when it does not pretend to 'divinity' (Lorne Greene's voice-over for the NFB are divine in this sense), off-screen speech creates the perspective of a character. The interpreting character is a persona Vera Frankel, Jane Wright and Tom Sherman have been complicating and expanding in Canadian video (Frankel with greater sophistication than anyone) for some time now.

The power of Sherman's attenuated version of Romantic anguish lends to his video work a self-reflexive realism quite different from the work of many of his colleagues in

video art. Sherman is clear about this when addressing nine photographs in a chapter of *Cultural Engineering*, supposedly as a critic but really as a storyteller of an especially literalist bent. The most interesting of these deals with a photo by Toronto video artist Rodney Werden. Characteristic of Werden, the image depicts a sexually ambiguous figure standing against a cheap shelving unit containing various shabby knick-knacks and a TV. Sherman makes him/her out to be an artist, a painter. Amid a shower of one-sentence stories, listings of the objects, etc., Sherman proves she/he cannot possibly be an artist but goes on asserting she/he is an artist. The joke is, of course, that the very idea of an artist is beyond Sherman's method of literal accounting. It is a minor instance of *Cultural Engineering's* theme—the failure to identify the artist. On the other side of the Werden essay is the biography of the artist, 'Voluntary Handcuffs'. Accompanying a photograph of Jay Yager's sculpture of the same name, Sherman relates the biography of 'Russ'. The character carries on like a very well-organized workman who has renovated a shack behind his house. It is 'Russ' who finally makes the photographed sculpture. In Sher-

man mark out the contours of that contemplation-within-routine.

In this way, *Cultural Engineering* manages what Young could not sustain in *Incognito*, the translation of traditional literary modes into the so-called 'post-modern' moment. Where Young sought to reconstitute the Homeric quest-narrative into a post-modern novel by seizing on Homer's use of tale-telling excursus, Sherman nudges the Romantic's introspection into the literalist TV-camera vision. Young's attempt proceeds by variations on autobiography and sub-literary folk tale. Sherman's project progresses by dawdling, postponing ideas, denying his authorial persona 'poetic' language, by flattening. Arranging the bits of language to make it move, especially move sideways into description, and giving his characters patience and good attention span, Sherman plays interiority against its own literalized language. The ironies that arise are still Romantic for they individualize the characters and carefully centre them, though without letting them be what they want to be: artists. When they try they whine, wheedle and cannot do their work. Sherman has the good sense to say simply they need to be in love, and to be at work.



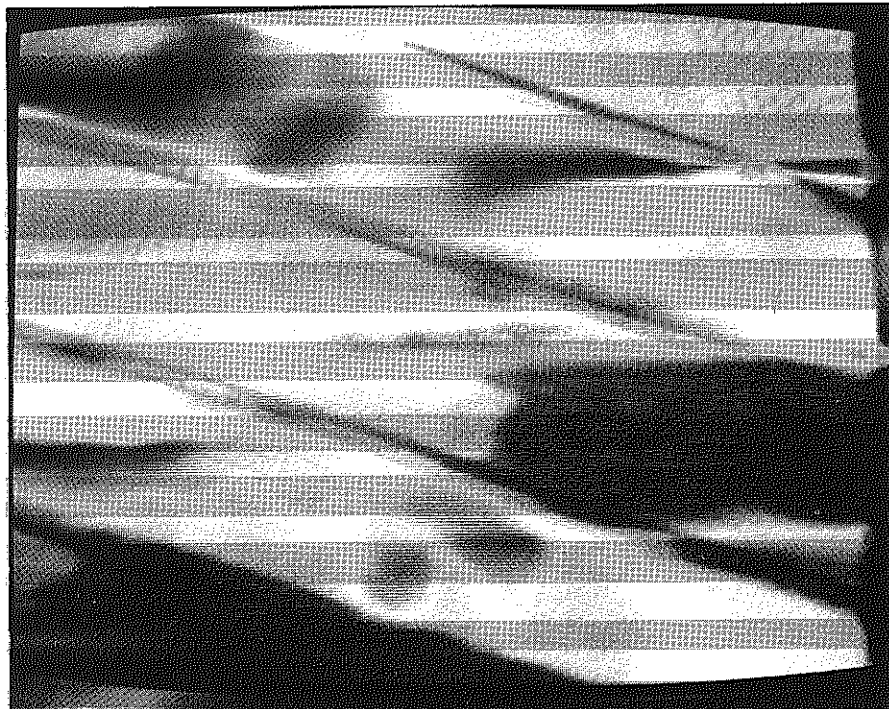
man's account the piece is a rather naive, solipsistic little exercise in self-help therapy from a man who does not apparently talk very much. But the point is—the artist cannot appear to Sherman, only the art-work does.

'Voluntary Handcuffs', perhaps the sweetest and most affirmative piece in *Cultural Engineering*, conveys in a compressed fashion what so much of this book does—a depiction of 'artistic' contemplation ruled by order and routine. The relationship between the writer and his typewriter and between the solitary viewer and his TV screen for Sher-

The later texts, like 'More Dead Artists', mark a diminution in Sherman's *Cultural Engineering* and it is no wonder that he so long postpones them. The style of the book changes to clumsy parody. 'More Dead Artists', for example, rehearses 'A Modest Proposal' using Canadian artists for the Irish babies of Swift. 'TBDF' is a fair but unremarkable imitation of J.G. Ballard on a bad day. Sherman's critical essays, a thorough discussion of which would take a whole other review, may be considered important to the state of Canadian video art criticism. By any other measurement, however, they are poorly argued and aesthetically ungrounded. Moreover, in terms of the carefully set up and rigorously sustained play of themes and strategies characteristic of *Cultural Engineering* as a whole, they are an unfortunate bastardization of the problematic status of art and artists in the supposedly high-tech cosmos now being manufactured in electronics labs around the world.

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As Charles Altman pointed out in his article 'Towards a Historiography of American Film' (*Cinema Journal*, 16, 1977) the chronic problem regarding the history of Hollywood is paradigmatic periodization. How do we understand the history of that form of cultural production in terms of time and (simultaneously) in terms of a particular approach—production (technology, technique, personality, film in relation to the other 'arts', chronicle, social, studio, auteur, genre, ritual), or distribution (legal, industrial, sociological)? That, to be sure, does not exhaust the possibilities, as knowledge of *Ciné-Tracts*, *Cinéaste*, *Screen* or *After-Image* would show. However, the problems do not stop there—for some years now certain neat defining divisions between 'documentary' or (a real joke this!) 'factual' film and Hollywood have come to be seen as convenient fictions which carry forward the machinery of curriculum, pedagogy, criticism and the rest—a disciplining of the forms of film to suit non-filmic purposes. Finally, in almost all of this there is a crushing, crippling absence—what of the audience? Marketing/trade 'demography' and silence! All these comments could apply to any and to all forms of cultural production.

Cagin and Dray produce a text that belongs in a particular genre (both historical and fictional) which has to do with the spatialization of time. Its time to say clearly that decade thinking (itself highly selective, based on one version of the Christian calendar standardized by certain imperialist nations in the 1880s and now adopted as a world standard by the International Standards Organization) is fictional, not factual. It's exactly like writing political history in terms of the periodization of elected assemblies/ruling monarchical reigns. It is also, in terms of psychoanalysis, a good version of phenomenal symptomology: take a spurious spatial container (the ...ies) and from it select half a dozen (or 2,000) 'events' and say these comprise that box of time. Things then get messy when people can turn around (on this silly box of tricks) and make comparisons from one fiction to another—'Oh, yeah, that's a sixties thing' or 'The seventies are different from the fifties'. Who, whom?

Apart from the recent book-length version of *Social Text*, *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1984), consider Gerald Howard (ed.) *The Sixties: The Art, the Attitudes, Politics and Media of Our Most Explosive Decade* (New York, Pocket Books, 1982)—which opens with an extract from Wordsworth's *The Prelude*! Or better compare Cagin and Dray with the much preferable Peter Biskin's *Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1983). This last comparison is not without special point. Unlike Jody Berland's vastly superior work on replaying the fifties (forthcoming in *Parachute*), what we find in Cagin and Dray's book is simple narrative discussion of films made in the fifties and sixties. Chapters 1 and 2 are all about anticipations, in which certain films—notably *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and *Easy Rider* (1969) are given an honorary 1970s status! But it then becomes a lot worse in subsequent chapters. Films like *Easy Rider* come to operate like magnets, allow-



HOLLYWOOD FILMS OF THE SEVENTIES

by Seth Cagin and Philip Dray
(New York, Harper & Row, 1984)

ing a clustering of 'convincing demonstrations': so *Alice's Restaurant*, *Medium Cool* and *Z (all 1969)* support their contention of a 'new move'. Alas our old enemy/friend 'the last instance' might well have been interpellated here! Cagin and Dray report *Easy Rider's* pre- and post-budget to be \$555,000 and its gross profits world-wide to be \$60 million. Apart from the fact that David Pirie's *Anatomy of the Movies* (London, Windward, 1981) says *Easy Rider* grossed \$33.8 million (allowing for inflation, and during its initial release period, by contrast *Gone With the Wind* (1939) grossed \$310 million under the same criteria), there are a few salient facts that might be added. First, according to Ned Tanen, president of Universal Theatrical Pictures, "'Two films nearly destroyed this industry'", *The Sound of Music* (1965) and *Easy Rider* since both produced a spate of copying, copying, copying; most copies flopped (*Anatomy of the Movies*, where also Joan Didion talks of the 'hangover summer of 1970'). But as well, ignoring Peter Fonda, some of these boys were rather connected: the father of Bert Schneider, co-organizer of *Easy Rider* with Bert Rafelson was chairman of the board of Columbia, and his brother was president of the studio. This kind of sliding across significant phenomena continues. Thus *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (also 1969!) is considered by Cagin and Dray as 'immensely popular'; *Anatomy of the Movies* places it 41st in all-time Hit Comedies, lower than thirteen other 1970s movies!

The pace *thins* as it speeds—it is not until around the 190s of this 290 page book that we have serious attention to the mid-1970s! In fact, the Epilogue begins with 1977—called, of course, 'the late seventies'. The book splutters out with the most superficial—well, par for the book as a whole—treatment of *Coming Home* (1978), *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

If times were not so hard (and fearful) we might simply annotate this book as *charmingly innocent*, but since—in 1984—this kind of spurious texting of the serious subject of representation can appear—it's long, teasing subtitle being part, of course, what it is 'about'—there is cause for some ascerbic criticism.

Innocence in these times is a simpering plea of guilty to the rightful, mindful accusations of ignorance. Apart from one (largely useless) footnote on a 'short-lived phenomenon'—every liberal's heart-throb, of course—the ignoring of Afro-Americans in Hollywood films (p.116) and some—why not?—slovenly writing about class and some even more gratuitously inadequate words about the original 'Native Americans', the way in which Hollywood's image-repertoire works is hardly mentioned. How many years will it be before the specificity of the cultural production we know as *cinema*—far more than film—comes to be taken seriously? It is not about how it makes use of other forms (notably the textual/musical), it is about its own aboutness which is

not that of narrativity (as in that ludicrous cul-de-sac comparison 'the classic realist text') but of *diegesis*. How do movies *move*? How do they organize space/time? How do they catch us up, *move us*? Which particular 'us' did you have in mind, Philip? The marketing categories—'the' audience? Or those doubling and yet fragmenting social identities that produce that completely new (on this, yes, I insist!) separation which can also be love and hate, pleasure and pain, fearful dread and plentitudinous joy. That combinatory is *what cinema is* and hardly anyone is prepared to face the degree of this new kind of social difference. In cinema we find a separation that is qualitatively different. In ordinary social relations, love and hate desire proximity; whereas separation involves distance and loss. Cinematic separation is a place to enable a certain 'I' to see, be seen, play, gamble. All cultural productions are like this, of course, their real subject is the subjectivity who constructively audits, watches, waits, being there and not being there. But this is all about difference, and Cagin and Dray are guiltily innocent of that consciousness. They paste films like wrapping—or better wallpaper onto some specific (also inaccurate) 'history' in which the male possessing heterosexual can alone be pictured. It's a bad trip!

Apart from Peter Biskin's book I mentioned, I urge everyone to read John Berger's *And Our Own Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (New York, Pantheon, 1984) and—even more so—George Trow's *Within the Context of No Context* (Boston, Toronto, Little, Brown, 1981) (for knowledge of which I thank Elizabeth Asner). To understand films/cinema, aside from these glancingly sparkling tangential sources for hope, read Annette Kuhn's *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), Teresa de Lauretis' *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington, Indiana U.P., 1984) and *Screen*. Don't bother to read, certainly to buy, this—let's be charitable—pitiful book.

Philip Corrigan's forthcoming book (with Stevie Bezencenet) is *Photographic Practices: Towards a Different Image* (London, Comedia).

borderlines

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borderlines is also available through Marginal Distribution, 53 Niagara Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1C3; the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association, 54 Woiseley Street, Toronto, Ontario, and through the publisher.



It's the magazine about music and culture that was recently called "the latest living example of the alternative press" and "something more a pop artifact; a serious trip; elegant and exciting" (Peter Goddard, *Toronto Star*, May 7, 1983). The best way to find it would be in your mail. Every six weeks, 8 issues for \$12.00.

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Letters

Congratulations on a fine new magazine! I wish I could restrict myself to praise and encouragement—but unfortunately I was disturbed by your choice of Alex Wilson's article ('*The Anti-Porn Roadshow: Feminism as Law and Order*') as the main article on sexual politics for the first issue. My reservations are as follows:

1) I was puzzled as to why Alex took up so much space to comment on the pornography symposium held in Toronto in early February 1984. Varda Burstyn's detailed, excellent piece in *Fuse* (Summer 1984) had covered much of the same ground, also from an anti-censorship perspective. The failure to acknowledge that others, and especially feminist others, had already done thorough critiques of both the symposium and the anti-porn movement in general strikes the feminist reader as insulting. Alex thus presents himself as the omniscient male above the heads of emotionally overwrought feminists. A bad start.

2) Alex would have us believe that Toronto feminists hailed the symposium as our deliverance, writing that 'these interventions were hailed as victories in the Toronto feminist press'. And then he quotes from an article by Susan Cole in *Broadside*. Now, it's well known to most of us that Susan's views are merely one opinion among many (and incidentally, she wasn't even asked to speak at the symposium). Alex's reductionism fits right in with the bourgeois press' construction of a mythical Feminist Bogeywoman, speaking with a single voice to ask for state protection. That is a stereotype, and one which we unfortunately see in *The Body Politic* every month—I was hoping for something a little more accurate from *borderlines*.

3) Having dismissed anti-porn feminists as dupes of the state, Alex goes on to dismiss 'cultural feminism in general'. What the hell does he mean by 'cultural feminism'? He only says, enigmatically, that said cultural feminists do 'nothing to challenge the power of the state'. Well, I'm confused. The state sure does a lot to challenge cultural feminists—cf the censoring of both *Born in Flames* and *Not a Love Story*. I would suggest that we feminists be left to make our own pronouncements on feminism, cultural or otherwise.

4) Violence against women and children is completely trivialized. Alex ridicules attempts to stop male violence by rhetorically asking what the targets of an anti-violence campaign might be—'Men? Terrorism? The police? Competitive sports? Hurricanes?' That's not very funny, Alex. Just because the reactionary US Surgeon General claims to deplore violence against women and children, it does not mean that all attempts to curtail male violence are misguided. And no, violence is not like a hurricane, and no, we don't need men to point this out, thank you. Alex says something about violence being a part of life in primitive societies; are we to understand that we should therefore accept it? Is queerbashing a fact of nature? Women have very good reasons to be concerned about violence, and the manipulation of this concern by the right wing should lead the left to try to come up with *real* answers, real strategies to combat male violence. For male leftists, gay or straight, to write cute little sen-

tences ridiculing women's experience of violence is surely both insulting and politically misguided.

5) Every time that the word 'feminist' is used in the article, beginning with the title, it is in a negative context. By contrast, when Alex wants to refer to that small part of feminism that he happens to agree with, he subsumes it under the larger label of 'sexual liberation movements'. This is manipulating language to disempower the oppressed. Feminism is much larger than sexual liberation: it includes a call for the radical reorganization of the economy and the family, as well as the subversion of sex and gender roles. Men cannot take a few crumbs of the feminist critique of gender, assimilate that into a male-defined sexual liberationism, and throw out the rest of feminism into the garbage. That sort of thing is not just the manipulation of feminist discourse: it also expresses a fundamental contempt for the integrity of women's experience. This contempt comes across in the supercilious tone used by Alex throughout—he does not see that there's something a bit warped in treating all feminists in the same way as we treat the ideologues of the FBI or the morality squad. I can only hope that this sleight-of-hand, which begins as a reasonable critique of some aspects of the women's movement but turns into a complete dismissal and distortion of feminism *per se*, is not an ongoing aspect of the politics of *borderlines*.

Mariana Valverde
Toronto

Alexander Wilson responds:

I'll try to be brief. In the first place, I didn't mean my article to be an attack on feminism. My title—'*The Anti-Porn Roadshow: Feminism as Law and Order*'—was meant as a critique of a widespread (and hegemonic) social movement within feminism that, to put it crudely, sees pornography as a primary cause of sexism, and even rape. I think that analysis is mistaken, and naive, and dangerous in its political ramifications. I also think, as many women do, that it has nothing to do with feminism. But here's the problem: many people in the anti-porn movement call themselves feminist. All of us are going to have to figure out how to deal with what's obviously a changed political moment and a fragmented social movement. Feminism is in crisis both because of challenges from within and because it has had to accommodate itself to a social agenda increasingly defined by the right. Now, we can either respond with our own dogma, or insist on opening up in a theoretical and tentative way the debate about sex, representation, desire and pleasure. Let's face it, we also need a new strategy, for by this time I'm sure it's as obvious to Mariana as to anyone that the few advances women and gay people have made in the past decade are being avenged today by the conservatives who hold power.

But you see, this debate has already been going on within the women's movement itself, and I'm a little amazed at Mariana's dishonesty about that. I'm sure we read many of the same rags and journals, but nowhere in her letter does Mariana take seriously the much good work—and bitter struggles—by women who are critical of the anti-porn



movement (her mention of Varda Burstyn notwithstanding). I'm thinking of the writing of Ellen Willis, Pat Califia, Amber Hollibaugh, Alice Echols, Lisa Steele, Chris Bearchell, Deirdre English, Thelma McCormack, Sue Golding, Gayle Rubin, Carole Vance and many others. The formidable challenge of the lesbian S/M movement has been silenced, as has the pioneering work presented at the Barnard Conference several years ago, now published in the book *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. This is the kind of work I mean when I talk about sexual liberation movements, a term I'm afraid I don't use perjoratively. For one thing, it puts pleasure on the agenda, something regrettably lacking from anti-porn (and much leftist) politics today.

I want to object, too, to Mariana's uncritical reproduction of dominant cultural assumptions about gender. Her letter is littered with references to 'male omniscience', 'the male left', 'male violence', etc. Mariana does in her work precisely what she accuses me of doing vis-à-vis feminism: conflate under one heading everything 'male'. What kind of assumptions underlie this language? What's it supposed to mean? What are the other terms here: 'female non-violence'? 'female ignorance'? What became of the early feminist insistence on abolishing gender as a meaningful category? How has it come to be so easy, within hegemonic feminist discourse today, to make an essential and inevitable connection between a biological state and a complicated set of behaviours? Where is there any recognition on Mariana's part of the considerable opposition within feminism to this position?

I'm sorry that Mariana doesn't treat seriously what for me were the key theoretical issues when I sat down to write this piece a year ago: Why does the anti-porn movement privilege sexual representations over all others? What is consent? What are the causes of sexual violence? More generally, what's the nature—actual and ideological—of violence in this society, and what kind of language do we use to talk about it? What is the status of sexual fantasy? Why aren't we talking about the availability of sex education (and the possibility of sex) for kids?

Women have much to fear in this society, and that danger coalesces around sexuality. Yet the anti-porn movement makes no distinction between sex or violence or domination and their representations. Images get addressed as if they were the equivalent of social relations. This is a problem, it seems to me, and as I suggested in my article I think it has something to do with the peculiarly privileged status of photography in this culture, and the extent to which the image (and the commodity) has penetrated our social relations—and our bodies. I don't see any agreement about the ambiguous relationships between these images and practices. I do see a lot of people getting onto an escalator—legitimated by the truth claims of science—that begins with something like 'images influence attitudes' and ends up with 'images instruct people to commit criminal acts'. (And smoking pot leads to heroin.) There's a lot of work to be done here that would clearly want to say something about advertising, TV and other popular cultural forms, as well as the public relations/public opinion poll apparatus, the scientific establishment, ideologies of objectivity—and yes, violence and hurricanes and S/M too. There is also the very basic work of developing a political economy of the sex industry.

I'm sorry, but I can't accept the data we have as truth. I still have a lot of questions. The anti-porn movement, however, doesn't seem to. They talk in absolutes: about gender, representation, the nature of feminism, and so on. They also seem to know good porn from bad, where I can't tell the difference. I realize that if I don't think in absolutes about these things I run the risk of sounding liberal or anti-feminist. But if we can't be critical of feminism—or socialism for that matter—then I give up.

Unlike Mariana, I don't think these things are settled. I know all kinds of feminists who are trying desperately to air in a speculative way some of the issues I've schematically mentioned here. As for *borderlines*, I hope we can make some contribution to moving the debate forward—or at least out of the rut we're in at present—and to building a sexual oppositional community. To this project, we welcome contributions of any sort.



A listing of academic, political and cultural events, compiled by Kieran Bonner and Peter Fitting.

This section aims to bring together the various events, particularly in Canada, which are not generally publicized.

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS

For political and cultural events we want to provide a publicizing opportunity for those events which, for financial or ideological reasons, do not have access to the major media outlets.

● **AFTER THE TRIUMPH: MICHAEL MITCHELL**—Feb 22-Mar 17, Community Gallery, Harbourfront, Toronto. Commissioned by the NFB, this work chronicles life before and after the Revolution and speaks eloquently of life in Nicaragua. Info: Victor Coleman, 74 Hillsdale Ave E, Toronto, ON M4S 1T5.

● **FLIGHTS OF FANCY: NEWFOUNDLAND YARD ART**—March 1-April 14 at the London Regional Art Gallery.

● **THE ARTISTS' NETWORK OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**—meets every month in Toronto: the first Monday of the month at 7 pm at 10 Trinity Square, behind the Eaton's Centre.

● **PHOTOJOURNALISM IN NICARAGUA**—Feb 22-Mar 31, Loft Gallery, Harbourfront, Toronto. This show, coordinated by Artnica, features photographs focussing on the November elections. It shows how the elections were conducted under war conditions and how the election was portrayed by the Nicaraguan media. Info: Judy Whalen, 74 Hillsdale Ave E, Toronto, ON M4S 1T5, (416)486-0898.

● **CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**—Mar 14-16, University of Waterloo. Community-based economies, appropriate technology and the future. Keynote address by Murray Bookchin. Info: Waterloo Public Interest Research Group, (519)884-9020.

● **NEW MUSIC AMERICA 1986**—The Eighth Annual Festival of New Music, Apr 5-13, Houston, Texas. Info: New Music America, 1964 West Gray St, Ste 227, Houston, TX 77019, USA.

● **SPOKESPEOPLE**—A conference on bicycle advocacy, Apr 26-27, Toronto City Hall Council Chambers. Info: Kate Sutherland at Energy Probe (416)978-7014.

A series of recent developments in Toronto makes me nervous about the continued possibility of an oppositional culture: the renovation of Queen Street, the pressure to extend expressways, intensified land speculation, the megadome itself. This is happening in cities everywhere. What kinds of urban culture are threatened by this capital expansion, and what sort of politics can we make to undo it?

Here's a conference that begins to think about how to effect social change today. The objective is to bring together a range of social movements now working in isolation around one goal: the transformation of urban space and social organization away from the private automobile. Participants will be drawn from community health groups, anti-expressway coalitions, community gardeners, provincial cycling groups, architects and landscapers, municipal cycling committees, environmental organizations, planners, etc.

The Friday evening session will open with a talk by urban theorist Jane Jacobs that will suggest ways forward for grass-roots urban politics. Saturday morning sessions will identify common goals and strategies. Afternoon workshops will focus on the integration of specific tasks such as media work, fundraising, lobbying, educational programs, direct action, community projects, etc.

Bicycle advocacy has traditionally been based on a kind of voluntarism that never sees the big picture. By this time, surely we can draw on a rich and variegated history of urban social movements, as well as the specifically ecological politics underway in much of the rest of North America. Bicycle advocacy is a good example of a politics that is both local and decentralized, and broad in its cultural implications. It's also something achievable.

Alexander Wilson
● **INTERNATIONAL PEACE COLLOQUIUM**—May 8-10, Moncton. L'Université de Moncton organise un colloque international sur la paix. Les participants étudieront notamment: les moyens à prendre pour servir la paix dans le monde, les politiques des Etats et des institutions internationales, les relations entre les superpuissances, la contribution de la politique extérieure du Canada à la défense de la paix, le rôle des établissements éducatifs et culturels, particulièrement celui des universités, le rôle et

l'influence des media. Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements, on voudra bien s'adresser à M. Khaled Belkhdouja, professeur titulaire, Faculté des arts, Université de Moncton (Nouveau-Brunswick) E1A 3E9.

● **THE FIRST TEN YEARS: 1975-1985**—May. A ten-year retrospective of the work of the Off Centre Centre gallery of Calgary.

● **THEATRE FESTIVAL OF THE AMERICAS**—May 22-June 4, Montreal. Two weeks of theatre from around the world, to be run simultaneously with the 16th FESTIVAL QUEBECOIS DU JEUNE THEATRE. Info: Theatre Festival, Box 119, Stn N, Montreal, PQ H2X 3M2.

● **AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL**—May 27-June 1, Roosevelt Hotel, New York City. 27th annual showcase of documentary and short films. Categories include: Art and Culture; Contemporary Concerns; Education and Information; Feature-length Documentary; Film as Art; Mental Health and Guidance; etc. Info: Educational Film Library Association, 45 John St, New York, NY 10038, USA.

● **CIVIL RIGHTS EXHIBITION**—May-Aug, Saskatoon. An exhibition dealing with the development of civil rights in Saskatchewan at the Diefenbaker Centre. There will be a special focus on the rights of native people, particularly of native women.

● **POPULAR MUSIC TODAY**—June 24-29, Montreal. The International Association for the Study of Popular Music is an interdisciplinary association working since 1981 for the development and the promotion of studies on popular music. The Third International Conference will gather researchers from different countries, producers, journalists, DJs and musicians under the theme 'Popular Music Today'. On the program: Jazz, Video, Semiotics, Technology, Music and National Cultures, Current Issues in the Politics of Popular Music, Mainstream Pop, Canadian Music Now. Papers, workshops, video sessions, musicians panels and shows are scheduled. The official languages of the conference are French and English; simultaneous interpretation in French and English will be available. Info: Dr. John Shepherd, Department of Music, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6.

● **CREATING CHOICES THROUGH FEMINIST EDUCATION CONFERENCE**—June 19-23, Seattle, Washington. The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) is holding its 7th annual convention at the University of Washington. The conference coincides with the fifteenth anniversary of the University of Washington Women Studies Program. The convention will include interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and practical sessions on all phases of feminist education and research. The emphasis at the convention will be on the choices created through feminist education in both the classroom and community. Session categories include: Feminist Education; The Arts from a Feminist Perspective; Feminist Research in the Humanities/Social Sciences, and/or Natural Sciences; and Feminist Practice and Theory. The conference will also include a Plenary Session and workshops on and about poor and working-class women. Info: Sydney Daplan, Director of Women's Studies, Program GN-45, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195, USA.

● **SEX AND THE STATE: THEIR LAWS, OUR LIVES**—July 3-6, Toronto. An International Conference on Lesbian and Gay History. From July 1 to July 7, the annual International Gay Association (IGA) conference will be taking place in Toronto, with delegates and observers from around the world. In association with this event an international lesbian and gay history conference is being organized to be held at the University of Toronto. The proposed theme of this conference is 'Sex and the state: their laws, our lives' and it hopes to be able to bring lesbian and gay historians together from around the world for this important event. The topic 'Sex and the state' is seen as encompassing the various ways in which the law, state policy and morality have restricted and controlled lesbian and gay behaviour as well as the ways in which lesbians and gay men have resisted these restrictions and controls in their daily lives. The conference is intended to be an important forum for new research and historical discoveries, as well as for the sharing of information and research. There will be an opportunity for historians from Europe, Australia and New Zealand to participate. Papers and ideas for panels, discussions, slide-shows, films and other presentations at the conference will be solicited. The basic format of the conference will be papers and presentations of approximately 45 minutes in