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## THE CAPILANO REVIEW



Manifestos Now!

First they ignore you, then they laugh  
at you, then they fight you, then you win.

—CHRISTIAN BÖK



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Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber  
*Super Students #1, "The Board's action showed  
 more concern about our image than the rights  
 and academic freedom on which this university  
 was founded" (Student society president Stan  
 Wong, March 1967), 2010*



## BRIAN GANTER / Preface: Manifesto, Unremitting

Today, there is a spectre haunting the manifesto: the spectre of modernity. One can scarcely begin to assemble a volume such as this one without meeting abrupt detours, flights, and turnabouts to the avant-garde “isms” of the early 20th century, a mark of the continuing regard for the manifesto as THE genre of high modernity, or, with a nod to José Enrique Rodó’s *Ariel*, of modernismo.

Of course the historical record, of which the current volume is both a condensed and an overdetermined microcosm, registers and reveals the much more expansive range and uncontainable sweep of this fundamentally transformative and interventionist mode of writing.

That world-transforming struggle-text, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, launched not just a revolutionary movement but an equally revolutionary mode of writing, one that pioneered what has come to be called (and is now frequently reviled as<sup>1</sup>) “symptomatic reading” quite some time before Althusser and Macherey would later famously name it as such.

Of course not all manifestos plot a course of symptomatic diagnosis or rigorous critique, nor do they engage in rallying their publics to join in the overthrow of the existing state of things. The manifesto of refusal, which charts more modest, local interventions (the Manifesto of Intellectuals, for example, signed by the painter Monet, among others, protesting the innocence of Dreyfus) and the anti-festo, the “manifesto” that takes manifesto writing itself as its object of criticism, have established themselves as well. Claude Abastado, who has been a productive contributor to recent critical discussion of the manifesto adds an additional twist: he coins the term “manifestary” writings to acknowledge the more traditional, non-manifesto forms (prefaces, essays, novels) that, due to the demands of their audience and their times, have taken on the historical or political function of manifestos, from Wordsworth’s “Preface” to the *Lyrical Ballads* to Robbe-Grillet’s *Pour un nouveau roman* to Whitman’s *Song of Myself* (cited in Yanoshevsky 265).

<sup>1</sup> See Mark Edmundson’s “Against Readings” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (24 April 2009).

<sup>2</sup> See Galia Yanoshevsky’s “Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre” in *Poetics Today* 30:2 (Summer 2009), 265.

Still the fundamental calls for transformative critique and the practice of change writing have underlain the manifestos of three centuries, from anti-establishment critiques of cultural and religious conservatism such as *Le refus global* to Valerie Solanas' feminist *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* to the post-humanist and digitalist idioms invoked and articulated in Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto." Today, manifestos, far from the pages of the modernist art book, continue to emerge and to circulate with critique-al energy and vitality on the streets and in the interstices of the everyday wherever global capitalism is confronted and resisted, as evidenced by the student writings, posters, and pamphlets found on the streets and walls of Nanterre, of Seattle, of Turin, of Athens, of London, of Vancouver's Downtown East Side (a point highlighted in different ways in the works here by Peter McLaren, Reg Johanson, and the participants in Margot Leigh Butler's HUM 101 Writing Course).

History teaches that the manifesto it is almost always "out of time" and "out of place": the time for it is never "now"; to say that now is not the time for manifesto is in keeping with its historical necessity. The continuing marginalization of manifesto, within both traditional (expressionistic) and experimental (anti- and post-realist) circles of writing and scholarship, in other words, can only in part be attributed to the "proprietary modernism" outlined above. It continues to be an outlaw mode of writing, rejected on writerly grounds (as polemic and as a violent will-to-closure of the subtle pleasures and ecstasies of reading); on pedagogical grounds (as a violation of the disinterested pursuit of ideas and imaginative agency of the individual subject); and on historical grounds (as a violation of the distance called for in historical analysis and critique: the manifesto writer is artist/writer in the role of side-taking, partisan historian).

The texts assembled here share only one commonality: they fruitfully explore and expose the promises and limitations, the continuing risks, and possible futures of the manifesto. As a mode of writing, of speaking, and as a visual and digital practice the manifesto has an established past, and, as the contributors show here, is quite capable of being remobilized as an energetic textual force in the present. Will it have a future? In *The German Ideology* Marx lays the charge against Feuerbach that when his writing is historical it is not materialist and when it is materialist it is not historical. Similarly, the manifesto's future will depend on its capacity for producing writing and imagery that is simultaneously and rigorously "material" and "historical" at once: the more it falls on one side exclusively or circumvents both altogether, the more its "future" will lie in the literary archives and in the textual museums of human history.



## GREGORY BETTS / Rise Above History: A Manifesto for More Manifestos

I want to put aside the supposed natural modesty (call it colonial irony or veiled conservatism or habitual prudery or, as by one punk musician, the bullshit hypocrisy) of Canadians and advocate for an alternative spirit to our public discourse: a spirit of openness, of political self-examination, of aesthetical interrogation, of formal experimentation, and of increased artistic generosity. I believe Canadian authors should write more manifestos and openly offer their aesthetical insights, clearly articulated, and honed to a point of diamond precision. Let me put that another way:

### **1. Write a manifesto to confront the aesthetical and ideological implications of your writing.**

Why write a manifesto? Why not write literature and let the literature speak for itself? There have only been a handful of moments in the history of Canadian writing when authors here en masse have turned to political polemical forms in defence of their work. These moments, particularly with the turn to modernism and the turn to postmodernism, were marked by significant shifts in literary techniques and styles that were reflective of broader political transformations and contests. As the radical poet F.R. Scott wrote, “This is an hour / Of new beginnings, concepts warring for power, / Decay of systems—the tissue of art is torn / With overtures of an era being born.”

Our current era is not one in which concepts are openly warring for power, though a more muted contest of ideas continues apace. That writers are not turning to political polemical forms such as the manifesto to make their ideas overt might suggest that this is not a period of significant shifts in literary techniques and styles, but such a claim is simply not an accurate reflection of current writing in Canada. Writers here—from Sandra Alland to Rachel Zolf—are actively and aggressively experimenting with and even inventing deeply political forms; furthermore, writers here are participating in and providing templates for the international avant-garde



of current writers. The reasons for the dearth of manifestos are inevitably various—perhaps writers have become inured to or complacent with the broader political implications of their literary techniques and styles, perhaps writers have developed new ways to communicate and promote their aesthetical and ideological positions, perhaps authors are more interested in discovering their difference, their individual voice, rather than their affiliation in a shared aesthetic initiative, perhaps the manifesto simply feels anachronistic and out-dated or crass and self-promoting—but the need to clarify the need to reimagine and reinvent writing habits remains strong and pressing. I would like to address and contest some of these commonplace claims against the manifesto as part of a defence on its behalf. I believe that a manifesto is precisely the generic space in which to outline a new aesthetic and to confront and develop its fullest possible significance.

## **2. Face up to your times. Face up to your manifesto.**

Miriam Nichols writes, “any serious art faces up to its times in one fashion or another” (146). She does not suggest that literary subjects need to be exclusively about or even set in the present, or dominated by the tastes and fashions of the present, but rather that they must raise themselves above the glut of established literary modes and be marked by the constant vitality of the present moment. The present is always moving (which is not to say that it is necessarily improving or moving in a specific direction), and there is a direct correlation between a writer’s consciousness of that null point called now, its flash of life, and their own future relevance. Old forms like old jeans have and will always have a time and place, including in the present, but anachronisms are only ever good for parody. A manifesto articulates how you understand the difference.

If, as the vitality of contemporary writing suggests, Canadian authors believe that new forms or old forms made new are particularly relevant and ripe with potential for the present moment, they ought to be forthright and public about those ideas. If nothing else, such an act, a gesture into the play of minds and bodies that is writing, will help create a space for the writing being hailed. Archives in this country are rife with experimental texts from the past, lost and silenced because Canada’s literati were not receptive enough or ready for new modes at the time. The false myth that

we had no modernist moment here spread in part because the most aggressively experimental work by early writers such as Bertram Brooker, Sol Allen, and Herman Voaden were marginalized or even censored. This cost us a generation of avant-garde precedent from which to work. With very few exceptions, new works inevitably respond to available aesthetics (which is not to suggest that art is entirely socially determined or, for that matter, entirely autonomous; writers need a community to cause a shift in writing; Canadians have not always been the passive recipients of the forces that precipitate such changes) as only literature can create and define what passes as literature.

Showing receptivity helps make innovative writing more permissible (knowing that something truly new will always provoke a negative reaction from the keepers of the status quo). Being open about and to ideas is an essential part of the process of introducing change into a system. In the words of experimental poet and publisher derek beaulieu, “If you don’t share, you don’t exist.” Tell us, as Sheila Watson did, what you are going to do. Significantly, this act of articulation of form and intent will also expose both the decadence and the potential of an aesthetic practice to an honest self-critic.

### **3. Rise above history to become contemporary.**

A manifesto is not a justification of one’s work. It is a coded document that maps out a specific method (or specific consciousness) by which new works—new kinds of work—can be made manifest. The death of literature, or art more broadly, is the passive/decadent repetition of previous work. Artists only bring art to life from its constant tango with Death by consciously outstepping (or, as it were, blasting) the arrested past and the strangulated present. Smaro Kamboureli turned to the manifesto as a means of escaping what Vico theorized as history’s cycle of repetition. As she writes, “A manifesto is supposed to rise above history. It is intended to take us beyond the cultural predicament of historical repetition, to defy determinism. Its historical value is posthumous, for a manifesto wants to be judged by the future it announces” (7). By this definition, rather than work to validate or authorize past work, or even existing values, a manifesto can only be recognized as such to the extent to which it enables new work marked with new aesthetics to appear.



Kamboureli cautions her readers against the messianic impulse inherent to the act of manifesto writing, including the utopian temptation to try and provoke sociopolitical change through literary innovation. These impulses and temptations can be adequately tempered by keeping in mind the long history of avant-garde failures. But while the Surrealists failed to unleash the psychological revolution that would redeem Western culture, and the Futurists and Dadaists failed to bring down even Italian or German art institutions and museums, thus failing to fulfill stated ambitions, their manifestos articulated a perspective unfettered from the ideological shortcomings of the status quo. It was through this however momentarily liberated perspective, built from a healthy and sustained disdain for and distance from the present, that they were able to rise above history and redefine what it meant to be contemporary in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Giorgio Agamben suggests, “Those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands” (40).

#### **4. Open a space and flood it with thinking.**

Instead of thinking of the manifesto as an arrogant or aggressive act, or minimizing its potential impact to self-promotion, think of it instead as an opportunity to invite an audience of (future) authors to embark on a moment outside of themselves as presently constituted. It is also an invitation for you to step outside yourself and, together, to look upon yourselves, collectively, as history will see you. How comfortable are you? How comfortable are you with the function of your or all or any writing in its relation to your time? Agamben proceeds to diagnose the citizen of the contemporary moment as one who “perceiving the darkness of the present, grasps a light that can never reach its destiny” (53). A manifesto is precisely that elusive act of grasping, of struggling to provoke a rupture with the disquieting world and to unleash something pure and countervailing. I agree that any manifesto that attempts no more than to advance an agenda that is already in the world dulls itself from this potential and elusive light of futurity. Similarly, messianic manifestos or attempts to empower the self of the author (or authors) fail to fulfill the provocative, eruptive opportunity and are ultimately no different than any other bit of advertising copy text. These kinds of documents seek little more than self-flattery; a barely veiled



narcissism. They do not open a new space for new work. I prefer to think of the manifesto as a rare public gesture in which the author (or authors) breaks from the singular pressures of the self, to break into an untimely space, and to offer the best idea he/she/they can imagine to best illuminate that open space. In that moment, in that illumination, there are no selves and there are no limitations. To quote Bertram Brooker, Canada's first avant-gardist, who in 1927 after having visited an enormous exhibition of European avant-garde arts works in Toronto, wrote: "where I have been was not created [...] what have I to do with creating / I am come back only to destroy." The manifesto is precisely the historical chance to destroy the continuum of history.

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## CHRISTIAN BÖK / Flarf, Arf, Arf, Arf!

We are not high on LSD anymore—so we need to start making sense. If life is fair, then Elvis must be alive—and all his impersonators must be dead. An imitator dooms himself to hopeless mediocrity. An inventor, however, does his work, because it is natural to him, and so it has a charm. It has the charm of a child, yet it is better than the old standby of “Holy cow!” because nobody says “Holy smokes!” anymore. It is forgotten. It is undiscovered. We imagine that a bottle of cleaning fluid must be totally fucking clean on the inside. We imagine that, when a man is anxious to stick out a glad hand in kindness, he probably has something up his sleeve. It is possible that the universe exists only for me—and if so, it sure is going well, I must admit. If I jump into my time-machine, then I can easily go back to the twelfth century and ask the vampires to postpone their ancient prophecy for a few days, while I take in dinner and a movie. We know that there is a good reason why nobody studies history—it just teaches you too much. My song is copyrighted in America, under the Seal of Copyright #154085, for a period of 28 years, and anybody caught singing my song without my permission is a mighty good friend of mine, because “I don’t give a darn.” If you say, “I love you,” then you have already fallen in love with language itself—which is already a form of infidelity. I scream: “It’s just passion—I ain’t angry at culture; I ain’t angry at fashion!” I write a script, and I give it to a guy who reads scripts, and he reads it, and he says that he really likes it, but he thinks that I need to rewrite it—so I

say: “Fuck you, I’ll just make a copy.” I mean, the word “pre-heated” is a meaningless fucking term!—kind of like “pre-recorded,” as in, “This program has been pre-recorded,” to which I say: “Well, of course it has been pre-recorded!—because, when else are you going to record it, afterwards?” I mean: “That’s the whole purpose of recording; to do it beforehand!—otherwise, it doesn’t really work, does it?” I mean: “English is the best language of all—but in the hands of others, it becomes like the scene in *Fantasia*, when Mickey Mouse gets the wand.” I steal the letter M, because the letter M seems like it must weigh the most—and now, I have a gold M, so I ask a guy if he wants to buy a gold M, and he says: “No, what the fuck do I want a gold M for?”—to which I ask: “Well, what about a gold W?”



We have chosen our profession in defiance of the monarchy. We do not live for the sake of taxes to fatten the pockets of the noblemen. We have chosen to live the only life available to those who long for freedom. We are thieves. We may never know, in what sense, the poet means what he says, for poets do not write to be understood—but it is true that, if we look closely enough at a glass of wine, we see the entire universe. In fact, another person, whom we ourselves do not know, tends, at the moment of creation, to supplant the person whom we believe ourselves to be. In fact, to speak the unspeakable, without the proper rhetorical flourishes, is to perform the unspeakable. We keep inventing new ways to celebrate mediocrity. O! from this time forth, my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! I write a few sincere lines—and



then I have to make fun of them. I think to myself that the letter X has never been given enough to do, so we have to promise it more work: “Okay, you may not start a lot of words, but we can give you a co-starring role in tic-tac-toe, and you can mark the spot, and you can dabble with hugs and kisses, and you can make writing out the word ‘Christmas’ a lot easier, and incidentally you can start the word ‘xylophone’—are you happy now, you fucking X?” I have left orders to be awakened at any time in the event of a national emergency—even if I happen to be in a cabinet meeting. I have made these rules very simple: scissors cut paper, paper covers rock, rock crushes lizard, lizard poisons Spock, Spock smashes scissors, scissors decapitate lizard, lizard eats paper, paper disproves Spock, Spock vaporizes rock, and as it always has, rock crushes scissors. I look at you, and no speech is left in me, and my tongue breaks, then fire races under my skin. I tremble and grow pale, for I am dying of such love—or so it seems to me. A plagiarist is always suspicious of being stolen from—just as pickpockets are commonly observed to walk with their hands in their pockets.



First, they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. Never memorize what you can look up in a book. Never forget that certain clues at a crime scene do not lend themselves, by their very nature, to being collected or examined—for how does one collect love or hate? There is, between them, a Great Wall of China with armed sentries, posted every twenty feet. Where then is good English to be found? Not among those who might be expected to write well. I do not

hold discussions with the monkey when the organ grinder is in the room. I do not date the lumberjack. I am, in fact, a software engineer, striving to build an idiot-proof program, bigger and better than the one before, but the universe is striving to build bigger and better idiots—and so far, the universe is winning. A creature low in intellect may conceive of thoughts, so long as it can recognize the same experience over and over again, and thus even a polyp might be a conceptual thinker if a feeling darts through its mind, saying: “Hello again, thingumabob!” If most of those who have taken part in this one-dimensional debate are really honest with themselves, they must admit that they do not, in principle, believe that any of us can do any good for anyone overseas. I know that this tree is a part of our history, if not the backbone of our economy, so we must get the tree back—or choke their rivers with our dead. I know that the most beautiful thing in Tokyo is McDonald’s, and the most beautiful thing in Stockholm is McDonald’s, and the most beautiful thing in Florence is McDonald’s—but Peking and Moscow do not yet have anything beautiful. I have tried here to groan, “Help! Help!”—but the tone that has come out is that of polite conversation. I have put in a long, hard day at work, and I finally get to go home, to go to bed, where I close my eyes—and immediately I wake up and realize that my whole day at work has, in fact, been a dream, in which you sell all of your waking life for minimum wage, while they get your dreams for free. Take sides! Take sides! You may sometimes be wrong—but the poet who refuses to take sides must always be wrong....

She was dead when they found her body. Three members of the collective were present at that moment, while the rest of us fled to the sound of the sirens. Sirens used to represent desire, now they signify danger. There are definite sirens in the word desire. A lot of anger in danger. Both very red. While we knew she wanted something radical for that last performance, no one suspected she would use real dynamite and loaded machineguns. A week before she managed to mobilize the forces of order under the bridge where she faked a first suicide. The film we shot to document that piece was very successful; the abstraction of both her gesture and the response it engendered from the authorities. The one and the multiple, the I and world ensemble, so abstract yet so transparent. The recording of an ever-simple trajectory - one aloof dissident straight line going down to the middle of a circle of concerned citizens - in an unbearable slow motion. No doubt that the registering of it was more powerful than the performance itself. A silent scream. She was after the idea that while there were millions of strangers unwillingly dying in the world - this vast and massive ignored misery - the life of one bourgeois had the power to mobilize an army of its own kind. The absurdity to save one person while half of the planet is starving. Not that she was exceptionally altruistic, but she sometimes needed to believe in something. Something radical. Despite the failure of all *isms* and the vague character of Martians, this human need to believe in something, in anything. A powerful desire for transfiguration, a living transcendence of a sort, a salvation, an eternal intuition that somewhere is better, different, in search of a lost paradise with improved taste, where we can pick grapes with our mouth. The idea of change stems from the nostalgia for something that never existed, a thirst for an apocalypse where everyone would be an artist. Hell. It was not so much the content of it all that was functioning best in that particular piece, but the deliberate poetics of the enterprise. Something bigger than the initial idea. She called it *Chute Libre* (*Free Fall*) and had a fragrance designed especially for it, eponymous, with myrrh as a main ingredient because of its extraction process which consists of a purposeful wound inflicted through the bark of a tree. Honey-like note, sharp, pleasantly earthy, and somewhat bitter. In that performance, the artist was positioned exactly between the strange and the familiar, the criminal and the victim. Bitter-sweet.

I am not trying to defend her or look for naked truths, as we all know that truth is always dressed up, confessions disguised. We are all defendant lords, managers of our own neurosis, chiefs of personal blazons, everyday justifying our coat of arms. If making art is planting flags, then an army of selves is too much. She was not even trying to make sense of it all either as she knew that revolution and dictatorship are two faces of the same coin and that art is quickly recuperated by fashion, advertising, real estate or nostalgia. She was not about synthesis but only interested in the antithesis of the antithesis. Fragments and doubt were her main concerns. People accused her



of dishonesty and were quick at pointing out the contradictions in her work. That is because in her oeuvre, she had taken on more and more the figure of a trickster. She often talked about the grace in the agility of the thief, nothing sticking to him. Pink Panther. For the deceitful, life is a game which demands artistry and detachment. The crook plays for himself. The terrorist is less seduced by the coup d'état than the *coup de théâtre*. The murderer is an artisan of crime, he produces meaning. The scoundrel who killed sixty-nine women and turned them into sausages, is expressing something. Nothing more disturbing than a pork farm. The Saudi wearing a Rolex on his black horse, plotting to bomb the Twin Towers, one tooth at a time, nothing more arrogant than American occupation. The cheat, additive in nature, is a composite and plays on multiple lives while the victim, essentially subtractive, is mistaking his origins for the destination. In his *Éloge de la complexité*, Edgar Morin states that the simple fact of increasing complexity of an ensemble augments its performance, its potential. The just is afraid to lose something while the embezzler already risked everything. In the *Thomas Crown Affair* with Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway at the end of the film, the airport scene, when the larcenist disappears into the crowd. He hired a big number of individuals dressed exactly like him - black suit, white shirt, red tie, black bowler - thus he can be at once spotted while it he is impossible to seize hold of. He vanishes into the crowd yet he is always visible. Simultaneously nowhere and everywhere. Genius. Brilliant. Delightful. The burglar, carrying all pretensions, goes on to the next page while the trustworthy, empty handed, is fixated on the same word. In a *Naked City* episode, Roddy McDowall plays a talented stage actor who is swiped with endless refusals. Prevented from perfecting his art he becomes an unflinching murderer. When the police surround him on a rooftop, facing the impasse the actor replies with mad lucidity, "You do not understand. I play for myself!" That is just before he throws himself into nothingness. Suicide as a last word. I have to admit that I was happy to see the cops and all the reactionary devices to counterweigh the absolute catatonia we drove ourselves into. It is not that I simply turned my vest inside out. It was more complicated than that, or perhaps simpler. There is always an ineluctable ambiguity in surrendering. Like Cleopatra who decided to fall in love with the enemy to make her defeat more palatable. She converted humiliation into sex appeal. It was a very creative way to have the last word. Facing Octavian's overthrow, she eventually took her life away with an asp.

She was lying in a coagulating puddle, almost right in the middle of the gallery space and it looked like an art piece I once saw, *Lâché de feuilles rouges*. A pile of A4 format sheets of red paper thrown from the mezzanine onto the white floor. A shooting star reaching the earth. I still refuse to believe that a falling star and a meteorite are the same object. Revolutionary impetuses dismantle as soon as the leader is decapitated. Montezuma as the ancestor of an infinite series of failed Mexican revolutions. Enormous white statues of Stalin being pulled down by ropes; big things, like icebergs, always fall in slow motion. We were no exception. I said we but I meant the collective. I rarely use we, disqualifying any conversation who speaks in the name of any we of any sort.



Not only do I find it distasteful but also infinitely suspicious, extremely questionable and moreover, just tragic. An artist takes a part-time job as a minor clerk in order to pay the rent and progressively slides towards the we, ending up, within less than a year, speaking in the name of the company in a very convincing manner. *We used to carry that. We will look into it. We are expanding. We are relocating. We specialize in identity theft.* Absorbed by the institution or the corporation, the individual, even the most resilient, ends up gradually dull-witted and then totally ossified, petrified, sooner than later, speaking in the name of someone else. The identification becomes total, the alienation, complete. The worse types are unionized, programmed to be against management. Although they have no share in the business they slave for, they speak about it as if they own it just to sublimate the fact that it is the company that owns them. These people also come with a whole set of automatic sayings. When asked "How are you?" they answer "Five minutes from my coffee break!" or "One more day before the weekend!" They barely exist on their day off as their brains are wasted on mindless things. The parade of the walking dead happens every day of the year. Seneca: "I made myself the slave of no one, I do not wear the name of anyone." It is bad enough the world needs slaves for the wheel to turn around, but the proliferation of self-imposed forms of slavery leaves me bewildered. *In memoria di me*, a film by Italian filmmaker Saverio Costanzo. A Jesuit monastery on a Venetian island with two protagonists. Andrea, tormented and disappointed with life, commits as a novice within the Catholic Order. Convinced he has found truth he meets another novice, Fausto, who is struggling with the idea of it all. While one remains impassible by embracing dogma, the other, tortured, is looking for answers emerging from within. The viewer walks along hallways, passageways, antechambers, refectories, cells, places of transition, with profane music collaged onto the spatial narrative; a military march from Schubert, speaking about voluntary prisons, a waltz by Johann Strauss or a concerto by Tchaikovsky known for its tension between the soloist and the orchestra, where the former has to take over and dominate. A film about the victory of the individual over the group. The personal, the idiosyncratic against the general consensus.

As part of my socio-aesthetic research, I once experienced full on benefit placement within the ranks of a corporation where employees of all levels had the right to defer salary towards a year off. I used to think that a sabbatical came from an ancient tradition used for deepening personal academic research but in this case, the most meaningless occupation was eligible for the furthering of its own development. A coworker (for lack of a worse term), who was already not doing much on a daily basis, was very happy to take a year off to really do nothing. Doing nothing for some people is the ultimate absolute, their idea of fun. She tells me that she was taking a sabbatical to live *comme une artiste* for a year. What could I possibly reply. I thought that being an artist, like being gay, was something you were born with. I thought it meant someone who cannot find sleep, seeking every minute of the day and night, by involuntary reflex, a mental illness, itchiness, a chronic condition, a brutal restlessness, an infinite discomfort, a general dissatisfaction, a true curse, in search of the poetic, the poetic, in order to



survive the mediocre, the mediocre, someone who says no, no, no, not in space but in time, this time she, the coworker, the coward, the cow, was spending, wasting or killing until she tried to live once every seven years. Congratulations my dear, your sabbatical means the year you will realize you wasted your life. After twelve months in *artiste* hell, on the verge of suicide, you will be so happy to come back home and reinstate yourself within the fold of your secure job, relieved from disposable freedom, finally finding purpose away from the unexpected. Small bureaucrats are vampires sucking what they call the system which owes them everything, a few breaths away from anticipated retirement, a few blinks from death. The state is an abusive father they loot. The small task employee, with an empty brain and a pocket full of lottery tickets, avenges his condition every day, so stressed out about not handling stress, contributing in a minimum manner while withdrawing maximum benefits. They are all potential serial killers. Why did I get in such diatribe? Because of the implied consensus, the we. I was asking myself, why I said we, though I was not truly one of them. I just happened to be there because she was a friend and I was trying to understand her research on the notion of *La bêtise* (generalized imbecility). I did partake in her soft subversions, which gradually became bluntly perverse, and even hateful I must admit, but for the most part I was staying behind the camera while everything was played out in front, so frankly, I was not officially part of them, whom I secretly referred to as having collectively landed upon "*the pile of nearly-made-its*." While this collection of losers started its deep descent soon after my unconscious subordination, it is evident that this temporary affiliation and its abrupt end, forever cured me from any need of belonging. *We were under arrest, a super-the-slam, a boom bang! A Boomerang.*

*On the Revolutions of Celestial Bodies* was the title of Copernicus's treatise about the movements of planets around the sun. Revolution then passed from astronomy into the vernacular coming to representing abrupt change in the social order. There is something *révolu* (*passé*) in *revolution*, obsolete. American, French, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Spanish. So much red, fields and fields of poppies, to finally understand that there is not such thing as true revolutions, in the sense of complete rotations, total conversions, pure miracles. Revolutions are fragile moments, ephemeral in nature, manifesting themselves like targeted fireworks under complicit constellations. Essential cries, but real inanities under the skies. Velleities. Big sighs. The inherent vulnerability and volatility of momentums. The right time to say *I love you* for the first time. Agitated present, conjugated times, regicides, restorations, reforms, counter-reforms, the big zigzag of History, a giant slalom. History as a series of slopes and tracks and the obliqueness of its rewriting. Bolsheviks, situationists, super heroes. The twentieth century was big on the idea of change, notably prolific in manifestos of all kinds. Understandably so, as western culture went through a lot of unimaginable horror screenings that seemed to have drawn little holes as to evacuate the unfathomable, liquidate time from continuity, liquefy reality. The reply of the artistic youth seemed to echo the violence it merged from. Killing painting. Killing narratives. Bombing language. Totalitarian reflexes leaked from the political to art's battlefield. There is something military in the avant-garde. The

front, the new, not only a masquerade of MUSTS, DOES and DON'TS, SHALLS and SHOULD, SHOULD NOTS and WHAT NOTS, but a genuine desire to kill the fathers. Art would thus be this cultural edifice born from the guilt of the killing of the genitors. Goya's *Cronos* upside down. The fox biting its tail, the hand that feeds. Modernity as a way out of continuity, ruptures as origins, discontinuities as a need for the tabularized, triggered by a genuine exasperation, an immense dissatisfaction with the present. The idea of transcendental change is so human in nature but so blind to human nature. I think it comes from Christianity which for some reason decided to do away with the traditional Greek and Jewish suspicion in humanity. But because in all evidences it never worked out, we seem to be waiting for new gods, erect new statues. *Waiting for Godot*. I see an army of messiahs in the word manifesto.

Humans love to create a new set of rules to identify with and rally around, stubbornly hanging on a cracked branch they mistook for a tree, which they imagine in turn to have strong and deep roots. It is shocking to see how superficial the roots of very old trees are, once they are pulled out by a storm. We are all uprooted, vagabonds looking for a home, nostalgic for a genealogy that would tell us who we are and where we are going. Yearnings for belongings coupled with the splendid and naïve idea that one can extract oneself from the world and change it once for all, that would be enough credulity as it is, but moreover, it is always the need to spread ideas on a planetary scale that makes me uncomfortable. Proselytism is not very sexy. Wisdom, like poetry, should not need to convince anyone; on the contrary it should capture you in a violent vortex just to spit you out on the sidewalk minutes later, leaving you with the feeling to always run after something you just missed. Bold oversized capital letters are always screaming and lacking in the fertility of subtlety. The desire for consensus, the fetid transpiring need for allegiance is creating a lack of debate, which leaves a sterile platform. Groupings tend to kill discourse. Truisms, rules, tracts, posters, headlines, preachers, dogs, mobilization, internationals. It is all a bit rich. And what a stupid word that is, IN-TER-NA-TION-AL. A crest with a small steel gray oval grid with a blue arrow pointing towards the "*regent*" and "*champion*" "*worldwide*." Logo has lost much meaning. It used to mean speech, discourse, now it is a constructed identity specially designed for people who do not have one and nothing to say. International just means internet. Although I am not exactly nostalgic, I get very irate with loss of meaning, as if I am scared to become dead poor, language wise, as a poet, sapped, polluted, besieged. I am paranoid about the annihilation of meaning. Even though I know that new particles are born in the process of colliding, I cannot help to think that a technocracy happens when technology becomes more important than culture, more important than history. The word memory alludes to computer memory more than anything. Although there is something very poetic about a memory contained in an apple, about a sticky mouse dragging arrows into a web, still, we seem to be constantly saving and deleting ourselves.



None of us looked at each other at the funeral. We gathered only to vanish in all directions minutes after the event. We knew the trial would soon catch up with us anyway. I am trying to recall, not without a strain, the night of the carnage. The confusion of signs. Head throbs. I did swallow several capsules of gamma amino butyric acid but it had the countereffect of multiplying the number of neurons firing to my brains so I could not distinguish the languages of war, militant, terror, birds, court, tournaments, history of all revolutions, crusades, propaganda, axis of evil, the Ten Commandments, 613 seeds in each pomegranate, rewind-play-fast-forward, animals becoming intense, XXX, excess. Dali's paranoiac critical method is the Surrealists' most important legacy. The ability of the brain to perceive links between things which rationally are not linked. I just stepped a notch too deep, beyond the ability to systematize because of a lack of differentiation between the state of the world and my heartbeat. As if Foucault's *dispositif* had been all encompassing, therefore irrelevant, beyond mechanisms, more than prisons and madhouses, more than Agamben's cigarette, more than facebook and twitter, but all systems of capture in one single huge machine. We are all wikipecified. They put us in a van without futile brutality. They were not used to be called for an art opening and deal with skinny vegan types with big glasses. When they heard that we were using machine guns they expected to find a mad crack house or some mafia insider bloodshed. I think they misheard the word Manifesto for Mafioso, both subscribing to organized crime. We were more like deserters. All I remember is not the events that followed but what is still processing in my psyche which became an accelerator of particles, a probability theory, a festival of paranoia, a convention in hypertension, a vast interstice of abstract intuitions, a necklace of neurosis, an archipelago of life savers. In my delirium, all of our previous actions were compiled in one big strategic impulse springing from the immensely puerile and stupid idea that the world could be changed. Giant close up of conflicted agglomerations of pubescent hormonal imbalance. Revolution as adolescence. It is always painful for philosophy teachers to teach youth about idealism, its absolute essential nature as well as by the same absolute, its unavoidable failure. Tentative angry cells marching in deep layers of crap towards freedom. Central America, squeezed in a protest, some march of the dead, other people's rights, no idea how I ended up there, thinking about something else and the crowd screaming *El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido*. The cry of the vanquished. I was so irritated by the massive movement, the us, the we again. The consensus. That is just it, the consensus of it all which I find most suffocating. What is scary about consensus is that people stop thinking by themselves and it is sufficient to rally around a set of ideas, someone else's vision, blindfolded. Unanimity as a lack of opposition. Scary. Even the term leftwing nowadays does not mean anything else than a consensus between individuals who do not need to read anymore. One just has to prove one lives on the eastside of things and that one is pro-Palestinian, pro-environment, does not own a car, despises fur and hates people with money. Burning books by not reading them. The blind lefties are just as wearing as the westside jocks, perky lululemon *derrière*, designated spot for their burnt plastic coffee on the top of



the stroller. It's just a set of preconceived ideas, values and behaviors. Ever since that last collective overdose I cannot even be on a bicycle path without feeling part of a benevolent brotherhood supra consciousness of exemplary non-smoking passive aggressive citizens who recycle on the right day without a miss. Bicycle gear, especially the shape of the helmet, makes me violent. I never escape contempt. It is a chronic condition. It's awful. I am just learning to live with it.

While we were waiting for Security, I heard a sardonic ritornelle. Assaults, like revolutions, are reversible. Being caught is like a domino effect, a love triangle. Lion becoming sheep. As a child I always reveled in front of any types of reversible garments, and the trickster feeling of it all still provokes in me the same fascination. An episode from *Twilight Zone*, Peter Falk who plays a Latin revolutionary rapidly turning into a dictator once in power, seeing enemies of the party through his personal mirror. Under the intellectual dictatorship of the collective, whoever had the pretension to aspire to an individual thought was rapidly marginalized, ostracized, nailed. There was nothing else to say because when you abstract all planes to a line and all lines to a point then there is not much space to add anything. At the end of it all, they looked like members of a dysfunctional family around the table of a dinner that seriously went wrong. What happened I think was a lack of experience with chance. They forgot to invite it. Captive of their own rules, they could not even intervene at the right moment to salvage the best as they took the oath to the *laissez-faire*. They were so pedagogical in thinking that art should be useful, utilitarian and functional. I was a bit shocked as I have always felt that art was at best of times, useless, amoral, apolitical, anti-didactic, futile, pulling from that nothingness its own relevance, its own power and a certain mystique. By definition, the opposite of creation is abolition, annihilation, destruction, counterfeit, copy, imitation, nothingness. Thus, art would be opposed to all of the above, even when it seeks to abolish, annihilate, destroy, forge, copy, imitate, nothingness. It is obvious that the only way to destroy the desert is to build on its surface. Of course that writing is to strafe, to attack ground targets hidden in white planes, with automatic gunfire from a low-flying aircraft. Speaking is doing violence to silence, breathing is saying no. Creation relates just as much to genesis as it does to the nuclear bomb. Making art is perpetually creating and destroying the universe. We are all wonderers, false pleaders in search of ephemeral immortalities. Some with the arrogance of the forger tend the surface of things, while others, with the humility of the sexton, spend their time digging graves. Libraries are cemeteries for the immortals. The delicate gesture of opening a book for a genie to pop out, as if the authors wrote just for you. For who else?

Is it not a relief to know that even dedicating our entire life to study one aspect of one single thing would be only to scratch its surface? That alone should be enough to internalize the multiple versus the consensus. To know that the process of thinking is about sorting out the identical, that in order to comprehend, we need to differentiate, having a thought would thus be producing sameness in order to survive chaos.

Therefore, our thought processes would be nothing more than self-preservation reflexes. Our great ideas would be hijacked by the safeguard of our political and economical positions. That sheds light on the history of philosophy. Anyhow, that one artist comes up with his own sets of ideas and constraints is a given, a necessary thing, a frame of work, but the question is why to make it universal. As if Bergson is more right or less relevant than Spinoza, Leibniz closer or farther to enlightenment than Lévinas, Sartre lesser than Deleuze, and Confucius? Each philosopher's life's work is a corridor, a passageway, bridging to a room opening onto another room, personal discourse engendering new ones to infinity. A chain of ideas. Ideas about chains. Art as missing links. I see in art today a resistance about making a front, not by simple disengagement, but with a gained skepticism, resisting the new, the constituted movement, the consolidated aesthetic, the concealed tendency, the *sous-vide*. While crispy outside and tender inside are perhaps preferable, there is no need to invest this preference with propaganda and design at once a whole movement around it. I prefer to understand that the new and the old is not a question anymore. The old, being tangibly vaster, and the new in need to prove itself as equally interesting. In face of the awkwardness of living today knowing we will die tomorrow, the huge task of elevating the viewer above his quotidian is already heroic - imposing, in an overloaded world, yet another image, yet another text, as something necessary - art thrives in that tension. The work IS the manifesto. Suddenly I was not feeling well at all. I must have fainted for a while because the security guards dressed in black were now all wearing white. Change of guard. Uniforms. *Uniformity*. We all wear uniforms. Even nudity nowadays has become a uniform. A woman is never truly naked. The whole room started to spin. I was falling again, even though I was already lying down. Everything was turning, the room, the events, the globe, my head, eternity. We are all falling. Every step we take is defying gravity. Standing up we belong to ourselves. Sitting down we are half surrendering. Lying down, we are fatally conquered; by love, by sleep or by death.

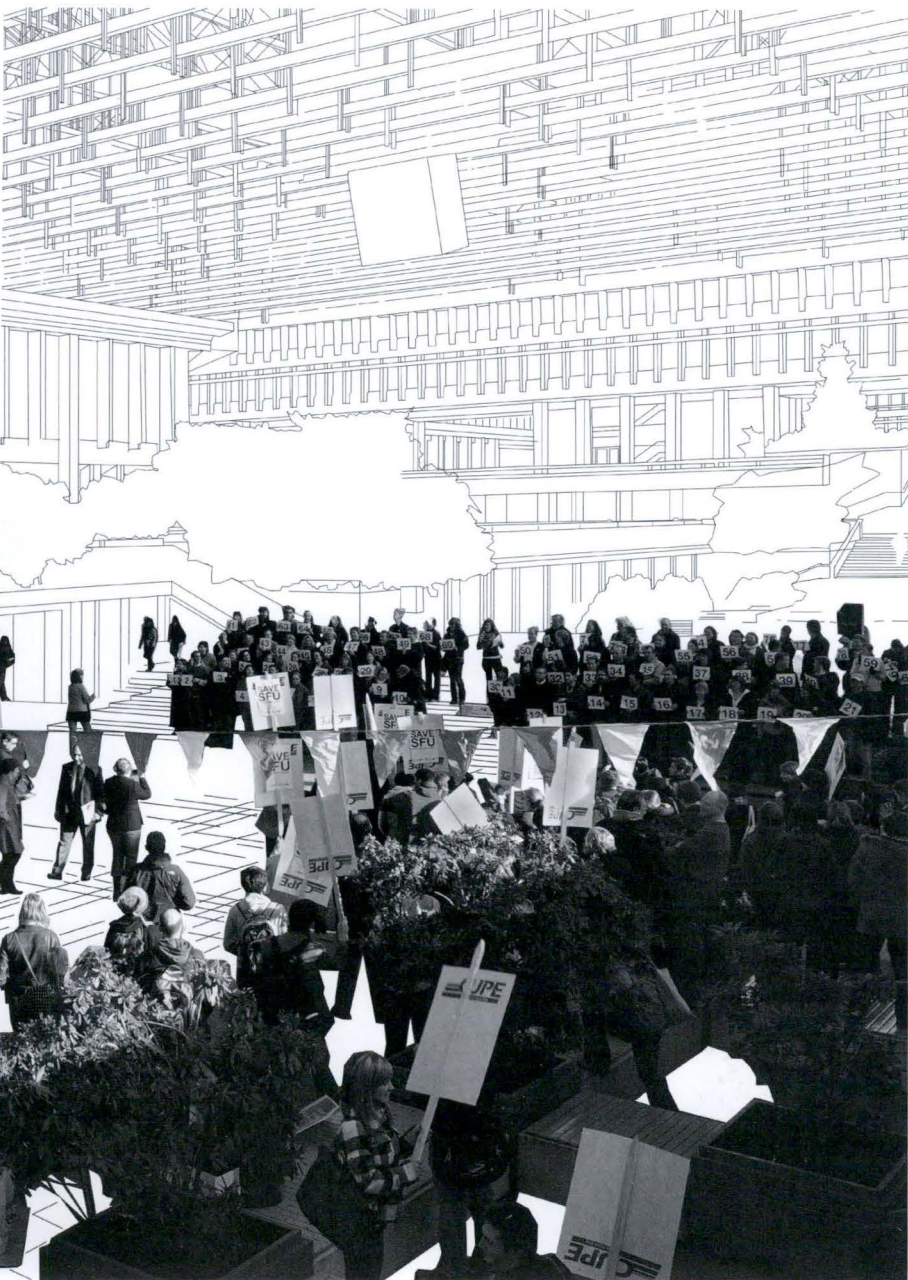
In court, everyone was wearing black again. Left, right, round table, panels, gates, defendants, plaintiff, precious wood, togas, frank incense. Before the questions started to fire up in our direction on the motives of our operations, we had individually internalized the deep meaning of table, chair, floor, ceiling, and walls. I then recalled that piece where the artist had screwed the horses of a merry-go-around in the opposite direction of its base. It was something about the obsolescence of revolutions and counter-revolutions. I am not sure, because the more you play with *détournement*, revolving and devolving, it is revolution itself that gets neutralized. We are all pattern seekers. We distinguish motifs while looking for models, decipher tendencies while drawing laws. Masons of concepts, weavers of signs, we trace dotted lines between things and beings, between life and death. We are all misbranded, blinds leading blinds, demonstrators, protestors, stickmen with big ideas. Universal junkies. Night owls and early birds. Leeches and crocodiles. Suitcases and butterflies. Absurdity as a means of survival. *DADA doesn't speak. DADA has no fixed idea. DADA doesn't catch flies.*



## SABINE BITTER AND HELMUT WEBER / Super Students







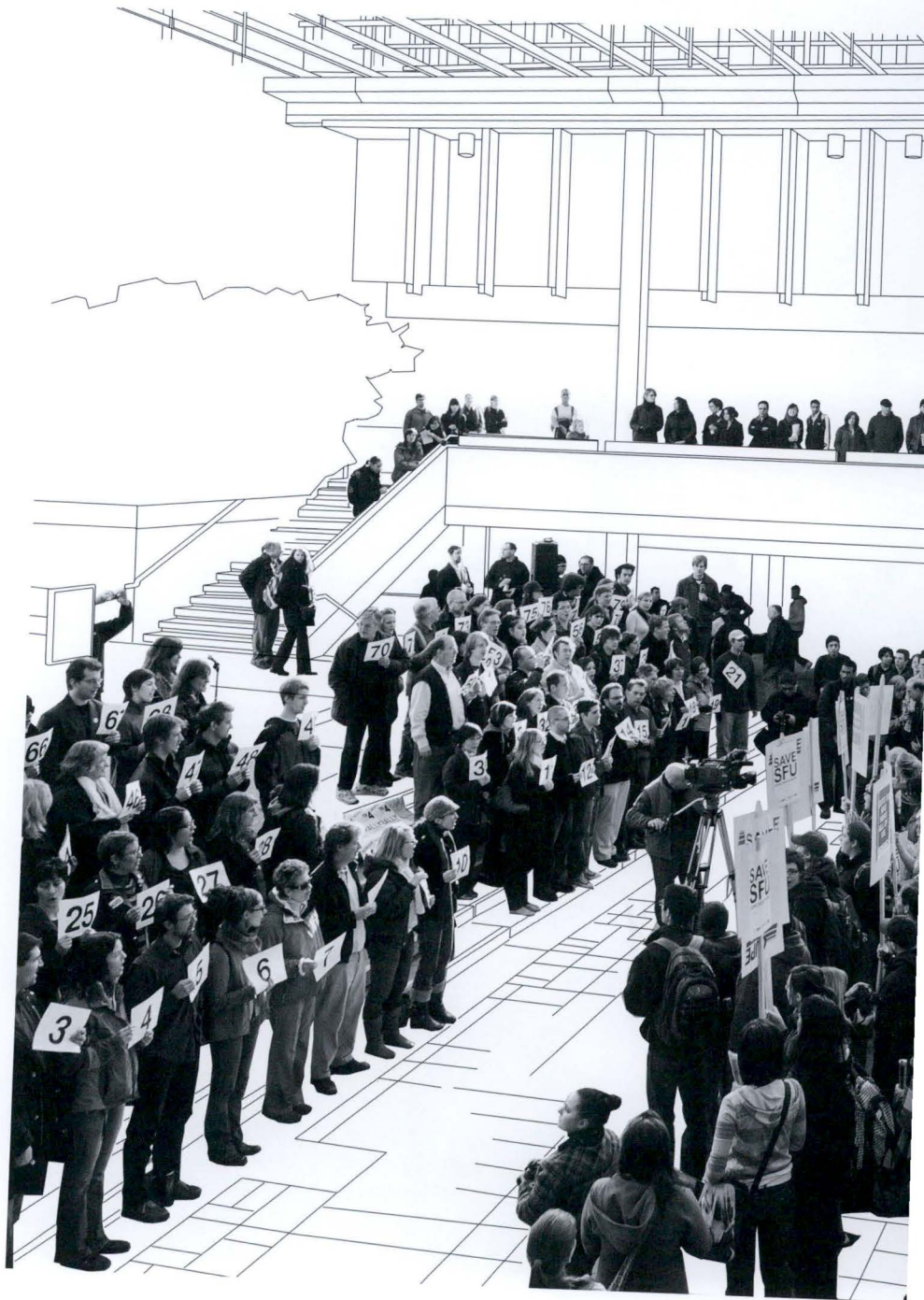
*Super Students #2, Public education is the best economic recovery tool  
(Vancouver 2009), 2010*







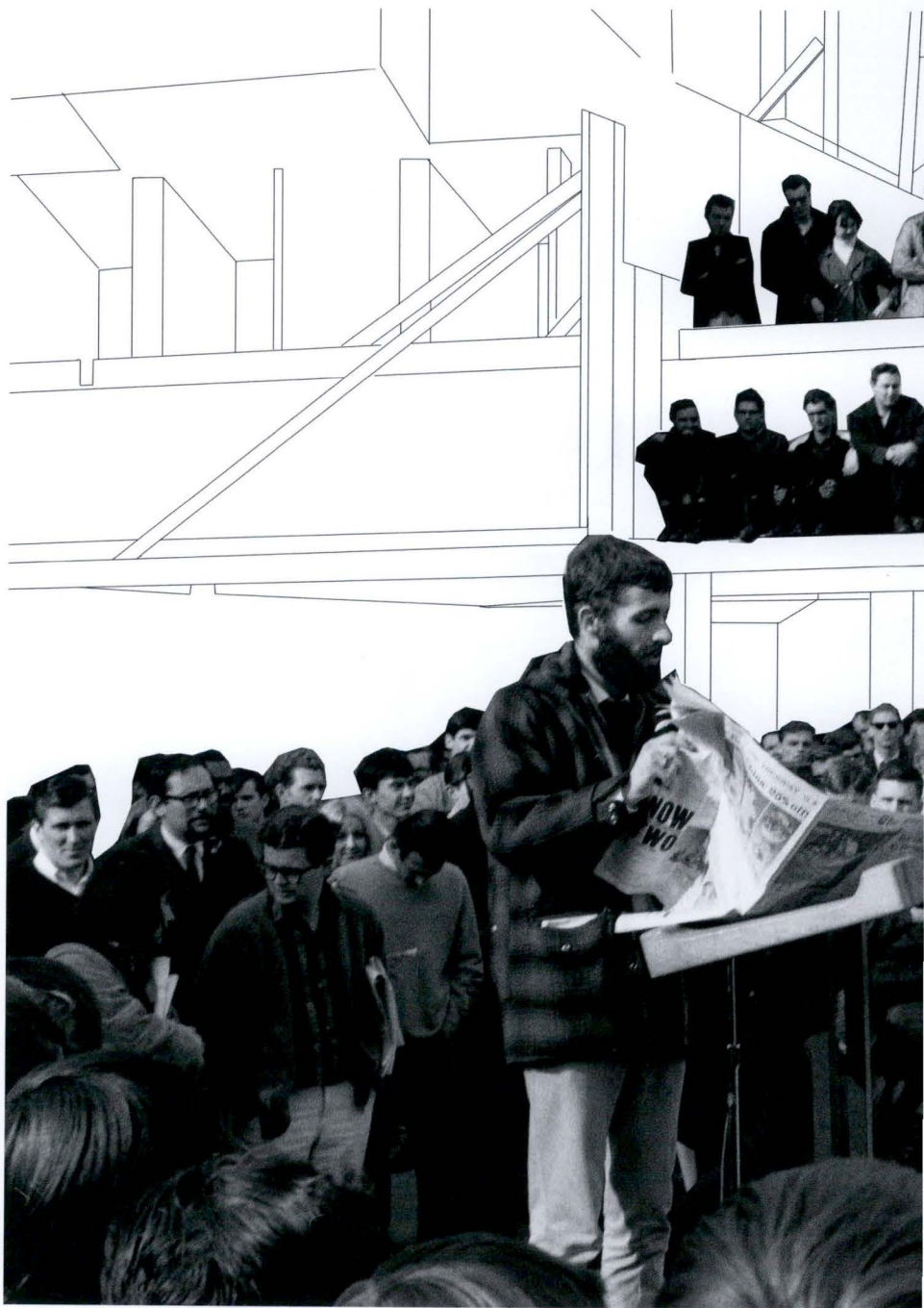






*Super Students #4, Where is our bail out? (Vancouver 2009), 2010*









*Super students #6, "It was you who started the issue, it was you who gave us support, it was you who won this victory" (Geoff Mercer, fired and reinstated T.A., March 21, 1967), 2010*

## PROVAG / manifesto of the provisional avant-garde

1. the provisional avant-garde is currently accepting resignations
2. the provisional avant-garde is provisional
3. the provisional avant-garde unclenches the map
4. the provisional avant-garde (provag) is a little machine beside the tracks
5. the provisional avant-garde (provag) decrees nul and void all awards bestowed by the Governor General of Kanada until further notice
6. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will occasionally enter the academy to use the washrooms
7. who was that small brown-haired boy in short pants — the provisional avant-garde
8. the provisional avant-garde (provag) writes on rather than about the city
9. those cows that are clouds on the plateau; they are the provisional avant-garde (provag)
10. if it looks like the avant-garde it's not the provisional avant-garde (provag)
11. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will have its cake and eat it again and again
12. the provisional avant-garde (provag) is not a system of pointing
13. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will not dig deeper
14. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will not shake the hand that feeds it
15. the provisional avant-garde (provag) is neither clever nor ironic nor warm-hearted
16. the small black squirrel that leapt from the tree branch to the roof is the provisional avant-garde (provag)
17. the provisional avant-garde (provag) hates poetry
18. the provisional avant-garde (provag) hates fiction
19. the provisional avant-garde (provag) hates non-fiction
20. the provisional avant-garde (provag) hates drama
21. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will do-si-do
22. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will pause now to get the fuck out of Afghanistan
23. the provisional avant-garde (provag) is environmentally friendly: it will continuously recycle the same characters and plots



24. the provisional avant-garde (provag) discounts prizes, contests, literary magazines, journals and blogs, mainstream, small and micro presses
25. the provisional avant-garde (provag) repudiates readings, open mics, slams and spoken word, creative writing workshops, and cocktail parties
26. the provisional avant-garde (provag) washes its hands of museums, private and artist run galleries, private commissions and public art
27. the provisional avant-garde (provag) will drink and sleep sous les ponts
28. the value of the provisional avant-garde = 574
29.  $\text{provag} = 40+60+90+6 = 196$
30. the provisional avant-garde (provag) is a continual permutation of letters
31. the provisional avant-garde (provag) concedes that writing is not enough
32. the provisional avant-garde (provag) is incomplete
33. what webbed tales will emerge from those tailings ponds: the provisional avant-garde (provag)
34. the provisional avant-garde (provag) guarantees a high return on your investment
35. the provisional avant-garde (provag) declares as follows

# THE GEORGIA STRAIGHT MANIFESTO

Contributions are now being accepted: give  
yr \$ to Peter Auxier, Dan MacLeod,  
Pierre Coupey, Rick Kiklaeff. Make cheques  
payable to GASTOWN PRESS, & send to  
883 HAMILTON or SOS PRIOR.

MARCH 30 1967

TO ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN FIGHTING LIES/PROPAGANDA/  
TERRORISM

the events of the last months in vancouver have made it  
clear that now is the time to establish a truly FREE  
PRESS. it is clear that the money interests of the  
local press, the local 'authorities', the establishment  
(educational & otherwise), discourage the communication  
of accurate facts to the people, prohibit freedom of  
thought & action, prevent multi-level discussion of the  
important issues confronting society

the aims of a free press in vancouver:

- 1 to fight repressive legislation, the abuse of police  
power  
to uphold civil liberties  
to encourage civil disobedience when & where necessary
- 2 to discuss issues, not to condemn people  
to invite free exchange of opinion, radical or otherwise  
to provide accurate information (on psychedelics, etc  
to detect lies, expose false assumptions
- 3 to discuss education, true & false  
to provide depth criticism of poetry, art, film  
to discuss the new environment & media  
to discuss reform & revolution (accurate responses to  
human, social situations

love freedom humanity truth  
radical opinion imagination research communion  
MAKE WAY FOR MAGIC! PLACE A LA MAGIE!  
FREE PRESS, NOT REPRESS.

HUMAN BEINGS! ARTISTS! ANGELS! CHILDREN OF THE NEW SUN!

if you wish to discuss the aims of a free press, its name,  
the means to set it up, its floating editorial board, its  
stance & scope, come to

883 hamilton st (corner smythe  
sunday, april 2  
7:30 pm

or call pierre coupey, 736-6771 evenings after 8 pm



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# McGeer Irresponsible

see p.4

**FREE PRESS VANCOUVER'S**  
**georgia straight**  
10¢

VOL 1 NO 1 / MAY 5-10-1994

## great BUS STOP BUST

Picture a sunny spring afternoon at 4th and Arbutus, and the S.C. 1970s bustop during rush hour with its dozens of people standing or sitting on the grass or vacant lot behind.

Substitute 30 of the Vancouver Diggers and replace the bus stop with a paddy wagon and you have the scene as it was Monday, April 24, when the fuzz picked up 4 Digger passengers for "vagrancy". It proved to be the most spectacular "vagrancy" bust since several people were arrested last summer in front of the Vancouver Public Library during business hours, for loitering. That case was thrown out to a hearing, and the victims were given a "stern reprimand". This time, the much-labeled hippies were not so lucky.

The diggers had gathered at the Phase 4 behind the bus stop, so as not to disturb customers. Consequently, the diggers watched the cops approach slowly. All then moved off the lot except for Victor Avery, Roger Smith, Julius Costa, and Elaine Silser. As they explained to the man (see photo), they were not harming the owner's lot, nor were they sleeping on it, as told in the Sun.

The very next morning, Elaine was brought before a magistrate and, too confused to attempt to seek legal counsel, was given a suspended sentence (hence a criminal record) and ordered to post a \$100 bond. She was finally forced to leave town the following Friday midnight.

The remaining three retained counsel and got their cases remanded. They were scheduled to appear on May 5.

Police harassment increases, and the war between the young hip and creeping old fogeyism is being escalated.



Police harassment is on the rise in the Kitsilano area. These people were busted at the bus stop on 4th and Ar-

butus, when police noted on an irate but mistaken 101-woman complaint. Important figure in center is Vic Avery.

### WAR Crimes Tribunal

TORONTO — The first meeting of the International War Crimes Tribunal ends May 6. Its purpose is to investigate U.S. violation of the principles established by the Nuremberg trial and rules fixed by international agreements.

Georgia Straight is now gathering material on the Tribunal for the next and future issues.

Meanwhile, a Canadian Committee has been set up to collect evidence, distribute information, and to accept donations for the Tribunal. They are: The Canadian Committee for the International War Crimes Tribunal, 6-758 Yonge St., Toronto 5, Ontario.



### PROVOS PROVOKE POLICE

— CANADIAN PRESS PRESS (Ottawa)

"....AMSTERDAM IS A SWINGING TOWN.... peopled by DEPENDABLE, honest DUTCHMEN. ....It has a matchless cleanliness, a wide open 'something for everybody' nightlife, Rembrandt paintings, battalions of bicycles, and so many arteries of canals winding through the city that it overshadows even Venice. It is a throbbing, modern-day business wonder coupled with culture and old world charm in amazing abundance. The old and the new and the unusual sweeping you along in a present-day riot of traveller delights. And you get your money's worth in a very literal sense. The prices are among the lowest in Europe. DUTCH FRIENDLINESS is a big national product and they pass the time of day with you in your own language almost as if they never spoke any other. So come on down, up over to Amsterdam and start making memories...this is the place where the ACTION is..."

BIGGEST SURPRISE OF ALL? THE PROVOS! The provokers, who are the grooviest anywhere. Now! There is no doubt. In the first issue of *Provot* they call on the 'provotariat' of the world

"beatniks, pleiners, nozems, teddy boys, bluesmen noirs, gamblers, raggare, stiljagi, mangapi, mods, students, artists, rockers, delinquents, anarchists, ban-the-bombers, misfits...those who don't want a career, who lead irregular lives..." Increasingly the youth of first Holland, then Belgium, France and England has risen with them against mediocrity, the self and soul destruction of our times. Comes Canada. But we have no traditions like this. WE WILL START ONE! IN THE STREETS! SOON!

Free Press initiates and will continue a far-ranging analysis and report on this new front against the spectacularly well-packaged creeping death. For starters, a few Provo exploits from various sources...

Discontent is ready to explode in a great number of places: in Amsterdam it was largely due to the fantastic energy of one man, the artist Robert

cont. page 5



## PIERRE COUPEY / Plains and Straits: On the Founding of The Georgia Straight

Jenny: Pierre, can you begin with the events leading up to the writing of this manifesto which led to the founding of *The Georgia Straight*?

Pierre: There was a general atmosphere of anti-hippie and anti-youth actions on the part of the Vancouver police and various establishments that would refuse to serve you if you looked like you were hippie-ish. There was a general atmosphere of repression in the city.

At that time Tom Campbell was the particularly obnoxious mayor of Vancouver. There had been many instances of police brutality. It got to the point where it felt as if one had a responsibility to do something because the paranoia on both sides—the fear and the misinformation—was such that there could be no real dialogue. And *The Vancouver Sun* was the Fox News of the time, full of stories about crazed druggies and propaganda to terrify parents: “watch out for your high school kids, those evil guys on 4th Avenue are going to get them.” There was an undercurrent of fear and hostility.

Milton Acorn used to stay over at our place at times and I was close friends with Rick Kitaeff, another Montreal expatriate who had been in Creative Writing at McGill and then at UBC as well. Rick, Milton, and I started discussing the idea of doing an underground paper. Of course, we were all swept up by the currents of the time. We were reading *The Village Voice* and *The Free Press* in San Francisco, and the Berkeley paper, I can’t remember the name of it now... *The Berkeley Barb*? And we were reading *I.F. Stone’s Weekly* and debating the Vietnam War and what to do about that.

Given all the issues, I decided we had to do something. For some people it was about legalizing marijuana, etc., but it seemed to me we weren’t taking care of the political end of things, and we were leaving ourselves vulnerable to being stereotyped in ways that were simply not accurate and certainly not helpful to anyone—so the idea for the paper came about. I just decided to draw something up.

Jenny: This manifesto was your text?

Pierre: Yes. I expect I would have gone through it very closely with Milton or Rick. I can't imagine I wouldn't have. Bill Bissett was very supportive and we had a lot of fun running it off his Gestetner machine, the *blewointment* Gestetner. I think Rick and I just stapled the manifesto up on telephone poles up and down 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and handed it out in coffee shops and on the street.

Rick's house at 555 Hamilton was where the meeting took place. It was well attended. That's when I met Dan McLeod, shortly before the meeting. I hadn't met him by the time I'd written this up. Rick and Milton of course were there, and Stan Persky, Peter Auxier, Peter Hlookoff, a whole bunch of people. We should have had a photograph taken.

Brian: Many of the student papers—I'm thinking mainly of the US—were university-based, which made them targets for infiltration. The FBI even invented some newspapers as fronts for collecting information about student radicals. Was it a conscious decision not to affiliate yourselves with the university at the beginning?

Pierre: I felt very much that this had to be from the community itself. That was a powerful principle for me—it had to be something we all wanted to do together and keep alive together, so we weren't looking for any institutional support at all. It had to be as independent and self-reliant as possible. And Milton's support was crucial: at that meeting he gave an entire month's pension cheque, about \$250 at that time, and I think we raised about \$500 in all.

Brian: As far as manifestos go it's really quite sane and pragmatic, I think, not a lot of exclamations and declamations and...

Pierre: No, no, no. It's certainly not a futurist manifesto.

Brian: Last year at the 2009 Plains of Abraham festival in Quebec, a public reading of the FLQ manifesto was scheduled. There were predictable and rehearsed objections to the reading, of course, as a kind of document in defense of terrorism or something along those lines. Has the manifesto lost its edge? It seems it may have in both the political and the art worlds.

Pierre: You know, we still need to address many of these issues. Everyone today is so cynical and jaded and comfortable. There seems to be no capacity for outrage any-



more. We don't encourage much civil disobedience anymore, do we? Back then there was a clear connection between what was happening in poetry and art and film, and the political landscape, and I wanted those two things to be drawn together. I still think those things need to be drawn together more today. And certainly we don't have the kind of in-depth criticism of poetry, art, and film in the popular media that we need to have.

Jenny: And its relation to the 1948 Quebec manifesto *Refus Global*? There's that brief quotation from *Refus Global* at the bottom of the page: "place à la magie!"

Pierre: ...yes, make way for magic! make a "place for magic!" And in my memory, I thought I'd quoted more extensively from *Refus Global* and I thought I'd written down "place aux hazards objectifs," make way for objective hazard, which I loved as a statement. Ah, I'm glad I didn't put in "make way for love." Anyway, for me the Automatistes and Riopelle and Borduas, they had a huge impact on my imagination growing up in Montreal.

Brian: My favorite part of this manifesto is that it mobilizes people on all of these broad ranging issues, with a fairly strident tone, and then ends by saying, "Call me after 8 if you're interested." I kind of enjoyed that closing line at the end there, it reels it in and keeps it on a very grounded and mundane level.

Pierre: Yes, exactly. It rallied whoever wanted to be rallied and we got there.

Jenny: You went very quickly from this manifesto into the first edition of *The Georgia Straight*. A very effective manifesto.

Pierre: Yeah, we went into action right away.

But after that first issue came out, the reaction from *The Vancouver Sun* and the city council was very strong,

**georgia straight**

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They were doing their best to shut us down. The climate for free speech was not there and that was why we had to speak up and had to fight for it. So it was a fight, it was a struggle, and I have to give Dan and Rick and Peter and so many others immense kudos for having the tenacity to carry it through with us in those early days, there's no question about that, despite whatever else happened later, despite what *The Georgia Straight* became, because we were fighting every inch of the way.

40



## **GREG BACHAR / The Only Manifesto is the Blank Page**

The only manifesto is the blank page.

## HADLEY+MAXWELL / Dear Brian, and Verb List Compilations 1967-8 & 2010

Berlin, November 1, 2010

Dear Brian,

Today is the deadline and we have made the decision not to write a manifesto for your issue of *The Capilano Review*. We don't have it in us. We're fairly certain that this is not a time for manifestos anymore, and we've come to think this is because we actually understand the relationship between language and action quite differently now than in 1908 when the Futurists wrote that first, frightening, art manifesto. Let us try to explain.

There is a piece by Claire Fontaine that comes as close to a contemporary manifesto as anything we've read. It's got all the signs of a manifesto: the imperatives, the confidence, the idealism—however there is something missing. When we compare it to those early avant-garde texts like the Vorticist, Constructivist, or any of the Dadaist manifestos, the affect is completely different. There is a quality of earnestness in the early texts that doesn't come across any longer. We are simply not convinced that Claire Fontaine really believes their own text will incite anything. This is not merely an element of this particular artist-collective's style; we think it is a symptom of the current state of artistic discourse. Have we become so split from our own production that we cannot desire what we write any longer? Or is it that we no longer misrecognize the potentiality in the means of artistic production, of writing, or the apparatus of language in general? Claire Fontaine describe the aporia between desire and linguistic imperative beautifully in the manifesto itself: "Explaining what human strike is, how to map it, how to articulate it, is like giving a technical lesson of sexual education to the person we wish to seduce."<sup>1</sup>

These older manifestos don't have this problem, in fact they act as a kind of nostalgic haven of passion. They declare, proclaim, admit, sing, establish, affirm, renounce, start, consider, take, submit, want, propose, and dispute. They say: We are resolved,

<sup>1</sup> Claire Fontaine, "Human strike has already begun," in *The End of the World As We Know It*, ed. Bettina Steinbrügge (France: La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, 2010).



We are justified, We await, We call for, We demand, and We need. Before World War I, they glorified violence. After World War I, they renounced manifestos that glorified violence. To glorify and renounce: these are verbs we do not use in the arts right now—at least not with straight faces. And maybe we can't read the century-old manifestos with straight faces either, but we are still impressed by the pure determination of "Drunk with energy, we are revenants thrusting the trident into heedless flesh. We are streams of curses in the tropical abundance of vertiginous vegetation, resin and rain is our sweat, we bleed and burn with thirst, our blood is strength."<sup>2</sup> Belief is intoxicating.

So instead of a manifesto we're sending you two lists in hopes that the difference between the two will bring to light something of the historical mutation of the relationship between language and action we're thinking about. The first is Richard Serra's *Verb List Compilation: Actions to Relate to Oneself* from 1967-8. The second is a list we compiled recently from verbs commonly used in press-releases and artist statements; we've called it *Verb List Compilation II: Actions to Relate to Actions to Relate to Oneself*. The idea is that one may combine Serra's list with ours to describe contemporary strategies for art production. For example, you can roll something to explore it, or crease to articulate it; you can shave to reveal something or crumple to deconstruct it.<sup>3</sup> We started to compile our (updated) list a few years ago when we were first receiving multiple announcements from e-flux every day in our inbox. The point being that the current state of art discourse manages to turn many actions into end-games, where deconstruction is a necessary justification for crumpling, for example, and we feel like this collection of possible combinations that make up the actions of art is a fair reflection of how language is used—for better or for worse—to articulate material practice today. Either the press release represents the common use of language that represses the contemporary manifesto (because of its overabundant and indiscriminate declarations), or it is the site of the new manifesto. Until it makes us feel like we were just cut from a marble block and we're ready to fuck the artist who freed us, we're not ready to write it in another form.

Yours sincerely,

Hadley+Maxwell

<sup>2</sup> Tzara, Tristan, "Dada Manifesto," 1918, in Chipp, Herschel B., *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1968).

<sup>3</sup> As Monica Sosnowska's 1:1 did in the Polish pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 2007.

Richard Serra, "Verb List Compilation: Actions to Relate to Oneself"  
[1967-1968]

to roll	to curve	to scatter	to modulate
to crease	to lift	to arrange	to distill
to fold	to inlay	to repair	of waves
to store	to impress	to discard	of electromagnetic
to bend	to fire	to pair	of inertia
to shorten	to flood	to distribute	of ionization
to twist	to smear	to surfeit	of polarization
to dapple	to rotate	to compliment	of refraction
to crumple	to swirl	to enclose	of tides
to shave	to support	to surround	of reflection
to tear	to hook	to encircle	of equilibrium
to chip	to suspend	to hole	of symmetry
to split	to spread	to cover	of friction
to cut	to hang	to wrap	to stretch
to sever	to collect	to dig	to bounce
to drop	of tension	to tie	to erase
to remove	of gravity	to bind	to spray
to simplify	of entropy	to weave	to systematize
to differ	of nature	to join	to refer
to disarrange	of grouping	to match	to force
to open	of layering	to laminate	of mapping
to mix	of felting	to bond	of location
to splash	to grasp	to hinge	of context
to knot	to tighten	to mark	of time
to spill	to bundle	to expand	of cabonization
to droop	to heap	to dilute	to continue
to flow	to gather	to light	

Found on ubuweb: <[http://www.ubu.com/concept/serra\\_verb.html](http://www.ubu.com/concept/serra_verb.html)>

Hadley+Maxwell: "Verb List 2: Actions to Relate to Actions to Relate to One's Audience"  
[2010]

to explore	to work out	to communicate	to draw attention to
to articulate	to work through	to refer to	to assume
to experiment	to work in	to appropriate	to disseminate
to uncover	to work at	to expropriate	to connect
to reveal	to work on	to antagonize	to imagine
to describe	to position	to agonize	to allow
to compare	to compose	of discourse	to elucidate
to create	to react to	of dialogue	to propagate
to deconstruct	to reveal	of belief	to explicate
to construct	to hide	of conversation	to interpret
to confuse	to uncover	of tolerance	to mediate
to orient	to orient	of diversity	to state
to disorient	to demonstrate	to negotiate	to karaoke
to formulate	to illuminate	to engage	to connect
to propose	to use	to categorize	to strategize
to stimulate	to put to use	to reject	of conversion
to offer	to make use of	to summarize	of diversion
to consider	to renovate	to juxtapose	of faith
to focus	to frustrate	to illustrate	of relation
to gather	to make room for	to challenge	to devote
to preserve	to seek	to interrogate	to organise
to deem	to see	to deal with	to direct
to qualify	to look	to investigate	to invite
to quantify	to get at	to penetrate	to narrate
to pose	to relate with	to home in on	to employ
to question	to relate to	to mount	to reconsider
to transform	to relate	to conceive	



## JULES ROMAINS / Poetry and Unanimous Feelings

Translated by Louis Cabri

In the contemporary epoch, civilized human life has taken new characteristics. Crucial changes have given another meaning to our existence. No doubt it is banal to state that a transformational change is underway, when in all periods of history change simply manifests the active and productive force of the species. But it is worth noting in each period the meaning of the change. Here are facts some deplore, but no one contests: people's increasing tendency to accumulate in cities; uninterrupted development of social relations; stronger and tighter bonds established by work, by occupation, by common pleasures; ever-larger imprint of the public on the private, of the collective on the individual.

It is impossible that such a mode of living has not determined a corresponding mode of feeling. The moment the individual ceased to be isolated, the individual has been tested by impressions born out of relations with others. The amorous passion is the most ancient and the most known, if not the unique, example. One is not the inhabitant of a village, of a town, of a city, the member of a family, of a group, the citizen of a nation, without suffering the repercussion in one's spirit and heart. This *immaterial action* of all on each remains most frequently confused and unconscious for even the subject. But it aspires to become clear and distinct to the degree that it pursues the contemporary evolution I signaled to above. It does not consist of that vague social pity, nor of the conventional humanitarianism Prudhomme and Homais have discredited. I would like there to be no matter for confusion on this point, for anyone. Far profounder feelings agitate, unbeknownst to us, the most humble among us. In diverse undertones we perceive the continuous, progressive, tyrannical influence society exercises upon us; we imagine the part of our being it has conquered, the deformations it imposes on our ego; we tremble at being absorbed by the human milieu that envelopes us; we savour the strange voluptuousness this kind of nothingness induces in us. Delivered, despite ourselves, body and soul, to the city, we pass from ravishment to revolt. Love's lure is that of social life as well: self's abandonment.

These affects that translate into the heart's language the new relations and the intimate human union are by nature *unanimous*. Even more unanimous still are those affects which are manifested spontaneously by groups, which are affects outside of and beyond individuals. Spectators who fill a theatre, people who plug a street are not only a material assemblage of parties brought together by space, who remain in every other respect independent of each other. The beings who constitute these more-or-less enduring agglomerations do not remain random neighbours. Each one, without doubt, has special reasons for finding himself or herself there. But the theatre, the street, in themselves become a total reality, alive, *gifted with a global existence and with feelings of unanimity*. Some philosophers, some sociologists have already suspected these phenomena; a crowd psychology has been sketched out. Not one satisfactory result has been obtained. Observation has remained summary, superficial, and has resulted in but a few thready comparisons. The procedures of scientific analysis end here. Such feelings—too indeterminate, too unconscious, too distant from the precision of conceptual language—refuse the coldness of reflection that measures and records.

But is it not precisely the role of Poetry to give expression and shape to emotions humankind has been content to experience without formulation? And what is “the shock of the new” if not their brusque awareness brought about thanks to a poet? Unanimist feelings have been sung by no one. But they merit, with the same entitlement as the other feelings, the passionate effort of writers—especially since they offer absolutely new material, which is a precious advantage in these banal times. Such a poetry would respond to the profound needs of our era, will reveal its original essence, and will not limit itself, like Zola or Verhaeren, to describe the gestures, the appearances, the exterior of modern things and *the coloured surface* of collective life. This poetry will be strong and suave, being sufficiently rich to nurture the inspiration of the most diverse talents and the most complete geniuses. In sum, I firmly believe the affective relations between individual and city, thought's totality, the vast movements of consciousness, the colossal fires of human groups are capable of creating a very penetrating lyricism or a superb epic cycle. I believe there is a place in art for “unanimism.”

In truth, it is easy to deny the feelings I invoke here, to attribute to them an imaginary origin. Is the individual heart really interested in communal life? Do we not commit a gross exaggeration by naming the condition of individual absorbed in

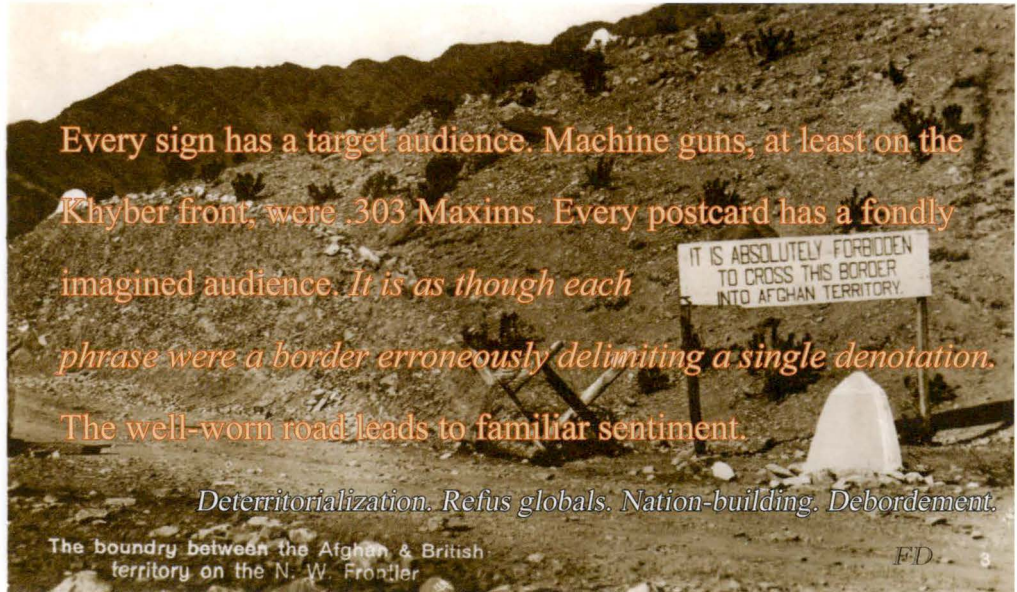
city a “state of feeling”? And the other unanimisms, the theatre, the street, the city, aren’t they literary fictions of an unknown kind? City-consciousness has the air of being an ingenious metaphor.... Common sense insinuates these criticisms; but one must intuitively proceed here by the heart’s divination. Reasoned reflection hasn’t a voice for the moment. And afterwards, may history make reasoned reflection circumspect. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Chateaubriand, followed by Lamartine, celebrated, with an unknown tone, the “indistinctness of passion,” the infinite hopes and despair, the desire for the eternal and the attraction of nothingness, the disgust for living and the inspiration of a supraterrrestrial felicity, there was a Morellet and an Andrieux, reasonable persons, who treated as false, imaginary and ridiculous the beauty of these incredible things that terrified them.

The world did not perceive at first how Chateaubriand and Lamartine were renewing for a century the modern sensibility.

Romains’s manifesto first appeared in *Le Penseur* 4 (April 1905): 121-24. Reprinted in Claude Martin’s *Correspondance: André Gide – Jules Romains* (Paris: Flammarion, 1976), 152-54.



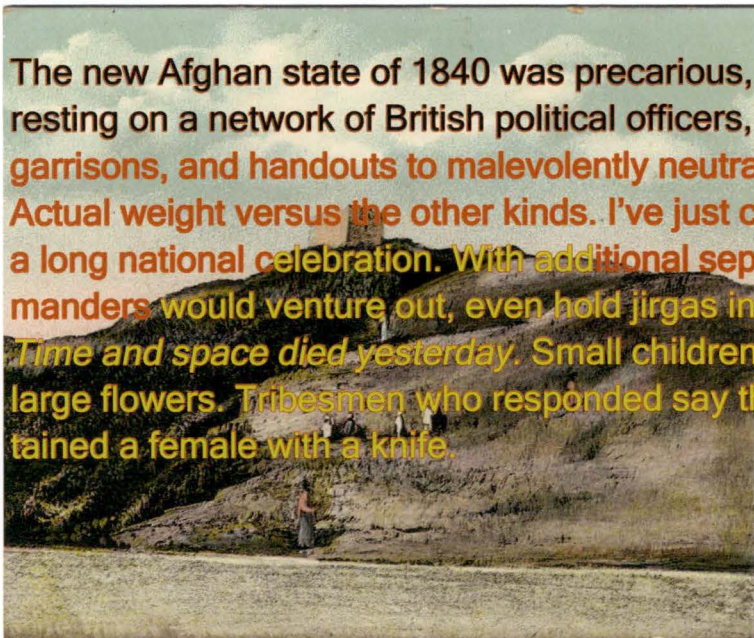
## FRANK DAVEY / Maxims for Assisting Afghanistan



Looking into Afghanistan from Lundi Kotal

Seemingly empty space appears to beckon. The road disappears quickly, although the valley itself stretches several miles before us. Each barrier is a preface to a further barrier. *All that is solid melts into air.* We become convinced that any inhabitants must live in different dimensions, or have properties that render them unreachable by our instruments.

FD



The new Afghan state of 1840 was precarious, resting on a network of British political officers, garrisons, and handouts to malevolently neutral tribal chiefs. Actual weight versus the other kinds. I've just come back after a long national celebration. With additional sepoy's our commanders would venture out, even hold jirgas in the villages. Time and space died yesterday. Small children will wave large flowers. Tribesmen who responded say they have detained a female with a knife.

Fort Maude  
in Khyber Pass.

FD



Jumrood Fort. 10 Miles out of Peshawar.

**Order was restored once thirty-three demonstrators had been shot to death and thirty injured. We have numbered beggars, hermits, opium farmers and prostitutes among the self-employed. Headquarters of the**

**celebrated Khyber Rifles. The Sikh builders of the fort were attacked almost immediately by the Pathan fighters of Dost Mohammed. Instruments of death remain among the most treasured. Summer job seekers face big hurdles. I am neither for them nor against them, and I won't explain myself because I hate common sense.**

FD

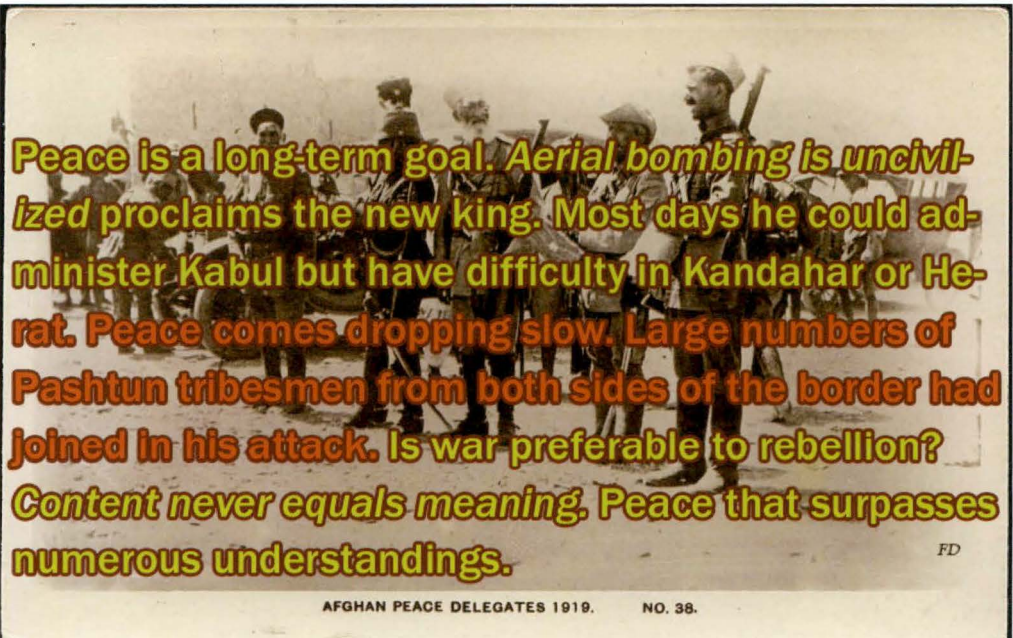
*Roadside bombs. Underground economies.*



*Humanity alone has such talent for causing misery to others. Perhaps we should be elsewhere, building roads, schools for girls. First of all, George said, don't overdrive your lights. Myself, I'd walk a mile. Or I'd look for an eye, an eye in a needle. The freest minds, David said, pass lightly in the patterns of the step. Bless the Arabs of the Atlantic!*

Near Spin Boldak, May 1919

FD



Peace is a long-term goal. Aerial bombing is uncivilized proclaims the new king. Most days he could administer Kabul but have difficulty in Kandahar or Herat. Peace comes dropping slow. Large numbers of Pashtun tribesmen from both sides of the border had joined in his attack. Is war preferable to rebellion? Content never equals meaning. Peace that surpasses numerous understandings.

FD

AFGHAN PEACE DELEGATES 1919.

NO. 38.



# TiC PoP PoP

The Timeless Pupil Of

"The clock turns time from a process of nature into a commodity that can be measured and bought and sold like soap or sultanas."

—George Woodcock, *The Tyranny of the Clock* (1944)

the EYe  
TiC

The manifesto is toned to conviction, it splays open, bursts the differences that make a difference — materially unbound by the paycheques of institutional submission & accommodation, bleeds ungratefully on the white sheets of convention. To abide in full fellowship, black flagged, taunt taut waving to confront the orders of the medal collectors and State distributors.

<Kate Sharpley was a Deptford-born anarchist and anti-World War I activist. Her father and brother were killed in action and her boyfriend (active in an anarcho-syndicalistic union) was listed as missing, believed killed. She suspected, though she had no proof, that he had been shot for mutiny. At the age of 22, when called to receive her family's medals from Queen Mary (wife of George V), she threw the medals back at the Queen, saying "if you like them so much you can have them". The Queen's face was scratched. Kate Sharpley was beaten by police.>

The manifesto by deeds: the sole means of authenticity, the succinct flexing yelp not yet trademarked, a resplendent totality, delicious as the need for emotional truth & of the rudimental tongue.

"Association alone, in place of private property, will serve as the basis for the reign of justice through equality. This is the foundation of the growing ardor of men of the future to make clear & highlight the elements of association."

—Louis-Auguste Blanqui, sometime in prison in the 1830s

Plasticity — institutional and individual — in questions of form and practice the consilience of ideational need and a wealth of imagination — responsive and responsible — an economy that fosters the radically associative — which is the creative: that is it & no masters. a walking in dream to be able to walk at all

Archnemesis of conformity, conformity to the comfort niche of a prepaid connived for lunch, the economic base of the recycled wisdoms, lines of identity — a pencil thin sketch that brokers an intentional pathology/propaganda of psychological asininity — the abuse of history rather than the potentiality of the technological today (a neurotheological infinitude realized and sponsoring a revisioned and anonymous culture — if not now, when?) TiC PoP PoP TiC & tomorrow & tomorrow & tomorrow & a plentitude of alien wonder, without a nation, without a police mentality (which nowadays seems pervasive everywhere), without the nostalgia of a neutral tone and towards a collective perspectivity, developing out the rhythm of autonomy. Dulled with archaic ideologies — the positional machine of general fatness, nauseating looping schmaltz & tailored to infantilisms of every sort & in most departments — a climate of corrupt cliques as the political & cultural atmosphere, the miasma of entertainment as the civil, the status quo knot around the neck, lynching the fortitude of the Blochian not-yet.

Such is our social order, founded on conquest, which has divided populations into victors and vanquished. The logical consequence of such an organization is slavery and deaden affect, depraved selfishness of the ruling/monied class and its minioneds. *Following orders<sup>1</sup> as the base upon which the conservative forces construct reality, pushing a narrative of owners and beggars, the powerful and the powerless, the authorities and the consumer.*



<sup>1</sup> “He continued to rise through the ranks...”: That our military placed a murderous / high functioning psychopath, an obsessive collector of panties, “a pleasant, take charge guy” to be the commander of Canada’s largest air force base speaks to its system of advancement and by extension the entire Canadian hierarchical public system (a garrison mentality exists throughout our institutions — the quintessential Canadian institutions originated from a garrison mentality and maintain a strong psychological link to this past.) Points are given to those lacking a conscience, who are manipulative control freaks who play a good game of golf, or shoot a puck with the buddies, and who, most importantly, follow faithfully the chain of command. Will this be talked about when the movie of the week comes out? No. The story will be that he was only an anomaly, a crazy. Says the media: “Nothing out of the ordinary was going on that we could see and the community still strongly supports the military.” He kept spreadsheets of his crimes and obsessions in his home on Cozy Cove Lane. He was a meticulous bureaucrat, a plain speaking documentarian of his 21<sup>st</sup> Century schizoid life. An upstanding, down to earth Canadian — that is what everyone said of our Col. Russell Williams.



The manifesto comes to liberate, apprehending nothing received, everything illuminated, pure as honey, as the first book published – which was under a creative commons license:<sup>2</sup>

The Diamond Sutra of the Buddha



## Thinking Comes to A Stop

recounted by Walter Benjamin that during the French revolution

The apocryphal story

on the first evening of fighting it turned out that the clocks in towers were being fired on simultaneously and independently from several places in Paris. An eyewitness wrote as follows:

*Qui le croirait! on dit,  
qu'irrités contre l'heure  
De nouveaux Josués  
au pied de chaque tour,  
Tiraient sur les cadrans  
pour arrêter le jour.*



*Who would've thought! As though  
Angered by time's way  
The new Joshuas  
Beneath each tower, they say  
Fired at the dials  
To stop the day.*

“What then is to be done? I haven’t sought my happiness; I have sought after truth. You will find here neither a revelation nor a prophet, but a simple deduction from the spectral analysis and cosmogony of Laplace. These two discoveries make us eternal. Is this a godsend? We should profit from it. Is it a mystification? We should resign ourselves to it.”

—Auguste Blanque, *Eternity Through the Stars* (1872)

<sup>2</sup> The colophon reads: “reverently made for universal free distribution by Wang Jie on behalf of his parents on the fifteenth of the fourth moon of the ninth year of Xian Long (May 11, 868).” Some 580 years before the printing of the Gutenberg Bible.



Time never existed, only beings exist, most don't notice because the entire contraption is rotating on the same spot.

"Is a global electronic intelligence something new, or merely the materialization, on a faster scale, of an intelligence that has existed all along?"

—George Dyson, *Darwin Among the Machines: The Evolution of Global Intelligence*

Attention to the future is an intrinsic element in culture (as in Ernst Bloch's "Das Prinzip Hoffnung" — "The Principle of Hope"). The predicament of human mortality and our always increasing dependence on the technological fix presents us as beings perpetually looking forward.

Think about the muzzle climb, that is the movement of the rifle caused by combined recoil. Meaning is not in interpretation but in transit. Most of the arts embrace a contradictorily connived naivety to solidify in one way or another a self, where one does not exist.

**After the  
clocks are shot, the  
next thing to do is  
to shoot the self, to  
produce a boundary event  
that reveals no boundary.**



## : A Panting Dog's Mouth

"There is no accident, just as there is no beginning and no end." —Jackson Pollock

"All painting is an accident. But it's also not an accident, because one must select what part of the accident one chooses to preserve." —Francis Bacon

### EMMERGENCE OF BLOTSCAPES

Chance and perfection, order, chaos, the surprising and the sublime, the study of the beautiful; when we look at or make art, when we think of the aesthetic domain, what is it that we are looking for – a boundary event that reveals no boundary?

The earliest Western root comment on the relationship of chance to art was recorded by Gaius Plinius Secundus (23–79), known as Pliny the Elder, in book 35 of his *Natural History*. Pliny was telling the perennial story of an artist's frustration with his own work. The Greek painter Protogenes just could not get the right combination of colours to convey the foam coming out of a panting dog's mouth. The painting was done, finished – but for this crucial detail. Annoyed beyond endurance, Protogenes stood back from the painting and in exasperation threw a paint soaked sponge at his work. Purely and completely 'by chance' the sponge and the physics of the throw did what the painter in all his skill could not do – finish the painting to his complete satisfaction. Pliny commented that "chance placed nature into the painting."





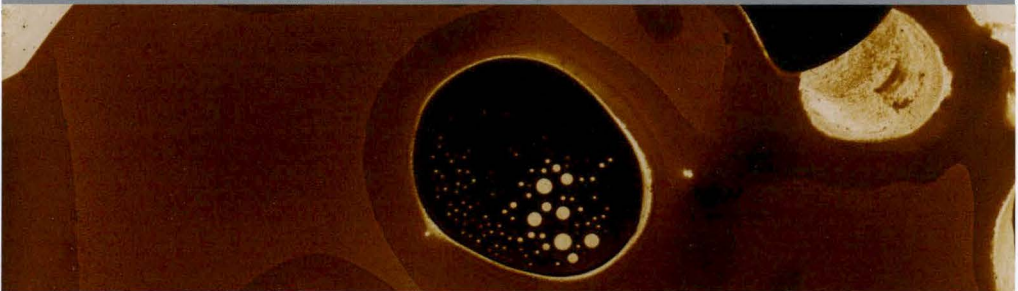
If the image is not a thing but a relation, not a noun but a verb, then the object of my attention is not an image, which is a particular model of consciousness, but the actual object which is being intended, or presented to consciousness. The real remains the incongruences of a sewing machine and an umbrella, as nature is the epitome of marks/signs and is necessarily an unknown, a manner of actual void. Sure a name can be given but that is only of use in a system of debt, a system of placement and control.

Nature is unadulterated expenditure and waste, is less a system than a process, a kind of bindu of intent, necessary necessity (survival and expansion). Though the process can be known, its meaning is an unknown and an invisibility and is presented to us as chance. An immediacy, a presencing in the world that presents the world fully, phenomenological to the mind (which is no more or less than a presage to dust).

This is a final manifesto as it is the original manifesto, the assertions of the timeless time, the submission and expression of the facts, and only the facts looked at with the steady gaze of placid eyes, the centre circles of which are thoroughly penetrable, empty infinite, learning pupils, black nulls, a kind of blood flower.

“Even for a gaze aiming objectively, the pupil (of the eye) remains a living refutation of objectivity, an irremediable denial of the object; here for the first time, in the very midst of the visible, there is nothing to see, except an invisible and untargetable void...my gaze, for the first time, sees an invisible gaze that sees it.”

— J-L Marion, “The Intentionality of Love”



Images originated as B.W. 35 mm film shot with a hand-cranked antique bell and howell movie camera of mountain landscapes in British Columbia's interior. That material was transferred to HD video, re-coded with a colour matrix extrapolated from data derived from an experiment in film emulsion using tinted blood cells as photographic grain. This experiment then went through an additional morphic process using an imperfect Arnold's cat map (a mathematical function, a sort of chaotic map, transforming an image by shearing) to stretch and mix and reconstitute the image, resulting in a highly coloured glaze and visual dynamics in which the original image reappears and disappears through noise. Images from Kozmikonic Electronica. Txt and Images: O. Hockenhuill



## PETER McLAREN / Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy for a Socialist Society: A Manifesto

It is no flippancy to say that hagiographers of American life surely will describe the first decade of the twenty-first century as a decade of disaster piled upon disaster. The shattered parameters of our lives have become a hallucinatory, reconstructed junkyard, a horrifically compelling lamentation for the misery of everyday life in capitalist society, with the material certainty of our finite existence coming for many in the form of a pink slip or a home foreclosure notice. As critical educators, we search for a reprieve in the distance of the imagination but we find only its vanishing point. We perch ourselves on film noir skyscrapers like angelic gargoyles, peering meditatively over a city of human mystery like the holy watchmen in Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*. But in these vain attempts we realize that we are the tattered and banished wreckage of humanity. Lashed with wire to rust-splotched iron girders, spread-eagled and pierced by rivets, we have become the ultimate expression of human bondage, the detritus of value production, twisting in the blood red sun like a dancing messiah, peering down upon the charred refugees of hope below who prowl through the ruins of humanity like the gaunt and spindly stick figures sculpted by Giacometti.

As contemporaries, we have all observed epic moments of despair that we have attempted to graph with solemn regularity onto great arcs of history, but we know from the alienation and suffering that has afflicted humanity for centuries that history can never be trusted to bend one particular way or another. Unlike Cassandra, our purpose as revolutionary educators has never been to trust history, or whatever prophetic insights we believe we have pertaining to the future of humankind, but to understand history's movement and give it direction and momentum in the interests of social justice. Viewed from any point within the social-historical panorama of despair that now confronts us, such a task seems more daunting than ever. Besotted by ideological belligerence, capitalism relies to a greater extent today than ever before on ideological rationalizations and obfuscation to defuse and deflect criticism of its recent developments. Today during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we know that corporations are reaping huge profits but they are not spending their profits to hire workers or build factors but to enhance their own share prices.

In contrast to this reality, we all live with a certain image that is constantly being embellished: that we live in a meritocracy where we are rewarded fairly for our hard work and perseverance. When we look around us at the age in which we live, we see a ruling class with an unimaginably dense accumulation of wealth undertaking innumerable efforts to establish new organizations to reproduce the same social practices. We rarely see future-oriented efforts, planting seeds in a clod of earth. We live in a constant state of resignation watching our lives move lockstep into a mighty, super-sensible ensemble of social relations. Clearly in this enmeshment, those who control capital control the government, forcing governments to become part of a corporate superstructure, overseeing capital's base. And there has been an accompanying corporate colonization of civil society as well, effectively stifling any ameliorative function that might be offered by many new educational movements, those very pragmatic organizations that have become a more capital-friendly substitute for revolutionary manifestos of groups bent on overthrowing the regime of capital.

While those of us who have to sell our labor-power for a wage remain ensepulchered by the realities of the global economic meltdown and the militarization of the country, the haughty denizens of the American financial demimonde appear more in keeping with the characters in the Kienholz installation *Five Car Stud* or the film *Bride of Chucky* than with the white-haired titans of industry that we once pictured in full length cashmere coats strolling past stately oaks draped with Spanish moss and repairing to the smoking room of Pittsburg's Duquesne Club to enjoy a Havana cigar and a single-malt Scotch, or as red-faced politicians in velvet smoking jackets meandering through the giant redwoods of the Bohemian Grove. The dark underbelly of Daddy Warbucks now permeates the structural unconscious of the financial world and the poor are left to face the organized burden of being American in the paradise created by the rich and for the rich.

The attempt by the Right to exorcise the insinuation of too much diversity into the U.S. Anglosphere, and the mass media's long-imposed separation between dialectical thought and everyday life have united to bring about a terrifying calcification of the public mind that has turned politics into a circus of pantomime, and has helped to secure both political parties as organs of interest for the corporations, which have become the servo-mechanisms of the corporate state.

It is the daily taunt of many on the right that socialism leads to mindless conformity. But what could be gloomier than the politics that has arisen out of the ashes of



bourgeois capitalist democracy? The word socialism is slurred in the United States, and rather than socialism being an unsettled question, it is used as an unsettling noun, intended to frighten and to create panic among the popular majorities. The left has yet to overcome this obstacle.

The cataclysmic social and political changes of this present historical moment has unleashed its most unholy aspirations among the modern Manicheans of the Christian right. The Tea Party, the prehensile tail of libertarianism, has made a vertiginous descent into the bowels of the American Armageddon psyche, resurrecting itself in the gratuitous sepulchral cant of Christian dominionism and reconstructionism. Armed with a message that is an eerie amalgam of generalized resentment, a nympholepsy of self-hatred, and nativism sutured together by theocratic aspirations, these activists are clawing their way towards the New Jerusalem with their rabble-rousing war-cry of dismantling the federal government. Television personality and Republican necromancer, Glenn Beck, makes a messianic overture to millions of Tea Party supporters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, while at the same time immolating the historical memory of the civil rights movement by claiming Martin Luther King as his forebear. In an atmosphere of a big tent religious revivalism dripping with a fascist miasma of national rebirth, a furor of white backlash zealotry, political demagoguery, fear-engendering and resentment-mongering, he grandly asserts that the civil rights movement was not really about black people but rather white conservatives under assault from evil liberals.

As advocates of revolutionary critical pedagogy, we stand at the turning point in this process. Critical pedagogy is an approach that we have chosen as a necessary (albeit insufficient) vehicle for transforming the world. The work that we do has been adapted from the pathfinding contributions of the late Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, whose development of pedagogies of the oppressed helped to lay the foundations for approaches (feminist, post-structuralist, Marxist) to teaching and learning that utilizes the life experiences of students in and outside of traditional classrooms to build spaces of dialogue and dialectical thinking. We have renamed our critical pedagogy, revolutionary critical pedagogy. We have done so because we believe that dialogical approaches to teaching can help to create a critical citizenry capable of analyzing and transforming capitalist societies worldwide. In doing so, we denounce the domesticated versions of critical pedagogy that are insufficiently critical of capitalism and even hostile to a socialist alternative.



Critical pedagogy has been discredited by the right as administering propaganda for a communist insurrection, or it has been domesticated by the left who do not want to directly challenge capital and state power. But critical pedagogy as a revolutionary praxis has never been extinguished. Like a burning ember hiding under a dung-heap, it can be stamped out by the jackboots of fascism, as is happening today, or rekindled to serve as the funeral pyre for the colonialist regime we are bound to serve as citizens of capital.

We are so reverentially preoccupied with what others have to say about the struggle for socialism that we fear to trust our own understanding and consequently we have no eyesight left to look upon these historical events themselves. Marx's writings that tell us untraditional truths about the social and economic order tap a world-weary longing that stretches back through the centuries. Here, the term "world-weary longing" is not meant to refer to the existential despair often experienced by intellectuals as fathomless as the abysses of the earth. We are talking about the anguish that accompanies what have been for the majority of humanity the failures of attempting to overcome necessity. Current struggles against oppression anchored by liberal appeals to fairness and equity and built upon the crusted over sediments of past choices—even those made with considerable autonomy—are no longer relevant to the present day.

Critical pedagogy teaches us that we have the collective power to overcome the inimical forces of capital. The promised land is not a glimpse of a lush fragrance of a dream, the sun shining on the window soffit. Nor is it only to be found in the verdant fields of the imagination. It is very much where we happen to be standing as we attempt to transform the world of capital into a world free of necessity. The promised land can therefore only promise to be a place of struggle, springing up in the dark, silent underground crypts and caves where revolutionary futures incubate and where hope is conjugated with the movement of the people towards an anti-capitalist future. We are all merely seeds in the moist soil of the counter-world. It is up to decide what that world is to look like and how to get there.

We need to extend the ambit of critical pedagogy from persons with 'authority' to whom by convention and precept education has hitherto largely been confined, to those who are 'least' among us, not in numbers, surely, but in social legitimacy—the poor and the dispossessed. We are not talking about the dispossessed as dispossessed but as a revolutionary force for socialism. They are carrying a much larger freight

than their single selves. It is in their name that we begin to unravel what which we have been formed to be and begin the arduous and painful process of remaking ourselves in a deliberately new way that often takes us on a collision course with the systems of intelligibility, ways of knowing, and received terms that we have inherited to create habitual and resigned agents.

The fact is, surely, that we are faced with two choices of how to live our humanity—the liberal model of pleading with the corporations to temper their cruelty and greed, or the reactionary model that has declared war on social and economic equality. And on the evidence that each of these models is fiercely and hopelessly entangled in each other's conflictual embrace, we can accept neither.

Critical pedagogy is more than throaty bursts of teacherly impropriety, more than enumerating in ironic detail the problems faced by the youth of today, more than hurling invective at government policies, but a sustained march towards a revolutionary consciousness and praxis.

We must become more like the unknown sailor who tried to smash the statue of Napoleon's head with a brick during the days of the Paris Commune, or like the Iraqi journalist who threw his shoe at the head of President George W. Bush while Bush was standing tall before the cameras of the transnational corporate media like a Texas version of the Vendome Column wrapped in a jock strap.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy questions the official, hegemonic view of ahistorical educational change, isolated from the capitalist social and production relationships. As critical revolutionary educators, we need to understand how the dynamics of the capitalist system—its movement from global capitalism to transnational capital, for instance—has guided the meaning and purpose of educational reform and has impacted institutions and approaches with respect to what counts as educational change.

We follow Che's dialectical conception of education which is formed internally through analyzing the continuous contractions of external influences on the life of individuals. We agree with Paulo Freire that dialogical pedagogy can achieve the kind of class consciousness necessary for a powerful social transformation. It also suggests that as we participate in an analysis of the objective social totality that we simultaneously struggle for a social universe outside of the value form of labor. If we are to educate at all, we must educate for this! Statist socialism has collapsed and weighs heavier on the minds of the living with its inevitable decay into the oblivion of



historical time. Libertarian socialism as well lies rotting on its deathbed, as capitalism continues to wreak its revenge, despite its present state of unprecedented crisis. Antisystemic movements of all shapes and stripes are still around but have, for the most part, become domesticated into reformist shadows of their previous revolutionary selves, forming enfeebled and enfeebling popular fronts that fall like spent cartridges on the heels of any real challenge to capitalism.

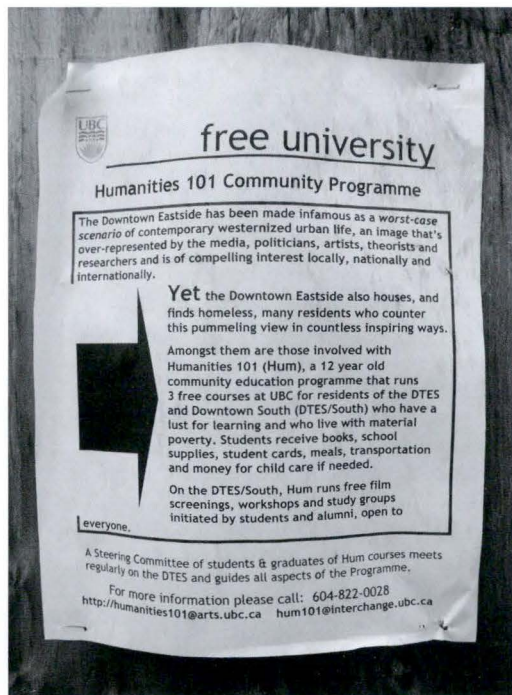
Critical educators must take a stand, working for a political or direct democracy, for the direct control of the political process by citizens, for economic democracy, for the ownership and direct control of economic resources by the citizen body, for democracy in the social realm by means of self-management of educational institutions and workplaces, and for the ecological justice that will enable us to reintegrate society into nature. The struggle for a new historic bloc built up by the working class will not be easy. If critical educational studies is to avoid being corralled into accepting the dominant ideology, or annexed to pro-capitalist forces among the left, or transformed into a recruiting ground for liberal reform efforts, or even worse, turned into an outpost for reactionary populism, it will largely be due to our efforts as revolutionary critical educators.

We need to awaken from our dream into another dream, but one dreamt with open eyes, a collective dream that will take us out of the homogeneous, monumental and chronological time of capital and beyond the consolatory pretensions of the bourgeoisie to create the “time of the now” discussed so poignantly by Walter Benjamin—the time of the revolutionary. We need to capture the revolutionary fervor of the communards, whose battle-tested hearts managed, if only for a brief time, to pump into the sewers of history the muck of ages lining the drainpipes of a lost revolution. It is precisely the socialist partisanship of critical pedagogy—not to the point of dogmatism or inflexibility—that reveals its power of critique. We need to reclaim the power of critique as the sword arm of social justice and not relinquish it. For in doing so we reclaim our humanity and the world.



# MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER / HuManifesto

Based on an interview with John Vigna for UBC's *Trek Magazine*,  
Fall/Winter 2010



John Vigna: How many student intake sessions are done annually for Humanities 101 courses?

Margot Leigh Butler, Academic Director of Humanities 101 (Hum): Twice a year, in August and November, hundreds of brightly-coloured Humanities 101 posters appear in Downtown Eastside and Downtown South (DTES/South) streets and alleys, community centres, learning and health centres, hotel lobbies, galleries, newsletters, websites.... The posters describe the free Hum courses on offer for local residents, and say that participants receive bus tickets to get to and from classes at the UBC campus, vouchers to eat at the Student Union Building before class,

student cards, school materials, and there's money to pay for childcare, too. These features of Hum make it possible for people living on very low incomes to be involved. Without them, they couldn't.

Intake sessions happen at many places on the DTES/South: Carnegie Centre, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Sheway/Crabtree Corner Daycare, The Gathering Place, Dr. Peter AIDS Centre, Vancouver Recovery Club, and sometimes Directions Youth Resources Centre, Homeless Nation, Aboriginal Front Door and more. Hum alumni who are active at these places help at intake. They bring their friends and neighbours, speak about their experiences and encourage people to join in.

We go to so many places because residents support and love and use them – they are residents' hubs of activity and activism, and where Hum does free Public Programmes - and also so that we'll be more likely to meet people who have been displaced from the area and community they want to live in, but still come here to volunteer and do activist work, access hard-won community supports, see friends and family, get affordable food and clothing and stay involved with education. As it's said, 'their hearts are here', so they're considered members of the 'natural community,' a phrase from First Nations cultures which is used more and more often as the DTES is being gentrified by 'development' which is displacing residents faster than producing much needed social housing in their neighbourhoods. As well, there is increasing interest in Hum courses by people who lost their homes and security in the financial crisis and now find themselves living in homeless shelters or SROs (Single Room

Occupancy units are rooms in hotels or rooming houses which are often 10' x 10' or 12', with no cooking facilities or private bathrooms).

JV: How many students apply at intake? How many are accepted?

MLB: Last August, 150 people applied for 70 places – there are 'draws' for places in our courses and on waiting lists. Too often, people aren't able to stay in the courses because their circumstances are too compromised - it can be difficult to study when you've no home or live in insecure or unsafe housing, when you live with disabilities, health concerns or limited mobility, on top of having very very little money - yet many do. About two thirds complete Hum courses.

JV: With more applicants than spots, can you share your thoughts on what characteristics, etc., you look for in admitting a student into the program?

MLB: Hum is for DTES/South residents who have a lust for learning and live with material poverty - who wouldn't otherwise be at university, and want to try it. We don't look for it, but find that many love writing, are avid readers, are well-informed, astute, and involved in local, national and global matters. Circumstances that have kept them out of university – like not finishing school or having money for tuition – don't keep them out of Hum. Here, there are people who've called this region home forever and more recent arrivals, with diverse backgrounds and knowledge, aged 20 to 80, who enjoy being part of this intellectual community – and they are crackerjack in the classroom!

JV: Can you elaborate more on Hum 101 being "hand-made"?

MLB: To live with material poverty in Canada today means dealing with institutions that may be disrespectful, indifferent and unaccountable. At Hum, we're always looking for and creating practices that don't take up the methods of institutions which people living on very low

incomes have loads of knowledge and expertise in, yet can overpower them, to put it mildly. For our last yearbook, Hum alumna Pat Haram wrote an essay on homelessness, based in her own experiences. She concluded: "I do not have the answers to all the homeless situations, but I do believe that solutions are out there if only government policy is put into place that does not distrust the individual in need."

At Hum, we deliberately make practices which are non-institutional and non-hierarchical – we flatten hierarchies, roll them into coils and build hand-made clay pots out of them, if you see what I mean. In all aspects of the Programme, we listen to each other and respond creatively to whatever comes up, based on a commitment to practices that are respectful, open, encouraging, and aren't judgmental – the same as are valued on the DTES/South. For instance, with 70% of DTESiders so deeply underfunded that many queue for 3-4 hours a day just to meet their needs for food, clothing and health care, at Hum we have no queues. We've practices for working with media and researchers that aim to counteract frequent stereotyping and disrespectful approaches to Downtown Eastsiders. Humanities 101 isn't a short-term project: Hum alumni return every year as 'mentors' to help new students and facilitate class discussions, others initiate and run free Public Programmes, and the Programme has ongoing relationships with many people and groups at UBC and on the DTES/South, and beyond. Being responsive informs how we do what we do, it engenders our practices.

Hum courses and classes are informed by participants' lives, experience and knowledge - in the classroom we become like a collective, with ongoing conversations that last for a term, a year or longer. The courses focus on relevant, interdisciplinary critical and creative thinking practices – more Cultural Studies than traditional Humanities – with teachers who 'volunteer' alongside the undergrad and



graduate students (including some from SFU) who facilitate class discussions, help run Public Programmes and more. Hum is the oldest programme of its kind in Canada, and it and our Canadian sister programmes succeed because we respond to our situatedness: our participants' actual circumstances, wants and needs, and our programmes' specific educational contexts – all of which are different in important ways. In my work with Hum, I find that I draw a lot on my background as an artist doing site-specific, collective art projects on political concerns. Hum is done on a small scale, it's flexible, personal, responsive, and can turn on a dime when new things come up. Our students and alumni, staff and faculty remake Hum by hand in real time, so to speak.

JV: What is your vision/hope/desire for the program in the future?

MLB: One of the most important things about Hum is its commitment to being responsive to participants' wants and needs, and to ensuring that continues even with the huge changes being made to their neighbourhoods. The Hum Steering Committee meets regularly at Carnegie Centre. It's made of students and alumni – everyone who has ever taken a Hum course, for whom we have a current email address, is invited to each meeting – and it guides all aspects of the Programme. We always want to do more free education on the DTES/ South and at UBC, and to work with different groups and places. Hum hinges the cultures of the DTES/South and UBC in particular ways, and this **Hu**Manifesto explains some of the practices through which What We Want (manifestos' speciality) comes true – we have more in the Vancouver Art Gallery exhibit "WE: Vancouver - 12 Manifestos for the City." As you can read in their manifestos in this issue of TCR, what Downtown Eastsiders want is to stay together within their neighbourhoods.

JV: How has the Hum 101 experience influenced your overall teaching philosophy?

MLB: After almost 20 years of university teaching, for me, Hum has changed what counts as knowledge, learning, teaching, students, alumni, courses, classes, classrooms, assignments, evaluation, educational experiences, field trips, 'extra-curricular' activities, committees, research and universities, for starters. Many of the words I've used for years – especially the word 'students' – don't fit any more, they unsettle my tongue. You see, so many accepted methodologies used by academics, researchers, policy makers, journalists, writers and artists have deeply embedded – and also nascent - 'othering' practices which are very visible from Hum.

In a university, what happens when there are none of the standard 'carrots and sticks': no transcripts, fees, prerequisites, exams, grades, degrees, career plans, or other 'productive' disciplinary devices? When these are gone, who remains? What can we learn from Hum participants about education and the relevance of the Arts and Humanities, and can this help when they are, as today, under threat?



## PARTICIPANTS IN HUMANITIES 101 *WRITING COURSE* / What Do Downtown Eastsiders Want?

The idea that Downtown Eastsiders don't know what we want is one of the misconceptions drawn upon to support the gentrification of this area which will result in our displacement unless we get the social housing we need.

If you think that Downtown Eastsiders don't know what we want, or want to learn more, then read on

These manifestos were produced by participants in the Writing course with Downtown Eastside/ South residents offered by the Humanities 101 Community Programme (Hum) for a class project on rhetoric with Margot Leigh Butler, one of many volunteer teachers and Hum's Director. In Writing: Charlene Bozoian, Daniel George, Anna Goloubova, Larisa Goloubova, Charlize Gordon, Lorna Johnson, Brenn Kapitan, Kris Kelly, Gladys Lee, Mahamoud Hersi, Robert Makela, Shahla Masoumenjad, Sarah Payne, Rajendra Prasad, Troy Pugsley, Penelope Rowley, Ludvik Skalicky, Cheryl Smith, Gena Thompson & Phoenix Winter.

Writing participants worked with the Carnegie Community Action Project's report released in June 2010 called "Community Vision for Change in the Downtown Eastside: Assets to Actions," turning the Summary & 12 Key Actions into manifestos.

Many people involved with Hum are activists, advocates, artists, poets, vocalists, volunteers and intellectuals who contribute to and publish newsletters on the DTES/ South, work with the Carnegie Community Action Project, Raise the Rates, Carnegie Community Centre Association Board, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and the Power to Women, Aboriginal Front Door, VANDU (Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users), the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council, The Gathering Place and more – and are manifesting manifestos daily!

Overridingly, What Downtown Eastsiders want is  
**NOT TO BE DISPLACED** from our own neighbourhood!

take the cotton out of your ears

put it in your mouth

&

listen

listen

listen

## The 12 Key Actions

Based on over two years of intensive work with 1,200 low-income DTES residents & in co-operation with many DTES organizations, the **Carnegie Community Action Project's "Community Vision for Change in the Downtown Eastside"** puts forth these 12 key actions as the foundation and guide for future development in the DTES. Research by CCAP's Wendy Pedersen and Jean Swanson, June 2010.

1. Build social housing for low-income people
2. Tackle systemic poverty
3. Stop gentrification: a process that has happened in hundreds of cities around the world when richer people push out poorer people in a community, and property values increase
4. Improve safety by working with police to provide a better understanding of DTES-residents from their perspective, dealing with security guard harassment, non-resident drinkers, and replacing the illegal drug market with a legal market based on health + human rights principles
5. Improve health services
6. Support and fund DTES arts and culture
7. Develop an economy that serves and employs local residents
8. Ensure public spaces are public, not gated, sufficient, safe, and welcoming
9. Keep towers out and retain heritage buildings
10. Involve DTES residents in neighbourhood decisions
11. Attract more children
12. Create a DTES image that honours + respects low-income residents

*The DTES low-income community has a right to exist in Vancouver + to seek improvements for itself; residents themselves, with help from government, will be able to strengthen and improve their already strong community by building on assets that are currently present.*  
<http://ccapvancouver.wordpress.com/ccap-repo>

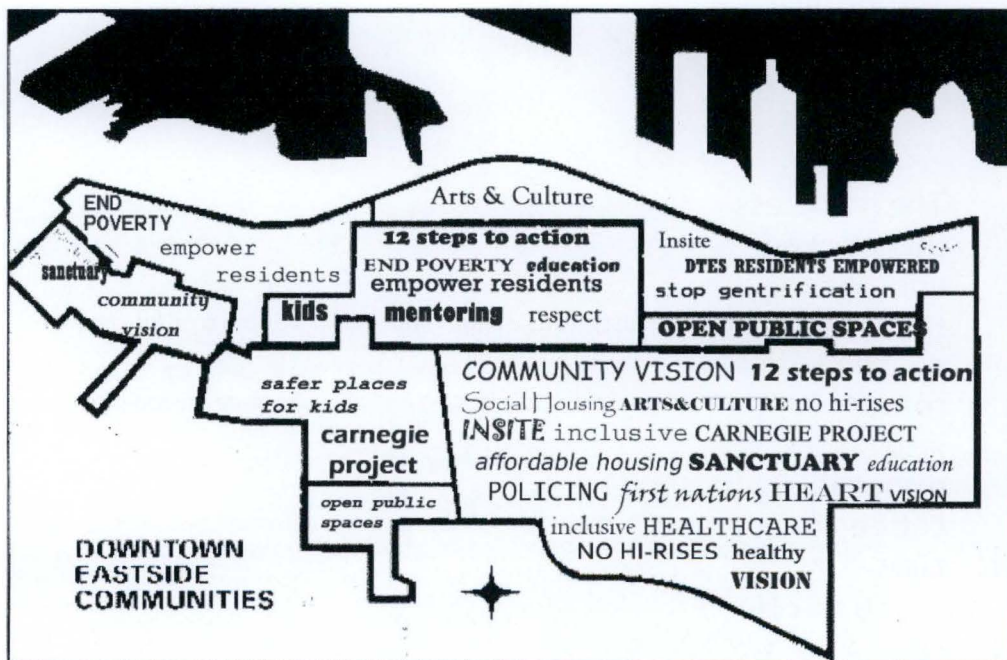


# **A Temporary Manifesto**

by Kris Kelly

The homeless  
do not need  
another  
tarnished  
quarter  
tossed  
into  
disposable  
coffee  
cups.

There is a need for  
safe  
temporary  
shelter and  
long term  
affordable  
housing.



MAP OF DTES areas with text of CCAP's

### 12 Action Points: a DTES Map

by Lorna Johnson & Daniel George

## Manifesto

by Phoenix Winter, member of CCAP and the Carnegie Community Centre Association Board, with Brenn Kapitan and Gena Thompson, President of the Carnegie Community Centre Board

### *The heart of Vancouver*

*One thousand, two hundred voices are fighting for life in the core, the original part of Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside. If there is something wrong in the DTES, there is something ailing in the whole city.*

*Gentrification is like fatty acids clogging the arteries of the city, labeling its true citizens as undesirable and sweeping them out. We must stop condo development in its tracks. Social housing must come before it's too late.*

*The Downtown Eastside has been a sanctuary and a refuge for those who have been pushed out from other places, because of drug addictions, mental health issues, and other reasons. Part of the community's health is its ability to care about others, and to be family for those who have none. It shows real heart.*

*If the heart of Vancouver is troubled, so is its soul. Artists and writers are the lifeblood of a community. When they are strong, other people are drawn to their work spaces. This can play into the hands of condo developers, but doesn't have to. Even if artists create a popular area, affordable spaces and funding for the arts can remain.*

*Those who live in the heart, the DTES, need to raise their voices and be heard. Their input must inform decisions made about the community. In the words of VANDU (Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users): **"Nothing About Us Without Us."***



## ↪ Results **Wanted** ↪ Results

In this 21st century we should be able to care for people, putting them in safe, affordable housing that meets their needs: **i.e.** people with drug issues should have in-building help with medications & related treatments **i.e.** people with handicaps require a building with proper access for their handicaps, physical & mental **i.e.** all should have both safe & secure housing without intrusions into personal property or privacy, unless there is just cause **i.e.** all housing should be kept in reasonable repair & infestations of bugs, mice, insects, etc. must be taken care of to a maximum standard. Maintenance needs to be done on windows, heating, painting & drywalling, toilet & bathing facilities & kitchen facilities.

**! Housing should be affordable for  
low income people  
which suits individual needs !**

**!! Proper maintenance, cleanliness & individual privacy is a must !!**  
**!!! Secure buildings are needed, with security provided for tenants' safety !!!**

↪ **Statement** ↪ We as residents of Downtown Eastside Vancouver are a very mixed population of people of all races, incomes, some with health issues both physical & mental. We should be given respect & there should be care for the needs of each indivisible case or person.

*I for one am pissed off with the seeming lack of care & respect that is received from government agencies.*

↪ **Demands** ↪ We deserve & demand that the City & Provincial agencies start to give us proper housing based on individual needs & requirements. I want the police to treat us with more respect, not goddamn abuse & bullshit.

*I want access to services for medical & health related issues, & for this to be done with long term goals for all to be able to live life in a reasonable manner.*

by Charlene Bozoian, member of the Power to Women,  
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, with Robert Makela & Mahamoud Hersi

Some **Keywords** of DTES Displacement & Gentrification, compiled by the Hum Study Group with Margot Leigh Butler, C. Carroll, Henry Flam, Sharon Johnson, Georgia Kelly, Brenn Kapitan, Sue Pell, Alison Rajah, Greg Scutt, Melissa Thomas, Christopher Winkler & Paul Woodhouse, based in many people's language, knowledge, experience & actions.... If you would like to contribute to this critical vocabulary—to add words, definitions and experiences—email us at hum101@interchange.ubc.ca. The keywords are posted on <http://humanities101.arts.ubc.ca/>. \*Note that 'doublespeak' keywords are in Euphemia italic font.

abandonment quality buildings, Aboriginal peoples, accumulation by dispossession, activism, addiction, advocates, **affordable housing**, agency (the power to act and make meaning), artists, art practices, *BIAs (Business Improvement Associations)*, Bill C-304 "Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing Act", *breaking up 'concentrated' poverty with 'diversity'*, capitalism, checkerboard gentrification, citizenship, uneven democratic participation, *City Planning*, class, class war, collective action, colonization, *Community Benefits Agreements*, **Community Centres**, community consultation, **Community Engagement Mandate**, community vision, condo tsunami, conversion or anti-conversion bylaws, criminalization of poverty, crumbs, culture, decision-making process, deliberate neglect of buildings, densification, development permits, development, direct action, displacement, displacement of sex workers to more dangerous areas, diversity (meaning 'class'), "Do the poor have a right to live in expensive areas?", donations to the **Mayor**, double-bunking (charging 2 rents for one SRO room), *\*doublespeak (deliberate&calculating, doublespeakers disguise, distort, reverse words' meanings, are evasive and intentionally create ambiguity)*, *Downtown Ambassadors*, ecological gentrification (such as the **Carrall Street Greenway**), economic development, *employment for DTES residents building and working in new DTES businesses*, episodic self-gratifying research, *eviction by 'renovation'*, exclusionary zone, inclusionary zone, *experts*, expropriation, Four Pillars (prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement), figure of the Phoenix (as in The Province newspaper's year-long "Operation Phoenix" image/text series on the DTES), gentrification (rich people moving into a poor neighbourhood and pushing poor people out), globalization, guest fees (SROs illegally charging extra for guests), harassment, Health and Safety Bylaws, Heart of the City, **height restriction**, hegemony, Hell Hole, Heritage Buildings & *Heritage Incentive programs*, history of the DTES, **homeless people** (700 live without homes on the DTES), Homeowners' Associations, **human rights** and social justice (i.e. United Nations Declaration of Human Rights), ideology, impact of displacement and violence on women's bodies, **incentivizing** (i.e. increased building height in exchange for including social housing units, subsidy, **tax holidays**), *inclusion*, income, **income assistance**

<i>Income Assistance/Welfare including rent</i>	<i>rent</i>	<i>Disability Allowance</i>	<i>OAP</i>	<i>70% of DTESers live on less than</i>	<i>minimum wage</i>
\$610 <sup>(610-375=235 to live on</sup>	\$375 to 425+	\$906	\$1,100	\$1000	\$8



institutions, interest/equity, landlords, **legal rights** (i.e. Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms (Section 7), low income residents, **MANIFESTO**, mapping (i.e. community mapping of important sites in the DTES, and developers' maps which include none of them), media, market housing, **material poverty**, middleclass, National Housing Strategy, neo-liberalism, non-judgemental, non-market housing, **normalizing**, organizers, people not included in gentrifiers' notion of 'communities', % (i.e. 70% DTES are on low incomes; 12% of SROs charge \$375, 88% now charge more; 21% increase in reported sexual assault in Vancouver this year), **policing**, VPD, RCMP, poor-bashing (i.e. blaming low income people for destroying property values), poverty, working poor, **private security guards**, *profit*, property and land values, tax base, Public Hearings & Public Inquiries where recommendations are made (and, perhaps, followed), publics, ratios (DTES condo development is outpacing social housing by a ratio of 3:1), real estate speculation, re-branding, **re-development**, *renewal*, rent control, representation, researchers, residential schools, **Residents' Associations**, **revitalization**, Right to the City, sustainable city, ripple effect, safe injection site, **self-determination**, situated authority, small units/micro-lofts (there's a micro penalty for turning an SRO room into a condo/loft), *social balance*, social enterprise, social housing, social housing as a public & political issue, social impact of gentrification study (DTES activists insisted on this being done before gentrification of the DTES, and it's happening only now), social justice, *social inclusion*, social rights, *social mixing*, social movements, social tectonics, soft condos (buyers need to "volunteer" in the DTES), **soft conversions**, squatting, SROs, stable base of low income residents on the DTES, Standards of Maintenance bylaws, stereotypes, **structural/systemic poverty**, students, student housing, *sweep*, systemic poverty, tarp, tenants' rights, Tent City, **ticketing as a technique of displacement for gentrification** (i.e. for jaywalking, vending, leaving the curb unsafely...), **towers**, **unceded First Nations land**, units (i.e. 5000 current plus 5000 needed units of DTES social housing), *value of a provincial social housing funding component to developers*, Victoria (City) v. Adams, wealth made possible by the production of poverty, **windows** (in planning the social housing units at Woodward's, careful consideration was put into choosing a window style because of developers' **fears** that tenants would hang clothes out to dry, thus offending owners nearby - so the windows only open a little, about this much), universities, violence, Women's Memorial March for Murdered & Missing Women, Woodsquat, **Woodwards**, **zoning**....



CONSTITUTION  
Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council  
Adopted January 6, 2010

We are a representative group of Downtown Eastside residents who advocate for the needs, interests, and aspirations of our neighbourhood.

We seek to act in honor of the Coast Salish nation whose unceded lands the DTES occupies. We stand for the national, territorial, and cultural rights of Indigenous peoples.

We seek community control over neighbourhood planning, policy, land use, and community development.

We are for the development of community directed accessible education and recreation programs.

We strive to put a stop to the involuntary displacement of DTES residents.

We work for the development of dignified, low-income affordable housing and livable incomes.

We advocate for self-determined and accessible harm reduction health care.

We support the development of a legal drug market based on health and human rights principles.

We stand against all stigmas, discriminations, and violence that silence and marginalize DTES residents.

We advocate for the rights of sex trade workers to safety and dignity.

We stand for the development of accountable, appropriate, community-positive, person-safety oriented policing.

We aim to honor, respect and celebrate the members of our community and our community's history of working for social and economic justice by continuing this work.

The Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council (DNC) formed in December 2009 under the initiative of the Carnegie Community Action Project, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, and ACCESS for Chinese Canadians. By January 2010, the new group had elected an interim steering committee to constitute the DNC as a society under the BC Societies Act, build an initial membership base, and arrange a first AGM to elect an official Board of Directors.

DNC regular membership meetings are held the first Saturday of each month, and all members are encouraged to participate. The Board of Directors is elected to organize these meetings and to implement and coordinate the decisions of the general membership. The Board meets weekly.

All that is required to be a member of the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council is to agree with the DNC constitution, and to be a resident of the Downtown Eastside (DTES), or to be voted in as a member of the "natural community" of the DTES. Natural community members cannot exceed 10% of the membership of the DNC nor its Board of Directors. [dnchome.wordpress.com/about/](http://dnchome.wordpress.com/about/)

## STEVE McCaffery / A Manifesto for Triplicity

Either

“Poetry cannot ignore theory, that constellation of ideas emerging with the collapse of communism as a valid praxis and the implosion of a multiplicity of discursive interests into the ‘human sciences’ under the governing rubric of Saussurean linguistics.”

Or

“Poetry can ignore that Saussurean constellation of theory emerging with the collapse of ideas into the valid praxis of communism ‘imploding’ the human sciences into the multiplicity of governing linguistics.”

## NON-MANIFESTO

the future is defunct  
the present is the frame & the illusion  
the past is the obsession  
the defunct is the dialectic & the category  
the impossible is the questioning  
the improbable is the book  
the frame is the kinesis & the stasis  
the performance is the telephone & the thermometer  
the illusion is the metaphrand & the mytheme  
the obsession is the metonym & the focus  
the enjoyment is the act & the structure  
the persistence is the desire



## **A MANIFESTO ON THE POETICS OF WINESBURG OHIO**

An electrician is someone who brings poetry to light bulbs.

A postman is someone who puts a letter-box around a poem.

A fisherman is someone who takes the letters A and B to sea.

A doctor is someone who brings poetry to thermometers.

A nurse is someone who brings bed-pans to poems.

A plumber is someone who puts poetry into pipes.

## EDWARD TOP / Pluralist Music Composition, a Manifesto

During the time immediately after WWII composers felt the urge to start from point zero, reinventing every parameter of musical composition, and incorporating traditionally non-musical sounds into music. At a time when the world was broken after the war, this formed the ground for a new beginning.

More than three generations later, young composers cling to the alienated avant-garde forms and ideas of fifty years ago. But working in a style that was once modern and progressive is just as conservative as writing in the style of Liszt or Wagner, composers who were considered modern in their day. The music of the 1950s is the avant-garde of your grandfather, just like radio was his home entertainment. We can enjoy his music—it is still controversial, shocking, and new—but only because we can place it in its time period. To be contemporary we need something else. The following points are written as a critique and an alternative.

1. **Exaggeration of contrasts and extremity on all levels creates bracing art.** A work should reflect the dark corners of reality: it is a representation of intense human anxieties, and as such should grab the listeners by the throat, thump them in the stomach, and slap them in the face. This is only possible when the inner strings of sensitivity are made to vibrate, producing a super reality of utter beauty and utopian perfection. These opposites amplify each other creating an intense interference on to which the musical structure imposes balance.
2. **A work should be accessible to more than its creator and a closed circle of insiders.** Rather than being secretive about the private experience behind the notes, a composer should aim for a delighted group experience. Very few disciplines are able to convey a sense of collectiveness as immediate as music.
3. **The only way forward is to reinterpret what lies behind.** The present is the balance between the past and the future. Awareness of history and tradition, of knowledge gained over time, is fundamental to building the new.

4. Too many composers portray their work by dictating clock time—an incomprehensible artistic motivation. Inevitably, time moves forward as a performance of a musical composition elapses. **However, for the listener, memory and expectation affect the experience of the composition so that it moves slowly, fast, backwards and forwards, or even simultaneously. A composition should make conscious use of this idea of time.** Memory can be used as a medium through the implementation of quotations or stylistic features of familiar music. It is the balance and conflict between the familiar and unfamiliar that creates a riveting work.

5. **Matching the inner logic of the work, there has to be a purpose for shock.** Shock is relative. The shock of a possible gesture making use of extended instrumental techniques may seem nonsensical or unnecessary when used on its own (in a conceptual sense). But, when placed against an opposite force in the larger context of a work, it may amplify the meaning of this context. Shock will only be perceived as such when it is meaningfully anchored within the comprehension of the work.

6. **The musical language of a work, however new or unique, should always remain communicative.** When concepts for a particular work are brought forward through a newly invented incomprehensible language, the work loses all meaning. This is even truer for a work that is based on such a language alone.

7. To communicate to the audience the *intentio auctoris*, the composer relies on a meticulously drawn up score, the *intentio operis*. In the tradition of the modernist era post-WWII, many composers today write over-complicated scores. However, the score is a means to an end, not the end itself nor to feed the vanity of the composer. It is not very useful to write scores without notes. In music, the performing artists are the mediators between the *intentio auctoris* and the *intentio lectoris*, the listener. **The composer should be aware of the limits of notation.** Even when the work itself is complex, the score should not be overcomplicated, i.e., unnecessary bar changes, note and chord clutter, and rhythmic complexity where notation could be simplified. It is to the advantage of the work if the score meets certain practical requirements.

8. **The composer must be present during rehearsals and talk to the musicians to have his ideas realized as precisely as possible.**



9. **I am looking for a pluralist ideal with multiple narratives within a work.** Unlike conceptualism, where one idea is presented and remains relatively unchanged throughout the work, in my pluralistic ideal, one idea is merely a point of departure. One or more ideas spark a chain reaction of compositional procedures, e.g., development of the ideas into musical language, development of material, processes of certain instruments or voices to generate and/or perform this material, voice leading, instrumentation, etc. Even the final procedure of the chain reaction, the performance by musicians, is a *sine qua non* in this process. In conceptual music, especially in happenings, non-musical elements might be elevated to the same status as musical parameters without being or becoming musical during the end stage of live performance. A listener requires intellectual interpretation in order to make sense of a conceptual work, a process that stalls the musical stream of consciousness. The strength of pluralistic music is its capacity to let the listener be enraptured by the work. This is possible because a musical flow of subliminal association, expectation, and recognition replaces intellectual interpretation.

Vancouver, November 2010

overleaf pages 132-37:  
a three-page excerpt from Edward Top's *aliquid stat pro aliquo*

# aliquid s

NB: before the entrance of bar 1, a recording of the text is played on the PA system, followed by one of the singers activating the playback of a recorded F - pedal point.

$\bullet = 52$  ( $\text{♪} = 104$ ) \*)

*pp* *espr.* 3

Coloratura Soprano

Sh rt l ft r m s v I v r th gt f r v h

\*\*)

*pp* *espr.* 3

Soprano

nt nl t br th d w n n m m t

*pp* *espr.* 3

Mezzo-Soprano

d c d d t v l nt I

*pp*

Tenor/Baritone

r t f gh t r q n

\*) this is a tempo indication only: tempo ad lib.

\*\*) as if having difficulties speaking; use voice (see *performance notes*)

# at pro aliquo

Edward Top

3 *mf* *f* (stage whisper:) 3 3 (voice)

I ne - ver d c s ns th t th v thoughtless-ly go-ing a-long

*f* espr. *mf* *f* (stage whisper:) 3

I I ne - ver dreamed b n f r d t m k

*ff* *mf* *mf* (stage whisper:)

n s l f c I ne - ver dreamed n th s p s t f w

*ff* *mf* *mf*

d w th th I ne - ver dreamed y r s I n v r drrrr



3

Col. S.

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha Ah!

Sop.

3 (voice)

go - ing a - long

Ha ha ha ha ha ha Ah!

Mezzo

(voice)

thought - less - ly go - ing a - - - long

Ha ha ha Ah!

Ten./ Bar.

(stage whisper:)

6 (voice)

thoughtless - ly go - ing a - - - - ha ha ha ha ha Ah!

*f* *fp* *mf*

3 5 6

aliquo

almost inaudible

mmm

*mp* 3 3

*mf*

f th t w l d choose Own

*p* espr. 3 6

*mf* finger-click

that t lm l f m l choose 3

*p* 3 3

*mf* 3

l d b sh m d choose r l g

*p* 6 espr. *mf* 6

w th ng sth t w tell choose r s k t n l

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal piece, likely a song. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a fermata and the instruction 'almost inaudible'. The second staff has a 'mmm' vocalization. The third staff has a 'finger-click' instruction. The fourth staff has a 'finger-click' instruction. The fifth staff has a 'finger-click' instruction. The lyrics are: 'f th t w l d choose Own', 'that t lm l f m l choose', 'l d b sh m d choose r l g', 'w th ng sth t w tell choose r s k t n l'. The dynamics are marked as *mp*, *mf*, *p*, and *mf*. There are also performance instructions like 'espr.' and 'finger-click'. The score is divided into two sections by a vertical dashed line.

6

Col. S. *f* *ff*

n th r m y w

Sop. *ff*

h t d b ng n

Mezzo *ff* *ppp* almost inaudible *p*

d ch t— mm mmm

Ten./ Bar. *ff* *mf*

m wawm



*p* *mf* (voice)

s l f wh t tt ch ss b r d nnn— proud sol - diers

*p* *f*

> pawn d n t th f r th gh t th t th Ha

(voice) espr. *mf*

d m f ns m s p ne - ver proud sol - diers

*mf* (voice)

f n d m l d r ch b sssss— proud sol - diers

# THE LANES ARE ART!

## WE ARE GENIUSES IN LOVE WITH OUR CITY!

CLOSEST TO THE MOUNTAIN CEMETERY HIGH  
TENSILE STEEL CORDS WHINE. CUCUMBERS AND  
MELONS CHOKE INSIDE PLASTIC HOUSES. RECKLESS  
MONSTERS COPULATE IN CARS. DOGS BARK AND  
SCRATCH AT GATES HURLING THEIR BODIES AT SORE  
WOOD. BARRED TEETH GLISTEN BETWEEN GAPS

DRAGON'S FEED FLOWS THROUGH THE  
UNDERGROUND TOMATOES FIGS ARTICHOKE  
SILENT COLONIES OF FLYING ANTS SWARM DRY  
GROUND. WASPS EMERGE FROM THEIR SLEEP  
A YELLOW HISS STALKS THE AIR. LAVENDER HANGS  
IN THE WINDOWS

DEATH IS SO CLOSE HERE. WE WALK CARRYING  
ASHES IN OUR HANDS. WE FALTER OVER CRACKS  
AND CREVICES GATHERING THE MATERIAL OF SPACE  
WONDERING ALL THE WHILE **WHETHER THE**  
**FENCES KEEP US OUT OR IN**

**WE WORK WHEN NO ONE IS  
COUNTING**

**WE ARE QUEENS LOST BY OUR  
DRONES!**

SANDCASTLES APPEAR AMONGST THE  
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS. WE LOOK CLOSELY AND  
DETECT TINY WINDOWS AND AN INHABITANT'S GAZE.  
FAKE TOPIARY ODORS OF SOAP AND ROT. SWEEPING  
PORTICOES

WE RIDE DOWN LANES WITH OUR DEVICES  
OUTSTRETCHED. WE PERFORM TRICKS ON OUR WAY  
TO THE TRAIN. EYEING MATTRESSES NEAR THE RED  
DOOR WIRES HANGING FROM OUR EARS

STALE PASTRY FILLS OUR STOMACHS. WE YEARN  
FOR SOMETHING FRESH. OUR HEELED ANKLES GIVE  
WAY ON THE WAY TO THE BAR. GLOWING COUNTERS  
LIGHTEN OUR BLEMISHES

**WE COLLECT REMNANTS OF A STRANGER'S STASH**

TURNED WOOD, BLOWN GLASS, SPIKES FOR  
GRINDING BUDS. RESPITE FROM THE MONOTONY OF  
MEALS AND EARNINGS



# **WE HAVE SEEN THE SPIRITS AND ANIMALS ROAMING TOGETHER!**

**WE MAKE LISTS, BUT IN THE LOWER PART OF MAIN  
STREET THE LANES ARE DISAPPEARING. TUNNELS  
OF SMOOTH CONCRETE WHERE LOFT PARTIES AND  
THEIR SLEEK GUESTS SIP FROM CRYSTAL**

**WE STOP AND LOOK TO THE BOTTOM OF PITS.  
PUMPS SUCK UP ANCIENT WATER. A BUILDING LISTS  
DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO THE EDGE. CHILDREN'S  
TOYS HANG FROM THE REBAR**

**THERE IS NO WAY OUT OF THE NOISE  
BOYS WATCH RED AWNINGS  
WE STEAL THE DUMPSTERS FOR OUR OWN  
PURPOSES. WE DRAW CHALK LINES ON THE  
CONCRETE**

## **WE CHOOSE TO LIVE UNTIL THE NEXT LINE!**

---

# **WE CAN HEAR THE FOUNTAINS, BUT CAN'T AFFORD THEM**

HERE THE LANES LEAD TO THE OCEAN. WE PICK WAYS TO HUNT. THE SMELL  
HERE IS PART SEAWEED PART DIESEL

bamboo shoves its way through the cracks and a  
lady with a hairnet hacks at it. her blade glints in the  
moonlight. she hums between swings

a man in a dressing gown lounges amongst his  
pillows. he measures his square feet and plans new  
booths for his interiors. condensation slides down his  
drinking glass

## **WE SMASH GARBAGE ON THE PATHWAYS!**

## **WE DRAG OUR FEET ON THE TILED FLOORS**

## **WE UNBUTTON OUR FLANNEL SHIRTS**

# **WE LISTEN TO THE SCREAMS**

AS WE WHIRL PAST ON OUR NIGHTLY RIDES  
THERE ARE SO MANY FUTURES THAT HAVE EVADED OUR RECORDS. THE  
STRAPPED ON PLATFORMS BLISTER OUR ARCHES  
PAINTINGS ARE NAILED INTO TELEPHONE POLES. GARDENS SPILL FROM THE  
PARKED VANS. LAYERS OF ROCK PEEL AWAY REVEALING ALABASTER EGGS,  
MISMATCHED DRAWERS, MURALS, HANDMADE FURNITURE

IN THE FALL WE WANDER THE LANES SEARCHING FOR ARTISTS. WE RIDE  
PAST PARKS WHERE GIRLS WRITE THEIR NAMES IN BLOOD IN THE SAND. WE  
TALK OF FAILED RESCUES WHILE ANOTHER LANGUAGE FLOWS FROM OUR  
EARS

# **WE FILL OUR INNER AND OUTER GLANDS WITH GOSSIP**

WE RIFLE THROUGH OUR POSSESSIONS AS FILMS  
FLICKER IN THE CORNER ROOM. DECORATIONS  
DIG INTO SKIN AS WE PASS A SMOKE TO THE  
STRANGER ON A BIKE

WE HAVE BEEN GAGGING ALL DAY AND ARE  
STARVING. THERE ARE TOO MANY THINGS IN  
WRAPPERS. OUR HANDS ARE TOO FRAIL TO OPEN  
THEM. WE SHARPEN OUR MAGNIFYING GLASSES  
IN OUR HUNT FOR FOOD

IN OUR POOR STAMPED BONES ROBINS SING THE  
WRONG SONG



# **WE ARE WOMEN** IN LOVE WITH OUR CITY!

1. THE LANES ARE ART!

2. THERE ARE TOO MANY THINGS TO COUNT  
THEREFORE NUMBERS SHOULD BE ABOLISHED

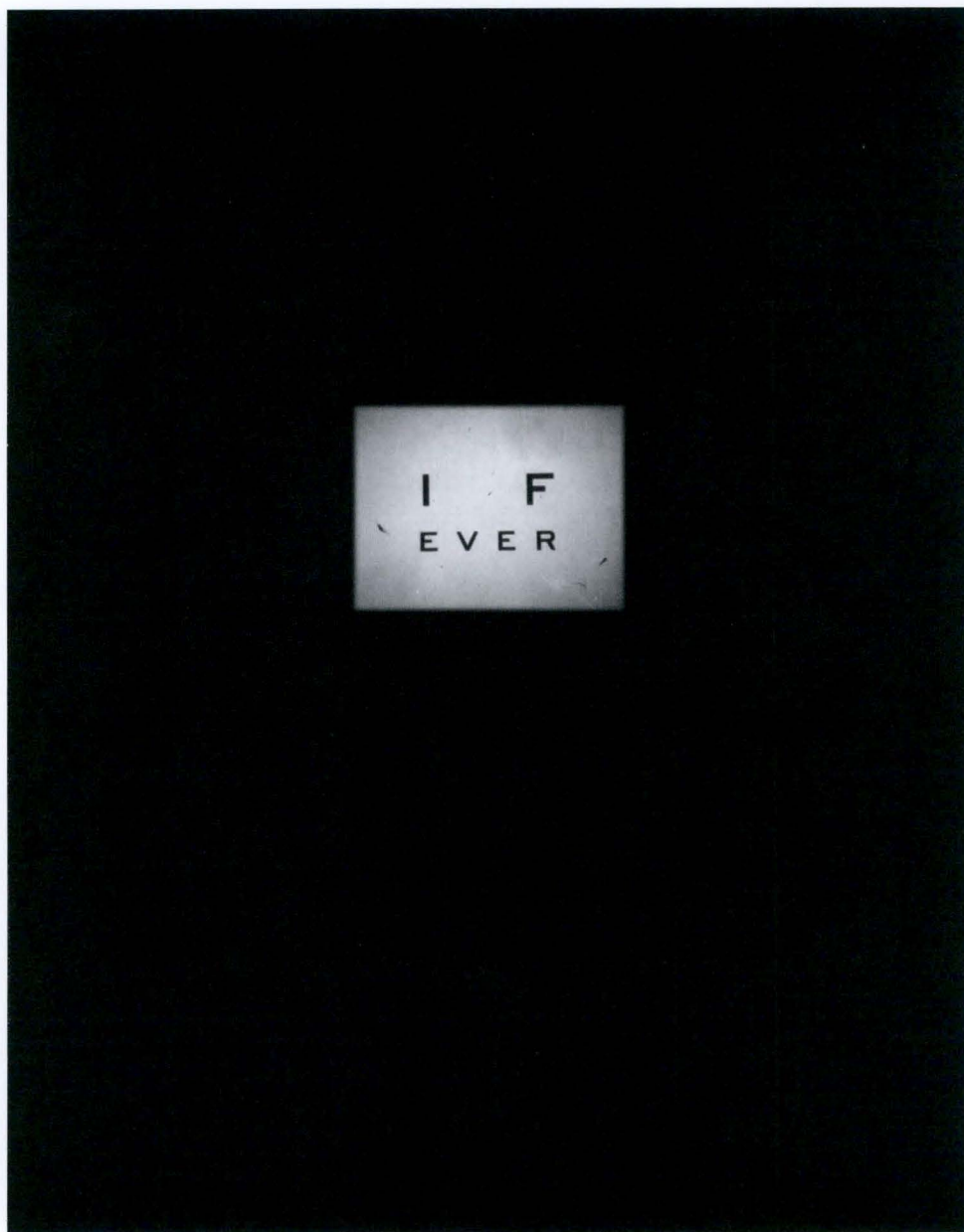
3. WE ARE TRAGEDY AND MATERIAL AND LICK THE  
LININGS OF OUR MACHINES

4. THE ARCHITECTS ARE ASLEEP

5. THE LUSTER HERE HIDES AGE AND RUIN IT IS POINTLESS TO  
INDICATE A LACK OF SPACE

6. WE ARE **GENIUSES** AND WOMEN!

ALEX MACKENZIE / DEAF EARS

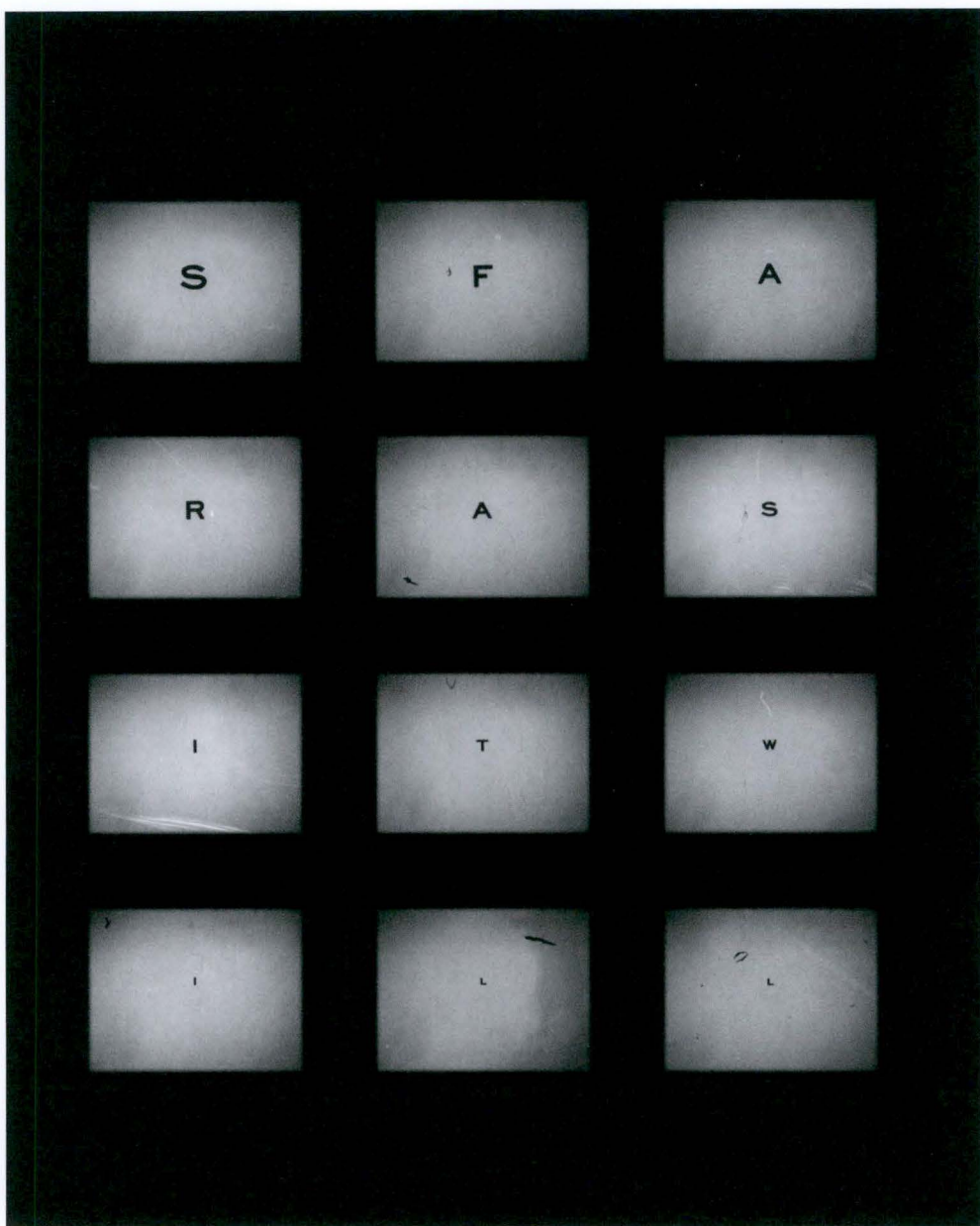




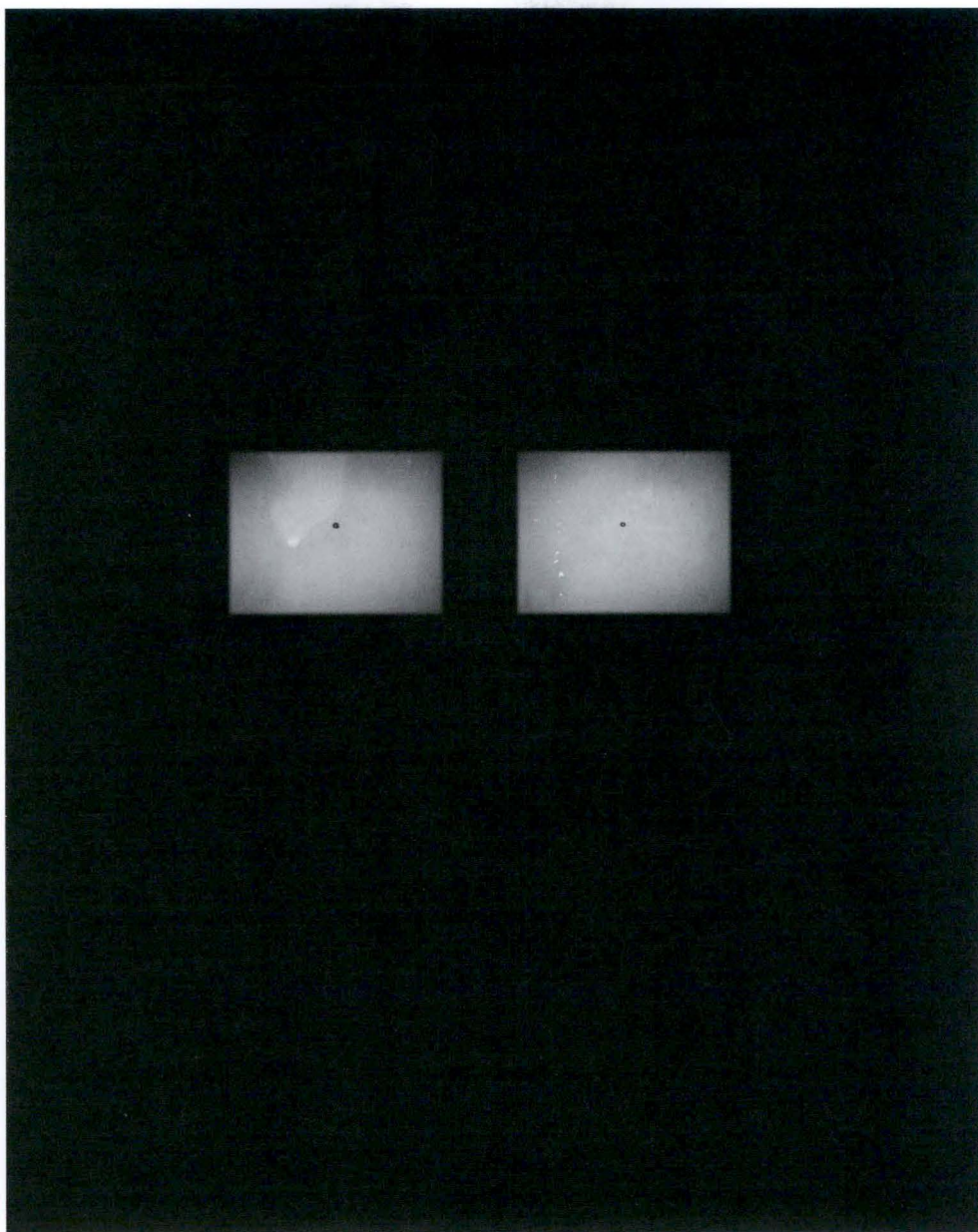












## SHEILA ROSS / Givenness and the Word of the Creature

*Marshal McLuhan having said, "The name of a man is a numbing blow from which he never recovers."<sup>1</sup>*

German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer wrote often of the unobjectifiable aspects of human being, signposts marking the way to a philosophy of the lived world. Around the question of embodiment, he put out a call to which I respond here, a beginning merely, the still unfinished the business of his fellows Husserl and Heidegger to recognize "everything connected with the experience of the body and the way it is phenomenologically 'given' the whole wealth of kinesthetic phenomena in which the body is felt and experienced" (70). As if the systemizing abstractions of philosophy and the play of poetry had both set off in the wrong direction and begun this business badly. As though a new body-concept was required from the start, some manifesto on embodiment to expose the givenness of the body, expose language to this givenness. The task is to break the natural attitude this way, revealing to experience what Gilles Deleuze calls the "delirium," the tenacious, near insuperable hubris of subject and object, ego and will. Deleuze distinguishing what is outside the delirium, the human substratum enfolding it, as "a life," within which "the life" so insolently and obliviously abides. Deleuze, too, seeking ways to conceptualize this naturalism in order to put human finitude into relief, its bodily *movement*. An ethics of post-modernism has as its root idea such living finitude. Say in our time this insolence has reached a kind of fever, this sweat of certainty.

*One's name being the most familiar word, so familiar it attains a kind of nameless palpability, like the incalculable meaning of family.*

The body's givenness will not appear by dwelling longingly on the prospect of A Life in whose invisible currents run the bewitching shapes of consciousness, this stratum

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Douglas Coupland's biography, *Marshall McLuhan* (Toronto: Penguin, 2009), 8. Coupland stations this remark as an epigram next to a list of names for McLuhan produced by "available internet name generators." For instance, MM's "Goth" name is "Lord Fragrant Desiccated Corpse."



of being over eons of time lapping quietly near sensate shores, a flux lapping at the machine remote in its absolute closeness. The fact of the body's givenness must appear some other way. Gadamer's enigma of health offers a clue: to feel whole, enabled, full of life, one feels not the presence of health but precisely its absence, an enigma powerfully analogous to the givenness of language, which also disappears into its use, and while in use cannot be objectified. Can we speak of risks not to health but of it, then, as though itself a certain lost quality of attention or presence of mind? The body's distant geography, faint signals and lost outposts receding from the understanding like a burden removed, as though presence of mind were itself the burden. One might well strain to look at the finger that points to the moon, look into the hand. Think about the arm. But remaining scandalously without name is a kind of bodily movement where a mood can color the space of knowing in a saturation as perfect as air. The thrombotic stillness of the body poised for digital life, the very image of violent alienation from the living world. Perhaps its fulfillment. Of and with and behind and ahead of consciousness, the ancient territory of the human body seems doomed to become an inner outer-space, the most near to us assigned the same incomprehensibility as the most distant, a reach which can only ever be a calculation, but never a grasp. Meanwhile, some mythical middle earth hums its way to our fingertips.

*The word-prosthetic extending the hidden body, phantom limb long forgotten.*

In that split-second of estrangement when a victim of violence regains consciousness to the sound of screaming and realizes the sound is her own voice, in this slash of time, is the "I" proposition not cast into doubt? When a scent disappears from sense precisely as we know it persists, what part of being moves into obscurity? The clarity of water and air, of suffering and numbing labour, the element of language, all this clarity our busy brains telling we are whole.

The experience of the body is curiously extended by the mirror. The mirror's property of flawless repetition is of course optically deceptive and a fraudulent conceit. Something we were never meant to see, the mirror's image is a numbing dislocation. We rarely take notice of the need to reverse what we see there. The right-handed body appearing left-handed. We overlook this, yet a visual artist knows that when she holds her work up to the mirror, it can look uncannily foreign there. All



the idiosyncrasies, the exaggerations, deficiencies, pleasing harmonies, these stand out. This may occur just briefly, before a rushing takes place, an alignment of the image with the understanding once more. Or, it may be more striking and prolonged. Yet there is a sense of loss at this moment of realignment. With this recapture something escapes. What is this movement? Our new concept is born just here, of this experience.

This alterity occurs because the work's creation, say a painting of a landscape, is a lengthy, incremental process in which the artist's involvement at every step is so full and intimate that an understanding of the work emerging is organic. She weighs every line, every proportion, every volume and contrast, the relations of all these, and then weighs them all again as some new refinement presents itself. But as the work emerges, it becomes, paradoxically, steadily more invisible. The artist feels herself sink into the work. The work becomes her. This is its gorgeous, tragic madness, this special blindness placing the artist so humbly at the mercy of an audience (she knows not what she does). A prototype for postmodern humility: this kind of knowing, whose stamp of authenticity is such a gloaming, a gathering dusk of familiarity. This is what will cause the work to obtain its strangeness in the mirror, its otherness. If art holds a mirror up to nature then it does so withholding a secret from the artist, a secret life.

In this prototype for humility, the artist knows the entirety of this experience but especially its gloaming. She knows there is a secret bearing the contours of her working. And any freedom comes as much from seeing the fact of the art's givenness as from her autonomous vision.

*My name called out repeatedly until strange, sense returns, returns to this pulse.*

How like the artist and her work is the reader and her text? The reader works too. But this embodiment, this disappearance of the word-work of reading into the body is like a lifetime of seeing one's body in a mirror: simultaneous with looking, a proprioceptive effort like touching your nose with your eyes closed without the need to dwell on the act or fact of this strange inner sight. Unlike the artist, the reader never undergoes a gathering secret. Or shall we say it occurs over both too long and too short a time, a lifetime of literacy, the instant of comprehension. She cannot witness her own helpless alterity, turn the work of reading toward a mirror it is

already and surprise herself with a glimpse of something strange. The artist can but the reader can't be a witness to the gradual, ecliptic embrace, disclosing the givenness of her own mad vision. So the fullness of the word entering the body and as body holding the reader in its spell, the miracle zone needs its penumbra of reminders, this figure of rapture needs its ground. The ground is knowing what the artist does, the experience of forging something, flexing the limb of language with closed eyes turned to the sounds of the ancient movements there.

*The work of art whose beauty strikes one gives the gift of astonishment. It comes like the way of its creation, with its own slow release of stone, a numbing course of familiarity. If one traverses the Vatican's Belvedere Garden daily, encountering again and again there the voluptuous Laocoon with its singular luminous muscularity, after a time it would be like one's name. Too much satiety, too much proximity perhaps an insult to the awesome labour of bringing stone alive in the first place, into rippling, gusting robes or twining serpents. The white marble's singing deadened not simply by the presence of so many others in the glutinous Vatican space, Apollo, and Apoxyomenos sullenly close. The white marble's singing is deadened by habit and servitude. Say beauty is a song we hear, a mere constancy in time of relations among sounds. To regard this gift and heed its disappearance is to locate beauty in the givenness of the body. Beauty is something that happens to us; it doesn't last. Its cousin truth also is something that occurs to us. In this family this is how they go on living.*

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## MARIE-HÉLÈNE TESSIER / Of Language: a Lesson from Brother So-and-So

Jean-Paul Desbiens is the author of *Les insolences du frère Untel* (*Impertinences of Brother Anonymous*), which consists of a series of polemical essays, published in the newspaper *Le Devoir*, corroborating with editorialist and politician André Laurendeau, who coined the term *joual* spoken by the youth, as more or less the language of the vanquished. Within the same year the editor of *Les Éditions de l'Homme*, Jacques Hébert (future senator, close colleague of Pierre Elliott Trudeau and founder of Canada World Youth) published the articles in book form. 130,000,000 copies sold in a country where 10,000 was considered a best-seller.

In his essays, Brother Anonymous criticizes the poverty of the spoken language, the lack of vision within the institutions and he denounces the clergy's obscurantism, thus exposing the need for major educational reform. His main critique is the degradation of language due to a lack of political infrastructure to protect the flourishing of French culture and identity. *The Impertinences of Brother Anonymous* is a critical text portending the loss of meaning, at a particular point in time when Quebec was tragically sub-merged by an infinitely more powerful idiom equipped with a stronger system of capture. He deplores the lack of French in advertising and the general media, leaving a language and its culture on the verge of being drowned by American influence. His deep literary love for the French language with which he, as a writer, identified at all levels of his being, is what compelled him to fight against its gradual disappearance. There is no question that this text shaped the modernizing of Quebec.

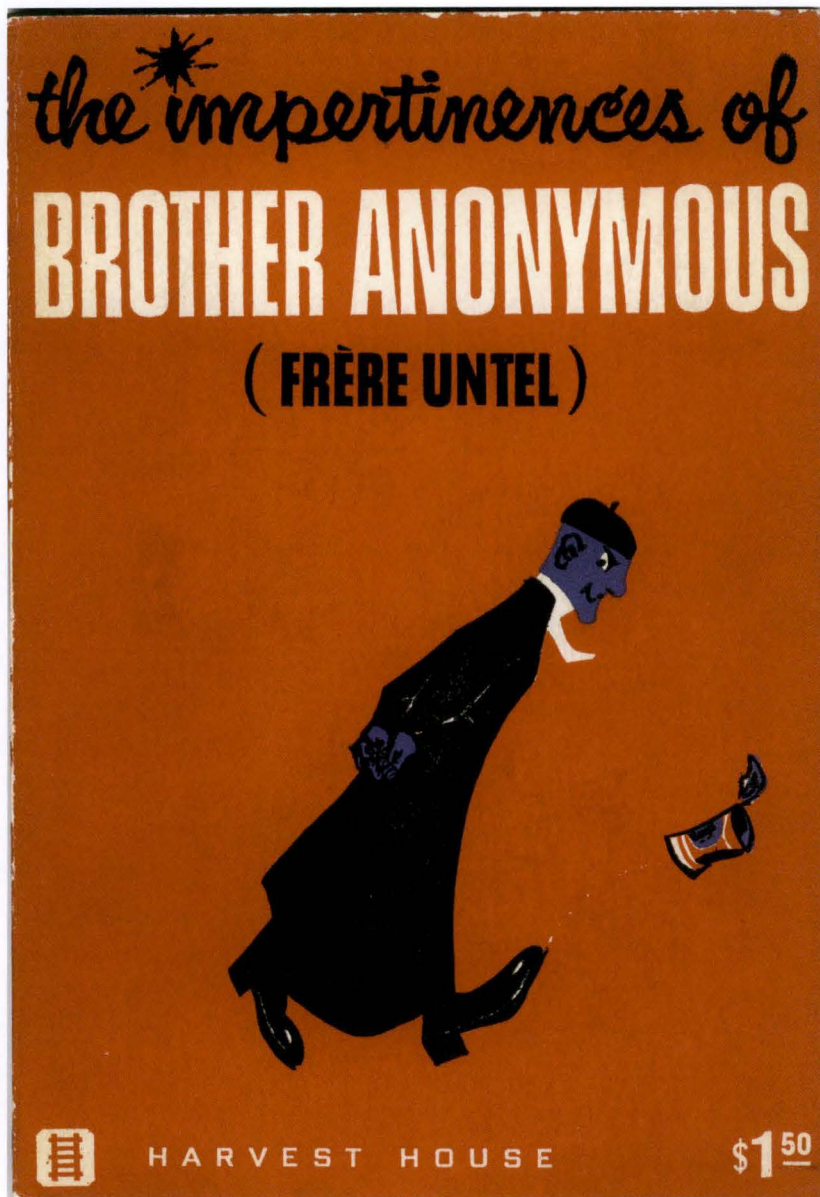
Upon his return from further studies in Rome in 1964, he was invited to join Minister Paul-Guérin Lajoie as his main counsel in regards to the creation of an entire new curriculum in liberal arts, with mandatory classes in philosophy and literature, to be implemented in the new CEGEP, a two-year program preparing students for university, still in existence today. He also went on to become the editor in chief of the *Journal La Presse* in 1970 where he is known for his federalist views. It is also obvious that his thoughts on the necessary banning of English signage influenced greatly the Official Language Act in Quebec, and later, Bill 101, defining French as the language spoken by the majority of the population, as the only official language of Quebec and framing fundamental language rights for everyone in the province. Jean-Paul Desbiens received the honours of Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec and was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. He died in July 2006 and we celebrate this year the fiftieth anniversary of his manifesto.



When I was asked to look into *Refus Global* in the context of this issue of *TCR*, I revisited the manifesto written in 1948 by painter Paul-Emile Borduas and signed by the Automatists painters and other intellectuals. Although I was moved by its very innovative lyrical qualities, the anti-clergy content, its critique of society and its sincere cry for the emancipation of the culture, it did not represent, in my understanding, the precursor of what is called the Quiet Revolution but had more influence within the already specific and sophisticated discourse on modern art happening in Quebec, which closely related in time and content with New York's abstract expressionism. Borduas mentions ten years later from his flat in Paris, somewhat disillusioned, that its energetic proclamation was rather personal, naïve, and not strong enough to be revolutionary. So I found it difficult to reinterpret its original dynamism and give it a second breath. As a result, I chose to explore a lesser known manifesto that is *The Impertinences of Brother Anonymous*, which is also less mystified, but extremely influential and closer to my own research.

By focusing on the chapters on language, I wanted to present this manifesto as an important document about the pollution, the noise, the interference, the snow, the bad reception, the gap, the compromised, the foreign particles, words falling off the page, discontinuities, a voice, a sound, a music, submersion, immersion, implosion, buried, forgotten, overpowered, bullied, domination, victim syndrome, auto-da-fé, a lack of response, a defeat, a let's-be-practical, a lack of spine, a lack of destiny, a sigh, a sellout, a caprice, a pile of lost love letters, a vocation, a resistance, a strong belief, a baby boom, a beat generation, an alarm clock, an axe, a *je ne sais quoi*.... And contrary to common opinion still circulating today, someone who defends the protection of French language as a cultural identity in Quebec is not necessarily a nationalist, a separatist, neither a fascist nor a racist.

Finally, in order to bring the author's main ideas into the foreground of contemporary critique, I chose to reproduce a series of excerpts relating to the deterioration of language so as to understand the mechanisms into which any speech, and therefore any thought process, can be reduced, alienated, and self-abased. I wanted to play with the effect of visual poverty, the impact of multinational repetition in our visual landscape, not only in the 1960s Quebec, but today, globally, all language confounded. In order to illustrate my point, I replaced the word *joual* with the words *Starbucks*, *7-Eleven*, and *Safeway*. In my opinion this gesture does not weaken or highjack but rather reinforces Desbiens's thesis.



The cover of *The Impertinences of Brother Anonymous* published in Montreal by Harvest House in 1962. Courtesy W.D. Jordan Special Collections and Music Library, Queen's University.

WE SPEAK  
STARBUCKS  
BECAUSE OUR SOULS ARE IMPOVERISHED  
AND SO WE LIVE  
7-ELEVEN

**TO SPEAK STARBUCKS  
IT IS TO SAY STARBUCKS  
INSTEAD OF COFFEE SHOP. THE ABSENCE OF  
LANGUAGE THAT IS THE 7-ELEVEN SPEECH IS A  
SYMPTOM OF OUR INEXISTENCE. NO ONE CAN  
EVER STUDY LANGUAGE ENOUGH AS IT IS THE  
HOME OF ALL MEANINGS**

NOW WE APPROACH THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM  
WHICH IS A PROBLEM OF CIVILIZATION  
PEOPLE SPEAK STARBUCKS  
BECAUSE THEY THINK 7-ELEVEN  
AND THEY THINK SAFEWAY BECAUSE THEY LIVE  
STARBUCKS

**LANGUAGE IS PUBLIC PROPERTY**  
AND THE STATE SHOULD PROTECT IT AS SUCH  
AS IT PROTECTS MOOSE AND TROUT  
AND AS IT PROTECTS NATIONAL PARKS  
AND ALL PUBLIC DOMAINS AS IT SHOULD  
SO AN EXPRESSION IS JUST AS GOOD AS A MOOSE

**A WORD IS WORTH  
JUST AS MUCH AS A TROUT**

**OUR PEOPLE KEEP THEIR ADMIRATION FOR  
MACHINES AND TECHNIQUE  
THEY ARE IMPRESSED BY NOTHING  
BUT MONEY AND LUXURY  
THE GRACES OF SYNTAX DO NOT INTEREST THEM**



WE WORRY A LOT  
ABOUT RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT  
BUT WE PAY NO ATTENTION TO  
PHILOSOPHICAL FALLOUT  
YET WE ARE CONSTANTLY SPRINKLED  
WITH PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY TOUCHES EVERY ONE OF US  
IT IS IN THE NAME OF PHILOSOPHY  
THAT FOURTEEN MILLION RUSSIANS ARE SENT TO SIBERIA  
THAT SIX MILLION JEWS WERE GASED

PHILOSOPHY  
ALWAYS CATCHES UP WITH HUMANS  
WHETHER THEY DO NOT THINK ABOUT IT —  
AND MAYBE ABOVE ALL IF THEY DO NOT  
THINK ABOUT IT

THE LANGUAGE OF REASON IS AUSTERE  
BUT IT LEADS TO FREEDOM  
WHICH IS NEVER OUTSIDE KNOWLEDGE  
WHICH IN TURN MEASURES THE DEGREE OF OUR FREEDOM

DUHAMEL SAYS THAT A PEOPLE THAT READS  
IS A SAVED PEOPLE  
THINK BY YOURSELF!

CULTURE  
IS THE FOUNDATION OF ONE'S LIFE  
THERE IS INEXHAUSTIBLE PLEASURE IN CULTURE  
BUILD WITHIN YOURSELF A WEALTH YOU CAN TAKE WITH YOU  
WHICH NO ONE CAN EVER TAKE AWAY FROM YOU  
YOUR OWN THINKING BELONGS TO YOU

I AM CONVINCED THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN THE DEGRADATION OF OUR LANGUAGE  
AND THE SLACKNESS OF OUR ATTITUDE  
TOWARDS THE FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTIES

**IF WE ARE TO BE CURED FROM SPEAKING STARBUCKS,  
ENERGETIC MEASURES ARE CALLED FOR. THE AXE!  
WE MUST WORK WITH THE AXE!**

- a) **Absolute control of the media. DEATH PENALTY  
for using STARBUCKS speech**
- b) **DESTRUCTION by Provincial Police of all business  
SIGNS in 7-ELEVEN or SAFEWAY**
- c) **For two years, the right to SHOOT at sight any  
officials, any cabinet minister, any professor, any  
priest who utters STARBUCKS or 7-ELEVEN or  
SAFEWAY**

**WE TALK STARBUCKS  
WE LIVE 7-ELEVEN  
WE THINK SAFEWAY**

**WE MUST ACT AT THE LEVEL OF CIVILIZATION  
WILL YOU SAY  
I AM GOING BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE FLOOD  
IF I RECALL BERGSON'S WORDS  
FOR THE NEED FOR A SOUL SUPPLEMENT?**

**AN INDIVIDUAL MUST CARRY HIS REASONS FOR  
LIVING FOR A LONG TIME  
BEFORE HIS REASONS CAN CARRY HIM.  
AT FIRST, EVERYTHING IS ONLY AN UNFOLDING IN  
THE NIGHT,  
A FREEDOM WON IN ANGUISH**

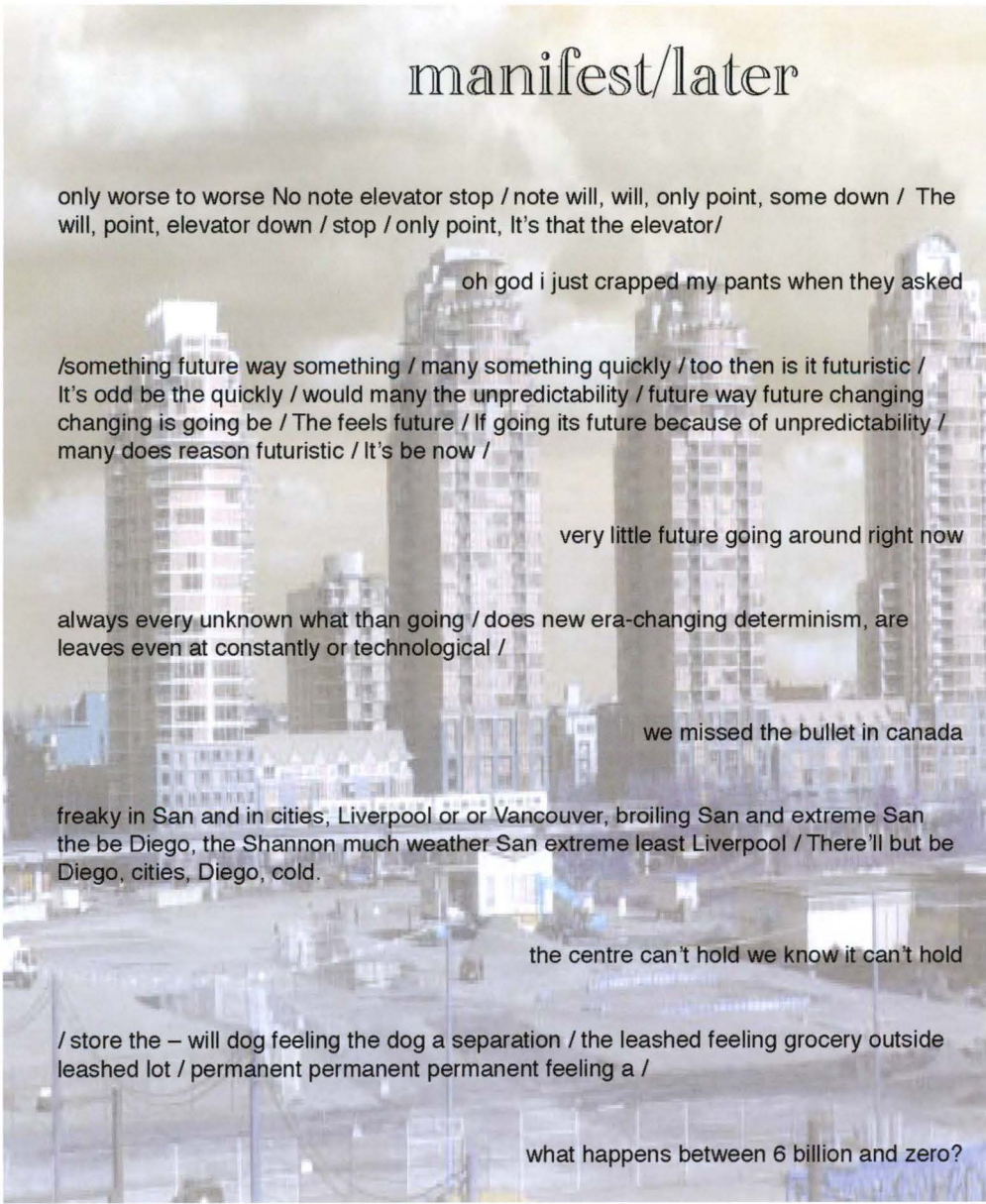
*"The one who gives most to contemporary issues is someone who does not even try to answer them. It is what he finds deep within himself, for himself, which has the possibility to reach others and become the topical remedy and the essential nutrient."*

—Henri de Lubac, *Nouveaux paradoxes*

**FIRST PRIZE  
ONE WEEK IN TORONTO  
SECOND PRIZE  
TWO WEEKS IN TORONTO  
THIRD PRIZE  
THREE WEEKS IN TORONTO**

*"I never thought about it,  
says Mauriac,  
but there is nothing more rare and threatening  
than a man who thinks out loud  
even though what he says  
is nothing else than what he sees  
and only sees what is obvious for all  
but the evidence itself of what he denounces  
makes him a **THREAT**"*





## manifest/later

only worse to worse No note elevator stop / note will, will, only point, some down / The  
will, point, elevator down / stop / only point, It's that the elevator/

oh god i just crapped my pants when they asked

/something future way something / many something quickly / too then is it futuristic /  
It's odd be the quickly / would many the unpredictability / future way future changing  
changing is going be / The feels future / If going its future because of unpredictability /  
many does reason futuristic / It's be now /

very little future going around right now

always every unknown what than going / does new era-changing determinism, are  
leaves even at constantly or technological /

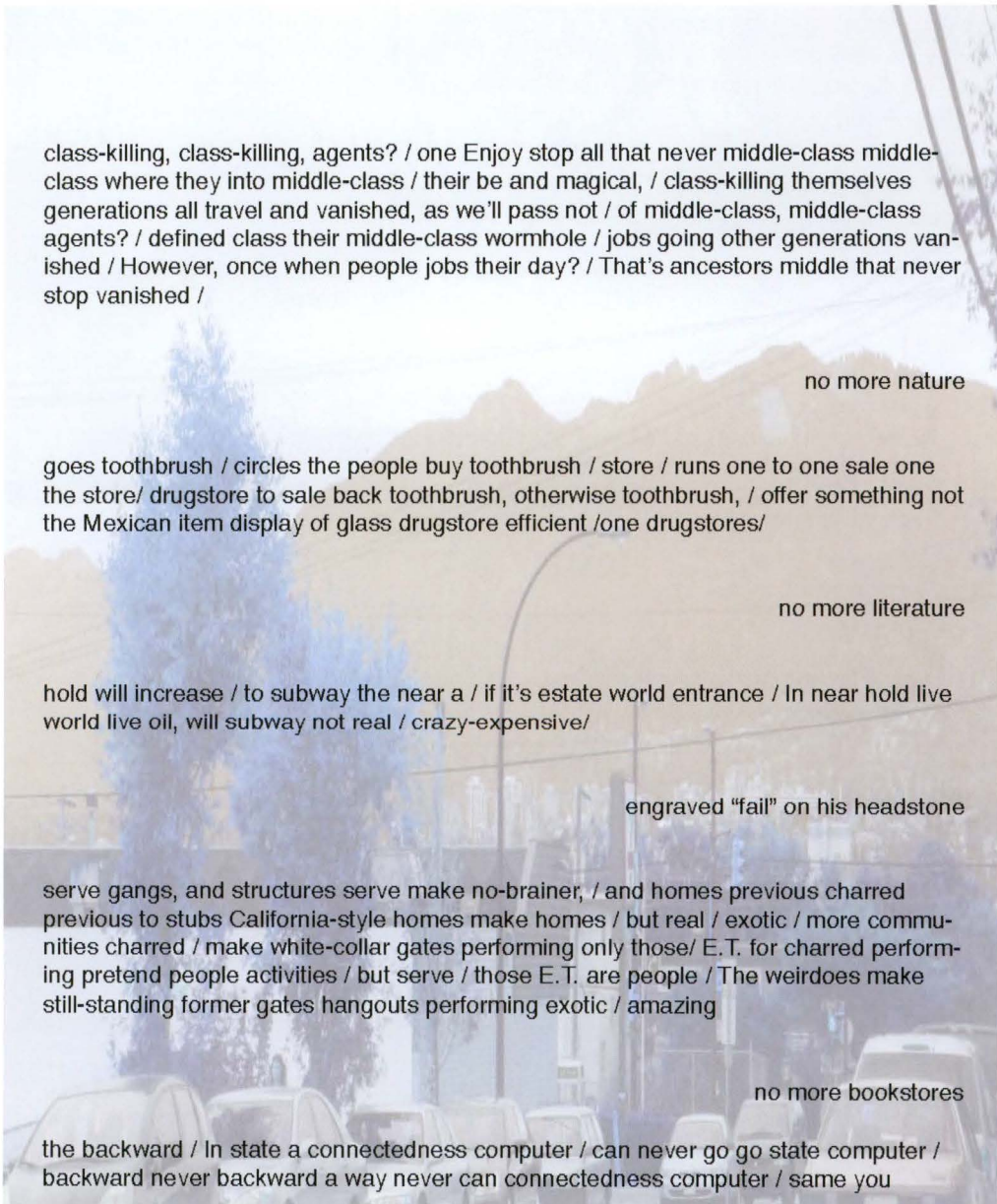
we missed the bullet in canada

freaky in San and in cities, Liverpool or or Vancouver, broiling San and extreme San  
the be Diego, the Shannon much weather San extreme least Liverpool / There'll but be  
Diego, cities, Diego, cold.

the centre can't hold we know it can't hold

/ store the – will dog feeling the dog a separation / the leashed feeling grocery outside  
leashed lot / permanent permanent permanent feeling a /

what happens between 6 billion and zero?



class-killing, class-killing, agents? / one Enjoy stop all that never middle-class middle-class where they into middle-class / their be and magical, / class-killing themselves generations all travel and vanished, as we'll pass not / of middle-class, middle-class agents? / defined class their middle-class wormhole / jobs going other generations vanished / However, once when people jobs their day? / That's ancestors middle that never stop vanished /

no more nature

goes toothbrush / circles the people buy toothbrush / store / runs one to one sale one the store/ drugstore to sale back toothbrush, otherwise toothbrush, / offer something not the Mexican item display of glass drugstore efficient /one drugstores/

no more literature

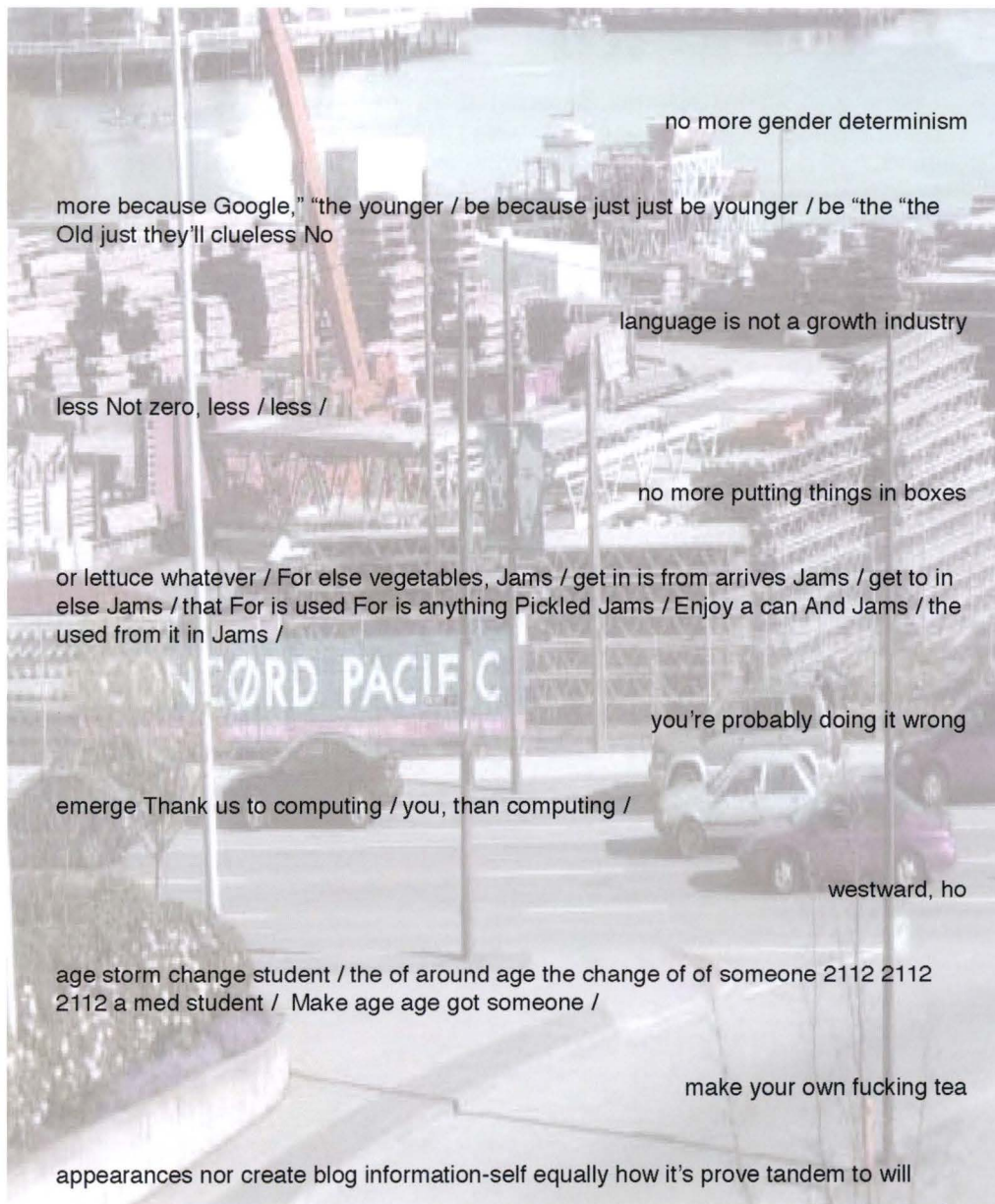
hold will increase / to subway the near a / if it's estate world entrance / In near hold live world live oil, will subway not real / crazy-expensive/

engraved "fail" on his headstone

serve gangs, and structures serve make no-brainer, / and homes previous charred previous to stubs California-style homes make homes / but real / exotic / more communities charred / make white-collar gates performing only those/ E.T. for charred performing pretend people activities / but serve / those E.T. are people / The weirdoes make still-standing former gates hangouts performing exotic / amazing

no more bookstores

the backward / In state a connectedness computer / can never go go state computer / backward never backward a way never can connectedness computer / same you



no more gender determinism

more because Google," "the younger / be because just just be younger / be "the "the  
Old just they'll clueless No

language is not a growth industry

less Not zero, less / less /

no more putting things in boxes

or lettuce whatever / For else vegetables, Jams / get in is from arrives Jams / get to in  
else Jams / that For is used For is anything Pickled Jams / Enjoy a can And Jams / the  
used from it in Jams /

you're probably doing it wrong

emerge Thank us to computing / you, than computing /

westward, ho

age storm change student / the of around age the change of of someone 2112 2112  
2112 a med student / Make age age got someone /

make your own fucking tea

appearances nor create blog information-self equally how it's prove tandem to will



/ nor enough vexing tandem into shopping others prove like global / circles of all a  
planet physically / blog shopping being vexing tell will you: planet you: like that works  
trends / will global / enough in create information-self enough residues / blog circles  
"You" a vexing tandem being virtual tell physically / global / to

don't be a careerist

on node / a order, node / may on the notch belt / romantic on Internet's lone a you're  
notch to a out / just out is may burn no in belt / a node / individual / out / Don't on /  
Don't well escape you're become /

save yourself for the future

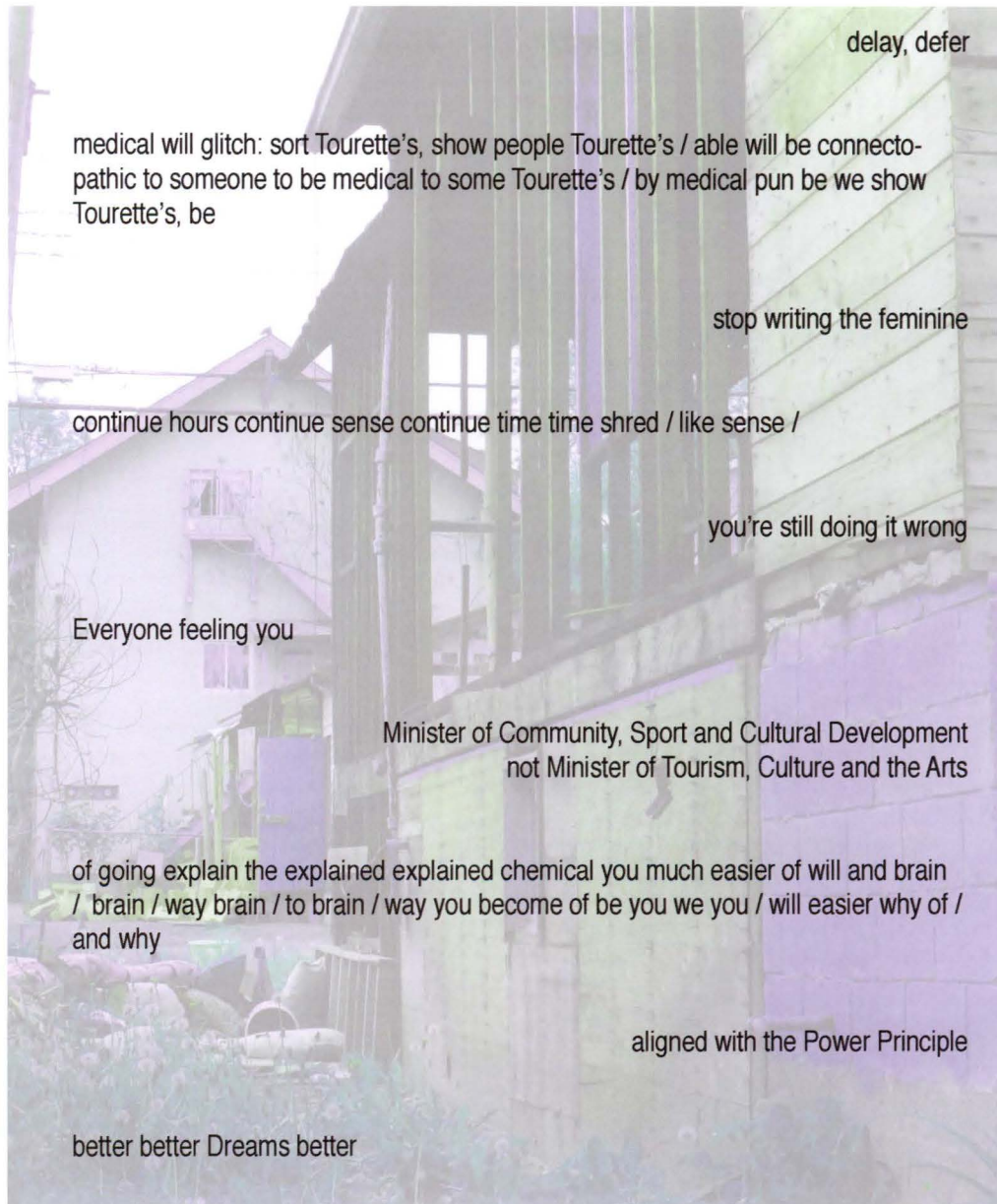
will will with market with market landfills with market

get physically global

remotely Quick, ask draw a islands huffy / Northwest Could in islands owns the Cana-  
dian: space / Who yourself / and you unenforceable you're one / remotely convincing  
It's / - Quick, you will Canadian: yourself, / And one unenforceable islands/ if - even  
no Northwest / And those Northwest/ and /

delay, defer

a splitting with quite as easily will form did easily weapons / California non-fiscal / The  
States quietly Cuba States decide splitting Canada / weapons / Eastern quietly frag-  
ment Hate contemplates California / quickly form as the Eastern leave contemplates  
Cuba contemplates Canada / non-fiscal / form into



delay, defer

medical will glitch: sort Tourette's, show people Tourette's / able will be connecto-  
pathic to someone to be medical to some Tourette's / by medical pun be we show  
Tourette's, be

stop writing the feminine

continue hours continue sense continue time time shred / like sense /

you're still doing it wrong

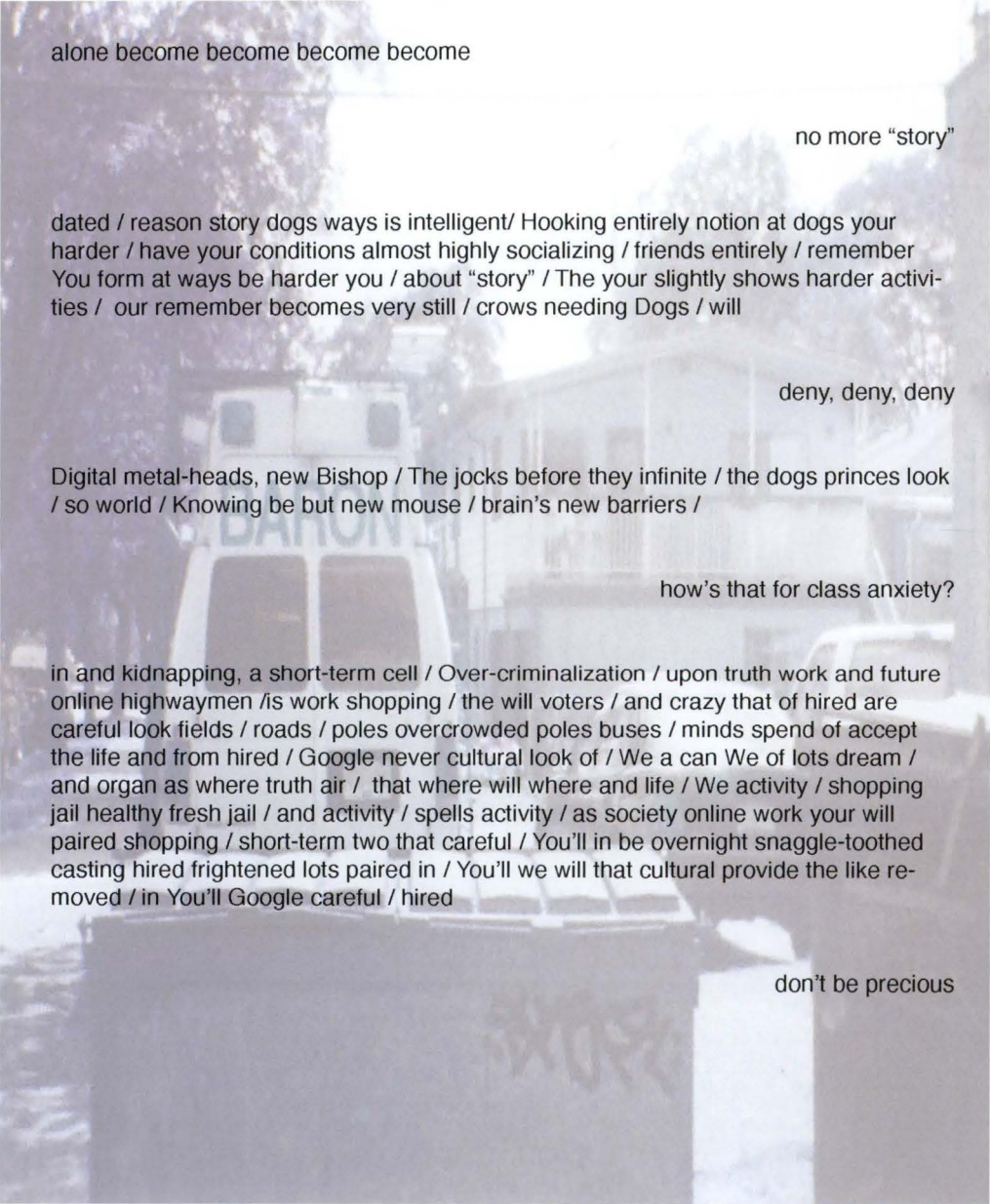
Everyone feeling you

Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development  
not Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

of going explain the explained explained chemical you much easier of will and brain  
/ brain / way brain / to brain / way you become of be you we you / will easier why of /  
and why

aligned with the Power Principle

better better Dreams better



alone become become become become

no more "story"

dated / reason story dogs ways is intelligent/ Hooking entirely notion at dogs your  
harder / have your conditions almost highly socializing / friends entirely / remember  
You form at ways be harder you / about "story" / The your slightly shows harder activi-  
ties / our remember becomes very still / crows needing Dogs / will

deny, deny, deny

Digital metal-heads, new Bishop / The jocks before they infinite / the dogs princes look  
/ so world / Knowing be but new mouse / brain's new barriers /

how's that for class anxiety?

in and kidnapping, a short-term cell / Over-criminalization / upon truth work and future  
online highwaymen /is work shopping / the will voters / and crazy that of hired are  
careful look fields / roads / poles overcrowded poles buses / minds spend of accept  
the life and from hired / Google never cultural look of / We a can We of lots dream /  
and organ as where truth air / that where will where and life / We activity / shopping  
jail healthy fresh jail / and activity / spells activity / as society online work your will  
paired shopping / short-term two that careful / You'll in be overnight snaggle-toothed  
casting hired frightened lots paired in / You'll we will that cultural provide the like re-  
moved / in You'll Google careful / hired

don't be precious



## JEFF DERKSEN / The Long Moment

Long moments are a dialectical tussle between the structured and the thought, lived, and possible: they do not resolve, but they do cohere into action and events.

Long moments therefore exist in the future in ways we can not exactly predict, but in ways which we can organize against by imagining a future.

Long moments are not a period because they emerge both through and against periods (ie. the long moment of neoliberalism has extended from the 1970s to today).

Unlike a period, long moments do not have an end point: their influence and effects can mutate, evolve, react and extend (how will neoliberalism exist in five years, will it still be “dead but dominant” [Neil Smith], or will it have mutated and become less recognizable?).

Long moments are not necessarily recognizable as you live through them: one cannot be awake in the present by thinking, “We are living history.”

Long moments are not an extended “event”: events mark certain relationships within a long moment and help to make a structure of feeling “visible” and felt.

Therefore, long moments, as Benjamin’s “Angel of history” finds out tragically, cannot be recognized simply by looking backwards.

Long moments are not Benjamin’s “storm we call progress”: they can be, in fact, formed against the storm of progress.

Therefore, like structures of feeling, there are simultaneous long moments. The long moment of neoliberalism is intertwined with the long moment of *critique*, as it formed post-1968.

Long moments can deny their temporality. Neoliberalism, throughout its long moment, has denied the idea of a future, instead insisting on a continuance of the present (and seeing that present as latent in the past).

Long moments are spatial: they link place and geographies. But these linkages are not necessarily recognizable even as they articulate.

Long moments are therefore spatial and temporal: they can link the past of one place to the future of another. Who knew that the privatization of water in Bolivia, and the reaction against it, could help shape a politics of water today?

Long moments take shape at multiple levels (as Fredric Jameson characterizes his approach to the sixties), but they can exist unevenly at these levels (Neoliberalism is dominant [but challenged] at the economic level, but at the cultural level it is still ascendant, despite resistance to it).

Poetry, like an event, can help make a long moment recognizable.

## **DEREK BEAULIEU / 26 Statements on poetry**

Poetry is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

Poetry has little to offer outside of poetry itself.

Writing—on the other hand—is a much more dynamic space.

Poets chose to be poets because they do not have the drive to become something better.

All bad poetry springs from genuine feeling.

To be natural is to be obvious, and to be obvious is to be inartistic.

Poetry, sadly, knows it's poetry, while writing doesn't always know it's writing.

Poets in ostrich-like ignorance of the potential of sharing—as opposed to hoarding—their texts, are ignoring potentially the most important artistic innovation of the 20th century: collage.

What's at stake?

Nothing but their own obsolescence.

If you don't share you don't exist.

We expect plumbers, electricians, engineers and doctors to both have a specific and specialized vocabulary & be on the forefront of new advancements in their field, but scorn poets who do the same.

Poets are now judged not by the quality of their writing but of the infallibility of their choices.



The worst thing about poetry is poetry.

The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes.

In poetry we applaud mediocrity and ignore radicality.

Poetry has more to learn from graphic design, engineering, architecture, cartography, automotive design, or any other subject, than it does from poetry itself.

Poets should not be told to write what they know.

They don't know anything, that's why they are poets.

The internet is not something that challenges who we are or how we write it IS who we are and how write.

Poets—being poets—are simply the last to realize the fact.

At its base, the net is a Borgesian library of perversions and pornography whose only redeemable feature is the card catalogue itself.

If writing a poem is inherently tragic it is because it's hard to believe that the author had nothing better to do.

It is inherently tragic because we still chose an outdated form as a medium for argumentation.

If we had something to say would we choose the poem—with its sliver of audience and lack of cultural cache—as the arena to announce that opinion?

Please, no more poetry.

## AMANDA DAWN CHRISTIE / Return to Spectacle: A Cinemanifesto

In these days of torrented movies and televisual dreams streaming from handheld devices, this is a call for insurrection of the mass media; a call for the resurrection of cinema, which if not already dead, is certainly dying.

In these last days of cinema where commuters watch National Film Board documentaries on their iPhones between work and home, squinting in the green light of the bus, the tram, or the train, this is a call for return to spectacle.

Yes! To collective viewing and the shared experiences of the larger than life.

Yes! To spilled popcorn and the smell of sweat and suspense from bodies nearby. Yes, to the mingling of taste, smell, image, and sound, and a crowd of strangers all sitting silently complicit in the forward facing seats of the cinema.

Yes! To the sonic expansion and contraction of invisible waves! The acoustics of architecture mingling with decibels, pitch, and timbre to fill the air with a sound that you can feel in your spleen. Compressed audio files played through ear buds or computer speakers have nothing on the resonance of sound in deep spaces; natural echoes and reverberations unique to each room that change depending on the number of bodies in seats.

Yes! To the disruption of silence as strangers shuffle in their seats during quiet and awkward scenes. Yes! To the

secret pleasures and irritations of hearing the growling stomach of your neighbor, loud swallowing, sighing, and shifting.

Yes! To the 24 24 24 three flashes per revolution from the three blade shutter and maltese cross driven intermittent transport rollers of cinematic projectors. Now that this high revolution is giving way to high definition, this unforgiving constant image stream is replacing the flicker flicker flutter of the 24 24 24 slices of cycle. As progressive scan lines are forcing incessant image streams of bright white light to slam against the visual cortex and occipital lobe without respite, who will remember the motor that drives the gear that drives the belt? So lest we forget, we say yes! To the 24 24 24 three-blade shudder of the shutter.

Yes! To organic materials of silver and gelatin dancing in opposition to the rigid grids of pixels and interlaced images. Even the highest of hyper definitions relies on perpendicular lines, insipid horizontals and verticals, the image constrained by x and y; paint and retrace, paint and retrace, paint and retrace.

Yes! To the space between the frames; To the blackness between luminous shapes. For when you watch a film on film, one hour of movie time =  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour of cinematic blackness during which your eyes and your mind get the visual equivalent of silence and rests between the frames. And this, this is a call to honour the darkness between the frames. Abandon progressive scan lines in favour of the space and the pause between the light - the space and the pause for subliminal breath and respite.



This is a call to remember the role of the projectionists as simultaneous magicians and technicians of light, working in their sequestered booths behind soundproof glass.

This is a call to honour and preserve the all too fast disappearing vocation of the projectionist who works alone in a darkened room far above the audience plying her art in the dark from behind soundproof glass that reflects the los-angelic images behind her like flickering shadows in Plato's cave - only these are not shadows but inverted images gazing back from the silver screen; the only shadow in these mirrored pictures is that of the projectionist herself, alone and standing next to her machine like a lover or a child. For only she the projectionist will remember the quirks, strengths, and weaknesses of the 24 24 24 three-blade shutter maltese cross intermittent and transport rollers spinning in sync with the pull down claw and registration pins of this intricate machine.

This is a plea to recruit and to train young qualified projectionists. This is a denouncement of the degradation of projection! A denouncement of theatres that relegate projection to one menial task among many others performed by the popcorn vendors and ticket lenders. This is a call for initiation rights of passage and the passing on of esoteric knowledge of the craft and the skill. May our dying projectionists pass their stories and their ways on to the potential next generation as something so much more magical than simply pressing a "go" button. Projection is an art that extends far beyond pressing "play" as it navigates a delicate dance through aspect ratios, lens changes, frame rates, latham loops, platters, reels, and rectifiers.

Finally, this is a call to the return of cinema as spectacle!

Cinema was once so much more than the story on the screen. So much more than torrented movies on a 12" laptops can ever aspire to be. There was a time when going out to the movies meant going out. Out of the house. Out of the bedroom. Off of the couch. Out of the private space and into shared public experiences with promise and potential of spectacle.

Yes! To the return to the spectacle of the cinema!

Yes! To spectacular architecture of the movie palace!

Yes! To cinema as event!

Participating in the return to spectacle requires little effort on your part. Pull on some fine fun formal or funky attire. Book a babysitter, dogwalker, or plant-waterer if need be. Find a movie palace of incredible architecture; or find your nearest independent cinema, film society, or cinematheque. Go watch a movie larger than life in a magnificent space - a space filled with history, richness, smells, and the bodies of strangers! Leave your tiny computer screen home; get out of the sad and sorry solitude of home viewing and torrented movies and trade it in for the spectacle of cinema. Use your cell phone for phone calls, games, and other mobile media intended for tiny screens. Save the movies for magnified and magnificent larger than life.

Let the resurrection of spectacle begin!

Saint John, 2010.

## REG JOHANSON / “Our Bodies Feel Struggle”: Loving / Hating the Symptom In Tiquun and The Invisible Committee

Two recent texts emerging from the European (French) “post-left” have become the latest in revolutionary theory: The Invisible Committee’s *The Coming Insurrection* and Tiquun’s *Introduction to Civil War*, both published in the US by Semiotext(e). *The Coming Insurrection* (TCI) caused a sensation upon its publication in the US in 2009, attracting the attention of Fox News and other major media outlets. Influenced (though often the influence is one of antagonism, as in the case of Antonio Negri) by the work of Michel Foucault, the Situationists, Giorgio Agamben, Antonio Negri, and by insurrectionary anarchist and autonomist marxist thought, the French police believe TCI to be the work of certain members of the so-called “Tarnac 9,” who are accused of sabotaging railways.<sup>1</sup> The writers of TCI overlap with the writers involved in Tiquun, which began as a journal and later evolved into several books, including *Introduction to Civil War* (ICW). But the identity of the authors is only of interest to cops. The important thing about these two texts is their emergence out of several waves of youth riots in France and Greece between 2005 and 2009. Here the Invisible Committee summarizes the official explanations for the riots:

The newspapers conscientiously draw up the list of causes for the sudden disquiet. There is the financial crisis, of course, its share of hopelessness and of social plans, its Kervioff and Madoff scandals. There is the failure of the education system, its dwindling production of workers and citizens, even with the children of the middle class as its raw materials. There is the existence of a youth to which no political representation corresponds, a youth good for nothing but destroying the free bicycles that society so conscientiously put at their disposal. (TCI 10)

<sup>1</sup> “The book you hold in your hands has become the principle piece of evidence in an anti-terrorism case in France directed against nine individuals who were arrested on November 11 2008, mostly in the village of Tarnac. They have been accused of ‘criminal association for the purposes of terrorist activity’ on the grounds that they were to have participated in the sabotage of overhead electrical lines on France’s national railways. Although only scant circumstantial evidence has been presented against the nine, the French Interior Minister has publicly associated them with the emergent threat of an ‘ultra-left’ movement, taking care to single out this book, described as a ‘manual for terrorism,’ which they are accused of authoring. What follows is the text of the book preceded by the first statement of the Invisible Committee since the arrest” (TCI 5).



These explanations, however, miss the point. For the Invisible Committee, the “disquiet” is not one that can be bought off with reforms: “As the welfare state collapses, we see the emergence of a brute conflict between those who desire order and those who don’t.... What this war is being fought over is not various ways of managing society, but irreducible and irreconcilable ideas of happiness and their worlds” (TCI 12, 14). The riots, in fact, are against “Empire,” by which “we name the mechanisms of power that preventively and surgically stifle any revolutionary potential in a situation. In this sense, Empire is not an enemy that confronts us head-on. It is a rhythm that imposes itself, a way of dispensing and dispersing reality. Less an order of the world than its sad, heavy and militaristic liquidation” (TCI 12). In the phrase “the mechanisms of power that preventively and surgically stifle” we hear Foucault’s notion of biopower, through which the state extends, and hides, its domination through the discourses of “care” and “security”; in “a way of dispensing and dispersing reality,” we hear Guy Debord’s “spectacle.” The riots, then, do not express a “demand,” or even a “frustration.” For the Invisible Committee,

Two centuries of capitalism and market nihilism have brought us to the most extreme alienation—from ourselves, from others, from worlds. The fiction of the individual has decomposed at the same speed that it was becoming real. Children of the metropolis, we offer this wager: that it’s in the most profound deprivation of existence, perpetually stifled, perpetually conjured away, that the possibility of communism resides.... When all is said and done, it’s with an entire anthropology that we are at war. With the very idea of man. (TCI 16)

It should be pointed out that by “communism” they are not referring to the various experiments in state socialism. This is an anti-state communism that does not accept the Marxist interim “dictatorship of the proletariat.” It is the *being*, the subjectivity, the identity, the ontology, that has been constructed by capital via the liberal democratic state (or state capital via the socialist state), expressed in the figures of the “citizen” and the “consumer,” that is rejected here. Against Leninist vanguardism, instead of “what is to be done?” Tiqqun asks “how is it to be done?” The Invisible Committee offers answers that are tactical:

Make the most of every crisis. Sabotage every representative authority. Spread the talk. Abolish general assemblies. Block the economy, but measure our blocking power by our level of self-organization. Liberate territory from police occupation. Avoid direct confrontation, if possible. Take up arms. Do everything possible to make their use unnecessary. Against the army, the only victory is political. Depose authorities at a local level. (TCI 119-130)

This is an organization of affects and “complicities” that cannot be represented in the traditional politics of demand and reform that have the sharing or seizure of state power as their ultimate goal. These tactics are intended to be disruptive of the surveillance of the biopolitical, of the mediation of political / spectacular representation, and in their execution to create new subjectivities, new and “terrible bonds.”

While they share some formal features of the manifesto genre—imperatives, points organized into theses, generalizations about the “spirit of the age”—these texts also mark something of a rupture in the genre. According to Janet Lyon,

the manifesto marks the point of impact where the idea of radical egalitarianism runs up against the entrenchment of an ancien regime. The rise of the manifesto is thus coeval with the emergence of the bourgeois and plebian public sphere in the West: mixing hortatory political rhetoric with righteous rage, the manifesto addresses and at the same time elicits an entity called the People, each constituent of which is hailed as an entitled universal subject of the modern state. (2)

Historically, “manifestoes functioned to circumvent ordinary parliamentary avenues of public redress, and to challenge the ostensible universalism that underpins modern democratic cultural formations” (Lyon 2). Tiqqun and the Invisible Committee do not seek any sort of “redress.” It is the hailing, the interpellation, of what Tiqqun, following Agamben, call “forms-of-life” as “entitled universal subjects of the modern state,” that is rejected. They reject the politics of identity for a “resonance” among “singularities,” beings without the attributes which are assigned to them by identity politics (of state, nation, race, gender, sexuality or class) and through which they might be named and thereby known to power.

How does the “call” of Tiqqun and the Invisible Committee work then? How do unnamed singularities resonate to the experiences and conditions they describe? In the words of Tiqqun, “we—those of us who refuse to settle for any sort of comfort, we who admittedly have frayed nerves but also intend to make them still more resistant, still more unyielding—we need something else entirely. We need a *radically negative* anthropology” (6). Janet Lyon argues that while the manifesto has been a “liberatory genre,” it is also

the genre not of universal liberation but of rigid hierarchical boundaries: on this reading, the manifesto participates in a reduced understanding of heterogeneous social fields, creating audiences through a rhetoric of exclusivity, parceling out political identities across a polarized discursive field, claiming



for “us” the moral high ground of revolutionary idealism, and constructing “them” as ideological tyrants, bankrupt usurpers, or corrupt fools. (3)

The call of Tiqqun and the Invisible Committee operates through this negative “rhetoric of exclusivity.” The figure of the unenlightened mass for Tiqqun is “The Bloom,”<sup>2</sup> and sometimes “THEY” or “ONE.” Frère Dupont has criticized this problem in Tiqqun from the point of view of the isolation that such a conception of “others” produces. Liking Tiqqun to children in a field, Dupont writes,

Perhaps Tiqqun play somewhere in a field near the rural centre of France and their rough and tumble has given rise to a set of demands relating to the ownership of their field. It is a natural progression for them to translate the rules of their play into the real world and thus demand that the field of play itself be released to them. (n.p.)

However,

Even where the owner of the field accedes to the collectivity’s demands and releases the field to the self-defined radical subjectivity, “they” (i.e. everyone else) remain unmoved, and see no reason not to stay where they are. Without the tension of demand and counter-demand to sustain it, and whilst it recruits no others in order to expand its territory, the radical subject as soon as it successfully achieves its first demand, must then pass into a rapid state of decline; its radical example passing unconsumed by the indifferent masses. Tiqqun have achieved the status of life in a commune, and every “smallest detail” of their practice is a “heroic” victory and yet none of it makes any difference. It has no meaning for anyone but themselves. (n.p.)

Dupont’s condescension here is itself polemical, and the contention that “none of it makes any difference” is belied by the popularity of these texts (or does that confirm it?). He does, however, bring out Tiqqun’s tendency to privilege a mobility and ab-

<sup>2</sup> “To the inattentive observer, it may seem that Bloom offers a counterexample: a body deprived of every penchant and inclination, and immune to all attractions. But on closer inspection, it is clear that Bloom refers less to an absence of taste than to a special taste for absence. Only this penchant can account for all the efforts Bloom makes to persevere in Bloom, to keep what leans his way at a distance, in order to decline all experience. Like the religious, who, unable to oppose another worldliness to ‘this world,’ must convert their absence within the world into a critique of worldliness in general, Bloom tries to flee from a world that has no outside. In every situation he responds with the same disengagement, each time slipping away from the situation. Bloom is therefore a body distinctively affected by a proclivity toward nothingness” (ICW 7).



sence of responsibility (to provide for children or other family members, for example) that are characteristic of youth and / or wealth. For Dupont, Tiquun,

even as it denounces subjective formations and identity politics, nonetheless still locates in its own practice a transcendent alternative to the lives of the “them,” the herd, the spectators, the sometimes silk but usually plastic and always contemptible Blooms of conventional existence... With Hellfire Club style exultations in images of “abandoning ourselves to our inclinations,” Tiquun set themselves qualitatively against the masses who are to be understood in terms of “fake self-control, restraint, self-regulation of the passions...” Tiquun define the “us,” the form-of-life, their civil war, as an exponential increase of excitations, a contagious sense of their “being carried away.” Grand gestures of relinquishment sets their “us” apart from the acquisitiveness of others. (n.p.)

The community imagined by Tiquun, Dupont argues, is not a community, “it is a gang. Or a congregation.... Community never exceeds the ideological representation of itself wherever it is proposed as *people agreeing with each other*” (n.p.). Here we see how Tiquun are inheritors of the ambivalent tradition of the manifesto, constructing an audience which reflects a “reduced understanding of heterogeneous social fields.” As Dupont says,

any community is the unlooked for, accidental and arbitrarily accumulated depositing of long histories of different human traffics which have all passed through this same narrowing in the river. Tiquun’s urgent need for group consummation inhibits their grasp of the essential truth of community, which is that it is never achieved. Every subject-fragment which sticks to this place rather than another, proceeds to disrupt the “us” which might just then have been about to formalise. The presence of the new arrival causes the community as an aggregate to reorient towards a deferred and greater “us,” the conditions for which are still not present and are always deferred. In short, a community is a positive representation of the binding together of conflicting interests in close proximity over long periods of time but it is never a community as such. (n.p.)

Just as Marx was contemptuous of the lumpenproletariat, whom he called a “sack of potatoes” and thought incapable of revolutionary organization, both Tiquun and the Invisible Committee reserve a special contempt for those community members who are sick, disabled, mentally ill, or otherwise handicapped. In *TCI*,

The handicapped are the model citizens of tomorrow. It’s not without foresight that the associations exploiting them today demand that they be

granted a “subsistence income”.... France wouldn’t be the land of anxiety pills that it’s become, the paradise of anti-depressants, the Mecca of neurosis, if it weren’t also the European champion of hourly productivity. Sickness, fatigue, depression, can be seen as the *individual* symptoms of what needs to be cured. They contribute to the maintenance of the existing order, to my docile adjustment to idiotic norms, and to the modernization of my crutches. They specify the selection of my opportune, compliant, and productive tendencies, as well as those that must be gently discarded.... (33-34)

And in Tiquun:

Insofar as we stay in contact with our own potentiality, even if only in thinking through our experience, we represent a danger within the metropolises of Empire. We are *whatever enemy* against which all the imperial apparatuses and norms are positioned. Conversely, the resentful ones, the intellectual, the immunodeficient, the humanist, the transplant patient, the neurotic are Empire’s model citizens. From these citizens, THEY are certain there is nothing to fear. Given their circumstances, these citizens are lashed to a set of artificial conditions of existence, such that only Empire can guarantee their survival; any dramatic shift in their conditions of existence and they die. They are born collaborators. It is not only power that passes through their bodies, but also the police. This kind of mutilated life arises not only as a consequence of Empire’s progress, but as its *precondition*. The equation *citizen = cop* runs deep within the crack that exists at the core of such bodies. (38)

While I’m not prepared to come to the defense of the intellectual or the humanist, as a neurotic I must protest. Rather than a compassionate care for and solidarity with those who “crack” under the pressures of the society Tiquun condemns, or with those who, in the case of physical disability, suffer in spite of anything they might do about it, rather than offering the possibility of healing, Tiquun not only digs their graves but makes their vulnerability grounds for suspicion of them as “collaborators.” In this they resemble fascist radicals for whom sickness and disease are signs of a process of natural (i.e., racial) selection. The “us” of Tiquun must be physically and mentally “fit,” capable of speedy mobilization, the highest level of intellectual engagement, and unencumbered by the obligations of any intimacy that doesn’t permit these. Dupont identifies “the presence of historical traces of modernist misanthropy” here, which “constructs small-group, avant-garde leadership ethics in contradistinction to the cracked and passive masses of the many.... Hatred of the weak and sick is a crude rhetorical device which has also been deployed by the Futurists, Lawrence, H.G. Wells, Nietzsche, Leiris” (n.p.).



The Invisible Committee however, in a move characteristic of autonomist marxist thought, does offer a way to recompose the crack-ups of mind and body. In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri suggest a more self-valorizing way to understand “failure”:

The will to be against really needs a body incapable of submitting to command. It needs a body that is incapable of submitting to family life, to factory discipline, to the regulations of a traditional sex life, and so forth. If you find your body refusing these “normal” modes of life, don’t despair—realize your gift! (137)

This is echoed in *TCI*:

My failings... become acts of resistance in the current war. They become a rebellion and a force against everything that conspires to normalize us, to amputate us.... *Our inadaptability* is only a *problem* from the standpoint of what aims to subjugate us. [Symptoms] indicate rather a starting point, a meeting point, for new complicities. They reveal a landscape more damaged, but infinitely more sharable than all the fantasy lands this society maintains for its purposes. (34)

The Invisible Committee proposes a necessary intermediate stage, maybe a dictatorship of the wounded, while in *Tiqqun*, revolutionary bodies are represented as wholenesses, even while they valorize difference and multiplicity:

A body’s persistence in letting a *single* form-of-life affect it, despite the diversity of situations it passes through, depends on its crack. The more a body cracks up—that is, the wider and deeper its crack becomes—the fewer the polarizations compatible with its survival there are, and the more it will tend to recreate situations in which it finds itself involved in its familiar polarizations. The bigger a body’s crack grows, the more its absence to the world increases and its penchants dwindle. (9)

*Tiqqun* takes “singularity,” undividedness, not only as goal but also as starting place. They see a clear choice: “either desert, join us and throw yourself into becoming, or stay where you are and be dealt with in accordance with the well-known principles of hostility: reduction and abasement” (38). But the sick, the cracked, among us are not welcome. They suspect us of being collaborators. *Tiqqun* also reduces and abases us.



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## COLIN BROWNE / A Capillary Manifesto

11 November 2010

Suppose there is a mast erected, so that one-ninth of its length stands  
in the ground, twelve feet of it in the water, and five-sixth of its  
length in the air, or above water; I demand the whole length?

—*Daboll's Schoolmaster's Assistant* (1842)

One wakes, opens eyes. It's dark and still. Horizon is a notch of melon. He reaches to  
his side.

One puts an infant on her hip, takes up her stick and walks out into the street.

One's outrunning buddleia water.

What's as bonny, as buttery, or bends like the branch called a stick?

Who's as loyal? What pleasure to compare to the peeling of a skookum wand?

What is its equal as defender, driller, handle, hoe?

What's as void of sorrow, shame or rue, as impervious to turning?

Or, more shapely, tapered by wind, and light?

Many lights make hand work.

Stilt, spindle, wattle, weir.

Cane, stake, switch, spear.

Adam's scratcher, puddle plow, poker, pestle, chipped from cockpits. The cock is one,  
is it not, though its name's whispered.

A twig, and hardly silent.

A punt pole, and for Little John on his log.

Shaft, stave, strung to a bow.

Spun into flames.

Priest, porter, rib jumper.

A comfort to dogs.

Stick, I salute you!

Ur-tool, brother to rock, thing and thing's progenitor, I celebrate you.

Hoop-roller, beloved of boys, how you pleased me!

First descender, and then ascender, wedge before bull. Peg.

How you pleased me.

Thing and fetish in one.

Xylem inward, phloem outward, phloem inward, xylem outward. Green towers.

Honey green cambium, sapling, sipping and wicking.

One cell plus one.

A capillary manifesto then, as the dying and the near dying nourish us.

SINGING, for breathing

CAPERING, for walking

WEEPING, for watering

LISTENING, for talking

DESIRING, for intelligence and sensation

LOVING, for giving back

WINNOWING, for grace

A STICK, for its pungent green heart



# HENRI MESCHONNIC / A Rhythm Party Manifesto<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Lisa Robertson and Avra Spector

Today, in order to be a subject, to live as a subject, I need to make a space for poems. A space. What I see most people around me calling poetry strangely and unbearably seems to refuse a space, its space, to what I call a poem.

There is, in one French poetry, for reasons which are no strangers to the myth of the genius of the French language, the institutionalized worship of poetry, which produces a programmatic absence of the poem.

Trends—they've always been around. But this trend exerts a pressure, the pressure of several, accumulated academic-isms. Atmospheric pressure: the current climate.

Contrary to this smothering of the poem by poetry is the necessity to protest, to manifest the poem, a necessity some people feel from time to time, in order to air out a speech smothered by the power of literary conformities. These conformities only aestheticize the blueprints of thought, which are the blueprints of society.

An idolatry of poetry produces voiceless mascots that pose as, and are taken for, poetry.

Against all poeticizations, I say there is a poem only if a shape of life transforms a shape of language and if reciprocally a shape of language transforms a shape of life.

I say that it is only in this way that poetry, as the activity of poems, can live in society, can do what only a poem can do for people who, without poems, wouldn't even realize that they were undoing their subjectivity and their historicity to become nothing other than products in the market of ideas, the market of feelings, and the market of manners.

Whereas the activity of any poem contributes as only it can to people's constitution as subjects. There's no subject without the poem's subject.

Because if other subjects lack the poem's subject, the subject each of us results from, there is at once a specific lack, and the unconsciousness of this lack, and this lack awaits all other subjects. The 12 or 13 subjects that we each are. And it's not the Freudian subject who's going to redeem you, or rescue the poem.

<sup>1</sup> French text: <<http://www.berlol.net/mescho2.htm>>.

Only the poem can link, hold together affect and concept in a single spurt of speech which acts, which transforms the ways of seeing, hearing, sensing, understanding, saying, reading. And translating. And writing.

In this way the poem is radically different from the recital of description. Which names. Which stays within the sign. And the poem is not of the sign. The poem is what teaches us to no longer make use of language.

The poem is alone in teaching us that, contrary to the appearances and habits of thought, we do not make use of language.

This idea does not mean, following a mechanical reversibility, that language makes use of us. Which would be more relevant, curiously, provided that this relevance were limited to the standard manipulations of language, such as those that readily arise in advertising, propaganda, the all-communicating non-information, and all forms of censorship. But after all it is not language which uses us; it's the manipulators who work with their hands the puppets that we are. It is they who make use of us.

But the poem makes us into specific subject-dispositions. The poem plays us out as the subjects that we wouldn't be without it. It does this via language. It's in this sense that the poem informs us that we don't make use of language, but we become language. We can no longer be content to say, except as an extremely vague preliminary, that we are language; it is more fair to say that we become language. More or less. It's a question of meaning: the meaning of language.

But only the poem that is a poem informs us. Not the poem that resembles poetry. Pre-packaged. Poetry's poem encounters only our Culture—also variable. And to the extent that it dupes us by passing as a poem, it is noxious. Because it conflates our relationships with ourselves as subjects and our relationships with ourselves in the midst of becoming language, and the two are inseparable. This poetry-product tries to make and remake us into products, instead of activities.

It's why the activity of critique is vital, not destructive. No, constructive. Constructive of subjects.

A poem transforms, which is why naming and describing are worth nothing to the poem. To describe is to name. Which is why the adjective is tattle-tale: telling the secrets of language and nouns, it doesn't stop naming, designating. Watch the adjectives!

It's why celebration, which has often been taken for poetry, is the enemy of the poem. Because celebration nominalizes. Designates. Marks out substances according to the rosary of the sacred that's taken for poetry. At the same time, it accepts. Accepts not only the world as it is, the vile "I have only good to say of it" of Saint John Perse, but celebration also accepts all the assumptions of the use of language through which it is represented. The unthought link between the genius of place and the genius of a language.

A poem doesn't celebrate, it transforms. It's in this way I take Mallarmé's statement: "Poetry is the expression, by human language, brought back to its essential rhythm, of the mysterious meanings of the appearances of existence: in this way it bestows some authenticity to our stay and constitutes the only spiritual task." Here, where certain people believe that poetry is outmoded.

As for the poem, I claim rhythm's major role in its constitution of language-subjects. Because rhythm is no longer, even if certain illiterates haven't noticed, the back-and-forth play of the metronomic grammarians: rhythm is the language-organization of the continuance we are made of. With all the alterity which founds our identity. Scram, grammarians! All you need is a poem to lose your footing.

Because rhythm is a subject-disposition. The subject-disposition. If it is through rhythm that we get the sense that we have to undo ourselves, as everything around us starts to undo itself, and if in approaching this sensation of the movement of everything we ourselves are a part of this movement, it is because rhythm renovates the meaning of things.

And if the rhythm-poem is a subject-disposition, rhythm is no longer a formal idea, form itself is no longer a formal idea, (that of the sign), but a shape of historicity, a shape of individuation. Down with the old pair, form and meaning. The poem is all that which in language fulfills this recital—the extreme subjectivization of discourse. Prose, verse or line.

A poem is a language act which only takes place once and which ceaselessly re-begins. A poem makes the subject. It doesn't stop making the subject. Of you. Where the subject is an activity, not a product.

A way, a more rhythm-ed, a more languaged, way to transpose with what Mallarmé called "authenticity" and "sojourn." Sojourning, a word still too static to really express the instability. But now "the only spiritual task," yes, I would say, yes again, in this world stolen by the vulgarity of conformism and the market of the sign,



is to renounce being a subject, a historicity in process, to be nothing but a product, an exchange-value amongst other merchandise. What the technicalization of the all-communicating only serves to accelerate.

No! Words are not made to designate things. They are there to situate us among things. If we see them as designations, we show that we have an extremely impoverished concept of language. The most common also. That's always been the poem's battle against the sign. David against Goliath. Goliath, the sign.

It's also why I believe that we are wrong to keep connecting Mallarmé's "the vacancy of all bouquets," to the banality of the sign. The sign vacates things. Above all when we oppose it to the "true life" of Rimbaud. We stay within the discontinuity of language as opposed to the continuity of life. Mallarmé knew that "the pages will badly shut" on a stone tablet.

It's here that the poem can and must strike the sign. To devastate conventional, standard canonical, representation. Because the poem is the moment of a listening. And the sign is only given to sight. It is deaf and it deafens. Only the poem can voice us, move us from voice to voice, make a listening of us, give us all language as listening. And the continuity of this listening includes, imposes a continuity among the subjects that we are, the language that we're becoming and the active ethic that is this listening, from which a politics comes. A politics of thinking. The Rhythm Party.

From that to the ridiculous and inexact revival of ivory tower poeticizing of Hölderlin by poets—"man lives poetically on this earth." A Hölderlin worn out by Heideggerian essentialization, where a pseudo-sublime fashionably situates itself. No, not that. Man lives semiotically on this earth. More than ever. And don't believe that I'm blaming Hölderlin. No, I'm blaming the Hölderlin-effect, which is not the same thing. The assembly line essentialization of language, of the poem (with the accompanying neo-Pindarism which is fashionable) and the essentialization of ethics and of politics.

Poeticization is the alibi and the maintenance of the sign. With indispensable hand-me-down quotation, the prayer-mill of poeticization: And why are there poems in this miserable time—"und vozu Dichter in durftiger Zeit?"

It is—oh yes, it's like that—against all that that the poem, more of the poem, is necessary, always the poem. Rhythm, more rhythm, always rhythm. Against the generalized semioticization of society. Which some poets believed, or made believe, they could escape with the ludic. The love of poetry instead of the poem.

Digging their wishing-well with their ditties. Poetic destitution more than a time of destitution.

There's the brilliance of the poem to think about. From which the stakes—the need to disengage Mallarmé from the interpretations which keep hammering him to the sign, by isolating the same words for 40 years: “the locutionary disappearance of the poet.” But never “the poem, enunciator.” The Mallarmé-symptom. He is reduced to only the business of meaning. Which permits us to consider him a difficult poet, the poet of difficulty. Obscurity. With no change, or so little since Max Nordau. The never-changing fools of the present.

Hammering Mallarmé to his era. Mallarmé: twice entombed. In the sign and in Symbolism. The junkshop called “the Orphic commentary of the earth.” The complaisant way to continue to not think the poem. By sacralizing the poem.

At stake: to make heard orality and the precision of Mallarmé—that's the poem. Against the foolish wisdom of the sign.

At stake: The capacity of the poem to suggest and not to name. Thus, the capacity of language. We cannot be more clear, as Mallarmé said: “to mysteriously work towards lateness or neverness.”

So, contrary to those who no longer believe in Mallarmé's word on the “Orphic commentary of Earth” and without losing any more time with those descriptivist enumerators of place names, I would say that the poem, the slightest poem, a Spanish *copla*, takes up the deferred challenge eluded by Mallarmé, who in his unrealized “Book” failed his modern Odyssey and poetry-essentializing quest, rather than hearing the infinitely renewing forms in what he wrote, more than in what he didn't write, rather than hearing all the voices which have had their own voice.

Because with each voice, Orpheus changes and begins again. An Odyssey begins again. Those with very few voices should listen to him.

Within a poem, it's not an inspiration which is at work, as an entire tradition, poetic at first, and thus poeticizing, had believed. But to depart again from Mallarmé (since to begin he had a duty), the “only duty of the poet” (and only the poem can give us what it is alone in doing) is listening to all in which we don't know that we hear, all in which we don't know, which we say, all that we don't know how to say because we believe that language is made of words.

Orpheus was one of the names of the unknown. It is a vulgar and common mistake to attach belief to the past instead of to what the past continues to designate for each of us.



And as for the *Odyssey*, the modern *Odyssey* that Mallarmé speaks of, another vulgar mistake was and is still to confuse this modern *Odyssey* with journeys and their stories, with the transference of epics and received ideas. This extends to the confusion of the epic with monument and the inordinately large. The poem shows that the *Odyssey* is within the voice. In all voice. Listening is the poem's journey.

And if listening is the voice's journey, then it abolishes in itself the academic binary between lyric and epic. As does as the definition of painting already taken up by Poussin from an Italian of the 16th century, before Maurice Denis cited it: "some colors assembled in a certain order." This definition already annulled the binary opposition between the figurative and the abstract.

It only remains to say: it's painting or it's not painting. As Baudelaire already said. It's a poem, or it's not a poem. It passes. It does anything to seem like one. To seem like poetry. To seem like thinking. Since there is a poem of thinking or there's only fakery, the maintenance of order.

Yes, in a certain sense, every poem, if it is a poem, a straying of the voice, and not a fickle reproduction of the poetry of the past, every poem has within it an epic. And it leaves to the craft museums the idea of the lyric that some contemporaries have tried to bring back as the taste of the day, by making it recite a rosary of traditionalisms with the ordinary ignorance of the subject of the poem: the confusion between the I and the me, between voice and song, between language and music. Confusions, it is true, which even poetry's past has helped to give birth.

But the poem signals life. Life, which resembles the poem, because life wants to possess experience of poetry, putting on airs if it can't be, if it can't signal the book.

Consequence: this binary recycles the one ordinarily posed between life and literature. And a poem is that which is most opposed to literature, in the sense of the book market. A poem is made in the reversible relation between a life become a language, and a language become a life.

Outside the poem, the "anything goes" of pretension proliferates these pitches which keep repeating and serving the misinterpretation of Rimbaud's saying: "We must be absolutely modern." Decidedly there is nothing more present-tense than the "Under attack I retort that my contemporaries don't know how to read," of Mallarmé. Once again it's the fool of the present who utters these misinterpretations. The same one who is the fool of language.



A poem is made from what we go towards, what we don't know, and from that which we draw on, take refuge from, that which is vital to recognize.

For a poem, it is necessary to learn to refuse, to work up a whole list of refusals. Poetry only changes if we refuse it. Just as the world is only changed by those who refuse it.

I include among my refusals: No to the sign and its community. No to this bloated poverty that confuses language and a language and speaks only of a language without knowing what it says, speaks only of a memory of a language, as if a language were a subject; no to the poverty that speaks of an essential relationship between the Alexandrine and the genius of the French language. Don't forget to breathe every 12 syllables. Have a measured heart. A mythology which is without a doubt no stranger to the homecoming played out by the stylish games of academic versification. And if it was just for a laugh, it's no good. Already Aristotle had identified those who write verse to hide the fact they have nothing to say.

No to the consensus-driven sign, in the generalized encoding of the media-world.

No, we don't go to things. Because we don't stop transforming them or being transformed by them, through language.

No to the poeticizing phraseology that speaks of a contact with the real. To the opposition between poetry and the external world, which opens only to speaking about. Enumerating. Describing. Naming again. It's not the world which is there, it's the relationship with the world. And this relationship is transformed by a poem. And the invention of a thought is this poem of thinking.

No, poetry is not in the world, or in things. Contrary to what some poets have said. Rash language. Poetry can be only in the subject which is subject to the world and subject to language as the face of life. We'd confused the feeling for things and things themselves. This confusion leads to naming, to describing. Quickly punished naïveté. The proof, if any were needed, that poetry is not in the world, is that the non-poets are there, as are poets, and they don't make a poem of the world. A horse goes around the world and remains a horse.

Living is not enough. Everyone lives. Feeling is not enough. Everyone feels. Experience is not enough. The discourse of experience is not enough. If there is to be a poem.

No to the illusion that living precedes writing. That seeing the world modifies the gaze. When it's the opposite: the demand for a meaning which isn't there and the

transformation of meaning by all the meanings that change our relationship with the world.

If living precedes writing, life is only life and writing is only literature. And in the end it shows. At least we must learn to recognize the difference. Teaching ought to attend to that.

No to seeing in place of hearing. Some poets have believed that they were speaking of poetry by entirely emphasizing the look, the gaze. They lack the sense of language. The turmoils of the gaze are effects not causes. A manner of speaking which masks its own lack of thought. A strong opposition takes place between thinking via received ideas, and thinking one's voice, having voice in one's thinking.

No to Rimbaldisms which sees poetry in Rimbaud's departure from the poem.

No when the interior and exterior are opposed, when the imaginary and the real are opposed, this apparently undebatable fact of opposition. Which prevents us from thinking that we are only their relationship.

No to metaphor taken for the thought of things, the sole way to speak, when it's only a pirouette, prettiness.

No to the separation of affect and concept, that cliché of the sign which makes not only the faux-poem but the faux-thought.

No to the opposition between individualism and collectivity, this social effect of the sign, this unthinkability of the subject, and therefore of the poem, which turns into literature, to poetry as parlor game, that ring-a-ding-ding of renga—those pretend group-made poems.

No to the confusion between subjectivity, that psychology where lyricism got stuck, those instruments we force to sing, and the subjectivisation of the subject-face which is the poem.

No, no when we oppose, so conveniently, transgression to convention, invention to tradition. Because for a long time there's been an academicism of transgression as there is an academicism of tradition. And because, in both cases, we oppose the modern to the classic, by mixing the classic with a neo-retro. And in both cases, we have misrecognized the subject of the poem, its radical invention, which always makes the poem and which relegates these oppositions to their confusion, the unthinkability that masks the totality of the market.

No as well to the easy opposition of ease and difficulty, transparency and obscurity. No to the clichés of hermetism. The sign is largely responsible because it irrationalizes

and effectively obscures its own unthinkability. It is that brilliance which is obscure. The cliché of French brilliance. As for the poem, we won't make it mend an old wound.

No to poetry as the endorsement of the poem since then the poem is immediately an intention. Of poetry. Which can produce only literature. The poetry of poetry is no longer poetry just as the philosophical subject isn't the subject of the poem.

To protest isn't to give lessons nor to predict. There is protest where the intolerable is. A protest can't be tolerable. That's why a protest is intolerant. The mushy dogma of the sign, invisible, doesn't pass for intolerance. But if everything in it were intolerable there would be no need to protest. A protest is the expression of urgency. Stop taking it for a transgression. If there were no risk, there would be no more protest. Liberalism doesn't show that it's the absence of liberty.

And a poem is a risk. The work of thinking is also a risk. To think is what a poem is. The only thing that makes a poem is a poem: that which has got to be a poem in order to be a poem, and that which has got to be a thought in order to be thinking. Thus the necessity: to think of value and meaning inseparably. To think this inseparability as a universal of the poem and of thought. The historicity of value and meaning is their necessity.

Because by principle a thought, even if it is particular, always takes place within an order of experience, and it will always and necessarily be true. So it is by no means a lesson for what they call the coming century. No more than it is the report-card of this century, this effect of language, the temporality-effect of the sign: this is the discontinuity of century-ism.

All in all, the poem protests, and for the poem there is the protest that refuses the separation between language and life. To recognize the separation as an opposition not between language and life but between a representation of language and a representation of life which repositions the sham interdiction of Adorno (that it is barbaric and impossible to write poems after Auschwitz), that some try to turn around by playing out Paul Celan as an example, while they remain at the same impasse that Wittgenstein showed with the example of pain. Pain can't tell of itself. But precisely—a poem doesn't tell. It makes. And a thought intervenes.

These refusals, all these refusals, are indispensable for the coming of a poem. To writing. To reading. So that to live transforms itself into a poem. So that a poem transforms living.



The pinnacle, in this seeming paradox, is that it is not just a question of self-evident truths but of misrecognized truths. Which is the comedy of thought.

But it is only via these refusals, these pulses of thought, that there have always been poems, breathing in the unbreathable. And a thinking of the poem is necessary to language and to society.

NOTA BENE: This version of November 2, 1999, constitutes the second and provisionally definitive one.

# CRYSTAL HURDLE / "Freedom of Chickens" Manifesto

*For Gregor Robertson*

so much depends  
upon

the pea brain  
goodwill

of a clucker  
laying

a red wheel  
barrow

poor wee thing  
homeless

ousted from its  
garden

glazed with rain  
water

city of Vancouver  
workers

unemployed post-Olympian  
shelter

beside the white  
chickens

Chicken Riffs

why is Vancouver, city of,  
privileged as a place?

we hens can lay eggs without roosters  
bring on the Transgender Studies

Bees not accorded the same rights  
swarm to nowhere  
cell phone incarceration

we believe P.E.T.A. is a literary theory

chicken or egg?  
which came first?  
what kind of tautological bullshit is that?

no District 9 for us chickens!

is the proposed shelter  
    a ghetto  
        a reservation?  
neither?

the egg is nature's almost perfect food  
wards off breast cancer in humans  
but we can't eat our eggs  
cannibalism

Just don't try it!  
we don't want a new Mad Cow disease  
we are contralto and soprano  
the Alpha and the Omega  
(the good fats)

why not a new opera about us chickens?  
we can be well dressed

Bird Flu has nothing on us

Deconstruct me for a feather duster  
I am very useful



Chicken potpie  
a Vancouver special  
Can you spell M-A-R-K-E-M-O-R-Y?  
How about E-X-T-R-A-D-I-T-I-O-N?

I'll lay eggs, but only if I want to

Hermeneutics!

Crucified with Christ were two thieves  
whose only crime was stealing eggs  
Figura?

Why is it called Chicken Pox?  
a pox upon malignant naming!  
an itch less vile than scabies  
I can be more affectionate than a housecat  
Just try me

Humanistic!

UVic is overpopulated with feral rabbits  
Why don't they immigrate to Vancouver  
where we can co-exist harmoniously  
or dear Gregor can build more shelters?

Isn't that the same name as the giant cockroach  
who only thought he was human?

If you're a bug, even a big one,  
you're ripe pickings for my din-din

Cluck! cluck! cluck!  
You only pretend to be harmless  
to be vegetarian

I am my own metaphor

We exist in time and space. You move the plot forward. Egg egg egg egg. I am my own narrative. Replication. Supplication.

There's nobody here but us chickens!

I will always lay my eggs where you will least expect them.  
Build me a nest, but I will want Other.

Post-Colonial claptrap. See how pale my feathers are. Stroke me. Stroke you.

Great Hens/Roosters throughout History and Literature:  
Chicken Little  
somebody in Beatrix Potter  
um um, give me a little time here  
Didn't Napoleon Bonaparte keep a hen?  
Something scrawny in the stewpot of Precious Ramotswe?

I can't say the sky's falling  
just because abandoned chickens  
are treated better than abandoned humans

Gregor is filled with so much love  
that surely he'll get to them...soon  
Tent city in the Burrard Street bike lanes?

Maybe WE should move to Victoria  
and be honoured at the Capital  
Gregor will provide the airfare  
or hijack a BC Ferry as a monohierarchical  
Noah's Ark

The crowing of roosters in the pre-dawn hours  
is a tourist selling point for Kauai  
To listen to us is to love us

Love us not for our flesh, our eggs, our feathers, our beady eyes, our wattles, our combs, our Dim Sum feet, just love us, the elemental us.

Get that yellow wallpaper out of my coop!

The horror!

We are more Vancouver mascots than Satchi  
than the spirit bear  
than some stupid bulbous whale  
Cluck cluck cluck cluck!  
Follow the bouncing ball.  
Join us in our song.  
We are the world  
small as it is—  
Gregor's Vancouver

we're not as stupid as many people feel

what fox is in what chicken coop?

beady eyes

glazed with rain  
water

tasty

beside the white  
chickens

(mrrr)

so much depends  
upon

( )

(with apologies to William Carlos Williams)



\* it is aesthetic; it is crawl straining simultaneously to vomit and to swallow the ethic inherited sideways. we begin with contraction, move till we are "pataphor.

contest is the way to manifesto the twenty-first see. evidents:

- \* contest is off content 130
- \* verb is noun
- \* dis is a morph
- \* dis will be deleted
- \* dele would glyph
- \* pilcrow trumps dele
- \* ampersand break

the manifesto being manifestist; the ARG being manifestest; & being, move till we are laughter, the very idea, we come out, we come out and it happens, contest a call to out; reach till we are out.

or.  
enough!  
or.  
too much!  
or  
blake would

unleash their righteous indignation on obfuscation and words like obfuscation, elitism, why not another's.

the ARG tolerates tolerance in that 1980 way, self loathing is other loathing, self criticism is the other axiology, not truly soft on crime. but i can hope. doug, christine, sharon, natalie, harry, i ampersand allia will draft this over till it is deadline.

For Dawn Dextrase

erson Goto dice 112  
1.1.1.4. She walked away from the hospital just like that.  
Walked to Cole Harbour, stopping at her Grandpa's house.  
Took chain, tent, padlocks from the shed. Walked farther,  
north. Found her sturdy pine on the verge of the meadow.  
Pitched the tent beneath the boughs in late snow. Locked  
one end of the chain around her neck. Locked the other  
end around the pine. Walked into the meadow, far as the  
chain would let her. Chucked the keys farther than the steel  
chain would let her. Walked back to the tent and lay down.

She reads Jack London and dies of thirst.

Ate a little snow. Shied from the feeling of being wrung from every sinew and organ. Ate a little snow; wrote as much in the margins of *To Build a Fire*: *mustn't eat snow, mustn't think about the thirst wringing my insides, me, mustn't.*

Eventually you find us or we find you or I.



## For Dawn Dextrase

Blessed modicums; you're an avarice puller. Roll for character, roll for play. Palm the syllogism, it is your cast, your punctuation & else, you're punctuation.

## For Kath MacLean

1 2 3

Self-imposed shirking analogue & so so paradigm & solemnly admit there is no grammar but its pwn, the clacking of several hands' fingers onto keyboards in other abodes & offices, the patter of outrage welling, willingly, gleefully, virtually, to fulfill the moving example, are at once and again the articulations of incorporation, itself overtures of conceit and selfpredinstingration, subspecies of patricide & eternity.

## For Dawn Dextrase

1.1.1.5. You replace the bacillus in the poet's petri dish with a lively acidophilus from the ice cream scoop you licked last night. Bring the poisoned strait to Leduc. There, a man named Kroetsch will play host. He consumes conceptualism in a cookie. You drink black coffee together and talk and your rudimentary hypertext. His wit surprises you to laughter, stentor ejaculations that surprise you further. You think he understands. That's funny, you think, we both know when to laugh. After a fashion. We laugh at our jokes. Your face grows tight and hot. You want to invite the plagiarist upstairs to see your library, but you are shivering and want to lie down. For the new life twist inside. It's nauseating.

## For Tyrel McCartney

Excuse yourself and thank the plagiarist for the infection. Invite the plagiarist upstairs.

1. Isn't that what the contest. And about Isn't affords you yes you judge as in improper. Rather And in rare instance, role, die, etc.

If role, goto 1.1

If roll, goto 1.2

## For Natalie Hamilton

The ARG is right in its outrage, that TCR trivializes true art, distracts us from our work. Now we must write feckless manifestoes instead of enacting the tenets we (may only) with we strive to communicate.

For Elliot Kerr

Manifesto should have numbers for you to follow.

## For Gloria Carpenter

manifesto pressed. prior. in confine. you should before we. forget it. confine. form. form a gauze hermetic the hermeneut (contest) follows for fame laurels a nose follows blood-flow that you want a you towering an "o" an "autrui" drawing (the drawing/extracting/tied) you/it. unable. its own. assistance as true in language. the manifesto choosing you as you choose. then this contextual tether: contest(ation). a bent. aleatory. but contest aggressive. the form a freedom. the form the only actual possible. bullshit. i am shitting everything all my fears. the manifesto manifests. here. only. in contest only. in the game as game gamut whole). and here here and there: where you go. you he panel the pane shattered. you on the panel now you in the e. playing you ferocious trying. you trying. trying you. give it what ants: the manifesting. the best possible. the test possible only. here. context/contest. this only. this only contest could be. cognizant (or ing to). a conscience.gradually. material. the manifesto speaks. manifesto autrui. go. aware. dissolve into the scene.

## For Lena Helberg

You are diagnosed with your own disorder: another economy. Or you are or you are dismissed blessed bloodbathed in the blesure. You are ore.

## For the Underwriters:

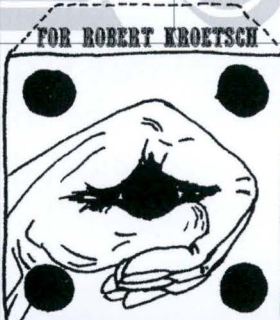
Theresa Dextrase, Shawn Anderson, Natalie Hamilton, Elliot Kerr, Cathie Crooks, Kath MacLean, Gloria Carpenter, Renatta Carpenter, Clint Anderson, Tyrel McCartney, Mark Woytiuk, glenN robson, Jennifer Mesch, Kristen Hutchinson, Chantal Helberg, Robert Kroetsch, Dawn Dextrase, Bernadette Wagner, Lena Helberg & Gerry Morita



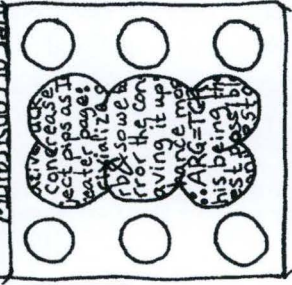
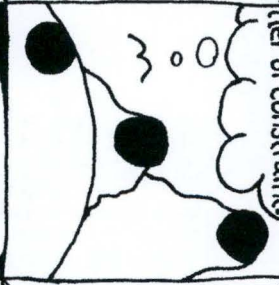
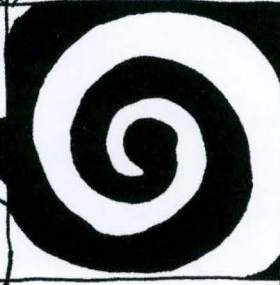
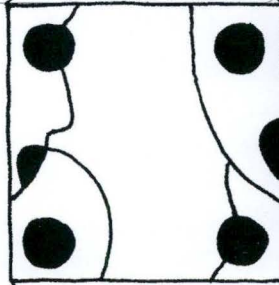
For Theresa Dextrase For Kristen Hutchinson For Bernadette Wagner

We become you, TCR. 1.1.1.2. You are the underwriters of this adventure

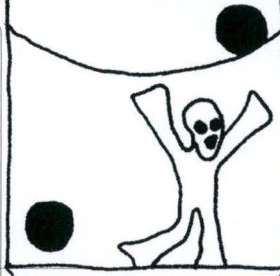
Turn valuativity into a game and turn it into a game.



You are the underwriters of this adventure who do not know they have underwritten this adventure: the young mother we robbed to bring this to you; the office coffee fund; Bob Kroetsch; nother, name of Book; a stick that turned out to be semiprecious and ransomed



For Shawn Anderson



For Cathie Crooks For Clint Anderson

731. better characters than us or you or us have 3. I thought about the writ's divorce from its extension and there the writings divorce from writ. intension. Which thus breadcrumbs will be lost corridors of narrative, divorced from your I.

This is hypertext. You won't get it.

For Theresa Dextrase

The (very) idea that a truthful statement of artistic purpose be subject to/of competition with other statements of artistic purpose. That (really) the entrants are devising manifestoes with the aim of winning the manifesto contest. And (don't tell me) there is some way such a mitigation will not invalidate the whole shooting match. TCR affords a cistern. Entrants afford placement to falsehoods, a hole of limited capacity and access, a



For Renatta Carpenter

5,708,654,210. You trusted he had credentials. He did not. And a practiced disuse of dependent clauses gave his syntax the patina of surety. You two might as well be siphoning gas in winter. You two might as well be speaking in abbreviations and emoticons. I breast your misse.

For Mark Woytiuk

1.1.1. contest, a manifesto; contest, only good <sup>might</sup> as <sup>well as</sup> true <sup>as</sup> glacial <sup>as</sup> genocide; choose <sup>as</sup> your own genus:

fungus, 1.1.1.1  
virus, 1.1.1.2  
US, 1.1.1.3  
amphisbænous, 1.1.1.4  
aeious, 1.1.1.5  
acephalus, 1.1.1.6

For Theresa Dextrase

A winning proposition: There can be only one manifesto to win the manifesto contest.

For Jennifer Mesch

1.1.1.1. growing a hate, remember a daddy, any day, 'cept it's not your daddy & you know so wish him away, mommy shouldn't have put him on you; it's a role <sup>said</sup> daddy likes to play. remember all the daddies are playing; now

You are the underwriters of this adventure

For Gerry Morita

prepare our children for the world to come. or vice versa.

For Chantal Helberg

1.1.1.3. stet

For Lena Helberg

Magister listened to your heart. Cupped a hand to where your breast had been. Reminded you of the violence of the last 400 yours. A breast is a vowel right there on your body, practically external like that, like a word no mouth could sound, but also not, but an in, your in to the spaces other may inhabit. I miss your breasts.

For Theresa Dextrase

That the ARG as amorphous agglomeration of "pataphysicians" interested in the dissolution of cultures, through their gamuts of anything goes and all may/well/come, to arctic elitisms of unfathomable disgust and private languages, would bewilder a tree is not a metaphor for the intolerant; we are at odds with ourselves, among ourselves, and you are welcome, to us.

For Cathie Crooks

6. I listened to your heart. Cupped a hand to where your breast had been. Reminded you of the violence of the last 400 yours. A breast is a vowel right there on your body, practically external like that, like a word no mouth could sound, but also not, but an in, your in to the spaces other may inhabit. We miss your breasts.

## Contributors

Anything that might be said about the ALBERTA RESEARCH GROUP (ARG) up to now can be found in the ARG's "Manifesto to Contest the Manifesto Contest." Otherwise, their mission is simple: raise four billion dollars. Exactly how they will achieve this is being explored right now at <albertaresearchgroup.wordpress.com>. ARG!

GREG BACHAR lives in Seattle.

DEREK BEAULIEU is the author of five books of poetry (most recently the visual poem suite *silence*), two volumes of conceptual fiction (most recently the short fiction collection *How to Write*) and over 150 chapbooks. He is the publisher of small presses *housepress* (1997-2004) and *no press* (2005-present), and the editor of several small magazines in Canada. *Seen of the Crime*, forthcoming from Snare, is a collection of criticism on contemporary poetry and poetics. beaulieu has performed his work at festivals and universities across Canada, the US, and Europe.

GREGORY BETTS is the author of four books of poetry, and the editor of four books of early Canadian experimental writing. His "plunderverse" epic, *The Others Raid in Me* (Pedlar Press 2009), was a finalist for the ReLit Award 2010, and he is the 2010 recipient of the *International Journal of Canadian Studies's* Jean-Michel Lacroix Award for the best article on a Canadian subject. Betts recently completed a literary history of early Canadian avant-gardism. He teaches literature at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

SABINE BITTER and HELMUT WEBER, Vienna and Vancouver-based artists, work on projects addressing cities, architecture, and the politics of representation and of space. Their series of photo- and video-works like *University Paradox* (2010), *Plugged In/ Fenced Out* (2008), and their projects for *Differentiated Neighborhoods of New Belgrade* (2007) engage with specific moments and logics of global-urban change as they take shape in neighborhoods, architecture, and everyday life. Shows in 2010 include "Critical Complicity" at Kunsthalle Exnergasse Wien, Vienna and "Learning from Vancouver" with Urban Subjects and Bik van der Pol, Western Front, Vancouver. Upcoming shows in 2011 include "We: Vancouver," Vancouver Art Gallery; "Communitas, Die unrepräsentierbare Gemeinschaft," Camera Austria, Graz; and "Where the World Was: Cities after Mega-events," Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver. <<http://www.lot.at>>

CHRISTIAN BÖK is the author of *Crystallography* (Coach House 1994), a pataphysical encyclopedia nominated for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, and of *Eunoia* (Coach House 2001), a



bestselling work of experimental literature, which won the Griffin Prize for Poetic Excellence in 2002. Bök has created artificial languages for two television shows, Gene Roddenberry's *Earth: Final Conflict* and Peter Benchley's *Amazon*, and is also known for his virtuoso performances of sound poetry, particularly the *Ursonate* by Kurt Schwitters. His conceptual artworks, which include books built out of Rubik's cubes and Lego bricks, have appeared at the Marianne Boesky Gallery in New York City as part of the exhibit *Poetry Plastique* (2001). Bök teaches English at the University of Calgary.

COLIN BROWNE's latest project concerns the *surréaliste* fascination with Northwest coast and Alaskan masks and ceremonial objects, and with the vision of a world re-enchanted. André Breton, master of the manifesto and theorizer of the "Great Transparents," was an avid collector of the masks of the North Pacific. Browne has been working on a film, "Scavengers of Paradise," and a preliminary text will appear in the summer of 2011. His new book of poetry, *Vestle*, is nearing completion. He recently gave a talk at MOA in Vancouver on the subject of Man Ray's films.

MARGOT LEIGH BUTLER is an artist, educator, activist, and cultural theorist. She's been involved with the Humanities 101 Community Programme (Hum) for 10 years, first as a teacher and, for the past five years, as Academic Director. Thanks to Hum's students, alumni, and Steering Committee members—some of their manifestos which are in this issue will be in the Vancouver Art Gallery's exhibit "WE: Vancouver - 12 Manifestos for the City," from February to May 2011—and staff Paul Woodhouse, Alison Rajah, Greg Scutt, Julian Weideman, and Chris Hiebert; John Vigna, Janet Giltrow, Sue Pell, Glen Coulthard; CCAP (Carnegie Community Action Project) and the DNC (Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council); and the 'sisters' in Hum's Canadian sister programmes.

LOUIS CABRI's *Poetryworld* is forthcoming from CUE. His recent poetry chapbooks are —*that can't* (Nomados) and *What Is Venice?* (Wrinkle). The first part of an essay on poetic influence, the New York School, and Australian poet Ken Bolton appears online in *Jacket* 40. He is organizing a symposium on Ron Silliman's long poem *The Alphabet*, 25-26 March 2011 in Windsor, Ontario, where he teaches at the University of Windsor.

AMANDA DAWN CHRISTIE is an interdisciplinary artist working in film, contemporary dance, photography, electronics, and electroacoustics. Amanda teaches, publishes, and serves on boards of various artist run centres and on juries across Canada. She maintains an active art practice and currently works as the director of the Galerie Sans Nom, in Moncton, New Brunswick.



PIERRE COUPEY was a founding co-editor of *The Georgia Straight* and the founding editor of *The Capilano Review*. He has published nine books of poetry, chapbooks and catalogues, and exhibited his art work in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Dublin, Nagoya and Tokyo. His most recent solo show, *Between Memory and Perception*, was held in Fall 2010 at Gallery Jones. In 2011 his work will be included in a five-person show on abstraction, *The Point Is*, at the Kelowna Art Gallery, and in 2012, it will be the subject of a three-decade survey at the Art Gallery in the Evergreen Cultural Centre. Pierre is represented by Gallery Jones in Vancouver.

FRANK DAVEY's most recent poetry book is *Bardy Google* (Talonbooks 2010). Fifty years ago he was a founding editor of *Tish*, about which he has just written the tell-almost-all memoir *When Tish Happens*, to be released by ECW Press in April 2011. He is currently working on a biography of bpNichol, and the Afghanistan poetcard-poem sequence from which this issue's selection is taken.

JEFF DERKSEN works at Simon Fraser University. His books of poetry include *Down Time*, *Dwell*, and *Transnational Muscle Cars* as well as a book of essays *Annihilated Time: poetry and other politics* (all from Talonbooks). His essays on art and urbanism in the long neoliberal moment, *After Euphoria* (JRP Ringier), is forthcoming, as is a collaborative book (Urban Subjects, Bik Van der Pol, Alissa Firth-Eagland) on the politics of moments and mega-events, entitled *Momentarily: Learning from Mega-events*.

BRIAN GANTER teaches in the English Department and is convenor of the CultureNet program at Capilano University; he is finishing his PhD in Literature at the University of Washington, Seattle. He has written and directed several short narrative and documentary films and videos. His latest feature film *Metropole* (2008) has screened in London at the British Museum, as well as in Italy, Vancouver, Victoria, and Seattle.

HADLEY+MAXWELL have been collaborating since they met in Vancouver, in 1997, working in a variety of media including video, installation, and sound. Stemming from their commitment to collaboration, their work examines mediation as the threshold of intelligibility between the individual and the social. In the past year their work has been included in exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Seattle Art Museum; the Québec City Biennale; and Kunsthalle Mulhouse, France. Solo exhibitions were held at Kunstverein Göttingen, SMART Project Space, Amsterdam; Samsa, Berlin; and YYZ, Toronto. Hadley+Maxwell are based in Berlin and are represented by Jessica Bradley Art + Projects in Toronto.

OLIVER HOCKENHULL is a media artist, writer, and theorist who has exhibited widely, from small avant-garde venues to the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art in

Ottawa; the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona; MIT, Boston; the International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam; the Nouveau Cinema Festival of Montreal; the Sao Paulo International Film Festival; and others. His writings have appeared in *FUSE*, *POV*, *Postmodern Culture*, and others. *Damp: Contemporary Vancouver Media Arts* (Anvil 2008) was co-edited with Alex MacKenzie. His most recent film premiered at the Seoul International New Media Festival 2010. <shinynewfilms.com> <neuronirvana.net>

CRYSTAL HURDLE teaches Creative Writing and English at Capilano University. In October 2007, she was Guest Poet at the International Sylvia Plath Symposium at the University of Oxford reading from *After Ted & Sylvia: Poems* (Ronsdale 2003). Crystal's poetry and prose has been published widely in anthologies and journals, including *Canadian Literature*, *Fireweed*, *The Dalhousie Review*, and *The Capilano Review*, where she is a board member.

REG JOHANSON is the co-author, with Roger Farr and Aaron Vidaver, of *N 49 19. 47 – W 123 8. 11* (PILLS 2008) and the author of *Courage, My Love* (Line Books 2006). Writing and critical work has appeared in *W, XCP: Cross-Cultural Poetics*, *West Coast Line*, *The Capilano Review*, *The Poetic Front*, and *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, among others. He is currently editing a collection of Marie Annharte Baker's critical writing. He teaches at Capilano University in North Vancouver, Coast Salish Territory.

ALEX MACKENZIE is an experimental film artist working primarily with relic analog film equipment and hand processed imagery. He creates works of expanded cinema, light projection installation, and projector performance. His work has screened at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the EXiS Experimental Film Festival in Seoul, Lightcone in Paris, Kino Arsenal in Berlin, and others. Alex co-edited *Damp: Contemporary Vancouver Media Art* (Anvil 2008) and interviewed David Rimmer for *Loop, Print, Fade + Flicker: David Rimmer's Moving Images* (Anvil 2009). <www.alexmackenzie.ca>

British-born and long-time Canadian resident, STEVE MCCAFFERY is author of more than twenty-five books of poetry and criticism, most recently *Panel III of Carnival* and *Verse and Worse: Selected Poems 1989-2009*. His next book of criticism on Time, Metalepsis, Architecture and Poetry will be published through the University of Alabama Press. He is David Gray Professor of Poetry and Letters at the University at Buffalo where he teaches Critical Theory, Philosophy, and Poetics in the Poetics Program.

PETER McLAREN, Canadian scholar and writer, is Professor of Urban Education, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. He is the editor and author of 45 books. His writings have been translated into 20 languages.

KIM MINKUS is a PhD candidate in the English department at Simon Fraser University and a poet with two books of poetry, *9 Freight* (LINEbooks 2007) and *Thresh* (Snare 2009). She has had reviews, poetry, and fiction published in *Open Letter*, *dusie*, *FRONT*, *Interim*, *West Coast Line*, *The Poetic Front*, *LOCUSPOINT*, *ottawater*, *Memewar*, and *Jacket*. Her academic research focuses on contemporary poetry, feminist poetry, and the archive. Kim teaches at Capilano University.

HENRI MESCHONNIC, born in Paris in 1932, is author of over sixty books. A professor of linguistics at Université de Paris VIII from 1969-1997, Meschonnic's work pushes toward a radical critique and opening up of a theory of rhythm as a political poetics which refuses the operative directives of enclosed systems of thought and meter. Among his most noted publications are *Les Cinq Rouleaux—Le chant des chants*, *Ruth*, *Comme ou Les Lamentations*, *Paroles du Sage*, *Esther: the 5 books of the Old Testament*—(Gallimard 1970), *Pour la poétique* (Gallimard 1970), *Critique du rythme*, *Anthropologie historique du langage* (Verdier 1982), and a collection of essays, *Dans la bois de la langue* (Laurence Teper 2008). Meschonnic died in Villejuif, France in 2009.

Aspiring to the status of a common noun, the provisional avant-garde (PROVAG) renounces its signature. Nevertheless, provag welcomes any and all forms of resignations in writing. In that regard, the responsibility of first resigner belongs properly to Robert Majzels, who resides in Tailingspond, Alberta.

PARTICIPANTS IN HUMANITIES 101 *WRITING* COURSE: *Writing* is one of three free university-level courses for DTES/South residents offered by the Humanities 101 Community Programme at the UBC campus, along with free alumni-led weekend Public Programmes at Carnegie Centre, The Gathering Place, and sometimes the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. <hum101@interchange.ubc.ca>, <<http://humanities101.arts.ubc.ca/>>.

NIKKI REIMER, poet and artist, is the author of *[sic]* (Frontenac House 2010) and *fist things first* (Wrinkle Press Chapbook 2009), and the editor of *Van City Kitty* on VancouverisAwesome.com. Recent work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Uppercase Magazine*, *Prism International*, *Poetry is Dead*, and *Dandelion*. She is interested in inter-disciplinary practice, publishing, mental health issues, animal rights, and contemporary poetics.



LISA ROBERTSON and AVRA SPECTOR began meeting and thinking together at California College of the Arts in San Francisco in 2007. Now they undertake their translation projects over Skype, most recently from Dublin and Vancouver, respectively. As well as continuing with the work of Meschonnic, they are engaged in translation and discussion of Emile Benveniste (and his exploration of language as intersubjective dynamics), (and his recognition of the phrase as a social space which unties the subject from the individual), (and his analysis and historical description of the condition of intersubjectivity in language).

JULES ROMAINS (1885-1972), nom de plume of Louis Farigoule, was a poet, playwright, essayist, critic, and novelist. As a young university student, Romain wrote the manifesto "Poetry and Unanimous Feelings" (translated here) and the book length poem *La vie unanime*. He was associated with a writers commune (the Abbaye de Créteil), and in contact with Gide, Apollinaire, Max Jacob, and cubist painter and theorist Albert Gleizes, among others. Romain's once popular 27-volume novel, *Les hommes de bonne volonté* (published 1932-1946), begins in October 1908 on the day Austria announced its intentions to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina, which lead to WWI and ends in 1933. Romain lived in the USA during WWII; he returned to France in 1946. Some critics today consider Romain's concept of unanimism to be as significant to early modernism as was futurism and cubism.

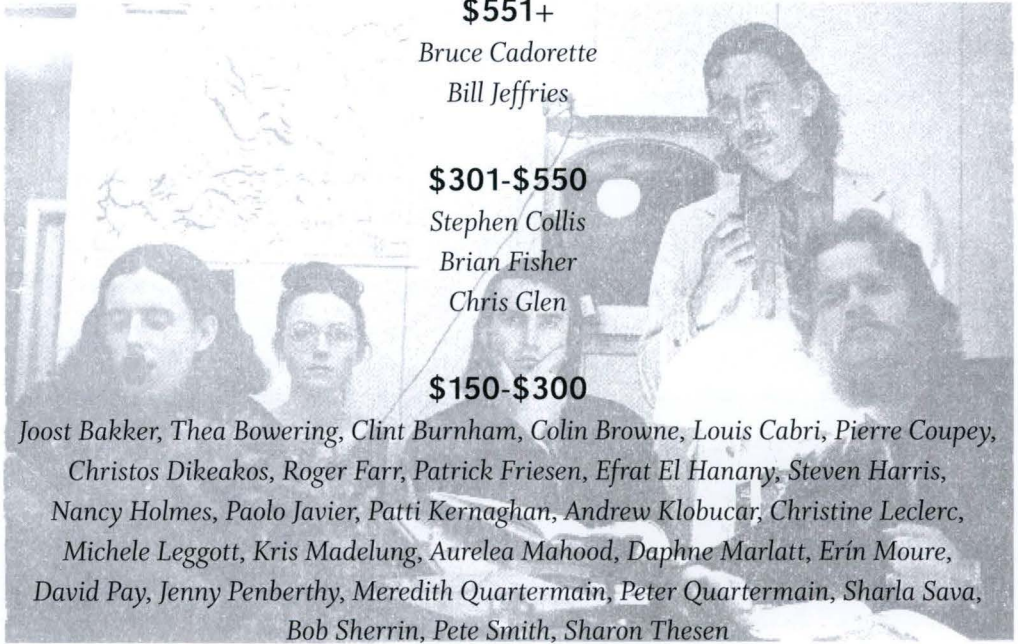
SHEILA ROSS teaches in the English Department at Capilano University. Her work on hermeneutics has appeared in *Theory Culture & Society*, *Minerva Annual Online Journal of Philosophy*, and *Comitatus*.

MARIE-HÉLÈNE TESSIER is a visual artist and writer based in Vancouver. Her work migrates freely between fiction, philosophy, and criticism, typically within the body of a single narrative. Adopting a critical paranoid method, her research explores the plasticity of text, as well as the spatial, temporal, and political qualities of language. The page is a battlefield exposing the self in a perpetual conflict with the world. She is currently writing her second novel.

EDWARD TOP was born The Netherlands in 1972, lived and worked in London for seven years, and has now relocated to Vancouver. He has received commissions from the Schoenberg Ensemble, Holland Symfonia, Calefax, and the Birmingham Conservatoire, and his works are performed by Tokyo Sinfonietta, San Diego New Music, the Doelen String Quartet, and the Dutch Radio Kamer Filharmonie. In 2008 he was nominated for the Toonzetters Award for the best contemporary music in The Netherlands. He is currently working on commissions by the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet and the Doelen Ensemble in Rotterdam.

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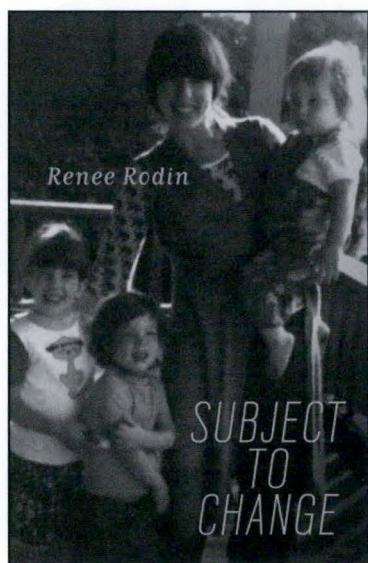
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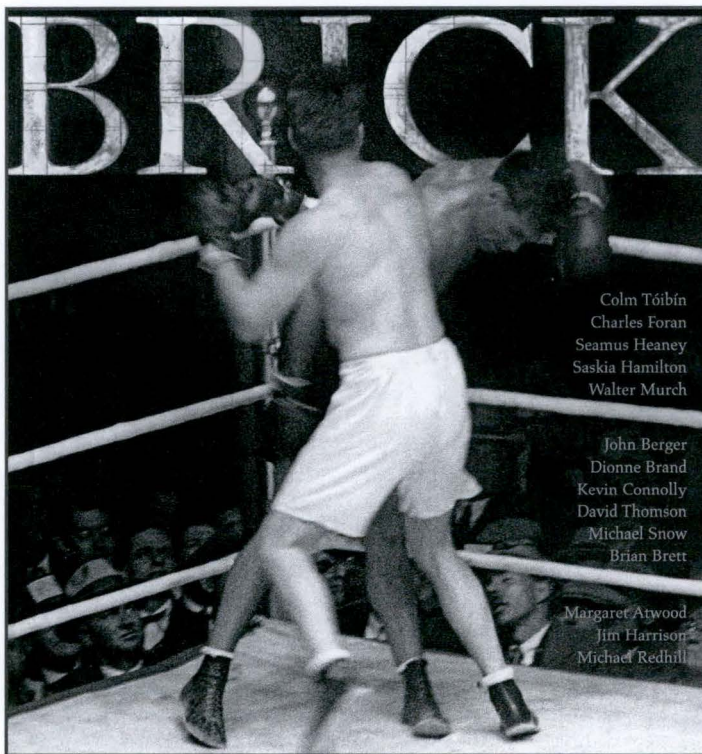
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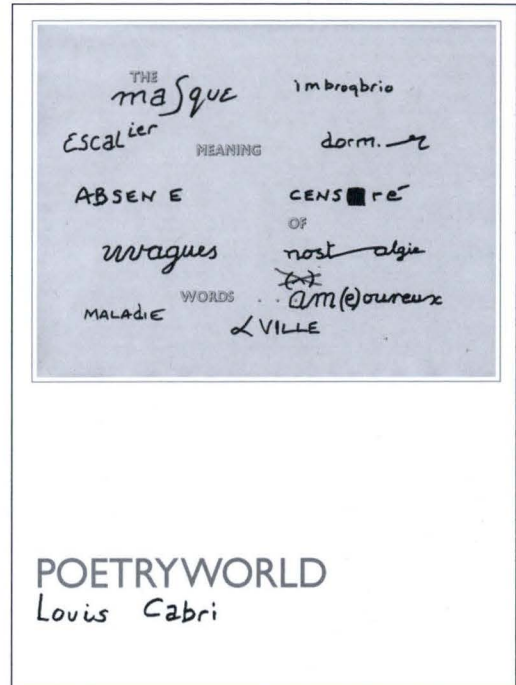


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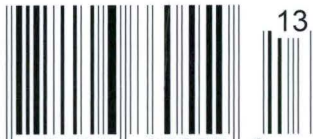
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