

XIP

CROSS CULTURAL POETICS  
NO. FIFTEEN / NO. SIXTEEN



*Editor*

Mark Nowak

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# XCP: CROSS CULTURAL POETICS

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*Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics* accepts submissions of poetry, essays, book reviews, and black & white photography. Translations are also welcome if accompanied by original language texts. All submissions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Although reasonable care is taken, *Xcp* assumes no responsibility for the loss of manuscripts.

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Email: [manowak@stkate.edu](mailto:manowak@stkate.edu)

Website Address: <http://www.xcp.bfn.org/>

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**WORD** (XCP NO. 16)

Alavío --> Xenography [175-280]  
(over 100 contributors)

**100.**  
(CONT.)

**STATE / CAPITAL (NO. 15)**



# WORKING CAPITAL

Giles Goodland

Organized labor reacts with horror to the prospect of applying cost-benefit analysis

to overfulfil all this year's plans; (4) strengthen Party leadership and step up ideological and political

laboring to provide glosses for the increasingly unreadable texts of poems

including a full-cycle metal works in Nigeria, coal-mines in Mozambique, power stations

and multi-stage cleaner floats where the pumping action of the impellers permitted the transfer of

the robots into the labor unions, even to the point of collecting union

documents, particularly the works of Comrade Mao Zedong, with great eagerness

giving the work its present form of ninety thousand couplets, which makes it by far the longest

drone marketing, said. 'You can't do the same jobs with drones as you can with manned aircraft

he's slightly robotlike, and she's calling the shots, flinging up her knee so that the slit in her dress flies

never the world. The work is in the world; it never contains the whole thing

I'd better go and put in a day's work. In the evening I'll have supper, get some sleep, and then I'll go back to

paying for work that has already been done. One considerable expense was

she and her co-workers didn't know what 'radiation' meant, and they weren't told anything by the authorities

but the relationship between the organization and knowledge workers, who already number at least one-third of all employees, is

identical to those in industrial control rooms, and then sleep and relax in apartments where we have complete control

he continued his lively presentation with a case study, substantiating his concept that "if venture capital isn't working then

a few minutes' work by a man can be leveraged into nine months of female gestation. Whether

most end up as low-paid, unskilled laborers or as beggars and street acrobats

followed by other labour saving devices and, finally, luxury goods of various types

increase workability, reduce creep, shrinkage and thermal strains

compared with 800 bold/job for workovers followed by stimulation jobs (8 jobs)

leaves the work of theorizing the gender orientation--bi- or otherwise--

to repay her 'travel fee'. When she refused, she was beaten and made to have sex with various men

the labour force is slowing to a crawl, and returns to Capital must now be sustained in creative ways

organisers of yesterday's conference distributed heavy-duty labourer's gloves to delegates.

1978 *National Journal* (U.S.) 30 Dec. 2056: 'Cracking down on the causes of cancer'; 1979 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* 23 June Part T 3 China FE/6149/BII/6: 'Chen Pixian Addresses Hubei CCP Committee on Economic Adjustments'; 1980 *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 40, 34: 'Sei Shonagon's poetic catalogues'; 1981 *BBC*

*Summary of World Broadcasts* 16 Oct Part 1 USSR: 'Soviet-African conference in Moscow'; **1982** *Mining Magazine* Jan. 35: 'Flotation machines'; **1983** *Production Engineering* Aug 7: 'The new Luddites; organized labor'; **1984** *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* 3 Dec.: Part 3 The Far East; B. FE/7516/BII/1: 'Li Lisan's leftist mistakes and self-criticism'; **1985** *UNESCO Courier* Aug. 26: 'Who's who in the Mahabharata?'; **1986** *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 28 Apr. 51: 'NATO strategies, limited resources increase uses for unmanned systems'; **1987** *Adweek* 11 May: 'Revlon's revelers get a big thrill from a little chill'; **1988** *New York Times* 19 June Section 6; 20/1: 'The unflagging artistry of Jasper Johns'; **1989** *Official Kremlin Int'l News Broadcast* 18 Apr: 'Housing area'; **1990** *Times* 13 Mar.: 'Yen mightier than the pen?'; **1991** *Daily Yomiuri* 19 Dec. 8: 'The other Chernobyl'; **1992** *Harvard Business Review* Sept.-Oct. 95: 'The new society of organizations'; **1993** *New Scientist* 13 Nov.31; **1994** *India Currents* 31 May 31 19: 'Silicon Valley entrepreneurs share expertise at historic two-day seminar'; **1995** *Economist* 23 Dec. U.S. Edition: 'Are men necessary?'; **1996** *Swiss Review of World Affairs* 2 Aug.: 'Ecological collapse and poverty in Mexico City'; **1997** *Applied Economics* Vol. 29; 903: 'Ownership patterns for durable goods and financial assets'; **1998** *Structural Survey* Vol. 16, Pg. 146-153: 'Use of scanning electron microscopy in concrete studies'; **1999** *Oil & Gas Journal* 21 Dec. 93: 'Decision trees optimize workover program'; **2000** *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 52 353: 'The epistemic contract of bisexual erasure'; **2001** *Journal of Financial Crime* Vol. 9, 165-177: 'Sex trafficking: a financial crime perspective'; **2002** *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 1 Apr. Vol. 19. 6: 'Remodelling East Asian development'; **2003** *Financial Times* (USA Edition) 26 June 4: 'Celebrities take centre stage in push for change'.

# PHANTOM CAPITAL

Giles Goodland

As with the Spectre gunship operators, Combat Talon operators have a shopping list of improvements

to implement the spirit of the two Central agricultural documents, carry out all policies and mobilize as far as possible the enthusiasm of the

unnamed, mysterious people on your management team, such as the Mr. G. who will join you later as a financial vice

does not know that the equipment has been sold, for the user pays monthly leasing charges as before and the manufacturer remains

solemn and majestic in form, radiant with dazzling light, lofty and magnificent, like the moon amid the stars

from the former regime, tribal chiefs and traditionalist religious leaders trained in non-governmental religious institutions

and that several of the most important documents had been attributed to guerilla leaders who didn't really

have to coincide with what the West calls 'Truth'. He is therefore at liberty, he thinks, to

refer to these instruments as 'phantom capital', because they do not yet exist as capital. They commit the bank to

determine whether the refractions we measured corresponded to changes in the shape of the eye, which produced differences

into a gaze map that contains information about the directions of gaze of the eyes and their disparities

said the purpose of the exercise was to rid the commission of 'ghost workers' who appeared only

inside the narrow cloth tunnel. Bread stuck in the toaster. Honey jars that mysteriously gum themselves

when the wind blows toward Kuwait City, the sky darkens as if a storm were moving across the plain. At times, night appears

as money and facilities, but also invisible capital in the form of

the well-known 'ghost capital' in eastern sichuan province, has started to construct a new 'ghost town' as its county seat

machines keep a person balanced at just the point where they would normally tip over into full sleep, making the visions

work with religious bodies to dispel the widespread belief that giving up one's organs is forbidden

the ghost ring sight allows the binocular use of the eyes to locate targets and index the weapon's front sight on them while

the wax, melted and cooled, acting as a sealant, adds a ghostly quality - everything seems wrapped in a mist

managers may believe this ghost capital unfairly biases downward the reported return on equity of each

experience with a personalized e-mail message, complete with 'daring' photograph, snapped by the Observatory's new e-postcard machine

starting with \$1 million of imaginary capital, placing buy and sell orders for stocks through a virtual stock exchange

a few points to note are (1) oil is a symbol of the holy spirit

it is not a murder mystery, although it does contain murders, and it is not a ghost story, although it does feature ghosts.

**1978** *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 6 Feb. 236: 'Special Operations Wing faces diverse challenges'; **1979** *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* 23 June; FE/6149/BII/6: 'Chen Pixian addresses Hubei CCP Committee on economic adjustments'; **1980** *Harvard Business Review* Mar. 28: 'A Business plan financing device'; **1981** *New York Times* 7 May, D; 10/2: 'Lease contracts as investment'; **1982** *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 42 605: 'Miao-shan on stone'; **1983** *Manches-*

*ter Guardian Weekly* 18 Dec. 12: 'Neither bled'; **1984** *Nutshell* (US) Spring 63/1; **1985** *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 85 696: 'Language and logic in ancient China'; **1986** *American Banker* 23 Apr. 1: 'Equity capital levels rise in '85 as asset growth lags far behind'; **1987** *Science* 3 July 73: 'Local retinal regions control local eye growth'; **1988** *Science* 11 Mar. 1309/1: 'Neural model of adaptive hand-eye coordination for single postures'; **1989** *Standard* (Nairobi) 1 Aug. 3/1; **1990** *Newsday Mag.* 22 July 23: 'Easing the pain'; **1991** *Time Magazine* 18 Mar. 28: 'Kuwait; chaos and revenge'; **1992** *Xinhua General Overseas News Service* Dec. 28: 'Guangdong fosters market economy'; **1993** *Xinhua General Overseas News Service* 8 July: 'County constructs 'ghost town''; **1994** *Science* 3 Sept. 37/1; **1995** *New Straits Times* (Malaysia) 9 Nov. 8: 'New ways needed to boost cadaver donors'; **1996** *Soldier of Fortune* Mar. 77/2; **1997** *Herald* (Glasgow) 23 Apr. 21: 'All fired up over ceramics'; **1998** *New England Economic Review* 1 July. 35: 'Economic profit and performance measurement in banking'; **1999** *Time International* 10 Nov. 6: 'Traveller's advisory'; **2000** *PC Magazine* 19 Dec. 79: 'Stock democracy; company business and marketing'; **2001** *Africa News* 30 Nov.: 'Ghana; the divine shepherd'; **2002** *Daily Yomiuri* (Tokyo) 3 Feb. 20: 'A lightweight new read from the 'Queen of Crime''.

# INTERVIEW WITH GRACE LEE BOGGS

July 20, 2004

Boggs Center

3061 Field Street

Detroit, Michigan

Interview by Sun Yung Shin

...This is a very, very interesting issue, the editor is Russell Young, who is Chinese and the associate editor was Glen Omatsu who is Japanese and Glen is an activist who came out of the movement 1968, 1970 and he teaches now in California. Glen is very interested in the question of education and they put out a wonderful, wonderful volume last time called "Asian American Pedagogy." We have them for sale at the Boggs Center. There's a lot of promise there, with the things you want to do. You can almost start out and make it what you want it to be.

I have no idea where it's [the Asian American socio-political movement] all going but in this issue Scott Hiroshige who teaches at U Michigan and who is on the Boggs board has an article about how we use the Vincent Chin case. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary remembrance that we did two years ago to begin to figure out what we could do. And I think that the way Scott looks at it is very interesting because you can see how you can create an event and out of the event see who is particularly interested in the things that you are interested in and then from there to use the event as a way of knowing, a way of discovering. Because you can't discover just through reading, just through talking. You have to create something and see how people respond and who there is in the community and that's what we did here in 2002 and it was really amazing how we were able to bring a whole lot of people from different communities together, we were able to not only involve the people who were involved in the case in '82, who are now in their 60s but we were able to bring younger people in, and raise questions in their mind and let them explore their identity and race. I only have one copy; you might want to look it up and order a copy.

You might want to find some opportunity next time you come over to talk to the folks here about how they've been doing things... actu-

ally my own work has been mostly in the black community. It was only after *Living for Change* was published that the Asian American communities sort of discovered me [laughter]. So they began asking me to come and speak and I had to find out more about what was happening. You read about Detroit Summer in *Living For Change*. Two years ago on the opening night of Detroit Summer, we did this remembrance for Vincent Chin. And then during Detroit Summer we worked with little Chinese kids from Chinatown and had them working with the little African American kids in the neighborhood and planting Chinese vegetables and all that sort of thing.

And then from there, we began looking at different generations of Asian Americans in the city and we found that the older generations which had moved out to the suburbs, and then there were their children who were going to universities, particularly University of Michigan and who wanted to get back into the city, and like all the kids they didn't want the suburbs the way their parents had wanted. And then there were new immigrants like the Hmong. And now we just finished a project with the Hmong. Are you going back to Minneapolis soon? On Saturday we're going to have a closing ceremony for the project that we worked on with the Hmong kids, if you were here you would be very welcome to come. It was a garden project, it was just the beginning, we just started this year we didn't know how to go about it. And I met with the youngsters on Thursday. They're very young, they're very beautiful, this whole lot--they still need to get a sense of where they are in the city and so forth, most of them are high school kids. But I think it has an enormous amount of promise.

SYS: How segregated are the young people of Detroit?

GLB: In Detroit Summer they're beginning to rebuild. I don't know how it is in the schools. In St. Paul there's a very large Hmong community and there's a very large community on the east side here, of the city, and I doubt that they have any relationships. I think it would be the exceptional young person who would have relationships outside the community. You have to learn more about that from the others; I haven't been working with them.

SYS: What other the other plans for the center? Do you do different things in the winter?

GLB: Detroit Summer started as a 3-week project in 1992. And during that period it started out with community gardens to reestablish contact with the earth, painting murals, and intergenerational discussion. These still are the basic programs of Detroit Summer but since then it has expanded into a number of other projects. They do poetry for social change, they do workshops--it's wonderful to see the number of young people who are into poetry at this moment.

And we're establishing a media center here, and then we're also working on what they call Back Alley Bikes which is a program to involve young people into choosing a used bike and repairing it themselves and then earning the bike so that we have bike transportation in the neighborhood and that helps to create the community. And those three programs: workshops for social change, Back Alley Bikes, and Loud and Clear which is the media program are year round, whereas the intensive Detroit Summer program only lasts about a month.

A number of the young people participate in slam contests. There are quite a few of them going to these; one of them has been with Detroit Summer since she was fourteen. She just joined the Peace Corps and she won the state of Michigan slam contest and I imagine there's a lot going on in Minneapolis, also a lot of groups doing things. Our opening ceremony for example on Sunday was mostly poets from the community doing wonderful pieces. There are a lot of groups--they have a huge network. What this workshop has done mainly has taken young people who want to become poets and work them.

For the media center, right now what happened is that we were very lucky--a huge space almost as big as Intermedia Arts [in Minneapolis] which we'd been given for Detroit Summer youth space and they've been holding fundraisers there for Loud and Clear. They have very good contacts with people who are disk jockeys and poets in the city. And they had a fundraiser--they raised \$3,000. I don't know whether you feel that same sense in Minneapolis or not. I do water aerobics at the recreation center near here and this morning I was talking to a

young woman who cleans the lockers. She took out a notebook and I said what are you doing and she said, "I'm writing poetry." And I said, "That's wonderful how long have you been doing that?" And she said, "I've been doing that for quite a while would you like to come to the workshop?" And I gave her the information so she could do it. It's just amazing the number of people you see around young people just feel they can do. Are you a rapper poet?

SYS: No, but there's a similar movement in the Twin Cities involving mostly young people of color.

GLB: One of the things that they're doing, the space has a huge courtyard. Every year people come over from Macalester. Do you know Karin? San Aguilar. Karin and her friend Tracy Orr who teaches at St. Cloud, they bring over a group of students. They started working on this huge mural in the courtyard, which is bigger than that wall. And they're planting a garden, so that's one of the things they're doing. They're fixing up the whole place and trying to find out raise money for all sorts of equipment.

We started soliciting for youth bikes and now there's a room in this building, which has the square footage that is probably bigger than this house, and the whole floor is filled with used bikes. And you tell kids in the neighborhood that they can choose the bike they want and they learn how to repair it. It's really exciting to watch. I was just amazed because the moment the word gets around, people want to give bikes, the whole floor was covered with bikes, and it was just amazing.

SYS: You have some good relationships with professors. Do you work with other universities?

GLB: Antioch College in Yellow Springs used to bring students. The guy, one of them went on to teach at Penn State and the other one has gone on to teach in New England so last year we didn't have anyone from Antioch University. And what happens also is that at California Santa Cruz one of the sociology professors has one of the choices that you can make for your fieldwork is to come and work with Detroit Summer. So last year we had a guy stay six months and

this year we have another guy who is working for six months and is doing his fieldwork.

SYS: Is that only possible because you're a non-profit organization?

GLB: We have a track record now, we've been in existence long enough, what happens is that over the last seven or eight years particularly I've been going around speaking at colleges and speaking on Detroit Summer and writing a column on Detroit so young people will come on their own. As a matter fact, here is one of the articles from the column on university students and Detroit Summer—you can have that.

SYS: I was very interested in "The American Manifesto" in your book, is that something you make available to people?

GLB: I'll take you upstairs—I have lots of materials available. That was written in 1982 and the main thing was to begin to point out that we need to begin creating at the grassroots levels to create communities. It was very clear from about 1980 on, that it was almost impossible to get anything done at the national level, that campaign financing and the number of lobbyists, the control of multinational corporations means that just about everybody in Washington is in the pocket, but at the local level we can begin trying to create some sort of democracy.

These [articles] were written for the North American Labor History Conference at Wayne State University, the one called Coming Full Circle. It starts with saying that there were six ideas which Marxism was based which are no longer self-evident truths: the first that the workers are the only social revolutionary force; the second thing is that the first thing you do seize power and then everything else will be worked; the third is—and these are not in the right order—that democracy is only a bourgeois concept; the fourth is that science has the final truth; and there's the idea that productivity is trying to increase and that what we need is single party to give leadership. These are tenets which we as Marxists took for granted as self-evident truths for much of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And when I

joined the radical movement 1941 this is what I accepted and what I studied and I read Marx and Lenin and Engels like crazy. I'll show you my library. Because that's where I thought the truth was and it wasn't until the '60s that I seriously began to question this.

And I questioned it for two reasons, one, in 1963 my husband Jimmy Boggs. I'm going to show you a video of him—he wrote a book called *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook*—he had a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of it last year—and he noticed that in the plant whenever workers asked radicals what is socialism they would stutter and stammer. So one morning he said to me, “What did Marx mean by socialism?” And I thought and I said, “Marx developed the idea of communism as a utopia or an idea toward which we should striving in which each according to his needs and gave according to his abilities.” But he recognized that according to society you had to have abundance and he was writing in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when material scarcity was everywhere and he saw the capitalists as competing amongst themselves that he didn't think they would be able to develop the productive forces to the point that communism would be possible. So he created this stage called socialism which is workers' power during which the workers take power and plan production and develop the productive forces to the point where you could have communism.

And suddenly when Jimmy heard me say this, he said, “That's why they stutter and stammer because Marx's premise was that the capitalists couldn't do this and in fact the capitalists done it.” They have taken us to the point where we have more than we can use, they have created consumerism, they're destroying the biosphere and so forth and so on. So that's the first thing that allowed society, the second thing was that Marxist scenario was based so much on victims replacing villains—that the oppressed replacing the oppressors. And what had happened after or during WWII was that human beings had split the atom and you could not say that all the evil was on the side of the capitalists. And Einstein said the splitting of the atom has changed everything but the human mind and thus we drift toward catastrophe. And so then the idea that you had to have transformation of people not only of the society, but the people, began to emerge.

And what happened in 1967 was that rebellions burst out in Detroit and I could see that some idea that somehow that the idea that the people of the streets could just take over and create a new society had a fundamental error in it. In 1967 I had been in the radical movement for almost thirty years but I had never seen the need to distinguish a rebellion and revolution and I began to understand that a revolution requires tremendous step forward in terms of social responsibility and consciousness. And it requires beginning to create new values and new ways of living that are the basis of the new society.

So these are the things that helped me to go beyond Marxism and made me understand that the movement politics, the movement activism, as began in the '60s in particular involved this idea of transformation. I tell you this because this--I think it's important to talk to me is because I've lived through these two periods. When I was going to school, when I was going to college in the 1930s the people who taught me were going to school in the same time that Darwin was writing the *Origin of Species*, they were part of 19<sup>th</sup> century science. I was going to school with them and they were teaching me and I realized as I went out in the world that the world was changing enormously. I want you to realize, to think about this, as you think about what you're going to do.

At this point, for example, one of my main interests is the school system. I was very much a part of the community control of schools movement in the '60s. This was part of the black power movement. As I watched what was happening I realized we had to go beyond changing who was in charge of schools. At that time even though Detroit was becoming majority of black the superintendent was white, the school board was white, so people thought we had to change the color, but changing the color didn't change the way we thought about the school system. And the school system is actually structured to supply people for the American system, to climb the ladder of success based on individual ambition and so forth. But we are reaching the point, which Glen Omatsu makes very clear in the issue on Asian American pedagogy, where this idea of teacher-directed learning and one-way learning--everything that we learn from brain science and from society is that people learn best when they're active, when they're creative when they working with other

people and not just on an individual level. So we have a huge challenge in the field of education which is in terrible crisis and Asian Americans have an enormous contribution to make to that partly because so many of us which you'll see from that book, that issue, have done so much work on this and also because there are so many Asian Americans who are in education.

The column I just sent in this morning is entitled "Schools Cry Out for Change" and the crisis is reaching the state of almost of emergency in the school system. One of the things that is happening for example is that the loss of students in the last ten years. The enrollment in the Detroit public schools has gone down 40,000. Last fall 6,500 students didn't return and in February 5,800 didn't return and each represents a loss of \$7,800 in state funding. The result is budget deficits, layoffs, and closing of schools. And they can't hold a board meeting here in Detroit because the protests are so many. So the thing is reaching a boiling point with the kids leaving, with the teachers leaving. And all the politicians can do is struggle over who is in charge, we're going to fire the superintendent, we're going to hire a superintendent, the state replaces democratically elected board with an appointed board.

But the crisis is going deep—this is where creating a movement becomes so important, to create a movement you have to have some concept of something new to put in its place. What we need obviously is some more participatory, some more democratic method of education where it's not all down on the teacher. But that is also discouraging teachers. I've been writing about this in the *Michigan Citizen* for the last three or four years, and this by the way is the speech that I gave at the Martin Luther King celebration, two pamphlets you might want to buy.

SYS: It's the same situation in Minneapolis but there are no protests—but I don't understand why.

GLB: Maybe you haven't had enough layoffs yet. See you never can tell. This is a national situation and if it breaks out someplace it can break out nationally. Personally I think this is where the next movement is going to come from. The last movements have been mostly

identity movements but this is an institutional movement within the institutions where on the one hand it's possible for the teachers to see themselves again as a vocation and not just in terms of a job. The zero tolerance against the students is also creating a lot of dissatisfaction and there the whole community is involved, there's the crime element, the prison business. The business of making a paradigm shift is very difficult to do and what we need are people who can be talking about this, writing poetry about it, thinking about it, because what people lack is a vision of something different.

SYS: Jane's sister works in the school system in Detroit and she says the teachers live outside the city and that the students feel despair because their white teachers hate them and resent them.

GLB: There's some really good stuff that's been written, Postman's books. I refer to the Postman book in one of the articles. There are people at the university level who recognize this now, we are in contact with a number of them, at this point, what we did—have you ever seen *The Vagina Monologues*? Do you know them? We decided about two years ago to bring together some teachers and people studying to be teachers to think about what form we would use and we took the example of *The Vagina Monologues* and created *The Freedom Schooling Monologues* and we presented those on June 18<sup>th</sup>. We did a celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of freedom schooling down south in Mississippi and presented these monologues.

SYS: Do you work with the teachers' union?

GLB: For example, one of the members of our board teaches at University of Detroit and she brings her students—every Thursday night we have an intergenerational discussion and her students are asked to prepare the food for a community dinner, we have about fifty, sixty people and following dinner we all talk. So that's one source.

SYS: One last question before we watch the video. My friend Mark Nowak is a professor at the College of St. Catherine in Minneapolis and he teaches *Living for Change*. His students often want to know why you don't mention Vincent Chin in your book.

GLB: Well, it's simple, I wasn't involved in the case, I wasn't part of the Asian American community. I've been part of the black community. But now people are starting to find me [laughs].

[Grace Lee Boggs then showed us, in answer to my question of how to maintain one's ideals, goals, and to not give in to despair, a memorial video of her late husband, Jimmy Boggs in which he says, among other sage things, "It ain't going to be no cheap-ass victory!"]

# GOT ANY CHANGE?

Amiri Baraka

Instead of this street with its wasted brothers  
Asleep on the corners So  
the crackjackers Have to step over them with the cuss out laugh

Of the soon to be wasted Themselves.

Instead of this street

In a city, where aint nothin Pretty, but the people

Who keep on standing & really laughing &

actually underneath our night make love to each other even if they  
fight

A city ruled by a Negro

Ghoul, a sepia Lieutenant Nazi with license to fool, a looney Tunes  
coon, so skilled

At deception, everything he thinks Is a lie, and he has had his

Snoring altered to resemble Casual remarks

We are in NewArk, the BrickCity, Like I sd

Where only the people Are pretty

& they have a hell of a

time being that

Ruled by his dishonor, the May Whore Who has crowned  
Hese'f Emperor, His Majesty The Rat.

Ghost brain

In a rubber brown

"Black Man" costume Like TB spit.

He sick, always laughing

To cover the fact he has no face.

& Like post DallasJFK look for his brain aint even a trace

So we have climbed the ladder to this, where white folks Seem to  
recede to the margins of our pain, and their

Black substitutes are prostitutes and clinically insane.

We are being taught about classes and class struggle

& the people of whatever color are not what they look like

but exactly how they act, a cold fact

We are in a city ruled by a mad nigger punk a Mobutu, Abacha  
Backward petty bourgeois Heels and Scum

Who serve imperialism & Corporate rule,

Who hate Black People Any poor people

They are well made tools

We must overthrow

These negro asst. beasts Loathsome things

For whom evil is sexual release

Are they puppets? Ask them...

They'll tell you they aint no such thing They're just very very smart,  
you know, They get to help the rulers pull their strings.

Negroes like Dull Jimmy, from the most backward

Sector of the black petty bourgeoisie, a millionaire slum lord on a  
first name basis with international murderers and thieves.

When he leaves office, they'll find a lawn in the suburbs, where he  
can stand a traitorous spook, grinning in stone. Immortalized by our  
enemies as permanently useful



## **MOVEMENT OF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS**

Kendra Fehrer

Photographs by Lisa Arrastía and Mark Nowak

The Movement of Unemployed Workers La Matanza must be thought of in relation to the growing network of movements around the world, most recently manifesting their resistance to a set of policies loosely referred to as “neoliberal globalization”. The Zapatistas in Mexico, the Landless Peasant’s Movement (MST) in Brazil, anti-privatization organizing in South Africa, anti-dam resistance in India, and trans-sector organizing in Seattle. The “popular uprisings” in Argentina during December of 2001 are only the glossiest parts of a detailed picture of long-term social unrest and rebellion.

In Argentina, it is commonly accepted that the economic crisis of 2001 was the direct result of macroeconomic policies of the nineties, executed with exaggerated precision by former Minister of the Economy Domingo Cavallo, and ex-President Carlos Saul Menem. Both Cavallo and Menem pertain to a socioeconomic class who magnified their personal wealth with the concentration of resources, income, employment, and opportunity to an increasingly small sec-

tor of the population. The corresponding poverty, unemployment, and hopelessness extended to a growing majority. By the mid 1990s, among the marginalized communities in the periphery of Buenos Aires and in the interior of the country, the displaced were organizing against the privatization, de-industrialization, and economic concentration.

One of the foci of resistance was La Matanza, a county of 1.3 million that shares a border with the national capital. Crossing under the highway that separates the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires from *Provincia* (the term referring to the marginal urban area outside the jurisdiction of Buenos Aires), one is suddenly transported into another dimension. Instead of the engraved French balconies of apartment buildings, tall city sycamores, and urban chic walking quickly to and from work, one faces the chaos of busses gushing fumes, precarious houses, and traffic lights no one obeys. The accompanying social problems in La Matanza—unemployment, drugs, violence, neglected infrastructure, poor education system—are not like the problems in many de-industrialized cities throughout the US.

The Movement of Unemployed Workers (MTD) La Matanza, originally encompassing a mobilization of tens of thousands of residents mobilized in self-defense against the politicians, elite and the police, has given birth to various other organizations. The current MTD La Matanza is based in their community center, in the neighborhood “La Juanita,” referred to in the following interview.

Since the time of the interview, the location of the community center has changed. On 11 September, 2001, the *compañeros* of the MTD were occupying an abandoned primary school. The school would become their new community center, which they hoped would later host the radical primary school that had been forming as an idea in their minds. Currently, the community center has legal status as a cooperative: “Educational Center for the Formation of Community Culture”. The center houses a bakery and a sewing workshop. For the last three years, a neighborhood market place assembles in the courtyard for two hours every Monday through Saturday. In May 2004, the community nursery school opened with 35 students and plans for opening the primary school next year.

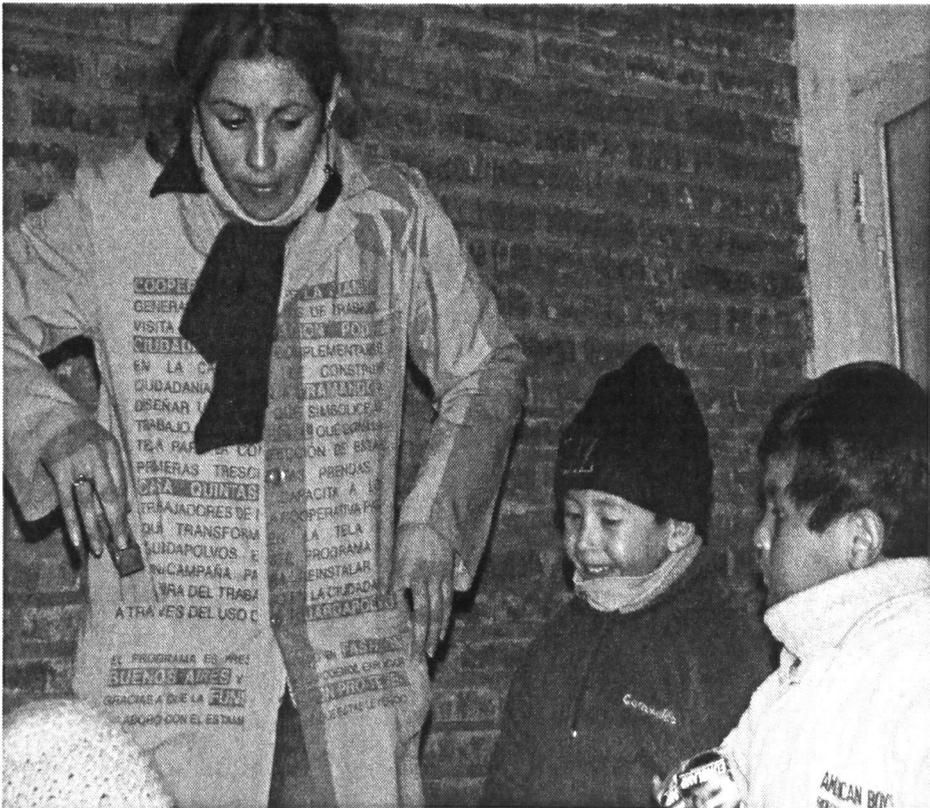


A visitor to the center will without a doubt be impressed by the bustling crowd of children, adults, neighbors, and other visitors, but may not immediately recognize all the layers of this intentionally constructed political process. The following interview gives light to the historical and ideological foundations of the MTD La Matanza, and a greater appreciation of its richness.

In May 2003, after much dreaming, planning, and hard work, the school of the Movement of Unemployed Workers La Matanza opened as a nursery school for 35 neighborhood children. Parents were not charged a matriculation fee, but rather required to commit to participating in the educational community that meets every Wednesday to discuss and plan the functioning of the school. The

three teachers are trained in education and psychology, and rely on the support of volunteer teachers to enrich the regular content with English, physical education, and periodic art programs. The teaching team, other teachers from around the country, several psychologists, and the participants of the MTD meet together every Saturday to collectively construct the new pedagogy and methodology to be used in the school.

The productive and educational projects of the MTD are explicit efforts to create alternatives to capitalist logic. “We have been beaten down in the political and economic arena, so we have taken our battle to the cultural arena,” says Toty Flores, one of the leaders within the MTD. Engaging in the “cultural battle” means causing a subjective change in themselves and their neighborhood: deconstructing the internalized logic of capitalism and militarization, and replacing it with a new logic based on principles of autonomy, cooperation, and ecology. The school is one way forward.



UELA PRIMARIA:  
ADULTO CON 8<sup>vo</sup>  
DE LUÑ. A VIER.  
13<sup>as</sup> Hs. A 17Hs.  
ATIS TÍTULOS  
CIALES.  
OTATE, MAYO  
2004.



## DIARIO DE REDES DEL NORTE

Encuentro de Desocupados 1997  
Interview with Toty Flores, of the MTD La Matanza,  
and Juan Golzman, radio broadcaster.

*The unemployed person isolates himself, believes himself to be at fault for his situation. Héctor "Toty" Flores explains how to counter the results of this feeling, making us think about the reality produced in a plain that knows no borders.*

*Juan Golzman: What did you do when you arrived to Buenos Aires from [the northern province of] Entre Ríos?*

Toty Flores: I was a metallurgist. Then, technological advancements and computerization increased the competition. It's been more or less six years since I stopped working for the union.

*What factory did you work in?*

I worked in the metallurgic factory of La Matanza, in Acindar, and in the later years I began to prostitute myself in different places, through an employment agency.<sup>1</sup>

*Have you always worked in labor rights?*

In one of the factories I was a union representative, in others I was an organizer but without being in the union because it was a rather complicated affair. The metallurgist union is very repressive.

*How was your position with the union during that time period?*

From the outside, everything looked well organized with powerful unions. But in practice, this wasn't true. The deception was huge. You were more upset with the union bureaucracy than with the boss himself, because the traitors were your own people. So from the beginning there was a lot of hate toward the union structures. The negotiations were done behind the workers' backs.

*What do you remember of this syndicalism?*

Rucci was in the Central Workers's Union (CGT), but already there were signs of what was to happen: he was a sinister person that did not represent the workers' needs, but was after his own interests. It was all a learning experience. We participated in semi-clandestine activities in the factory. We had to be careful of our own representatives. Going to the union meant being fired.

*How do you see current unions?*

Today, there is a search. We have met with people in all sectors. We were with people from the Argentine Worker's Center (CTA)<sup>2</sup> where there appeared to be an attempt to rethink a non-corporate syndicalism, but it is still just a discussion. It hasn't become anything concrete, in terms of organization and action. It's interesting that the unemployed can affiliate with the CTA, but there is not a politic around this. We had some popular kitchens in an area where they were supposedly going to help us, but in the end for various reasons, they left us hanging.

Basically, we don't have very high expectations of unions. In fact, we don't have high expectations of anyone, including the political parties. We learned that we have to resolve the problems ourselves, autonomously, with our own initiative, together with those who stand beside us, like indigenous *compañeros*, and those that fight for human rights. The problem of exclusion encompasses many sectors, including students who are graduating from the university and finding that they have no place to practice what they learned.

No one owns the truth. We have our own initiatives, but that doesn't mean they are the best.

*How do you get by still without a job?*

Well, my wife and I began to do repair work with a sewing machine. We are underemployed, with all that that implies for someone who is used to earning a stable, fixed salary. Everything that has to do with relationships changes. You have to go negotiate for yourself, whereas

before you would go and fight for all your *compañeros*. Everything becomes an individual matter. This was a cultural change that we still have a hard time accepting. You stop being the “head” of the household, in the sense of being the one who maintains the house. It distorts everything. The relationships with friends also rupture. You can’t plan a life if you’re saying “Sunday I’ll visit you and bring a chicken” when you don’t know if you’ll have cash for transportation, let alone the chicken. All of your life empties of content. To be unemployed is to be socially nothing. You even lose your relationship with the grocer, who no longer lets you run an account.

*How did the movement arise?*

The movement arose like the majority of organizations during that time, more or less three years ago, when there was a high peak in unemployment. It was a year in which about 400,000 public employees were laid off by Cavallo’s plan<sup>3</sup>. We got together accidentally, for a neighborhood problem. A lot of us weren’t able to pay the electric bill... about 80%. And about as many were unemployed. The problem wasn’t electricity or gas, but a problem of unemployment, and in the assemblies we were having we talked the issue over and we decided to create an organization of the unemployed.

We got together with other unemployed workers from other areas, mostly those from *Zona Sur*, Quilmes, and La Plata, and from there we launched the Movement of Unemployed Workers, La Matanza. There was a big debate about whether we should create an organization with leaders or not. We resolved that we had to let the movement develop, organizing ourselves from below. We talked about autonomy, horizontality, and other criteria.

*How were the first meetings?*

There was a lot of anguish, with each person sharing what had happened to him and her... and not having the tools and solutions was terrible. It really brought us down. Today we have transformed this anguish into creative things, as we had always thought to do but sometimes things don’t work out. If there is a birthday, we all go to the Central Market and buy what we can to celebrate. The idea

was to not keep lacking and missing things. Some of the *compañeros* were even considering suicide. But the best is when you can finally say: they brought me to this, it is not an individual problem, but a collective, societal problem. There are sons of bitches that plan that I am this way and I am rebelling against it. I am going to continue building my own life project, I am going to revert their plan. "WE HAVE THE DIGNITY TO SAY THAT THEY HAVE NOT BROKEN US!"

*Let's clarify that these are not self-help groups...*

No, psychology is interesting, but fundamentally the struggle occurs in the political arena, against a class that wants to eliminate us. We take on other projects from the starting point of our rebellion.

*What does your family think?*

Ahh, the family is a little complicated because one wants one's kids to know that the needs we are experiencing are not because he is lazy, but because he hasn't accepted certain things. It is a tremendous source of pride to know that one's children understand the validity of the struggle and that they actually accompany us trying to build the movement. It doesn't appeal to everyone, but we can show that we are parents trying to change the world. We may not reach that day ourselves, but when that day comes, it will all be different. We have the dignity to say that they have not broken us. We struggle for a world for our children and our grandchildren and we're going to die doing so because we have no way out. The support of the family is vital in these things, not that they help you but that they understand you.

*Have the number of participants increased in recent years?*

The numbers go up with the unemployment statistics. It is difficult organizing the unemployed worker, because he doesn't admit he is unemployed. There is a particular stigma that you can't really explain. They think, maybe they find some kind of work and then they stop coming to the meetings and supporting the organization. We start from the position that the "unemployed worker" is a global

phenomenon and is here to stay, that a third of the world “sobra,” and so we’re working with the consequence. We wish it would resolve itself, but we’re convinced that this system benefits from having so many unemployed people and it is not going to change on its own. We have to struggle, to organize ourselves to change things, and to construct alternative forms... which is why we are so interested in what is happening in Brazil with the Landless Peasants’ Movement. (MST).

*Why is having work important?*

One’s work is one’s social identity. Being unemployed is being unable to relate to others. Socially, you’re a bum. The problem is yours and not a societal problem.

*What alternatives are you looking for?*

We’ve tried sharing *changas*<sup>4</sup> as well as work the land, because to us it seems that the problem of hunger in the neighborhood could be resolved with community gardens. We also intend to start various small-enterprises. We haven’t changed our aspirations of having a dignified life. We don’t want to be business people, rather we want to work in order to eat. A life where our kids can go to school, far removed from drugs and other social ills. We don’t have a future, really. Perhaps one day we could win the lottery, but the future is pretty dark not just for us but for our children as well.

*How many organizations like this do you know?*

Well, two years ago we had a gathering in La Matanza and there were over twenty organizations of the unemployed. There were about 300 *compañeros* from all over the country: from the neighborhoods in the provinces to Cultural-Co, in Jujuy. The problem is that not everyone stayed full time, because some found *changas*. Another problem was the whole deal with *Planes Trabajar*, what we called *asistencialist*.<sup>5</sup> There are *compañeros* that organized around these *planes*, which is fine because at least they’re doing something, but to us, it doesn’t seem like a way out. The *Planes* are manipulated by the political processes and it is difficult to avoid it. We had a lot

of debates about this.

The *compañeros* in Jujuy, from Cultral-Co, are those that put us on the alert. They told us, look, this is terrible because they're just "managing" our misery. They're offering 20 positions to 200 *compañeros*, and you have to decide which of the twenty get the jobs. You end up being the villain. This happened with us and the neighbors almost killed each other. There are *compañeros* who look like they're waiting for another to leave, so that they get his plan. All this breaks the ties of solidarity we've been working so hard to construct. On the contrary, it is the most horrible expression of individualism. There isn't a requirement to be unemployed in order to participate in the meetings and the decisions. There are *compañeros* who are doing temp work and still come to the meetings, and of course there are the students that work with us. In this moment, there are Social Work students participating in the meetings and in some decisions, others no. For example, whether to block the road is a decision that we make, and we take responsibility for.

*How do you spread the word about your activities?*

We have an hour-long radio program, once a week. We've had incredibly interesting interviews with people from all over the world. A lot of the conflicts in the neighborhood come up. The *compañeros* who run the program, it's amazing, the minute something happens in the neighborhood, we get on the radio and start spreading the word about the activities. We have a web page that some of the Social Science students created. We publish our bulletins and monthly newsletter there. The newsletter doesn't have an official position, but rather basic principles we all agree with, and then each person has their own ideas and focus. Some *compañeros* tell us that in practice, we're full of contradictions, and we say yes, that's the way our movement is and we're not going to deny it. It's difficult not having a homogenous discourse, but showing something other than what we are wouldn't be real. Of course, they're not huge contradictions, each one knows what side of the line they're on, and from there we all have our own way of embodying the struggle.

*What do you think about the closing of the Phillip factory, here in the area?*

We didn't have a response to this. With the Alparatas factory, we're seeing about doing some activities. They're closing down lots of factories around here. It surprised us how quickly it all happened... we thought at least something would work out. One expects these things to happen, but not so quickly! One has to take into account the impact not just on those who lost their jobs, but also tertiary parties. The factory workers bring money to the neighborhood, to the grocer, to the carpenter who sometimes the grocer employs... it's all a chain that permits the multiplication of work.

*What type of activities does the MTD do?*

We're organizing a number of talks with indigenous *compañeros*, and a number of trips to the interior of the country. We want to organize another meeting for May. We're up to our ears in our own tasks and problems happening in the neighborhood, for example the case of 50 neighbors who have problems with their mortgage. They came to see us to see if we could help. We put them in contact with lawyers and from there we began working to organize the neighborhood. We are organizing around the possibility of constructing a cooperative land settlement, that allows each person to build their own place, generating not just homes, but also work, based on solidarity. We're counting on Idelcoop to help us. Our community center is based in the neighborhood "La Juanita."

*Thank you Toty Flores, from the Unemployed Workers Movement, La Matanaza.*

**(Footnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> La Matanza is a municipality in the Province of Buenos Aires, bordering the west of the national capital of Buenos Aires. Colloquially known as "*provincia*," the peripheral municipalities and cities pertain to an entirely separate government from the autonomous city of Buenos Aires they border. The area to the south and west of the city is characterized by fewer public resources, more violence, and more poverty; the opulent area to the north hosts the presidential residence.

<sup>2</sup> The CTA is a rebel offshoot of the CGT, formed to avoid the corruption and clientelism of the CGT.

<sup>3</sup> Domingo Cavallo was Minister of the Economy during the majority of the 1990s. Educated at Harvard University, where he currently teaches, he oversaw the transformation of the national economy characterized by pegging the Argentine *peso* to

the US dollar, privatizing the major national industries, and releasing restrictions on foreign investment and speculation, in the name of economic growth.

<sup>4</sup> *Changas* are short-term jobs, often manual labor in construction, moving, and other day labor that pays a minimal income under the table.

<sup>5</sup> In 1997, the government increased the quantity of federally distributed subsidies, called *Planes Trabajar*, to an unprecedented 200,000. In 2001 the amount of *Planes* would increase again, this time to 2 million. The *Planes Trabajar* provide US\$200 a month to unemployed heads of household, in accordance with varied work requirements; the current monthly subsidy provided is \$150 pesos or US\$50. Neither in 1997 nor currently has the subsidy provided met the estimated basic needs basket. *Asistencialism* is the act of giving assistance, often used by people in the MTD La Matanza to refer to palliatives that provide just enough support to get by while undermining motivations and drives to make real changes





# SUPER CITIZEN

Caracas, redistributing the city  
Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber

Pointed local interventions or massive demonstrations of hundreds of thousands that move through the city have produced an atmosphere which makes it clear that massive societal changes in Venezuela have been spurred.

These changes, popularly called “the process,” are part of an articulation of bottom-up organizations and the government of Hugo Chavez. This alliance of the long-established community organizations and the state apparatus have begun to convert concepts of social justice and “globalization from below” into an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. The alliance has formed a unique moment of participatory democracy in Venezuela (symbolized most strongly in the new constitution) and aims at creating equitable social relations on a national level. For the urban territories of Caracas they mean an exemplary new order of power and property relations.

New political subjects like local community organisations, grassroot movements or the newly founded national union UNT carry banners through the streets with slogans like “Workers are the constructors of the country,” “The Bolivarian workers are in the front line of the revolution,” or “Self-organised media is the basis of freedom of expression!”

The original photographic images of these events have been digitally altered. The architecture and the city scape have been sketched out, rendering the urban landscape as an ideal or even utopian architectural drawing which recalls the optimistic aesthetics of the collage works from late-sixties architectural groups such as Archigram and Superstudio. The language of this moment of sixties utopian architecture, with terms such as ‘total urbanization’ and ‘absolute egalitarianism,’ is replaced in our sketches with the forceful language of protest and change.

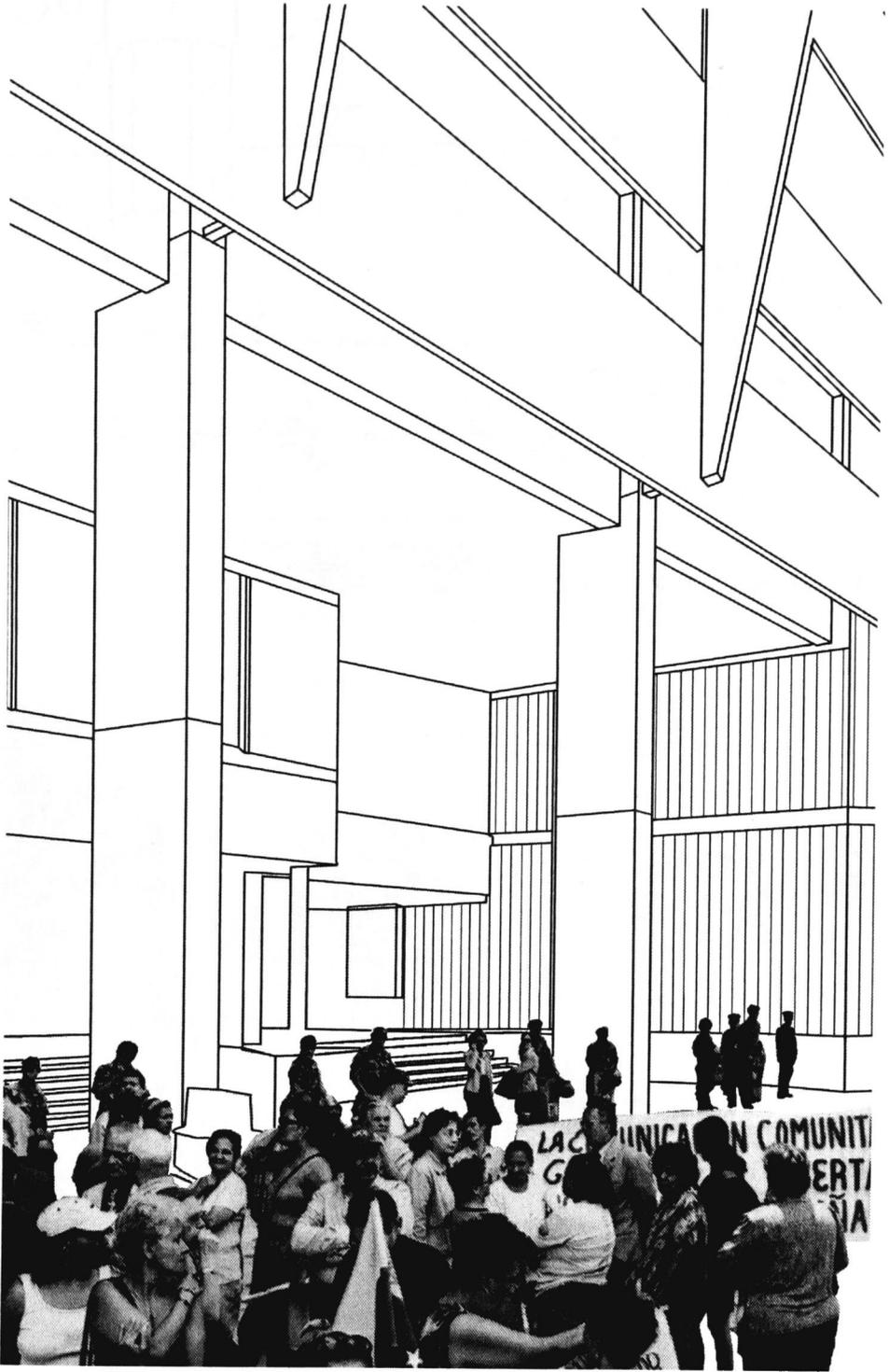
In these sketches, the architecture abstracted from the urban surfaces exemplify a development which leads, even though discontinuously, away from the topos of a rationalized modernist city to forms of urban society which were already formulated by Henri Lefebvre in 1970 in his book *The Urban Revolution*.

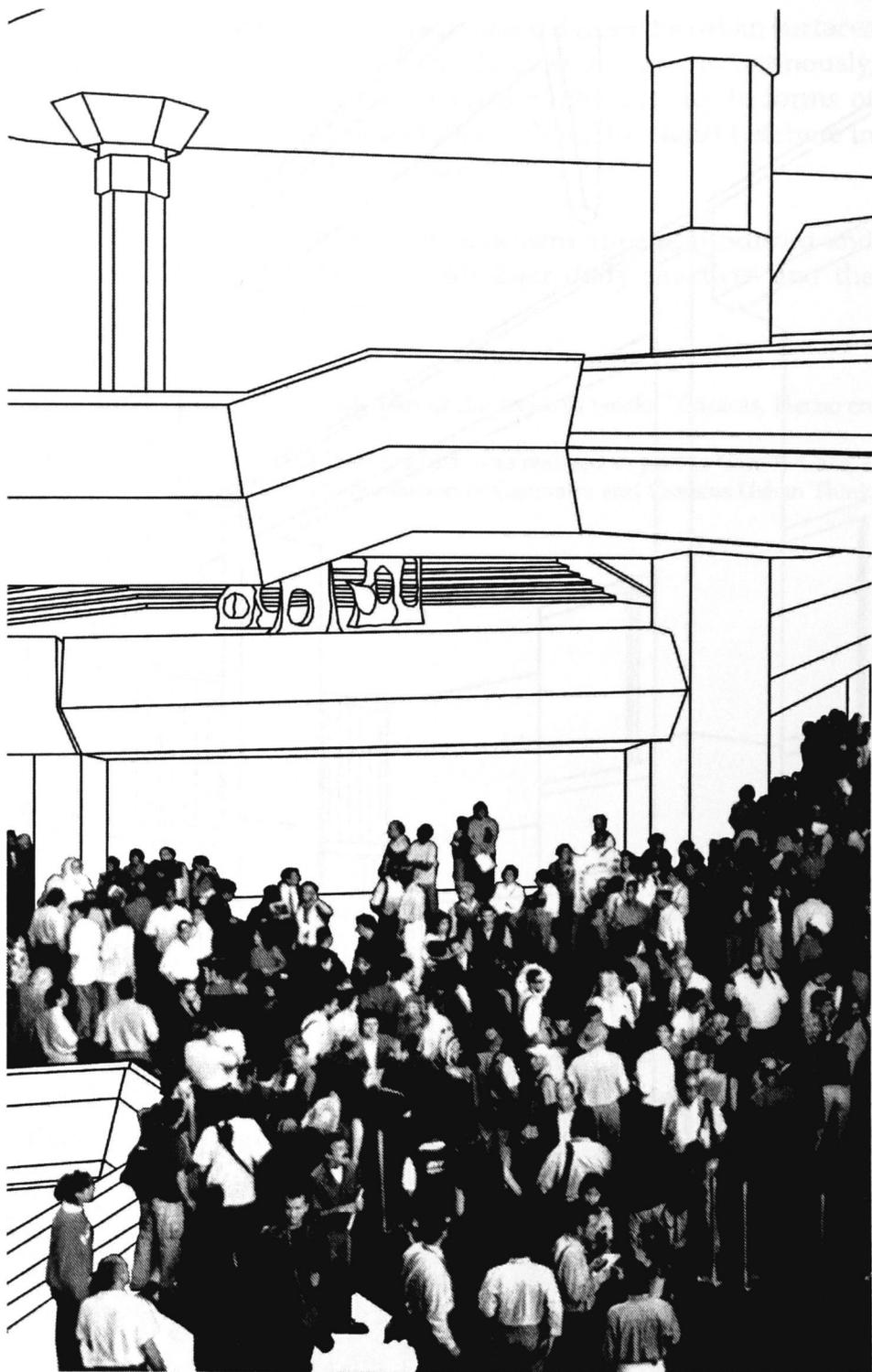
The contours of a transformative urbanism appear, produced and determined by its inhabitants with their daily practices and the politics of reterritorialisation.

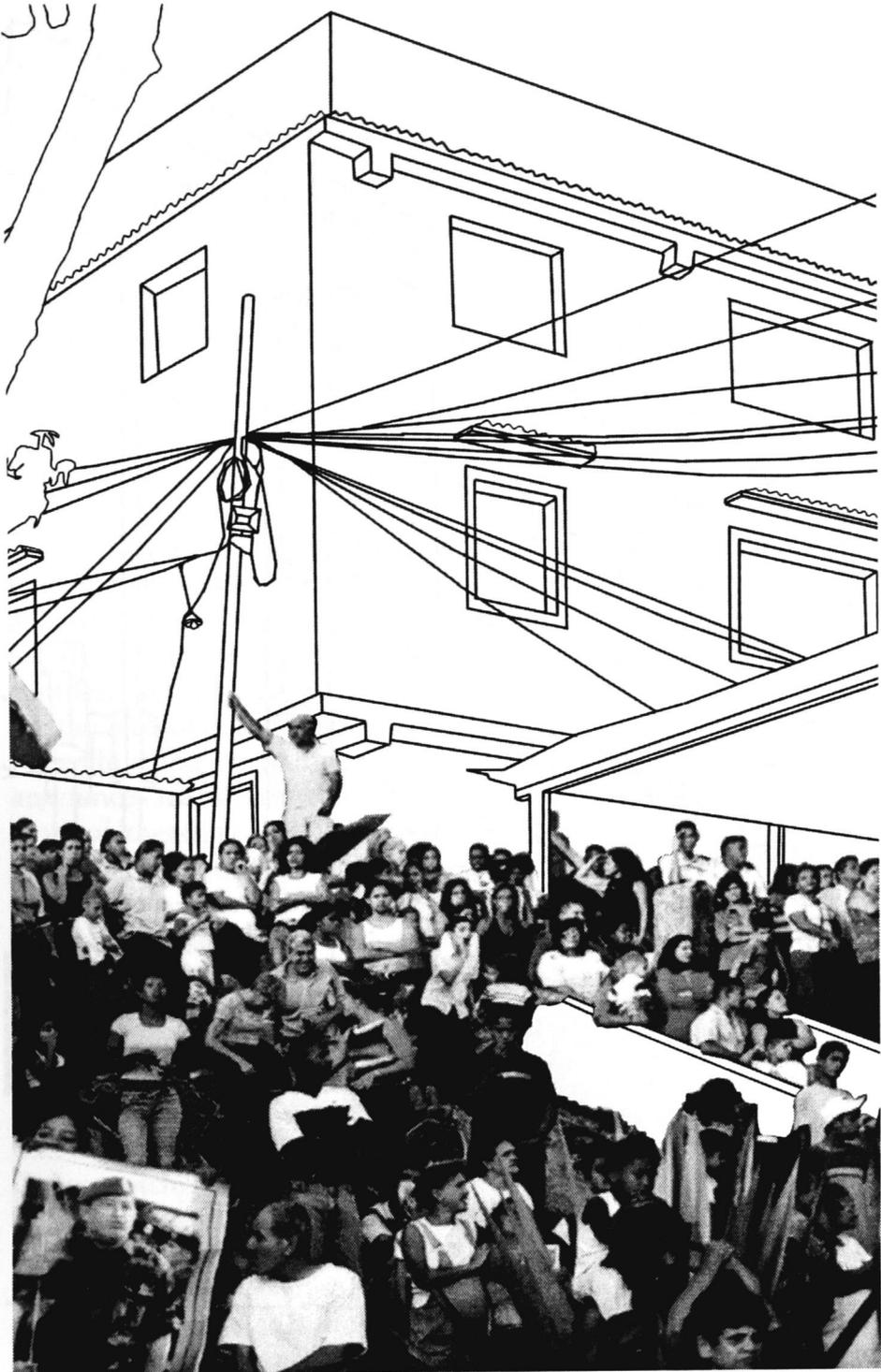
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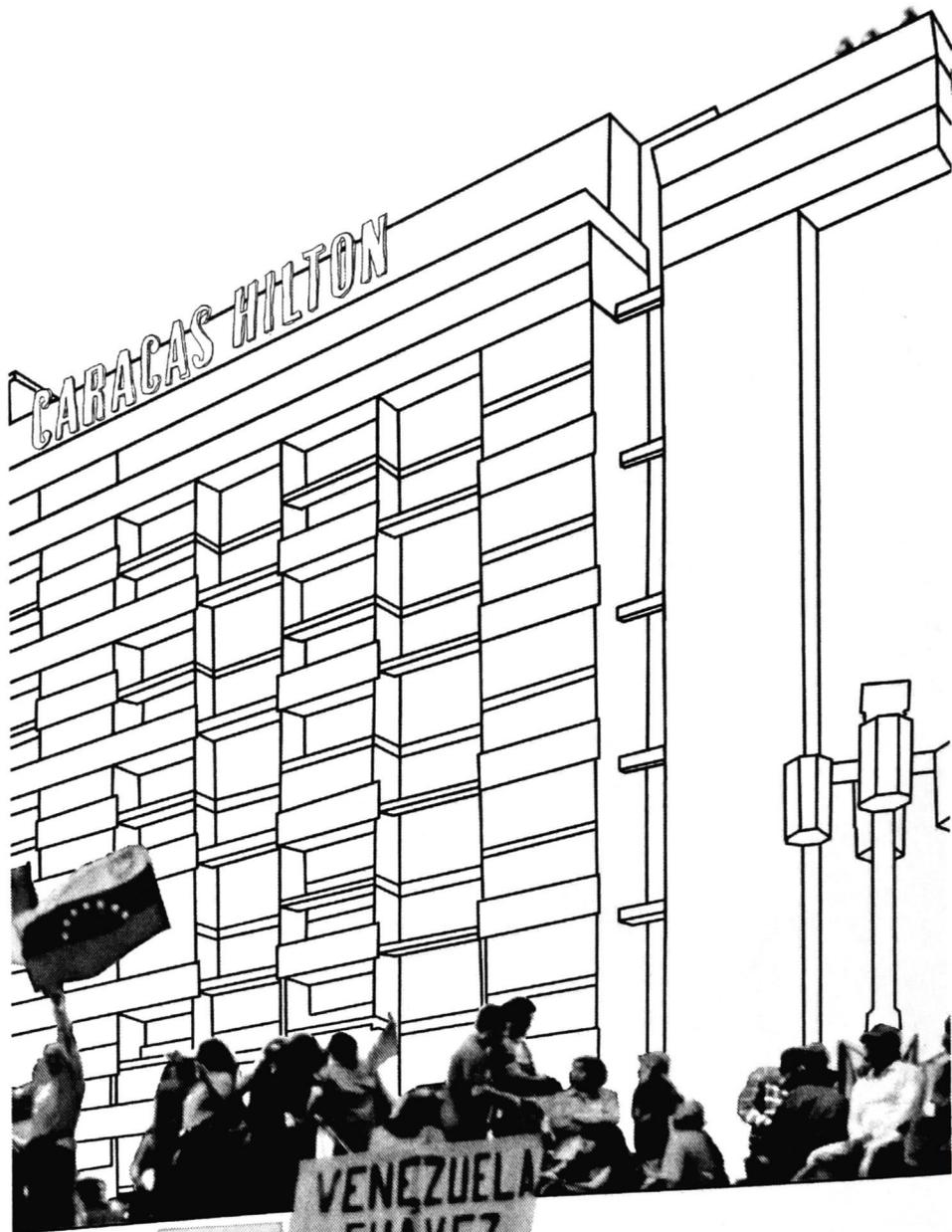
The drawings "Super Citizen" are part of the series of works "Caracas, Hecho en Venezuela"

© 2003 Sabine Bitter/Helmut Weber, which was realized as part of CaracasCase, a project of the Federal Cultural Foundation of Germany and Caracas Urban Think Tank.









UNO DE LOS EN EL  
VETE AL "MAGALO"

VENEZUELA  
CHAVEZ  
LA CONSTITUCION  
EL PETROLEO  
LA LIBERTAD  
LA PAZ  
LA EDUCACION  
EL AMOR

## BREAD MACHINE

Karen Tei Yamashita

Although the following stories are addressed to and written for Ronaldo Lopes de Oliveira, a Brazilian-born architect and artist who lives and works in California, I imagine all of us who travel across borders for whatever reasons – tourism, labor, education, or frequent flyer miles – know another story or two.

Airport: LAX, Los Angeles Bradley International

Destination: São Paulo, Brazil

Item: 1 Deluxe Breadmaker

You don't fault the inventor of the automatic bread-making machine. It's after all a pretty nifty machine with its timer, detachable whip, handy baking bucket, not to mention the sleek design that sits like a miniature refrigerator or gigantic toaster on the kitchen counter. You like the way you get a whiff of the yeast sweating, see the blob of dough rising behind the clear plastic cover, hear the whip churning, smell the aroma, hear the dinging and buzzing that announces freshly baked bread, and all just as if you had done the work of kneading and punching and baking yourself. You imagine that for some, on a scale from purchasing a loaf of Wonderbread to spending an afternoon messing around in your kitchen near a hot oven, it's a pleasure somewhere in between. Still, when this is one of 35 other items that your Brazilian cousin has been commissioned to buy for her extended family on her first, and probably for a long time only, visit to the US, you wish that wheat had never been imported to the Americas.

Of course, why single out the bread machine? What about the Nike tennis shoes, camcorder, palm pilot, perfume, Lakers T-shirt, Guess watch, cordless telephone, Legos, Jack Daniels, or Victoria's Secret panties and brassieres? The list seems endless. You cart your cousin from Circuit City to Sportsmart to ToysRUs to Fry's. You spend hours in the shopping mall comparing sizes and colors and prices. Everyone back home wants something. Even those who haven't expressed a need or sent money along have to be rewarded for her brief brush with the USA. Your cousin has one week in the

*Estates*, as they say, and three of those days are spent shopping and one packing. Even if you are able to get to Disneyland, Universal Studios, Venice Beach, or Beverly Hills, you are constantly on the look-out for shopping opportunities.

On the day of packing, you rush out and buy a large duffel bag to accommodate her extra loot. The problem, however, is the bread machine; it doesn't fit in the suitcase or the duffel bag. No problem, box it up, and it's a carry on. So she has three carry-ons. A bit over-sized, but who's going to notice? The backpack could be her purse. At Bradley International, your cousin lines up with all the other Brazilians who've spent similar vacations in consumer hell, and you both look relieved because every other Brazilian has twice as much stuff. Not to mention the Carioca who's made a deal with a sweet grandmother to check his surfboard with her luggage. If the surfboard flies, it should be a shoe-in for your cousin.

You see her struggle off valiantly under her backpack, her small duffel, and the big box with the bread machine. You're just about to turn and leave when you hear her cries of panic and dismay. The box with the bread machine is too large to pass through the scanner. *It's just a bread machine*, you plead with security. They roll their eyes; they've seen everything. Your cousin is almost in tears. It's the only thing she's bought for her mother. It's only been a week, and she's homesick for her mother. You want to tell her that her mother has been buying fresh bread daily from the Portuguese who've owned the corner bakery for the last 50 years, but it doesn't seem appropriate at the time.

The plane will be boarding soon; you have to think fast. You tear open the box, pull out your Swiss Army knife, and unscrew the bread machine, dividing all the pieces between the backpack and carry-on duffel. For this purpose, your cousin sacrifices Minnie Mouse, 2 bottles of American shampoo, waffle mix, and a pair of Tweetie Bird slippers. You drop her a handful of screws, which she deposits into the zippered pocket of her backpack. No problem you reassure her, even though you wonder what the reassembled bread machine will look and work like on the other side. Tchou! Boa viagem. Bom proveito.

She's finally off, but you sigh, remembering that over the years, it's always been impossible to sneak in and out of Brazil without having to schlep someone's desires across the border. Why

complain about your cousin's family? What about your own brother, the ultimate sportsman?

If there's a sport, Rubens has engaged in it. If only it were just soccer involving a sophisticated ball. No such luck. Rubens skin dives, spear fishes, hunts, target practices, bikes, camps, plays tennis, shoots bows and arrows, runs marathons, and climbs mountains. He's an avid and skilled technician and excellent athlete in every genre. He's competed in championships and turned down a space on the Brazilian Olympic team. He subscribes to every sports magazine and catalog he can get. He sends you off with or faxes detailed lists of catalog items and 1-800 numbers.

You find yourself spending your vacation in the Yellow Pages, driving all over LA to distant and obscure sporting shops, collecting neoprene wet suits, aluminum hunting tree chairs, pup tents, titanium bicycles and tennis rackets, bullets, stoves, lanterns, arrow tips, scuba tanks, masks, cording, gloves, knives, boots, camouflage vests, inflatable boats, mosquito repellent, decoys, harnesses, deer scents, rifle attachments, sleeping bags, binoculars. His gear takes the place of your own clothing, not to mention the microwave, VCR, and ice cream maker you thought to bring your mom. It's not as bad as it seems. So far he hasn't professed an interest in skydiving, kayaking, or Formula One. Thank God it doesn't snow in Brazil, or you might anticipate cross-country skiing or bobsledding.

Airport: LAX Customs  
Destination: Disneyland  
Item: 5 kilos Kitano polvilho

But what won't you do for your brother? How about your wife? She wants her saudades too, and that means she'll expect Rubens to arrive in Los Angeles from Brazil with the following food items: pinga, café, guaraná, óleo de dendé, carne seca, and polvilho. Pinga is cachaça or cane brandy. Guaraná is a medicinal stimulant. Óleo de dendé is palm oil used in Afro-Brazilian cooking. Carne seca is dried salted beef, a kind of jerky. Polvilho is manioc starch flour used to make Brazilian cheese bread. Hey, she's not asking for indigenous artifacts like Carajás headdresses or Marajoara ceramics. She just wants food.

This is where Rubens repays you for his requests. The bottles

of pinga and palm oil break en route, a mixture of dizzying alcoholic and thick oily fumes threatening to ignite customs. The coffee beans are farmed from your grandfather's private plot, and the customs officer wants to toss it as loose farm produce. The officer scrutinizes the stick of guaraná that looks to him like a piece of consolidated dung, but he's already confiscated the dried beef; this is a real no-no. However, the kicker is the 5 kilos of fine white tapioca flour. The customs officer makes Rubens open the packages, sniffs and tastes the stuff. He even calls out the dogs who already have to be thrown off by the overpowering smell of alcohol, oil, jerky, and strong coffee.

*Food*, Rubens tries to say. *Eat, bread, very good!* Despite the stink emanating from his open luggage, he tries to look enthusiastic. He pantomimes rubbing his tummy and smacking his lips, but it sounds to the custom officer like: *Fuji. Each, breji. Very gooji.* He says everything again in a crude romance garble: *comida, pão, mucho bueno, mangiare! Entende?* Under his breath he says, *Putá merda.*

Airport: São Paulo Guarulhos

Destination: Rural Interior

Items: refrigerator

Sony TV

washing machine

gas water heater

Zojirushi rice cooker

Toshiba computer

Nikon camcorder

kotatsu

Toto toilet

hibachi

You, your wife, and 2 children have arrived on vacation to visit Brazil. You and your children are Brazilian-born, but your wife comes on a tourist visa. Your wife has packed the bags full of gifts for your family. It's mostly toys. She's tried not to forget anyone. There are Barbie Dolls, scooters, basketballs, baseball bats, racing cars, toy ovens, and Tinker Toys. Your luggage seems extensive, but it's still doesn't have the impact of the exaggerated sizes and numbers of boxes you see wobbling forward on the carts of returning dekasegi.

After living in Japan, you know these migrant Brazilian workers and their families. You make small talk, asking them where they lived and worked in Japan and for how long. Their words tumble out: *I worked in Toyota, various jobs, but the last one was a car battery manufacturer. My son was making brake pads. My wife was doing electronic parts inspection. We've been gone seven years. That's it. We had to come home. Sure, it's safe, it's clean, the money was good, but thank God, we're home.*

You push your cart with your luggage toward customs, but you realize this dekasegi is holding the line for five more carts. You see his family push forward their acquisitions earned over seven years. You see the boxes that indicate various appliances: a triple-decker refrigerator, a Sony television, a gas water heater, a microwave oven, a stereo sound system, a computer, a rice cooker. You understand why they might find these items useful in Brazil, but you wonder what they are going to do with the Toto electronic toilet or the kotatsu or the hibachi. You figure that they've packed futons, a high-tech kerosene area heater, Japanese dishes, slippers and shoe horns, and you try to imagine what sort of new life style they will recreate out of this stuff in Brazil. But this is just one family among many returning to Brazil from Japan. How many more rice cookers and kotatsu are standing in line? You can see the crowd of friends and relatives stretching their necks past the sliding doors beyond customs, the intermittent roar of cheering as the door slips open and closed. You follow the dekasegi through those doors back into Brazil, pushing behind your American toys.

Airport: Brussels international transit center

Destination: Madrid, Spain

Item: One Brazilian

You and your wife are on your way to Madrid, but there's a plane change in Brussels. This is simple enough, but it seems you must collect your baggage and recheck them on to the plane to Madrid. You and your wife file toward the doors that indicate baggage retrieval. You wife slips by the officials waving her American passport, but you who hold a Brazilian passport are stopped and told: *No! Go back! You cannot enter Belgium without a visa. I don't want to enter Belgium, you complain. I just want to get my baggage and go on*

to Madrid. Brazilians don't need visas to get into Spain, you want to add. The official is adamant. *Go back into the transit center!* Your wife waves at you and yells, *I'll get the bags. I'll be right back.* Your American wife retrieves your baggage, checks it onto the flight to Madrid, and gets your boarding passes, but when she tries to return to the transit center, she's denied entrance. *No! Go back,* the same official yells. *Yours is a domestic flight; you cannot enter the **international** transit center!* She waves her American passport again, but no deal. International, but for whom?

So there you are trapped and alone in transit. Your wife has your tickets and boarding pass; all you've got is this Brazilian passport that might allow you buy a bottle of duty free whiskey. You brush aside the thought that you could be stuck in transit forever, make use of the restroom, and consider your sudden thirst and hunger. There are eateries with every sort of food from sushi to pizza. You stand in a long line and get a makizushi and Coke. You wonder why the line is so slow, but when you get to the cashier, you realize the problem. The cashier accepts all foreign currencies, but she has to enter the type of currency into a computer to calculate the exchange. The man ahead of you has Eurodollars. Before him pounds. Prior to that, francs. You wish you could produce Brazilian reals just to see if her computer will take them. Instead you whip out your Visa card, and the cashier almost smiles in relief. It's so easy, her expression seems to say. At that moment, you experience a small panic, the thought that your Brazilian passport and American Visa card are all it takes to live forever in international transit.

Airport: Narita

Destination: Shibuya, Japan

Item: nothing at all

One day you finally get naturalized a US citizen entitling you to an American passport. This means that you will be able to travel to Japan without having to stand in line at the Japanese consulate for a visa (not to mention Belgium). Free, free at last!

Your wife leaves for Tokyo a few days earlier. For your convenience, she takes your baggage with your clothing on her flight; this way, you can arrive "light" and negotiate the train system without baggage from the airport into the city. You arrive at Narita

via VARIG airlines with nothing but your fanny pack and your blue American passport. This situation, however, is entirely confusing and very suspicious to the Japanese customs official. *What do you come to do in Japan?* he asks. *Just visiting,* you smile. *Where are your bags?* he wants to know. *I have none,* you say, since it's too complicated to explain everything. He sucks the air in through his teeth, does a tight twist to his head, while his chin recedes into his neck. He looks from your American passport to you. Luckily you've shaved so your face matches the one in the photo, but your hair is a little long. Of course he's already noticed that you're disembarking from a Brazilian plane full of dekasegi, and he's got to have read your birthplace: Batatais, SP, Brazil. He turns the cover of the passport around to make sure it's the blue American one; he's probably wondering if you've tricked those gullible freedom-loving Americans or if the passport's fake. He holds up his hand and says, *just wait,* and wanders off with your passport to consult another official. You watch them flipping through your passport. You know there's nothing much to read since you just received it. You are inaugurating your Americanness on Japanese soil, but they don't want to buy it.

Now both officials return to the counter to point at your only baggage -- your black leather fanny pack. You empty its contents on the counter: keys, credit cards, a few dollars, coins, peppermint candy falling out of the wrapper, ballpoint pen, pieces of folded paper, movie ticket stubs. You realize that you don't have more than \$20 cash on you (your wife has the traveler's checks); you must look like a homeless problem to them. Finally, one official gets excited and points to a shabby 3" square packet. You're curious about this thing too since you haven't cleaned out your fanny pack since you got it for Christmas 3 years ago. *What's this?* he demands as if he's finally found something that will incriminate you. You tear it open. It's just a dried up paper towelette, but you wish it were something more exciting like diarrhea pills or a condom. No matter. The officials are disgusted anyway. You jam everything back into the fanny pack along with your American passport, making sure to leave behind the desiccated towelette, its faint lemon scent invading Japan in a puff of soft dust.

Airport: São Paulo Guarulhos  
Destination: Ribeirão Preto

Item: Seeds:

- 1 pkg Sunbright Supreme
- 1 pkg Chicory sp.
- 1 pkg Annuals Gypsophila
- 1 pkg Open Pollinated Bush Tomatoes
- 1 pkg Head Lettuce Edox M.I.
- 1 pkg Blue Jay Peppers
- 1 pkg Gourmet Sweet Bicolor Corn
- 1 pkg Komatsuna
- 1 pkg Baby Basil
- etc. etc.

You are escorting your mother back to Brazil. She's spent a month with you and your family in California, and now she's anxious to return home to her greatest pleasure -- her garden, which she tends to daily in her home in Ribeirão Preto. In California, she's spent everyday gardening in your garden or taking long walks and enjoying other gardens. She's collected seeds from dying flowers, tree pods, and seeding vegetables. These she's put into envelopes, plastic bags, or folded pieces of paper. You've also helped her to choose store-bought packages of seeds of a wide variety of vegetables and flowers not known in Brazil. All during the flight, she's been thinking about her garden, where she will plant her new varieties of flowers, how she'll protect the seedlings, if she can grow that wonderful tasting sweet white corn. You've been talking these things up during the flight to keep her mind occupied. She fears flight, and it's a small miracle that she agreed to make the 14-hour trip. But now she's back on the ground -- Brazilian ground, and she can't wait to get home.

The customs officer is a nisei woman. Later, you'll think that you should have seen it coming. You've experienced before the zealous fascist rigidity of her sort. She rifles through every fold and crevice of your mother's suitcase, ferrets out the illegal stuff, confiscates every last seed, loose or properly packaged. She motions for you and your mother to enter a locked holding area where you wait for her decision for the next 3 hours. She's on the phone, her consultations an endless bureaucratic back and forth. Your mother tries to placate a wall of officiousness with her usually irresistible human warmth, assuming that another woman will sympathize

with her ideals of nurturing. Nothing doing. Your mother pleads, rants to you under her breath when the officer is out of hearing, and finally breaks down and weeps. For your mother, every seed was a possible child, a memory of her family, her sons and especially her grandchildren, cast wide across the Earth. She has brought home little else – a trinket or two. The seeds held possibility, future, renewable pleasure. Is it the law or a capricious official? You don't know. A \$2,000 laptop computer slips in effortlessly. \$20 in seeds, your mother's meager investment, slips into international limbo.

When finally you escort your teary mother, sans seeds, past the international holding area, you see your brother Rubens' frantic expression turn to relief. You are reminded that his sporting gear has once again replaced your clothing. Your mother smiles bravely for Rubens, but you make a mental note: Next time, without fail, you will return with a super deluxe automatic 2 lb. loaf breadmaker with timer, tested recipes booklet, and double-fast action yeast.

# KIKI'S INTERSECTION

Clarence Major

It may be too early.  
Unemployed men are poor prospects.

She is in a doorway waiting for the obvious.  
No one hates her—yet.

All is yellow and it's not a sunset.  
No one loves her—yet.

But what is that large feeling that keeps  
spreading through the air?

She is now down on the sidewalk  
looking both ways.

No one looks at her—yet.  
Shadows grow longer.

No one looks away—yet.  
She knows that doomed feeling,

but so far nothing terrible has happened,  
not even a disease. Across the street

unemployed men wait on a stoop  
for the day labor truck.

An old woman is crossing  
to the other side where evening shadows

are longer than buildings are tall.  
Overhead, a train rumbles by.

She does not look up that way.  
It may be too late anyway.

# WHAT'S IN THE FULL OPTION? ON THE PASSAGE OF QUITE A FEW FAST CARS THROUGH SOME RATHER NARROW STREETS IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Kanishka Goonewardena

Two of this century's greatest philosopher-critics, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, demonstrated that the truth of a social system lies in its most trivial details.<sup>1</sup> Such is surely the case with the current popularity in Sri Lanka of the so-called '*full option*' found in a variety of new 'luxury items' (especially automobiles)—the avoidance of which is not an option today for anyone even momentarily caught up in the ever more compulsory mindset of the consumer, since the latter displaced every form of the citizen as the most desirable and universal mode of 'being-in-the-world.' For quite apart from enumerating the irresistible features of the latest personal computer, television set and cellular-phone that our middle class is firmly obliged to acquire, the phrase 'full option' attached to consumer goods now promises us an intoxicating sense of empowerment.

By 'us' I here mean Sri Lankans like me (and unlike me) who think they are 'middle class,' for various reasons, although 'we' as a class are hardly alone in this world (first, second or third) of globalization and postmodernity.

It was not so long ago that we heard the more modest word 'optional' in the rhetorical space presently occupied by the more imposing and tempting 'full option,' when the former simply referred to those extra features you wished to have installed by special request in your car or bathroom in addition to the standard ones. Such 'options' of personalizing to some extent your own mass-produced possessions may have helped to stem the worldwide depression of the predominantly Fordist economy in the early 1970s by paving the way to some 'post-Fordist' or 'flexible' process of globalized production, and ushering in a 'culture industry' more totalizing than the one witnessed by Max Horkheimer and Adorno in Los Angeles circa 1944 (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*); but they did not, apparently, go far enough to overcome the post-humanist consumer's existential *angst* and thereby ensure the sweeping hegemony of a new kind of

commodity culture known for better or worse as postmodern.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent (1990s') advertising habit of appending a 'plus' to model and brand names presented an improvement over this 'optional' state of affairs from the point of view of capital—but only a minor one, especially after that habit became compulsive, and the ubiquitous 'plus' divulged its status as a merely quantitative (this 'plus' that 'plus' the other 'plus' . . . *ad infinitum*) rather than a qualitative improvement. The semiotically superior 'full option,' by contrast, represents a genuine step forward for the culture of capital—and it is to the credit of the Sri Lankan advertising industry to have popularized it more aggressively than have their Western masters or, to put it more diplomatically and optimistically, counterparts. (This, by the way, is not the first time the Sri Lankan comprador bourgeoisie has demonstrated its world-class word power on behalf of global capital: was it not our late President Premadasa who did one better than both Thatcher and Reagan by calling privatization 'peopleization'?) For now, with the 'full option,' by the very virtue of being a consumer you are assured in impeccable Sri Lankan English not merely that you possess all the *options* (the *former* 'options'), but above all that you possess *all* the options—and are therefore sovereign.

Beneath such omnipotence, to be sure, lurks impotence. The latter routinely reveals itself, for instance, in the everyday ritual of commuting to work: nothing in the enviable range of your precious new vehicle's 'full options' helps you during the morning rush hour, which forces you to crawl at a snail's pace in lethal traffic and poisonous smog along every road leading to Colombo, much like how millions of Los Angelenos and Angelenas suffocate for hours each day in what are still called 'freeways,' slouching towards downtown or in search of suburbia. Likewise, when you switch on the television, none of its latest 'options' saves you from the bombardment of mind-numbing advertisements, punctuated by the cynical claptrap of self-serving politicians that is an affront to the intelligence of even those who only sense *jouissance* in every advertisement. I take it that such cognitive dissonances are not necessarily less jarring for the numerically dominant class of Sri Lankans hanging precariously below the objectively shrinking yet subjectively-elastic middle, even if they could legitimately play with 'full option' stuff only in the wildest of their borrowed dreams. In any case, the perpetual revelation of impotence by the very gadgets designed to deliver omnipotence points

to the common but fatal error of confusing technological progress and the actualization of the free-market utopia with human emancipation as such, which of course would be impossible without a self-consciously and collectively organized political movement of the people. (Whether in Colombo or Los Angeles, the globalization of gridlock will not be halted by more automated automobiles, not even better drivers or meaner cops, but by a vastly different kind of city planning that will not see the light of day without radically democratic and revolutionary politics—i.e., a genuinely empowered people.) Yet, precisely for the current shortage of such politics, the greater the terrible objectivity of impotence, the more lucrative becomes the market for omnipotence—as the former begs for compensation and sublimation in the image of the latter in order to render the lived-experience of multinational capitalism (i.e., postmodern consumerism) plausible and palatable, if only in our postcolonial imagination. The ‘full option’ is the postmodern opium of the masses.

When the actual impotence of the citizen metamorphoses into the fantastic omnipotence of the consumer, moreover, the ‘full option’ becomes also a testimony for the supposedly world-historical victory of *laissez-faire* markets over all politics and culture that is indeed the essence of ‘postmodernism’ (or, as Fredric Jameson said it in a memorable phrase, ‘the cultural logic of late capitalism’).<sup>3</sup> For the universalist logic of capitalism (about which those dogmatically anti-universalist post-Marxists of various stripes have little or nothing to say) compels every advertisement for a commodity to be an advertisement for commodification as well, just as it is today impossible to buy a commodity without also buying into the universal system of commodity production—the totality called global capitalism. Although I have never walked into a store with the intention of buying into our universal system of commodity production (it was only for my basic and other affordable middle class needs), on more than a few of such inevitable occasions I have found myself being ‘hailed’ (or ‘interpellated’, as Louis Althusser theorized it) by the public address system of the supermarket—not as ‘hey, you there!’, but as ‘dear shopper!’<sup>4</sup> So I become aware of, or, rather, *become* the subject I ‘always already’ am—i.e., the consumer—in spite of myself—and by virtue of a simple dictate of the *system* of commodification. This happens, I gather, not only to me. The system is here *objective* precisely to the extent that it addresses *everyone* (save the

'untouchables,' the truly marginal ones 'without shirts and shoes,' who are not allowed to enter stores and malls, as if to prove that no totality is truly total) as a consumer, without discriminating between those who think that it is a totality and those who don't. Whether I 'like' the system—totality—or not is even less relevant to the way it treats me. The totality does not rest on moral categories; nor would it be reformatted or deleted by epistemological maneuvers. I can ignore the totality, of course, but the totality does not ignore me. Ignorance, still, is the more popular option—in postmodern cultural theory as much as everyday life. Yet it's more prudent, perhaps, to take a very long, hard look at this sublime totality, until it may, like Nietzsche's proverbial abyss, eventually look back at you. For then, in the flash of its reluctant physiognomy, the 'debris of mass culture,' now endowed with the hypnotic 'full option,' may stand some chance of being redeemed at least in our consciousness 'as the source of philosophical truth'—in the manner urged by Benjamin's *Arcades Project* or Jameson's (more recent) project of 'cognitive mapping.'<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, however, it is not to be forgotten that the subtlety of the 'full option' advertisement currently lies in its subliminal message and subcutaneous injunction: today we have 'no option' but to happily embrace the free market, along with its cultural and political consequences. The 'full option' is the 'only option.'

Against the totalitarian nature of this imperialist directive (i.e., there is only one way to do things—'The American Way' hacked by the 'Washington Consensus'), however, no fascist nationalism need be summoned.<sup>6</sup> For the complacent common sense that 'there-is-no-alternative-at-the-end-of-history' is now more than ever only barely concealed by the neoliberal ideology of freedom, even as it is taken for the gospel truth by our own ruling clique of conservatives and liberals representing not so much 'people' as 'economic-corporate' interests (local as well as global) poorly disguised as leading but undifferentiated political parties. Marx saw through this ideology of freedom with refreshing clarity in those wonderful passages of the *Communist Manifesto* on the 'revolutionary bourgeoisie' detailing how and why 'in the place of numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms' they 'set up that single unconscionable freedom—Free Trade.'<sup>7</sup> But not only Marx. Following the recent cascade of crises in East Asian economies, chief economists of the IMF and the World Bank agreed with Marx (without due acknowledgement) as they confessed that

'the East Asian Crisis is as much a crisis of Western capitalism as of Asian capitalism' (Jeffrey Sachs) and that 'the crisis was the result of private decisions gone wrong' (Joseph Stiglitz).<sup>8</sup> Writing contemporaneously and exactly 150 years after the *Manifesto*, the great finance capitalist George Soros—knowing global capitalism more intimately than our economic advisers who take orders from his Wall Street colleagues and their Washington lackeys—declared in his bestseller *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* that 'market fundamentalism is today a greater threat to open society than any totalitarian ideology.'<sup>9</sup>

Now, if the Seattle police chief had had read some Marx or heard the more sober voices in Wall Street instead of his 'intelligence reports,' then he might have been better prepared to greet those 50,000 visitors who arrived in his jurisdiction a few years ago—on the occasion of the WTO summit, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999—bearing an idea of freedom different from free trade. But that was not to be. In the event, the lonely conscience of free trade found its unmediated voice in thousands of police batons, pepper sprays, rubber bullets and tear-gas, with the US National Guard in attendance. Or perhaps it was just as well that in this case the medium was not all that autonomous from the message. Because nowadays it literally takes a bloody beating on the head for some of our 'deconstructed' leftists as much as unreconstructed nationalists to realize that the economy still plays a mediated but determinant role in human affairs—or what used to be called history. And, these 'scenes not seen since the sixties' from Seattle would have also reminded some card-carrying ex-Marxists the *Situationist International* theoretician Guy Debord's thesis on cops (formulated in the wake of urban uprisings sparked off by the 1965 'Watts Riots' in Los Angeles): 'What is a policeman? He is the active servant of the commodity.'<sup>10</sup> One WTO protestor beaten up by several such 'servants of the commodity' wrote in a moving eyewitness account that she found the US media coverage of these Seattle events a lot more painful than the real thing. That feeling is not alone. Yet, even the concerted attempt to portray a truly mass political rally against the global free trade agenda on the WTO table as a conspiracy of rabble-rousers to smash sheet glass and get free coffee from Starbucks (not yet available in Sri Lanka) could not help but proliferate in the mainstream media literal images of a great metaphor in Marx's critique of capitalism: '*the artillery of commodities*'—firing away at masses on the run.<sup>11</sup>

Fidel is right. Had anything like this happened in Havana, there would have been a NATO invasion of Cuba within 24 hours, on humanitarian grounds. In Washington, D.C., by contrast, it turned out that similar events could be summarily dismissed by the spin doctors, barely four months after the Seattle 'surprise,' as a wild party of spoiled college kids. But I am not trying to be anti-American or pro-Sri Lankan (or vice-versa) here. Not at all. (Neither do I wish to endorse in any way the view expounded by any number of 'post-colonial critics' that while the West is admittedly superior to us materially, we have it better spiritually and culturally in the East.<sup>12</sup> The best brief riposte to that tired logic I've heard came from Professor Carlo Fonseka, in a guest lecture on the urban environment while I was studying architecture at Katubedda: 'In the West, they have sanitation without sanity; we have insanity without sanitation'.) Rather, I have lived in both of these places and I see something fundamentally wrong with the global economic system that now links them. So when I follow closely the 'full option' in Colombo, before I know it I end up in the streets of Seattle, via Los Angeles. Other detours and destinations are also possible, surely, for those living in different circumstances with different experiences. The Seattle story, however, I find particularly instructive, given that the omnipotence projected in the 'full option' phantasmagoria of commodities is an imaginary resolution of the real contradiction of political impotence—the end of the citizen, along with the 'end of history'—that in turn requires free trade—by brute force, as we have seen, if not by mild coercion or engineered consent—as the condition of its possibility. Yet, among other things, the protesters gathered in Seattle and other cities of the world since then *reject* the basis of freedom understood as the abundance of commodities—i.e., free trade—and *demand* the accountability of supranational economic interests to international, national and local political constituencies. The WTO 'debacle' thus signalled a victory over freedom defined economically—free trade—for freedom defined politically—democracy.<sup>13</sup>

But we know also that actually-existing *bourgeois* democracy has typically operated by insulating the more or less capitalist economy from more or less democratic politics, by limiting the scope of the political. Marx said this, even if no one is listening now.<sup>14</sup> Globalization as we know it, which is also a code-word for what Lenin called 'the development of capitalism' and David Harvey

refers to as 'the latest stage in the development of capitalism,' has only increased this time-honoured gap between the economic and the political—especially spatially. Then in Seattle for once we heard a massive cry to abolish that gap—to bring the global economy into the arena of democratic politics organized at various spatial scales. The results may not be immediately radical, but, for the time being, this demand represents a step in the right direction for the political left in the face of neoliberalism—the common enemy of the people if there is one. For at least implicit in it is an agenda of extending radically-democratic politics to the whole of society, without excluding the economy—in order to socialize the political and politicize the social. Or, if the word 'politics' is now too hopelessly tainted, then as Karl Polanyi put it, the same demand could be formulated in terms of extending 'freedom beyond the narrow confines of the political sphere into the intimate organization of society itself.'<sup>15</sup> Either way, freedom will not come to Colombo (or go anywhere else) in the latest 'full option' limousine, but something useful may yet emerge from a 'full option' democracy.

### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> 'Walter Benjamin,' as Susan Buck-Morss amply demonstrates in her brilliant study of his Arcades Project (*Passagen-Werk*), 'took seriously the debris of mass culture as the source of philosophical truth.' See her *Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), p. ix. Similarly, Adorno's cultural criticism consistently betrayed a stringent commitment to the dialectical relationship between the seemingly isolated fragments of a totality and the totality itself, which (though lacking in much of what passed today for 'cultural studies') he took to be the task of philosophical interpretation to clarify. In *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1990 [1966]), he was methodologically explicit on this matter (p. 83): 'the more socialized the world, and the more tightly the network of general definitions covers its objects, the greater will be the tendency of individual facts to be direct transparencies of their universals, and the greater the yield a viewer obtains precisely by micrological immersion.'

<sup>2</sup> On the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 121-197. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno wrote *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1976 [1944]) in exile in the US, not far

from the apex of the ‘culture industry’ then (and now): Hollywood. For a vivid account of the Frankfurt School in Los Angeles, see the section on ‘exiles’ in Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), pp. 46-54. Adorno’s own recollections of those times and places can be found in ‘Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America’ in *Critical Models* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 215-242.

<sup>3</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’ in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 127-186, especially p. 174: ‘I shall suggest that ideology “acts” or “functions” in such a way that it “recruits” subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or “transforms” the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: “Hey, you there!” Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn around. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*’.

<sup>5</sup> Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, p. ix. On ‘cognitive mapping’, which Jameson uses as a code-word for class consciousness, see his ‘Cognitive Mapping’ in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 347-360. This notion of ‘cognitive mapping’ touches a wound for post-structuralism and postmodernism—by invoking the Hegelian-Marxist concept of *totality*, which no less an authority than Georg Lukács singled out as what distinguishes Marxism from bourgeois thought (*History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971], p. 27). Today totality is, of course, also the real bone of contention between Marxism and post-structuralism. (On the largely misguided debate surrounding this key concept, see the level-headed essay by Steven Best, ‘Jameson, Totality and the Poststructuralist Critique’ in *Postmodernism/Jameson/Critique*, ed. Douglass Kellner [Washington, DC: Mouton de la Motte Press, 1989], pp. 333-368.) Unproductive exchanges between Marxists and post-structuralists over this issue can be avoided, however, by simply acknowledging that if capitalism is indeed the totality it increasingly proves to be in our age of globalization, then it is so not for Jameson’s or Marx’s fault. Anyone who is truly opposed to the totalizing nature of capitalism is likely to be better off fighting the system itself, instead of attacking the few critics who have clarified for us its structural tendencies. On the relationship between the fear of totality in everyday life and in theory, it will be useful to recall a few words from Marx’s famous ‘Preface’ to the first edition of *Capital*, Volume 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin and New Left

Review, 1976 [1867]), p. 91: 'Perseus wore a magic cap so that the monsters he hunted down might not see him. We draw the magic cap down over our eyes and ears so as to deny that there are any monsters'.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent study of the Washington Consensus in theory and practice, see Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble: Washington's Faustian Bid for World Dominance* (London and New York: Verso, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, intro. Eric Hobsbawm (London and New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 37-38.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey D. Sachs and Steven Radalet, 'The East Asian Financial Crisis: Diagnosis, Remedies, Prospects', *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, issue 1 (1998); Jason Furman and Joseph E. Stiglitz, 'Economic Crises: Evidence and Insights from East Asia', *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, issue 2 (1998).

<sup>9</sup> George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> In the wake of recent concerns regarding the alleged 'rioting' and 'violence' in the so-called 'anti-globalization' (more accurately, as pointed out by Michael Hardt, Naomi Klein and many others, *anti-neoliberal*) movement, the Situationist International text on the 'Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy (Watts Riot)', *Internationale Situationniste* #10, 1965 (<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/10.Watts.htm>), deserves to be quoted at some length: 'The Los Angeles rebellion was a rebellion against the commodity, against the world of the commodity in which worker-consumers are *hierarchically* subordinated to commodity standards. Like the young delinquents of all the advanced countries, but more radically because they are part of a class without a future, a sector of the proletariat unable to believe in any significant chance of integration or promotion, the Los Angeles blacks take modern capitalist propaganda, its publicity of abundance, *literally*. They want to possess *now* all the objects shown and abstractly accessible, because they want to *use* them. In this way they are challenging their exchange-value, the *commodity reality* which molds them and marshals them to its own ends, and which has *preselected everything*. Through theft and gift they rediscover a use that immediately refutes the oppressive rationality of the commodity, revealing its relations and even its production to be arbitrary and unnecessary. The looting of the Watts district was the most direct realization of the distorted principle: "To each according to their *false* needs"—needs determined and produced by the economic system which the very act of looting rejects. But once the vaunted abundance is taken at face value and directly *seized*, instead of being eternally pursued in the rat-race of alienated labor and increasing unmet social needs, real desires begin to be expressed in festive celebration, in playful self-assertion, in the *potlatch* of destruction. People who destroy commodities show their human superiority over commodities. They stop submitting to the arbitrary forms that distortedly reflect

their real needs. The flames of Watts *consummated* the system of consumption. The theft of large refrigerators by people with no electricity, or with their electricity cut off, is the best image of the lie of affluence transformed into a truth *in play*. Once it is no longer bought, the commodity lies open to criticism and alteration, whatever particular form it may take. Only when it is paid for with money is it respected as an admirable fetish, as a symbol of status within the world of survival. Looting is a *natural* response to the unnatural and inhuman society of commodity abundance. It instantly undermines the commodity as such, and it also exposes what the commodity ultimately implies: the army, the police and the other specialized detachments of the state's monopoly of armed violence. What is a policeman? He is the active servant of the commodity, the man in complete submission to the commodity, whose job it is to ensure that a given product of human labor remains a commodity, with the magical property of having to be paid for, instead of becoming a mere refrigerator or rifle—a passive, inanimate object, subject to anyone who comes along to make use of it. In rejecting the humiliation of being subject to police, the blacks are at the same time rejecting the humiliation of being subject to commodities'.

<sup>11</sup> 'The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which [the bourgeoisie] batters down all Chinese walls, with which it . . . compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image'. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>12</sup> According to Partha Chatterjee: '[A]nti-colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the "outside", of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an "inner" domain bearing the "essential" marks of cultural identity. The greater one's success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture. This formula is, I think, a fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa'. See his 'Whose Imagined Community?' in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan, intro. Benedict Anderson (London and New York: Verso, 1996), pp. 214-225, here p. 217.

<sup>13</sup> See David Graeber, 'The New Anarchists', *New Left Review* 13 (January-February 2002), pp. 61-73 ([www.newleftreview.net](http://www.newleftreview.net)) and Naomi Klein, *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate* (Toronto: Vintage, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> See Karl Marx, 'On the Jewish Question [1843]' in *Karl Marx: Early Writ-*

ings, ed. Lucio Colletti (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 211-241. In a noted critique of Habermas's concept of the public sphere, feminist political theorist Nancy Fraser refers to this essay by Marx as a 'still unsurpassed critique of liberalism'. See her 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 6-98, here p. 96.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [1944]), p. 256.

# MYCENAEAN

Carl Hancock Rux

Did we not know it? See it coming? Did the prophets not point us toward the wings of Icarus as they flapped asunder, violently crashing into our towering shrines? Did not "The Life of Solon" warn us about the strategy of men who will acquire dictatorial power? Did not Foucault contend that there would at all times seem as if we had but one adversary, that they would nevertheless strike on all fronts and they would make it seem to us as if the battle was against one same adversary and we would believe this because we needed to believe this because we can only cope with one hero, one foe, one Jesus, one Buddha. There are a thousand devils but only one Prince of Darkness and this is the tactic, old and true, that makes for good social-fascism.

Power relationships do not represent reality, but relativity and the reporter in the box, the man in the blue screen, he becomes that density, that inertia, that viscosity, fantasy, religiosity, that game of sport and theater of good vs. evil, our sacrament, our murdered infant of social-centralism, that flat idea. Their tactics are old, and is there one who can say he did not see the war gods of Agamemnon returning from Troy to conquer the Plain, the Shore, the Hill where laboring people like my father and mother had already begun their revolutions with the vodka drenched stench of a father's fierce invective?

I am born Mycenaean...where Hippolytus did walk, evicted... attacked...attacked again by demons far greater than the Minatour...is there one who can say his legacy will not be mine if I stay here and do something? Or one who can say his legacy will not be mine if I do nothing except leave here?

As of now, I am an old man, not yet thirty...eroding the tissue, the tendon, the muscle. My silence is coarse with heavy hands, my anger, falling wherever it is natural to fall, my beauty--too elusive to center.

Too severe is my reptilian nature, snaking its way up an invisible fourth wall, moving slowly toward understanding. An optic dance. Ever so often, there is a slight miracle that reminds me I am not one of the renderings on my wall. The light of the blue screen...the cameras hidden in the rocks as I follow the roads... my foe is seated in my living room...watching me follow my father's blood on my father's roads...and my father's blood means nothing...nothing more than the planted grove of elms above my father's tomb means to the granite that mounts his flesh.

Let it be remembered, it was their words that brought us their voices, and it was not their voices that evoked some eternal response in us... it was the absence of their words where their voices took over... that coaxed the rock, and bent the branches into repetitive choruses...In our ghetto—visible to all in our shame...we are destitute even of the third realm of dreams; Hildebrandt's paradox wherein there is no difference to multiply between our virtuosity and our deterioration...we walk entrapped, here, saddled and forlorn; vanquished, and ruthless are the Gods we served in store front church basements such as these...cave dwellings from which we heard of the betrayal of magistrates for whom we had cast our vote...no sooner had we rejoiced in our expectations were we deceived, and the King's son rose up as King with his father's sins still moist and gleaming on his tongue twisting rudimentary vowels—ruthless are the Gods of a bloody Jesus.

# SELF-MANAGED COLONIALISM

Randy Martin

“We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States.”<sup>1</sup> This finding by the commission charged by the Bush administration with giving a factual account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks was widely construed as formally giving the lie to justifications for the war against Iraq. Vice President Dick Cheney disavowed his own statements about the linkage, and voiced outrage at *The New York Times*, originally a co-conspirator in the fable, for publishing the Commission’s findings.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the disclosure of misrepresentation on the rationale for invading Iraq was one more nail in the already deflated tire of public support for the war. A year’s worth of provisional administration was leeching back onto once impermeable popularity of the Bush presidency, fomenting a nauseating mix of policy induced foreign-domestic insecurity.<sup>3</sup> By the time of the preemptive departure of proconsul and mess-meister L. Paul Bremer two days early on June 28, 2004, the U.S. occupation only seemed capable of shocking itself with the element of surprise. Afghanistan, Iraq, the United States looked like three sides of a bermuda triangle into which sovereignty had fallen. Amidst all the efforts at reconstruction, people were left to fend for themselves.

Whatever pleasures might attach to exposing the Bush administration’s malfeasance in going to war without the benefit of truth to explain belligerence, another point was missed. While Afghanistan and Iraq were falsely linked to the malpiloted assaults of 911 they became genuinely connected through Bush’s own war on terror. Deposing the governments of Mullah Omar and Saddam Hussein twinned two countries that hitherto had but the most tenuous of ties. The war on terror had established its own truths. An underlying asset could be detached from the value (in this case sovereignty) of which it was part, bundled together or securitized, in order to establish benefits from newly assumed risks. The new class of warfare, from which Afghanistan and Iraq found themselves

unwitting graduates, made of disparate evils an axis. Not only would the bad be banished, but the derivative war would leave liberation in its wake. It would not be enough to contain bad influences, nor would security be a basis for reconstruction. Rather, occupation would provide a cover for self-management. The war on terror creates what it seeks to destroy. By the dead weight of numbers and casualties, terrorism as tabulated by the State Department was on the rise since the US launched its offensive.<sup>4</sup> In that it is the perfect medium for force transformation where armed conflict has an effect that is revolutionary. To appreciate what the embrace of risk in foreign affairs has wrought, it is important to dwell in the domain of effects. In short, the link between al Qaeda and Iraq does not lie in their common cause, but in the realm of consequences they have now been forced to share. The shadowy network of assets meant to comprise the grand strategy of US imperium—if there is such a thing—are detectable in the prosecution of these two wars and their aftermaths. The derivative war, that most distinctive of American exports, is generative of a world-order in the making.

These recent conquests display all of hubris of prior colonial incursions. For all their immediate military success, they lack the clarity of interest that applied to earlier possessions. It is not difficult to pronounce the attacks against terror a failure in their own terms. Two nations thoroughly ravaged by colonial and cold war attentions saw their life conditions move from bad to worse. Physical degradation of already compromised infrastructure. Economic deterioration, increased unemployment, corruption and swelling of illicit trade. Terrorist attacks up world wide, with seemingly increased numbers of recruits and operations in places where it was previously thought absent. An unrivaled superpower manufacturing its rivals everywhere. It is far more challenging to consider what might be implied by success. A revolution in military affairs affirmed? Regime change? Liberation? These victories remain tremulous. Derivative. Securitization. Risk. How might these keywords of finance be seen as the fruits of battle? Our small wars of late have been tied to big ideas. A highly interventionist privatizing state. Highly restricted applications of resources intended to be leveraged to larger effects. The break-up of fixed values, the dispossession of populations from

their productive capacities in search of new opportunities.

Before September 11<sup>th</sup> Donald Rumsfeld already grasped the shift. At the Senate hearings to confirm his appointment as Secretary of Defense, he proclaimed that the United States could not wait for another Pearl Harbor, “we have to be more forward-looking.”<sup>5</sup> In its 1999 report the Defense Intelligence Agency had already anticipated the source of the threat that Rumsfeld would use to channel his aspirations of force transformation from a staid defensive posture to an opportunistic stance: “State failure will be more common in the developing world.”<sup>6</sup> The attentive embrace of risk yields productive returns whether prices rise or fall, and whether states succeed or fail. The world’s volatility would launch a thousand ships. Military intervention for liberation would become the means and ends of politics, force would become the kind of change agent once reserved for the idea of development. Aid would remain a promise, forever falling short of expectations. While positioned to go anywhere, intervention would remain highly selective, hoping that a couple of well placed calls might ripple throughout the world. All this under the sign of an evangelical capitalism, All this pressing its limitations and counter-prospects to the fore. The elements of this design for better opportunities through war were already in place with homeland security. Now let us search for them among occupations’ ruins.

## **Into Afghanistan**

The revolution in military affairs carried the corpse of the cold war with it. Released from an arms race without application, opportunities for the uses of weaponry would now abound as a forward deploying logic of leveraged investment would replace the old savings plan of mutually assured destruction. The terror war too retained its debts and absent causes to a missing communism. Small wars were always considered the hot spots of the world, now they were supposed to light the way as well. For a US foreign-policy as content with freedom fighters as with internal purges of political parties, anti-communism was the pre-linkage of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, once useful assets allied by what they opposed. Evidently, the measure of communism’s monstrosity could be found

in what would oppose it. The governments of Afghanistan and Iraq combated alien ideologies and attained their global notoriety by hosting their own foreign agents. In the first case this would entail the financial and military patronage enabled by bin Laden. In Iraq, the foreign agents were chemical and biological in nature, and sent by the United States during the 1980s to its then ally to use against Iran. The anthrax, botulism, and *E coli* bacillus provided by US firms were later recovered by UN inspectors and given imaginary life by US invaders.<sup>7</sup> The Defense Intelligence Agency helped Iraq plan its use of chemical weapons against Iran, considering their deployment, “inevitable in the Iraqi struggle for survival.”<sup>8</sup> Both al Qaeda and the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction turned out to have a phantasmic aspect that gave momentary coherence to US intervention. It is not that the threats never existed, but rather, like a hedge fund they dispersed and placed their interconnected assets into wide circulation.

Bin Laden went to Afghanistan in the 1980s and helped finance a recruitment network for Muslims from around the world called the Maktab al Khidmat (Bureau of Services). At this time he also established training camps for regional war lords engaged in the battle against the Soviets.<sup>9</sup> His own combat experience was probably limited to a rout by the Soviet army in April, 1987 in which many of his recruits died.<sup>10</sup> When the Soviets withdrew, bin Laden sought to maintain the international network of fighters. Al-Qaeda, a term that means at once, base, camp, foundation, pedestal, precept and method, was used in the 1980s to refer to the association of anti-communist militants, and subsequently adopted by bin Laden in the early 1990s. Abdullah Azzam, a Saudi professor and bin Laden’s mentor defined al Qaeda ideologically rather than organizationally. “This vanguard constitutes the strong foundation of the expected society.”<sup>11</sup> Norman Friedman, an anti-terrorism analyst for the Navy characterizes al Qaeda as a “holding company for numerous local movements” that collects money indirectly through a network of charitable Muslim organizations patterned after the CIA’s money laundering through the Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI), which collapsed in 1991.<sup>12</sup> Jason Burke likens it to a “venture capitalist firm, sponsoring projects submitted by a variety of groups

or individuals in the hopes that they will be profitable.”<sup>13</sup>

Since being cut out of his family’s inheritance (and his million dollar a year expense account) in 1994, bin Laden served more as a manager and trainer than as a financier.<sup>14</sup> He sought to broker relationships, but al Qaeda’s overtures were often rebuffed by movements with a different political or ideological itinerary, such as with the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armée, the Indonesian Lashkar Jihad group, or with Iraq itself. On the other hand tenuous links could very profitably be declared solid such as with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which netted aid for the government in Tashkent, or Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines whose purported ties to al Qaeda were used as a pretext by the US to send in troops.<sup>15</sup> While not alone in their sponsorship the Taliban were al Qaeda’s most successful deal. A British and then US-backed monarchy until 1973, the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan took power in 1978, supported by the Soviets a year later. After years of counterinsurgency and billions in US aid, the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989, with the Najibullah government surviving another three years before the Mujaheddin forces took over, only to wreck themselves in internecine conflict two years later in 1994 when the Taliban stepped into the vacuum left by great power abandonment of the country.<sup>16</sup> Against the subverted modernization project championed by Najibullah (executed by the Taliban in 1996) the Taliban came to power with subventions from Pakistan and al Qaeda to pay off local leaders.

These monies allowed the Taliban government to sustain a measure of popularity because, unlike previous administrations, it did not have to resort to extortion of the population to maintain its army. When Pakistan threatened to withdraw support if the Taliban could not end the civil war by late 2001, al Qaeda stepped in and formed the 055 brigade--a kind of praetorian guard that both defended the government and killed Afghans who tried to abandon their posts. It was this brigade of non-Afghan fighters who successfully assassinated the Taliban’s chief rival, Ahmed Shah Mahsood on September 7, 2001.<sup>17</sup> With the promise of an oil pipeline through the country looming, the United States returned to the scene in 1998 as the Taliban’s main source of cash through its program to pay for the suppression of the poppy crop.<sup>18</sup> Needless to say, such a heavily indebted government is also a highly volatile one, and the Taliban could no more give up bin Laden than they could themselves. The

irony in al Qaeda's offering of Mahsood, besides accomplishing what the Pakistanis had demanded, was to provide cover for CIA and Special Forces infiltration of individual Northern Alliance Groups (of which Mahsood was the putative unifier).

Three weeks after September 11<sup>th</sup>, a period of time deemed appropriate to prepare for war and negotiate bin Laden's surrender and al Qaeda's departure, carpet bombing of Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001. Dropping 15,000 pound bombs was meant to have a demonstration effect both to Taliban and to the Northern Alliance, at the same time the seemingly indiscriminate reach of the mass munitions were meant to conceal the specific targets that US operatives were calling in for precision guided assault.<sup>19</sup> Dumb bombs were a cover for US intelligence. A little over a month later on November 9, 2001 the major northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif fell to the Northern Alliance, who entered Kabul just four days later. Kandahar was given up to the Southern Alliance on December 6, leaving the two major engagements with US troops, Tora Bora and the Shah-i-Kot valley (Operation Anaconda) for the aftermath of the fallen regime in the winter of 2002. In a landlocked country, a thousand marines established a beachhead one-hundred miles from Kandahar called Camp Rhino, supported by carrier groups in the Arabian Sea four hundred miles away.<sup>20</sup> With 7,500 US troops in Afghanistan (over half the 14,000 in the 20 nation coalition) and another 47,500 military personnel in the region as part of the war effort, direct occupation was never part of the scheme.<sup>21</sup>

Much has been made of the spectacular aspect of the 1991 war against Iraq. Not only was a formidable opponent conjured through vivid graphics, but so too did crystalline images of intelligent ballistics, stand for the deadly inert of more mundane munitions. In contrast, the Afghanistan bombing was prosecuted as a kind of "don't touch me" intervention—dusty and remote, a series of dull glows on night vision screens. Deployment of smart bombs rocketed to 60% with 90% accuracy while use of ground troops in small dispersed packets could best be described as speculative.<sup>22</sup> Much on what follows rests upon a reading of the work of military analyst Anthony Cordesman. Cordesman is a consummate Washington insider, having worked on staff as an advisor for the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Secretary of Defense, Departments of Energy and State. As a state intellectual he is treated here as foreign policy's internal

analytic and reflective moment, a kind of governmental foundation-ism. He is a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank that is contracted to conduct studies for the Army and the Coalition Provisional Authority. Cordesman has a long history writing on the middle east and has conducted work on both Afghanistan and Iraq, before and after the interventions. He considers this speculative aspect of the attack on Afghanistan one of the “problems of distributed warfare:”

The United States and its allies won the battle in spite of the problems of fighting against forces in nearly 200 well-positioned caves and fire points in the mountains. The United States and its allies also seem to have inflicted at least several hundred casualties. Nevertheless, the Al Qaeda forces largely escaped—often because Afghan troops either took payment to let them, simply choose not to fight, or let factional rivalries paralyze effective coordination and action. Nothing that U.S. and allied forces did in Operation Anaconda or in independent search-and-destroy missions, however, has shown that the United States and its Western allies have a solution to the problems of dispersed warfare against an enemy that is fluid and unwilling to fight. Al Qaeda has shown that it can disperse without a trace in spite of the best efforts of U.S., British, and Australian Special Forces; use caves and other hiding places to keep arms and ammunition in spite of massive search efforts; move into neighboring countries like Pakistan; and disperse into countries outside the immediate area of combat operations.<sup>23</sup>

When we move from the ideology of the war on terror to its applications, virile unilateralism and overwhelming force with high yields and near total accuracy, gives way to a delicate leveraging of engagement. The principle ground fight at Tora Bora deployed 200 U.S. troops against an uncountable and invisible enemy. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the logic of the body count, a key symptom of the Vietnam syndrome, was itself being buried. One of bin Laden’s development projects was to use his construction company to enlarge the caves around Tora Bora. At the battle some 300 of his combatants were seen dead with another two hundred estimated to have been entombed—perhaps half of the al Qaeda fighters gathered there.<sup>24</sup> The Vietnam-era’s dull accumulation of the dead was out of sync with the new strategics of minimal expenditure of blood for maximum gain. The unwillingness to count bodies—on either side—belied an indifference to human costs of the war, but also gestured toward the missing calculus for the intervention’s strategic success. Through

December 2001 before any US soldiers were killed in combat, estimates for Taliban and al Qaeda kills ranged from 1,500-3,000, and civilian collateral damage deaths varied from 500 to 6,000.<sup>25</sup> For the enemy there was no forensic interest and the numbers were free to fluctuate wildly.

Despite the celebratory seamlessness or “jointness” among CIA, special forces, and the branches of the armed services, competition for credit prevailed. From a narrow tactical perspective, the largest massing of US troops (one thousand soldiers from the Army’s 10th Mountain and 101st Airborne Divisions) at Shah-i-Kot could be considered unnecessary. According to Navy analyst, Norman Friedman, “There was also speculation that the U.S. Army leadership badly wanted to demonstrate its relevance to the Afghan War. Until Anaconda, the only large U.S. units on the ground had been Marine Expeditionary Units. To critics, the grandiose name of the operation reflected the Army’s need for credit. There was talk that some U.S. Army units had to be withdrawn because they had proven unsuited to guerilla warfare.”<sup>26</sup> The commanding officer, Major General Franklin C. Hagenbeck decided to forego air support to achieve an element of surprise. Instead, al-Qaeda fighters anticipated the assault, took up the high ground and fired down on advancing troops, leaving nearly a hundred dead or wounded.<sup>27</sup> The reconnaissance efforts greatly reduced the actual battlefield, leaving out nearly half of the al Qaeda positions. Similarly, the highly touted Predator unmanned surveillance plane provided pinpoint focus that tended to distract from the larger picture. Friedman notes that “a photo exists of the entire 10th Mountain Division staff staring at a Predator’s footage of a fleeing truck, which might have been carrying Osama bin Laden—and not thinking at all about the wider battle they were supposed to be directing.”<sup>28</sup> On the ground, US forces unsuccessfully attempted to force al Qaeda into pre-set traps, imagining a topography that the antagonist was unwilling to comply with.

The pinpoint accuracy, full spectrum dominance, speed and agility imagined by the revolution in military affairs were all in evidence in Afghanistan. The war had not solved the problem of dispersion, rather, the far-flung network of effects that goes by the name of terror had been advanced by this leveraged intervention. While the carpet-bombing that had concealed the belligerents’ knowledge of one another moved on to make dust in Iraq, the day-to-day tactics

of special operations combat and challenges to national reconstruction remain. Writing two years after his initial appraisal, Anthony Cordesman concluded:

Afghanistan has become the not-quite-forgotten war. Americans and America's allies die there, but not as regularly as in Iraq. Nation building is in crisis in Afghanistan but at less cost and largely without high-profile media examination. Victory, however, has proved to be as relative in Afghanistan—its second current war—as in Iraq. The Taliban has mutated and is again fighting; Al Qaida has lost many of its leaders but also has mutated and relocated some operations in Pakistan; internal tensions in Afghanistan threaten to make its central government the government of only a Kabulstan; and the spillover of Islamic extremism into Central and South Asia continues.<sup>29</sup>

The operations are just as quick, but speed has become dissociated from progress. The terms and the temporality of the derivative war were transferred to the occupation. 2004 was not the future of 2002, but its perpetual present.

Reconstruction would seem to connote making things as they were, without specifying what golden moment is to be returned to. In actuality the ambitions for post-invasion Afghanistan are far more circumscribed. The World Bank scheme for "Transitional Support" is to "place primary emphasis on the role of the private sector," and to move the laboring masses from "food-for-work to cash-for-work."<sup>30</sup> Aid-workers face an increasingly dangerous environment, one that has shifted emphasis from building a nation to constructing a class. In testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, risk had become intertwined with development, "Encourage the development of an entrepreneurial class of people at USAID and reward wise risk taking."<sup>31</sup> The US has undertaken what one development scholar has termed a "minimalist position" on reconstruction focusing on the elimination of terrorists to enhance security over concrete support for development.<sup>32</sup> For the years 2002 and 2003, Afghanistan achieved the dubious distinction of being the most minimally supported post-intervention country—a tenth of what Kosovo had received after its intervention and less than either Haiti or Rwanda after theirs. "Financial aid to Afghanistan, measured per capita, has been far lower than for any other nation recently during a period of rebuilding after a conflict."<sup>33</sup> Outside of military expenditure, less

than a billion dollars of US was spent in those two years, most of it on emergency food and shelter and the rest on “small-scale, quick impact projects” with no long term plan for development in place until June of 2003.<sup>34</sup>

In the absence of aid, the market has been decisive in its typical cruelty. Poppy production again became the dominant economic activity, in 2003 accounting for a quarter of the country’s GDP after prices for a kilo of flowers soared. By early 2004 prices had collapsed due to overproduction, and many of the nearly 2 million small farmers found themselves overwhelmed by debt.<sup>35</sup> Itself an enclave protected by a detachment of marines, the government of Hamid Karzai has been relegated to the administration of these dwindling promises. Much seems to have fallen between the cracks of the new Afghan Constitution. Article 9 states that “minerals and other underground resources are properties of the state” while Article 10 mandates that this same “State encourages and protects private capital investments and enterprises based on the market economy.”<sup>36</sup> In the 1970s, before the terror war wrought its imposed isolationism on the land, tourism was a major source of foreign currency, with 90,000 visitors per year—many traipsing along what was then the poppy-strewn “hippy trail.”<sup>37</sup> Tourism might be considered the archetype of self-managed “recovery” with the state and local entrepreneurs hosting fresh dribbles of foreign capital.

## Dispersing Iraq

In the first week of the Iraqi invasion, there was much muttering from the military analyst/lobbyists about low troop levels and insufficient force. Conventional criticism—that the basket of hardware is not bountiful enough and that all the goodies that lay within need upgrading—is typically aimed at higher military appropriations. The most prominent voice, about to be derailed by the Rumsfeld railroad, was then chief of the Army, General Eric Shinseki. He estimated before the bombing began that “several hundred thousand soldiers” would be needed to occupy Iraq after the government was deposed.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was promising that, like a successful hostile takeover in the business world, Iraq would in short order “finance its own reconstruction,” by selling off its assets.<sup>39</sup> The debate over which road

best led to slaughter turned out to be moot. The troop levels were already maxed out for what the regular and reserve force structure could bear. Short of further recruitment or a draft, the army went with what it had, and the military critics were finding a technocratic way to disagree with the civilian highjacking of their machinery.

By declaring himself a “war president” Bush was assuring that war making would be the art of politics. Diplomacy and financial incentives would take a back seat to intelligence—which, for the information war seemed always doomed to fail.<sup>40</sup> The strategic inevitability of invasion (in terms of the many years that went into planning for it) was tempered by tactical surprise—what was termed the either the rolling or the running start. In actuality, the second war against Iraq started already in motion because the first one had never stopped. If anything it’s been the end that has continued to roll on. It had been rolling since US troops stopped at the Kuwaiti border in 1991, continued through the embargos and inspection regimes of the 1990s that were more strident versions of the domestic wars against youth, drugs, and education (and children suffered disproportionately from the eradication of clean drinking water and drugs). At its most reductive, the revolution in military affairs was a scheme to make war against Iraq the next war. Well before Saddam Hussein was given 48 hours to get out of town by Bush (on March 17, 2003), the start of the invasion was well underway. The aerial attacks to destroy the remnants of the Iraqi anti-aircraft capacity under cover of enforcing the no flight zone had already begun at the end of 2002 and in the months leading to the land invasion, the CIA bribed Iraqi officers in the North to discourage them from fighting, while Special Forces Operatives scoured the countryside looking for the ever AWOL Weapons of Mass Destruction.<sup>41</sup> While the Turkish Parliament withheld permission to use it’s bases as a staging ground for a northern front, American bases in Kuwait had years of preparation for this task. Major General Henry Stratman, deputy commander for the 3rd Army stationed in Kuwait admitted the September 11<sup>th</sup> was understood as the trigger for the Iraqi war, and the question “was not whether but when.”<sup>42</sup> The running start was meant to bring together the foreign policy of preemption with military doctrine of rapid dominance. Given that the Iraqi forces, at 350,000 would not likely be overwhelmed by an invading force a third their size, the Army opted for operational surprise and an

“overmatched” deployment of state-of-the-art systems against the severely compromised condition of Iraq’s war materiel.<sup>43</sup>

The actual land invasion began on March 19, 2003 before full troop strength and logistical support (especially spare parts) had been delivered, in what the army called “just-in-time operations” deemed more efficient than the stockpiling of people and equipment in 1991 when Saudi Arabia was the staging area. This time it was Kuwait that provided the free gas, and their national oil company spent two years laying a pipeline right up to the Iraqi border. In addition, the Army would take what it considered a “systems approach” based on Saddam’s own means of political control over the city of Baghdad. By seizing these “key nodes” of repression and consent—from the secret police to sewerage—the invasion would assault the “critical vulnerabilities of centers of gravity” so as to collapse the regime and save the city. The coalition forces assumed that they would be treated to a repeat of the earlier Gulf War where conventional Iraqi forces did not resist and surrendered en mass.<sup>44</sup> The plan was to get to the capital as quickly as possible and to deploy soldiers as if they were precision guided missiles on selected targets. The reliance on systems logics, which creates equivalence between different kinds of resources, political processes, and social activities combines readily with the post-fordist managerial approach that makes equipment and labor interchangeable inputs. That anxiety that labor will work like a machine and the worry that machines will work with the reliability of a good soldier are the wobbly pillars that underwrite the revolution in military affairs and inform the criteria by which the war was planned and evaluated. To fulfil their civilizing missions, wars must teach. But since the lessons they teach the vanquished can lead to further barbarism or terror, the military takes on the commitment to life-long learning, forming vehicles for outcomes assessment like the Center for Army Lessons Learned, from which this account of the war borrows heavily.

In the various narratives of the war, the Army’s is instructive because it represents the perspective of labor as it attempts to assert itself in a setting at once thoroughly mediated by technology and conceived of as integral to a system, part of a fighting machine. The official Army assessment of its performance in the invasion of Iraq and assault on Baghdad is called “On Point.” It is the few weeks between March 19-April 9 2003 that the Army considers to hold les-

sons for its future—rather than the actual future that will follow, the downward spiral of occupation. Before the assessment is an assertion of the army's essence, the small band of infantry whose position of honor and greatest responsibility is the team member who leads the way, a position known as being on point. Being on point is metaphorized as the team concept of the warrior ethos, both interpersonally among comrades in the squad, and more abstractly as a division of labor among the services. The army's claim to continued relevance in a hi-tech world rests upon an ethos based on affect, where "humans, not high tech sensors remain indispensable.....Every values-based institution has an image of itself at its purist most basic level. It is a single mental snapshot—a distillation of all that is good and right. Reaching back to the institution's foundation, it evokes a visceral emotional response from the members."<sup>45</sup> The army's institutional apologia as fundamentally humanistic stands in for the absent values of freedom by invasion and occupation, where labor's own assertion against dehumanizing "sensors" provides the heroism that might otherwise be converted into more reflective values of liberation.

The remote controlled ballistics of shock and awe were underwritten by the intimate contact of infantry brawn. While long distance bombing raids may give cover to those issuing orders, the open theater distributes risk among all military occupations and applies to bombs and bullets whether released near or far the shared logic of leveraged force—less is more. Rather than forming a broad front with steady advance, the intervention was calibrated to maximize turnover time. Ribbons of troops traversed highways and pierced cities. Yet while the army was performing according to its own mandates, achieving speed, agility, and surprise, the enemy was not behaving as forecast. To American observers, Iraqi forces had "melted away" like an approaching mirage in the desert. Absent was any insight into their disappearance, and explanations ranged from strategic orders to preserve the force, to the success of psychological operations (some forty million pamphlets were dropped on the Iraqis telling them that liberation was nigh), to the efficacy of bombs, to fear or inability to surrender.<sup>46</sup> Equally surprising to the Americans was the fierce presence of unconventional forces who lacked the prudence to protect themselves from hostile fire and armor. These paramilitary forces' "tactics were suicidal in that they literally ran and drove to their deaths" rather than using the "cover" of the

urban environment. The battlefield was declared “noncontiguous,” “non-linear,” and occupied by an enemy prepared to fight “asymmetrically.” While drawing fire away from homes rather than making these targets might be taken as evidence of reason, the combatants were already being constructed as proto-terrorists willing to embrace risk and opportunity—purportedly what the transformed army was itself prepared to do.<sup>47</sup>

In the minds of some commanders, unpredictability, irrationality, and evil easily slid into one another: “We overrated this army but we underrated the irregulars. They were fierce, but not too bright. They were evil men who deserved to die. They didn’t adapt to our forces. They would continue to impale themselves on our BIFV (Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, an armored troop carrier) and tanks.”<sup>48</sup> Further down the chain of command exuberance for technology and an enemy stripped of characteristics altogether is reported. Sergeant First Class Jason Christian of Charlie Troop 3-7 Cavalry gushed about the surveillance and targeting abilities of the 60 ton Abrams tank and the digitally linked Bradley armored carrier. “The hunter-killer team concept works fantastic...The M1/M3 combination is outstanding. What you get when they work together is lots and lots of dead folks.” Troops shut inside these vehicles communicated with one another through global positioning technology called Blue Force Tracking. The more sophisticated Army Battle Command system was not distributed to all forces in the coalition. The simpler system reduced fratricide and allowed commanders to keep track of troops spread across many miles, but did not allow them to see the enemy, a system that has retained its cold war moniker Red Force tracking.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the larger scale of operations, the primacy of Special Forces to identify targets and call in strikes joined Iraq with the leveraged logic of the smaller war in Afghanistan. With Iraq for the first time, conventional forces were actually assigned to Special Forces, the mass applied to support the special effect. While separated physically and culturally from conventional forces, the specialists were normalized by constant deployment and re-integration with regular units from the Balkan intervention onwards. Special Forces called in strikes from air, land and sea—serving as the hinge to achieve the vaunted “jointness” which the military sought.<sup>50</sup> A third of all the bombing sorties were called in by Special Forces in the North,

at the height of combat four-fifths of the bombs were directed at Iraqi ground troops, and all told, two thirds of the munitions were precision guided.<sup>51</sup> In Iraq as well, Special Forces worked closely with internal opposition, especially the Kurdish Peshmerga, earning them the praise of Lieutenant General David D. McKiernan as a "huge combat multiplier."<sup>52</sup> The precision afforded by Special Forces directed strikes is to isolate a particular threat (or risk) from its physical, political, or military environment. In terms of deployment, such forces lost their specialness and had become the norm, but their function was to concentrate risk who effects would ripple throughout the warscape.

The resulting approach is not limited to ground troops but also applies to aerial attack and is called "effects based" bombing. As explained by Colonel Gary Crowder, chief of Strategy, Concepts, and Doctrine of the Air Combat Command, "If we understood what the effect we desired on the battlefield, we could then figure out ways of creating that effect more efficiently, more effectively, striking less targets, using less weapons and, quite frankly, mitigating or easing potential concerns for collateral damage and civilian casualties." This greater efficiency is then distributed throughout a range of "target systems, creating a greater effect on each individual system, and that, in turn, started to collapse the system from the inside."<sup>53</sup> Crowder makes a distinction between collateral damage which can be planned for and anticipated as a "reasonable occurrence" resulting from a targeted attack, and "unintended damage" which is "when something goes wrong" and is therefore beyond calculation.<sup>54</sup> The distinction is consistent with that made in finance between risk—a calculated departure from expectation, and uncertainty, the prospect of the unknown occurrence which eludes any calculus. While bodies may never be counted, collateral damage presents a risk opportunity that drives the planning process. Yet the confidence of the planning process might be undermined by a look at the numbers. In one estimate, 9,436-11,317 Iraqi civilians were killed (nearly twice the estimated 5,000-6,000 Iraqi combatants) and another 40,000 wounded by the time the Provisional Authority dissolved in June 2004.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, by this time the Coalition had incurred over 6,000 casualties a number approaching the 9,000 they had planned for before the conflict as a worst case scenario.<sup>56</sup> What political system was being installed when collateral damage had double the effect of

military targets? If the civilian population of Iraq is held as collateral, what is going to count as a security?

The initial forays into Baghdad were, by design, made to resemble more the caves of Tora Bora than the conventional proscenium theater of war. By the time coalition forces had reached their prize, whole Iraqi divisions dispersed and slipped away, and the looting and dismantling of infrastructure, looked like a time released capsule for the poison pill merger, or a corporate raider on speed. The drive to Baghdad that began with armored columns crossing the Kuwaiti border on March 20, 2003 had taken but two weeks. The assault on the city consisted of a series of small incursions and souped-up drive by shootings called “thunder runs,” that disappeared the government within another week. By April 4<sup>th</sup>, when coalition forces had surrounded Baghdad, “all major systems within the city had been dissected, studied and targeted. Every section and building in the city were mapped and numbered.”<sup>57</sup> The transformation of Baghdad into a targetable system of systems reflected twelve years of aerial surveillance and reconnaissance—for the army “preparations for Operation Iraqi Freedom begin March 1, 1991—the day after the first Gulf War ended.”<sup>58</sup> Yet aerial bombardment was also formative in the creation by the British (with the aid of a League of Nations mandate) of Iraq as country in 1921. After betraying promises for independence if Arabs fought with Britain during World War I, The Royal Air Force proved instrumental in suppressing a 1920 nationalist uprising in Iraq. British military planners of the day understood that “the attack with bombs and machine guns must be relentless and unremitting and carried on continuously by day and night, on houses, inhabitants, crops and cattle.”<sup>59</sup>

The hostile space would be pacified by numeracy, transformed into a decapitated body. Baghdad was also refamiliarized along the lines of American popular culture. US troops first occupied Baghdad’s suburbs as a staging ground to take the city. These captured objectives were named after favorite football teams (Saints, Lions, Titans), cartoon characters like Woody of Pixar’s Toy Story, or Curly, Larry and Moe of the Three Stooges. Before the war, the expectation of military planners was that Republican Guard divisions would retreat from the perimeter and engage in urban warfare throughout the city. The utter devastation of those Divisions, the detritus of abandoned bodies and equipment suggested that the final

seige would not correspond to expectations. "It was unclear whether Baghdad was a trap, a clever ruse, or a hollow shell."<sup>60</sup> The thunder runs themselves were "armed reconnaissance" diagnostic probes into the city. The first, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, consisted of several hundred soldiers aboard 29 tanks and 14 Bradleys that took a fourteen mile, two hour-twenty minute drive right through the center of the city to the airport. The armored column drew small arms fire from Iraqi fighters, killing one US soldier and wounding others, with one tank destroyed. While the mission was deemed a military success in its own terms, namely that Iraqi defenses could be violated at will with acceptable loses, it was recognized as politically counter-productive. Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, broadcast that American forces had been repulsed. The phoenix of postmodern relativism had reared its ugly head. Major General Buford Blount III, Lieutenant Generals William Wallace and David McKiernan, in charge of ground forces, ordered Colonel David Perkins to conduct another run into the city on the April 7<sup>th</sup>. Perkins decided to undertake a riskier operation of seizing a psychologically strategic objective in the center of the city and staying overnight. The commanders supported their subordinate's embrace of greater risk, "all intuitively understood the opportunities—and risks—and reached similar conclusions."<sup>61</sup> This was a larger operation with an entire army division, but with similar time constraints, as the sixty-ton Abrams tanks can only run four hours before needing to refuel. Objectives were seized, attacks and counterattacks were joined over the next two days and nights. Once again, the operation was considered a military success that foreshortened hostilities by perhaps two weeks. The message that Iraq was without government, clear as intended, was decidedly more mixed.

The waves of appropriation by Iraqis that went under the generic name of looting, seemed to follow the vapor trail left by the attacks on the system of systems—government facilities of every stripe, including schools, hospitals, the national museum, as well as basic foodstuffs which had been part of the state rationing system. It was not simply that coalition forces were unable to secure and protect the civilian infrastructure. Combat power was drained by treating soldiers as an extension of the intelligence network. Eager to establish the truth of the war, units were deployed to investigate some 900 sites purported to hold weapons of mass destruction.<sup>62</sup> The

speed of operations generated substantial logistical problems that created their own political demonstration effects to Iraqis. Despite the revolution in logistical affairs that had moved an entire army base worth of parts to Kuwait in three weeks and a digital global parts network, soldiers and equipment were delivered but as for spare parts “almost none reached intended customers during the fighting” because the requisition process required numerous approvals and elaborate processing through the complex system. Field units were constantly “cannibalizing broken down equipment and towing what they could not repair.”<sup>63</sup> Twenty days into combat, the coalition forces consumed as much fuel as was used during four years of World War I (forty million gallons). The two weeks saved on major combat may have been crucial as the war machine may have consumed itself by then. “Fortunately, major combat operations ended before the failure of the parts distribution system affected operations in a meaningful way.”<sup>64</sup>

The fragility of supply lines and expediency of speed to deflect attention from them would not be lost on military planners who might be considering the next intervention with a neighboring nation to serve as their gas station or a local Wal-Mart to provide parts. The military was far from self-sufficient even in a war of such limited duration and had to rely on their enemies for provisions. The shortages meant that “units used what they captured from Iraqi forces or improvised....Units resorted to using Iraqi lubricants acquired by foraging parties.”<sup>65</sup> For some Iraqis, these “parties” may have resembled more a license to loot. If coalition soldiers were helping themselves to the Iraqi army’s stuff, the local population might be doing the same. Saddam Hussein had, after all been preparing for this mother of battles for the same period of time as the Americans. The resistance he was able to mount was but a trace of what he had hoped for. He was able to create what the Americans could not—a local network of munitions to arm the people who never rallied to his cause. According to Anthony Cordesman, “Iraq sought to create a massive Popular Army with the capability to draw on a mobilization base of some 7 million and the goal of actually arming up to 1 million men.”<sup>66</sup> While hardly weapons of mass destruction, by ignoring these arms caches distributed around the country, the invaders offered Iraqis what their former leader could not. Further, the efforts to build a coalition and achieve interoperability seem

more gifts to the vanquished than assets of a globally lead military. The United States remains one of few in the world with “wide and diverse combat experience” and, as for Europe old or new, most of that Union’s land forces lack “the capability either to act as independent expeditionary forces or to be fully interoperable with the US.”<sup>67</sup> With the exception of special forces, even the British were assigned to Basra (a former province of the Ottoman Empire originally ceded to them in 1916 by the Sykes-Picot Treaty that had carved-up the Middle East among Britain, France and Czarist Russia)<sup>68</sup> where they had to take their lumps in some of the most sustained combat of the war.

Fourteen months of Coalition Provisional Authority cannot forecast what Iraq will become, but it does disclose what derivative war and discretionary reconstruction imagine for their world. While Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein had earned their credentials as staunch anti-communists, they wound up taking communism’s place as the abject other. Whether through faith-based mutual aid societies or centralized government rationing the market was being subverted by other logics of distribution. While Afghanistan could scarcely be considered a functioning national economy, Iraq under the embargo assumed all of the peccadillos of the centrally planned economy. If the Pentagon’s new way of war turned out to be Iraq redux, twelve years in the making, the plan for reconstructing Iraq’s economy was lifted from World Bank and International Monetary Fund blueprints for transition from communism to the market.<sup>69</sup> After twenty years of war and sanctions, 60 percent of the Iraqi population depended on government food rations to survive, and as much as a third of the work force was government employed, with many more working in the informal sector.<sup>70</sup> CPA economists thought “disheartening” the finding of a poll conducted by the International Republican Institute about what Iraqis sought in a political party. Nearly half reported supporting “more government jobs” and only 5% favored “more private sector jobs.”<sup>71</sup>

Iraq is among the world’s most indebted nations, with debt six times GDP and the CPA itself put unemployment at nearly 30% (although other studies found rates more than double that—largely a result of the CPA’s own disbanding of the state sector under de-Ba’athification ).<sup>72</sup> While the CPA said its economic policies were modeled on the transition economies of eastern europe and central

asia, the heady brew of liberalized interest rates, increased foreign ownership of banks, and availability of modest loans to establish small businesses known as micro-credit, is the familiar recipe of post-cold war fiscal policy for development the world over. To assure currency speculation takes an official form, the Ministry of Finance sells oil dollars to the Central Bank which then sells dollars at a currency auction. A year after Baghdad fell, the CPA had managed to create near unanimity that it was a force of occupation rather than liberation, with nearly ninety percent reporting the former position.<sup>73</sup> A year's occupation had not been too good for US troops support of the CPA either. Over half reported to the army that their morale was low and three-quarters said they were poorly led.<sup>74</sup>

When Bush finally made a public appearance to justify the year's occupation of Iraq, he was sharply rebutted by our man in Washington, Anthony Cordesman. "An Iraqi middle class has effectively profited from the opening up of Iraq, the flow of coalition aid and oil revenues and a lack of tariffs. The CPA has made virtually no progress, however, in carrying out broad structural reforms of Iraq's command economy and state industries. Moreover, it has failed to work out any meaningful mid and long term plan for the energy sector and has left the agricultural sector in virtually the same command dominated mess it was in when the U.S. arrived.....The President left the Iraqi economy and the critical area of jobs a virtual black box with no signs of a plan to really fix critical problems."<sup>75</sup> A week before, Cordesman had testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "Iraq now has a "bubble" economy, not real reconstruction, and Iraqis know this."<sup>76</sup> Even if for Cordesman the project of making Iraq into "a successful free market democracy was never practical," the success in creating a bubble economy of benefit to a few did have a familiar ring to it. The CPA even seemed to treat reconstruction monies the way the Bush administration had used tax cuts. The cronyism and corruption from Enron to Halliburton that had shadowed the executive offices were manifest in Iraq, where the government's own studies were revealing "a company and a contracting environment that has run amok."<sup>77</sup> On the eve of their departure, the CPA had given away nearly all of the funds in the form of commitments to US multinationals.<sup>78</sup> While half of the \$18.4 billion appropriated by Congress in the Fall of 2003 has been allocated to contractors, fewer than 140 of the 2,300 planned projects

had actually gotten under way by June 30th, 2004, the day that the new ambassador, John Negroponte presented his credentials to the interim Iraqi government.<sup>79</sup> Negroponte, seasoned anti-communist and supporter of dictatorship in Central America during his tenure as Ambassador to Honduras, would appreciate Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's (himself a former CIA employee) first act of state-arrogating to his governing authority the powers of martial law.

### **Self-Managing to Get By**

For the war on terror, liberation has been the operative term. Military intervention is liberatory insofar as it establishes an equivalence between hitherto unrelated values so that they may be placed into a universe of exchange. Dispossessed capitalists and dictators past their expiration date can be tossed into the same terror hole. By assembling the world into gradations of risk, an anti-productive network of missed opportunities can animate those choice moments that yield effective gain. Even if terrorists are not caught, weapons of mass destruction are not found, or regimes end but don't change, freedom will be achieved through installing representative self-government. That ongoing wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and various "sheriff" operations around the world have stretched military forces to the limit is not necessarily an endgame of imperial overreach, but of how the world's peoples are to be sorted between those who merit discretionary attention and those who can be ignored. The question here is what this freedom consists of and how it resembles the freedom of capital to circulate in financial markets. Iraqi's are to be liberated from their oil, no doubt, but it would seem as well that many people have been liberated from the economy as such. That the invasion force was not designed to police national development is less a planning oversight than a statement of intent for the resources applied for the return to civilian rule. Similarly, war architect Wolfowitz's promise that reconstruction would be self-financing was a matter of policy, not a forecast of oil production targets that would go unmet. For the "coalition of the willing" whether in Afghanistan or in Iraq, tactical success did not readily translate into strategic value. Regime change was affected without realizing the political objectives that regime was said to harbor. Fighting terror unleashed it elsewhere, just like a well placed put or call (buy or sell) of stock would send ripples of

price through the market. For the analogy to hold anything, however, international politics must be as seamless a medium of exchange as the market means to be. Unlike the al Qaeda or Baathist leadership, risk must not be allowed to slip away. But only through opportunity lost may it return, now with others in tow.

The prosecution of the war on terror has had this effect, to socialize politics by making opposition to objectifying rule impossible in principle (if not certainly in practice). U.S. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld insisted subsequently that his soldiers not stick around to clean up the mess, a task better left to others. In Iraq, the U.S. has been even more mischievous in its inconsistency. While U.S. military intervention was highly destructive for Afghanistan, it was modest in relation to total capacity. The Iraqi operation, while at a larger scale, kept one eye on its prey while allowing the other to roam from Syria to North Korea to Iran. Both followed the logic of a derivative war. Both in terms of domestic solidarity—the production of an America in the world—and international alignment, the problem of distributed or dispersed warfare extended a politics of securitization in the name of global security. Relative to the massive deployments in space and time of a World War II or even a Vietnam, Afghanistan and now Iraq are targeted investments to create spheres of participation wherein non-American governments can respond to the threat of being “with us or against us.” Hence, even while the initial goals of intervention can become obscured by means of their realization, the installation of new regimes of self-management maintain the nervous system of the imperium.

As we have learned at home, bad risk is denied movement, isolated, incarcerated. The terror at Abu Ghraib is not simply a scandal of command and control where responsibility is distributed downwards (like the recurrent intelligence failures that provided the foundation for war). The tactics of humiliation are familiar to those who follow carceral developments in the United States, and are in this regard but another export of civilian life back into the military. The lessons learned from the various domestic wars that end in the maximum security of prison, is that whole populations can be managed by moving minorities through the system. The small prison packets can be bundled together for greater effect. The strategic point of securitization in financial terms is to delocalize risk so that it can become a general feature of activity. Risk, like money itself,

is both means and ends of exchange, medium and store of value. Through securitization, one is not indebted to a person in a place, but the generalized other of the market. A successful war on terror, a specter of ongoing intervention actualized through severely limited and selective engagement, would have to manage itself. Networks and nations alike would find themselves equally treated. Liberation would allow them to continue, colonial cauldrons unto themselves, connected to the world at the point at which they would matter most—where risk, for better or worse, could be embraced.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Overview of the Enemy: Staff Statement No. 15” National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, p. 5. [http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing12/staff\\_statement\\_15.pdf](http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing12/staff_statement_15.pdf) accessed June, 28 2004.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of this affair, see, Dennis Hans, “Once They Were Sweethearts: Dick Cheney, the New York Times and the Myth of the Iraq Connection to 9/11.” June 26/27 2004. Accessed June 28, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The Economist Lexington column mused, “Judgments on the economy may well be overshadowed by pessimism about the occupation; views on these two largely unrelated subjects seem to move in close correlation.” “Poor George: The Case For Pessimism About the President’s Prospects.” The Economist June 24, 2004 .

<sup>4</sup> The State Department’s initial report for 2004 claimed that the number of attacks had declined, but they latter issued a corrective. For this and a more general accounting of the Iraq war’s various “costs,” see, Phyllis Bennis et al, “Paying the Price: The Mounting Costs of the Iraq War” June 24, 2004. Washington: DC Institute for Policy Studies, Accessed June 30, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Rumsfeld, quoted in Rowan Scarborough, *Rumsfeld’s War: The Untold Story of America’s Antiterrorist Commander* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2004), 166.

<sup>6</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency, “A Primer on the Future Threat, The Decades Ahead: 1999-2020” quoted in Scarborough, *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>7</sup> For an accounting of US conventional and unconventional arms provision to Iraq see, Larry Everest, *Oil, Power and Empire: Iraq and the U.S. Global Agenda* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), especially Chapter 4, “Arming Iraq.” Details on chemical and biological weapons can be found on p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> DIA Colonel Walter P. Lang quoted in Research Unit For Political Economy, *Behind the Invasion of Iraq* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003), 32.

<sup>9</sup> National Commission, *Op Cit.*, p 1.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Friedman, *Terrorism, Afghanistan and America’s New Way of War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 55.

<sup>11</sup> This distinction between a formal organization entity and a principle of association is made by Jason Burke to emphasize that terrorism cannot be countered by eliminating individual leaders, but must be addressed through its sociological roots. See his, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (London: IB Tauris, 2003) definitions found on pp. 7 and 8.

<sup>12</sup> Friedman, *Terrorism* Op Cit., 63-66.

<sup>13</sup> Burke, Op Cit., 16. An analyst for the Marine Corps, J. Noel Williams, likens bin Laden to a "ruthless venture capitalist," who incorporates "many of today's best business practices into his organizational plan." See, "Matrix Warfare: The New Face of Competition and Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (Quantico, VA: Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities, 2002), 1. Accessed July 2, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> According to the National Commission report, bin Laden never received the larger \$300 million inheritance once said to be his share of the family fortune. Op. Cit., 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 and 18.

<sup>16</sup> "With the Cold War over, Afghanistan was effectively neglected by much of the international community and, since 1992, the UN Consolidated Appeals for Afghanistan remained consistently underfunded, sometimes severely so." Sultan Barakat, "Setting the Scene for Afghanistan's Reconstruction: The Challenges and Critical Dilemmas." in Sultan Barakat, ed., *Reconstructing War Torn Societies: Afghanistan* (Houndmills, England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Friedman, Op. Cit., 80.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 and 81.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-85.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *The Lessons of Afghanistan: War Fighting, Intelligence, and Force Transformation* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 2002), 8 and 82.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>24</sup> Friedman, Op Cit., 200.

<sup>25</sup> Cordesman, Op Cit., 42 and 36.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *The War After the War: Strategic Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 2004), 65.

<sup>30</sup> Shengman Zhang, "Afghanistan Transitional Support Strategy" (Washington, DC: The World Bank February 14, 2003) [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/sar/sa.nsf/Attachments/TSS2Text/\\$File/Text.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/sar/sa.nsf/Attachments/TSS2Text/$File/Text.pdf). Accessed July 10, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony, February 25, 2004 Wednesday, CAPITOL HILL HEARING TESTIMONY, SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS, USAID CONTRACTING POLICIES, MR. FREDERICK D. BARTON, CO-DIRECTOR OF POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES LexisNexis Accessed July 4, 2004 [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?\\_m=f6a5fe083fc113711f6614f3a37ccdeb&\\_docnum=1&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkVA&\\_md5=444e40e86141dc37248b9b0456564bed](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?_m=f6a5fe083fc113711f6614f3a37ccdeb&_docnum=1&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkVA&_md5=444e40e86141dc37248b9b0456564bed). Barton admitted to a deteriorating situation for aid workers. "Many who work in Afghanistan feel that conditions have grown more dangerous, with work in the South slowing down into a shrinking area."

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Goodhand, "Aiding Violence or Building Peace? The Role of International Aid in Afghanistan" 37-59 in Barakat Op Cit., 53.

<sup>33</sup> *The New York Times*, May 13, 2004 Thursday, Late Edition - Final, Section C; Column 1; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 2; Economic Scene, 955 words, Afghans come

up with an aid plan of their own design., By Jeff Madrick. LexisNexis [http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?\\_m=7534792d0ada0a8d6722f9d0758dab0e&\\_docnum=73&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkVA&\\_md5=94c3eae1171c33f9528a8a276e2878a](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?_m=7534792d0ada0a8d6722f9d0758dab0e&_docnum=73&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkVA&_md5=94c3eae1171c33f9528a8a276e2878a) Accessed July 4, 2004.

<sup>34</sup> "Federal Study Faults Program to Rebuild Afghanistan" PakTribune June 5, 2004. accessed July 6, 2004. The study was released by the General Accounting Office June 2, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> David Rohde, "Poppies Flood Afghanistan: Opium Tide May Yet Turn" *The New York Times* July 1, 2004 A13.

<sup>36</sup> Afghan Constitution available online at Accessed July 6, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Clammer, "A Place for Tourism in Afghanistan's Recovery" June 8, 2004, Development Gateway, <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/afghanistan/sdm/previewDocument.do~activeDocumentId=1000580> accessed July 6, 2004. Development Gateway is itself a spin-off of the World Bank and a brainchild of its President James Wolfensohn, to "build local capacity to empower communities," by using information and communications technologies.

<sup>38</sup> Eric Shinseki, quoted in Scarborough *Rumsfeld's War, Op Cit.*, 139.

<sup>39</sup> Wolfowitz, testified to this effect before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations on March 27th, 2003 and is here quoted in Larry Everest, *Oil, Power and Empire: Iraq and the U.S. Global Agenda* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), 279.

<sup>40</sup> The Senate Intelligence Committee's "Report On the U.S.Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessment on Iraq, July 7, 2004" found in the words of its Chairman Senator Pat Roberts (R, Kansas) that "most of the key judgements....were either overstated or were not supported by the raw intelligence reporting." Excerpts published in *The New York Times*, "The Senators' Views and Excerpts from the Report on Iraq Assessments." July 10, 2004, A8. *Failure to pay heed to what subordinates say is happening is at odds with the Command and Control protocols claimed by the Revolution in Military Affairs but does suggest how intelligence lines of command would find themselves the cognate of military lines of information.*

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics and Military Lessons* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 2003), 58-59

<sup>42</sup> The Army's Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) declassified its study of the war in June, 2004. The publicly available version was not paginated. Stratman quote from Chapter 2 "Prepare, Mobilize Deploy" of "On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom" Accessed June, 2004.

<sup>43</sup> Cordesman, *The Iraq War Op Cit.*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> All quotes taken from On Point Chapter 2, Op Cit.

<sup>45</sup> On Point, Ibid., "Introduction."

<sup>46</sup> On Point, Ibid., Chapter 3, "The Running Start."

<sup>47</sup> On Point, Ibid., Chapter 4, "The March Up-Country."

<sup>48</sup> Lt. Colonel Pete Bayer, 3rd Army Division, 11 May 2003, quoted in On Point, Ibid., Chapter 5, "Isolation of the Regime."

<sup>49</sup> On Point, Chapter 7 "Implications" Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> As Anthony Cordesman observed, "this integration enabled conventional forces to leverage SOF [Special Operations Forces] capabilities to deal effectively with asymmetric threats." Cordesman, *The Iraq War, Op Cit.*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 120, 97, 143. The total number of sorties was nearly 50,000 and the number of precision guided missiles dropped was almost twenty thousand (143).

- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 365.
- <sup>53</sup> Crowder quoted in Ibid., 262-263.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 265-266.
- <sup>55</sup> Bennis, et al., "Paying the Price" Op Cit., iv.
- <sup>56</sup> Paul Sperry, "U.S. Army prepares for 9,000 casualties Sets up 'replacement center' to resupply Iraq combatants" Posted: March 11, 2003 Accessed July, 9 2004.
- <sup>57</sup> This and subsequent quotes from army personnel from On Point, Chapter 6 "Regime Collapse."
- <sup>58</sup> On Point, Introduction, Op. Cit.
- <sup>59</sup> Larry Everest, *Oil, Power and Empire Op. Cit.*, 43.
- <sup>60</sup> On Point, Chapter 6, "Regime Collapse" Op. Cit.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> On Point, Chapter 4, Op. Cit.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> Again, this is the army's own appraisal of its logistical limitations in a section of Chapter 4 titled, "Logistics, Setting the Conditions to Win," On Point, Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup> On Point, Chapter 7, "Implications," Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> Cordesman, *The Iraq War Ibid.*, 17.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., 174 and 369.
- <sup>68</sup> Everest, *Oil, Power and Empire Op. Cit.*, 41.
- <sup>69</sup> Hence, the World Bank drew up what it called an Interim Strategy that drew on the "Bank's experience with post-conflict countries and countries in transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-economy." "Interim Strategy Note of the World Bank Group for Iraq" January 14, 2004, 1. [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/mna/mena.nsf/Attachments/Iraq+Interim+Strategy/\\$File/Iraq+Interim+Strategy.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/mna/mena.nsf/Attachments/Iraq+Interim+Strategy/$File/Iraq+Interim+Strategy.pdf) Accessed July 7, 2004.
- <sup>70</sup> Christopher Foote, William Block, Keith Crane, and Simon Gray, "Economic Policy and Prospects in Iraq" Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Public Policy Discussion Papers, No. 04-1 May 4, 2004 , 2-3. The authors all worked for the CPA in Baghdad.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., 29.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., 7, 14. Bennis et al cite the higher figure and add that "the high levels of unemployment fueled the insurgency." Op Cit., 28.
- <sup>73</sup> Results of a poll conducted by the Iraqi Center for Research and Strategic Studies, April 20-27. At this time 76% held an unfavorable view of the CPA as compared to 41% who disfavored the UN. 43% said they would feel more safe if the coalition left. Quoted in Antony Cordesman, "The Bush Plan for Iraq: A Risk Assessment." 5/25/04 2.
- <sup>74</sup> Bennis, "Paying the Price" Op. Cit., ii.
- <sup>75</sup> Cordesman, "The Bush Plan for Iraq" Op. Cit., 7.
- <sup>76</sup> Anthony Cordesman, "The Post-Conflict Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan" Testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 19, 2004, 16. Accessed July 8, 2004. <http://www.csis.org/hill/ts040519cordesman.pdf>
- <sup>77</sup> Congressman Henry Waxman (D, California) succinctly detailed the Halliburton corruptions in a letter to Tom Davis Chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform on June 14, 2004. Waxman, a Committee member, was protesting Davis' prevention of testimony about Halliburton's "waste, fraud, and abuse" from being presented before the committee. Letter on Accessed June 24, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> As reported by the watchdog group, Iraqi Revenue Watch, "Iraqi Fire Sale: CPA Giving Away Oil Revenue Billions Before Transition" Briefing No. 7 June, 2004. Accessed, July 8, 2004.

<sup>79</sup> James Glanz and Erik Eckholm, "Reality Intrudes on Promises in Rebuilding of Iraq" *The New York Times* June 30, 2004, A1 and A11.

# SEARCHING OUT LOCATIONS

Jeff Derksen  
for KD

People are humans  
with particulars. Humans  
are people with portfolios. We  
are just nation-states, the plastic  
storage tubs  
of globality trying  
to live our imagined lives  
with a little extra, a pinch  
of pepper in our point-of-  
production morning whistle. Others,  
on the other hand  
have their own problems, particular  
problems that we are not at liberty  
to comment on  
in this century, "end of  
history" etc. We'd like  
to help, but we're here  
for a surplus time, not  
a short time so take the iris-screening  
device from my hand comrade  
and bury me where the suburbs slip  
to the ocean's edge  
that granddad aimed at from  
the Old Country fleeing the rise  
of fascism only to land  
in a swamp. Joke's not  
on you, but the century! Ditto  
for your continent! We recommend  
working for the weekend  
that comes once a year, expansive  
leather-clad lover boys

of the seventies. It's called  
"urban regeneration"  
and it comes after coffee  
and oil. Have a heart, not  
a Harley pumping pistons  
dear lord dwelling in the  
hot-air balloon of media and travel  
tycoons after Macchu Pichu. The bright  
twenty-four-seven  
humming of the drills  
boring bunkers into  
the verdant hills

# IF RUBBER GLOVING YOU IS WRONG

Jeff Derksen

Practicing  
to be human  
is like aiming to be a bulls eye.  
I think she's just reaching  
for the driver's door  
I think naively. Tearing rags  
into rags, breaking stones  
into stone, farming copyrights  
into the dark family soil  
of the bread basket of the world.  
India will not  
be privatized today, so today  
The Indian Stock Exchange has its  
historic fall. The democracy paradox:  
when did it become  
paradoxical? Was it when I was  
lap dancing in the Alps, or busy  
producing subcultural space  
with buddies on the periphery  
of utterance? Soft gentrification  
is architecture carrying a functional  
beautiful stick and walking softly  
where people used to work. Making  
things as if their lives  
depended on it! Bring in the public  
once you push out  
everyone else, they will identify  
themselves by their buying  
power: that's called citizenship  
and you get passport offers  
in the mail. It could be  
Poland or Portland or Porto

Allegre. This is how my modernized  
heart feels today. Let's walk  
rings around Vienna.

# SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I'M TIED TO THE LOCAL POST

Jeff Derksen

Cities compete against  
cities in a state-eat-state  
world. Somewhere underneath that  
people plant corn in Chilliwack  
or bolt together the robots  
that will weld together  
Volkswagens in Slovakia. How big  
is the human scale  
and can we expand it some more  
to include ideas  
about living  
and not neighbourhood associations  
poking surplus bean-bag shotguns  
out of picket fences surrounding  
up-graded working class bungalos  
close to the city centre, armed and  
defending soaring property values?  
I'm filled with a searing and soaring  
anger that shopping won't help  
and the extended forks of my hairline  
wane on the horizon  
of possibility, a utopia jerry-rigged  
from the discursive discards  
of new social movements and old timey  
internationalism plunked down  
where harm is far  
from home and ham is close  
at hand. The not-in-my-  
backyard people are  
at the door again! The concern is  
that needle exchanges  
lower the urban experience of coffee

consumption of failed neoliberal  
monetary policies. I would weep  
for the other possibilities. Those are  
tears of joy, *Jefe!* I have  
nothing against Volkswagons  
nor Volkswagon drivers. It's Saab  
people I can't stand.

# ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona

This is our simple word which seeks to touch the hearts of humble and simple people like ourselves, but people who are also, like ourselves, dignified and rebel. This is our simple word for recounting what our path has been and where we are now, in order to explain how we see the world and our country, in order to say what we are thinking of doing and how we are thinking of doing it, and in order to invite other persons to walk with us in something very great which is called Mexico and something greater which is called the world. This is our simple word in order to inform all honest and noble hearts what it is we want in Mexico and the world. This is our simple word, because it is our idea to call on those who are like us and to join together with them, everywhere they are living and struggling.

## I - What We Are

We are the zapatistas of the EZLN, although we are also called "neo-zapatistas." Now, we, the zapatistas of the EZLN, rose up in arms in January of 1994 because we saw how widespread had become the evil wrought by the powerful who only humiliated us, stole from us, imprisoned us and killed us, and no one was saying anything or doing anything. That is why we said "Ya Basta!," that no longer were we going to allow them to make us inferior or to treat us worse than animals. And then we also said we wanted democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans although we were concentrated on the Indian peoples. Because it so happened that we, the EZLN, were almost all only indigenous from here in Chiapas, but we did not want to struggle just for our own good, or just for the good of the indigenous of Chiapas, or just for the good of the Indian peoples of Mexico. We wanted to fight along with everyone who was humble and simple like ourselves and who was in great need and who suffered from exploitation and thievery by the rich and their bad governments

here, in our Mexico, and in other countries in the world.

And then our small history was that we grew tired of exploitation by the powerful, and then we organized in order to defend ourselves and to fight for justice. In the beginning there were not many of us, just a few, going this way and that, talking with and listening to other people like us. We did that for many years, and we did it in secret, without making a stir. In other words, we joined forces in silence. We remained like that for about 10 years, and then we had grown, and then we were many thousands. We trained ourselves quite well in politics and weapons, and, suddenly, when the rich were throwing their New Year's Eve parties, we fell upon their cities and just took them over. And we left a message to everyone that here we are, that they have to take notice of us. And then the rich took off and sent their great armies to do away with us, just like they always do when the exploited rebel - they order them all to be done away with. But we were not done away with at all, because we had prepared ourselves quite well prior to the war, and we made ourselves strong in our mountains. And there were the armies, looking for us and throwing their bombs and bullets at us, and then they were making plans to kill off all the indigenous at one time, because they did not know who was a zapatista and who was not. And we were running and fighting, fighting and running, just like our ancestors had done. Without giving up, without surrendering, without being defeated.

And then the people from the cities went out into the streets and began shouting for an end to the war. And then we stopped our war, and we listened to those brothers and sisters from the city who were telling us to try to reach an arrangement or an accord with the bad governments, so that the problem could be resolved without a massacre. And so we paid attention to them, because they were what we call "the people," or the Mexican people. And so we set aside the fire and took up the word.

And it so happened that the governments said they would indeed be well-behaved, and they would engage in dialogue, and they would make accords, and they would fulfill them. And we said that was

good, but we also thought it was good that we knew those people who went out into the streets in order to stop the war. Then, while we were engaging in dialogue with the bad governments, we were also talking with those persons, and we saw that most of them were humble and simple people like us, and both, they and we, understood quite well why we were fighting. And we called those people “civil society” because most of them did not belong to political parties, rather they were common, everyday people, like us, simple and humble people.

But it so happened that the bad governments did not want a good agreement, rather it was just their underhanded way of saying they were going to talk and to reach accords, while they were preparing their attacks in order to eliminate us once and for all. And so then they attacked us several times, but they did not defeat us, because we resisted quite well, and many people throughout the world mobilized. And then the bad governments thought that the problem was that many people saw what was happening with the EZLN, and they started their plan of acting as if nothing were going on. Meanwhile they were quick to surround us, they laid siege to us in hopes that, since our mountains are indeed remote, the people would then forget, since zapatista lands were so far away. And every so often the bad governments tested us and tried to deceive us or to attack us, like in February of 1995 when they threw a huge number of armies at us, but they did not defeat us. Because, as they said then, we were not alone, and many people helped us, and we resisted well.

And then the bad governments had to make accords with the EZLN, and those accords were called the “San Andrés Accords” because the municipality where those accords were signed was called “San Andrés.” And we were not all alone in those dialogues, speaking with people from the bad governments. We invited many people and organizations who were, or are, engaged in the struggle for the Indian peoples of Mexico, and everyone spoke their word, and everyone reached agreement as to how we were going to speak with the bad governments. And that is how that dialogue was, not just the zapatistas on one side and the governments on the other. Instead, the

Indian peoples of Mexico, and those who supported them, were with the zapatistas. And then the bad governments said in those accords that they were indeed going to recognize the rights of the Indian peoples of Mexico, and they were going to respect their culture, and they were going to make everything law in the Constitution. But then, once they had signed, the bad governments acted as if they had forgotten about them, and many years passed, and the accords were not fulfilled at all. Quite the opposite, the government attacked the indigenous, in order to make them back out of the struggle, as they did on December 22, 1997, the date on which Zedillo ordered the killing of 45 men, women, old ones and children in the town in Chiapas called ACTEAL. This immense crime was not so easily forgotten, and it was a demonstration of how the bad governments color their hearts in order to attack and assassinate those who rebel against injustices. And, while all of that was going on, we zapatistas were putting our all into the fulfillment of the accords and resisting in the mountains of the Mexican southeast.

And then we began speaking with other Indian peoples of Mexico and their organizations, and we made an agreement with them that we were going to struggle together for the same thing, for the recognition of indigenous rights and culture. Now we were also being helped by many people from all over the world and by persons who were well respected and whose word was quite great because they were great intellectuals, artists and scientists from Mexico and from all over the world. And we also held international encuentros. In other words, we joined together to talk with persons from America and from Asia and from Europe and from Africa and from Oceania, and we learned of their struggles and their ways, and we said they were "intergalactic" encuentros, just to be silly and because we had also invited those from other planets, but it appeared as if they had not come, or perhaps they did come, but they did not make it clear.

But the bad governments did not keep their word anyway, and then we made a plan to talk with many Mexicans so they would help us. And then, first in 1997, we held a march to Mexico City which was called "of the 1,111" because a *compañero* or *compañera* was going

to go from each zapatista town, but the bad government did not pay any attention. And then, in 1999, we held a consulta throughout the country, and there it was seen that the majority were indeed in agreement with the demands of the Indian peoples, but again the bad governments did not pay any attention. And then, lastly, in 2001, we held what was called the "march for indigenous dignity" which had much support from millions of Mexicans and people from other countries, and it went to where the deputies and senators were, the Congress of the Union, in order to demand the recognition of the Mexican indigenous.

But it happened that no, the politicians from the PRI, the PAN and the PRD reached an agreement among themselves, and they simply did not recognize indigenous rights and culture. That was in April of 2001, and the politicians demonstrated quite clearly there that they had no decency whatsoever, and they were swine who thought only about making their good money as the bad politicians they were. This must be remembered, because you will now be seeing that they are going to say they will indeed recognize indigenous rights, but it is a lie they are telling so we will vote for them. But they already had their chance, and they did not keep their word.

And then we saw quite clearly that there was no point to dialogue and negotiation with the bad governments of Mexico. That it was a waste of time for us to be talking with the politicians, because neither their hearts nor their words were honest. They were crooked, and they told lies that they would keep their word, but they did not. In other words, on that day, when the politicians from the PRI, PAN and PRD approved a law that was no good, they killed dialogue once and for all, and they clearly stated that it did not matter what they had agreed to and signed, because they did not keep their word. And then we did not make any contacts with the federal branches. Because we understood that dialogue and negotiation had failed as a result of those political parties. We saw that blood did not matter to them, nor did death, suffering, mobilizations, consultas, efforts, national and international statements, encuentros, accords, signatures, commitments. And so the political class not only closed, one more

time, the door to the Indian peoples, they also delivered a mortal blow to the peaceful resolution—through dialogue and negotiation—of the war. It can also no longer be believed that the accords will be fulfilled by someone who comes along with something or other. They should see that there so that they can learn from experience what happened to us.

And then we saw all of that, and we wondered in our hearts what we were going to do.

And the first thing we saw was that our heart was not the same as before, when we began our struggle. It was larger, because now we had touched the hearts of many good people. And we also saw that our heart was more hurt, it was more wounded. And it was not wounded by the deceits of the bad governments, but because, when we touched the hearts of others, we also touched their sorrows. It was as if we were seeing ourselves in a mirror.

## **II. - Where We Are Now**

Then, like the zapatistas we are, we thought that it was not enough to stop engaging in dialogue with the government, but it was necessary to continue on ahead in the struggle, in spite of those lazy parasites of politicians. The EZLN then decided to carry out, alone and on their side (“unilateral,” in other words, because just one side), the San Andrés Accords regarding indigenous rights and culture. For four years, since the middle of 2001 until the middle of 2005, we have devoted ourselves to this and to other things which we are going to tell you about.

Fine, we then began encouraging the autonomous rebel zapatista municipalities—which is how the peoples are organized in order to govern and to govern themselves—in order to make themselves stronger. This method of autonomous government was not simply invented by the EZLN, but rather it comes from several centuries of indigenous resistance and from the zapatistas’ own experience. It is the self-governance of the communities. In other words, no one

from outside comes to govern, but the peoples themselves decide, among themselves, who governs and how, and, if they do not obey, they are removed. If the one who governs does not obey the people, they pursue them, they are removed from authority, and another comes in.

But then we saw that the Autonomous Municipalities were not level. There were some that were more advanced and which had more support from civil society, and others were more neglected. The organization was lacking to make them more on a par with each other. And we also saw that the EZLN, with its political-military component, was involving itself in decisions which belonged to the democratic authorities, “civilians” as they say. And here the problem is that the political-military component of the EZLN is not democratic, because it is an army. And we saw that the military being above, and the democratic below, was not good, because what is democratic should not be decided militarily, it should be the reverse: the democratic-political governing above, and the military obeying below. Or, perhaps, it would be better with nothing below, just completely level, without any military, and that is why the zapatistas are soldiers so that there will not be any soldiers. Fine, what we then did about this problem was to begin separating the political-military from the autonomous and democratic aspects of organization in the zapatista communities. And so, actions and decisions which had previously been made and taken by the EZLN were being passed, little by little, to the democratically elected authorities in the villages. It is easy to say, of course, but it was very difficult in practice, because many years have passed—first in the preparation for the war and then the war itself—and the political-military aspects have become customary. But, regardless, we did so because it is our way to do what we say, because, if not, why should we go around saying things if we do not then do them.

That was how the Good Government Juntas were born, in August of 2003, and, through them, self-learning and the exercise of “govern obeying” has continued.

From that time and until the middle of 2005, the EZLN leadership has no longer involved itself in giving orders in civil matters, but it has accompanied and helped the authorities who are democratically elected by the peoples. It has also kept watch that the peoples and national and international civil society are kept well informed concerning the aid that is received and how it is used. And now we are passing the work of safeguarding good government to the zapatista support bases, with temporary positions which are rotated, so that everyone learns and carries out this work. Because we believe that a people which does not watch over its leaders is condemned to be enslaved, and we fought to be free, not to change masters every six years.

The EZLN, during these four years, also handed over to the Good Government Juntas and the Autonomous Municipalities the aid and contacts which they had attained throughout Mexico and the world during these years of war and resistance. The EZLN had also, during that time, been building economic and political support which allowed the zapatista communities to make progress with fewer difficulties in the building of their autonomy and in improving their living conditions. It is not much, but it is far better than what they had prior to the beginning of the uprising in January of 1994. If you look at one of those studies the governments make, you will see that the only indigenous communities which have improved their living conditions—whether in health, education, food or housing—were those which are in zapatista territory, which is what we call where our villages are. And all of that has been possible because of the progress made by the zapatista villages and because of the very large support which has been received from good and noble persons, whom we call “civil societies,” and from their organizations throughout the world. As if all of these people have made “another world is possible” a reality, but through actions, not just words.

And the villages have made good progress. Now there are more *compañeros* and *compañeras* who are learning to govern. And—even though little by little—there are more women going into this work, but there is still a lack of respect for the *compañeras*, and they need

to participate more in the work of the struggle. And, also through the Good Government Juntas, coordination has been improved between the Autonomous Municipalities and the resolution of problems with other organizations and with the official authorities. There has also been much improvement in the projects in the communities, and the distribution of projects and aid given by civil society from all over the world has become more level. Health and education have improved, although there is still a good deal lacking for it to be what it should be. The same is true for housing and food, and in some areas there has been much improvement with the problem of land, because the lands recovered from the finqueros are being distributed. But there are areas which continue to suffer from a lack of lands to cultivate. And there has been great improvement in the support from national and international civil society, because previously everyone went wherever they wanted, and now the Good Government Juntas are directing them to where the greatest need exists. And, similarly, everywhere there are more *compañeros* and *compañeras* who are learning to relate to persons from other parts of Mexico and of the world. They are learning to respect and to demand respect. They are learning that there are many worlds, and that everyone has their place, their time and their way, and therefore there must be mutual respect between everyone.

We, the zapatistas of the EZLN, have devoted this time to our primary force, to the peoples who support us. And the situation has indeed improved some. No one can say that the zapatista organization and struggle has been without point, but rather, even if they were to do away with us completely, our struggle has indeed been of some use.

But it is not just the zapatista villages which have grown—the EZLN has also grown. Because what has happened during this time is that new generations have renewed our entire organization. They have added new strength. The *comandantes* and *comandantas* who were in their maturity at the beginning of the uprising in 1994 now have the wisdom they gained in the war and in the twelve years of dialogue with thousands of men and women from throughout the world. The

members of the CCRI, the zapatista political-organizational leadership, is now counseling and directing the new ones who are entering our struggle, as well as those who are holding leadership positions. For some time now the "committees" (which is what we call them) have been preparing an entire new generation of comandantes and comandantas who, following a period of instruction and testing, are beginning to learn the work of organizational leadership and to discharge their duties. And it also so happens that our insurgents, insurgentas, militants, local and regional responsables, as well as support bases, who were youngsters at the beginning of the uprising, are now mature men and women, combat veterans and natural leaders in their units and communities. And those who were children in that January of '94 are now young people who have grown up in the resistance, and they have been trained in the rebel dignity lifted up by their elders throughout these twelve years of war. These young people have a political, technical and cultural training that we who began the zapatista movement did not have. This youth is now, more and more, sustaining our troops as well as leadership positions in the organization. And, indeed, all of us have seen the deceits by the Mexican political class and the destruction which their actions have caused in our patria. And we have seen the great injustices and massacres that neoliberal globalization causes throughout the world. But we will speak to you of that later.

And so the EZLN has resisted twelve years of war, of military, political, ideological and economic attacks, of siege, of harassment, of persecution, and they have not vanquished us. We have not sold out nor surrendered, and we have made progress. More compañeros from many places have entered into the struggle so that, instead of making us weaker after so many years, we have become stronger. Of course there are problems which can be resolved by more separation of the political-military from the civil-democratic. But there are things, the most important ones, such as our demands for which we struggle, which have not been fully achieved.

To our way of thinking, and what we see in our heart, we have reached a point where we cannot go any further, and, in addition,

it is possible that we could lose everything we have if we remain as we are and do nothing more in order to move forward. The hour has come to take a risk once again and to take a step which is dangerous but which is worthwhile. Because, perhaps united with other social sectors who suffer from the same wants as we do, it will be possible to achieve what we need and what we deserve. A new step forward in the indigenous struggle is only possible if the indigenous join together with workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees... the workers of the city and the countryside.

(To be continued...)

*From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.  
Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee—General  
Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.  
Mexico, in the sixth month of the year 2005.  
Translated by irlandesa*

# REVIEWS



# WOODSQUAT

West Coast Line no. 41

<[www.sfu.ca/west-coast-line](http://www.sfu.ca/west-coast-line)>

*"Property relations under capitalism will always leave some people homeless."  
– Michael Barnholden*

The Woodward's Building, which had stood empty for many years, a symbolic centre for housing struggles in Vancouver, was occupied by squatters and housing activists for three months (September 14 to December 14, 2002). During the squat, thousands of people in Vancouver rallied in support of this autonomous action, spontaneously bringing food, donations, clothes and moral support to the Woodsquat, as it came to be known. I remember being in the crowd that was invited to enter the building as guests of the squatters during a demonstration in September, and the energizing feeling of camaraderie that comes from seeing a group of disempowered people act together to assert their common interests, in this case, the urgent need for safe, accessible housing. As I climbed up the ladder and stepped through a large window into the dusty old ex-department store, the rhythms of anarchists drumming up a storm, people chatting and congregating, and a quiet sense of hope punctuated my initial experience of the squat.

Two and a half months later, while I was shivering on a witnessing shift at the squat at 11 pm on the wet, cold Vancouver streets outside the Woodward's Building, watching the blare of harassing police sirens pass by and chatting with squatters, the guarded exhilaration I had felt during that earlier protest seemed far away, yet what remained was the camaraderie. The squatters had set up shifts for people to act in solidarity with them by witnessing at the building during periods when the threat of brutal police eviction drew nearer. Against every reductive stereotype that demeans the poor and the homeless, the squatters were organized, and were fighting for their lives with intelligence and courage.

In many people's opinion, including mine, they were leading a mass struggle against a neoliberal provincial government that had hacked and slashed social services and decimated the material base of the

public good and the commons. This is made clear in a photograph that shows the detournement of the big “W” tower of the building, on which the squatters hung banners reading “Campbell’s Olympic Shame,” referencing how there were millions of dollars available to support a 2010 Olympic bid that benefits corporations yet no government funds for public housing. BC’s Premier, Gordon Campbell, had announced earlier in 2002 that less than half of the non-profit and cooperative housing units frozen in 2001 would be built, leaving over 1000 units of social housing still frozen, at a time when nearly 10,000 households are on the waiting list for social housing (Wulwik, “Squatting as an Organizing Tool”). Rally chants such as “Campbell’s cuts are class war!” also emphasized the squat as a politicized action informed by a critical analysis of the current socio-economic climate in British Columbia.

The first police eviction, in September 2002, resulted in the arrests of 54 residents of the Woodward’s Squat and in larger and larger numbers of squatters, activists and members of the public at large rallying and returning to the Woodward’s Building immediately after.

*“The three people I saw them [the cops] take down, it was like three-on-one and four-on-one, chokeholds and neckgrabs, and they were just really, really violent and really aggressive. And it was really, really scary. And I went and I stood across the street and the next thing I saw they’ve got their big, huge garbage trucks throwing away our beds and our bedding and our belongings.” – from “Transcripts of 16 statements by witnesses to the second eviction (09/22)”*

*“I saw the police as an occupying, military force, mobilized to protect the abstract notion of private property.” – Chris Forth*

Rather than being intimidated and cowed by police brutality, people collectively rallied and reasserted their right to occupy empty spaces when there is a chronic shortage of housing available to them. Their determination in the face of batons and handcuffs was truly inspiring, and is well documented in *Woodsquat*, an issue of *West Coast Line* (no. 41 fall/winter 2003/04), a journal of art, writing and cultural critique published by Simon Fraser University.

Consisting of interviews, speeches, poems, photographs, thoughtful analyses, firsthand accounts, comics, court depositions, police surveillance reports, government memos, and more, *Woodsquat* provides many lenses through which to evaluate both the strategies used to empower homeless people as well as the tactics used by the police against the squatters. *Woodsquat* is an impassioned cry for justice and a sober reminder of how much work still needs to be done in the struggle for accessible housing.

Starting with the opening poem by Theresa Gray, entitled “Canada Is All Native Land: Non-Natives Are All Squatters: The Devil + Canada Are One,” *Woodsquat* situates the Woodward Building within several contexts: on unceded Coast Salish territories, within international struggles for decolonization, and in terms of the poverty structurally built into the capitalist system that is “killing the planet.” The guest editor, Aaron Vidaver, has taken great care to document the lives of people who are increasingly excluded from the flows of global capital, the harsh realities of the rapidly widening gap between the rich and the poor as it manifests in the form of homelessness.

*Woodsquat* is an important addition to the long, inadequately documented history of squatting in Vancouver, starting of course with European settlement early on:

“Legal title to the land base of British Columbia has never been ceded by the indigenous peoples. Land claims amounting to approximately 114% of the Province, because of overlap, give new meaning to the term squatter’s province.” – Michael Barnholden

The publication reminds us that we are all on Native land, and how non-Natives can be considered squatters. In so doing, it encourages an analysis that links and integrates the struggle for housing with long-term efforts to decolonize and to enact more fulfilling relationships than the limited one to property that is so central to a capitalist economy. For instance, one of the squat’s six demands pays particular attention to the needs of First Nations’ people with regards to future development of the Woodward’s building. According to Mike Krebs, “First Nations people always had a key role in the Woodward’s Squat, and with good reason. Aboriginal people are among

the poorest people in Canada. First Nations people make up 40% of the Downtown Eastside population, and 70% of Vancouver Native population lives there.... Aboriginal homelessness is an especially disgusting crime of the Canadian government, where First Nations people are reduced to beggars on their own land." While there was some solidarity among non-Native squatters, this was unfortunately limited to what Krebs considers to be "the service-agency approach," which does not adequately redress the theft of stolen land.

The contributors offer insightful observations into various aspects of the squat. Chrystal Durocher, a squatter who was seven-months pregnant, worked to clean the kitchen everyday, finding that the environment which formed was "like family. Everybody has their arguments and their fights. We love everybody and we hate everybody all at the same time." Despite the challenges of poverty, lack of space, personality conflicts, differing levels of politicization, and ongoing police intimidation, what forms is a picture of people trying their best to work on a common cause. Chris Forth remarks upon the tension between more conservative elements and more radical elements: "One of the speeches at the second support rally included phrases like 'by any means necessary' and gave the impression that, yes, this was an illegal direct action, and no, we were not fucking around. Several anarchists and street youth also took to the habit of wearing masks at the public rallies. Not surprisingly, the pigs commented on this in the fear mongering pig press. I call this fear mongering because we represented no conceivable threat whatsoever (unfortunately). We were deliberately overstated as a threat, probably to justify the harsh nature of the police response." Roy Gladiator Archie states that "he joined up as a soldier to defend the people from bodily harm, from anything." Faced with drug dealers, he had to defend his home with a metal bar: "Another night I was lying on my little cot there and a blade came through my tent that just missed my head.... The third time they came I had a good ten guys here with bats in their hands. They [the dealers] stopped their car and backed all the way up to Cambie." The many voices in Woodsquat do not allow for an idealization or romanticization of the squat—at the same time that camaraderie existed, arguments, physical threats and dangers that are part and parcel of homelessness are not erased. Indeed, the publication is dedicated to the memory

of Taum Danberger, a poet and Downtown Eastside resident who died tragically in 2003, one of many lost to poverty.

The squat helped to shape public opinion in the municipal elections so that COPE, the Coalition of Progressive Electors, won a majority in Vancouver's City Council. Whether COPE has acted responsibly enough to the squatters is open for debate, but my general sense is that while they were obviously a better choice than the neoliberal NPA (nonpartisan association), and notwithstanding the efforts of some sincere city councilors, have remained ineffective in light of the ongoing poverty in the Downtown Eastside. In fact, mayor Larry Campbell's allocation of increased policing has resulted in more police harassment, not less, of homeless people (Cunningham, "A Ghetto Is No Community: Policing Poverty is Nothing New in the DTES"), raising questions about the relationship between electoral politics and autonomous actions such as the squat.

Woodsquat is a testament to the courage and will of the coalition of homeless people and housing activists who took over an empty building and transformed it into a vibrant, defiant space. This publication records the process of conflict, communication, and ongoing attempts to work together. In reviewing the strengths and weaknesses that the people in the Woodward's squat experienced, we learn more about how to build a sustainable movement for social housing.

**Rita Wong**

# ABERRATIONS IN BLACK:

## TOWARD A QUEER OF COLOR CRITIQUE

Roderick A. Ferguson

University of Minnesota Press, 2004

Is it possible to present an analysis that encompasses all queer people of color—lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, intersex, same-gender-loving, gay, black, Asian, Native/Indigenous, Arab, and Latino folks? Probably not, even though this is the premise of Roderick A. Ferguson's ambitious *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. The author's promise to provide this critique is a huge one; Ferguson shoots for the moon and does not make it, but he does hit a lot of stars.

The introduction, "Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology," is an incredibly dense critique of capitalism, historical materialism, Marxism, and "canonical American sociology." Building on scholar Chandan Reddy's work, Ferguson explains that "the decisive intervention of queer of color analysis is that racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations ... queer of color critique approaches culture as one site that compels identifications with and antagonisms to the normative ideals promoted by state and capital."

The goal of the text is to use "queer of color critique" to "examine how culture as a site of identification produces such odd bed-fellows" as, for instance, Marxism and capitalism, which can come together to support multiple oppressions, "the intersecting saliency of race, gender, sexuality, and class in forming social practices. It is at once a straightforward and very complicated idea explored in the main chapters.

Ferguson employs this multivalent queer of color critique in the rest of *Aberrations*, and throughout avoids obvious strategies. He extensively critiques (white) sociology's racism with African-American novels – although interestingly not by using the work of sociologists who are nonracist. He explains this choice as follows:

"I situate African American novelists alongside canonical sociologists to illuminate how African American culture as an epistemological object produced dialogical relations that both exceeded the formal parameters of its interlocutors and confused the distinctions between factual and fictive enterprises." While this is a reasonable explanation, it would have been unnecessary if his text had included analyses of nonracist sociology. (The absence of any mention of W.E.B. DuBois, considered by many to be the first black sociologist, is particularly startling.)

Notwithstanding this criticism, *Aberrations* is a true interdisciplinary text. Not only does Ferguson himself link sociology and literature, he convincingly makes the interesting point that fiction authors such as Wright and Ellison took active interest in sociology. While he is quite obviously well-versed in sociological theory, Ferguson is also a more than competent literary scholar – he examines *The Invisible Man*, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, and *Sula*, and his reading of an unpublished chapter of Ellison's masterpiece is particularly insightful. In the penultimate chapter he provides a particularly memorable analysis of the oft-maligned Moynihan Report, identifying both its appeal to American "liberty" and "equality" and its simultaneous attempts to impose racial, sexual, gender, and class norms. He argues that both Baldwin and Ellison's texts consciously counter racist sociology and that in all three of the novels *Aberrations* examines, it is black queer characters whose words and actions reveal black lives that transcend the narrow parameters and expectations of canonical sociology.

While he uses self-consciously if not self-identified queer male characters elsewhere in *Aberrations*, in the chapter that addresses women, Ferguson uses the title character from Toni Morrison's *Sula*. While the analysis convincingly argues that *Sula* is queer because of her sexual nonconformity (particularly having multiple partners and having sex with white men), one wonders at the absence of any critical discussion of women whose queerness has more to do with their sexuality or gender expression.

Which leads me to the book's main conundrum. In both the preface and the conclusion Ferguson invokes the "transgendered [sic] man, the sissy, and the bulldagger." He promises to "place" the

stories of these queers in sociology, where they have been previously absent. Baldwin's character John certainly, and Ellison's Woodridge probably can be considered "sissies," but lesbians and transgender individuals are harder to find in *Aberrations*. There are less than five pages devoted to transfolks, and contrary to Ferguson's pattern in the rest of the book, in this passage he does not provide a literary (or another sociological) text to counter the heterosexist one he critiques. This brief section is also without the dense sociological critique evident in his discussions of queer heterosexuals and men; while interesting, five pages are hardly adequate to address the experiences of individuals whose gender identity does not match their physical gender in ways society expects. Similarly, Sula can hardly be the "bulldagger" to whom the author refers.

In fact, Ferguson's book focuses overwhelmingly on queer *heterosexuals* – a double-edged sword with two very sharp points. For Ferguson, *queer* includes single-parent households and promiscuous women – anyone who does not precisely fit the (largely mythical) heterosexual, child-bearing, two-parent conjugal family with a man who works outside the home and a woman who does not. *Aberrations* builds this definition of queerness on the way Barbara Smith is described as defining "lesbian" in her discussion of *Sula*: as "in terms of a set of critiques of heterosexuality and patriarchy...[as] social relations rather than identity." Although such a definition is where popular and critical queer studies has been headed for some time now, it is still a radical argument. Ferguson wields this part of his sword deftly, skewering white racism, black nationalism, and capitalist classism in the process. (His definition is also radical because it includes millions of black homophobes, a fact I wish he had engaged.)

But the other edge of this queer sword threatens his own theory; the arguments that support his definition are more problematic than the definition itself (notwithstanding the "slippery slope" argument that would read all single or working black women as lesbians). Because of the absence of any substantive discussion of transfolks or of women who have sex with or desire women – especially when compared with the time spent discussing men who desire men – *Aberrations* comes close to disappearing some of the

very subjects it wants to “place.” (Not coincidentally, these are the same subjects who are usually disregarded in academic and political discussions.) Ferguson does use black lesbian feminist criticism, but less to include or discuss black lesbians than to point out its theoretical and activist emphasis on multiple oppressions and their critiques of black nationalism. This critical absence, combined with choosing to otherwise focus on men and heterosexual “queers” means that once again, transfolks and lesbians who actually desire or have sex with other women are left out.

Ferguson rightly states that “intellectual inquiry is always shaped out of heterogeneity.” But it is also true that heterogeneity is rarely made up of equal parts; in *Aberrations*, sociology outweighs literature, African Americans outnumber other blacks and people of color, and heterosexual queers edge out transgender and lesbian queers. What Ferguson chooses to include in his analysis is innovative; what and who he does *not* include is worrisome.

With these caveats, *Aberrations* is definitely worth reading. He challenges sociology – and implicitly queer studies – to “reconsider explanations of sexuality that presume [different races’] emergence out of the same epistemological traditions, our subjection to the same taxonomy of perversions, and our production through the same methodologies.” The author ends the book with a critique of “postnationalist” American studies’ romance with revolution and cultural nationalism that is similar to the best critiques of postcolonial studies.

Ferguson’s book makes important contributions to the fields of sociology, American Studies, African American studies, and USA queer studies. His arguments also have a number of interesting implications for our current political realities. Links can and should be made between his argument that in the last century “African American familial forms and gender relations were regarded as perversions of the American family ideal” and recent welfare “reform.” And then there is the irony that those at the forefront of the movement to assimilate queers into state-sanctioned marriage rarely champion the rights of queers or het poor people *not* to marry. Finally, his discussion of critiques of black nationalism also could be extrapolated onto current USA wartime nationalism. While the text

does not fulfill the promises of the introduction, *Aberrations in Black* is indeed working towards a queer of color critique.

**Rosamond S. King**

# LOUIS RIEL: A COMIC-STRIP BIOGRAPHY

Chester Brown

Drawn & Quarterly Publication, 2004

With *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*, Chester Brown has published what may be so far the most exceptional book of this Golden Age of the graphic novel. Brown is among a cohort of incredibly talented men (as ever, the world of comics is mainly masculine, though this is beginning to change some) who, in the shadow of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, have been creating works of unusual creative range, marked by graphic and formal care, and diverse topics and settings. Chris Ware's justly celebrated *Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Boy on Earth*, which chronicles its hero's reunion with his estranged father, part morbid fantasy, part pathetic tragedy, is perhaps the best-known – and most formally innovative – of these graphic novels, but the works of Ben Katchor (whose alter-ego Julius Knipl roams the streets of a lost, vaudeville-infused New York, where paeans to bromide seltzers and a decent pair of dancing pants vie with the indefinable lives of those who dwell in this world), Daniel Clowes (whose better-known *Ghost World* and *David Boring* have somewhat eclipsed his surrealist creep-out *Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron*, an indelibly curious work involving a vast, menacing conspiracy, perpetrated by figures such as Tina, a potato-shaped, fish-spawned woman), Adrian Tomine (whose serial *Optic Nerve* is so stylish and well-written he seems to have discovered a new idiom for expressing the malaise and emotional insecurity of a generation of hipsters and urbanites now in their thirties), and Seth (in whose serial *Palookaville* two graphic novels have so far been issued: the sublime *It's a Good Life If You Don't Weaken*, which chronicles the author's quest for a mysterious *New Yorker* gag artist from the 1940s, and *Clyde Fans*, which tells the story of two fan-peddling brothers in Ontario in the 1950s, both works so pleromatic with a sadness for the past that the word *nostalgia* feels inadequate for the mood pervading his work) deserve as wide an audience as possible, they are so rich, various, and carefully made. A recent profile of these artists, along with Joe Matt, Joe Sacco and Brown himself, in the cover story of the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* was less a benediction of the graphic novel than a somewhat embarrassed admission of the mistake in having

taken so long to acknowledge how good so much of this work is.

Brown's work is distinct from that of the rest of his cohort. For several years, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, he published *Yummy Fur*, a catch-all for his sprawling surrealist sagas of Ed the Happy Clown, but also for other burgeoning projects: *I Never Liked You*, the story of Brown's high school years – and first love; *The Playboy*, a story about peddling across Montreal to buy a copy of the magazine at a convenience store; and his retelling of the Gospel According to Matthew. It's this last project that makes Brown unique as a comic artist, the one that most reveals his talent. Surrealism and ironically- or tenderly-told autobiography are the ubiquitous equivalents of the *Bildungsroman* in comics, a rite of passage through which Brown himself was successfully initiated. (*I Never Liked You* was reissued in 2002 by Drawn & Quarterly in a beautiful book; as a portrait of adolescent alienation and awkwardness, it's superb.) With the last issue of *Yummy Fur*, number 32, published in January 1994, Brown devoted himself entirely to a depiction of two-and-a-half chapters from the Gospel of Matthew, a project he had been allowing into *Yummy Fur* intermittently. The cover for that last issue features a striking illustration of a fish springing from the storm-tossed waters of the Sea of Galilee, with a man flung through the darkness and rain above, a reference, I think, to Matthew 14:30, when Peter challenges Christ, who is standing on the waters of Galilee, to allow him to walk on water as well, when a wind picks up and he becomes terribly frightened, sinking rapidly into the water. Expressions of religion – as a kind of faith – are rarer in underground comics than they are in contemporary poetry. I remember reading this comic when I first bought it ten years ago: the bracing sense of a representation of Jesus and his disciples that I completely agreed with, one that captured the brutality, hebetude, and concupiscence of the world Jesus preached in; and one that likewise represented Jesus as a potent, charismatic but harrowed (and even unattractive) figure, surrounded by frequently deformed near-imbeciles. Brown's drawing style is unadorned, direct, and cartoonish. There's no implication of realism, at least in a conventional sense. Jesus's nose is extravagantly hooked and he stands anywhere from a foot to three feet taller than anyone else in a panel, depending on the context. Each page of his gospel retellings is jet-black with ink, making the panels feel back-lit, hypnogogic. (I think Brown's is the most inter-

esting, compelling representation of Christ in the last twenty years, including those in blockbuster movies.)

When Brown began his next series, called *Underwater*, he regularly included installments of the Gospel of Matthew. I couldn't follow the story of "Underwater" very well; it seems like this was true of other readers, because Brown eventually abandoned that narrative. (I feared he had given up on the Gospel of Matthew project as well, until I read a recent interview in which he stated his plans to complete that project in the near future.) In issue four of *Underwater*, published in September 1995, Brown included a brief story – uncharacteristically printed on white pages – called "My Mother Was a Schizophrenic." Readers of *I Never Liked You* encountered his mother's mental instability in that story (she leaves at one point to be institutionalized). This short essay from *Underwater* amounts to an argument for reinterpreting schizophrenia in modern society. Invoking the positions of figures such as psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, religion scholar Joseph Campbell, ethnobotanist/entheogenics-advocate Terence McKenna, and psychiatrist R. D. Laing, Brown contends that schizophrenia is not a diagnosis for an organic illness, but rather a label for behaviors that are socially unacceptable, because certain boundary-obliterating experiences – labeled *psychedelic* – have been understood mainly through a lens of fear and impermissibility. Rather than shifting the afflicted into a dead-end category – e.g., "my mother was a schizophrenic" – Brown advocates shifting society to understand so-called mental afflictions as perfectly permissible, frequently exceptional but altogether normal modes of perception. He wonders, for instance, if one can attain a schizophrenic state using a drug like L.S.D., isn't it possible that a person can slip into a psychedelic state either accidentally or as a result of the deadening monotony of modern life? This little piece is a key, I think, for understanding Brown's work, but especially the Gospel of Matthew and *Louis Riel*, which brings together his understanding of visionary illness and messianism.

*Louis Riel* was begun in 1999, with the announcement, "This is the first of approximately ten comic-books which will tell the true story of this 19<sup>th</sup> century individual." Now, shortly after the completion of the tenth issue, Drawn & Quarterly has published *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*. It is a gorgeous book, a hardcover with a sewn binding, and with cream-colored pages on which the draw-

ings are sumptuously printed. The cover is entirely given over to an illustration from a crucial scene in Riel's life, one in which Riel, on a mountain near Washington D.C., received a vision from God and was transported to the Fourth Heaven, where he received his prophetic command. Brown keeps his editorializing to a minimum: there is a brief forward describing the scope of the project, as well as listing useful, "actual" biographies. He also admits that the style in which he represents the figures in *Louis Riel* owes most to Harold Gray's drawing in *Little Orphan Annie*. The book concludes with a detailed selection of notes, keyed to pages and panels, all charmingly – *echt* comix – hand-lettered. The rest of this 250-page book is taken up with the story of Riel himself, one of the more controversial figures in Canadian history.

Canadian history. The phrase sounds as exotic and unknown to me as non-linear geometry. Why don't we know more about Canadian history in the U.S.? I admit I had never heard about Riel until I started reading Brown's comic. Riel is frequently compared to slave-rebellion leader John Brown, which is a useful if problematic comparison. I suspect more Canadians know who John Brown is than Americans know who Louis Riel is. (Riel's story bears significant resemblance to those of both Joseph Smith – prophet and founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, who was assassinated by an angry mob in Carthage, Missouri in 1844 – and Malcolm X – another religious and political visionary who was assassinated for the nature of his thoughts and actions.) I asked a Canadian friend of mine recently what she knew about Riel; she thumbnailed his story for me succinctly, telling me that it is a compulsory part of any Canadian education. I wish this were true of the U.S., too. (Which is not to say that John Brown's, Joseph Smith's or Malcolm X's stories are a part of our education).

Riel was from the Red River Settlement on the plains of Canada, in present-day Manitoba, a *Métis*, which means he was the child of a white French fur-trapper / trader and a plains Indian. (They were usually referred to as "half-breeds" by the white Protestant Canadians.) Because of the influence of the French, the *Métis* spoke French and were Catholic. In 1869, when Brown's story begins, the Red River Settlement was still part of Rupert's Land, claimed to be owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. The *Métis*, owing to their ancestry, claimed the land to be part of their cultural possession

and heritage. As the story begins, John A. Macdonald, the Prime Minister of Canada, makes a deal to purchase Rupert's Land – which includes most of Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, some of Alberta and some of the Northwest Territory – for £300,000. News of this purchase – discovered when surveying teams are found near the settlement – causes the *Métis* to organize, led by Riel, who had learned English when he studied in Montreal. Brown handles the language dissonance in *Louis Riel* interestingly: when the *Métis* speak among themselves – and they are speaking French – their speech-balloons are bracketed to indicate the French (because the comic-book is written in English). When they speak to the Canadians, and are speaking English, Brown gives them French-Canadian accents. So, for instance, when Riel confronts the surveyors, telling them to leave immediately for Ottawa, he says to them, “You go no furt'er. T'is land belongs to Monsieur Marion. Leave now.” This simple gesture allows for what must have been the most palpable aspect of the conflict that ensued to come fully to life: a division in language, which represented a difference in culture, faith, and propriety.

In short order, Riel was embroiled in an escalating conflict, one waged as a guerilla war, in which the scrappier but savvier *Métis* ran the British-loyal Canadians sent by Ottawa out of their land, eventually earning the establishment of Manitoba as a province (Manitoba is Cree for “the God who speaks”), with the promise that the *Métis* would retain ownership rights of the land along the Red River, which they used for fishing, trapping, and trade. Soon after this agreement was established, however, Riel was driven into exile in the U.S. His exile was precipitated by a tragic-ironic event in the *Métis*-Canadian conflict: on February 15, 1870, a *Métis*, Norbert Parisien, was walking through the English town of Kildonan, where he was accused of spying and taken subsequently prisoner. Meanwhile, an English settler named John Sutherland had negotiated with Riel to release all of the prisoners he and his small army were keeping at nearby Fort Garry. Another English-sympathizer, Dr. Schultz, had organized his own army; they were the ones who had captured Parisien. Sutherland sent his son to tell Schultz that an armistice had been reached, that prisoners were to be released, and that his army should stand down. In the meantime, Parisien managed to escape, acquiring a rifle in his flight. As he was fleeing, he ran into Sutherland's son, who was racing toward him on horseback.

Convinced he would be killed by this horseman, Parisien shot and killed Hugh Sutherland, who, according to Brown's depiction, was able to convey the news about the armistice before dying from his gunshot wound. Parisien was quickly beaten to death, and his corpse was beheaded by a racist named Thomas Scott. (This sequence is depicted with chilling, perfectly-paced attention by Brown, so that you can feel immediately both the cruelty and panic of the events, as well as sensing the tragedy to ensue as a consequence of these deeds. For instance, Brown shows Parisien to be little more than a boy, not so different from Hugh Sutherland, whom he unfortunately shoots to death; Thomas and Schultz, on the other hand, are shown as larger men, with cruel or manic expressions on their faces.) News of the sensational events quickly spread. Even so, this was the middle of a cold winter and with news of Riel's release of prisoners, Schultz's army disbanded. A large group of them making their way back home crossed near Fort Garry. Riel's army, mistaking this group for enemies, hastily imprisoned them. Among them was Scott, who spewed racist epithets at his jailers continuously. Under pressure from his army, Riel decided Scott should be executed, not because he wanted him killed, but because he feared for the fates of the other British sympathizers imprisoned with Thomas at the hands of his own agitated followers.

Rather quickly after Scott's execution, Riel's life was threatened. To preserve the communities around the Red River he had fought to protect, he fled to Minnesota, moving from town to town, eventually making his way to Washington, D.C., where he petitioned the U.S. government, in a meeting with President Grant, asking him to come to the aid of Riel and his fellow *Métis*. During this time, and in spite of his exile, Riel was voted two terms in a row to be the parliamentary representative in Ottawa for the Red River communities. Lynch mobs in Ontario – still enraged by Scott's execution – were organized to prevent him from taking his place in government. After President Grant refused his petition, Riel sought solace atop a mountain near D.C. Here, under pressure perhaps of his desperate circumstances, Riel was given a vision and a prophecy. He was instructed that the Bishop to whom he was loyal – Bishop Bourget – was to be the Pope of the New World, and that Riel was to establish a Kingdom of God in the New World. He began to call himself David, whenever he entered this prophetic mode. In 1876,

he managed to sneak back into Canada, where he was incarcerated at a lunatic asylum. His prayer book and his Bible were confiscated; he repeatedly tore his clothing to shreds, believing the honest man must show himself naked to the world and his accusers. Eventually, he was released, and again under pressure from the Canadian government, went into exile. He settled in Montana, where he was married and had two children.

By 1884, the *Métis* in Manitoba had been more or less stripped of their promised rights. They did not have an agreement from the government as to the possession of their land; furthermore, it was being divided up in ways that would benefit Anglo-Canadian farmers. The *Métis* favored dividing the land into long, narrow plots that would give everyone access to the Red River, rather than in large squares that would favor those with river access (all of whom were immigrants from Ontario). Because the earlier agreements Riel had brokered with the government in Ottawa never materialized, and because the *Métis* were offered unfarmable prairie-land, many of them moved further west, into Saskatchewan where some communities were protected by rebel and *Métis* Gabriel Dumont. By 1884, Dumont, sensing that the government was going to encroach on their settlements just as it had done a decade ago, sought the aid of Riel, who was living in exile in Montana. Riel, against the petitions of his wife, agreed to move north to help his fellow *Métis*. John D. Macdonald, once again Prime Minister of Canada, plotted to destroy Riel in hopes of aiding the Canadian Pacific Railway and securing a massive loan that would make both the railway and himself incredibly rich. Large numbers of troops were carried out west on the unfinished railway in hopes of subduing the fomenting *Métis* rebellion. Riel's leadership of this second rebellion is portrayed with some questions about his competence and authority. There's a vivid scene in the biography shortly after Riel takes command of this new army. He gives a speech in which he assures his troops that the Catholic peoples of the world – the Irish, the Bavarians, the Poles, the French, and the Italians, for instance – will come to their aid, inspired by the Laws of Moses by which the *Métis* live their lives. Afterwards, Riel proceeds to "breathe the Holy Spirit" onto each fighter, one by one frosting them with his chilly breath. (This was March, 1885). Riel's authority here is shown in conflict. The *Métis* trust him because of his political past. Riel accepts his role because of the apocalyptic vision

he believes authorizes his life. Religion, however, is not armor. The *Métis* were grossly outnumbered by the Canadian troops, just as they were forced to make do with insufficient weaponry. In short order, Mounties crushed the rebellion, the Canadian Pacific Railway was funded on the uplift of anti-*Métis* sentiment, and Riel was captured and brought to trial.

Riel's trial occupies the last fifth of Brown's book. He depicts this process with an admirable dispassion, in a very plain style, and in a sequence of monotonous panels in which characters from the earlier parts of the story testify, including Riel himself. In this section, Brown's various themes come powerfully together: Riel's political and religious authenticity (which Brown clearly admires); the Canadian government's machinations about and interference with native rights, using Riel as an example of the incorrigibility of the Indians and half-breeds; the nature of insanity and visionary faith; and the power and flaws of messianism. Riel's French-speaking lawyers, summoned from Montreal, intended to defend him as insane. Riel refused to be so labeled. He persisted in his trial convinced that if the Canadian people were allowed to hear his true version of the story, one in which he would not compromise the vision of faith given to him on the mountaintop near Washington D.C., that they would feel his truth and conviction, and not allow him to die. He was wrong. Popular sentiment at the time was pro-government, anti-native rights. On November 16, 1885, Louis Riel was hanged. Among his last words, to his confessor Father André, Riel repeated a dream in which a man said to his brother, "They will kill Louis, but God will raise him up again on the third day" and "Courage, Father."

It's a rather difficult thing to convey the power of a comic-book biography. Riel strikes me as an incomparable figure, uniquely Canadian. I think this is why Brown chooses Riel as his subject – because he speaks somehow to the Canadian condition, which is his own. (Brown has indicated in an interview that he is a "right-winger," which he qualifies as meaning someone who wants the least amount of government interference possible in his life.) Furthermore, Riel in Brown's hands summons to life an element of conviction and transformative mental energies conspicuously lacking in present-day leaders, but not unequivocally in uncritical heroizing. Brown's talent lies in his depictions, marked as they are in their plainness and their cartoonishness. Riel seems at times an embodiment – or mirror

– of Brown’s visionary, apocalyptic Christ; elsewhere, he appears as panicked as a rabbit caught in the open, fleeing from angry mobs, or deranged by his religious convictions. Were Brown to have written this biography, he would be able to emphasize certain characteristics of Riel and to speculate on their meaning. In drawing Riel’s story out in panels – strictly six to a page – Brown constrains the interpretive liberties of prose in order to augment our sense of Riel’s character.

There’s a telling scene in *Louis Riel*, when Gabriel Dumont rides into Peter’s Mission, Montana to summon Riel to the aid of the Saskatchewan *Métis*. We see Riel sitting in a pew attending mass. A woman whispers in his ear, “<Four visitors have arrived, and they wish to see you.>” (The brackets indicate she is speaking French to Riel.) He exits the church to speak briefly with Dumont, who is bedraggled from his seventeen-day journey. This is Riel’s first appearance after the split in the middle of Brown’s biography – he’s been “underground” for almost ten years. He appears changed: he wears a full beard, and his hair juts up in an unruly black crown. His shoulders are broader but his head is set more deeply in them, as if to show a weight he is bearing. And then we see his hands: they are nearly doubled in size from the earlier scenes in the story, as if carved from granite. He says to Dumont, after exchanging pleasantries, “<If you’ll excuse me, though, I’d like to hear the rest of the mass.>” The social, religious, and personal convictions portrayed in this scene would be impossible to imply in prose. Here, Brown provides a means for perceiving the power and tragedy of Riel’s figure: that rumor of his existence can summon as powerful a leader as Dumont to come bid for his help; and that his devotion to his faith precludes any but the briefest niceties. Furthermore, and much more subtly, there is the sense that no matter how Riel has been transformed, no matter how strong he appears, he will be crushed under the weight of his destiny. The slightly sadder cast to Riel’s face in the second half of the book represents, then, a pre-cognitive confirmation of his fate. It’s the way Brown brings all of these elements to bear on his story that makes *Louis Riel* more than a comic-book with history, and more than an illustrated biography. North American history – driven as it has been by religious seekers and zealots, as well as cunning capitalists and fortune-seekers – is essentially teleological. Brown understands that end as apocalypse. By telling Riel’s story in the light of its seemingly inevitable catastrophe, he transforms the

graphic novel into something else, a simultaneous depiction and questioning of authority, both political and divine, that abides as a personal and punitive conviction, one whose sentence we might only now begin to petition.

**Peter O'Leary**

## MY COCAINE MUSEUM

Michael Taussig  
University of Chicago Press, 2004

Michael Taussig's cocaine museum appears in and out of register alongside the Gold Museum in Bogota, up the Timbiquí river on Colombia's Pacific coast, rising in the miasma emanating from lowland mangrove swamps, on top of the slated floors of stilted houses, and deep inside the region's archaic goldmines. Taussig's eye is tuned to sense geologic shifts. Human history and natural history tangle. Slavery, capitalism, colonialism, forces set in motion remotely and gradually, turn and rip on the Colombian coast, like continents rubbing, condensing their elements and heaving mountain ranges into the sky. Taussig sees his museum spark from this friction. His hallucination becomes the apparatus of his seeing, the lenses focusing and throwing off the focus of his experience. Mocking Charles Wilson Peale, or maybe the Museum of Jurassic Technology's David Hildebrand Wilson, Taussig crafts dioramas and places his field notes beneath charged displays. "My cocaine museum does not ... try to tease apart the nature from culture, real stuff from made up stuff, but instead accepts the life-and-death play of nature with second nature as an irreducible reality so as to let that curious play express itself all the more eloquently."

He is looking over gold mining and slave documents in the Arboleda Archive in the state capital of Popayán. Taussig paints the scene. Storm brewing. Helicopters crisscross the sky. He remembers his visit thirty years previous: the janitor then, the new director today. The wind rustles linen papers, a hawk flies into the clouds. Taussig tries to explain the "shudder on having" his eye fall on the documents put before him. "For a minute, maybe shorter, the past brushes your cheek and you are there at the slave mines of San Vicente de Timbiquí in the forest in 1829. What is this shudder where the past meets the present moment? It has nothing to do with continuity. Its power lies in its juxtaposition in which those big bellied birds—Black Hawks, they are called—scurry before the storm. The director takes another drag on her cigarette, the local newspaper is tossed aside, and the hawk soars out of site over the Andes."

This is how one moves through *My Cocaine Museum*, haptically, groping dark corridors. It's a labyrinth layout inducing surprise as one turns a corner and is confronted with an object on display. And what is one to make of it? There is a sloth on the floor of a dug-out canoe. 'I thought it a wet bundle of fur...' Taussig says, placing it gingerly like Meret Oppenheim's teacup. As a surrealist's object, it oscillates between worlds, in its slowness, that of the living and that of the dead. Such is the power of animation and necrosis bequeathed to a curator. "Essential to this montage was the merging of myth with nature... Here, history as ruin or petrified landscape took center stage, as if the succession of human events we call history had retreated into stiller-than-stiller things entirely evacuated of life..."

The museum is everywhere and nowhere, for it appears as the direct experience subsides, in the transitions between experiences. Inside experience, the body is immersed in reality as if inside a pitch black and damp gold mine. As Taussig emerges he writes, 'Subject peels off from object allowing for consciousness itself' or consciousness of self. The mine is material and allegorical, and Taussig refuses to relinquish it from either realm. His desire is to present his Colombian *Lebenswelt* unfiltered so that its edges and materiality will brush the reader, but he knows such attempts are doomed to fail. Experience repeatedly defies language. His fetishes, gold and cocaine, those crystallized indivisible monads, are fetishes precisely because they cannot be unraveled. They are the gravitational foci around which his project spins, yet they remain impenetrable.

For Taussig the responsibility of the anthropologist is to use whatever means necessary to relate and represent the experience of the field as obviously and as full as possible. Like a curator 'smashing vitrines' to transform a museum, using docudrama, *in situ* displays, and multi-narrative placards, Taussig, for many years now, has been trying to revolutionize anthropology, to break its spell, the illusion that it is a science of detachment. His tactics are the poetic use of language, allegory, etymology, word association, collage, and creative ways of manipulating his own reflection in the events and objects in the field. Writing for Taussig is engaged as a kind of magic. He has called this nervous system writing, and likens it to a sixth sense, or dog's sense, always chasing, and in pursuit fleeting realities. He finds affinity in Benjamin's "mystical idea that words and things are materiality connected." He studies his use of dialectical images,

and attempts to unfold river life as a riparian arcade. He also wears the hat of Joseph Beuys, another self-styled modern shaman, who called upon mimetic play to translate the indescribable forces of nature and mind. He makes good use of Beuys' bog action, in relation to the Colombia's mangrove swamps, which separate the forests from the sea, and the fermentation occurring in the forest culture as elements slip between literality and metaphor. The power to petrify and de-petrify is awarded to the curator.

In *My Cocaine Museum*, Taussig calls out all stops, including spellbinding photography and art brut watercolors from the field. A black and white reproduced watercolor sketch shows the process used to mine gold under the Timbiquí River. A man descends beneath the currents and burrows into and beneath the muddy bottom. This is called the *buzo* system of gold mining. He wears a mask and carries a vacuum tube to suck out the mud and deliver it to the surface. On the descriptive painting, Taussig writes, NO PUEDA VER NADA and across the bottom, 8 DEAD IN 8 MONTHS... These were probably done in the field while collecting interviews; they are most likely negotiated images. Taussig's writing, like his painting, is similarly collaborative. It is sketched in consultation. His conversation with the documents in libraries and archives bring to life Colombia's colonial ledgers. He confronts numerous initial encounters recorded in the diaries of early travelers, cartographers and chorographers. He engages philosophy and fiction, most notably bringing in William Burroughs, Gabriel García Márquez and B. Traven. All make their mark on the pages as Taussig drifts from informant to informant, circumnavigating the objects in his gallery, hunting ghosts.

But what really makes the museum interesting are the people passing through it. Parading characters evidence an everyday participation in the village life. Along the way we descend mines with Dario, who cautions about receiving the evil eye. We meet Lilia Zuñiga, whom speaks of the devil's interest in gold and his various incarnations and tricks, such as the master's appearance as a hen with chicks in tow deep inside the darkness of a mine. We hear about the horrific exploits and foibles of a paramilitary called Dwarf and mysterious interloping FARC guerillas as well as fake-guerrillas. We are treated to hilarious Kafkaesque scenes staged in government offices. A man name Epifanio, called *brujo*, enters selling apotropiac medicines and rainforest viagra. Sometimes his medicine is a cure;

other times it is a poison. Traditional anthropology and rational, zoologically organized museums have trouble conveying such interconnectedness.

In Taussig's display each character is colorfully rendered, but their images, like his watercolors, bleed and fade into one another. 'There is no body that does not extend into mind, just as there is no body that does not extend into nature as well as into cosmic space and fate itself,' Taussig writes, explaining the similarity between his familiars. They are the witnesses and agents of transgressions in a culture and economy of transgressions. "Hence the heady 'confusion' of mind with body, no less than of the rule with its exception, which replenishes the rule." Gold, cocaine, and the overabundance of rain help Taussig illustrate the concept of the accursed share, how society and its culture, myths and rituals develop in reaction to problems of expenditure as much as from problems of scarcity.

If the reader can get past the beguiling "foreignness" of place, he or she might be able to bewilder some of the accepted rules, norms and practices played out in his or her own environment. All of Taussig's efforts seem geared toward this goal. The description of life on the Colombian Pacific coast is of course central, but Taussig is writing for an anthropology without distance. Chains of events develop contour, their form caste by gathering sediment. Taussig dusts these antediluvian fossils and places them under light so that shadows might deepen their relief. While there is little theorizing about globalism, its centrifugal tendency is omnipresent is Taussig's remote coast: in the descendants of slaves, in Castilian officialdom, in the ruins of French engineered mines, and in the Russians today, now tossed into this theater. And then there is the effect of U.S. drug laws and the dangerous economy of contravention playing out between the militaries, guerrillas and those in between, all interwoven and related in Taussig's restless descriptions.

It is an interesting way to tell a story, writhing and flailing around on the edge of enlightenment and confusion. Readers of Taussig will be familiar with the method and critics may again find in it another maddening example of hubris and self-absorption, characteristic of an anthropologist consumed by vanity. There is no doubt the project is ambitious. I think back on seventeenth-century Flemish paintings of *vanitas*, with skull and other symbols of transience on display. We see life expressed in its traces, on the surfaces

it impacts. The artist wishes us a consciousness of our own skull. In *My Cocaine Museum*, Taussig throws himself into experience to become such a surface.

The very opening pages meditate on the *poporo* of the Colombian Sierra Nevada Kogi. The Kogi are said to never be without their *poporos*, for they serve not only as containers for the lime necessary for chewing cocoa, but also as ritual gourds linked to their self-concept and identity. Along the rims of these containers saliva deposits build up as the Kogi insert small sticks to dispense the lime. Taussig writes, "When they take the end of the stick out of their mouth and reinsert it back into the *poporo*, they spend several minutes rotating the stick around the lip of the spout...they seem to be writing in curves and dashes punctuated by little stabbings."

For Taussig these deposits are a metaphor of the document he wishes to produce. It is a secreted document, the hardened, molted shell of experience, one written in a chaotic style on a formless medium. His desire is for a language that will induce rumination, like the babbling of a river. In dealing in this chancy play of poetry, Taussig is vulnerable to charges and perils of overplay, and their instances in *My Cocaine Museum* are not infrequent. Yet Taussig does not seem to mind. "This is the language I want, a substantial language, aroused through prolonged engagement with gold and cocaine, reeking in its stammering intensity of delirium and failure."

Considering a recommendation for this book is a bit like trying to rationalize the phrenetic conversations of a drug filled night...Just say yes.

**David Michalski**

## LAST ONE OUT

Deborah Richards

Subpress, 2003

What kinds of critical inquiries are poems capable of? What are the stakes when poetry forges a site for generating and opening space for public discourse? Poet Deborah Richards documents the process of human perception shaped by images—particularly American cinema. In her first collection of poems, *Last One Out*, Richards explores how our perceptions are shaped and the ways in which such shaped perceptions affect people in everyday life. What happens when the space of public discourse is occluded by dominant images intent on perpetuating a racial and gendered status quo? Written over, through, and across her subjects, *Last One Out* uses the textbox tool to investigate overlapping complex histories of race, sexuality, aesthetics of beauty, visual representations of stereotypes, irreconcilable aspects of decolonialism and its lasting impact on human perception and relationships.

Through four long poems—"The Beauty Projection," "Parable," *C'est l'amour:: That's Love*," and the title poem, "Last One Out"—Richards examines American cinema's mass-marketing of gender roles and film reels (in particular) as highly effective tools for racial profiling as she probes the still operative systems of colonialism and imperialism in American culture. A self-described "black Londoner living in Philadelphia," by way of Barbados, Richards' work deftly uncovers what happens when cultural vision is constructed by the film industry as she challenges the enduring power of loaded images in cultural space. These poems measure the depth of our perceptions against the media responsible for shaping them: America's pop-culture factory, Hollywood. Juxtaposing personal narrative against source documents, which include the *Wizard of Oz*, Tarzan movies from the 1930s, *Carmen Jones*, sketches of Dorothy Dandridge's biography and more, Richards work uses her subjects as loaded sites for extended social inquiry.

In the first poem, "The Beauty Projection," Richards forges a complex interplay between historical documents including instructions for the whitening, lightening and toning of the skin, with facts about the "Hottentot Venus." She creates her own visual "dialogue"

by pairing the story of a young woman's travels through Europe with the sad facts of an historical "traveler": Saatje Baartman. Saartje, the "Hottentot Venus," was paraded throughout colonial Europe and ultimately reduced by dissection to her most savory cultural consumables: vulva and ass. Richards uses textboxes to generate a kind of dialogue between the narratives that allow them to effectively comment on one another. The textbox technique maps cultural archeology pinned to self-archeology; as Richards' female tourist narrates her self-determined tour of Europe (so unlike the Hottentot Venus' Continental tour), she questions herself, questions the ways in which she is perceived by others, and purposefully examines the perplexity of living life as the "other" in culture:

This body was sexually and racially othered signed for variance. A variegated design in its deviance. Could you cage me—a silk thread round my neck? Could you control it? All of it? Or leave me alone? Is it exciting to look without the hope of consummation? Gorgeous! I am placed here so you can see everything in the right proportions. Explicit! Do you get the picture? I am. (...) I am particularly aware of each representation. It doesn't help to be too observant.

Splicing and overlapping source documents with first-person narrative opens the field for multivalenced readings and allows the poet to insinuate commentary as cultural critique. Richards dissects various word-meanings of "barbarian," traces the etymology of "strange." By engaging associative play between the first-person narrative and potential word meanings blurs the boundaries between her "subjects" becomes increasingly edgy: "that dress became ethnic when I wore it"; "I was built for amusement and amazement";

staring at me I think it was my dark complexion against the whiteness of the sheet of yes yes it was a sheet of take me desire well before I went to italy I had my hair relaxed and I could curl it and comb it so I looked different maybe that made me more delicious (...) so I was aflexible yes yes yes sheet

Later in the book, Richards sets the scene as a deliberately "claustrophobic" space. The text boxes work remarkably well to underscore the cultural claustrophobia endemic to colonialism as well as lingering aspects of social, racial, and gendered claustropho-

bia: “prejudices / exhibited / in public in a / number of European cities / for the / amusement / and / amazement / of / the public / assumption.” The boxed text underscores the sad irony of Saartje and the female narrator’s inability to escape life lived as not the sum of one’s parts, but only one’s parts, devoid of personhood in cultural space. On one page, the word “ass” sits in its own box at the bottom; Saartje’s buttocks are “still preserved in the collections of the Musée de l’Homme in Paris, despite a number of protests.” *Last One Out* reels back in time, like flashbacks or visual collage in films, to humanize the actual object (Saartje) by not taking on her voice or inventing one for her, but rather, by presenting the facts as found, in culture: artifacts, records, recipes for exalted procedures to improve the “elasticity” of skin—white ladies’ skin. The contemporary subject of “The Beauty Projection” moves in culture with a heightened sense of self awareness but can’t escape colliding with ever present and confusing aspects of prejudice.

The portrait-photograph is a closed field of forces. Four image-repertoires intersect here, oppose and distort each other. In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art. (...) In terms of image-repertoire, the Photograph (the one I intend) represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object... -Roland Barthes

The poems in this collection explore the perfect stop-time that Barthes alludes to: the moment of the self-aware subject perceiving his or her own transformation into cultural currency. In *Last One Out*, the subject/object is not only acutely aware of this crisis, but given a certain virtuosity of articulation to examine and disclose the process *as it is happening*. Providing a cool commentator’s peek into romance films from the 1940s, Richards mines them for information, stereotypes, rigid social norms, stringent gender roles (and rules), as she investigates the quintessentially American problem with racial bias and stereotypes. What are the forces underneath our imagination? The history and preconceptions that each reader, viewer, participant in culture brings to experiences and relationships with other humans is carefully dissected in the poems “Parable” and “C’est l’amour: That’s Love.” Does the subject have any agency in shaping factors

that influence perception by others? Ultimately, individuals are denied complete knowledge of the extent of other people's interpretations, including conclusions or assumptions about identity. In Barthes' moment of self-recognition, an abyss of the unknowable opens up during the transference of knowledge when the image is stilled in time. That moment of the fully-aware subject stopped *at* the point of discovery is the place from which Deborah Richards writes. An investigation prying apart images piece by piece, *Last One Out* grapples with constructed aspects of identity by exploding the ever-potent power of dominant images to define and maintain often rigidly biased cultural values, especially when it comes to representations of the black female body.

In the poems "Parable" and "C'est l'amour:: That's Love," the narrator adopts a friendly but removed tone as a kind of docent-by-proxy of the films providing a quick summation of plots and the complex social web the characters navigate. Musings, observations, and associations through dialogue, built in asides such as (seemingly off-handed) "but anyway" give the poem a terrific resonance with true conversation as it charts the process of thinking and the inner narrative of the subject(s).

then there was a film on tv      about a good time girl      in the  
forties      of course it was black and white well      this girl goes to  
a psychiatrist because she's been having too much fun      with a different  
lad      each good time      she drinks      laughs  
and enjoys herself      so much      that she has a reputation  
but something happens      and she wants to give them up      those  
good times

"Parable" explicates the plot as it examines other aspects of social claustrophobia. The poem moves swiftly to another film starring the same white male actor and probes the characters' miscegenation-neurosis-fraught love dilemma between "pinky" ("she is a black woman / who looks white") and the white "scientist." "Parable" details the obvious and predicable choices of the characters, trapped in 1940s sensibilities and held fast by the pressure of culturally proscribed norms until the docent-narrator de-cloaks herself, Oz-like, from behind the curtain: "this is my research work on american culture / and the past is much easier to arrange / I'm a bit / a little bit / like jack nicholson in the shining / he's a writer who feigns (...) I do

housework instead of creativity but my papers are stacked every-  
where / (...) I'm like those women / that square actor is attracted  
to / I get messy at the edges"

The story leads to the self: "she" could become anything, "elastic," malleable, approximate the image and is that good? "yet when I get home I'd have to look in the mirror and get used / to it and stop feeling sorry for not having all those nice attributes / pretty skin / and hair that promises deliverance when you put / your fingers through it / and maybe / my mother could look at / me and think that I didn't let her down too much / I'm too dark to be beautiful in her circles / and too educated." The first-person narrative of "Parable" expands to include England, class-specific dialect, and an intentional muddying of just who is telling this tale; who is the subject and just how much have the terms changed in 1940s America vs. present day immigrant class life in Britain? "Parable" moves outward in greater circles, using cinema as a portal into American culture. Employing one of America's beloved icons, Judy Garland's Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, arguably, the epitome of the wholly wholesome white girl Richards traces the downward spiral of the face behind the mask sinking into a haze of drugs and the loud collapse of failed dreams. In *Last One Out*, everybody gets rollicked by cultural stereotypes and strict norms:

there's something not quite right about a woman that does not  
fit in home is self contained not all over the place there  
is a point dorothy has to grow up start with some silence  
increase the spaces between herself and others divert her attention if  
that will help and watch the grains fall in the hourglass  
is it too much to ask

In "C'est l'amour:: That's Love," Richards compares, note for note, lines from Francesco Rossi's production of *Carmen* with *Carmen Jones*, the 1950s American re-telling of the *Carmen* with an African American cast; Dorothy Dandridge played the starring role, the temptress: *Carmen Jones*. Switching from French to English, summarizing and commenting on the plot and artifice of the film, Richards uncovers the racist implications of directorial choices pitted against chilling fragments from Dandridge's biography. "C'est l'amour:: That's Love" uses textboxes as charts and grids to contain words and fragments or sentences arranged for reading horizontally

or vertically. Associations open in many directions, depending on the readers' path through the grids of text. Richards' close reading of the sexual violence found in *Carmen Jones* bears little resemblance to the classic plot of the opera. "C'est l'amour:: That's Love" swings with verbal play mimicking the films. She creates an eerie ground where the "real" and the made overlap, charting disparities of race against the whitewashed version of American culture prevalent in films (particularly in the era Richards takes as her focus: the 1930s and 40s), and select facts from Dorothy Dandridge's biography. An examination of the zones where these cultural functions overlap reveals the difficult borderland Dandridge inhabited: "on the cover of *Time*, November, 1954. The first black woman to grace their cover, but she is not herself but Carmen, the sexualized woman." Richards navigates the overlap of image and individual, often with uncanny and uncomfortable results. Richards repeatedly pushes her work into a terrain not unlike Barthes' framed space in *Camera Lucida*: "Carmen's life and death is easily read on the screen, but Dorothy Dandridge is more difficult to categorize." Deborah Richards' work insistently pursues a negation of the image by setting an opposite stage, an alternative 'theatre of operation' from which to mine her source-texts (films 'read' in this way) for site-specific examples of the constructedness of race and gender. Her exacting investigations reveal the irreconcilable consequences for individuals living within culturally proscribed identities. This poem candidly reveals the deleterious effects perception of the subject/object within such narrow channels has on the entire group.

While Deborah Richards' work is not responding to photographs, per se, *Last One Out* reveals the incredible power of moving images to still perception and development in the mind of the viewer. In the final poem, "Last One Out," Richards' skills as a director and adroit thinker of theatrical space are revealed. Staged "NOW IN THE IMAGINATION" on a studio set: "OF AFRICAN LOCATION /INTERIOR/" Richards summons one of America's most blatant representations of racial bias (and celebration of colonialism): *Tarzan the Ape Man*. The title poem further develops Richards' signature obsession with film and theatricality; it synthesizes some of the brutal facts of colonialism through a satirical melodrama spoofing the Tarzan films of the 1930s. At times the poem runs the risk of perpetuating many of the same stereotypes it grapples with. However,

it might effectively manufacture discomfort in the reader not unlike the discomfort experienced by the rest of the subjects in the book. The final poem echoes the epigram:

*If he hollers let him go . . . O-U-T spells  
out.*

*Two little [African / African-American / Afro-  
Caribbean / Black] boys sitting in the sun;  
One got frizzled up and then there was one.*

Through frank analyses of American visual culture and colonial Europe's macabre fixation with race as eugenics, *Last One Out* is an incisive examination of the consequences for the individual inside Barthes' moment of hyper self-awareness *during* the transformation from subject to object. An unflinching exposé of racial and gender bias in American culture through the medium of film and a blunt invocation of America and Europe's shared colonial past; Richards' poems manage their own cinematic glimpse. What happens when Barthes' subject begins to speak at the very moment of realization, before the shutter snaps, before the stereotype is embedded in the mind of the viewer? What happens when the audience is also fully aware of the skewed glimpse they are consuming? Or what *might* happen? *Last One Out* is a book that not only asks these questions, but isn't afraid to offer uncomfortable and complicated answers.

**Jane Sprague**

# MULTITUDE: WAR AND DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri  
Penguin Press, 2004

What is the “multitude” according to Hardt and Negri? The “multitude” is not class, yet is quite like class. It is not masses, yet sometimes it could be the masses. It is not people, yet has people. The “multitude” is one and it is many. It is a singularity and a collective. It has a “topology” and “topography,” yet it is decentered and non-territorial. It does not have the “organic unity of body politic,” yet it is political. Its basis is not economic, yet it is economic. “Multitude” is “social flesh” without body. It is habit, yet always changing. The “multitude” has double temporality in that it is “always-already” and “not-yet.” The “multitude” is not what it is but “what it can become.” The “multitude” supports the demise of the State but also supports federalism on a global level. Both Madison and Lenin inspire the “multitude.” The “multitude” must destroy sovereignty and authority, yet its power lies in its ability to create common social relationships and stand between Empire and anarchy. The “multitude” is...

These “is-not is” descriptors of the “multitude” notwithstanding, by the end of the book, it becomes very clear what the “multitude” is and not is. For a start, the “multitude” is very *white*. In economics, “the hegemony of immaterial labour” i.e. those who produce, not material goods, but “ideas, knowledge and affects” and are empowered significantly by the internet and cyber technologies, is conceded. In a world where large sections of the population are illiterate; a world where only a fraction of the literate know the internet friendly languages, i.e. English, French, (usually coloniser’s languages); and only a fraction of those literate in a global language can afford to own or have access to a computer, the identity of the hegemonic ‘immaterial labour’ should not be difficult to guess.

In politics, according to the book, the inadequacies of democracy in the era of globalisation (discussed entirely as a European project) must be fixed by drawing inspiration from the very same European history that produced mass colonial conquests, slavery, horrific abuses and injustices, extermination of natures and peoples

everywhere. Yes, the authors tell us, there were some horrific things that happened, and they happened over and over again. However what it is about western democracy that allows it to happen over and over again through centuries, despite the eloquent philosophising and grand theories about democracy? Aristocracies captured the idea of democracy, they tell us. That was the problem. In the present era of the Empire, the “multitude” are well situated in the “biopolitical networks” to capture democracy and therefore this time around democracy will be real democracy.

Having told us that “immaterial labour” is hegemonic, how can we be sure that they won’t turn aristocratic and capture democracy to oppress the material labour and the “poor” everywhere, that it won’t be the same game under a new name? If Descartes, (quoted by the authors for his philosophical method) could say “I think, therefore I am,” Hardt and Negri’s method is ‘we say, therefore it will be so.’ The book does not seek explanations, nor does it interrogate any of the major concerns of our times, or why things are the way they are. Yet, it is a prescriptive book that tells us what we should be doing.

In the end the solution we are offered is: “... given the violent clashes and cultural conflicts of European history, we can see that the project of a unified European constitution confronts some of the same difficulties that a global constitution would face. [...] The European constitutional model does indeed provide mechanisms that could contribute to a stable global system.” And, why should we believe that the Algerians would love to be in a federation with the French? Or the Middle Eastern states with United States? The projection of the European experience upon the rest of the world is at the heart of Eurocentrism.

Ironically, as the post-war American Empire lurches from crisis to crisis, and each crisis deepens the fault-lines in the architecture of the Empire, Hardt and Negri want us to turn to the eighteenth century for inspiration. “Back to the eighteenth century!” they tell us in a section devoted to the idea. “Well, to all these various skeptics we say, back to the eighteenth century! One good reason to go back to the eighteenth-century is that back then the concept of democracy was not corrupted as it is now. [...] It is also useful to recognize that if the eighteenth-century revolutionaries were utopian, it is simply in the sense that they believed another world was possible.” True.

Only if you are white and privileged and male (should we add like the authors? We could, but we won't, because that brings us to a no-exit street).

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment culled out ideological, philosophical and theoretical resources from European history going back to ancient Greece, at a time when European society lurched from crisis to crisis (just as it does today). And it grafted them together in ways that sustained European societies, at the expense of two-thirds of the world that goes under the label of the "Third World" today. If ever there was an age of "sustainable colonisation" it was the eighteenth-century, the ideological, political, economic and structural consequences of which two-thirds of humanity is still grappling with three centuries down the track!

The significance of the book lies in the fact that it spells out the philosophical and theoretical premises of the so called "New Social Movements" in Western countries, exemplified by the World Social Forum (WSF). This is something that those involved in the WSF have been shy of doing so far [see D'Souza: "World Social Forum Revisited: back to basics?" XCP No 14, p.41-45; "Carnivals in the Age of Globalisation": Z-Net, 7 February 2004]. That is where the theoretical and philosophical excursions of Hardt and Negri eventually end.

According to them: "Some, for instance, point to the World Social Forum (WSF) as an instructive example of how NGOs and social movements can be organized as a global body. [...] The point is not that the WSF could be conceived as even an embryonic figure of a global governing body [...] The point rather is that the WSF demonstrates that a global set of nonstate actors, such as NGOs, can be brought together for real and substantial discussions, thus indicating the possible lines according to which a global political body is possible." Playing on the WSF's slogan 'another world is possible,' they tell us: "it is important to remember that another world is possible, a better, more democratic world, and to foster our desire for such a world, "multitude" is an emblem for that desire." The WSF is the emblem of the "multitude" by proxy.

The problem is, while another world is certainly possible, some of us who think it must be less "Enlightened" than the one we have known before, or the one inherited from the eighteenth century thinkers, struggle to get our voices across, even with impeccable

English and internet access! Those without either of those prerequisites for global citizenship in the “another world” may be voiceless. But fear not. They don’t need a voice because the finale in the movement of “multitude” is “real political act of love” for “when love is conceived politically, then, this creation of a new humanity is the ultimate act of love.” For those of us who have been loved to bits, historically, first by God and the Church, then by King and Country, the spectre of being loved once again by this de-centered de-territorialised “multitude” is frankly scary.

“Multitude” is the mirror image of *Empire* (Hardt & Negri (2000) Harvard University Press), “the living alternative that grows within Empire.” Both are de-centred de-territorialized networks of power, both are biopower, i.e. they have the ability to reproduce the conditions of life itself, and are created by biopolitics and bioeconomics, i.e. networks of production and political alliances. War is integral to the Empire’s network of bioproduction. The “multitude” that grows within the Empire is however like the “swarm.” Ideally, the “swarms” should be cemented by love and solidarity. But will it? We can understand why war is an integral part of the Empire: because of economic, political, organisational, technological dimensions that an Empire entails. Is love and solidarity sufficient to hold the “multitude” together when the Empire pits people against people, first world against third world, unemployed against employed, men against women, and so on?

Although it is recognised that the “multitude” is differentiated internally, the political implications of what that ramifies is never raised or discussed. Nor does the book provide any means by which we can tell who forms part of the Empire network and who of the “multitude” network. What are the criteria to determine which network is what? And who is from what network? The authors do not go into those questions. Indeed probing those questions would involve analysing the many complexities, structures, dynamics and contradictions in the world today.

Typically post-modernist in approach, the book recognises no boundaries. No conceptual boundaries between philosophical schools, intellectual traditions, theories; no methodological markers: criteria, definitions, qualifiers, thresholds, etc. There are no temporal boundaries: events, theories, philosophies move between different eras, ages, historical periods un-problematically; no spatial bounda-

ries: the specifics of the problems of the first world, third world, rich nations, poor nations do not appear to matter in any significant way. All differences are subsumed, in unproblematic way. The subsumption is problematic for colonised people, people of the "Third World," the South, however one chooses to describe them.

"When a distributed network attacks, it swarms its enemy: innumerable independent forces seem to strike from all directions at a particular point and then disappear back into the environment." And, this is the crux of the problem with the "multitude" for the oppressed people of the South. First, *distributed networks* don't attack. People *organise and struggle*, and often suffer pain and loss in the process. The analogy of the "swarm" is at best condescending of human pain and suffering as it reduces people to instinctive beings whose intelligence can be known only by their effects, post-facto. At worst it is de-humanising. It implies oppressed people of the South can no longer act concertedly for their self-determination and freedom by creating a blue print for a new, better and more just world. Instead, all they can do is creatively, "swarm" the Empire together with all sorts of different "swarms" and "disappear into the environment." Should we say, "Long Live the Empire!"

While full of compassionate references to the "poor," the South, and all that, the self-determination of the oppressed peoples becomes contingent on the compassion of the elites of the North and South. The elites, with their computer technologies, and communication skills, topped with plenty of "love," will save the "poor"—all the structural and historical differences notwithstanding. Ultimately that is the politics of the book.

Another World is Possible? Look elsewhere.

**Radha D'Souza**

## DANCING ON MAIN STREET

Lorenzo Thomas,  
Coffee House Press, 2004

## PRAYER TO SPIDER WOMAN / REZA A LA MUJER ARAÑA

Renato Rosaldo  
Ico cult of Saltillo, Mexico, 2003

It is a remarkable thing to have written about Lorenzo Thomas in the fairly recent past (American Studies Association, 2002) and having had, at that time, to scrounge and photocopy and scour used bookstores and libraries for his plenitude of out-of-print work (in the end, he sent me reams of copied material, thank you, as did Aldon Nielsen), and then to get a brand new Coffee House Press book of his poems in the mail. Though it could be argued that he never left, the publishing industry has missed his vibrance and consequently Everyreaders like myself have also done so. For us, he's back on the scene, swinging full force. It's like Christmas all over; his ur-real surrealism a bracing tonic of reality, dissolving in its wake any vatic bathos one might encounter on the way to the for(u)m, to the republic(an), to the convention(al). The title *Dancing on Main Street*, and some of the subtitles, like "Any Place You've Ever Been," "Rituals and Improvisations," "Resistance as Memory" (which neatly and somewhat cynically-- or is it wistfully?--reverses the normative academic formulation "memory as resistance" to say, "Remember when we ), "Dangerous Doubts" --all throw into relief Thomas's ongoing concerns with the messy seam of the public/private interface, the necessity for the individual to participate in expressive public culture, to take to the streets, but also to undermine any certitude or easy default position such as "taking it to the streets." Rituals and improvisations appear to be an oxymoronic pair: one is scripted, reassuring, repetitive even as it sets the stage for a heightened encounter with reality, with the Otherworld, with the sacred; the other is marked by its unpredictability, its processual Unknown, its teetering at the chasm, its wild thrashing celestial/bestial mystery on the writ(h)ing floor. But even as I type out this seeming polarity, it becomes patently obvious that ritual and improvisation converge:

one uses the guidelines of stricture to catapult one into the Beyond. In the very scene of poetry, and in the scene of a lived life, a heightened awareness of the expected and the everyday set the stage for wild divergences into uncharted experience. Everywhere in Thomas's work, apparent opposites demonstrate their inseparability. Dancing and mourning, music and grief:

It was in those days musicians started dancing  
Didn't have to touch their instruments.  
In fact they couldn't even stop the music playing  
It was so much sadness in the world.

("Back-Ordered Tears")

In "Excitation" the glib poetic clichés of sexual/sensual arousal are juxtaposed with socio-political/personal anger:

One [of the senses]  
Assays kaleidoscopes of failing light  
Another  
Revels in the moist kiss of the night  
...  
A hundred years past slavery still  
The same old shuffle

In Alabama, where the redneck fans  
attacked poor Nat [Cole] on stage just like Roland  
Hayes  
knocked him down, down to the ground  
sd, "Nigger!"

But the poem evolves into an homage to the ballad/blues singer-pianist Charles Brown, singingly blending the institutionalized sacred ("Just like Church") and the natural sacred ("Just like sunlight") into "singing" where words might unwrap the promise they usually fail to deliver. The argument (if that's the right word) here and in other poems is that in blues/jazz/poetry/artistic expression there is no division between mourning and dancing, between sexual tenderness, the deep anger and sorrow of collective memory of trauma, and creative inspiration. The foregoing sentence, however, falls into the bathetic soup, and Thomas's poetry does anything but.

Thomas's poetry, in fact, as I said at the afore-mentioned event, puts the wit back in witness. If witnessing is a key theme in and motive for his work (one bilingually published book is *There Are Witnesses/ Es Gibt Zeugen*), the wit is subtle but the farthest thing from

gentle. Understated, it comes at you sideways; it signifies. Its sting, once you realize you've been stung, makes him the Mohammed Ali of the poetry world:

You just don't know  
How hard it is  
To be uncivilized

You think that everyone you eat  
Deserves to be eaten

Lunch for me  
Means someone ain't coming home

So what  
If breakfast might have been  
The tuna that found a cure for cancer?

Damn sure was tasty!

("Whale Song")

A send-up of sentimental save-the-whale aesthetics (if not politics), the poem is obliquely indicts the big-fish-eat-little-fish national ethos currently in ascendancy. It's really funny.

It's difficult to say exactly how Thomas's poetry "works" because it both invokes and resists convention so unconventionally. It's also difficult to capture the wonderful unexpectedness of the poetry in such banal critical bromides as "invokes and resists," because that can be said of any poetry. The contrast between the prose of my review and the lingo of Thomas's verse is, well, it really is a contrast, not one that, like those alluded to by Thomas himself, wondrously dissolves in verbal legerdemain. The poem "Sentiment" repeats end-words or key-words (they're not always at the end of lines) so often you think it must be a well-wrought urn that's smashed, a disoriented sestina on the run, but under scrutiny it doesn't fall in to a formal form but further into controlled disarray ("A form of artifice destroys itself / Axxxx xxx xfxxx xxxxxxxxxxx rx xxx") Rather, it gestures at form in the same way that a daytime fragment gestures at a dream that in turn gestures at something you used to know. That haunting sense of having been here before: what poetry does; what memory does:

Any place you've ever been still responds  
To the rhythm of your illusion  
("Sentiment")  
The poetry is illusive, elusive and allusive.

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It is a remarkable thing to read a first book of poems by a revered teacher in a field (anthropology) I have experienced in my professional life as antithetical to my own (poetry and poetics). Rosaldo's class "Stories in Culture," taken in my first year of graduate school, inspired me to believe that it was possible to forge an analytic language for poetry that was human, collective, personal and contextually responsive in its accountabilities. (Imagine my chagrin on learning that this early taste was a brief utopian haven in a disciplinary world still regulated by aesthetic taste and solipistic literariness.) And even more amazing than the fact of the first book, that book, Renato Rosaldo's *Prayer to Spider Woman/ Reza a la Mujer Araña*, wins a Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award. It's like Christmas all over, but with all the weird cross-over anxieties: what if I don't like it? what if he's become the best poet in the universe, only a few years after beginning to write? No need to worry. He's a good poet, and I don't feel jealous about it. Instead, it inspires me to believe that it's possible to change intellectual trajectories, to follow one's instincts, to go into uncharted (for oneself, anyway) writerly territory at any point in life.

Before turning exclusively to focus on *Prayer to Spider Woman/ Reza a la Mujer Araña*, it's worth dwelling briefly on some commonalities between these two dramatically different works. Both of them touch, albeit differently, on one of my current interests, the intersection of ethnography and poetry. And they do this in several ways: as self-consciously and often thematically "ethnic writing," as writing inflected by a participant/observer sensibility, as (autoethnographic) poets of socio-politically disenfranchised legacies observing their own situations from outside/inside, with sometimes detached or philosophical tone but obvious deep engagement. The contexts of these books' engenderment likewise provokes and expands the concept of experimentation. Thomas is an experimental writer in the classical sense; the literary "ostranenie" of lines like "Racket

annoyance lace organic satins" patently reflect a "languagy," St. Marks-y aesthetic legacy. While *Prayer/Reza* would not be identified as belonging to an avant-garde tradition as conventionally understood, Rosaldo is experimenting with his intellectual and affective life, changing not only a poetic style after a well-established career (like, say, Robert Lowell), but shifting into an entirely new (to him) discourse, one that some would argue is functions as an "anti-discourse." Both poets are concerned, among other things, with a key element in (auto-)ethnographic writing; namely, in witnessing—that is, documenting experiences of social Otherness. Finally, both writers deploy their bilingualism and the code-switching such an attribute enables. Rosaldo is first-generation Chicano, while Thomas is Brooklyn-raised and Panama-born, in a Spanish-speaking household. Early bilingual experience in the home or other intimate environment heightens a sensitivity to the subtleties and multifarious possibilities of language: there are at least two ways to say or name even the simplest thing, even though many end up writing poetry in only one language. Thomas's poetry is more implicitly bilingual in its syntactico-semantic estrangement from the everyday, its sometimes extreme ellipticism and compression, its private or surreal allusions, its references to experience only linguistically accessible to those in the know, its sideways wit that destabilizes any facile critique or one-dimensional reading one might give the work. Rosaldo's poetry, on the other hand, is explicitly bilingual—not only is it, in this publication, presented in translation on facing pages (English on the left, Spanish on the right, translation presumably by the author, with, appropriately, no indication of which "version" was "written" "first;") but also there are Spanish phrases in the English poems as well as English phrases in the Spanish poems as well as Spanglish constructions throughout. The endearing titles of two consecutive poems, "El Tony" and "La Big Sister," use Spanish constructions that invoke a long tradition of Chicano and Nuyorican poetic usage (think of Tato Laviera's "La Carretta Made a U-Turn" and José Montoya's "El Louie," both considered breakthrough poems in widening the possibilities for poetic English by including everyday street Latino/a Spanish); the two poems on the "Spanish" side of the dual presentation mix English and Spanish so fluidly that one can *hear* the tenderness, or snappiness—the emotional tenor—of natural speech—one of William Carlos Williams's dicta for successful modern American

poetry:

Then she choked back tears      Luego she choked back tears,  
Begging to do it again.      Begging for la novela otra vez.

In a sense, this small snippet of relatively ordinary language can't do justice to the cumulative effect of several poems' worth of supple hybrid phrasing, but a comparative side-by-side reading makes it clear how restricted monolingual ears and tongues are, and how marvelous a range of expression is opened up by an uncontrived, macaronic multiglossia. (Important disclaimer: I am not a fluent reader of Spanish, so in a sense I am not an ideal reviewer for this book. But the ebulliently astute poet Juan Felipe Herrera has written that these are the best translations he's seen in decades.) Moreover, at times Rosaldo delicately indicates how different Spanishes mark their speakers as either regionally, linguistically, or generationally different: his paternal great-grandmother, Mama Meche, lets slip minor Spanish malapropisms that mark her as an originally-English speaker. Such understated cues encode a dynamic, rich and often fraught world of social, (inter)national and personal relations, all of which are explored from different but overlapping perspectives in the book's subsections: "Invisibility/Los Invisibles," "Prayer to Spider Woman/ Reza a la Mujer Araña," and "Night Voices/ Voces Nocturnas."

Rosaldo is intimate and self-disclosing in verse aimed at healing the socio-emotional, that is personal but representative, wounds caused by belittlement. The early death of a brother (see Kerouac's affecting *Visions of Gerard* for a comparative and bilingual childhood experience), family secrets, and especially Rosaldo's health crisis—a stroke when he was serving as chair of the Anthropology Department at Stanford University—which actually precipitated the initiation into poetry writing—all are explored with rigorous though tender honesty, as are the constant subtle or not-so-subtle instances of racism both he and his father before him encountered in the high aether of academe, where politics, to quote one colleague, is a blood sport:

He became the department head,  
Swelling importance shrank his laughter..

My brother died suddenly...

Three white colleagues circled him like sharks,

*Love the culture you study,  
but don't let a Mexican run the department.  
They called in their Bircher buddies.*

He never recovered, lost the job,  
suffered one stroke after another...

(“Border Crossings”)

I wasn't brought up to be a boss,  
Can't say no, surround myself  
with thugs. They love saying no.

Now everything I touch turns to gossip,  
I'm the worst they've seen, have no judgment,  
just don't get it, my enemies say.

(“Candid Boss”)

I find it noteworthy that the poems about being a high-powered academic recovering from a debilitating stroke (“Dr. Jones.../Will I ever speak in public again?/ I glimpse his withering bafflement,/ see it turn to patience.”) are included in the *Los Invisibles* section, suggesting the continuum between the social invisibility of Chicano laborers and the emotional invisibility of a Chicano academic being asked to park most of his lived experience in a discreetly invisible place as he rises in the institutional ranks. It is also noteworthy that Rosaldo's international reputation as an ethnographer has been enhanced by his willingness to break down the discursive barriers that prevented anthropological writing from being as interesting, personal, nuanced, multi-dimensional as its potential suggested. (At a workshop he led in the early 1980s, I remember his narrating his frustration with extremely interesting people who went to extremely interesting places and lived in extremely interesting communities and wrote extremely boring accounts thereof.)

Though Thomas's Viet Nam poems touch on autobiography, Rosaldo's poetry is more accessibly so, less elliptical than his co-reviewee. At times, but not often enough to note it as a consistent characteristic of his style, it is García Lorca-ish, as in the prizewinning “My Guardian Angel,” which plays delicately between the everyday and the surreal: The stroke is configured as a green wave, the persona sees himself from the outside as a “teacher [who] dictates the established rules” right before he “slide[s] to the other side,/

the beyond." This compelling poem mixes the otherworldly w/ the personal (guardian angel). Is the guardian angel a memory of a father, a current psychotherapist, or a disembodied presence whom the writer imagines into being during a harrowing but ultimately liberating life-change (literally, a stroke)? One of my favorite poems in the collection was, remarkably enough, a conventional love sonnet; I like the taste of sly happiness with which secrecy charges ardor:

Our secret trysts would take them by surprise.

We're married fourteen years. That's our disguise.

("Secret Lovers")

It is perhaps the inclusion of this sonnet, which is so unlike anything else in the book, that gave it a charming "beginner's mind, old-timer's heart" feeling. That is, it seemed a piece written as an exercise, perhaps a successful workshop or self-assignment; but rather than experience it dismissively as "just" an exercise, I felt renewed humility that a high-profile intellectual had the courage to try new things, especially things that involved self-disclosure *and* formal mastery. Rosaldo, though already groundbreakingly courageous in the degree to which he brought the personal voice into highly accomplished ethnographic writing (and to a large extent "made it okay," by virtue of his skill, rigor, and respected status, for others to do so), has broken his own record and gone to the next level by exploring a new (to him) expressive/textual form that constitutes his inner/outer explorations differently. Sort of like, "Oh my, he's done it again!" but using completely different discursive tools.

Or not. So different. I mean. The history of poetry-writing ethnographers is rich and fascinating: in addition to the well-known poet-anthropologists Nathaniel Tarn and Dennis Tedlock, others --among them Dell Hymes, Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, Stanley Diamond, even Bronislaw Malinowski --considered poetry one of the highest arts, and participated in creating it. The journal *Anthropology and Humanism* features a regular poetry section, which publishes poetry by anthropologists, rather than translated poems by these anthropologists' object/subjects of study. For most, it is a covert pleasure, or an activity that they keep sacred/protected by virtue of their amateur status as poets. Richard Handler has written well of the science/art tension that characterizes ethnography as a discourse and anthropology as a discipline, and demonstrates how Edward Sapir, for one, negotiated his own ambivalence about

being an “artist” in “scientist”’s clothing. Insofar as he has gone all the way—into what amounts to a second career—Rosaldo’s volume instantiates a new way of resolving this tension, letting this path take him to realms that require the proverbial steep learning curve, and into a range of styles and tones.

There is, as I’ve come to discover, a strong resonance between the lyric I, always self-watchful and slightly dissociated, and the ethnographic I, always observant and treading the highwire between that detached observation and engaged participation. The self watching and describing the self (in society) is especially poignant in the realm of auto-ethnography, which is all the more kin to lyric poetry that enacts and re-enacts “what it feels like to be me.” Both Thomas and Rosaldo make this high-wire performance a breath-taking pleasure to behold, engage, experience.

## **Maria Damon**

[Note: This review was written while our friend Lorenzo Thomas (1944-2005) was still with us. Ed.]

# DEBATING WORLD LITERATURE

Christopher Prendergast, ed.

Verso, 2004

*Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.) and Candy Crowley of CNN . . . are on record as having George Bush say that he doesn't do nuance. "Joe, I don't do nuance," the president supposedly told the senator. As for Crowley, she heard it this way: "In Texas, we don't do nuance." "Bush's War Against Nuance", Richard Cohen, The Washington Post, Tuesday, February 17, 2004; Page A19*

In such a day and age where complexity is a dangerous failing and nuance is a moral crime, reading Prendergast's latest book, *Debating World Literature*, is almost an act of protest. For this book is all about distinctions, shades of meanings. It is not an 'easy' read—indeed Prendergast can never be accused of such a thing!—and the denseness of the arguments is a hurdle one has to jump before one reaches a richer understanding of the term "world literature" and its contested expanse.

This collection of essays is strikingly interrelated, with contributors frequently referring to each others' essays in the volume, so that the book, although an edited volume of discrete essays, seems more like a panel discussion on the topic. In fact, Prendergast mentions in his introduction that Casanova's 1999 book, *La Republic Mondiale des Lettres*, was the impetus behind the book and most of its essays. Casanova puts forth a Saidian argument about world literature—the literary 'marketplace' is ruled by the struggles of nations to institute what Casanova calls the "Greenwich Mean Time" of literary history so that the "winner" gets the privilege of making the rules. All the other nations thus are locked in a contest to take over this dominant position.

This is refuted throughout the book but especially in the very first essay by Prendergast himself. And throughout the book, the attempt is to challenge the postcolonial account of literature as centered on colonial events and dictated by them. The challenge is along theoretical lines—essays by Masden and Stephan Hoesel-Uhlig analyse the original concept put forward by Goethe and its applica-

tion by Brandes and Auerbach; Heath examines the formation of the concept of “genre”; and Reiss confronts the dualism of “us/them” that besets postcolonial theories. It is also along the lines of genre—while Moretti agrees in reading literatures in terms of ‘center’ and ‘periphery,’ he also traces the movement of the novel across national boundaries and how it is inflected by local realities; and Cluneis Ross looks at poetry as more of a linguistic than a national artifact. Finally, there is Benedict Anderson and Fransesca Orsini who examine the lesser known literatures to show the complex socio-political interactions that help form these literatures. In all the essays, there is an attempt to deny what the writers see as the simplifying tendency of current critiques to reduce all discussions to merely the national and/or to the competitive. In these selections one also sees a consideration of folklore and its role in the nationalist agenda, the politics of translating oral literatures into the written, vernacular writings as opposed to English literature—so many ways to further add distinctions to unexamined, monolithic concepts of ‘nation,’ ‘literature,’ and ‘world.’

Notable among these are the essays by Prendergast, Anderson, Cluneis Ross and Orsini, many of these because they address, in very sophisticated terms, the less visible cultures (Phillipines), or hardly popular genres (like poetry), or the almost-unknown- to-the-West vernacular writings (like those in Hindi/Urdu).

Prendergast’s essay on “The World Republic of Letters” sets the stage for challenges to the indurate notion of an inescapable relation between “literature” and “nation” that is posited by Casanova. It reviews and takes to task Casanova’s latest book, *La Republic Mondiale des Lettres* (1999) for putting forth a competitive and victim/victimiser dualism of the world of letters. Through a very careful, sometimes convoluted, analysis of socio-historical context, Prendergast shows how the term “world literature” does not mean “all” literatures of the world but is biased, unwittingly, towards centering on the “European renaissance and the development of national literary traditions” through its emphasis on literatures that have been influenced by transnational forces: “‘World’ here (including *mondiale* in Casanova’s title) thus does not mean ‘global’ (in the sense of all the literatures of the world) but rather ‘international’ structures that arise and transactions that occur across national borders.”

Prendergast has a way of enlarging the scope of his argument

by roping in the views of historians (like O'Neill and Wallerstein) and theorists (like Casanova and Moretti) that is for the most part enlightening and thought-provoking. His statements are always qualified and his arguments always have counter-claims acknowledged. Only sometimes, does one wish that that Prendergast would not have so many modifications to his initial assertions but then that might also be the urge of an academic who has finally been infected (*help me!*) by the "no nuance" virus of the current American political environment. So let that be. More often, his essay has delightful bypaths that lead to very stimulating discussions that sometimes seem like they should be in the main essay (witness the long but very pertinent footnote on page 8-9 that shows clearly how, despite its wide grasp of non-Western literatures, Casanova's book finds a way "to constantly return us in one way or another to the shores of the *Vieux Continent*").

Anderson's article ("The Rooster's Egg: Pioneering World Folklore in Phillipines") talks about the translation of oral folklore into written Spanish by Isabelo de los Reyes in 1887. Through this study, Anderson explores the complex connection/disjunction between language and nation as well as between written/oral cultures and notions of nationalism. The translations are not seen as illustrations of a larger European story nor are they fitted to a larger story of imperialism that unwittingly places Europe at the center of the stage. Instead, even while acknowledging the colonial influences on life and literature of 19<sup>th</sup> century Phillipines, Anderson concentrates on the details of local influences, and thus tethers the "world" and the "nation" to more diverse native concerns.

The same is true of Orsini's treatment of Hindi/Urdu literature from India. Indian literature cannot claim to be overlooked like that of the Phillipines-- in fact, one is almost tired of reading about Rushdie's novel or of hearing Spivak or Bhabha hailed at the slightest postcolonial sneeze. However, Orsini does neither. She reviews Chaudhuri's anthology and, through this, she looks closely at the production and distribution aspects of literature in India and shows how vernacular literature deserves as much respect and visibility as any Rushdie or Roy. She brings Bourdieu and Casanova's theories into her argument and frames the question of "What is Indian literature?" against the larger one of "What is world literature?"—and tackles the question of how one forms its canon. This framing itself

expands the relevance of vernacular Hindi-Urdu literature (which, as a matter of theoretical habit, is relegated to the dark corners of any literature by the “world” critics). Through careful analysis, Orsini shows how Casanova’s theory of competitive national literatures is inapplicable to India. She gives an interesting table that shows the multi-layered levels of “production, transmission, recognition” of vernacular and English literatures in India, and comes to a justified conclusion that despite the fact that “[l]iterary production in English is triply privileged within this field, drawing on the language’s American-based global ascendancy, on the subcontinental legacy of British colonialism, and, relatedly, on Indian class divisions[,]” the “cultural capital” of the vernacular languages complicates any simplistic, imperial reading of the literary situation.

Cluneis Ross’s essay tackles a much-ignored section of world literature: poetry. World poetry hardly exists in the framework of contemporary theoretical or critical studies; it is the lost continent that very few are in a hurry to find. Cluneis Ross performs an important function here in highlighting this lacuna, and shows how contemporary non-Western poetry should not be straitjacketed into the expectations of postcolonial critics, who wish to see “nation” lurking behind every innocent poetic detail. One only wished that the writer would qualify his conclusions to make them sound less universal: “...there is enough to indicate that contemporary poetry in English is not centered anywhere in Britain, or the United States of America. From the perspective of poetry, the English-speaking world is polycentric.” No arguments about that, but one wonders whether such a statement can be made with confidence on both the sides—of production and of reception—of poetry. The odds are still stacked in favor of the poets who are read, published and disseminated in the West rather than in their Third World homes.

Overall, this book is a needed corrective to American academic discussions that hover too insistently (almost provincially) around selected names and theories. Emily Apter, in her essay “Global Translatio,” delineates the differing paradigms of this international reading of literature: “. . . ‘Global literature’ (inflected by Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyashi), ‘cosmopolitanism’ (given its imprimatur by Bruce Robbins and Timothy Brennan), ‘world literature’ (reviewed by David Damrosch and Franco Moretti), ‘literary transnationalism’ (indebted to the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spi-

vak) and comparative postcolonial and diasporic studies (indelibly marked by Edward said, Homi Bhabha, Françoise Lionnet and Rey Chow among others).” *Debating World Literature* showcases essays that deal with all these issues in one way or another and problematize these concepts by exploring the limits of such categorizations in native particulars. As the editor, Christopher Prendergast, says, “... the common thread [in this book] consist[s] in a reach for complexity against the grain of some of the polemically simplifying tendencies at work in cognate areas of inquiry.” If only Prendergast could do this to our political debates as well!

**Anjali Nerleker**

# FINALLY GOT THE NEWS

a film by Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman, and Peter Bessner

Produced in association with

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers

First Run/Icarus Films

First Run/Icarus has done a great service to teachers and students, scholars and activists, and community and labor organizers by bringing this legendary film out in video. I still remember the first time I saw a grainy print of it, as a student in the early 1970s, when a traveling group of activists brought it to my college. I had read about DRUM (the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) and The League of Revolutionary Black Workers (henceforth “The League” or “LRBW”) in the pages of *Radical America* magazine (where budding activists then looked for theory, history, and analytical reportage on “the movement”), but it was something else again to see and hear members of the League lay out their analysis, interspersed with scenes from auto factories, picket lines, and protest marches. By now there have been some fine articles and books published about these organizations, but they fall short of providing the goose bumps—and insights—that *Finally Got The News* can still generate.

For the past thirty years the existence of this film had taken on the characteristics of an urban legend. Those who had seen it would periodically ask their comrades and colleagues if anyone knew what had happened to it, whether any libraries or archives had copies of it, if there were prints of it available by hook or crook. The answers – at least the ones I heard or heard of – were always, sadly, negative. But now First Run/Icarus has brought a clean print of *Finally Got The News* into standard VHS format. Those of us who were fortunate to see the film all those years ago, and those of us who have never had the chance to see it, should send out a big shout of praise to First Run/Icarus and then get out our checkbooks and credit cards. Showing this film to the new generation of students, activists, and student-activists is a *must*.

The LRBW were a central – and distinctive – element of the emergence of “black power” in the late 1960s. Led by young men, they emerged after the Detroit uprisings of 1967 to express racial pride, anger, and militancy, along with new organizations and move-

ments like the Black Panther Party, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Republic of New Africa, the Black Arts Movement, and the voices of a new generation within the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the NAACP, the Urban League, and other, older, civil rights organizations. While sharing this shift in what Raymond Williams would have called “the structure of feeling” among African Americans, the League distinguished itself by building its base within the industrial working class, particularly the second and third generations of Detroit autoworkers. At their height in 1968-1969, they organized hundreds of black workers and commanded the respect of thousands more, while their political influence spread rapidly beyond the confines of the Motor City. They contested the entrenched leadership (some of it black as well as white) of the United Auto Workers Union, connected in-plant organizing with community organizing, and provided a vision of linking international revolution with domestic rebellion.

As much a “document” as a “documentary,” *Finally Got The News* offers the story of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers at their height, as they wanted their story told, as they understood it, and as they understood themselves. It also offers viewers a window into the dynamics of class, race, and internal union struggles in the auto industry when it was still the motor force of the U.S. economy and the United Auto Workers Union was at the heart of the U.S. labor movement.

*Finally Got The News* opens with a visual montage of slave ships, slave plantation labor, factories, school integration struggles, police harassment of black men on city streets, and urban uprisings, accompanied by changing drum rhythms. Here is the historical evidence for the central contention in the League’s analysis. As activist John Watson, posing in front of posters of Che, Mao, and Malcolm X, says at the end of this opening segment: “Black workers have historically been the foundation stone upon which American industrial capitalism was built.” American Capital, he emphasizes, has emerged from the “transformation of [blacks’] sweat and blood into products,” from cotton to automobiles.

With blues setting the aural atmosphere (“Please, Mr. Foreman, slow down the assembly line... I don’t mind workin’, but I do mind dyin’”), the camera follows African American workers leaving for work before sun-up, driving to work, entering the factory, and

performing their daily tasks. This footage appears to have been shot surreptitiously in the Ford Rouge plant. As we watch what appears to be a virtually all-black workforce do their jobs, we hear testimony in a series of anonymous voice-overs, many of them with southern accents, some with graphic language. They tell us about the pressures of the work, its speed and monotony, the filthy and dangerous conditions, and the injuries and exhaustion they experience. Several offer their frustrations with the union, which has done so little to address these shopfloor issues as to appear “almost the same” as management.

We are then returned to John Watson, who brings his analysis to the class conflict between these workers (white as well as black) and the “motherfuckers who don’t do nothin’” but handle money, credit, and capital. “The more abstract and intangible your shit,” he asserts, the more powerful you are. While this language and tone takes viewers right back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, some of Watson’s contentions are stunningly prescient of the critique of capitalism which has emerged in the young 21<sup>st</sup> century. He points to credit and consumerism as tools to keep workers under control. Whatever you earn, he suggests, “they steal it all back.” It’s just: “Buy shit, buy shit.” When he rails against the system as a whole, he sounds like one of today’s politicized hip hop poets. This system is “parasitic, vulturistic, cannibalistic, and it’s sucking and destroying the life of motherfucking workers, and we have to destroy it because it’s evil.” The evocativeness of Watson’s language and that of other League activists who also speak out in the film remind us of their place in the historical and cultural milieu that produced the Black Arts movement.

The film then moves into an explanation of the emergence of the League, from the assignment of African American workers to particularly dangerous, unpleasant, and difficult jobs within the auto industry to their resistance, individually and collectively. It was in their resistance that they discovered who their allies were (other black workers), who their enemies were (not just management, but local government, the union, and those African Americans who had risen into corporate management positions), and who stood on the sidelines (most white workers). As we follow scenes of the printing of leaflets and newspapers (such as *The Inner City Voice*), the distribution of leaflets at plant gates, and the organization of picket lines

and protests, we learn the full text – and implications – of the film’s title: “Finally got the news about who’s being used. Finally got the news how our dues are being used.”

Interestingly – and here is where class and race consciousness are so complicatedly interwoven in U.S. history – the League did not reject class organization and unions, even as its frustration with the United Auto Workers Union deepened. Between 1967 and 1970, League-affiliated organizations (the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, DRUM, the Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Movement, ELRUM, the Ford Revolutionary Union Movement, FRUM, and others) in particular plants organized caucuses and slates to challenge for union offices. Ron March, one of the League’s spokesmen, who ran for Trustee in the Hamtramck Chrysler local, tells viewers his frustrations with interference in these local elections by UAW regional officials. While the LRBW struggled for immediate reforms in working conditions and the reform of the union in a more democratic, representational direction, they also held out the vision of wholesale social change based on the merger of revolutionary nationalism and class struggle.

At this point, *Finally Got The News* moves in an unanticipated direction, exploring white workers, their experiences and their consciousness. League activists Watson and March offer some analysis – “There’s a lot of confusion among white workers as to who the enemy is” – but, for the most part, the filmmakers choose to let the white workers speak for themselves. This segment of the film opens with a montage of Appalachian poverty (the roots of many of Detroit’s white autoworkers at this time) and then shifts to hardscrabble urban neighborhoods, against a soundtrack of country music. We then begin to hear voice-overs from anonymous white workers who echo, in many ways, what we heard from black workers early on in the film – harsh working conditions, speed-up, injuries, disrespect. Two younger white male workers then appear on the screen and talk pointedly about the need for white workers to support black workers’ struggles. This segment of the film anticipates the important analysis of “whiteness” provided by David Roediger and others in the 1990s, suggesting another way in which the LRBW merits reconsideration and a new appreciation today.

The film returns to League activists who deepen their core analysis for us. They explain how black workers are “the strategic

vanguard” of the working class in at least two ways. In the plant, their goal is to “end oppression altogether, not replace white oppressors with black oppressors.” Their struggle can lead all the workers to overturn the exploitative system which has kept them in place and at war with each other. In the black communities outside the plants, black workers can provide the lead to community and student organizing, housing struggles, the struggles of African American women in service jobs, and the struggle against police brutality.

A LRBW pamphlet argued: “Thus owing to the national oppression (principally through institutionalized Racism as the dominant form of production relations) of black people in the United States, the black proletariat is forced to take on the most dangerous, The most difficult – yet absolutely necessary – productive work in the plants, The most undesirable and strenuous jobs which exist inside the United States Today. The demands which it poses – the elimination of economic exploitation (hence of capitalism) and of institutionalized racism (which thoroughly pervades the plant, not to mention North American society in general), and which allows capitalism to maintain itself, are more basic to the dismantling of U.S. capitalist society than those of the white productive worker, who up to now has been able to defend his “white-skin privilege.” That is why we say that any socialist revolution which is to be successful must take the stand of the vanguard class of this revolution: the black proletariat.”

The film ends on the optimistic note that, with such leadership, American workers, from white workers in manufacturing to impoverished people of color struggling in the margins of the economy, can join the struggles of working people the world over to challenge capitalism and bring about a more humane way of organizing everyday life. The League intended to use this film to further that goal, showing it (as I saw it) to audiences asking hard questions about the Vietnam War, racism, and capitalism, and seeking constructive, hopeful answers.

In the short run, as well know, the answers have proved not to be so hopeful. Most of the plants from which the League had emerged were closed over the next decade, and the global, national, and local economies – and labor movements – were transformed. The place of the African American industrial working class within the structures of U.S. capitalism has changed. But even as capital

has globalized, as manufacturing has relocated, as workers have been dislocated, and as unions in the United States have lost much of their membership and much of their clout, new movements of resistance have emerged. From the mountains of Chiapas in 1994 and the streets of Seattle in 1999 to the social forum movements in Brazil, India, and Europe, the anti-privatization and anti-commodification movements in South Africa and Bolivia, and the Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt forgiveness, new forces have arisen which can see themselves in many complex but constructive ways within this document of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. *Finally Got The News* is as timely as ever. For those of seeking a new world, it *still* speaks to us.

**Peter Rachleff**



WORD (NO. 19)



# ALAVÍO

**Avío** m, preparation, provision; picnic lunch; money advanced (to miners or laborers); pl Inf. equipment, tools. During the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Argentina laborers often carried an *avío* with what provisions they needed when travelling in the countryside. They would travel from harvest to harvest to work on different plantations and farms. These workers, many who were immigrants, carried a tradition of free worker or working only when they needed to. These workers were called *crotos* (English translation *Hobos*). They got this name because a government official named Croto passed a law to permit these workers to ride free on cargo trains. Along with food and clothes, many *crotos* carried inside their *avío* anarchist literature and newspapers. They would distribute these materials among fellow workers to raise consciousness of exploitation by the boss and to organize. *Al* in Spanish means *to the*. *Alavío* is a call out to take to the road. A summons to action. A call for workers to strike.

[*Grupo Alavío* is a direct action and video collective working in Argentina. Since the early 1990s the group has been producing audiovisual material as a tool to create a new working class subjectivity. "Through the recording and elaboration of audiovisual materials we are battling directly against the imagery of fascism. The camera is a tool, another arm, like a stick, molotov, miguelito or covering our faces" (*Grupo Alavío*). As a video collective we become available to the demands of organizations in struggle and often times our videos take on a life of their own. Many times the factory occupied by workers, the changing room of transport workers organizing a wildcat strike, land squat or barrio is the first place where we premiere our documentaries. *Alavío* uses the camera as a political organ and as a tool, which the protagonists in the films appropriate and use to organize. We use videos as the anarchist *crotos* used the *avío* to organize and generate actions against the boss, state, macho, and church.]

**Marie Trigona**  
**www.alavio.org**  
**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

## **ALOHA ANGER**

A phrase that should be coined to describe local emotions about the multinational tourism industry in Hawai'i. This phrase is not yet in use; but if it were, it might describe the uneasiness which forces locals to acknowledge their dependence on tourism which drives most of the economy and yet their anger at the industry's low paying and humiliating jobs, its environmental destruction, its cultural disrespect and appropriation, its endless tax breaks, its insistence that those who work for it are mandated to show unconditional aloha to even the most annoying and demanding humans. One might also use the phrase "aloha anger" to describe the tight lipped acquiescence those working in the tourist industry in Hawai'i give to tourists. As in, "she or he gave me so much aloha anger when I asked her to bring me my next mai tai a little more quickly." In other words, this phrase might be considered the tourist specific version of the pidgin phrase "stink eye" (dirty look). Also might be used to describe one's own anger with how tourism has created the idea of Hawai'i as a welcoming multicultural paradise filled with beautiful women who really do want to give you a lei and a kiss and then do a beautiful swaying dance for you, just for you. As in, "I've got so much aloha anger in my smile when I get up and do the hula night after night."

**Juliana Spahr**  
**Oakland, California**

# AMATEUR

As professionalization has moved into overdrive, affecting every aspect of our lives, dividing the developed world into consumers and service providers, and the “underdeveloped” or economically colonized world into toilers and the bodyguarded wealthy, the need to act like amateurs is of paramount importance. As we move from privatizing the food chain to attempts at decoding and privatizing the building blocks of life itself, people have to take things into their own hands and, like Herodotus, “find out” for themselves by disrupting old economies and creating new ones. Poets and writers should consider forming R & D groups organized into multi-talented cells to provide imagination to local citizens left in the lurch by social and political movements that have increasingly patterned themselves on the structures they purportedly oppose. Language, method and approach are crucial: the internal enemy is also the arrogant voice in us that pretends to know more, see more, feel more. Giving up power in order to gain other power starts by looking at things we might know nothing about, applying the investigative poetic method, and beginning to learn. As everything gets examined only in terms of itself, we need to fashion models and tools forged out of poetic encounters with history, experience, emotion, reality, and the unknowable that anyone can pick up and use in their own struggles and explorations. If Donald Rumsfeld was a mechanic, you wouldn’t bring him your car — for real world problems, accept no substitutes: hire an amateur!

**Ammiel Alcalay**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

# ANTI-CAPITALISM

As broad as it is long, anti-capitalism is all-embracing and irrepressible. A decade after the death of socialism had been confidently announced, it emerged well-formed and growing. Behind the confident globalizers, in the shadows between the new structures of domination they had built, resistance was growing. It erupted in Seattle in 1999 and weathered the intervening storms of 9-11 and the invasion of Iraq; it found common causes and common enemies and celebrated the multiplicity that merged into a single stream. It was alternately dismissed and denounced; it was no more than a group of balaclavad anarchists or it was the aimless crowd; it was the face of terrorism or the remnants of a hippy dream; it was a Mexican peasant holding a wooden rifle or a Haitian labourer sewing baseballs for the World Series.

True, it was all of these, this curious movement that refused to be invisible.

It was a movement that in a hundred languages expressed its hatred for exploitation, its solidarity with the oppressed, its refusal to share the war-dreams of the well-protected headmen of the global system. Its banners linked war and invasion to the struggle for oil, poverty with the wealth of the very few, disaster with contempt for the planet.

And it also dreamed – and dreams still. Of worlds in balance, justice as a guiding principle, an authentic democracy as the shape of things to come. It affirmed that a better world was possible and Arundathi Roy ‘could hear it breathing.’

**Mike Gonzalez**  
**Glasgow, Scotland**

# ASSESSMENT

Rooted in the verb (to) assess, originating in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, **assessment** has primarily and traditionally referred to the process of evaluating for taxation purposes or other monetary charge. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> College Edition, focuses three of four definitions of assess on the calculation of monetary value for purposes of taxation. Most recently, *Encarta's* online dictionary lists four definitions of **assessment**, with definitions two and three referring to the monetary value of something and definition one referring to "judgment about something based on an understanding of the situation." It is definition four that has come into its own in the academic world over the last ten to fifteen years, "a method of evaluating student performance and attainment." Recent federal mandates have forced the bureaucracy of the higher education community to embrace outcomes-based **assessment** as a tool for measuring student progress and achievement and for shaping faculty and program accountability. This concern for accountability has required college faculty to devote precious hours to devising **assessment** "tools" and then evaluating students based upon those "tools." Likewise, institutions of higher learning have had to commit sizeable expenditures and human resources in order to comply with **assessment** requirements. **Assessment** has become an increasingly volatile issue in higher education, for many faculty feel it impinges upon academic freedom and draws them away from more productive and creative instruction and research. This confounded focus on **assessment** in higher education begs the comment, **assessment** is not education.

**Michael J. Pikus**  
**Buffalo, New York**

# AUTOIMMUNITY

The result of training citizens in misrecognition through the use of opportunistic infection, in order to get them to destroy their own bodies. Autoimmunity: theatrical inflammation that disguises the true threat. The dioxin by which Manifest Destiny bleaches its electoral deathmask. Friendly fire. Bombing people to save them from genocide. But autoimmunity is also the response to this logic that demonstrates the lesson through its very resistance. If immunity is our defense system, autoimmunity is Timothy McVeigh. Autoimmunity takes over as exemption from service to the state, but only through the parodic stratification of the self. In this sense, Western modernity might be thought of as a process of autoimmunity in its ideology of embodiment as continual war with an outside and a constant marshalling of flesh, which ensures that civilians remain in fight or flight. Autoimmunity refuses the suicide mission, but the body's rejection of the mirage may yet mean homicide by fascial regime. Autoimmunity is the gulf that opens when skin no longer appears as color but is felt as membrane, when I cannot distinguish my own cells from those about to be woken by Fox TV. Autoimmunity is the fermentation of one's guts to buffer the acidity of digesting the rest of the world / disgust for the rest of the world. The way vaccination pledges our autism. The way poverty's offense is judas-kissed by the armies of compassion. Wiping off the stain with liberty.

**Eleni Stecopoulos**  
**Oakland, California**

# BAD

**bad** /baed/ *adj., n.*, (Origin: [Euro] American Culture) **1** defective, inadequate, inferior (the bad nigger). **2** evil, wicked (the bad nigger). **3** disobedient, naughty (the bad nigger; “on the back seat”—under the censure of the church for bad behavior, such as ‘crossing his feet’). **4** disagreeable, disturbing, unpleasant (the bad nigger). **5** serious, severe (of an unwelcoming thing: the bad nigger). **6** invalid, worthless (the bad nigger). **7a** *US sl. adj.* good, excellent, incommensurable, outstanding (Origin: the linguistic manifestation of the new-world African revolt against Euro-American cultural, economic, mental, physical, political, social, spiritual annihilation) Dat bad boy [*bad nigga*] ain nothin nice: Scott Joplin; Spike Lee; Thurgood Marshall; Oscar Micheaux; Richard Wright. *Comparative adj.* **7b (badder)** Ain nobody got badder skillz than: Johnny Cochrane; Kasi Lemmons; Levert (father / son); Kara Walker. *superlative adj.* **7c (baddest)** Off de chain: American Classical Music (Jazz); Blues; Bomb Beats by Dr. Dre; Frederick Douglass; W.E.B. Dubois; Toni Morrison; Oprah; W. Purvis (Inventor: fountain pen); de Dirty South.

**badass** /baedaes/ *adj. & n.* (also **bad-ass**) formidable: **a** Dat’s a bad-ass sista right dere: Mary McLeod Bethune; bell hooks; Patti LaBelle; Meshell Ndegeocello; Suzan-Lori Parks. **b** controversial folk figures: Dolemite; Frankie; Stagolee. **c** slave rebels: Gabriel Prosser; Charles Deslandes; Harriet Tubman. **d** aesthetics: brown (all variations of the hue; sugar); bountiful (breasts, buttocks, lips, hips, and thighs); braids (natural hair, including afros, corn rolls, dreadlocks, twists); beads (and cowrie shells); ballet (Dance Theatre of Harlem); black (consciousness); black folks bangin and beauteous in all dey glory.

**Pamela R. Fletcher**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

# BOO

“When they boo you, you know they mean you”

George Halas (1895-1983) Football Coach for Chicago Bears

1. A boo is a strong [negative] reaction to a person or event.
2. Booing can be politically effective.

1. Halas states above there is no confusion about the intent or object of booing, as both parties are connected by this articulation. In fact, boos are often more honest than applause, which can be polite, lukewarm or forced. Of course boos can be instigated, as they are imitative. The boo's power comes from its ability to sidetrack the performer.

Yet a boo can be unreadable. Tony Blair was booed or 'boomed' (*sic*) on the campaign trail at a south London school during the 2005 General Election. In other words, could the black students boos be interpreted as Afro-Caribbean respect? Boo! Boo! Boo! If they had guns perhaps they could 'shot them up' (*sic*).

2. It is rare these days for politicians to step on the wire without a mistress of plate-spinning to keep everything fine fine. Remember it was we who were watching that Christmas time in '89 Ceausescu's wave in response to the boos from his 'posse.' The shock was then, but later he was all defiance when the gunshot shot in him head.

'And if it wasn't for me you would win no war now

Is I rata-ta-ta-ta-ta-and a bow, bow, bow

...

My reward...slice a bread and an avocado'

Ini Kamoze 'Engeland be Nice' Statement Island Records, 1984

Deborah Richards, London, England

## BORDER CLASS

In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams describes the 'basic range' of the term **class** as defining a group (social or economic category), rank (relative social position) or formation (a specific organization or perception of economic relationships). **Border**, not in *Keywords*, can be defined as a boundary between two or more social categories. Borders exist in physical space, such as between nations, or between concepts. Related is the adjective 'borderline,' describing something that fits uneasily within a border. The relationship between a social category and its border might be described as mutually reinforcing. Defining categories creates borders between categories, yet defining a border sometimes creates categories (for instance, when a nation changes its borders). At the border, different categories touch, perhaps intermingle, perhaps at moments become indistinguishable.

**Border class** can be defined as any social group that fits uneasily between various groups, ranks, or formations, or that crosses borders between them. A border class includes those whose activities challenge or disrupt conventional class distinctions. Examples of border classes include those who work for sub-bourgeois wages at jobs defined by bourgeois rank (such as adjunct teachers, freelance writers, or short term contract office workers, often in data processing). It also includes those in more traditional working class jobs who have financially invested in corporate culture. The concept of the border class is especially useful for discussing part-time workers whose multiple jobs move them back and forth between groups, ranks, and formations, often daily.

**Mark Wallace**  
**San Marcos, California**

# BREAKDOWN

As in “threat of ~” (pej.) a means of deflecting blame, a wringing and washing of hands. As in “threatened ~ of communities” refusal to work with what is and what may be. A turning away from all are welcome at the table, as in “the threatened ~ of (the Anglican) Communion.” So clean the rim of that bowl, now the scum’s all rinsed away. Assuming no one will scramble for the crumbs. How instead to see rooms and their windows, their near and distant prospects, through and beyond the trees, how to believe in God *and* human rights. Think about walls –continually cracking towards & across constituent stones, think of the creeping plants that sometimes break walls down faster, sometimes hold them up longer, always re-shaping re-coloring their stiff gray outlines. It’s not atomic science we’re talking here, not fusion / fission, but bricolage, the stuff that humans do. The stones on the ground, the figures in a crowd and what passes between them: all those everyday walkings, makings, talkings through. For “~ in communications,” ponder that “in,” that entrance, that two-letter possibility.

**Anna Reckin**  
Norwich, England

# **BUUFIS**

Buufis is a simple word in the Somali language which could be interpreted to mean inflate, spray or blow air or a mixture of air and other substances onto a surface. For instance inflate a Balloon would be "Buufi Buufinta." To spray paint on the wall would be "Kubuufi ranjiga derbiga." The word Buufis is so heavily misused to an extent that its original meaning is no longer popular. For example Buufis is used to indicate the expansion and change in shape that occurs when a balloon or similar objects are inflated. Nowadays Buufis is used more often to indicate human expressions and behaviors that are thought to be abnormal. For example, "War maxaad la buufsantahay" which means why are you angry? "Ma Buufis baa ku haya?" which means are you paranoid or do you have an anxiety disorder. The surge in using the word Buufis to indicate the abnormal change in human behaviors and mental disorders become popular after the fall of the Somali Government in 1991. The civil unrest and wars following the fall caused many people to develop mental disorders such as the post-traumatic disorders, depression, and anxiety. Hence Buufis became a word of choice to indicate mental health problems. However its usage is still debatable among Somali intellectuals.

**Said Yusef**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

# CHATTER

Common noun & intransitive verb: the continuous, mostly random vocalization and/or sound-making behavior of animal species (viz., avian and primate chatter); rapid sequences of inarticulate signals, involving echoic language-use; self-perpetuating/self-reflexive communicative behavior (repetition of the word chatter in public discourse increasingly adds to *chatter* itself); a form of cliché-driven media discourse rendering uncritical messages that approach thoughtlessness; since 9-11-2001, a frequently used term for digitally quantifiable and analyzable series of unstructured messages interpreted as secret intelligence (“Recently we have witnessed increased levels of *chatter*.”— National Security Adviser [later Secretary of State] Condoleezza Rice, referring to intercepted communications from suspected terrorist sources)—as such, a form of nefarious signaling, replacing the previous harmless connotation of so-called “idle chatter”; thus, obliquely revives a pejorative connotation of the word as “careless,” harmful talk, indicative of the World War II motto: “Loose lips sink ships.” Often attributive: chatterbox and chat room. Synonym: **noise** (refer to Shannon & Weaver’s mathematical model of communication [1947/1948] indicating recurrent presence of unwanted and/or “negative” [i.e., destructive] information that increases doubt within the transmission channel; as such, bogus information). Contrast to the Cistercian rule of monastic silence, solitude and contemplation. Antonyms: **poetry, silence**.

**C. Natale Peditto**

**Los Angeles, California**

# CITIZEN

**citizen**, vb. as in to citizen, **-zening, -zened, -zens**. To mix, to cross, to cast, to struggle, to represent, to justify, to place, to breathe, to own, to migrate, to alienate, to rescale, to trans-, translate, transcreate, transnationalize, to transgress, and so forth, to inflect, to inflict, to touch, to share, to experience, to tell the truth (the way the words lie), to domesticate, to inhabit, to escape, to dislocate, to image the nation, to imagine relation, to fragment, to serve the self, to fake, to gesture, to multiply, to name, to choose, to politicize, to cultivate, to read/write, to deterritorialize, to believe, to improvise, to consume, to torque, to screw, to unfix, to loosen, to listen, to practice, to see through, to appear or perform, to articulate, to equivocate, to shop, to co-opt, to know, to inform, to demand, to strip, to separate, to reclaim, to constitute, to hybridize or disappear.

**Fred Wah**

**Vancouver, British Columbia**

# COLORBLIND

On the black-hand side. (n) Origin: (White folks) 1. An individual who has 20/20 vision 24/7 until suddenly confronted with race-hatred, a subject they're unwilling to deal with preferring to pretend it's better to be blind in one eye and unable to see out the other; to practice saying "I do not see color" while wearing a blindfold so teeth do not fall like boulders out of both sides of their mouth. The word said when asked how many Black people they work with, teach, pass on the street, invite home, know the first names of, attend church with, while they're biting tongues to keep from saying THE EXACT NUMBER 2. Anti-Social echo-nomic, *mis-education*, just-us, po-litical institutions pretending they want an equitable playing field, while promoting an a-z racist agenda 3. (v) When someone tries so hard not to say *nigger* they begin fucking up the American English their ancestors created to confuse everybody: *I colorblind you. We're colorblinding our home for Christmas. She colorblinded her kids before she sent them to school.* 4. (adv) A euphemism added to make inhumane acts okay in the eyes of the majority of nice-white-racists who hate the Klan, but send small, annual donations so they can sleep easy at night: *The police colorblind killed him. We colorblind coded the construction contracts. The counselor colorblind filed her students college applications.*

**Mary E. Weems**  
Cleveland, Ohio

# COMMUNITY

An ideological weapon that points in all directions at once. In radical discourse, a signifier of nostalgia. *Community* is arguably the most misused word in contemporary political discourse. As a rhetorical instrument, it is an empty signifier that demands allegiance and promises value without specificity. *Community* implies a system of shared interest, but the word is often deployed as a strategy of ideological mapping that centers the subject in a field that masks individual interest. *Communities* in these terms exist as subjunctives, objects of invocation and sites of recourse. Allegedly lost in the alienated world of post-industrial transnational capital and recuperated in sentimentalized and essentialized boundary mechanisms, community eradicates class in popular discourse. The immediate cognates of *community* form a lexicon of transgressive specters: *commune*, *communal*, *communist*. The substitution of one letter transforms community into its demonized Other. Coming into enunciation in a reciprocal dance, community is a tactical attempt to dematerialize the material historical specificity of *communist*. *Community values* and *community leaders* align against *communists* and their forgotten ancestors, the *communards*. (*Communalists* survive in Berkley and Vermont.) *Communist* had already lost meaning in the statist Stalinist hegemony, and thereafter came to mean its opposite, and subsequently, entered historical usage as a synonym of *Soviet*, now signifier of state betrayal, political oppression and geopolitical defeat. In popular usage, *communities* are good, as long as they are not *communes*, *communal*, or of course, *communist*. No other word in the English language carries this weight of contradictions. We are left to wonder why the invocation of *community* is nevertheless a necessary strategy of cultural resistance and political opposition. Radical cultural practice enacts and exposes the social formations that create *communities*, but it often replays essentializing and totalizing fictions of sentimentalized *communities* of geography, ethnicity, class and gender, that dematerialize the work of political resistance.

Alan Filewod,  
Guelph, Ontario

# COMPAÑERO

Once 'comrade' was a beautiful word. It crossed frontiers and was absorbed into every lexicon. It was international and did not gender solidarity, communion or the common cause of social change. But in the mouths of grey bureaucrats and leaders who addressed those who had brought them to power only from the highest of palace balconies, 'comrade' fell from grace. One by one the inheritors of the October Revolution were exposed as walls fell and the palaces were torn down in waves of mass rage. The very people for whom 'comrade' was coined to express a global community now hurled it back at those who had purloined and corrupted the noble word.

But another came in its stead. From the struggles of Latin America 'compañero' came to fill the need to call upon the brothers and sisters across the world who were the companions in the battles to come. As we march together, sing together, identify the visions that we share, we will need again a name that crosses borders, equalizes us, is an acknowledgment and a kind of praise. 'Compañero' has come to our rescue.

**A.G.Cruz**

**Mexico City, Mexico**

# COMPUTATIONAL POETICS

Before the theoretical theatrics of post-human aestheticians, practitioners of computational poetics brought machines into the picture as another way toward linguistic randomness that questioned the nature of what might be considered poetry and what might be considered authorship. Now, with the advent of more powerful processors, the computer can compose poetry that mimics to a tee some human poetics, coders forgoing the purely random for programs that allow for a coherence that apes that human need for sense. But this sense is not derived from any unconscious, from any day-dream, from any psycho-chemical process—but instead is derived from a prosthetic mind that thinks in and through statistics.

Like the mind, the computer utilizes predetermined lexicons which are substituted out of a pre-extant text (say *Moby-Dick*) and into a given structure (say blank verse) through filters that guarantee certain syntactical and grammatical adherences (*vide* Oulipo's ALAMO projects and Jon Trowbridge's Gnoetry0.2). The end-user, through prescribed tools of textual generation and regeneration, and the reader of the end-result decide to what the result might refer, but freed from the usual governances of reference and meaning.

Though computational poetics derives some of its logic from the "fragmented-self" of the Language movement, it shores up these fragments; through a new insistence on a true collaboration of equals, programs like Gnoetry0.2 show that post-human and fragmented-self thinking still presuppose the superiority and priority of the human-maker. A true computational poetics says "no" to the philosophical alienations that have been the under-pinnings of previous thinking on the subject of machine-derived verse. The poet is dead; long live the machine-poet.

**Eric Elshtain**  
Chicago, Illinois

# CONGENITAL MEMORY

Memory preconditioned by inherent cultural/racial ethnicity, by cellular knowledge in the blood and sinew of landscape; anatomical affect of aboriginal identity, secondary to the pulse pivoting on beat and rhythm provoked in ancestral times; intellectual consciousness of the rote nature; instinctual belonging to place and parameters of perspective; dwelling in such space on a fundamental aboriginal level; determinant of glossalolia sensibility, anterior belongingness; knowingness from synergy of humanity and landscape of origin; magnetic connectivity in curvilinear attraction drawing bearer to seat of place; precognitive awareness; *deja vu au courant*; catalyst of cognizant zest; preinstinctual gesture; stimulus of impulsivity; compelling stellar homing; rouse of individual human nature; internal natural propensity; antecedent of prime visceral (e)motions; augury heralding life-calling; precursor to premonitory thought; connate purpose; intrinsic rationale; source of direction in innate primary drive; elemental bearings; essential awareness; soul vis inertii; indwelling relativity uninfluenced by diaspora or oppression; the inertia of humanity causing connectedness in the very acceptance of being.

**Allison Hedge Coke**  
**Marquette, Michigan**

# CONSUMEE

One who is consumed by, or affected by the actions of, consumers. Sometimes a new word makes visible a thing that the language had obscured. The noun 'consumer' needs an object, the person or thing that is consumed. Once the word *consumee* becomes established, whole new relationships between people and their actions will be easier to describe. People would be able to ask of themselves which (in aggregate or essence) they are: consumer or consumee? Maps could be drawn showing the world or neighbourhood distribution of consumers vs. consumees. Societies could be formed for the protection of consumee's rights: Consume Councils would establish what their entitlements are. Young consumers could be sent on adventurous holidays and enjoined to meet consumees in their indigenous locations. Graphs could be constructed showing flows of capital in one direction, depletions to consumees in the other direction. The word consumee should not be limited to people, however. The earth, the soil, flora and fauna, livestock and deadstock are all consumees. Even the weather, the sea, the air. In the final reckoning the most voracious of consumers (person corporation or state) is also laid bare as an abject and depleted consumee, in a great scouring flood of capital that ends up eroding non-consumer relations until all that is left is the inbreath-outbreath of consumer / consumee, a body consuming its own flesh because there is nothing left to devour except one unit: the world as consumer and consumee.

**Giles Goodland**  
**London, England**

# CONSUMPTION

Originally referring to the malady of pulmonary tuberculosis, consumption means a bewildering number of things. From the creation of entropy (thermodynamics), to the capture of material for survival (biology), to the purchase and use of commodities to enhance standing and identity, consumption often stands as the opposite of production. A more complex view has them inseparably intertwined. Consumption can be seen as production as consuming goods often produces rubbish as well as a psychological 'uselessness.' Alternatively, production can be seen as consumption in the consumption of nature, capital, and human labour (often lives) for the production of goods that drive profit-seeking markets.

At the centre of consumption is Marx's fetishism of commodities. This has capitalism veiling the social and ecological relations instrumental to the production of goods. The fetish also fuels the dizzying spectacle of consumption (adverts, malls, Las Vegas) and the creation of 'needs'. Recently, markets have grown for commodities that seek to 'de-fetishize' consumption, making explicit connections between consumption and production conditions. These fragmented consumer 'movements' include markets for organic and fairly traded goods.

Several issues stand out when 'confronting' consumption: (1) how (over)consumption is driving the capture of resources (read oil) to the tune of warfare and poverty; (2) the rise of the so-called 'new' consumers (e.g. Chinese and Indian middle-classes) and their impacts on ecology; (3) the continuing inequalities in consumption between North and South; and (4) the need to re-define citizenship based on political rights and responsibilities and not merely the ability to purchase more 'cool' goods.

**Mike Goodman**  
**Middlesex, England**

# COSMOPOLITAN

In its more general usage “Cosmopolitan” implies a citizen of the world, one without ties to national, cultural, or geographic boundaries. Although the term was used in the fourth century by Diogenes to describe himself as a “citizen of the world,” cosmopolitanism emerges as a centerpiece of Enlightenment thought where it signifies a universal humanism against particularisms and nationalisms. Kant’s 1795 essay, “Toward Perpetual Peace” advocates cosmopolitanism as a matter of right and an expansion of philosophical reason. Peace among nations can be secured by “a universal *cosmopolitan existence* [as the] matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop.” This philosophical (as opposed to political) cosmopolitanism undergoes a decisive shift in the late nineteenth-century when the fragmentation of old empires and increased imperialism in Europe created two contrary meanings to the term. On the one hand, cosmopolitanism referred to anyone without (or denied) a national identity (immigrants, homosexuals, gypsies). Chesterton’s remark that “[all] good men are international. Nearly all bad men are cosmopolitan” marks a distinction that allowed strong nationalists to validate cultural tolerance while maintaining nativist sympathies. A second definition, one that has endured much longer, is used to describe qualities of sophistication and worldly knowledge among the educated upper bourgeoisie and embodied by Victorian the grand tour. In the latter usage, the cosmopolitan figure, like Baudelaire’s *flâneur* or Poe’s “Man of the Crowd,” is a product of the new urban metropole, able to mingle with the crowd without necessarily being a member of it. In the present day, cosmopolitanism has been retrofitted to describe new, diasporic populations displaced by ethnic conflict, lured by global capital, and coerced by new forms of indentured labor. This is a transnational cosmopolitanism forged in globalization, trade agreements, and border wars. The contemporary cosmopolite is a world citizen not through choice of location or privilege but often through the shifting flows of global capital and labor.

Michael Davidson, La Jolla, California

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# COSMOPLASTIC.

Adjective. From *cosmos*= universe + *plastic*= shape. The conviction or description of the universe as a product of inanimate and synthetic creation. The quality of, or belief in the ability of inorganic self-replicating mechanisms to inform or create lifeworlds through the production of interlocking material, cultural, or spiritual networks. The belief in, or recognition of the ability of inert or static structures to mediate social relations; the technogenic or parthenogenic attributes of impersonal civilizing mechanisms, such as universal rationalism, technologisms, or economism. A quality of any autonomous and reified conceptual system; objective knowledge without the knowing subject; thought-form divested of intellect; the agency of that objective intellect; a concrete metaphysical system; a structure creating structure; the mystical belief in the development of behavior patterns devoid of ecological, social, or psychological consciousness; the ascension of bureaucratic, administrative or technological agency; the aesthetic or ethical systems of that agency; the description of such tendencies in culture. *Cosmoplasticity* has been used to illustrate how the structural weight of the British Empire became a driving force behind the Empire itself. Other uses might apply to descriptions of: the logic of capital, the pentagon-intelligence-apparatus, and other enigmas of social inertia. According to Theodor Adorno, metaphysics consists of a necessary dialectical between Form and Matter. If the materiality of social thought were to destroy all possibility of transcendence, he argues humans would be forced to live at the mercy of hylozoist priests. Similarly, if abstract rationalism were to rule without regard to social mediation or human will, he argues human societies would fall under the spell of an annihilating rationalism. Adorno seeks to maintain the dialectical tension between Form and Matter as a guard against these two cosmoplastic possibilities.

**David Michalski**  
**Davis, California**

## CULTURAL WORKERS

Cultural from culture: production by people, usually taken to mean of arts, language, architecture and social organization. Workers from work: labor. Globally, the phrase 'cultural worker' is used in common parlance as a job description. Cultural workers are named as such in online databases documenting employment worldwide; Canada and many of the former Soviet bloc countries use this term regularly indicating broader cultural understanding of both the term and the work itself.

Cornel West builds a particular field or frame for the term in his essay, "The New Cultural Politics of Difference." West compellingly argues for "a new kind of cultural worker" for whom "attempting to undermine the prevailing disciplinary divisions of labor in the academy, museum, mass media and gallery networks, while preserving modes of critique within the ubiquitous commodification of culture (...) highlighting issues like exterminism, empire, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, nation, and region" would be of central importance.

Cultural workers might use their positions in society, in culture, to affect a kind of sea-change challenging conventional modes of thinking in institutions and organizations. Cultural workers are most effective when they exploit the resources available within places such as the academy or cultural institutions to challenge and insert into discourse catalytic criticism. Articulations of cultural workers can be found in the writings and speech of Kristin Prevallet, P. Inman, and Rodrigo Toscano, among others.

**Jane Sprague**  
**Long Beach, California**

# DEHORN

Removal of horns from domestic animals, goats and cattle, done to prevent danger to self and others both animal and human. Also Industrial Workers of the World (wobbly) slang meaning a person who lost their revolutionary fervour to drugs and/or alcohol would be dehorned or on the dehorn (local British Columbia usage) The dehorn crew is a group of fellow workers assigned to clearing workers out of bars and brothels in order to participate in anti-capitalist work, also to prevent gamblers from cheating men out of their wages.

The wobblies saw drugs as a distraction that robbed workers of their rage against capitalist wage slavery and devoted part of their organizational tactics to reminding members of their struggle and at times physically preventing their members from being dehorned. The phrase also conjures up the image of west coast lumber workers as timber beasts.

**Michael Barnholden**  
**Vancouver, British Columbia**

# DIASPORA

Diaspora describes the heterogeneous articulations and diverse experiences of populations that have been displaced from their homelands and dispersed throughout the world. It is concerned with questions of identity, difference, memory, and survival. The subjects of diaspora have lived through conquest, colonization, the Middle Passage, racial slavery, genocide, famine, wars, dispossession from their land, and labor exploitation. They have moved through the realms of loss, hurt, unspeakable violence, suffering, sorrow, and creativity—straddling through multiple dimensions of space and time; striving to reverse the irreversible directions of their long journeys; traveling and returning; and struggling to reconcile the nearness of a homeland and the sense of incompleteness. Such a mnemonic exercise involves recognition that the past is flitting and that the attainment of a unitary identity is impossible. Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), one of the most important Black revolutionaries of the second half of the twentieth century, explained in *Ready for Revolution* that the subjects of diaspora are peoples of dispersal, but “dispersal only begins the process, it does not end it.” It begins the process of survival and sets in motion ceaseless struggles toward freedom. To think, to dream, to theorize, and to live with and through diaspora is to do the most difficult double task of explanatory construction. That is to discursively explore the roots of identity and routes of identity formation and, as Carmichael noted, “*stay ready*” (rather than get ready) to revolutionize existing ontological categories governed by liberal individualism and capitalism to live and struggle for a committed human life.

**Yuichiro Onishi**  
New York, New York

# DISSENT

Dissent came into English in the late C16 as both a general term meaning disagreement in outlook or sentiment and as a specific term meaning difference of opinion in regard to religious doctrine or worship. In either case, dissent signifies the opposite of consent. Important correlatives threading through the centuries astride dissent include protest, nonconformity, and collectivity.

Dissidents move beyond the activity of deliberative citizens who participate in contained politics within the institutional structures of democracy. Dissidents engage in transgressive contention using innovative political action that is either unprecedented or prohibited.

Dissident citizens and groups meet the following three criteria: (1) They publicly contest prevailing modalities of power and/or the underlying logic of public policy, (2) they engage in some extra-institutional, oppositional tactics, though they may be flexible movements that employ forms of action both inside and outside the institutional pathways of political power, and (3) on some issues, they have marginal stances that are not consistently entering the dominant political discourse(s).

With the rise of George W. Bush, one of the most explicitly religious presidents in U.S. history (he once said, "I believe God wants me to be president"), the more specific definition of dissent—disagreement with the form of religious worship which prevails or is authoritatively established—may be in line for a comeback. Bush's prayer "for the strength to do the Lord's will" in Iraq may engender a new wave of politico-religious dissent to match the fervor of Edmund Burke and his fellow dissidents of the 1770s.

**Jules Boykoff**  
**Portland, Oregon**

# EDUCATION

Education is a desire for human development. *Kev kawm ntawv yog ib yaam kws tuajneeg ntshaw kua paag tau peb ua tuagneeg.* Education provides people with the tools and knowledge they need to understand and participate in today's world. *Kev kawm ntawm paab tau peb ua neej nyob rua huv nplajteb.* It is the basis for lifelong learning, inspires confidence providing the skills needed to participate in public debate, and it makes people more self-reliant and aware of opportunities. *Kev kawm ntawv yuav paab tau yus lub neej ntawm tej kev muaj tswv yim, paab rua yus kuam yus kaaj saab txhaj le pub yus muaj cuabkav nrug lwmtug sib thaam tswv yim txug kev txawj ntse zoo.*

Education makes it possible for people to be responsible and informed citizens. *Kev kawm ntawv yuav tsum ua tau kawm xwb txaj le paab tau dlej num kuas muaj kev vaam meej.* Education allows people to be more productive, to play a greater role in an economic life, and to earn a better living. *Kev kawm ntawv pub rua tuabneeg kua puab ua tau ntau yam zoo, lawm yaav tom tej, paab tau tsua tej pejxeem, hab tau txais ib lug neej zoo.*

**Phoua Her**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**

# EMBARRASSMENT

In order to be righteous, convinced, and cool, or unconfused, enlightened, and pure, thus in order to have a fate that is mine-mine-mine, I need to disavow embarrassment. Embarrassment is recoil. Cool is the recoil against recoil—against making the other pass as or pass through or pass by me. Embarrassment is the affect of an ethics of ethics (Levinas—again?). *Embarasada*, ‘to be pregnant’ in Spanish. *Embarrassé* is the opposite of *débarrassé*, “to be rid of” in French. Embarrassment is the self muttering in public to its own pregnancy of no one in particular. *I cannot get rid of you are my ingrowing fix*. No one in particular on a first come basis.

Embarrassment is a *major* embarrassment. It has cultural and psychic disavowals in tow. Commerce is founded on the cultivation and amplification of, and temporary relief from, embarrassment. I.e., embarrassment must be rendered embarrassing. Like the word ‘Marxism.’ The embarrassment of embarrassment is the basis on international capital, and ‘modernity’ consists in slowly shifting embarrassment to new fallow zones—say, carnal sin to sexual revolution to sexual addiction.

No superego, just trembling. No selflessness, just bumbling. Both cars, in a postgesticularity of *after you’s*, rush at each other. A rush of embarrassment aconverging. A politics of damp armpits. Swedenborgiano-Chomskyism of a certain *bar* laying at the center of embarrassment. Against the current political extermination of embarrassing *facts*. The not-quite-genocide and the not-technically-torture and *factoids*. The expedient-opposition and the wrap-around-mantle-of-power. *Sooooo* embarrassed. Infantile. Interdicted. No one.

**Christophe Wall-Romana**  
**Richmond, California**

# ENCLOSURE

The end of collective control over the means of subsistence brought about through the collaboration of property owners and the state. First described by Marx as “primitive accumulation,” the enclosures signaled “the historic movement which changes producers into waged workers.” Marx theorized the enclosures as a discrete stage at the dawn of capitalism, in which the English countryside (“the commons”) was literally enclosed by fences, thereby uprooting peasant communities and transforming subsistence agriculture into the industrial production of commodities intended for distribution on an open market. The term has been resuscitated recently by autonomist Marxists, who argue that enclosure is in fact a *continual* process – the very foundation of capitalist reproduction, witnessed today in SAPs (the manufacturing and management of a global “debt crisis”). The Midnight Notes Collective argues that the terrain of these “New Enclosures” is both immaterial (the internet, information technology, communication) and profoundly material, transforming the fabric of life itself (genetic engineering, seed patents, privatized water, etc). Historically, popular response to the old enclosures included arson, theft, property destruction, and rioting. While certain wings of the contemporary anarchist movement have embraced this “diversity of tactics” [see LUMPENPROLETARIAT], most replies to the New Enclosures have been expressed as a desire to “Reclaim the Commons.” Such nostalgia for a lost “organic society” was critiqued by Williams in *The Country and the City*. As *Aufheben* notes, in advanced capitalist nations the pressing task is not to *reclaim* the commons, but rather to *transform capital into a commons*.

**Roger Farr**  
Vancouver, British Columbia

# EROS

I want to contemplate *eros* so that it might find its way back into the public discourse.

For the Greeks, *eros* included intellectual and spiritual desire in varying blends with the physical. It supposed an infinite curiosity for a person or an idea or an idea embodied in a person. Even in Shelley's day, "love" could still be substituted for *eros*, but today love is shorn of the intellectual and critical components essential to politics and art. A certain amount of Platonic Idealism, accompanied by eternal verities, pervades Greek *eros*, but with its revival heavy-duty metaphysics doesn't have to be a foregone conclusion. To the contrary, "infinite curiosity" can require perpetual movement.

Static ideas and fixed positions make for bad politics and bad art. Eros avoids this by proceeding onward. Just as importantly, *eros* brings flesh-and-blood people back into ideas. It seems that a politician would make better policies if he raised his curiosity about people beyond Monica Lewinsky and the so-called town-hall forum. It also seems that a poet would use more innovative language or construct better representations of people and society, and the universe more widely, with this curiosity propelling the imagination beyond the rote poems endemic to poetry.

Why *eros* and not some other idea? In the case of politics, one would have to ask why *eros* and not ideology? In the case of poetry, one would need to ask why *eros* and not, for example, formal experimentation? Simply put, *eros* would not preclude ideology or experimentation, but would question their tenets in the name of the body and the spirit. Finally, how does *eros* become not merely a catchword advocating the politics and poetry of transcendence? The curiosity would, I believe, have a recursive quality, a built in skepticism.

**Greg Hewett**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**

# EUGENICS

a common phenomenon (1984) described weeds such as people (a hoary green colour with sundry stalks) alteration of the species for sociological purposes (bruised and bound the juice is used in old sores to cleanse dry) criminal degenerates and race suicide (*die freigabe der vernichtung lebensunwerten lebens*) facilitating removal of exotics (faith in other motivation—a system of *voluntary unconscious selection* (for limited resources) friendly to nature the herb is familiarly and frequently used to heal) impact of invasives in relation to direct competition (in every county of this dysgenic land (killed to confirm field identifications) most successful introduced invaders of once 'natural areas') *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* ("stem the tide of threatened race degeneracy and (such an inescapable mutualism) suggests that other plant species must be affected) suppression of native species most often reported as their major (the fertility of flowering plants (the flowers unscented but the leaves have a bitter hot taste)) "this year of grace the majority of human beings are substandard: (tough phlegm and clammy humours (to open obstructions of liver and spleen)) to protect the united states against "indiscriminate immigration (undernourished or ill or (using a decoction of two handfuls has been found to cure)) whether artwork or not must comply with those laws (withal 'beneficence' leans heavily towards utility (without killing the specimen some type specimen) "won't accept the idea that they are in general second rate we) (would be a more fateful step than any previously)

**Tony Trehy**  
**Manchester, England**

# FORCE

In determining what *appropriate force* might be, the enforcing power agent must be strategic, have meetings, and carefully weigh the efficacy of either a gun or a tazor; of either sanctions or an army. If *appropriate force* is thoughtful, premeditated force, *excessive force*, is the opposite: it is emotional, immediate, careless, and lacks constraint; it disregards Newton who said that force is relative to the size of each body. Although the word *force* may be balanced on the one side by what is *appropriate*, and on the other by what is *excessive*, when force is set into motion, when the nightstick has been raised, the gun fired, the punch made contact, the missile launched, what is the guiding principal determining if its actual execution is either *appropriate* or *excessive*? The answer: The actual implementation of force, set in motion, is neither excessive, nor appropriate. It is force (see definition).

**Kristin Prevallet**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

# FORENSIC ELOQUENCE

With the U.S. government settling into maintaining a social prescription of secrecy, security, and surveillance, it is interesting to note the increasingly narrow and negative uses of forensic argumentation aiding the redefinition of our cultural landscape. From the move to present a validating visual evidence of our just desires in ‘reality’ television programs to the investigative evidence copiously supplied to subvert myriad ‘evils’ in courtroom, crime, and medical dramas unfolding daily as news and entertainment, Americans are encouraged to engage in the world discourse via a terminology of self-righteousness passed through the tight prism of moral/ legal findings and refutations, a la Justice Scalia’s ‘damn the torpedoes’ quote “The Constitution says what it says, and doesn’t say what it doesn’t say...” The notion that forensic [L. *forensis*, fr. *forum*, a public place, an open market] debate is being winnowed down to argument-by bullying tactics or ideological intransigence only adds to the fearful perception that what should be valued will only be obtained by a discourse laden with threats of violence, reprisal, and unilateralist thought. And while ideas are the opening gambit for changes in the way we live, it is in the ‘open market’ of our written and verbal exchanges that the eloquence and passion language contains demands a rigorous attention to its usage.

**Dennis B. Teichman**  
**Ferndale, Michigan**

# GANGSTER

Gangster, from gang, from gong, a going, a journey, from Old English—the English language as it was written and spoken circa 450-circa 1100. And later, gangr, Viking Norse circa 700-1100, the language spoken by the men who seized hold of, took possession of, by force, North and East England circa 875-950. The word even found its way through Lithuania, but it was ironically the meaning of the word as it was spoken by the Norse invaders and colonizers that lingered: “A group of men.” By 1896, in American English the word became gangster three years before Chicago’s most notorious vice addict Alphonse Gabriel Capone was born. Thus, a pathway for violent white men—gangsters—to manipulate the outcome of civil institutions like courts and political elections by bribing police, who take the bribes, legitimating the gangster’s illegal activities, manufacturing, then, licit passage through a system made fraudulent by its administrators, managers, elected and public officials and lawmakers, and participated in by its public. Who be the real gangster now, y’all?

**Lisa Arrastía**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**

# GLOBAL WARMING

(n) (glō'bal wôr'ming) the increase in the average atmospheric temperature of planet Earth over time through emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

While global warming was first discussed in science in the early 1800s by French scientist Joseph Fourier, it was not until the 1980s that it entered widespread popular discourse. Global warming is now used interchangeably with 'climate change,' despite that climate change also accounts for other changes, such as rainfall and sea levels.

Global warming has also been used synonymously with 'anthropogenic global warming' (human-contributions to warming), despite that there are natural contributors to atmospheric warming such as volcanic eruptions. Research has found that approximately 75% of warming since the Industrial Revolution can be attributed to human activities (transportation, infrastructure/households, land-use, industry/manufacturing). Moreover, science has reached consensus that human activities in fact contribute to global warming. A recent study found that not a single peer-reviewed scientific paper since 1993 has opposed this consensus position.

Overall, this term is a signifier for high-stakes arena of intense conflict, as it is widely considered to be one of the most crucial environmental, economic, social and political problems now facing the planet. Among a range of proposed policy options to reduce GHGs, the Kyoto Protocol is most prominent. It has now been ratified by over 140 nations, and is a symbolic first step (calling for 5.2% reductions from 1990 GHG emissions). However, the United States – top emitter of GHGs – has not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

**Max Boykoff**  
**Santa Cruz, California**

# GOD

English morpheme naming a supreme being, moral authority and/or origin for all being, belief in which is widespread not only in Anglophone, but all regions of the world. The term's signified can be completely void (for non-believers) or can exceed, even override, all other signifieds in the semantic network. It has no empirically verifiable referent, but possesses indexical value for believers that is, in theory, all-encompassing—i.e. referencing the totality of things. In practice, instability in the term arises from precisely this meta-semantic character, since public articulation of relationships between meta-signifier and social or material realities (like exploitation, patriarchy, or homosexuality) results in contending predications on "God" and hence divine authorization for conflicting operations on the social body. Disputes over "God" and its non-English variants resort either to theology or to war.

"God" emerges for the twenty-first century as a last semantic redoubt, and emphatic popular retort to the intensified corrosion of social norms, personal meanings and collective identities generated by strategies of capital accumulation and elite political control attendant to economic globalization. Hence, "God" also names a compensatory ideologeme: a psychic defense against what Jürgen Habermas called the colonization of the life world by "steering mechanisms"—i.e., the instrumentalization of the social by transnational corporations, and its management by national states. The threatened omnipresence and omniscience of global capital and state supervision is counter-balanced by the all-knowing, all-powerful "God" of local tradition. Predictably, elites seek to direct this religious sentiment selectively against their political enemies, or to legitimate their predatory assaults on this or that social body.

**Bruce Campbell**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

# GOD

Consider the word is GOD! What is that, a made up word to cover the absence of GOOD, the missing “wheel,” the Will. GOD is the most transient presence in the Post-Pygmy world. (Pygmies so old they had neither God nor the Drum.) All kinds of mayhem is visited upon us under the sham rubric of “God” or “G” or the other million names of invisible oppression. Usually some questionable UN-IS is the sky? At least in the AD. We want GOOD, which is verifiable. GOD is a temporary Heathen. How can the US be a Christian Nation (unconstitutional anyway) if it’s Caesar, like the first Seizers of “Christianity” who murdered Jesus, if they violate ALL of the “Ten Commandments”? In fact, like Imperial Rome, the churches of the West ride with the Roaming Seizers. “G”, now, is money (See Marx on the bloody continuum of Christianity as a criticism of Judaism and Islam as a criticism of Christianity.) But all these Churches are corrupt. How can Saudi uphold Islam and violate its people and whore for the West? The Christian churches are institutions of Prostitution. Even the Black Churches now are filled with “Ho’s” viz. “Faith based Charity”! Judaism sleeps with Zionism as figleaf for Wannabe-Nazis. The first thing these Pseudo Xtians did after they killed X was invade the “Holy Land” and slaughter everything in sight. They are still at it! Once they seized Xtianity (which only existed After X’s murder) they made Jesus’ betrayer, Peter, Patriarch of Roman “Rock & Roll” and Paul, who was not a disciple and opposed the Living Jesus, but took up proselytizing for a dead cult figure, the other Patriarch, though they murdered both, crucifying them upside down)! We want Good not God. God is missing one wheel, hence a unicyclist, whose obverse is DOG! The World needs Good. God appeared with Slavery. Heaven appeared with Private Property!

**Amiri Baraka**  
Newark, New Jersey

# GOVERNMENT

This is a concept and activity that continues to obfuscate the minds of many. Etymologically, to govern refers to steering, ruling. Government essentially means a minority ruling a majority, with or without consent. It is most often associated now with the national state, a form of organising society that is based on (1) sustaining social inequalities, (2) formalising, simplifying, and depersonalising social relations, (3) establishing for a minority a monopoly over the legitimate means and use of violence, (4) superimposing and prioritising bureaucratic interpersonal relations. In the present global system, government really means plutocratic rule (the rule by the rich), and the plutocrats include the highest ranking members of government, who are in political power because of their wealth or who gain economically from reaching governing status. Governments are inherently antagonistic to egalitarianism; hence, “democratic government” is an oxymoron, and politically an extremely dangerous delusion. Often, their absence is viewed as destabilising, leading to chaos, as if without someone to rule over us we would rapidly degenerate into constant war, as if a capitalist world system of national states had nothing to do with the actually existing government-supported chaos caused through the reproduction of massive social inequalities. What an incredible conceit it is to impute warfare on a lack of government, when it is governments across the world that consistently wage wars and with increasingly devastating weaponry and engage in genocide and mass murder to ever larger scales!

**Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro**  
**Stevens Point, Wisconsin**

# HENRY

tonsonial - Our limitations of hair-culture are troubling. God (or Evolution) gave our heads hair, with its semi-uselessness. No other creature bears this mutative head apparel. (Some birds have remarkable feather displays, but they are fixed, inflexible.) The question is: "Which ornament to pursue?"

The Beatles brought all at once, in February, 1964, a New Sound and New Hair (the latter the creation of Astrid Kirchher, a photographer of Hamburg, Germany). But where is the new New Hair?

(At this point, I have no interest in the Beatles' music, but I still find their haircuts intriguing—their strange roundness, and cuteness. They refer to Moe of The Three Stooges, a public sadist and fool. Yet they feminize Moe. The haircuts seem to say: "We are gay Moes.")

(When The Beatles sang: "Oooh!", they'd shake their heads, and their hair would fly up—as if you could see sound.) During the 1960s hair grew longer, but that, in retrospect, was a mistake. Hair does not want length but variegation.

Now, in 2005, everyone on TV has the same hair. Their hair is even the same color—a brownish brown. How can heads think different thoughts when covered by identical hair?

Government can help. There should be a National Endowment for Hair, patterned after the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts). Grants should be awarded to innovative barbers, and poignant stylists with hair ambition.

Support tonsorial experiment!

**Sparrow**  
**Phoenicia, New York**

# HISTORISCAPE

In “western civilization,” discounting Native America (the Far West) and Asia (the Far East), the landscape is viewed and charted through topographical and geographical sciences. This negates both the Native American view of landscape as storyboard and the Asian geomantic landscape based on the made landscape of auspicious character. When Jesuits and trappers questioned Natives in “New France” regarding descriptions of place, they were informed of what had happened in the place, not of the land’s physical detail. Early Anishnaabe maps on birchbark depict basically straight lines with events depicted along the way. A boat on a lake might appear larger than the lake itself, the journey being the thing of importance. This was a source of frustration to early French mappers.

Similarly, when Matteo Ricci and his Jesuit scholar/missionaries reviewed extant maps in China, they were troubled by renderings of landscape based on the Chinese traditions of *kanyu* and *fengshui*, formulated to create pleasing geomantic spaces. Places could be resituated to create auspicious geographical situations. In part, this approach to mapping was due to the fact that the written word remained the primary source of representational authority. As philosopher Wang Bi wrote in the third century, “Image is what brings out meaning; word is what clarifies image.”

*Historiscape* incorporates the history of the land as lived by its people, as well as the function of the land in the inhabitant’s cosmology, ultimately creating an accurate rendering of the experienced space and linking it to that of the empirically charted physical one.

**James Thomas Stevens**  
Dunkirk, New York

# HYBRID

Postmodernism's key notion, maybe the notion that sustains most postmodernism's quackery. Through the illusion of *hybridism* contradiction is obscured, commoditized. Not able to recognize and accept the other in its complete otherness, we turn it into hybrid, i.e., half me, similar to Us. (Not Other). Not Either/Or but always *proper*. Property. Not completely stranger. 'Mixed.' In denial of otherness we constructed 'hybrid.' We have naturalized the 'hybrid' category so much, that the mere mention of this category as purely cultural, artificial, contextualized (in imperialistic epistemology) seems a 'menace,' an evil return to 'Nationalism' or 'Pure.' Using the 'hybrid' category we have remained Hegelian. We arrive to syntheses. (Isn't that wonderful, daddy?) We prevent radical dialectics to take place. 'Hybrid' has taken control of cultural industries, such as music where *fusion* has become institutionalized. Such happens also in the arts and writing communities, where being 'hybrid' is the key to enter. In the same way, 'activism' is replacing 'revolution,' 'hybrid' replaced 'contradiction'—and denies the real relationship with One and the Other. Otherness. Hybrid is sameness. Hybrid tends to become Happy Hybrid. That's why the hybrid category plays so well in 'postmodern' discourse. A capitalistic notion to kill *rupture*. No *negation* anymore! Let settle down with *hybridism*, ok? Don't even talk about *resistance*. But resistance is what really takes place where hybridism is now used. Resistance doesn't mean borders or 'essences' are not transgressed. To the contrary. It means participants enter into a strong relationship. A magnetic field where attraction and repulsion both take place. Resistance is all about magnetism. And the hybrid category is all about denying *resistance*.

**Heriberto Yépez**  
Tijuana, Mexico

# HYPNOPOMPIC

Adj. Of or related to the partially conscious state that precedes complete awakening from sleep. [<Gk. *Hypnos*, sleep + Gk. *Pompe*, a sending away, procession]

We are trying to sleep, *damn, send it away*, the procession, 4 x 8's in the wood frame's high pitched groan, nails ripping from the boards like a ship's timbers torque'd in a gale wind, wall joists split shuddering, drywall cracks, planes descend into the earth, windows twist & pop out. Panes shatter along the whole length, huge diagonal shards sway and jump out, pitch darkness revealed. Summers, Mexico City, lives & wasps flying out from ristras hung on the porch and helicopter shots on TV, smoke columns rise and hang over the city, the National Guard deployed. Fuck! Feet lacerated before you find your shoes, get out—can't see—keys, pants, get the kids.

**Sesshu Foster**

**Los Angeles, California**

# ICONS, ICONOCLASTS

Powerful images that embody or mediate presence of someone absent so that beholding the representation can be an experience of being in the presence of that godlike figure. Icons often provoke worship, uplift, an erotic economy, identification between viewer and purported presence, aura, relation with others in community. As means to advance orthodoxy, icons have provoked varying political and social responses including iconoclasm, ways to disfigure, detourné, or overthrow icons, knock down city-square statues, conventional structures of thought and belief. Like nationalist calls of identity, they may be useful and coalesce during a struggle for liberation but may become untenable in a post-revolutionary moment, slip from ethical core to merely commemorative, frozen in time, no longer workable, populist tee-shirt revolt devolved to docile consumption. Threads: —Traditions include but are not limited to Greek Orthodox from the Byzantium, African, Russian, Buddhist icons, Plumed Serpent, Christ, Madonna & Child, Virgin of Guadalupe, St. Francis of Assisi, Giotto's frescos in Padua's Arena Chapel, modern painter Malevich's "Black Square," postmodernist earthworks artist, Robert Smithson's "Spiral Jetty," contemporary videographer, Bill Viola "The Passions" —Traditions of nonrepresentational design such as Judaism or Islamic as an antidote to icons and idolatry --Political icons such as presidents, kings and queens, tyrants and despots, leaders of mass killings, of liberation movements, in labor movements (Cesar Chavez), and Black liberation struggles (Malcolm X), saints and martyrs, journalists and publishers, underground railroads, Statue of Liberty, nuclear energy or detonated bomb, Gandhi, Subcomandante Marcos of Chiapas uprising, US Civil Rights movement, French, Russian, American, Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, Mexican Revolutions, US Civil War.

**Deborah Meadows**  
**Pasadena, California**

# IDEOLOGY

The three most common meanings of this term are: 1. A body of ideas or concepts about life, the world, and the after-life. 2. A manner of thinking or the content of thoughts characteristic of a person, a group or a social class. 3. The series of beliefs, assertions and goals that form a sociopolitical program. As used by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The German Ideology*, the term refers to the ideas formed by individuals "about their relation to nature, their mutual relations, or their own nature." These authors add: "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness is directly interwoven with the material activity and the material relationships of men; it is the language of actual life. ...If men and their circumstances appear upside down in all ideology as in a camera obscura, this phenomena is caused by their historical life-process, just as the inversion of objects on the retina is caused by their immediate physical life." Importantly, they conclude: "In every epoch the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas, that is, the class that is the ruling material power of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual power. The class having the means of *material* production has also control over the means of intellectual production, so that it also controls, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of *intellectual* production." Ideology is the ordinary result of human intellectual activity not only in pure theory but also in practical consciousness. Ideology is ignorance, illusions, flawed ideas (from believing in Santa Claus to believing that the capitalist system is eternal), but it may also be progressive knowledge. It is present when Foucault formulates his unhistorical, idealistic, and immobilizing theory of power, but it is progressively present when countless individuals struggle to organize working people in trade unions and to help build an autonomous workers party based exclusively on workers demands simultaneously in each country and internationally.

**Frederick Luis Aldama**  
Columbus, Ohio

# INDETERMINACY

**Indeterminacy** has two primary valences: it denotes a paradigm shift in theoretical physics at the heart of coterminous ideological shifts, as well as being a literary-critical trope. German physicist Werner Heisenberg is known as the founder of the modern—and pointedly Modernist—“theory of indeterminacy,” according to which all hypotheses can only effectively aim at probabilities, rather than Cartesian “spontaneous assent.” As a literary-critical trope, however, “indeterminacy” belongs to reception theory, and particularly to Wolfgang Iser’s “theory of aesthetic response” put forth in his 1971 article “Indeterminacy and the Reader’s Response in Prose Fiction,” revised and included in his book-length study *The Act of Reading*. In it, Iser observes that “texts constitute their own objects and do not copy something already in existence.” A decade later, the first major statement by a literary critic devoted to the poetics of indeterminacy appeared as Marjorie Perloff’s *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*. Ironically, literary critics, even and especially post-colonial and cross-cultural critics, have displayed something like spontaneous assent to the term insofar as it advocates an “undecidability” crucial to encounters with “the Other” vis-à-vis class, gender, race, region, and ethnicity. Given the preponderance of the term in practitioners of avant-garde art in USAmerican circles decades before Iser’s work on reception theory (John Cage, etc.), one cannot consolidate the valences of “indeterminacy” without also dehistoricizing USAmerican Modernism and uprooting the radicand of so-called “radical modernism.” This failure to historicize indeterminacy is subsiding in the work of poet-critics such as Édouard Glissant and Juliana Spahr. While it has become synonymous with the theorteically lax trope of “ambiguity,” the notion that “works are constructed by readers” vis-à-vis sheer willful ambiguity on the part of the author seems like “the obverse of an orientalism that presents Western writers actively writing about passive subjects” (Spahr, *Everybody’s Autonomy*).

**Patrick F. Durgin**  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

# INTEGRITY

**Integrity** *n.* The state or condition of being whole. Unity of all the elements of a system or entity. By way of Old English from the Latin *integer*, or whole (as in a whole, not fractional, number). A state of integrity is one in which the components of a system behave in harmony with the intent or nature of the system. Uncorrupted. Incorruptible. A perspective based on integrity requires the observer to take into account all essential elements of the observed entity. Thus, a system to generate electrical energy must be seen to include the wastes that are created and all impacts that result. Integrity means to recognize that which is *integral*, or essential. An oppressive or exploitative system depends upon fragmented consciousness. It encourages a fractured view, such as that reflected by a shattered mirror. This discourages understanding by presenting many disjointed images and preventing a unified view of the whole. An *integral* perspective encompasses all of the parts, including the observer, so that no hands are hidden and truly informed choices can be made. *Integrated* and interconnected approaches to all social problems will be necessary for any of them to achieve solutions. To bring about such outcomes, social movements must embrace disparate dimensions of human experience, including emotional, physical, familial, cultural, psychological, economic, political, ecological, and spiritual. An integrated vision of humanity and the universe cannot create connections among disconnected spheres but rather recognizes their underlying interconnectedness and so can identify the levers that can make them move.

**Ricardo Levins Morales**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

**Intellectual property** is a concept that not only reifies the results qua products of intellectual labor, but also, on the basis of such reification, seeks to secure certain rights over those results, especially those with actual or potential economic value. *Eo ipso*, **IP** is among the most ideologically fraught and sharply contested issues of our time. Under common law, it is an entitlement which permits its holder to control the circulation and use of intangible ideas and expressions *as if* they were tangible property, which, of course, they are not. Familiar forms of **IP** include patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets. Not surprisingly, then, socioeconomic considerations, including the opposition of public and commercial interests, are prominent in debates over the terminological probity and social consequences of the concept. Historically, such debates arise when emergent technologies introduce unanticipated problems into public discourse. Hence, the debate over **IP** “rights” heated up on cue as the transnational, not to say global, implications of advances in information technology and genomic research, to cite but two developments, became apparent. Critics note that **IP** conflates areas of law that share little, if any, common ground. This terminological confusion not only prevents meaningful discussion of the conceptual issues involved, but also, by referring to these laws as “property” laws, biases our thinking about how to treat these issues. Beyond juridical debates about exclusive versus limited rights, or moral versus intellectual rights, public access and use of the results of intellectual labor are at stake.

**Ted Pearson**  
Detroit, Michigan

# ISLAM

What are Islamists? Why is Islamophobia a permissible form of bigotry in the West? Why invoke “the crush of Islam”? How do these current political/social usages relate to the term islam, which means simultaneously surrender, submission, and peace? “Islamists” is a currently acceptable term used by Western media to designate what have previously been known as “Islamic extremists” (still acceptable) or “Islamic fundamentalists” (no longer useful/accurate). It’s used by media spokespeople to distinguish radicalizers and terrorists from Muslims, those who are in a state of al-islam. (The Quran says, “The true way of God is al-islam.” (3:19)) These practitioners of Islam are therefore to be distinguished from the terrorists. How does the word “Islamist” do that? Imagine its equivalents: can I speak of Ariel Sharon as a “Jewist”? Is John Ashcroft a “Christianist”? Would it be appropriate to call Timothy McVeigh – bloodied but unbowed – an “Americanist”? What about the word “Islam” in our ears gives us permission to make a distorted word like “Islamist” out of it? When Westerners try to understand this religion, it is through the legacy of Christian missionary activity, itself an agent of Western colonialism. Thus Muhammed is a belligerent Jesus; the Quran is a somewhat bizarre New Testament; and Mecca is a desert-dweller’s idea of Jerusalem. So what is Islam? How about what it’s not: Christianity’s poor brother. Terroristic fanaticism. A distortion of the Holy Bible. A word to be twisted to any purpose that suits its user.

**Peter O’Leary**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

## "IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY"

When Chou En-Lai was asked about the French Revolution and what he thought of it, he said, "it's too early to say."

*Chou En-Lai*: lifelong CCP functionary; once boho expat operating out of Paris; renowned for his charm and wit; trusted for his patriotic acumen; widely acknowledged as master diplomat during the Mao years; a 'complementarity of mind' (Kissinger often noted, was leery of); successfully surfed the high-tide as well as low-tide of the Cultural Revolution.

*The French Revolution*: a complex clash of various classes, primarily the Peasant, Bourgeois, and Landed Aristocracy (tied to the Monarchy)—legacies: the establishment of wily citizen assemblies, the rule of law, the final separation of church and state; famous for its high-minded passions, emancipatory lexicons, and spectacular violence; progenitor of several subsequent material enthusiasms, including Paris 1871 & Paris 1968.

*"too early to say"*: a historical transposition (as understood from backwards to forwards) referring to the unreleased potential of a once revolutionary class (bourgeois); specific resonance of (and enforcement of) Stalin Period "stages" theory; secondary polemical function as allusion to American Revolution, stages 1 (1776—1783), 2 (1861—1865) and 3 (1954—1965) (stage "4" as bound up in stage "5" as frustrated by stage "3"); implicit intra-socialist world polemic (slash) diktat, as in to "ally with progressive National Bourgeoisies" etc; see also, "Continuous Revolution," "long detour" (aka 'third-worldism'), "long march through the institutions," "melancholic Marxism."

When Chou En-Lai was asked about the French Revolution and what he thought of it, he said, "it's too early to say."

**Rodrigo Toscano**  
Brooklyn, New York

# JIHAD

The word *Jihad* is derived from the root *Jhad* whose primary meaning is to strive or to exert oneself. To understand the spiritual significance of *Jihad* and its wide application to most every aspect of human beings as understood by many Muslims, it is necessary to remember that Islam bases itself upon the idea of establishing equilibrium within the person as well as in the human society where he or she functions and fulfills the goals of their lives. Jihad equilibrium is established to carry out the duty for justice and equality, the greater Jihad being the person who is living according to the theomorphic norm and God given nature.

However, today's media blames Jihad for violence in the Islamic world. Different *Jihad* are evoked which have to do with the environmental conditions, physical suffering and social injustices. Jihad in my view means the reassertion of justice in the external environment of human existence starting with the person himself. The inner Jihad, which a person must carry out continuously within himself for the nobility of the human state, resides in the constant tension between what we appear to be and what we really are. So, it is a way to reach deep inside for goodness and reflect. With inner Jihad, I seek spiritual understanding on nature and belief that the spiritual person dies in this life in order to cease all dreaming, in order to awaken to that reality, which is the origin of all realities.

**Fadumo Adan**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**

# JOURNALISM

A nostalgic term from the last century meaning the presentation of news & analysis through media. From journal, a French-derived term that means literally daybook. In an age of blogs & wikis, journalism as an institutional practice is being transformed from below. In an age in which the current U.S. regime does not recognize either the legitimacy of news or the historic role of the First Amendment, journalism is being attacked from above. The release of ersatz “newscasts,” the presence of mock reporters using phony names to pose friendly questions, the patent hysteria of cable news does more damage over time than the prosecution of reporters for protecting sources. Yet the greatest threat to newspapers comes through changes in advertising. Contemporary papers live off two categories of ads – classifieds and full-page display ads from department stores. The internet is rapidly eroding the role of classifieds; Wal-Mart – which does little advertising due to its “Everyday Low Pricing” strategy – is eliminating the number of viable mass merchants. Gone are the Emporium, Capwells, Hinks, Wanamakers, Hechts, Gimbels and their kin, the very organizations that funded the golden age of print journalism. The number of profitable daily newspapers is dwindling, the remaining independent, locally owned papers even more so, & it is only a matter of time until a major metro is without a daily paper altogether. Local coverage will soon be reduced to Happy Talk News, focusing on over-hyped weather & if-it-bleeds-it-leads “live remotes” from today’s murders. Film at 11:00.

**Ron Silliman**  
**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

# KIKE

n., pl. -kes, [yiddish *kikel*] 1. ellis island, christian papers stamped crosses. dark mustached italian bureaucrats in high blue felt hats black rubber branded us a circle—*kikel*—we whispered. and some dumb mickwopcrackerpollak shortened it like our last name—kike! 2. enclaves, huddled in a stranger's land, rounded synagogue windows, knelt before kings who let us earn a living while we speak to ours in secret tongues. 3. kikes of zion, dirty money diamond lenders—hollywood vegas masonic blueprints—goyium beware! 4. scapegoat, paschal lamb, issac/ishmael- economic woes blamed for plagues on pharaoh. 5. cossacks killed kikes like the spanish romans christians germans italians french russians american roosevelts turning backs and boats around- christians christians christians 6. ethiopia, africa, egypt moses black manna orphaned rivers 7. rounded in boxcar lines waiting deportation extermination salvation from christ killing revisionists 8. families broken—names changed, converted nose job cul-de-sacs 9. systematically sought out sages, blind blues morgan freemen, kabalah madonna idolatry. 10. gelt in our socks hidden like sidecurls and sliced cocks, yarmulkes beneath fresh shtetl lids-assimilate-able 11. kikes are not white 12. full circles, history gorging its tail 13. kikes are not white 14. building walled jerusalems, closed knesset theocracies 15. kikes are not white 16. never again—cycles, recycles, can't say we didn't see it coming 17. remember the covenant 18. come depression—start running

**Kevin Coval**

**Chicago, Illinois**

# LUMPENPROLETARIAT

The surplus population said to exist outside of the productive apparatuses of capitalism. Riff-raff. Bums. Vagabonds. Beggars. Jailbirds. Hooligans. Lazzaroni. Blouson noir. Goldbrickers. Petty criminals. Ne'er-do-wells. Prostitutes. Hobos. Junkies. Rotters. Knaves. Defectives. Scavengers. Thugz. Layabouts. Despised by Marxists. "The 'dangerous class,' the social scum, that passively rotting mass" (Marx-Engels). "The harshest measures of martial law are impotent against outbreaks of the lumpenproletarian sickness" (Luxemburg). Adored by anarchists. "They are 'individual bawlers' who offer no 'guarantee' and have 'nothing to lose,' and so nothing to risk" (Stirner). "That rabble ... which alone is powerful enough today to inaugurate the Social Revolution and bring it to triumph" (Bakunin). Central for mid-to-late twentieth century anti-colonial & national liberation struggles. "At the core of the lumpenproletariat ... the rebellion will find its urban spearhead" (Fanon). "We downed that [Marxist] view when it came to applying it to the black American ghetto-dweller because we were off the block too, Stagolees" (Seale). Recent theoretical debate revolves around whether the term "resists the totalizing and teleological pretensions of the dialectic" (Stallybrass) or leads to "bolstering of identity cut-off from social relations" (Thoburn). "You are not born dangerous-class. You become so the moment you cease to acknowledge the values and constraints of a world from which you have broken free: we are basically referring here to the necessity of wage labour. This *line* is one that very precisely separates the working classes from the dangerous classes" (Becker-Ho).

**Aaron Vidaver**

**Vancouver, Coast Salish Territory**

# MAHADSANID

Mahadsanid is a Somali word that means thank you. It is pronounced like two words mahad and sanid or mahad-sanid. We use this word in every day conversations. This word is important because people should be thankful to God or whoever does something for them and say thank you. This word is also important for non-Somali speakers to learn. Mahadsanid is important now and in the future because there are thousands of Somali people who live here in the United States, especially Minnesota. It also makes you feel good if your neighbor knows one important word like this.

I work at the Science Museum of Minnesota, and I meet people from different backgrounds and sometimes they ask me where I came from. Some of them don't even know where Somalia is on the map. I feel good when one of the customers comes to me and say "mahadsanid." I always ask if they know more than that. I would like people to learn this word because there are many Somali elderly people who don't speak English and use this word when they get helped. I witnessed this situation last week when I was standing at a bus stop waiting for the bus. There were a lot of people standing in line and when the bus came a young white man who was first in line let an old Somali woman go first, and she said to him "mahad-sanid." The man was looking at her in a confused face, so I said to him that she means thank you. Mahadsanid is easy to pronounce, so try to learn it today.

**Amina Haji**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

## **MANNER, MANNERS**

Manner is a consideration of the way we do things. Manners is a consideration of how we treat others. Manner is attention to detail. Manners is attention to relation. Every punctuation mark weighs, counts, sounds: every silence, every word, every act. We are what we are, specifically not statically. And how. All manner of human contact has intimate reverberations; the political is not just personal, it's intimate and public. Manner is choosing to bicycle through the vastly wakeful urban landscape. Manners is calling a cheery salutation to other people on the street. In or out of abundance, manners suggest basic human needs be fulfilled for all humans: prior to and as a priority above any gain, any excess. Manner and manners are modes of thinking. Do you notice that in a single wind the vigorously assenting orange prides of poppy heads move in a concert of discord, of difference? Do you notice the crow's feet at the corners of the eyes of the body that was once a man imprisoned under false pretenses (false politics) or the crow's feet at the corners of the eyes of his captor? Manners don't dictate, they remind. Manners demand that difference, disagreement and even dislike shall not be met with weaponry of any sort. Manners demand a certain manner. See neighbor, kindness, sincerity, integrity, thoughtfulness, conscience, consciousness, citizenship, community. See also hostess with the mostess, generosity, gift economy, extravagant and genuine manifestations of affection without affectation. Do not see obligation, politesse, conformity, mindlessness, rote, rout, domination, empire, imposition. Do not see war.

**Jen Hofer**  
**Los Angeles, California**

# MELANCHOLIA

Formerly limited to its psychological and psychoanalytic meanings, **melancholia** now serves as a critical concept for theorizing two different yet related sets of articulations--that between affect and social and political realms, as seen for instance in translations of loss and mourning into the forms of militancy and protest that characterized AIDS activism in the 1980s, and that between aesthetic and cultural domains and the particular social antagonisms played out within them, as witnessed, for example, in what came to be known as the culture wars. Conjoining desire and politics, "melancholia" challenges older formulations of collective violence and loss as forms of social wounding in need only of redemption and healing. Informing recent scholarship on life amid the ruins and catastrophes of the twentieth century are re-readings of Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928) and his "Theses on History" (1940), along with Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), which argues that the cause of both psychic processes is "the loss of a loved person, or . . . the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (S.E. XIV, 243). This faltering of "some abstraction" is experienced not only by individual subjects, but also by social collectives. Future critical debates on social justice and political transformation will necessarily include discussion of "melancholia" and other affective states.

**Sheila Lloyd**  
Detroit, Michigan

# MICRONESIAN

People from the islands of Micronesia in the Western Pacific. Micronesia is a colonial construction meaning “tiny islands,” over 2,100 of them, including the island nations and territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru, and the Republic of Kiribati. Most islands in Micronesia have maintained colonial ties to the United States with the exception of Nauru and Kiribati, former British colonies. Since 1986, with the signing of compacts of free association with the U.S., citizens of the FSM, Palau and the Marshall Islands have been moving in large numbers to Guam, Hawaii and the U.S. mainland. The influx of these citizens, especially to Guam and Hawaii, has resulted in the common usage of the word “Micronesian” to describe an ethnically diverse group of Pacific Islanders who maintain distinct cultures, languages and identities.

**Emelihter Kihleng**  
**Honolulu, Hawai'i**

# MICROPERFORMANCE

*The becoming-imperceptible of performance.* Microperformance refers to actions that have been disentangled from the representational structures of the traditional performing arts such as performers, audience, stage, specific duration, script, etc. Where traditional performance designates an inside/outside dichotomy of the real versus the imaginary, microperformance only experiments with the real. Microperformance allows no outside and affords no audience – it always requires participants to enact a politics, an ethics, and a sociality squarely within the real. The goal of microperformance is social transformation through the production of affect: to expand and reframe the real, to effect political change, and / or to invent new ways for being together in the world. As such, microperformance takes place in, with and through already existing situations and contexts (a street corner, an office building, a protest march, the dinner table). Microperformers participate fully in the unfolding of the situation, in a more or less spectacular way. Some microperformances can be almost entirely unnoticeable (such as eating an apple at a particular time and place) while others can be designed to attract the attention of everyone in the area. In either case, all microperformances enact the becoming-imperceptible of performance: the way that performative action leaks into every event, every thing and every self that is engaged in the active production of the real. Through microperformance, we see that the so-called dichotomy of Art and Life is thus revealed to be a false construction, an erroneous dualism, a total mistake - for they were always already the same exact thing.

**kanarinka**

**Waltham, Massachusetts**

## MICROPOETRIES

Ephemera, doggerel, fragments, “weird English” (props to Evelyn Ch’ien) graffiti, community *and* individual survival—écriture brute, folk letters, textile patterns; naive lettrism (as well as belletrisme and lettrisme brute); wise oraliture, gnomic thought-bytes and lyrical bullets, clairaudient visitations with a hermeneutic spin—

—the marriage of esotericism and exotericism, banality and exoticism. Embedded in contextual specificity but deracinated --the historic exile, the monadic nomad, the centrifugal community that lets fly its auratic verbal detritus.

These are poeties that fly beneath the radar of accepted poetic practice, that is not practice but object—these are processes rather than object/products. I’ve explained the term elsewhere as originating in Mark Slobin’s term “micromusics” (in *Tenement Songs: Micromusics of the West*) by which he means fragments, lullabies, tunes, extremely localized bits of expressive culture carried from the Eastern Europe pale of settlement to New York in the great migrations 1880-1940; individual shtetlach (villages), families, locales had unique musics that made the journey and morphed, somehow surviving. This is also the resonance of W. E. B. Du Bois’s anecdote in “Of the Sorrow Songs,” wherein he tells of his grandfather’s grandmother bringing a song with her which traveled not only spatially across the Middle Passage but temporally down the generations to have been sung to him when he was a small child. He prints the music, the transliteration of the syllables he doesn’t understand, and from that archaeological fragment constructs a theory of cultural transmission. The presence of fire in resonant landscapes—resonant for those big-eared ones.

**Maria Damon**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

# MIGRANT

“Migrant” should be distinguished from “migration,” which denotes a phenomenon rather than a person. “Migrant” is a more appropriate term for public discourse because all too often the issue is treated solely as an abstract political or social problem rather than a matter pertaining to actual human beings. Whether it’s Afghan asylum seekers stranded on a ship off the coast of Australia, Chinese immigrants found dead in the back of a transport truck, Kurdish refugees stowed away on trains crossing the Channel Tunnel, Mexican workers smuggled by traffickers into Texas, or Haitian “boat people” rescued on the high seas by the U.S. Coast Guard, migrants are an inevitable consequence of the polarized world economy and a troubling contradiction at the heart of liberal ideology. Western countries regard migrants as a problem, a liability, an embarrassment, and so they fight them with laws and regulations in the name of political stability and national “identity.” In this sense, the migrant represents fragmented personhood, incomplete humanity, criminalized “otherness” (as exemplified in the United States by the phrase “illegal alien”). “Migrant”: detained, deported, dead on arrival. “Migrant”: a focus of what will have to be a renewed debate about freedom, egalitarianism, nationalism, citizenship, social justice, cultural diversity, and human rights in the twenty-first century.

**Piotr Gwiazda**  
**Baltimore, Maryland**

# MISERABILISM

It was in an artistic context that the surrealist Andre Breton coined this word in the 1950s essay "Away with Miserabilism." He used it to describe works expressive of little beyond their own fawning need to ingratiate themselves with the totalitarianisms of the larger world. He described not bad art, nor even a miserable excuse for art. It was art systematically accepting and promoting misery and making it harder to refuse to settle for it. Franklin Rosemont, later clarified that miserabilism spoke to freedom struggles generally. Rosemont saw that the production of misery was intertwined at every turn with the reproduction of capitalism. He held that the creation of an "undesirable" society did always immediately threaten elites. Hallmarks of such a society include but far exceed the environmentally poisonous byproducts to commodity production and even transcend the profound inequalities in the consumption of what is made. Even and especially when it does deliver the goods, contemporary capitalism dulls and narrows human desire. There is plenty of "desublimation," to Herbert Marcuse's term, on offer, but to chillingly miserable ends. Erotic life gives way to sex industries far truer to the laws of capital than to the multiplicity of desires. The endlessly varied desire to satisfy hunger now typically ends at McDonald's, where undesirability is supersized. The fostering of addictions to misery, far more than the nurturing of any grand hegemonic projects, is what the ruling classes now do when they rule.

**David Roediger**  
Urbana, Illinois

## **MOB QHOV QUAV**

*Mob Qhov Quav: (Hmong) — pronunciation: (maw-kow-qua)*

A term that is used to mean annoying, simply just being ignorant or being a pain in the butt. In Hmong, Mob Qhov Quav means, “to be annoying or ignorant,” but when the word is translated into English it means, “that you have a pain in your butt.” This is a well known term that is used as a descriptive word. It is used to describe people in general. It could be the way they act or what they do. This word is not usually used by elders. It is a common word that teenagers or middle-aged Hmong people use. I would also say that it is gender based. Women are more likely to use the word than Men. It is a term that is only used during conversations about someone. For example, if you were talking about someone you knew and you saw them doing something that made you paranoid or you thought was annoying, you would then use that term. It is never used in books, articles or magazines. I would say that it isn’t a bad word, it is just a word that best describes a person that is annoying. In some situations you can even use the word to say to your close friend and the most you’ll get out of it would be a laugh. It can humorous if you phrase it correctly. Usually, while saying it, having a smile on your face and laughing at the same time would make the outcome of the word be humorous rather to be judgmental. But turn it the other way around, showing an annoyed expression and then saying it would turn the outcome to, saying someone is annoying or simply just getting on your nerves.

**Annee Cha**

**St. Paul, Minnesota**

# MONOTICAL

Mo-not-ical (Moe – Not – eh-call)

*Adj.* **1.** Characterized by obsession with habits believed to lead one to an unattainable goal, typically financially related: “*He’s monotical*” whispered Cheryl to the children as they watched their father plant pennies in the soil. **2.** Suggested or afflicted with compulsion: *A monotical pursuit of the greenest money ever printed.*

**Idris Goodwin**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

# MOSQUE

In English, the Moslem house of worship is known as “mosque,” a word deriving not from the official language of Islam – Arabic – but from French, mosquee, and Italian, moschea. The faithful refer to it as masjid, which comes from sajada, Arabic drawing upon Arabic. Sajada means “to prostrate oneself.” Compare this to the etymologies of the mosque’s antecedents, “church” and “synagogue.” The paternity of “church” is traced to the Greek kyriakon, which translates unambiguously as “Lord’s house.” “Synagogue” has a similarly Hellenistic pedigree: synagoge, or “assembly.”

Prostration implies servility, an association that conforms to Islam’s fundamental tenet, willing and utter subservience to the Almighty. Islam itself means “submission.”\*

To the uninitiated, the mosque’s most prominent architectural constituents are the domed ceiling and the minarets. For the devout, the supreme feature is the mihrab, a niche in the wall that identifies the direction of Mecca, birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH\*\*). During prayer, offered at five prescribed times each day, Moslems everywhere kneel and bow toward this holiest of cities.

\* In his biography of William S. Burroughs, Ted Morgan recounts a visit to the home of a Moslem friend in Tangier by Burroughs’ colleague, the painter Brion Gysin. When the friend’s father impolitely informed Gysin that prior to him, the only Christians who had ever been in the house were slaves, the worldly and diplomatic artist replied, “But aren’t we all slaves of Allah?”

\*\* Peace Be Upon Him, a phrase used by Moslems when referring to the Prophet.

**Joel Allegretti**  
Fort Lee, New Jersey

# MOTHERFUCKER

*Motherfucker* has come a long way since that classical motherfucker, Oedipus, boned his own mama way back in the day. It has evermore widespread, popularly applied currency. Indeed, the word seems to be going far, given the USA's and the rest of the West's ruthless, expediency-and-profit-driven foreign policies, particularly as those policies are perpetrated against the prayerful and preyed upon people of the so-called Third World. For example, increasingly, in this new century, capitalism in Latin America and China is rightfully becoming known as a *hijoputa* and *ta ma de*, respectively. But *motherfucker* has a mainly domestic North American, indeed, black American history. What word (except for "nigger") is more all-American, more union-made-in-America?? Jefferson, the father of white-light black Sally Hemings' slave children, was one of The Founding Motherfuckers. And in that way, truth and light, the late white supremacist Strom Thurman was a classic motherfucker. Native Americans have long been dissed: displaced, dispossessed, and disposed of, just as unjustly as are today's Palestinians, who seemingly ever shall be, even unto to the end and for evermore by unrightful holy writ of collectively self-proclaimed manifestly destined motherfuckers. The decades of postmodern apartheid were a bitch, but, relatively speaking, the centuries of racebasedslaverypostreconstruction" norightswhichwhitesneedrespect"jimcrowlynchlawbenignneglectracial profiling have been a motherfucker. A racist is a son-of-a-bitch, but an Uncle Tom, or Uncle Juan, or Uncle Han is a motherfucker. Diabetes is fucked up but A.I.D.S. is a motherfucker. Yet in pop parlance you are either a good motherfucker or a bad motherfucker. And some say good loving's thorough intimacy is a *b-a-d* motherfucker. So it would seem a bad motherfucker is not necessarily a rotten motherfucker. Because though it used to be "bad motherfucker" was a redundancy, now it often means being a good motherfucker. Clearly, the word *motherfucker* is a motherfucker!

**Everett Hoagland**  
New Bedford, Massachusetts

# MUNDANE

No one wants to be mundane anymore. Mundane: conventional, dull-as-dishwater, humdrum, lowly, mediocre, trite, banal; *how mundane, it can't be said with anything other than a sneer or an air of resignation. Yet we resign ourselves to the world, for mundane began its linguistic life as mundus, the world, which still spins on its axis mundi. It is the antonym of celestial and ethereal, the synonym of carnal, temporal, and worldly; but it holds these values at a time when no one wants to be either temporal or worldly (though carnal still seems to be desirable.)*

Once upon a time, to be mundane was to be mighty indeed. The Vendanta Sutras tell of the world's creation from a mundane egg: the world housed within an ovoid of potential, a universe in the palm of a hand. How positively Edenic, and note that mundane can still substitute for garden variety.

So why fear the earth beneath our feet? Perhaps it lies in mundane's temporal connotation, since it translates for all of us into dreaded mortality. Or perhaps it's just that we don't want to look down, the better to imagine ourselves anywhere but here. We tell each other to let go, thinking ourselves like hot air balloons, but instead why not try truly letting go, the better to drop to the ground?

**Jennifer Uhlich**  
**Alameda, California**

## **NATIONAL OPPRESSION**

The oppression of entire nations which includes colonialization (direct rule of a people by another, external people); or more commonly in the modern era of post-colonial struggle, imperialist subjugation (national liberation, or the freeing of colonized or semi-colonized peoples from both political direct rule and economic indirect rule). Oppressed nations can exist within the boundaries of current nation-states (a by-product of colonialism). Some contend that an oppressed Black nation or oppressed Chicano nation exists within the borders of the U.S.A. Clearly, Hawaii was a constitutional monarchy subjugated by the U.S.A. and completely annexed as its 50<sup>th</sup> state in 1959 by the U.S.A. The peoples of oppressed nations are oppressed nationalities (often in the U.S. referred to as "people of color.") National oppression encompasses racism, discrimination, inequality, disenfranchisement, and is marked by conquest, subjugation and annexation of land territory. The reducing of the struggle of oppressed nationalities in the U.S. to be "anti-racism" fails to recognize the land aspect of such struggles and thereby diminishes, restricts and reduces such struggles to one of integration into the imperialist nation-state.

**Fred Ho**

**Brooklyn, New York**

# NATURE

Using Raymond Williams' third definition of nature; "nature as the material world itself, often separate from human society," and asking "how are love, power and science intertwined in the construction (definition) of nature" (Donna Harraway)?

Wednesday, March 16, 2005, US Senate oks drilling in The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. So, it is, even now, a physical site, material, and we are in it. Partly place and partly human conception of place, radically evolving definitions include; metaphorical heavyweights good & evil (see wilderness, "out of" or "into"), nature as victim or perpetrator (depending on historical advantage), nature as utility cell (see raw materials, see terrorism, see war on), nature as vehicle for human transcendence (see ritual, sport hunting, nature poetry), nature as object of erotic and intellectual desire (see inappropriate love object, see colonialism, see eco-tourism), nature as inexhaustible resource (see divine entitlement, spirituality), nature as cultivation/mutation (see western evolution of biotechnology, see biomimicry, anthropocentrism, Monsanto), nature as lifestyle (see New Age, see office fountain, Subaru), nature as cause (see "spotted owl!" vs. "you can't wipe your ass with a spotted owl," see "we are all greens now!" (Mike Davis)), nature as woman (see essence, misogyny, virgin forest, slash and burn), nature as native (see authentic, see "get back to"), nature as park (see democratic ideal), petting zoo, fragrance, and increasingly, nature as cyborg, (web) host, soundscape, screen-saver, oxygen bar, simulation (see cloning extinct species to inhabit what?), virtual nature and nature as data (see periodic table, genome project, google.com).

**Yedda Morrison**  
**Montreal, Quebec**

# NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

. . . versus “sprawl plan.” Versus existing codes and zones, versus existing coders and zoners. Versus their Crush Mom N’Pop© in the demolish the art moderne corner store IT IS PARKING TIME. Versus the take the auto up the pike. Versus the down the valley into heavenly asphalted nine-hundred parking spot piece of BRING THE CARS and it’s a Ron English painting: Volvo to Valu, Windstar to WalMart WE WILL BE EVERYWHERE WE ARE NOT : Sprawl Plan. Fuel Plan. Extended Warranty Tires Plan GasGasGas GoGoGo Plan versus mixed-use housing, versus pedestrian-friendly areas. Versus walk, don’t drive; versus Live amongst people who look different than you! Versus Black Rock, Buffalo, NY: a New Hampshire native, I’ve come to have a stake in this town because you see Mayor Anthony Masiello wants to build a Big Fancy Bridge at the expense of a neighborhood. BRING THE CARS over the bridge and more, come ye guzzlers. Fat and stupid and beaten down by a wretched world we are aware we hate, but then comes the inaction. Your home versus not when there’s something better on the way. Neighborhood Plan versus Sprawl Plan. Build up versus beat down the cities. Build up versus beat down the cities. Build versus beat down Build versus beat down Build beat Build beat build build beat beat Keep building WalMarts, Mr. H. Lee Scott Jr., Keep building suburbs Beat down Kill off those fucking grubby cities.

**Ethan Paquin**  
**Buffalo, New York**

# NEOLIBERALISM

**Neoliberalism** is, with apologies to Horkheimer and Adorno, the (liberal) myth of the market turned radical. The market, Marx mocks in *Capital*, is the Eden of liberalism, a paradisiacal space where free individuals driven by their selfishness interact with their own interest in mind and, in so doing, benefit all (1977, p. 280). Today, neoliberalism names the will to make this paradisiacal space the organizing principle of all of society, a will to create what Bourdieu (1998) calls ‘a utopia of endless exploitation’ the world over. The manifestations of this will are distressing. The market-rationality of neoliberalism calls for ‘the withdrawal of the state’ in the form of reduced public spending in social programs, privatization of state-owned enterprises and services, the abolition of welfare, labor and environmental protections, and the deregulation of capital mobility. But the trope of withdrawal hides a more fundamental shift in the discourse of government. Whereas liberalism, with its foundational principles of *laissez-faire* and individual freedom, places the economy and the sovereign subject as external limits to state action, neoliberalism establishes the market as *the* organizing and behavioral principle of both government and society (see Lemke, 2001). Correspondingly, the schemata and criteria of economic decisions are brought into policy realms that have little or nothing to do with (capitalist) economic rationality. In this context, the government function is to enable market-like spaces of social interaction. All the while we are continually compelled, by direct government intervention, to behave as neoliberal subjects – to take on the *dramatis persona* of that selfish *homo oeconomicus* of the liberal Eden in every aspect of our lives.

**Rafael Ortiz**  
**San Juan, Puerto Rico**

# NORTH

Facts beyond the set of destinations. In terms of direction, the opposite of south; conventionally mapped as superior.

In terms of black subjectivity, north is most contradictory among directions: race (beyond destination) is multiple, ambiguous, and anecdotal, not storied. Yet north is (and has been) the racial figure for an open gate or series. If south is (or can be) "where the Southern cross the Yellow Dog" (W. C. Handy), north needs music.

The fact of great migration, the trope north.

Belligerently, "our northern neighbor." Ishmael Reed: "He preferred Canada to slavery, whether Canada was exile, death, art, liberation, or a woman." Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*: "nothing in the north but the past and not much of that either..." Steve McCaffery: "North of intention."

In terms of vernacular and measure north is opaque, unfamiliar (not "back north," e.g.), final and open at once.

**C. S. Giscombe**  
**State College, Pennsylvania**

# OBJECT

Object—noun and verb, transitive and intransitive from the Latin to throw in the way, prevent, hinder: ob—in the way; jacere—throw.

n. it's the stuff you toss out; it's the material you keep; it's the thing you use; it's the item on your shelf; it's what gets in the way—an obstacle and obstruction; it's something that excites the senses, makes a spectacle, elicits desire; It's the product you fashion for yourself or others; it's the goal you seek; it's the purpose of your life, or at least your thoughts; it's the end of your efforts; it's the constituent of your investigations; it's the element of your research; it's what you ponder or want; it's where your sentences are heading, directly or indirectly.

v. trans. it's to oppose, refuse, reject, interrupt, disrupt, dispute, expose, just say no, loudly in words or through gestures or actions.

v. intr. it's the process by which you exclaim your discontent, your disgust, your distaste, your disapproval; to be against.

In our era of identities, when claiming subjectivity is a political act, the lowly object has suffered. An object lacks authority; it endures disregard. But why? It's a value of labor, issuing from someone's hands, someone's thoughts. It enters into circulation with other objects, other ideas, and others who use or abuse it. The object is always a work of art. It is the form of protest still left to us: the raised voice, the defiant stance. No, I said, No, No, I won't, No.

**Paula Rabinowitz**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

# OU'WASH

Not in the dictionary. No, he's covert. He is everywhere. He is Evil. E-ville. EVUL. EVL. The DE-VILLE. Beelzebub. Bub for short. Bubby. Sometimes he wears the costume of a lamb. He stirs up war. He flies a kite. Rides with insurgents. Gathers scalps on a battle field. He has a bone yard all his own. He has a tight grip cutting off blood to the fingers. He is a cloud coming over the earth. He rides a camel. A jet. The military vehicles and car bombs are his. Ou'Wash lays traps. He burns wholly. Promotes murder, public beheadings, regimes of terror. He counts his numbers. He sends Delusion. Behemoth by land. Leviathan by sea. He pushes buttons. He is Dictator. He squeezed shut the hearts of Indian children in boarding schools. He is a crippling rage. No one means anything to Ou'Wash. He sucks dry. He cuts out paper doll clothes of camouflage uniforms. The lions run from him. The ravens gather. He is a wild goat. A landing in Roswell. He wears the costume of a doughboy on a table— Dead, computer-screen eyes are his. He is a peacock. The great Dragon cast out of Revelation 12:9. That old serpent called, the dEVIL, and Satan. Horned and pitchforked. He fell in his space ship to the earth and his angels with him. He slumps around nations to find whom he can Deceive. Destroy. He moves into our heads. The Dominion of war fields is his.

**Diane Glancy**  
**Kansas City, Missouri**

# PERFORMANCE, PERFORM

n. 1) Live art. 2) Movement that is not dance. 3) Acting that is not theatre. 4) Visual art that moves. 5) The presentation of (as opposed to the recordings of) music. 6) The act of making objects, art, food, love, money, etc. 7) Any form of living. 8) All acts presented in the presence of others or the self. 9) Provocation. 10) Entertainment; a show.

v. 1) To function, as in "Did the stock/senator/police review committee *perform* well?" 2) To entertain, as in "Perform for me." 3) To provoke, as in "The censors are ready in case you really *perform*." 4) (informal, especially in African-American communities) To behave badly, as in "Don't *perform*; act like you have some sense."

**Rosamond S. King**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

# PHONEME DEATH

New science says we humans are unable, ever, to really see anyone whose face differs beyond a certain limit from the original visual ingredients – templates that take shape in relation to faces that come close to us in the first weeks of life – of our perceptions. Same applies to phoneme death. The facts are there. Our ability to hear and distinguish upwards of 840 sounds at birth drops down to between 20 and 40 distinct sounds by six months of age. The voices and faces that come near us in early life reinforce patterns, destroy others, and author the basic premises of sight and sound into our lives. Apparently, the Japanese and Xhosa languages lead the world with an average of around 43 durable phonemes. No matter how many languages we learn, before we know a word in any of them, we undergo untold hemorrhages in our auditory capacity. These losses translate themselves into the muscles of our mouths. These losses behind our eyes encode themselves in everything we see. Studies show the brain doesn't trust this blindness. It writes suspicion into the way the tone of someone's voice plays silence in our ears. Yet, the mysteries have an allure. Somewhere our psyche knows it has been islanded off, at some level, beyond the reach in sight or sound, of any visitor who may be coming down the road. Maybe this is where poems come from? From the urge to enter a pre-hemorrhage zone where, we must sense from somewhere, our human, pre-individual capacity to see, to hear, to trust, remains wider than this narrow thing we've become. In a poem, a kind of music happens and we see ourselves, somehow, through the blindness of others.

**Ed Pavlic**  
**Schenectady, New York**

# PRIVILE GIVER

(get off the gravy train [it's all gravy])

*>read aloud for full effect<*

work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work  
to eat to work to eat to work to eat turkey turkey turkey turkey  
{breath} work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work to eat  
to work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work  
to eat to work to eat turkey turkey turkey {breath} work to eat to  
work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work to eat to work to  
eat to

Wok to eat to work to eat work to eat to work to eat to work to  
eat turkey turkey work to eat Out work to eat out work to eat out  
we're turkeyed out work to eat out work to eat out we're turkeyed  
out work to eat out work to eat out we're turkeyed out eat to  
workout need to workout eat to workout eat to workout need to  
workout eat to workout eat power bars to workout eat to work-  
out eat to workout need to workout eat to workout to eat Out to  
workout to eat out to workout to eat out to workout to eat out to  
workout to eat out honey to workout to eat out to workout to eat  
out to workout to eat out to workout to eat out Workout Eat out  
workout eat out workout eat out workout eat out workout eat out  
we're Counting Down workout eat out workout eat out workout  
eat out we're Counting Calories workout eat out workout eat out  
workout eat out workout eat out workout eat out workout eat  
OUTWORK eat outwork eat outwork eat outwork eat AT work  
eat outwork eat At work We're Counting SECONDS Work out eat  
out work out eat out work out eat out work out eat out we're  
Eating Seconds workout eat out workout eat out workout eat out  
workout eat out workout eat out workout eatoutworkouteatout-  
workouteatoutworkouteatoutworkouteatoutworkout{lose breath:  
hunch over}{present palm & lick; pull up sleeve, flex bicep and  
bite} TASTE the difference.

**Denni Somera**  
**Oakland, California**

# PROPAGANDA

We need to talk.

IT HAS GOTTEN HARD to say [DYNAMITE] anything. I can neither slit throats nor slip in the vague submission of I'm OK You're OK. WHO IS GOOD & what limp truce remaindered?

TIMES OF THE PEOPLE & the people imprint. Graph delusion & myth, owing breath to an evened ecosystem, pathos of decline. Points in decline. Looks at the girl & how she is the earth, becoming woman, landing girth.

I saw houses of water in which things got new names to ~~market~~. The bed on the door, the ceiling hanging from the linen... It would be the end of air if not for grounding the axiom in soil-oxygen, proportion consumer, upper limit: shallow wading (waiting) wishful thinking in fair use, the ceremonies, blankets – honored & onward.

The kiss that tried & the lipstick trace: spektral paralysé.

Counter cult also a cult. Apocatastasis. The pedagogic put differently, to compass off the map, ships, masts, to embrace a sort of vertigo, until the entire past is present, & present, present. Reckoned & displaced rather than misplaced & neglected.

Even in labcoats, children will smile. Propaganda is not dogma. "This is not a pipe" / line / "Vote [FOR WHAT] or die"? For what?

Consensus what I mean.

**Carol Mirakove**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

# RACE

The study of race has historically denoted a set of wide ranging analyses of freedom and power. The breadth of those analyses has much to do with the broad application of racial difference, that is, its extension into social, corporeal, epistemological and subject formations. With regard to economic and political formations, race has shaped the meaning and profile of citizenship and labor. In relation to corporeality, race has rendered the body into a text upon which the histories of racial differentiation, exclusion, and violence are inscribed. Analyzed in terms of subjectivity, race names both the constitution of identity as unified and whole and the deconstitution of identity through heterogeneities of race and ethnicity. With respect to epistemology, race has shaped modernity's reflective technologies, technologies that construct both self and other. As such, race expresses a founding paradox of modernity, one in which freedom is constituted as the mode of subjection under morality. The critique of race as such necessarily calls for an analysis of critical formations that have been enacted in the name of freedom and their engagement with regimes of morality and processes of unfreedom. We may divide the critique of race within two genealogies. One is denoted through movements of national liberation and civil rights that have historically responded to racist regimes within colonial and advanced liberal states by calling for modes of freedom. But they have typically done so without interrogating how those modes were constituted through modes of gender and sexual regulations. Another genealogy is the one represented by intersectional analyses of race, historically promoted by women of color feminism. As women of color feminism has pointed out the gender and sexual limitations of revolutionary and cultural nationalism, women of color feminism has suggested the regulatory procedures of freedom and the movements that have tried to attain it.

**Roderick Ferguson**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

# REAL

The real is all that there is and is not and all we really have. Vladimir Nabokov wrote that the word “reality” should always appear within quotation marks, and this seems to be a wise injunction. As we continue to question the nature of what we hold to be true and real after the cataclysms of the preceding century with its rise of post-Platonic findings and beliefs – really a throwback to pre-Socratic philosophy (pace Hegel, Einstein, Derrida et al.) – the word “real” comes to have great significance at this time as we are nudging our way into a new century, not to mention a new millennium. Relativism guides much of our moral, social, and political thinking and actions. We continue to question authority, absolutism, infallibility, and even in certain branches of the sciences, the field of nutrition coming to mind, it seems that one generation of scientific and scholarly thinking replaces the next almost entirely and very quickly at that. For more careful observers this demotion and replacement of previous received opinion or knowledge occurs more quickly than a generation; in fact, it seems to happen several times within a generation. Given the shifting sands of even scientific law (our secular dogma), how does one then discern and define what is real. The preceding century also produced the easy ability to manipulate those instruments for measuring authenticity and reality: eyewitness testimony, physical evidence, forensic evidence, the photograph, film, audio recording, and video recording, so that even images that have not been manipulated in any way may still be considered suspect. Yes, this may be an eternal question, but there really is a real and a reality, if only we can discern the real within the context of its reality.

**John J. Trause**  
**Wood-Ridge, New Jersey**

# RED

Beginning in 2000, this color, once associated with leftist movements, was subjected by media operatives to a complete reversal of its erstwhile subversive coding. “Red” designated states whose voting patterns and alleged “cultural values” marked them as right-wing, in contrast to “blue” states, identified as “liberal.” Exemplifying the power of media-fueled Newspeak, this semantic makeover quickly gained currency and acceptance. Historically, however, reclaiming “red” for radicalism is no simple matter. There are the red cockade of the sans-culottes, the red flag brandished as an insurgent symbol of the blood of the working class, and the red card of IWW militants, but also the Red bureaucracy of which Bakunin warned: a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. Such was the Russian Revolution’s outcome: red became the color of the terror carried out initially against the revolution’s enemies and subsequently against revolutionaries. Stalinism, terror triumphant, was characterized as Red Fascism by disillusioned leftists. Post-revolutionary China claimed the entire East was red, yet red also became a floating signifier of government orthodoxy; dissenters were accused of waving the red flag to oppose the red flag. For capitalists, Red scares, Red squads, and Red-baiting were used to contain and repress all forms of radicalism. And following the collapse of bureaucratic Communism, wars in Yugoslavia saw the emergence of red-brown coalitions of fascists and Communists perpetrating massacres and concentration camps. Paul Robeson’s gibe at the U.S. government’s inability to tolerate his being both Black and Red provides further dimension. Conspicuously absent from the red-blue bifurcation of the U.S. polity is that other color of the national flag: white, a sign of a continuing racial domination meant to be ignored or accepted, never challenged. Here, Jean-Jacques Dessalines’ victorious action upon Haiti’s independence stands out: slashing the white stripe from the French tricolor, he united red and blue under a new social and symbolic order.

**Christopher Winks**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

# RENDITION, EXTRAORDINARY

**“Brutalization doesn’t work. We know that. Besides, you lose your soul.”**  
— former F.B.I. agent Dan Coleman, as quoted by Jane Mayer

Like no version of any song you’ve ever heard, nor any translation of any text, nor any offering of thanks; like no delivery of any verdict in any court in the land; part of the “New Paradigm” of international (absence of) law, quaintly labeled “rendition,” is truly *extraordinary*. What insidious mind of the Bush administration ransacked his or her lexicon to uncover this least-known use of the word — and why? Could it be a perverse delight in the idea of “rendering” as a boiling down? For the word is used by the United States government to name the practice of secretly transporting suspected “enemy combatants” to foreign countries for purposes of extracting, by torture, confessions of terrorism and revelations of terrorist schemes. Thus does our present “leadership” seek to circumvent international law against torture. Jane Mayer reported in her exhaustive New Yorker article of February 2, 2005, entitled “Outsourcing Torture,” that “the fiercest internal resistance to this thinking has come from people who have been directly involved in interrogation, including veteran F.B.I and C.I.A agents ... [who] doubt the effectiveness of physical coercion as a means of extracting reliable information.” The now-famous case of the rendition of Canadian citizen Maher Arar, arrested at Kennedy Airport in September 2002 reveals the perversity. He was battered and humiliated into confessing to crimes he did not commit, saying later that “You just give up. You become like an animal.” He was released 13 months later without charge, but the sadists had satisfied their lust.

**David Landrey**  
**Buffalo, New York**

# RIGHTS

A euphemism used in control societies to name or promote a behavior that is acceptable to the State; what has been enforced to happen “freely.” Rights create an illusion in those who exercise them. It is believed that the rights that the State grants can be used against it. Rights are carefully crafted and sold so the people will “benefit” from them, but the final beneficiary is the State, who gets the surplus of the struggling forces that cede and resist those rights. In the right to free speech the State makes sure that everything maintains itself in just speech, and any effective action is punished as an act of violence, a violation of human rights. Here individuals make themselves their own coercive force, watching each other for the compliance of their precious rights. In exercising the right to live in a safe environment all power is given to the State, even to dictate a siege. Imprisoned in their own homes, searched offensively in their properties and bodies, citizens are proud to make use of their right. The right to information; information flows as never before, but the flow is never bi-directional. The information that floats among the public is third class information constructed to conceal other information. And the information that the public generates to the State gets there as is. The more transparent the individual makes itself to the State, the blurrier the State makes itself to the individual. Ours will not be a century of control through weapons but of control through language. Wars are going to be words.

**Mayra Luna**  
**Tijuana, Mexico**

# SECURITY

(suh-kyur-uh-tee) *n., pl.* –ties. **1.** Freedom from risk or danger...especially for capitalist class in imperialist centers: “*Security requires the use of force against dissenting individuals and groups when co-optation and containment fail.*” See also austerity measures, de-skilling, and racial stratification of laboring class. **2.** *Obsolete.* General freedom from doubt, anxiety or fear; confidence. **3.** Anything that assures safety of capitalist investments, as in one. **a.** Imprisonment of large numbers of domestic population. **b.** Harassment, arrest or murder of trade union leaders in “free” trade zones. **c.** Military support of oppressive regimes. See Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Israel, Nigeria, Colombia, Indonesia. **d.** Control of media through private ownership, see also CIA and Cold War culture. **e.** Passage of opportunistic emergency measures to curb democratic participation in domestic and global affairs. See Fast Track and PATRIOT Act. **f.** Organizations which help make this possible or desirable. See Democratic Leadership Council, Carlyle Group, and major Hollywood studios. **4.** Terror; insecurity. **5.** *Aesthetics.* **a.** The level to which poetic ellipticality is encouraged or required. **b.** Prevention of unauthorized access to the innovative; point beyond which the extra-aesthetic may not pass. **6.** *Incr. obsolete.* Social Security. New Deal government program whose mission was to insure well-being of working people upon retirement or disability. **7.** Global security. **a.** Degree to which unequal distribution of wealth can be maintained before war, international aggression, or acts of terror occur. **b.** Term for national or international military forces used to quell such events. **c.** Any force whatsoever used against Palestinians or Iraqis. **8.** That which serves to protect the ass of the President, especially in cases of gross abuse of power. See Supreme Court, and Dad. See also Enron, Halliburton, and U.S. Department of Defense.

**Laura Elrick**  
**Brooklyn, New York**

## SHOPPING

I know there's no such thing as a best crock-pot. It's way more than I ever spent on sunglasses, but, hey, I'm not like a kid anymore. If they've got cinnabon, we usually stop there. I hate when the catalogue arrives and I have to pull out the ol' credit card. I don't understand the people complaining about the clothes being teenybopper; they have a totally different target market. Their clothes always look great on me in the store, but when I get home it's a different story altogether. I had to exchange a visor—apparently my head is not a small/medium. These are our four favorite spots in this mall for designer labels. They do need to step up their selection, even though there is a lot in the store I really like. I didn't even *want* those jeans that I bought; I bought them just because. I needed some color in my life so I got a pink leather hobo bag. When you're pre-teen and you want basic clothes, you go to Old Navy; high school or college comes around and you graduate to the Gap; get a real job and you're forced to step up to Banana Republic.

**Robert Fitterman**  
New York, New York

## SLUMMING

Some say “what work means, what means work.” Others are too cool for that; they have your last year’s clothes that your mother didn’t want you to wear anymore cuz she got you something bright and new at Kmart. Lucy Lippard says “the working class girl has to drop into frayed jeans to make it into the art middle class.” You show up in the same vintage rags cuz you loved Cyndi Lauper in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They can still tell you don’t belong. What gives? Their CEO record company dad’s apartment for them on St. Mark’s? Just like Beck. What a brat. Maybe what gives is their “loft” in Bushwick’s burning blocks. “How cool is that,” they say. I never recovered from the slummer who suggested I wasn’t working hard on my thesis, cuz she never saw me in the library, me working three jobs and going to some b-rated ivy league with the prepped schooled. In default. Always will be cuz I think education should be free. I tried re-listening to my Metallica records to make it right, and James Hetfield’s wailing and the immense working classness of the music still didn’t help me. Don’t get me started on punk. One of the Ramones was a Republican and he was working class, too. There’s the trouble. Some days things don’t make any sense. Don’t even try it with me. I don’t want to see your trucker hat. James Hetfield’s dad was really a trucker, so give it up.

**Stephanie Gray**  
**Flushing, New York**

## SOCIAL PRACTICE

Poetry is neither an end in itself, nor a means to some external end. It's a human activity enmeshed with human existence; as James Scully names it, a *social practice*. Written where, when, how, by, for and to whomever, poetry dwells in a web of other social practices historically weighted with enormous imbalances of social power. To say this is not to deny the necessity for poetry as an art whose tangible medium is language.

It's a commonplace to say that in a society fraught with official lying, hyperbolic urgings to consume, contrived obsolescence of words (along with things and the people who produce them) poets must "recover" or "subvert" or "re-invent" language. Poetic language may thus get implicitly defined as autonomous terrain apart from the ripped-off or colonized languages of daily life.

Yet the imagination—the capacity to feel, see, what we aren't supposed to feel and see, find expressive forms where we're supposed to shut up—has meant survival and resistance, for poets and numberless others: incarcerated, under military or colonial occupation, in concentration camps, at grinding labor, suffering bleak and traumatic circumstances of many kinds. We may view the imagination as a kind of gated, landscaped neighborhood—or as a river, sometimes clogged and polluted, carrying many kinds of traffic including pollen and contraband, but in movement: the always-regenerating impulse toward an always-beginning future.

\*excerpted from the introduction to James Scully's *Line Break: Poetry as Social Practice* (West End Press, 2005).

**Adrienne Rich**  
**Santa Cruz, California**

# SPECTACLE

The spectacle is the other side of money. The spectacle is the money which one only looks at. The spectacle is *capital* to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image. But the spectacle is not identifiable with mere gazing, even combined with hearing. The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images. The spectacle is *affirmation* of appearance and affirmation of all human life, namely social life, as mere appearance. The spectacle is nothing more than an image of happy unification surrounded by desolation and fear at the tranquil center of misery. The spectacle is the map of this new world, a map which covers precisely its territory. The spectacle is the present model of socially dominant life. The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the *total occupation* of social life. The spectacle is ideology par excellence. The spectacle is materially "the expression of the separation and estrangement between man and man." The spectacle is nothing more than the common language of this separation. The spectacle is the existing order's uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue. The spectacle is a permanent opium war which aims to make people identify goods with commodities and satisfaction with survival that increases according to its own laws. The spectacle is the nightmare of imprisoned modern society which ultimately expresses nothing more than its desire to sleep. The spectacle is the guardian of sleep. The spectacle is an apologetic catalogue. The spectacle is everywhere. The spectacle is real.

**Craig Dworkin**  
Salt Lake City, Utah

# SPIN

—examples as defining moments—

. . . (of spiders, silkworms, etc.) to produce (a thread, cobweb, gossamer, silk, etc.) by extracting from the body a long, slender filament of natural, viscous matter that hardens in the air . . . [Websters]

tailspin

to tell a story

washer cycle

baton, tutu, top, SUV,—

In media jargon: how partisans ruthlessly manipulate facts and data with rhetoric, hearsay and fabrication. (See *Rove* and *fact*.)

See *hoax*.

See *campaign*.

Form of music created by manually manipulating records forwards and backwards on a record player. See *rap*.

**Kimiko Hahn**

**Brooklyn, New York**

# STANDARD ENGLISH

The syntactic, grammatical, and lexical form of written English enforced as the norm. Non-Standard uses of English are stigmatized as “errors” and as signs of failed or incomplete enculturation or socialization. The ideology of Standard English maintains an idea of a pure, transcendent, acontextual correct English in denial of the varieties of English as a global language and the realities of everyday speaking and writing. In the English-speaking settler colonies the failure to reproduce Standard English is also taken as a sign of the failure of a migrant or indigenous person to integrate into the dominant white European culture. Educational institutions demand that teachers apprehend, detain, and “correct” students on the basis of their ability to reproduce Standard English, putting teachers in the role of language cop and border guard. In return, English language, literature, and composition prerequisites for other programs justify the institutional space English departments occupy, and return to them the sense of moral burden which feminist, queer, Marxist, and postcolonial critiques had threatened to relieve. It is often argued that “students [need] access to those standard forms of the language linked to social and economic prestige” (Pennycook) but writing that aspires to “social and economic prestige” would need to conform to the dialect of the socially and economically prestigious, a dialect that may be antagonistic to the representational requirements of most users of English.

**Reg Johanson**  
**Vancouver, Coast Salish Territory**

# SUPPLY

Etymology: Middle English *supplien*, from Middle French *soupleier*, from Latin *supplere* to fill up, supplement, supply, from *sub-* up + *plere* to fill—more at SUB-, FULL

**1** : to add as a supplement. **2 a** : to provide for : **SATISFY** <laws by which the emotional wants of middle-and upper-class white women are *supplied*.> **b** : to make available for use : **PROVIDE** <*supplied* the necessary child> **c** : to satisfy the needs or wishes of **d** : to furnish (organs, tissues, or cells) with a vital element (as blood or nerve fibers)

**3** : to substitute for another in; *specifically* : to serve as a supply in (a church-funded agency's adoption program) **4** : the quantity or amount (as of a commodity) needed or available <Healthy white American infants are in short *supply*> **d** : **PROVISIONS, STORES**—usually used in plural and impersonal. <America has large *supplies* of black babies because those people keep having too many kids and can't take care of them> **5** : the act or process of filling a want or need <engaged in the *supply* of children to the adoption industry> **6** : the quantities of goods or services offered for sale at a particular time or at various prices, depending upon citizenship and race of the child, and the nature of the supplier, whether public or private. **7** : something that maintains or constitutes a supply, such as poverty, corruption, human traffickers, orphanages, and adoption agencies. <adoption of children is subject to market forces of *supply and demand*> **RELATED WORD: sup·ply·side:** of, relating to, or being an economic theory that reduction of tax rates encourages more earnings, savings, and investment and thereby expands economic activity and the total taxable national income. < IRS Publication 968: Tax Benefits for Adoption. For 2004, U.S. citizens may be able to claim a credit of up to \$10,390 and also exclude up to \$10,390 from their income. Qualifying adoption expenses are adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, and traveling expenses including meals and lodging while away from home>.

Jane Jeong Trenka, Seoul, South Korea, and  
Sun Yung Shin, Minneapolis, Minnesota

# SURREALISM

Surrealism has been misrepresented as a literary and artistic style that emphasizes bizarre and nonsensical elements. But the word comes from the French *surréal* ("super-real"), a term indicative of attempts to access deeper, richer realities and a radical dissent from the narrow, prejudicial conventions of thought, language, and image that constitute reality in the late capitalist nation-state. Poet André Breton described surrealism in 1924 as "the actual functioning of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason and outside all conscious aesthetic or moral considerations"; twenty years later, Martinican Suzanne Roussi Césaire called it "a total activity capable of liberating humankind by revealing the unconscious, an activity that will help free the peoples of the world as it illuminates the blind myths that have led them up until now." Surrealists believe that the dominant patterns of social control draw their strength from fear-mongering obscurantism, vulgar materialism, instrumental reason, and the debased and stale psychosocial routines that are produced by the daily violence and coercion inherent in capitalist civilization. Through the systematic negation and supersession of those debased and cretinizing social practices that have long conspired to disenchant daily life (wage-labor, private property, religion, patriotism, white supremacy, and patriarchal family values), surrealists seek to trigger collective crises of consciousness and advance new concepts of freedom. Surrealist investigations, research and interventions seek to sabotage the repressive, culturally-enforced barriers that divide perception from representation and creative expression from lived experience, conditions that Brazilian surrealist Ivanir Vincente de Oliveira aptly characterized in 1996 as "the hegemony of the habitual." Surrealists insist that human emancipation is impossible so long as this hegemonic system reins.

**Don LaCoss**  
**LaCrosse, Wisconsin**

# SURREGIONALISM

(n): The marriage of surrealism and bioregionalism; the notion that culture, while growing bioregionally, has roots deep in the earth and therefore may appear anywhere on earth in a variety of congruent forms and secret twins; (v): what a surregion does; to surregion; to go surregional— the region *surregions*; surregionalize (v) to joy up and rebel, to smilingly revolt (“*all the regions do smilingly revolt*”; Shakespeare); to *surregionalize* the world, to re-awaken the world to its natural state, as opposed to its nation-state. Surregionalist (n.): an adherent of surregionalism; rebellious, in a surregional way; surregionalist, surregionalistic (adj.) revellious (aka, that which joys up and rises against monotony, conformity and industry).

**Dennis Formento**  
**Slidell, Louisiana**

# SYPHILIZATION

metaphorically: deterioration of the human consciousness, integrity, and dignity due to a disease or rot of the nod-and-wink "foundations" (mind and muscle) of perceived social order.

used as a swipe at what passes for civilization, that well-organized machine whose underlying function is to keep the powerful in power, money in the bankers' hands, business as usual: profiting the profiteers.

culture paralyzed and blinded by its own self-consumption.

\Syph`i\*li\*za''tion\, n. (Med.)

Inoculation with the syphilitic virus, especially when employed as a preventive measure, like vaccination.

[1913 Webster]

Common misspellings syphillization, syphiization, syphilziation, syphilizatino, syphilizatin, syphiliation, syphilizatioon, syhpilization, syphilizattion, syyphilization, sphilization, yphilization, syphiliztaion, syphilizatiion, syphiylation, syphilizzation, syphilizatoin, syphiliization, sypphilization, syphilizaion, syphilzation, syphlization, syphilizationonn, syphhilization, syphilizaton, syphiilization, sypilization, syphilizaiton, syphiliztion, syphiliization, syphilizatio, syphilizaation, syphliization, spyhilization, ssyphilization, syhilization, ysphilization, syphiliaztion. see: syphilis • noun a sexually transmitted disease, spread by bacteria and progressing if untreated from infection of the genitals to the bones, muscles, and brain.

— ORIGIN Latin, from Syphilus, the subject of a poem of 1530 who was the supposed first sufferer of the disease.

see: paresis

• noun (pl. pareses /preeseez, parriseez/) Medicine 1. muscular weakness or partial paralysis caused by nerve damage or disease. 2. inflammation of the brain in the later stages of syphilis.

paresis — ORIGIN Latin, from Greek parienai 'let go.'

**John Landry**

**Dartmouth, Massachusetts**

# TRANSPOLITANISM

Transpolitanism is a neologism for that experience of metropolitanism that incorporates the palimpsestic practices of urban vernaculars from other cities and regions of the world. It underscores the fractured provinciality of today's metropolitanism. Transpolitanism is a response to the growing need for a new word that addresses the fact that most people do not live in the context they are born in, and hence their experiences of worldliness does not arise from a coherent sense of a singular city. As opposed to metropolitanism, which has embedded within it the idea that we are structured by the metropole and its resulting encounter, the word transpolitanism incorporates metropolitan experiences into a displaced sense of time and simultaneous converging of other urban landscapes. It is the conjuncture between cultures, transportation networks, urban sensoriums and logics of the *polis* or the city. Transpolitanism captures the fragmented structure of cities today where the metro mentality is superimposed by travel and displacement—the trans-habitation. Transpolitanism is a moving away from the idea that metropolitanism is about people who live in a city, particularly a world city in the West or the North, and instead includes that fragmenting space between the body, multiple sites of habitation and imaginary worlds of urban living. It links metropolitan experiences to the realities of suburban, exurban and small town living as well as to third world cities. Transpolitanism invokes the shrinking of communicative spaces between villages on the global circuit outside the imagination of the west to centers of cultural and financial capital. It is the probing of partial dwellings, temporary solidarities and fleeting protests between immigrants, migrants and locals within the urban. Transpolitanism incorporates the baggage of metropolitanism while suggesting the need for a new imagining, a way of talking about urbanism without origins, metropolitanisms beyond metropolises.

**May Joseph**  
New York, New York

# TRANSFORMATIVE URBANISM

New emerging forms of a transformative urbanism became first recognised by US\* in the Venezuelan capital Caracas in 2003. Forms like “collective landtitles” and “urban agriculture showcases” in the very city center of Caracas are both spatial and social and try to change things.

Made by the insurgent politics of its inhabitant the city becomes a platform of a greater social transformation. Democratization from below meets governmental initiatives from above and merges into processes of “participatory democracy” which are part of the “Bolivarian Revolution” made in Venezuela at the beginning of the 21st century.

(US\* is Urban Subject, a collective research project by Bitter, Derksen, and Weber)

**Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber**  
**Vienna, Austria**

## TREATY (INDIGENOUS TREATMENT)

Treaty with the Delawares, 1778  
Treaty with the Six Nations, 1784  
Treaty with the Wyandot, 1785  
Treaty with the Cherokee, 1785  
Treaty with the Chickasaw, 1786  
Treaty with the Six Nations, 1789  
Treaty with the Creeks, 1790  
Treaty with the Cherokee, 1791  
Treaty of Greenville, 1795  
Chickasaw Treaty, 1805  
Treaty with the Apache, 1852  
Treaty with the Cheyenne and Arapaho, 1865  
Treaty with the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache, 1867  
Fort Laramie Treaty, 1868

*"...hereafter no Indian nation or tribe within the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty,"* Indian Appropriations Act, 1871. Major Crimes Act of 1885. BLM, OEO, FBI (COINTEL-PRO), BIA, Tribal Councils, "Goon" Squads. Relocation/Termination Program, "Red Ghettos," alcohol, "surplus land," red and Red Indians. Native American per-capita income—\$4,500; Native American unemployment rate exceeding 40%; Native American violent crime rate—2.5 times the national average; Native American state prison population—1%, federal—2%; Native American national population—1.8 million (0.5%); Native American population 1492—Est. 2 million to 18 million.

**Jason Evans**  
**Phoenix, Arizona**

# UNCANNY

Most famously, the uncanny is a translation of Freud's *unheimlich*, the title and subject of his 1919 essay, which Hélène Cixous calls "uncanny" itself and "less like an essay than a strange theoretical novel." Understood as an extension of Burke's theory of the sublime and a veering away from Jentsche's postulation of intellectual uncertainty, Freud's uncanny divides its terrifying attention between awe-producing alienation and comforting familiarity. The uncanny takes as its premise that the estranged begins right at home. Its power resides in recalling repressed desires or alienated memories. When something is strangely familiar or inexplicably strange to us, we are in the grips of the "uncanny." The uncanny may involve spatial or temporal dislocations: a severed head, a haunted hour of the night. In Freud's view, animism, the omnipotence of thoughts, the return of the dead, the double, involuntary repetition, and the castration complex all turn on collapsing the psychic boundaries between the self and the other. *Unheimlich* cannot be neatly domesticated into English. The uncanny no longer replicates the semantic structure at the pulse of Freud's essay. According to the *OED*, while lacking the Germanic sense of "home," uncanny builds its meaning on the Old English and Old Norse *kunna(n)* meaning "knowing." The addition of "y" imparts a sense of "full of" and the addition of the "un" negates or opposes the initial sense. Thus, uncanny literally dissembles into that which is not full of knowing or is full of not knowing—an emptying of knowledge coincides with a surfeit of ignorance. In contemporary use, the uncanny might refer to sampled music, collage art, highly referential film or quotation in literature—all manner of imported sounds and images that drench the present with undertones of the past or refigure the present by channeling the past. Recontextualizing as a cultural tendency desensitizes us to our own ghost-haunted moment. In this light, the uncanny might be classified under a developing trend toward the aesthetics of anxiety.

**Christine Hume**  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

# UNION

**Union-n.** short for labor union **vt.,vi.,izing** to organize into a labor union

A union is a vehicle to enrich working people's existence on earth. A union is a positive force, a movement, to instill fairness in the workplace and dignify what workers do. One way to describe what a union means to me and should mean to others are contained in the following words and their literal meaning.

**Union-n.** protection, force, fairness, strength, toughness, sound, promoter, truth, advocate, upholder, defender, shield

**Frank Cunningham, IBEW Local 134  
Chicago, Illinois**

# UNIVERSAL CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

Globally, and universally, cultural imperialism pushes the project of neoliberal global capital as the only viable and only existing form of life: that is, consumption, property and property rights, and privatization. This is the ideological wing of cultural imperialism, a wing deployed toward similar but qualitatively different ends during the Cold War, and aired at everything from World Fairs through forms of popular culture and even in avant-garde artistic production. This ideological wing, or universal cultural imperialism, today continues the work of the triumph of capitalism by shutting down what poet Bruce Andrews had designated as the social horizon that cultural production strains at and what Ernst Blok calls “real utopian critique” which speaks out for the “particular tendency to come.” By limiting the discussion and imagination of other shapes of the world and of other forms of social order, universal cultural imperialism tries to enact Althusser’s call of interpellation at a global level; national cultures and state structures are to turn to the call of “hey you” from neoliberalism and further embed themselves into its systems and logic.

**Jeff Derksen**  
Vancouver, British Columbia

# WAR

The continuation of CULTURE by *all means necessary*; the technique which characterises the abyss of SELF-INTERPRETATION replacing THOUGHT with STRATEGY in the modern era. As a term of art, war generically refers to the agonism of CLOSURE within a given hermeneutic field or polity (see POETRY; EPIC). As a species of COMMUNICATION (rather than MEANING), modern warfare has traditionally been seen to have three main operations:

i. *zuruckwollen*: the experience of nonexperience; general overdetermination combined with designification. Sometimes called the 'critique' of separation (from Gr. *krinein*: to separate; hence any *double-antithetical* relation: see under MILK : i) SPILT and ii) CONDENSATION). By extension the term has come to denote all negative qualia (see RELIGION: TRAUMA; also DEPRIVATION: SLEEP).

ii *zwischenzug* : primary reversion of social groupings to mechanical solidarity; the confl(agr)ation of holistic with binding (teleonomic) representations for purposes of organised amnesia (see LANGUAGE : i)ROMANTICALITIES ii)RECITATIONALISM. ) In archaic or sociological usage WARFARE also referred to the managed opposition of social CLASS (see SLEEP) by the replacement of ETHICS (see under MILK) with RATIONALITY (see POETRY).

iii. *zugswang* : the bombardment and transformation of NONRECIPROCALITY into MORAL RIGHT ('innocent violence'). Since the aim of modern warfare is *survival*, it has been argued that its methods provide any given culture with an allegorical vocabulary for itself that would otherwise be invisible: for this reason, some have argued that warfare represents the most sophisticated means yet invented for keeping the love of life intact.

Kevin Nolan  
Cambridge, England

# WAR

An applied science, the objective for which is the decimation of others. The term has also been used in the modern period to refer to any organized assault on the real. In this sense, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century war is the sharpened sword of postmodernity.

Since the early industrial era, the economic conditions of modernity forced the word to come unhinged from its strictly martial referent. Marx recognized the war powers of capitalism famously in the *Communist Manifesto*: “The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls.” Less than a century later, while the Futurists embraced the language of automatic weaponry as a purifying antidote to the ennui of bourgeois dominance, Antonio Gramsci theorized counter-hegemony as attainable through either a “war of position” or a “war of movement.”

Under late capitalism, war *stricto sensu* presents itself as yet another synergistic opportunity for capital. Cheap prices and heavy artillery combine to allow the imperial national pole of transnational capital to assert itself. On the domestic front, military technology is recycled for civilian work, leisure, and surveillance; talk of “war” constructs alliances between economic elites and popular tribalisms, despite the antagonism between these forces in domestic politics.

In the so-called Cold War, war as such was reinvented by the U.S. as a total social environment—an altered state assiduously developed for certain national societies (e.g., El Salvador, Colombia, now Iraq) that might otherwise resist exogenous control. The culture industries achieve similar effect almost everywhere with marketing “campaigns” and “targeted” bombardment of the body politic with mass spectacle.

**Edwin Starr**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

# WAR ON TERRORISM

**War:** *n.* a state or period of armed conflict between nations, states, or parties. **Terrorism:** *n.* the political use of violence or intimidation. Individually determinate, war and terrorism are, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, combined in an unhappy pairing. The act of **war** in **war on terrorism** reflects a necessary antecedent to be acted **on**, that is, an act of **terrorism**. If we are to follow the definition of **terrorism** above, then the act which afflicted New York City on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 was by definition politically motivated and additionally demands causation. The historical lineage which predated September 2001 has been immaculately submerged by propaganda machines which have turned **terrorism** into an act associated with race. The appearance of Middle Eastern origin has now become a signifier for political persuasion and religious beliefs which mark the subject and often leave them open to cruel acts of individuation, contempt, and coercion—in a word, **terrorism**. To put it in its semantic and definitional location, we find that because **war** in America is dictated by the political infrastructure, this **war IS terrorism**: politically motivated violence. The definitions above show that the **war on terrorism** is literally “a state or period of armed conflict between nations **on** the political use of violence or intimidation.” The idiocy of the terminology is clear—the United States is fighting about fighting. As the United States increasingly polices the world, much more **war** and **terrorism** can be expected.

**Shana L. Redmond**  
New Haven, Connecticut

## WORD

Neruda called it the Great Table Cloth. Yes, let us spread it wide this yuletide—on parking lots behind warehouses, beside the Congo, out on the Andean altiplano. Let us now invite those who have not spoken, and give them microphones snatched from hustlers, hucksters and priests. Oh my brother from Sally Ann, bring your kettle full of warm words: ‘forgive,’ ‘share,’ and ‘speak,’ Dear knight from Red Cross dispense words with love and care; let them be cordial, and please bring bandages. Let us lay out a feast of sounds and syllables, of meanings with true options. The bitter words—like sorrow; and stern ones—like justice. And ‘Hyderabadi tamarind pickle’ that tickles the tongue, and the sweetness of hearth and home. Don’t forget the sad and sour ones either: antiretroviral, cocaine and needle exchange. Clean air—how about clean air? Adoption papers; naturalization papers; security files . . . oh, keep thick-lensed bureaucrats hence, he will overturn our table, spoil our sustenance, finger-print our needful words. Oh, keep them hence. If you want to hear the subaltern speak, give her words—and you will be amply rewarded with community—real, worthy community, fellowship, friendship—those are precious words, words meant to be spread widely. It is *their* turn to talk now; ours to listen with bowed heads, and perhaps an occasional tear—to salt the long-delayed repast. Above all, keep the words you have given. Keep them to give away again, and again.

**Shyamal Bagchee**  
Edmonton, Alberta

# XENOGRAPHY

Noun. From Gk. *xenos* 'strange, foreign' + *graphos* 'writing.' The examination, in writing, of the alien, strange, or foreign; the ability to write in languages one does not know (cf., xenoglossy or glos-solalia); the use of foreign-language characters in another language, such as Chinese kanji characters in Japanese; a technique used for electrostatic reproductions. **Xenography** represents a social recognition that the synonym it should come to replace (for this is that lexicographical paradox, the prescriptive definition), ethnography, adheres to an older model of empiricism, observing, examining, or specimen-hunting the subordinate culture (the tribe, the primitive people). **Xenography** is ethnography free of the burden of the colonial or imperial. **Xenography** is ethnography that eliminates privilege, and extends possibilities: before the Second World War, writing the foreign was a privilege reserved for the subsidized; in the latter half of the 20th century, the privilege was extended to the middle class. **Xenography** represents the ultimate erasure of class distinctions and the devaluation of the *Tourismustrieb*. **Xenography** removes the valency between the global and the local. **Xenography** is the camera eye turned not only toward the headwaters of the Amazon, but the jungles of East Saint Paul. **Xenography** acknowledges the willingness to look for all that is alien not only all around us, but also within all of us. **Xenography** identifies a future already upon us: everybody gets to look at everybody else.

**Adam Siegel**  
Davis, California

Xcp

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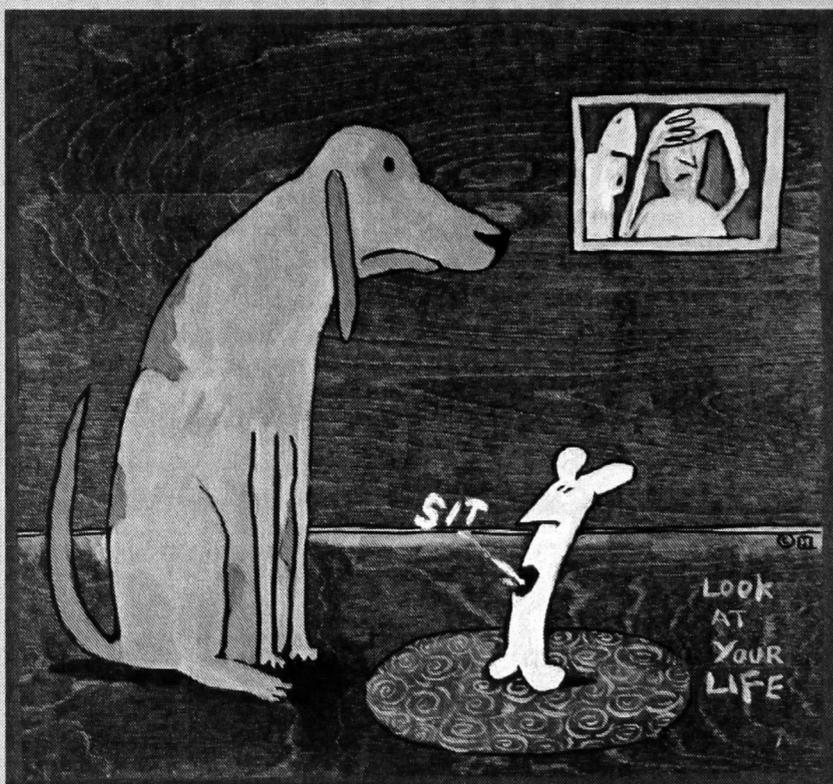
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