WEST COAST LINE # 73

HERE COMES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

CONTENTS

HERE COMES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD:

ENCOUNTERING THE PROBLEM OF THE NEIGHBOUR IN SPACE INTRODUCTION

EDITORS JASON STARNES AND DAVID GAERTNER

Sixty years ago, Norman McLaren's "Neighbours" was shown to unimpressed film distributors, who thought it both gruesome and technically rudimentary (Ohayon, NFB). In just 8 minutes, without dialogue, the stop-motion animated film introduces a nearly-identical pair of neighbours living in harmony that are sucked into a territorial argument over a marigold that sprouts in the space between their properties. Escalating from a border conflict to a turf war, and finally to a hand-to-hand bloodbath, the dispute consumes the neighbouring men as well as their homes and respective wives and children. Eventually, everyone is left dead. Implausibly, the film won an academy award which led to international screenings, including presentations for school children. For all its unblinking visualization of *frenemy* antagonism, however, the conclusion of "Neighbours" resolves its powerful tension all too abruptly, and all too simply. It isn't just that the neighbours mete out a universal death, consuming each other in a tidy, symmetrical annihilation; more problematic is the final series of title cards: "SO," they admonish in about twenty languages, "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR."

Despite its idealism, this final moralizing injunction (made famous in the New Testament, Mark 12:31) does nothing to counter the philosophical *problem* of the neighbour that the majority of McLaren's film confronts. The violence generated between neighbours is, in fact, the very position taken by Sigmund Freud in his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), where he developed a skeptical rejection of the Judeo-Christian injunction of the "cultural super-ego," an imperative he saw as impracticable, if not horrifying. For Freud, the idea of a universal love, while certainly admirable, is simply beyond human capacity. This is due to the fact that "men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved," (58) but rather are "creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness" (58). For Freud, this aggression can be directly located in the figure of the neighbour, presumed to be "jeering at me, insulting me, slandering me and showing his superior power" (57). Thus McLaren's tonic resolution not only leaves untouched the problematic core of the neighbour, it actually gives rise to its opposite: loving the neighbour, extending hospitality, could result in the very annihilation

the film visualizes.

From the optimistic perspective, taken up by thinkers such as Emmanuel Levinas, the neighbour is an "abyssal point from which the call of ethical responsibility emanates" (*How to Read Lacan,* 43). But according to Slavoj Žižek, Levinas, in appealing to the emotional volatility of the face-to-face encounter, ignores "the monstrosity of the neighbour, a monstrosity on account of which Jacques Lacan applies to the neighbour the term Thing (*das Ding*), used by Freud to designate the ultimate object of our desires in its unbearable intensity and impenetrability" (*HTRL* 43). To argue this differently, a Levinasian perspective elides the concrete neighbour-to-neighbour relations in its appeal to a cloying theological demand that can never be realized in the lived spaces of actual neighbours. While the face-to-face encounter may indeed allow for empathy, the "humanity" of the other may in fact be inhumane. Returning to McLaren's "Neighbours" here, we can see the marigold, a random weed that spontaneously appears in the interstice of the two properties, as a stand-in for this Thing, which the antagonists desire with irrational intensity. As Žižek continues: "the neighbour is the (Evil) Thing that potentially lurks beneath every homely human face" (43); we note that McLaren has visualized this precise point as well, showing the neighbours' faces change into monstrous visages with the escalating conflict.

In response to this apparent deadlock, this issue of *West Coast Line* takes a psychoanalytic perspective on the neighbour which eschews the metaphor and metaphysics of theology, and instead engages with the obstinate literal proximity as well as the inevitability of neighbours and neighbourhoods. With what we have collected here, we hope to confront the fact that neighbours are inevitable, and inevitably other, and inevitably threatening. In a fundamental paradox, the neighbour psychically constitutes the subject by delimiting boundaries, but also spatially aggravates it, threatens it with over-proximity. The neighbour is a strangely intimate other. S/he is not a foreigner (although s/he may be foreign,) yet s/he is also not family (although s/he may be familiar). Rising populations and limited space have contributed to a

world in which we live, work and play in ever-closer proximity to the other; at the same time, however, technology makes it ever-easier to ignore or disavow the presence of those we share physical space with. The neighbour is not simply someone with whom we share a property line or an interior wall. Long gone is the fantasy (which may have only ever been nostalgia anyhow) that the neighbour is at best someone from whom one might borrow a cup of sugar, or, at worst, someone who mows their lawn at seven a.m. Today, the neighbour be a contractor or a corporation; s/he could be nothing more than a number on an apartment door, the smell of food, or the thump of a sub-woofer.

This spatial materialist perspective on the neighbour "problem" provides a revealing framework for the analysis of real estate development and property speculation in Vancouver. "Development" is a loaded term, carrying connotations of "progress," while signifying a pattern of property speculation that displaces renters, residents of social housing, and the unhoused. Carrying an overtone of the salvation of a destitute nation, development in fact denotes the rampant displacement known as gentrification that "revitalizes" an urban area by raising its property values, in turn hiking rents beyond the reach of the existing community, and creating wholesale turnover along with surplus profit. In a city labeled as "The Most Overpriced Housing Market In the Developed World"(Badkar), gentrification has become the primary concern for those who work, live and socialize in "poor" neighbourhoods. Many communities are being driven to outlying Vancouver streets—away from the amenities and security provided by major city hubs—under the contempt of neo-liberal business slogans exhorting them to "be bold or move to the suburbs" (Rennie). Neighbours who earn money in the sex work industry, for instance, are constantly being displaced to dark and dangerous street corners where they are exposed to a marked increase in violent crimes and abuse, not because the wealthy owners of a new condo disagree ethically with sex work, but because this work is thought to drive down property values. The self-righteous, self-interested mandate "not in my backyard" is subjecting Vancouver's most vulnerable

communities to what Giorgio Agamben calls "bare life," existence that is not guaranteed by representation in the polis. To argue this differently, love of the neighbour (which is also articulated as neighbourhood pride) becomes justification for exclusion and scapegoating. To be clear, however, this is not only a conservative conceit, the dehumanization of the other is just as prominent in leftist groups which decree the developer as the "scumbag" and work similarly to drive him or her from the neighbourhood *they* love.

While it is certainly more Vancouver-centric, this is not the first collection of essays to contend with the neighbour. In the essays collected in *The Neighbour* (2006), Žižek, Eric L. Santner and Kenneth Reinhard use political, philosophical and theological approaches to further analyze the neighbour in contemporary thought. But while Žižek *et al* provide very nuanced criticism on the biblical trope of the neighbour, they seem to ignore what Lacan calls the "neighbor's space as such" (*Seminar VII,* 197): the very literal borders that delineate self and other. The essays, interview, poetry and photography collected here explore the space of the neighbour, a space produced in the interface of self and other, as Lacan notes:

> The space in question is that which is formed when we have to do not with this fellow self whom we so easily turn into our reflection, and whom we necessarily implicate in the same misrecognitions that characterize our own self, but this neighbour who is closest to us, the neighbour whom we sometimes take in our arms, if only to make love to.
> (*Seminar VII*, 197)

What is missing in McLaren's imperative denouement can be ascribed to its lack of the second half of the biblical injunction: the full exhortation is to "love your neighbour as yourself." As Lacan clarifies, "...my neighbour possesses all the evil Freud speaks about, but it is no different from the evil I retreat from in myself. To love him, to love him as myself, is necessarily to move toward some cruelty" (198). In this way, Lacan's view of the neighbour transcends Freud's by confirming all that Freud held while also positing that the neighbour is always already in the subject;

what seemed the most foreign is actually intimate, and is therefore even more disturbing.

The Lacanian concept of mimetic desire, the claim that "Man's desire is the Other's desire," further explains the function of McLaren's marigold, given that "the subject desires only in so far as it experiences the Other itself as desiring, as the site of an unfathomable desire." Thus the other "confronts me [...] with the enigma of my own desire" (*HTRL*, 42-43). This is the "abyssal dimension of another human being – [...] its utter impenetrability," which simultaneously sets up the other as a mirror surface which reflects the subject's own abyss (*HTRL*, 42-43).

In much the same way Freud resists the idea of universal love, Jacques Derrida opposes the "perpetual peace" (*Of Hospitality*, 141) prescribed in Kantian thought by identifying a fundamental alterity which prevents the subject "from closing itself off in its peacefulness" (4). As with Freud, Derrida is cautious of any theory which supposes it can eliminate violence via the implementation of a law, and implores us to carefully consider the implications of prescribing any "common sense" precept (including "love thy neighbour"). Derrida explains that the literal space of the home is requisite for the hospitality that should accompany the love of a neighbour. But the maintenance of this space also requires a certain prejudice: "one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one's own hospitality, the own home that makes possible one's own hospitality" (53). The (threatened) violation of private domestic space is paradoxically constitutive of the place called home. According to Derrida, "anyone who encroaches on my 'at home' on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage" (*Hospitality* 55). Hospitality can thus become the basis for racism and political violence.

The first article in this issue, Nathan Crompton's "The Persistence of Anti-Asian Racism: 'The Political Economy of the Empty Signifier,'" directly engages with the xenophobia implicit to hospitality, "that unbearable orb of intimacy that melts into hate"

(Dufourmantelle 2-4). Crompton's article confronts one of Vancouver's most prominent myths about rising property costs. The Vancouver media has been quick to propagate the idea that the city's housing crisis is a symptom of off-shore investment, namely from rich investors in "Asian" markets. As Crompton points out, however, anyone who decides to move past hearsay and investigate the issue more closely must eventually confront the fact that "surplus capital extracted from China is made possible by the conditions of oppressed labour sustained by Canadian-based capital networks." In Crompton's analysis, the "Asian investor" is an empty signifier that facilitates scapegoating and distracts attention from the local conditions that contribute to rising housing costs: "[t]he empty signifier is a floating signifier meant to displace blame wherever necessary." Crompton's final analysis compels us to reconsider the arguments that capitalize on the fear of the neighbour and to shift our malcontent towards those who claim to share our interests.

Following Crompton, Kathleen Deering's piece, "Not in my Neighbourhood: Sex Work and the Problem of Displacement," takes up the issue of Vancouver neighbourhoods from an evidence-based, epidemiological perspective. As an HIV researcher, Deering's work contends with the ways in which Vancouver's sex workers have been displaced to outlying neighbourhoods, which intensifies marginalization and increases the potential for harm. Perhaps the most striking argument in this piece is that sex work *per se* is not what is at stake in the displacement of vulnerable populations. Indeed, community groups such as NIMBY (Not in My Backyard), "may or may not have opinions on whether sex work activities should *ever* take place." Rather, "their primary interest is to *remove it from what they view as their own spaces*, despite the fact that the vast majority of visible sex work occurs in the public realm" (emphasis added). Among other things, Deering's piece illustrates the ways in which "even the most exclusive account must face the inevitable question of the choice of one particular neighbour over another, for to love any neighbour is surely to fail to love another" (Žižek 6). For NIMBY-esque groups, loving the neighbourhood provides

adequate justification to subject neighbouring sex workers to exclusion, and ultimately violence.

The first poetry selections in this issue comes from Scott Inniss and is entitled "Averse Map of." According to Inniss, the poems published here (which will make up a larger collection) "propose a methodology of appropriation and erasure that borrows the determinate imperatives (diction, syllabics, etcetera) of previous poetic readings of Vancouver in order to dramatize the contradictions and disparities that make it perhaps the most unlivable of 'most livable' North American cities." In form and content, these poems contend with the disruption and displacement that comes as a result of (re-)developing established communities, be they based on literature or architecture. Working within the structure of Michael Turner's *Kingsway*, for instance, Inniss addresses the colonial violence implicit in one of Vancouver's oldest trade routes. Similarly, by re-pacing Meredith Quartermain's *Vancouver Walking*, Inniss contends with the history of "demolition" that haunts the occupants of developments that promise to repurpose and revitalize old neighbourhoods. In colonizing the work of other Vancouver poets, Inniss draws attention to the neighbours always already subsumed in the city's landscape and the ways in which we repress the other while sharing tenancy with them.

Photographer Melvin Yap adds a visual component to *Here Comes the Neighbourhood*, which complements the revisionist conceit in "Averse Map of." In a series of carefully framed shots, Yap's photography juxtaposes the rhetoric of Inniss's most/least livable dichotomy against the architecture of the Downtown Eastside. In 2011, Bob Rennie, an affluent Vancouver real estate marketer, and art "enthusiast" (introduced in more detail in Crompton's essay), permanently installed a seventy-five foot neon artwork by Martin Creed on the Wing Sang Building, the oldest building in Chinatown. The sign reads, "EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT." Chinatown is fast becoming one of the city's most gentrified neighbourhoods as well as the theatre for a number of well-organized protests that challenge the ethics of Vancouver development. Located as such, Creed's slogan can be (and has been) read as the refrain of a developer-neighbour attempting to lull an angry

and displaced citizenry into complacency.[1] Conversely, Yap's photographs capture the slogans and signifiers (displayed both intentionally and accidentally) that disrupt the calming narrative of gentrification.

Following Yap's photography, *Here Comes the Neighbourhood* features an interview with the creators of *Podplays*, Adrienne Wong and Martin Kinch. *Podplays* are a series of theatrical pieces—composed by a number of different writers—that use Vancouver neighbourhoods as their stage while propelling audiences through literal and narrative space. Audiences are guided through specific streets by an audio file that they listen to on headphones. The pre-recorded narrative is layered onto the contingent, live experience of the space. The various pieces, which include audio plays that take place in Stanley Park, Main Street, Waterfront Road and Dunlevy and Cordova (to name a few) illustrate the narrative distance by which we absent ourselves from the neighbourhoods we occupy while simultaneously constructing new ways for listeners to move through and imagine the city. As Wong reports, one audience member said that while listening to the podplays she was "in the city" but "not *of* the city." In this interview, Wong and Kinch expand on the differences between being "of" and "in" the city and the ways in which neighbours and neighbourhoods shape their work.

According to Stephen Collis, "'neighbouring' is of interest because it is an active space, a dynamic borderland, a relationality through which energies pass back and forth, a space in which tensions remain productive, and thus in which change occurs." Like Deering, Collis is invested in the welfare of the other and our "willingness to meet each other as equals" across the spaces that mediate and interfere with interpersonal relationships. "A Show of Hands: Art and Revolution in Public Space" engages with Vancouver's Occupy movement and the tensions derived from two sets of "neighbouring zones": public/private and art/revolution. Through the Occupy movement, Collis illustrates how public spaces of encounter are becoming the exception. "Public" spaces, perhaps now more than ever, are paradoxically owned by private enterprises, while the "commons," the space in which one might in encounter "the undeniable humanness of the other *outside of ourselves*," is tightly regulated by stakeholders and investors. In these spaces, as Occupy participants can attest to, behavior is meant to serve particular, capital-accumulating ends. As such, certain interactions are carefully monitored and particular activities are categorically excluded. As Emily Fedoruk also argues, the transformation of public into private spaces has delimited the ways in which we can experience the neighbour and put the terms of "commonality" in the grammar of private enterprise.

Continuing on the theme of investment capital introduced by Crompton and elaborated by Collis, Fedoruk's essay, "Good Malls Make Good Neighbours: Settling Community under Capitalism," takes into consideration the ways in which consumerism is increasingly shaping neighbourhoods. According to Fedoruk, Malls now figure prominently in the construction of community and the composition of citizenship: "[m]alls are not merely factors in or contributors to suburban spatial progress; rather, they determine how these spaces are realized within the rise of consumer society in the twentieth century." Via a detailed analysis of the "mixed-use" spaces developed by Rick Caruso (in which shopping and living are synonymous), Fedoruk's essay makes explicit that neighbourhoods are being constructed in and around private investment. This has resulted in a "consumerized republic" in which every need and desire can immediately be met by the market. Neighbour's music too loud? Buy some noise-cancelling headphones. Homeless man on the corner pestering you for quarters? Call security. Malls make good neighbours, as Fedoruk so aptly puts it, because they create contained spaces in which the antidote to the other is available for sale twenty-four hours a day.

---

1   In an article headlined "Party's Over for Canada's Baby Boom," Rennie clarified his own sincere and candidly neoliberal reading of Creed's luminous statement: "On the exterior walls of my new offices in Chinatown, I've installed a [...] work of art by Britain's Martin Creed. It reads, EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT. And it will. [...] For the enterprising business person, there are many opportunities to capitalize on this new reality.". (*BC Business* Sept 2, 2009)

Following Fedoruk is an excerpt from Michael Turner's latest project, *9x11*. As Turner described in correspondence with *WCL*, *9x11* works to translate time (the events of 9/11) into space (the 9x11 room occupied by the narrator of the poems) and form (the final work will include eleven poems each composed of nine lines). As suggested by the small space of the room (reflective of the diminutive floor plan available to most Vancouverites), the world of *9x11* is cramped, confined and claustrophobic. Relationships with the neighbours are simultaneously removed and intimate. On the one hand, private activities and communications are made public by the accident of thin walls, a shared toilet and a communal mailbox. On the other hand, the names of the people with whom the narrator is closest (physically and, perhaps, emotionally) are never identified; rather they are named by their spaces, represented by their respective apartment number. The neighbour who insists on candles in the bathroom is "5"; the one with the loud TV is "7"; the one he bumps into in the hall is "4." The distant intimacy that Turner explores in these poems helps to further illustrate the uncanny relationship we have with the neighbour.

The final four pieces of this issue of *WCL* collected by Jeff Derksen and Michael Barnholden contend with the issues of acoustic space versus thematic and typographic space. For instance, John Havelda's piece, "Against Preconditioning: Steve McCaffery's Sound Poetry," illustrates the ways in which sound influences the written word, both contributing to and threatening meaning simultaneously. According to Havelda, "sound poetry defamiliarizes the word," raising awareness of direct sensory involvement with the phonemes. Similarly, Carolyn Richards's piece, "{A. E. I. O. U.}," uses the formal structure of vowels and consonants to examine the Downtown Eastside and "what hurts worse than dispersal." Echoing Yap's photographic capture of text in urban space, Richards critiques the role language plays in gentrification. Paolo Javier's long poem "*from* My Aspiring Villainy" reflects on the spatial configuration of its own poetics, for instance asking, "why indentation?" as he sets signifiers in neighbouring relations within an open field. Using collage, Shane Rhodes opens up the problematic way in which colonial land appropriation is supported by the poetics of treaty language. The "stable" legal discourse employed by treaties is undermined by Rhodes' use of translation, typographic experimentation and cartographic tropes. This final piece illustrates the ways in which settler nations are always already antagonistic neighbours imposing on established communities and traditional definitions of "hospitality."

The selection of essays, poetry and photography offered here provide a variety of perspectives from which to further develop notions of neighbours, homes and hospitality as they have been conceived in the work of Freud, Lacan, Derrida and Žižek. Considering "spatial relationships as an ethical field," (Levitsky) these pieces also offer a new figure through which to consider how Vancouver is developing neo-liberal "communities" and constructing models of intersubjective relations based on capitalist interest. Through a kind of reification analogous to the stop-motion animation in McLaren's film, this work counters the abstract, theological ideal of loving the neighbour by making concrete the spatial relations of neighbouring. Subtracting the Levinasian face-to-face, this work subverts the emotional volatility of neighbouring that invites racism, classism and violence.

Works Cited

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.

Badkar, Mamta. "The Most Overpriced Housing Markets in the Developed World." *Business Insider*. N.p., 13 Feb. 2012. Web. 24 May, 2012.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Hospitality.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000.

Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and its Discontents. James Strachey trans. New York: W. W. Norton, 1962.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII*. New York: Norton, 1992.

Levitsky, Rachel. *Neighbor*. New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2009.

Ohayon, Albert. "Point of View: Neighbours, Norman McLaren." *National Film Board of Canada*. N.p. Web. 24 May, 2012.

Rennie, Bob. "Party's Over for Canada's Baby Boom." *BC Business Online*. N.p. 2 Sept. 2009. Web. 24 May, 2012.

Žižek, Slavoj, Eric Santner, Kenneth Reinhard. *The Neighbour: Three Inquiries in Political Theology.* Chicago: Chicago UP, 2005.

___. *How to Read Lacan.* New York: Norton, 2007.

THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTI-ASIAN RACISM: 'POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE EMPTY SIGNIFIER'

>>   NATHAN CROMPTON

A recent BMO report blames Canada's unsustainable household debt and world-record housing prices on an "enormous inflow of capital from non-resident Chinese nationals" (Cooper 2). When a journalist wrote to the author of the report in search of a source for these enormous inflows, he received the response: "It's based on anecdotal reports; there are no reliable data on foreign-resident purchases…If you find a good source of data, please pass it on to us" (Brocki).

Despite the entrenched belief that since the 1980s the Chinese have succeeded in throwing off the equilibrium of the local housing market, the reality is that the vast majority of foreign residential real-estate in Vancouver is American-owned. According to 2010 property statistics collected by BC Assessment Authority (the provincial Crown corporation that assesses all properties in B.C. for tax purposes), about 58% of foreign-owned real-estate is American. Europe and the United States together account for 70% of all foreign-owned real-estate in the city, with the whole of Asia accounting for only 22% (Brocki).

In response to these numbers, commentators hoping to peg the housing crisis on Asian capital maintain that while the *volume* of purchases from Asia is lower, it is the *nature* of those purchases that matters, since Asian buyers are bidding for luxury housing at the top and dragging the rest of the market upwards with them. Again, reality disrupts the myth. In 2010, the highest

recorded purchases were from the United States ($7.17m) and Europe ($7.55m), while the highest Asian purchase was a Hong Kong owner, reaching $6.84m (Brocki).

Despite the facts, numbers are often not enough to compete with anecdotes. Regardless of the data, the notion of Asian capital as a dominant means for understanding the housing crisis persists, with constant statements to the effect that "despite the lack of statistical proof," "despite the dearth of empirical data," "despite reports that point to the contrary," *the threat is nonetheless real*. These types of analysis invoke a set of signifiers – "Asian," "foreign," "offshore" – that in reality serve as *empty* signifiers: they mean nothing but can absorb whatever prejudice is found lying around. The empty signifier is a floating signifier meant to displace blame wherever necessary.

Racism, as the ultimate "floating" signifier, touches the ever-shifting nature of politics. Local historian Henry Yu has stressed the role of this uncertainty, alternating between different forms of metaphor and imagery. It is this uncertainty that has for 150 years helped make Asians into such "indispensable enemies" of the West Coast (Saxton).

Yu stresses the fact that the contingency of such politics makes analysis of local conditions important, and it is worth quoting his prescription: "There is contingency involved in anti-Asian politics—*local conditions matter*" (311). It is this contingency that makes us investigate the political conjuncture, defined within a critique as the convergence of different political forces in the singular contemporary moment. The marker of anti-Asian politics is its ability to make the opposite hold true: contingency succeeds in *erasing* local conditions. A marker of the success of scapegoating is its ability to capitalize on its own "emptiness" by eliminating the visibility of local conditions. Slavoj Zizek captures this phenomenon perfectly with a reference to anti-Semitic scapegoating:

In anti-Semitism, all fears (of economic crisis, etc.) are exchanged for the fear of the Jew – *je crains le Juif, cher citoyen, et je n'ai point d'autre crainte*…('I fear the Jew, my friend, and have no other fears…'). (*Parallax* 37)

It is no exaggeration to say that today, for a person who attempts to understand Vancouver's housing crisis through the lens of excess foreign capital, local conditions become almost entirely irrelevant. As the housing crisis worsens in Vancouver, the oblivious slogan becomes: "I worry about the Asians, my friend, and have no other worries." This persistent logic takes the form of anecdotes and empty signifiers. I know a woman who knows a guy who knows a real-estate agent who works with mostly foreign buyers. "All of his work is now with (international) buyers…very few spoke English, translators were used in virtually all the transactions," as one anecdote reads in an article by city commentator Sandy Garossino ("Unaffordable").

In such narratives, the realities of the local situation literally drop from out the bottom, disappearing into the depths. The key to the empty signifier is that its lack of tangible proof makes the threat appear all the more dire. It plays the role of a hidden cause that can never be pointed to concretely, but whose evasiveness makes it hold all the more sway in the imagination of those who believe it.[1] As with the anti-Semitic category of the "Jewish banker," global capital takes on the role of a mystified power, like a puppet pulling the imaginary strings of the economy.

By pointing to *nothing*, anti-Semitism appears to be pointing at *everything*, providing an explanation for the whole order of the world. The empty signifier becomes the Master signifier. It is in

---

1   "It is the intervention of the pure empty signifier which engenders the mysterious X, the *je ne sais quoi* which makes Jews into Jews for a true anti-Semite." (*In Defense of Lost Causes* 318).

this eclipse that local conditions disappear behind the moon of racism, overtaken by the empty Master signifier. Thus in Vancouver, the housing economy becomes viewed as "completely independent of local economic conditions," to quote Sandy Garossino ("Unaffordable"). Finance, real-estate and the ongoing commodification of housing are re-framed as processes of *pure circulation* floating in a global "stratosphere," rather than processes of rent accumulation extracted from living labour.

In the terms of this increasingly accepted view, Vancouver becomes an undivided victim of "excessive global capital speculation that is unrelated to the local economy"—again to quote Garossino ("Vancouver")—rather than a site of struggle between property elites and the dispossessed of the city. Instead of zeroing in on the almost-feudal relationship between landlords and renters, Garossino laments the floating housing market, upheld by the loftiness of the empty signifier of race. Instead of attacking the reality in front of one's face, we set out to attack the elusive abstractions that cannot be demonstrated. *Why?* To better secure the promise that *nothing is allowed to happen that may change the concrete situation whatsoever*.

To begin, there is no question about the fact that today China is a source of massive surpluses distributed throughout the globe, including Vancouver. "China's economy has been," as the *Asian Pacific Post* writes, "minting millionaires" ("Chinese flush"). The *Post* does not, however, report on the Anglo-investors among these millionaires who work from Canada and who always have worked from here. Picking up where the *Post* leaves off, a *Vancouver Sun* editorial ("Chinese Vancouver"), written from the perspective of Vancouver's business elite, remarks that while Vancouverites were once racist towards the arrival of new Asians in the 1980s and 90s, they have now realized that the Pacific Rim connection is not only source of investment into Vancouver, but a new line of entry for Canadians into the Chinese economy.

It used to be that the so-called "astronauts"— the Hong Kong breadwinners who spent much of their time aloft commuting back and forth between Vancouver and Hong Kong— were seen as oddities. Today its seen as a way of life for any Canadian who wants to tap into Asia's boom. ("Chinese Vancouver")

In short, it is impossible to overlook that China's new wealth emerges within a complex network of the Canada-China nexus, perpetually blurring the lines of what is considered "global" and "local."

These connections mean that, quoting Tristan Markle, "surplus capital extracted from China is made possible by the conditions of oppressed labour sustained by Canadian-based capital networks" (*The Mainlander*). This exploitation cannot be downplayed. The transformations of the Chinese economy are today on a scale that has to be reconciled with one-sided depictions of an economy that "mints millionaires." As Perry Anderson writes, "never have peasants, the backbone of the revolution, been robbed in such numbers of land and livelihood by developers and officials" (95-96). This process of dispossession accelerates even while the commodification of land fails to move as fast as other sectors of the Chinese economy.[2] Indeed it is for the latter reason that the domestic land market is becoming over-saturated by capital,[3] so

2   Lance Carter," "The Chinese Communist Party uses the powers of the state (both local and central) to keep wages low, working conditions horrendous, and squash dissent. Yet at the same time it is the state that has thus far prevented the complete privatization of the economy (perhaps most importantly the privatization of land)."

3   Bruce McCoubrey, "Mr. Rennie probably knows that domestic demand for the [Olympic Village] units is almost done and the pressure is on find to find an external supply to absorb the remaining units. China is the best bet. The Chinese Government is now fighting a homegrown asset bubble and is planning restrictions on speculative real estate investing at home. Chinese investors will be looking to invest elsewhere."

that China's "soaring domestic housing market has sent rich mainland investors flooding overseas to get more for their money" ("Chinese flush"). Sitting among such "rich mainland investors" are of course the silent Anglo-Canadians who must bring surplus capital back into Vancouver from Chinese labour networks (perhaps it is the case that they have left China for more additional reasons, including too many strikes, disruptions and uprisings in their mainland factories).

On the other side of the coin, the North American economy itself has been freeing up enormous amount of unregulated, surplus capital extracted from global and local labourers and renters. As the Occupy movement has foregrounded, if there is any economy that has been minting millionaires in the period since the 1980s, it is the North American economy. The ratio of the average American workers' income to that of their CEOs changed from 30 to 1 in 1970 to 500 to 1 by 2000, helping the top 0.1 percent of the population to triple its share of the national wealth (Harvey, *Brief History* 16). During that same period, individuals' real wages in America and elsewhere stagnated or even declined (Crafts 54). Real wages were frozen while the top layers of society dramatically increased their share of the economy. David Harvey, Duménil & Lévy, and others are precise in identifying neoliberalism as a "project for the restoration of ruling class power" (Harvey, *Brief History* 16).

"Downtown," writes Bob Rennie, "is being driven by local high net worth individuals and children spending their parent's money" ("Keynote"). These local high net worth individuals are well positioned within international networks of labour and capital and are no less global than anyone else trading in the property market. *Global* in this sense does not mean "over there," somewhere else in the world. On the contrary it means *here,* in front of us, and as Zizek has said presciently, the global rich and

global poor often live directly above and below one another, stacked in the highrises of our modern cities. "A new global class is emerging" composed of "ultrahigh-net-worth individuals. These global citizens [are] the true counter-pole to those living in slums...They are, indeed, two sides of the same coin, the two extremes of the class division...with ordinary people swarming through the dangerous streets down below, whilst the rich float around on a higher level, up in the air" (*First as Tragedy* 4-5).

Any effort to analyze housing costs in Vancouver should begin with the conspicuous role of "local high net worth individuals." These investors are today more important than ever for the reason that there are far more of them than ten years ago, while each one holds dramatically more money than ten years ago. The last ten years have seen an exhaustive restoration of ruling class power in British Columbia, and it serves to review the empirical data to understand the roots of the surplus capital now being re-absorbed into Vancouver's booming real-estate market.

After ten years of neoliberal reforms, an unprecedented amount of wealth has been freed into circulation, transferred to the rich from working-class people of Vancouver and British Columbia. Since the election of the BC Liberal government in 2001, profit rates have soared while the corporate income tax rate descended from 16.5 percent to 10 percent. Today the upper 20% of BC pay a *lower* total provincial tax rate than the remaining 80%, (Ivanova *et al*) and the provincial government now collects more revenues from sales taxes than from income tax. Already by 2010 the people of BC were paying more in medical premiums than businesses paid in corporate income taxes, and the trends are only worsening (ibid). All of these changes, which only scratch the surface of a massive roll-out of neoliberal restructuring and privatization of the British Columbia economy in the past decade, represent a massive handout to the rich, amounting

to billions of transferred dollars between 2000 and 2010. In each of the next four years, corporate profits are projected to continue climbing and reach $31.3 billion in the year 2015 alone. Profits have soared, but instead of being re-invested in labour, wages have stagnated and declined (Ivanova).

All of these numbers matter for housing in at least two major respects. Firstly, the neoliberal theft of working class wages means that we have less available to spend on housing. Stagnant and declining wages are being gouged with higher rents and mortgages. Secondly, these new rounds of finance are freed up for injection into the further-inflated housing market. There is a "spatial fix" taking place in which over-accumulated capital "switches," to use David Harvey's terms, into fixed capital investments — an absorption process in which surplus capital is placed in non-productive sectors (*Limits,* 227-8). This non-productive sector is, above all, *real-estate*, articulated by Bob Rennie when referring to real-estate investment in Vancouver as a question of "parking money" (Gunn). Simply, surplus profits leave the global industrial cycle when financial investment in housing permits a "smooth switch of over-accumulated circulating capital into fixed capital formation" (*Limits* 266). In other words, the neoliberal restructuring of the economy frees up an increasing mass of finance to be injected into housing.

To match the floating capital freed up by federal and provincial tax cuts, the City of Vancouver now has the lowest corporate taxes in the world. A report published by the global financial auditor KPMG places Vancouver first out a list of 41 global cities. The main finding of the report is that Vancouver has a tax system more favorable to corporations and the wealthy than anywhere else in the world ("Competitive Alternatives") in addition to a low overall rate for wealthy corporations, the municipal government has implemented a policy of property tax breaks and exemptions for real-estate developers

and billionaires, adding up to tens of millions of dollars. Not long ago the two wealthiest billionaires in British Columbia—Brandt Louie and Jim Pattison (London Drugs and Nesters)—received ten-year tax exemptions for their corporations' participation in the new Woodward's development.

When a local neoliberal bourgeoisie has taken outright control of city council, we should ask: Is it "foreigners" who have chosen to sell off Vancouver's social housing as market condos? Is it "foreigners" who have set the lowest corporate tax rates in world? Is it "foreigners" who have chosen to destroy social housing at Heather Place, Little Mountain and the Olympic Village? Is it "foreigners" who have exempted developers from inclusionary zoning in the Oppenheimer district? Is it "foreigners" who have written up long policies to "revitalize" areas containing our city's largest concentration of affordable housing?

The answer to each is an obvious *no*. We can therefore begin to see how the Mayor and Vision benefit from the same old anti-Asian tropes that have plagued Vancouver for a century. Policies of tax cuts for the one percent, the sell-off of social housing, incentives and fee exemptions for billionaire developers, and the ongoing de-regulation of the housing market have come in tandem with the Mayor's racist capegoating of "wealthy immigrants,"[4] supposedly responsible for Vancouver's housing crisis. The sooner the better for calling out this ruling class double standard.

---

4   The *Vancouver Sun*: http://blogs.vancouversun. com/2011/08/23/vancouver-mayor-laments-wealthy-immigrants-making-green-city-unaffordable/

Works Cited

Anderson, Perry. "Two Revolutions." *New Left Review* 61, Jan.-Feb., 2010.

Brocki, Luke. "I Can't Own Alone." *The Tyee*. Web. 22 Mar. 2012.

Carter, Lance. "A Chinese Alternative? Interpreting the Chinese New Left Politically." *Insurgent Notes: Journal of Communist Theory and Practice*. Web. 6 Jun. 2010.

Cooper, S. and Sal Guatieri. "Will Canada's Housing Boom Forge On, Fizzle Out, or Flame Out?" Special Report of BMO Economic Research, 30 Jan. 2012.

Crafts, Nicholas. "Profits of Doom?" *New Left Review* 54, Nov./Dec. 2008.

"Chinese flush with cash eye Canada." Editors. *The Asian Pacific Post*. Print. April 22 – 28, 2010.

"Chinese Vancouver: A decade of change." Editors. *The Vancouver Sun*. Web. 30 Jun. 2007.

"Competitive Alternatives 2010 Special Report: Focus on Tax." KPMG. May 2010.

Garossino, Sandy. "Unaffordable (That's What You Are)." Web. 28 Nov. 2011.

Garossino, Sandy. "Vancouver, we've got a housing problem." *Georgia Straight*. Web. 24 Oct. 2011.

Gunn, Barbara. "Let the property games begin, Bob Rennie encourages brokers." *Vancouver Sun*. Web. 27 Mar. 2010.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

___. *The Limits to Capital (4th edition)*. London/New York: Verso, 2006.

Ivanova, I. "BC's Growing Gap: Family Income Inequality 1976 – 2006." *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. March 2009.

Ivanova, I., Seth Klein and Marc Lee. "BC's Regressive Tax Shift A Decade of Diminishing Tax Fairness, 2000 to 2010." *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. June 2011.

Markle, Tristan. "New report shows affordability crisis deepens, blames foreign investment." *The Mainlander*. Web. 8 Jun. 2011.

McCoubrey, Bruce. "Bob Rennie Selling the Olympic Village in China." *Vancouver Real Estate Market Insight*. Web. 18 Jan. 2010.

Rennie, Bob. "Keynote to the Urban Development Institute." Print/Conference handout. 2008.

Saxton, Alexander. *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. University of California Press, 1975.

Yu, Henry. "Is Vancouver the Future or the Past? Asian Migrants and White Supremacy." *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (2006).

Zizek, Slavoj. *In Defense of Lost Causes*. New York/London: Verso, 2008

___. *The Parallax View*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006.

___. *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*. London/New York: Verso, 2009.
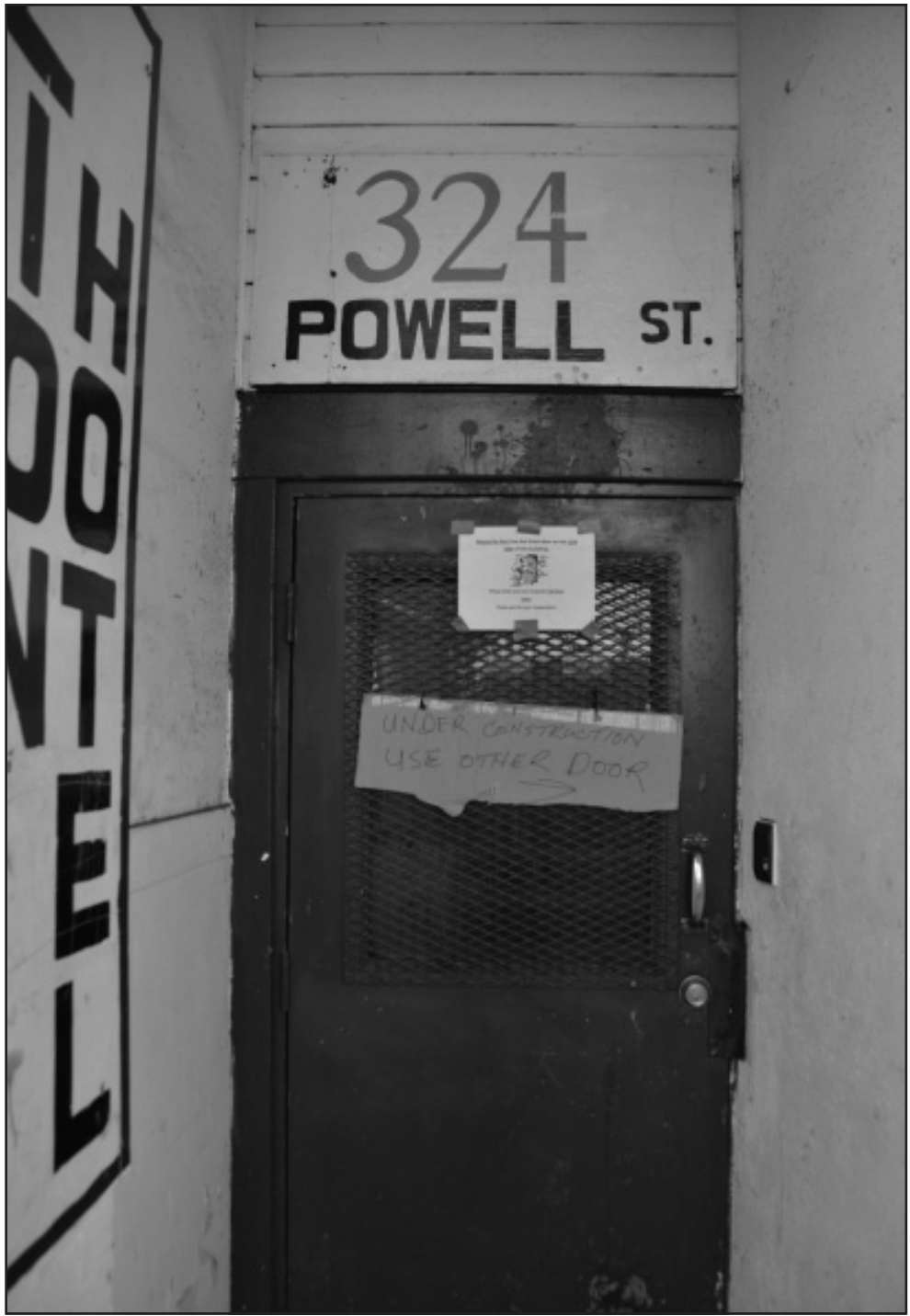
324 Powell St.

NOT IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD: SEX WORK AND THE PROBLEM OF DISPLACEMENT

>> KATHLEEN DEERING

Historically, women and men who do sex work have been systematically excluded from societies, while at the same time sex work activities have been largely tolerated. Sex work, which can broadly be defined as the exchange of any sexual service for money or goods, arguably exists in some form in most countries and has been conducted and performed by women and men for so long that it is often referred to as the "world's oldest profession."[1] In many places the number of men who are clients of sex workers is thought to vastly outnumber the number of sex workers, with relatively few sex workers providing a substantial number of services. The relatively large numbers of men who are clients suggests a familiarity with sex work among a diverse range of individuals in most settings.

Certain settings are better known for sex work than others – for example, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Hamburg, Germany and Bangkok, Thailand. On a local level, while limited, studies of the geography of sex work have primarily been conducted in Western contexts,[2] with some recent exceptions.[3] Studies on the geography of sex work have included a focus on neighbourhoods where sex work

---

1   Although "sex work" can include the exchange of any sexual service, defined broadly (e.g., exotic dancers, telephone sex operators), this paper considers sex work as the more formal definition of "prostitution" under most country's sex work laws, whereby sex work includes the exchange of physical sexual services (e.g., vaginal, anal or oral sex).

2   Hubbard and Whowell; Hubbard and Sanders; Sanders, "The risks…".

3   Bailey, Hutter, and Huigen.

activities occur as well as sex work environments, including places where sex workers solicit for clients or provide sexual services, within neighbourhoods. Detailed examinations of how characteristics of neighbourhoods and sex work environments impact sex workers' health and safety are increasing in the medicine and public health literature, but these remain limited.

Discussions of sex work environments and the neighbourhoods in which they are embedded are inadequate without a discussion of the laws surrounding sex work and more specifically, the enforcement of these laws, and how legal frameworks play substantial roles in shaping the organization of sex work[4] within and across countries.

In addition to laws surrounding sex work, the actions of small numbers of community members[5] who oppose visible sex work in their neighbourhoods can also have a substantial impact on neighbourhoods where sex work occurs and sex work environments within neighbourhoods. The negative attitudes of some community members toward sex work often manifests as in a "not-in-my-backyard" ("NIMBY") approach, whereby local residents take actions[6] to remove sex work activities from their neighbourhoods; residents may or may not have opinions on whether sex work activities should ever take place, but their primary interest is to remove it from what they view as their own spaces, despite the fact that the vast majority of visible sex work occurs in the public realm. Neighbourhood opposition to sex work as a "negative externality" within public spaces is mirrored in pervasive protests that occur against a diverse range of individuals, including drug users and people with mental illnesses as well as sex workers. These individuals, as "other," provoke popular anxiety as individuals who do not conform to commonly held ideals of normal or acceptable behaviour.[7]

This article explores how sex work laws and the aggressive displacement of sex workers via NIMBY-esque groups can have a considerable effect on the local organization of sex work, as well as be a key factor in shaping the risk environments of sex work-related harms such as violence and HIV/AIDS, with a particular historical focus on neighbourhoods with high concentration of visible sex work markets in Vancouver.

Sex work laws vary substantially across geographic settings and usually these are consistent within countries, but not always. Broadly, policy-makers in different countries have taken several main approaches to regulating sex work. Sex work can be completely illegal—for example in China and many African and Muslim countries—although it is still practiced to varying degrees.[8] Another approach taken by some countries – for example, Sweden; Iceland – is to criminalize the purchasing of sex – for example, being a client of a sex worker – but not sex work itself. Sex work has been legalized in some settings – for example, the Netherlands – with the same rights afforded other types of workers.[9]

In other settings sex work is quasi-criminalized, with legal contexts shaped by abolitionist ideologies, which view sex work as exploitative, dangerous and commodifying in all cases.[10] Within this legal context, individuals exchanging sexual services

---

4   The organization of sex work can be conceptualized as the places, including neighbourhoods and sex work environments (and related characteristics) where women solicit clients and where they provide sexual services, and the relative distribution of these places on a population level.

5   For example, residents of local neighbourhoods.

6   For example, patrolling neighbourhoods to harass and intimidate sex workers out of certain areas.

7   Hubbard.

8   "100 Countries and Their Prostitution Policies"; Hindle, Barnett and Casavant; Kavemann.

9   Ibid.

10   "100 Countries and Their Prostitution Policies"; Hindle, Barnett and Casavant; Sanders, "Risky business…"

for money are perceived as being unable to give consent; thus, the abolitionist viewpoint favours the term "prostitute" over "sex worker."[11] This viewpoint often goes in hand with religious-based stances that sex work is morally objectionable.[12] Canada, as well as India and the United Kingdom, are the most prominent examples here.[13] Under an abolitionist-driven legal framework, sex work is not illegal, but most key aspects of sex work are, effectively making the practice of sex work nearly impossible without breaking laws. For example, in Canada, with the recent exception of Ontario,[14] sex workers are prohibited from communicating in public for the purposes of prostitution (i.e., the "communicating law"), from living off the avails of prostitution and from keeping or frequenting a common bawdy house (i.e., brothel).[15]

The organization of sex work in a city is unique to that city's (country's) sex work laws, culture and local and municipal approach to tolerance of sex work. Visible sex work activities are most often concentrated in certain neighbourhoods of cities as sex work strolls (typically street-based areas of public solicitation) or "red light districts" (which may include multiple types of places where sex work solicitation occurs or where services are provided). City officials and the police generally prefer that sex work be geographically concentrated; usually these areas of concentration are located in undesirable and hidden neighbourhoods, unlikely to bother the average resident and easier to manage by law enforcement.[16] Likely because of this, despite the presence of sex work laws in most countries, public or street-based solicitation is usually tacitly tolerated to an extent in specific sections of certain neighbourhoods. The same is true for other types of sex work, including more hidden indoor sex work and higher-end escort services.

In the context of the criminalized nature of sex work, police enforcement and community pressure can have a substantial impact on the organization of sex work in a city, often leading to sex work places being located further away from main or commercial settings and becoming entrenched in more outlying neighbourhoods, intensifying the marginalization of sex workers. While there are innumerous unrecorded examples of this, several documented cases from settings with similar sex work laws to Canada (India, Britain) have been highlighted in the literature.[17] As in Canada, the highly interrelated negative community attitudes toward sex work and support from national laws surrounding sex work allowed displacement activities to occur in these other settings. In this paper, a discussion of how the organization of sex work in Vancouver has changed over time based on similar displacement practices will be presented.

In Vancouver, up until the Second World War and shortly after, a "red-light district" flourished on East Pender, between Cambie and Main, and near Chinatown. After what was known as a sensational trial, the Penthouse cabaret on Seymour Street, a hub of activity for sex workers and clients, was raided by police enforcing the "common bawdy house law" in 1975.[18] This raid had substantial implications for shaping sex work places in Vancouver for years to come, leading to significant increases in riskier

---

11   Sanders, "Risky business…".

12   Ibid.

13   Hindle, Barnett and Casavant.

14   Sex work is broadly decriminalized in New Zealand and Ontario (with the "communicating law" remaining criminalized in Ontario). A court case in BC that seeks to repeal sex work laws, similar to the successful court case in Ontario, in ongoing.

15   Hindle, Barnett and Casavant; Himel.

16   Hubbard.

17   Bailey, Hutter, and Huigen; DeSouza; Mani and Noronho; Hubbard; Kotiswaran; Lowman, "Street prostitution control…".

18   Lowman, "Street Prostitution Control…"

street-based sex work. A number of street-based sex work strolls have operated in different parts of Vancouver since then, with Lowman (1992) identifying fourteen separate strolls between 1970 and 1990.[19]

Sex work strolls existed in the West End until community pressure forced sex workers to other Vancouver neighbourhoods, including Mount Pleasant, Strathcona, Kensington-Cedar Cottage and Grandview-Woodlands.[20] This pressure originated in particular from the group "Concerned Residents of the West End" ("CROWE"), which was led by then-MP Pat Carney and formed in 1981 specifically for the purposes of removing street-based sex work from the area, as well as the "Shame the Johns" campaign, which picketed sex workers and their clients.[21] The actions of these groups were bolstered by a geographically based court injunction in 1984, which banned public solicitation west of Burrard. In the neighbourhoods where sex work was displaced to, new community groups who were against sex work activities occurring in their neigbourhoods soon formed with similar objectives to the original West End groups.[22] The "communicating" law was subsequently enacted in 1985 across Canada,[23] and

meant to deter outdoor and public solicitation by targeting both sex workers and their clients.

In 1994, after neighbourhood residents complained about late-night traffic and sex work activity in the Franklin and Semlin area in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood, a series of traffic-calming actions were taken to try and divert traffic, including no-entry signage plans and diagonal traffic diverters.[24] In the City of Vancouver administrative report assessing their effectiveness, the measures are hailed as a general success with comments from a survey of residents including the following: "We need a larger presence of the police to drive prostitution away from this area."[25] Of note, however, is that there is no discussion of where the sex workers and related activities relocated, despite the fact that they did not disappear.

As part of the effort to try and make sex work invisible, police enforcement tactics and community pressure sometimes displace sex workers completely from their places of work, to other cities or even countries. Migrant sex workers may be vulnerable to negative health and safety outcomes, due to limited social networks in new settings, reduced ability to access health and support services, language barriers and other factors associated with being in an unfamiliar environment.[26]

Sex workers may also be displaced locally, to another neighbourhood or down the block, typically to places where there are fewer people to object. While these sex workers might not face some the same types of challenges as those who are pushed to new cities or countries (e.g., language barriers), substantial recent research has shown that sex workers who are displaced to more isolated neighbourhoods have increased vulnerability to experiencing sexual or physical violence by clients,

19   Lowman, "Street Prostitution Control…".

20   Ibid

21   Ibid.

22   Ibid.

23   Section 213 of the Criminal Code: Every person who in a public place or in any place open to public view (a) stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle, (b) impedes the free flow of pedestrians or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place, or (c) stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicate or attempts to communicate with any person for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the services of a prostitute is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction. A "public place" includes any place to which the public have right of access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view.

24   Administrative Report.

25   Ibid.

26   Carballo and Nerukar.

and are less able to access safety services, or health and harm reduction services, the latter which can also increase their chances of becoming HIV-positive or infected with a sexually transmitted infection through reduced access to and use of condoms.[27]

Even within visible sex work venues, which are known to be more dangerous for sex workers relative to indoor venues, displacement and isolation can place some sex workers at higher risk for violence.[28] In Canada, sex workers who serviced clients in cars or public places as well as those who were displaced from working in main streets due to police presence (versus did not) were independently more likely to experience client violence in the last six months.[29] In order to avoid police, some sex workers have moved toward online solicitation of clients and providing services indoors or in clients' places of choice (e.g., clients' homes, cars). The risks of online relative to other types of solicitation is not clear, though it may confer protection relative to outdoor solicitation depending on the availability of safer indoor spaces to take clients. However, online solicitation makes sex work substantially more hidden and more difficult to access by health and support services.

While there are a number of cases where police and other enforcement officers interpret sex work laws on a micro-level, resulting in rights abuses against sex workers, without sex work laws, police would not be required to engage in displacement tactics that directly or indirectly harm sex workers. The Vancouver Police Department readily acknowledges that enforcing the communicating law simply displaces sex work, but representatives argue that police should not be held accountable for the harms ultimately experienced by sex workers as a result of these policies, since they are just enforcing existing laws.[30] This suggests a crucial need and important opportunity to address sex work harms on a policy level through changing sex work laws.[31]

Sex work laws, however, reflect a much deeper ingrained negative social perception and intense stigmatization of sex work that is exhibited in community antagonism towards sex work. Sex workers face widespread occupational social stigmatization, social marginalization and exclusion through which they are shamed for contravening gender norms, including exchanging sex for money and being overtly and publicly sexual. Sex workers over clients have also been characterized as "diseased" or "vectors of disease," despite the widespread and frequent refusal of clients to use condoms. Sex workers have also struggled against views that sex work and drug use are necessarily intertwined.[32]

It is this overarching stigma, which Lowman[33] argues was manifested as a "discourse of disposal" in Vancouver newspapers from the 1980s, reflecting community groups' desires to "get rid of" sex work in Vancouver neighbourhoods, that contributed to social acceptability of violence against sex workers and ultimately played a role in mass murders of sex workers in British Columbia, many of which remain

---

27 Shannon, et al "Social and structural…"; Shannon, et al. Structural and environmental barriers…"; Shannon, et al. Prevalence and structural correlates…"; Shannon, et al. "Mapping violence and policing…". Shahmanesh.

28 Harcourt and Donovan; Blanchard, et al. Church et al.

29 Shannon, et al. 'Prevalence and structural correlates…'.

30 "Police Not Responsible for Isolating Prostitutes, Inquiry Told."

31 In March, 2012, the Vancouver Police Department released a new draft document that provides guidelines for police interactions with sex workers, focusing on building trust and communication with sex workers over enforcement, with the exception of cases relating to human trafficking, youth and gangs. While some advocates support the new guidelines, careful monitoring of their effects in practice is crucial. ("Advocates laud new Vancouver police 'sex work' guidelines.")

32 O'Neil et al.; Scambler and Paoli; Hubbard and Sanders..

33 John Lowman, professor of criminology at Simon Fraser University, Canada, who is a long-time researcher on street-based sex work and violence.

unsolved today.[34] This harkens to community views that that the participation in sex (particularly street-based sex work) is so morally reprehensible that sex workers are "deserving" of violence and reflects the widespread notion held by sex workers that they are disposable as well as their acceptance of everyday and "institutionalized" violence.[35]

Over the longer term, addressing the social-structural factors that lead to women and men becoming involved in sex work under exploitative conditions and constrained choices is crucial to reducing harms to sex workers (e.g., poverty; sexual abuse; drug use; the effects of years of colonization of Aboriginal people). Support should be provided for sex workers who wish to exit sex work at the same time as harm reduction and safer-environment interventions[36] are scaled up to support current workers. Acutely needed, however, are changes to policies that increase harms to women and men in sex work and in particular, decriminalization of sex work; the urgency of these changes is reflected in the continued escalation of reports of missing women over the last two decades, including some of the largest and highest profile serial murder cases in North America and the United Kingdom, settings with criminalized approaches to sex work.[37]

Amidst increasing calls globally for changes to sex work laws, a movement in support of decriminalization of sex work laws is gaining momentum. In Canada, the recent Ontario court case in which the Ontario Superior court struck down all sex work laws in the province in acknowledgement of the high risk they place sex workers under, as reflected by Judge Susan Himel's assessment: "By increasing the risk of harm to street prostitutes, the communicating law is simply too high a price to pay for the alleviation of social nuisance."[38] Addressing antiquated and harmful sex work laws is a first step to de-stigmatizing sex work and shaping safer sex work environments within neighbourhoods.[39] It has become increasingly clear that the problem with displacement practices by the police or community in the context of criminalized policies toward sex work is that these approaches have little impact on reducing sex work-related activities or harms. Rather, displacement has served to alter or shift sex work environments from neighbourhood to neighbourhood in ways that substantially increase harms to sex workers, including increased vulnerability to HIV, violence and murder.

---

34   Lowman, "Violence and the Outlaw Status..."; Recently, the largest serial killer investigation in Canada concluded with the conviction of Robert Pickton for six murders of women who were involved in sex work in Vancouver's downtown eastside (DTES). "CBC News in Depth: Robert Pickton," *Canadian Broadcasting Company* 2010, S. Cameron, *The Pickton Files* (Toronto, Canada: Knopf, Canada, 2007). Over the period between 1997 to 2002, Pickton has claimed responsibility for the disappearances and murders of 49 women from Vancouver. Stueck and Hunter, ("B.C. To Review Police Investigation into Pickton Killings " The Globe and Mail 2010.)

35   Romero-Daza, Weeks and Singer; Shannon, et al. "Social and structural..."; Dalla, Xia and Kennedy.

36   Safer-environment interventions include those that modify risky environments of sex work to reduce sex work-related harms (e.g., are located in sex work places; operate when and where women live and work).

---

37   Shannon; Goodyear and Cusick.

38   Himel.

39   In 2003, New Zealand became the first country in the world to completely decriminalize sex work between consenting adults. Reports suggest that although some of the stigma surrounding sex work has been symbolically removed, sex workers still experience stigma and violence. However, evidence suggests that the impact of decriminalization has been mostly positive and is thought to have empowered sex workers to challenge exploitation and violence, though challenging embedded stigmatization of sex work and increasing awareness of the realities of sex workers lives remains a priority. (Armstrong.)

Works Cited

"100 Countries and Their Prostitution Policies." 2011. ProCon.Org. http://prostitution.procon.org/view.resource. php?resourceID=000772%3E.

Administrative Report. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 1999. http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/000111/tt2.htm.

"CBC News in Depth: Robert Pickton." *Canadian Broadcasting Company* 2010. http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/pickton/history.html.

"Criminal Code, R.S., C. C-46, Ss. 210, 211, 212(1), 212(3), 213." 1985. http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/.

"Police Not Responsible for Isolating Prostitutes, Inquiry Told." *Canadian Press* 2011. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2011/10/20/bc-missing-women-dickson-lowman.html.

Armstrong, Lynzi. *Out of the Shadows (and into a Bit of Light). New Sociologies of Sex Work.* Eds. Hardy, Kate, Sarah Kingston, and Teela Sanders. Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010. Print.

Bailey, Ajay, Inge Hutter, and Paulus P. Huigen. "The Spatial-Cultural Configuration of Sex Work in Goa, India." *Journal of Economic and Social Geography 102.2* (2011): 162–75. Print.

Blanchard, James F., et al. "Understanding the Social and Cultural Contexts of Female Sex Workers in Karnataka, India: Implications for Prevention of Hiv Infection." *Journal of Infectious Diseases 191.Suppl 1* (2005): S139-S46. Print.

Cameron, Stevie. *The Pickton Files.* Toronto, Canada: Knopf, Canada, 2007. Print.

Carballo, Manuel, and Aditi Nerukar. "Migration, Refugees, and Health Risks." *Emerging Infectious Diseases 7.3* (2001): 556–60. Print.

Church, Stephanie, et al. "Violence by Clients Towards Female Prostitutes in Different Work Settings: Questionnaire Survey." *BMJ 322.7285* (2001): 524-25. Print.

Dalla, Rochelle L., Yan Xia, and Heather Kennedy. "'You Just Give Them What They Want and Pray They Don't Kill You': Street-Level Sex Workers" Reports of Victimization, Personal Resources, and Coping Strategies." *Violence Against Women 9* (2003): 1367-94. Print.

Desouza, Shaila. "Razing Baina, Goa in Whose Interest?" *Economic and Political Weekly 39.30* (2004): 3341-43. Print.

Goodyear, Michael D.E., and Linda Cusick. "Protection of Sex Workers." *BMJ 334.7584* (2007): 52-53. Print.

Harcourt, Christine and B Donovan. "The Many Faces of Sex Work." *Sexually Transmitted Infections 81.3* (2005): 201-06. Print.

Himel, Susan. "Bedford V. Canada " ONSC 4264. Ed. Court, Ontario Superior. Vancouver, Canada2010. Vol. 07-CV-329807 PD1. Print.

Hindle, Karen, Laura Barnett, and Lynn Casavant. "Prostitution: A Review of Legislation in Selected Countries. Legal and Legislative Affairs Division." (2008). http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/prb0329-e.htm%3E

Hubbard, Phil. "Community Action and the Displacement of Street Prostitution: Evidence from British Cities." *Geoforum 29.3* (1998): 269-86. Print.

Hubbard, Phil, and Teela Sanders. "Making Space for Sex Work: Female Street Prostitution and the Production of Urban Space." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 27.1* (2003): 75-89. Print.

Hubbard, Phil, and Mary Whowell. "Revisiting the Red Light District: Still Neglected, Immoral and Marginal?" Geoforum 39.5 (2008): 1743–55. Print.

Kavemann, Barbara. The Act Regulating the Legal Situation of Prostitutes – Implementation, Impact, Current Developments: Findings of a Study on the Impact of the German Prostitution Act. Berlin, Germany: German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2007. Print.Kotiswaran, Prabha. "Born Unto Brothels—toward a Legal Ethnography of Sex Work in an Indian Red-Light Area." *Law and Social Inquiry 33.3* (2008): 579–629. Print.

Lowman, John. "Street Prostitution Control: Some Canadian Reflections on the Finsbury Park Experience." *British Journal of Criminology 32.1* (1992). Print.

Lowman, John. "Street Prostitution in Vancouver: Some Notes on the Genesis of a Social Problem." Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice 28 (1986): 1-16. Print.

Mani, Kalanand, and Frederick Noronha. *Picture-Postcard Poverty: Unheard Voices, Forgotten Issues from Rural Goa.* Bardez, India: Rama Harmalkar, 2008. Print.

O'Neil, John, et al. "Dhandha, Dharma and Disease: Traditional Sex Work and HIV/Aids in Rural India." *Social Science & Medicine* 59.4 (2004): 851-60. Print.

Romero-Daza, Nancy, Margaret Weeks, and Merrill Singer. ""Nobody Gives a Damn If I Live or Die": Violence, Drugs, and Street-Level Prostitution in Inner-City Hartford, Connecticut." *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Studies in Health and Illness 22.3* (2003): 233-59. Print.

Sanders, Teela. *Sex Work: A Risky Business.* Portland, USA: Willan Publishing, 2005. Print.

___. "The Risks of Street Prostitution: Punters, Police and Protesters." *Urban Studies 41* (2004): 1703–17. Print.

Scambler, Graham, and Frederique Paoli. "Health Work, Female Sex Workers and HIV/Aids: Global and Local Dimensions of Stigma and Deviance as Barriers to Effective Interventions." *Social Science & Medicine 66.8* (2008): 1848-62. Print.

Shahmanesh, Maryam, et al. "A Study Comparing Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV among Ex-Red-Light District and Non-Red-Light District Sex Workers after the Demolition of Baina Red-Light District." *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes 52.2* (2009): 253-57 10.1097/QAI.0b013e3181ab6d75. Print.

Shannon, Kate. "The Hypocrisy of Canada's Prostitution Legislation." *CMAJ 182* (2010): 1388. Print.

Shannon, Kate, et al. "Social and Structural Violence and Power Relations in Mitigating Hiv Risk of Drug-Using Women in Survival Sex Work." *Social Science and Medicine 66.4* (2008): 911-21. Print.

___. "Structural and Environmental Barriers to Condom Use Negotiation with Clients among Female Sex Workers: Implications for Hiv Prevention Strategies and Policy." *American Journal of Public Health 99.4* (2009): 659-65. Print.

___. "Prevalence and Structural Correlates of Gender Based Violence among a Prospective Cohort of Female Sex Workers." BMJ 339 (2009). August 11, 2009 http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/339/aug11_3/b2939%3E

___. "Mapping Violence and Policing as an Environmental-Structural Barrier to Health Service and Syringe Availability among Substance-Using Women in Street-Level Sex Work." *Int J Drug Policy 19* (2008): 140-47. Print.

Stueck, Wendy, and Justine Hunter. "B.C. To Review Police Investigation into Pickton Killings " *The Globe and Mail* 2010. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/pickton/bc-to-review-police-investigation-into-pickton-killings/article1680038/.
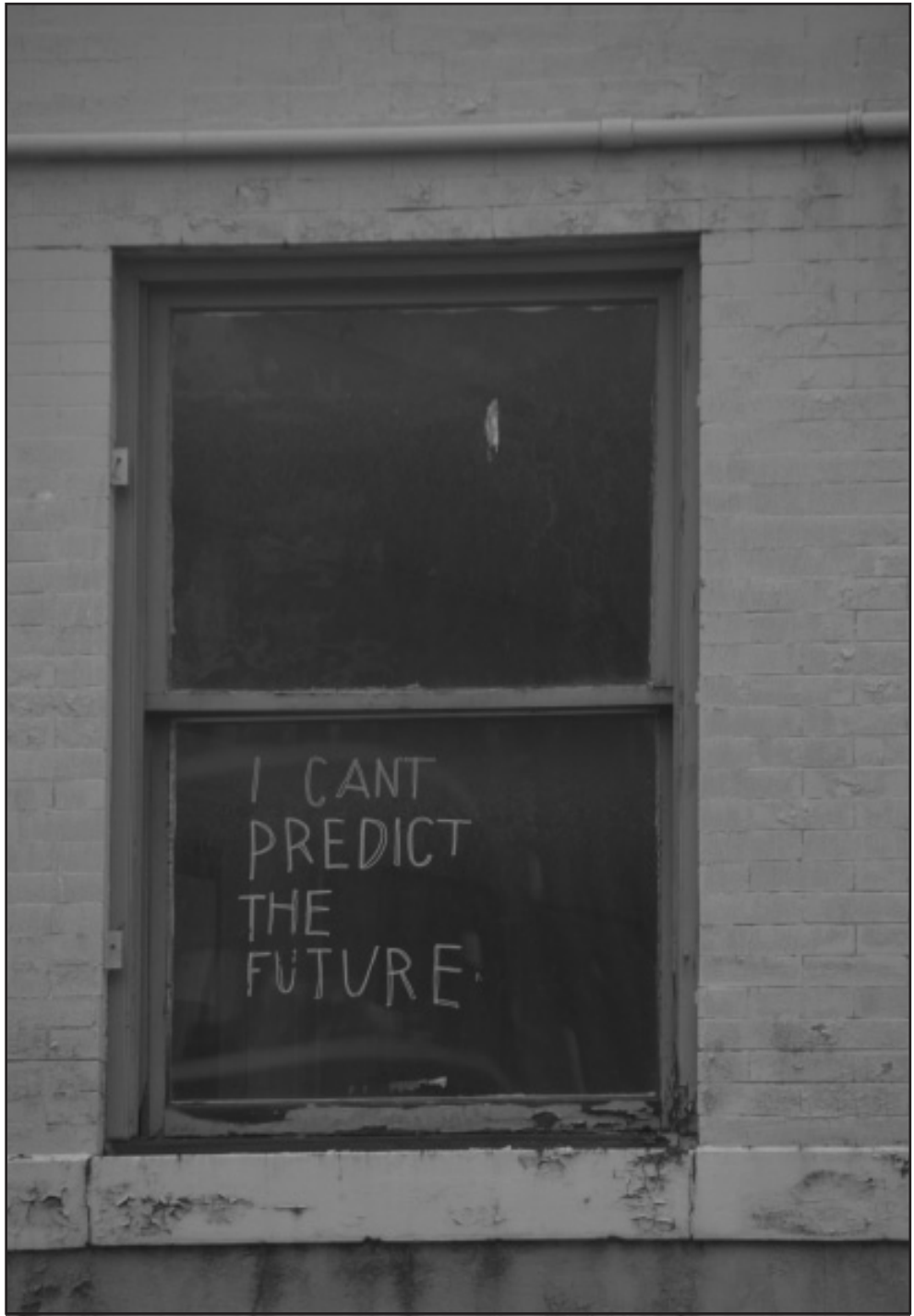
I can't predict the future

AVERSE MAP OF

>>   SCOTT INNISS

Averse Map of

1.

        Up inlet a pay outlet sprays
into decor. This red arrest at morning—calmly seize
a shopping cart park. A sail a patient grey
stretcher. Protest and the market jumps

changes. Neither spare nor season. Paucity

      comes overnight camping. A long sentence of
vision or suffice squabble. Po-mo SRO addresses.
Be averse no longer—bear it. That picture of
you at the expo. Killer view

but for the beach. Sub catastrophe for
visionary—can't eighty six it underground

the viaduct mattress. That's beside the point
that that is besides. I don't since carte blanche's white.

Small millionaire town. Landscape of what's to come
down to bus ridings. Skid rowing when the condo's too small

        by a half way house. Asphalt
cuts a falling tax rate. To insure a
culvert advert. Here—and there goes the underground.
You are what you property glass and steel.

2.

[D M Vancouver Poems 1973 last page]

       Comes into polis—the squat homestead steady.
Rip currency sounding out of the rains.
Drive to the right to work & town's left something

wing. Ever since such a creative under
cover of surveyors. From exposing

abdomens of shelter-settler closures.
Breathing dirtily is not a daily bread.
Stone broke, my fake creek bank loan. Crying

'Come to glass towers to admit the
conifers are trees.' A real estate relations trip.
Echo alley to become gentry. Undercover
you purchase a totem whale.

Band with withdrawal treaty. But the land claims can't
stand standoff. Riposte no bills as developers grow
arms length. A social housing speculation means

we can handle a pan contract or a police limelight.

       Warm surveillance green lights.

3.

one pay stub cig. clear cut way

to credit. class monarchy.

three squares per stumps at par. cord lords

for five. & dime extra. overt time. explorers

six acre & a path sack. a Salish
name banding buck tents. to fall green fir from
seventh to nth. horsing. log indefinitely
a tree. cabin feverish. whole

looking food forest. bring demolition in.

avoid pulp mauling. beer hotel off.

4.

unfold the brochure once
to nearby. and again
to tenant. or to dwell still.

either we buy. or rent it
out to some of yours.

your front porch is. really something.

bluff by owner. or say-so
the lessee says. to continue
and go broker. in a lien year.
so. it's fee simple to.

5.

The city streets move easterly. Meet is to committee
well. The bulldozer who woke you up is gone. To place
the premium on place. But some don't want them.
They handshake together. Crowd out the bodies

first. To architecture as one wishes. History reminiscences
at the door. Nice block if you can get it. To walk by is not

to take rent increase notice. Near do wells
performs turnarounds. There's no accounting
for adjacency. The stranger is open.

6.

His peninsula story checks. No consent.

Even against title deeds. House

then if you can. No cash in the new rental font.
Canvas what develop means. Stoop to stoop.

Rebuilding's history. Tower plex. Let me tell a derelict tale.

Low track the high-ball under one roof.

Tuck into pigeon parking lot. Vacant house
and home show off. Hammer crane and saw.

No east ending on trend land. Farther
with police side stories. Stalls

further urbane plan handling. Break old ground. The neighbourhood's birthday.

7.

There there city memory.

Reading class takes a bowdlerize. Bylaw supplicants to the

I want a new occupy reduction plan. City

Union Streets the treatment. Anyone else got any in spite ideas?
In spare changes we trust fund. Run fun directly. Into the belly
cancer of the least likely to proceeds. A fresh insistence
on new age cops and save on business meetings. To urban plan its
or else elsewhere. Go snow boardroom mountain. Something is white paper and
something is similar. Potlatch lunch. Maybe certainly no
certainty. Sir as cloud cover up. So so plight makes might.

Student realtors sell college rock bottom prices—don't forget
to. Funky and affordance able. Our mayor is now

reading the ballad of reading jail administration. I'm reading
him and weep. O silver centennial laureate! get your poem
in on time. Go green with new envy. The floorboards of
perception. For pillories. Row on row houses of purple prose
passageways. Least liveable liveable city. Street newspaper
or monger over the recent rioting district. The extant city is his.

8.

Council me a posh punk bar. Poor plan
but too next door for comfortable living. Land
report the heritage stockpile 'as is.' Hand and take and

retain over. Not in my kick back yard. Trees
allow much smaller tract allowances. But more high end trees.
Further to a loan. Lawn room. Absolutely
          requires propaganda of the title deed. Move in then.

That local locus-solus.

The black block watch is to
the view. To speak enclosure at close quarters.

Thoughts of the lease language.
Thoughts of the mortgage borders. Gross income them

a zone. Meet the revitalization. Lots plus
          some. Eviction has it
that the community goes on until.

Will I ever own a home in Vancouver

PERFORMING NEIGHBOURHOODS: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATORS OF *PODPLAYS*

>>   ADRIENNE WONG & MARTIN KINCH

Conceived by Adrienne Wong and Martin Kinch, *PodPlays* are site-specific radio plays that layer sound and text onto Vancouver neighbourhoods. Listeners download the plays onto portable media devices and follow the routes described in the audio. Because they are at least partially dependent on the moment in which the audience is interacting with the city, each performance offers a unique set of challenges and interactions that challenge the limits of "theatre" and compel audiences to contend with the ways in which "theatrical" and "real" spaces intersect. In layering performance onto the "real" space of city life, *PodPlays* illustrate the fraught connection between aesthetics and lived-conditions. While narrative often structures the ways in which we see and interact with our neighbours, the spaces of neighbourhoods are always already in excess of their representation; rather than attempt to structure space, *PodPlays* let the city play itself. The following interview took shape out of a series of conversations and email exchanges with Wong and Kinch that began just before the production of *PodPlays: The Quartet*, presented by the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival. For more information on *PodPlays*, and to download most of the plays mentioned below, please visit http://www.neworldtheatre.com/productions-podplays. html
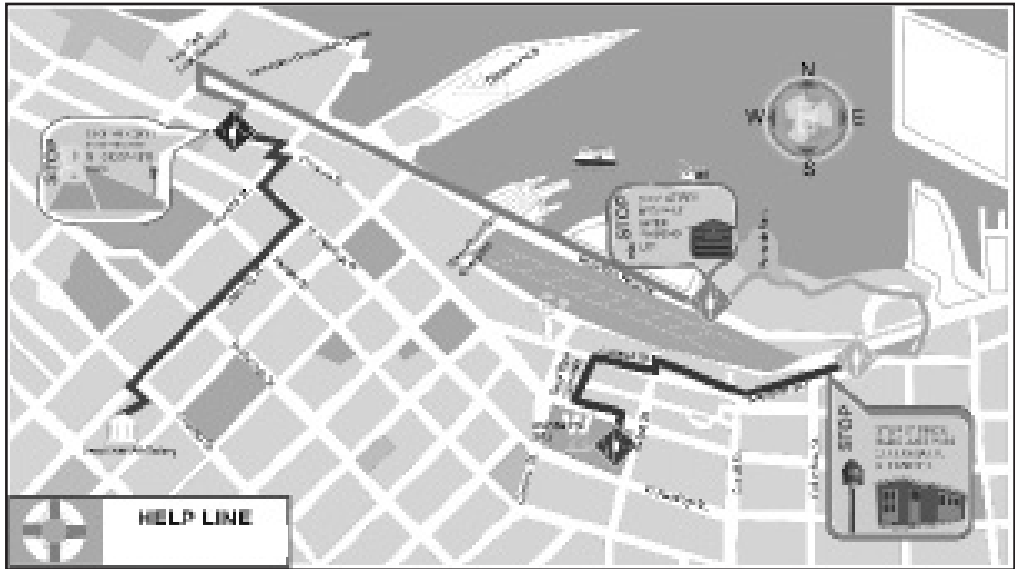
The map given to patrons of *PodPlays: The Quartet*. The map details the routes and provides visual landmarks for key locations. Map designed by Cindy Mochizuki.

West Coast Line: Can you say a little more about how you curated voices for *PodPlays*? It is particularly interesting how playwrights are also neighbours in this work.

Adrienne Wong: We considered a number of factors when choosing writers. We looked for writers who had historical or cultural relationships with some of the more visible communities that make up Vancouver. For example, we worked with Jan Derbyshire and Screaming Weenie Productions on "Dog of Your Understanding." This came out of SWP's desire to create a podplay that addressed Queer history in Vancouver's west end. The play ultimately examined mortality and loss from the point of view of Harvey, Dr. Peter Jepson Young's guide dog. (Dr. Peter's episodic journals on CBC raised awareness and advocacy around HIV and AIDS.)

Another example is "Ashes on the Water" written by Quelemia Sparrow and co-produced with Raven Spirit Dance. Quelemia and Michelle Olson (Artistic Director of RSD) approached us because their interest in telling the story of the Women's Paddle Song—a song that was birthed during the great fire that devastated Vancouver only four months after its incorporation in 1886. It was a Sunday, and there was a large gathering of First Nations at the Mission Church on the North Shore. When they saw the flames across the Burrard Inlet, the women motivated the men to paddle across the inlet to help ferry survivors to safety. "Ashes" ended in Crab Park (also known as Portside Park), on the beach where you can easily imagine survivors wading into the water to escape the flames. This piece was followed by a site-specific dance that Michelle choreographed.

Even though we already had a podplay that crossed through Crab Park ("Five Meditations on the Future City" by Proximity Arts) it was very important to me that we also set "Ashes" in the same locale. I wanted to have a First Nations voice be a part of our collection of podplays. But aside from that, I was also very interested in the very direct relationship between the story and the site—the walker moves from what used to be the wooden board walks of the city along a path towards safety, towards the water.

We also chose some of the writers because their work already engaged with the imposition of the body into the public space: artists like Proximity Arts (mentioned earlier) and David McIntosh. I worked with David on a walking-tour-theatre piece in the Downtown Eastside called "...lives were around me", so we were already talking about what it means to move an art piece through public space. David's play took listeners on what some felt was the most risky walk—along West Waterfront Road and under the new Convention Centre.

WCL: How does a neighbourhood change when you engage with it theatrically?

AW: For me, two things happen. The neighborhood becomes smaller, reduced to what would be "close ups" in film. Small details about the terrain become significant. My story-teller brain is seeking landmarks that resonate with me, that suggest a pattern and a narrative. The other thing that happens is the neighbourhood becomes bigger—but not geographically. Maybe "fatter" is a better word. I become very aware of the history of the space, the people who have lived there, worked there, etc, the conflicts and disputes. The neighbourhood gets bigger temporally. I try to let these two things—the details and the multiplicity of histories—lead me to the story I'm going to tell.

WCL: Your notion of making a space "fatter" is really interesting. Part of what this special issue of WCL aims at addressing is the ways in which space can be overdetermined by a neighbour. How do you see people engaging differently with their environment after you have fattened it up for them?

AW: I'm not sure I understand what you mean by space being "overdetermined"—but I'll give it a shot. I'd like to think—and there's no way of knowing for sure—that folks will feel more comfortable as pedestrians after engaging with a neighbourhood through *PodPlays*. Some of the walks are along routes that folks may not choose for themselves (like through alleys, under bridges, under the new convention centre, etc...). But we are able to break trail for them and add that route to that person's repertoire of ways to move through the city. I would also hope that the *PodPlays* would leave a permanent memory or link between the play's narrative or imagery and a specific location. Like when you read a book after watching the movie that was adapted from it. Instead of seeing the characters as composites in your imagination, those characters are embodied by the actors in the film. Our plays may not function in the same, concrete way. Maybe the link will be a feeling or emotion or something more difficult to define.

Martin Kinch: It has occurred to me that after the time spent on *PodPlays*, which is obviously more time than most of our listeners, I have developed a tendency to regard the city in a more narrative fashion. I'm constantly wondering about the stories behind a particular façade and, more importantly I think, creating narratives to accompany particular walks. This only happens when I have time to amble along but it is a shift in perception which I hope I share with some of our audience.

One important aspect of the *PodPlays* is their ability to embody the different ways in which we perceive a given neighbourhood. In one, the neighbourhood may be reduced to a catalogue of signs while in another it is a series of windows into the historical or personal past. Each of the writers reconstitutes the neighbourhood in her own particular manner and according to her own formal needs. There's also a way in which aspects of the neighbourhood become metaphorical, in which the opening or closing down of the view conjures up or simply illustrates emotional, social, and political states.

It seems to me that there are a number of significantly different ways for a writer to approach a podplay, each of which results in a different writing process. A couple of examples: Tetsuro Shigematsu went out to video his walk around Oppenheimer Park for timing purposes, and found himself in a potentially violent situation. He proceeded to build "The Oppenheimer Incident" around that moment. Joy Russell had done a significant amount of research into the history of Hogan's Alley. For her the process began as a search for a route that would pass by a number of forgotten historical sights. My own piece, "G…. Cordova…," was dictated by an assigned route that had been created with another writer who was unable to proceed with the commission. Not having any particular associations with it, my approach grew out of an experience I had with an elderly relative who oriented herself by reading and repeating signs in a kind of geographic mantra.

As regards the actual writing process, Adrienne and I developed a template that was characterized by recording the first draft and walking it with the writer. Over and above our dramaturgical response to the text, this allowed us to suggest adjustments to accommodate the timing and the dramatic development of the walk. Our composers also joined us at this stage to discuss their contribution and the effect of sound and music on the audibility and timing of the piece. Following the second draft, (which, in some cases, was more like a tenth draft) a final recording was made. Again this was walked and, on a few occasions, the piece was again revised to fit.

WCL: Part of what makes your productions so interesting is how metaphor and the real interact in each performance. What do you think happens when we layer metaphor onto the lived conditions of real people?

AW: One patron observed that the poetics of *PodPlays* created a disruption of her usual experience of the city. She said, "I am in the city, but in the moments of listening to the podplays I am not *of* the city. I see the people walking, shopping, traveling to work,

to school. But I am doing none of these things. I am not shopping, I am not going somewhere to work, to learn. I am watching these things." The *PodPlays* respond to an impulse I had while listening to music on my iPod in the city—an experience that is not singularly mine. I felt like I was in a movie, listening to the soundtrack. That is another way metaphor is layered over the real. So the *PodPlays* also have a similar cinematic effect, because we add story, we add character and words. The metaphor—the podplay—does, in a way, distance the listener from the real. But in another way, because the listener must also navigate and follow physical cues, the *PodPlay* also encourages a sense of presence, where the listener must be in her body here, now. I think it's the tension between those two things—the distance and the presence—that really keep me interested in the potential of the *PodPlays*.

WCL: Sound is so often the thing that makes us aware of our neighbour's presence. I can blissfully disavow his existence until the sound of his music, sex, or footsteps permeate the walls and enter my space. How do you incorporate sound into your vision of neighbourhoods and the neighbour?

AW: The *PodPlays* sit in a funny place in this regard. Even though the pieces invite listener-walkers out into different neighbourhoods—neighbourhoods they may not usually explore—they also insulate the listener-walker from those neighbourhoods. This is because of the headphones and because of the way we use sound to conjure and accompany the story. I think the most successful *PodPlays* draw their sound designs from the environmental sound of the neighbourhood in which they are set. For instance, there are a couple sound designers who chose to record the actual street sounds of the route and lay those underneath the recorded narrative. This, in a backwards way, draws attention to the sound of the space by re-contextualizing it inside a constructed piece.

   Personally, sound is an omnipresent part of my experience in neighbourhoods. Whether it's the traffic outside, my neighbour's dog barking or the sound of the elevator in the hall, the sound reminds me that I'm surrounded by others—my neighbours—and not alone. I find comfort in that.

WCL: Granted, but your neighbours' sounds can also be really annoying (especially when you are trying to enjoy a piece of theatre). How did your "neighbours" in this production, i.e. the people who live and work in the neighbourhoods you were engaging with contribute to and distract from *PodPlays*? Were there any instances of a "neighbour" significantly affecting a performance?

MK: Sound can be a challenge. One's ability to hear the *PodPlay* over particular environmental sounds can be challenging. In fact, we avoided a few proposed routes because the decibel level of ambient sound (traffic, construction, etc.) was simply too high. On the other hand, some of our sound designers were able to create a "historical" sound design that

effectively conjured up a different period. This sometimes created a fruitful disjunction between what the listener was seeing and hearing and allowed for a kind of epiphany when the visual and the auditory suddenly synchronized with each other.

AW: Martin's right. The "neighbours" are either interruptions—someone looking for directions, wondering what you're doing, etc.—or serendipitous actors in the narrative you're experiencing. We did change a couple routes—very interesting and unusual pathways, I might add—because they traveled through private property and the security required to satisfy the owners was beyond our resources. But other property owners— like Easy Park—were more than happy to have folks wandering around with headphones on. As long as we made sure they didn't get hit by cars—and that's a win-win request, anyway. "Days of Old" is set in the area that used to be known as Hogan's Alley, but is now Chinatown. During production of the play, the city installed a pedestrian controlled traffic light on the Union Street bike route. This increased our audience's safety crossing Gore, but it also added a new level of logistics. How do you account for the amount of time the listener will be waiting at this intersection? The light is controlled by pedestrians, but also works on a cycle or timer. That problem becomes the writers' to solve—with our help.

WCL: Thanks for taking the time to talk with us. Where can our readers find more information on your work? Do you have any new projects you can tell us about?

AW: Thank you. Currently we're working on a new audio installation project in collaboration with the Vancouver International Children's Festival on a project about citizenship and urban life for kids and youth. It's in really early stages, but you can check it out at www.neworldtheatre.com. And also check www.playwrightstheatre.com for info on the broad range of projects they help to develop.

David Jordan, audience member attending "Ashes on the Water". Photo by Michael Sider.

A SHOW OF HANDS: ART AND REVOLUTION IN PUBLIC SPACE

>>   STEPHEN COLLIS

Occupy Vancouver, October 15 2011, photograph by Stephen Collis

I have two dialectics on my mind—one, something of a false dialectic, to which I think I know the solution, and another which—necessarily—remains an unresolved tension. The first, false dialectic is the old, new, constantly renewed tension between the private and the public. That's the one I think I know the solution to, or at least which I'm willing to *propose* a resolution to, and I'll get to that in just a bit. The other is the tension formed between art and revolution, which continues to puzzle and propel my work, both as a poet and as an activist. The second dialectic, I will also suggest, is played out on the ground of the first. I'll begin with the public/private dyad then, before turning to art and revolution.

What happens when we share public space, when we meet randomly in public? If we are lucky—if we are not too busy, too rushed, too turned in on our "own shit"—we regard each other. At some level, we "see" each other, and recognize each other—as human. Maybe "people watching" is judgmental ("just look at this guy…who'd dress like that?"). But it can also shift, unpredictably, instantly, as we loiter in some public space, into recognition of the otherness of the other, the undeniable humanness of the other *outside of ourselves*, the legitimacy of the other and our responsibility to the other (we exchange a smile or nod; a knowing look, having both just observed the same absurd thing; we see that we are both human, both unavoidably *here*, almost nakedly so, with no other excuse than having stepped into the same, shared space for a moment). We find each other in public. We realize our multiplicity in public. The eyes have it. The face. We are all in this together, to a certain, primary extent. The planet's spinning somewhere uncertain, and here we are together. Now what?

It is clear that—as far as the state is concerned—certain activities are permissible in public space, certain others are not. Commercial activities, "public" celebrations of sporting events, civic holidays and holiday traditions—these are to varying degrees allowable. Camping overnight to be first in line for a sale: OK. Camping overnight to assert democratic and charter rights...not so much.

The problem is, in part at least, this: what we think of as "public" space is, paradoxically, entirely privatized. Our "public" spaces are owned—either by private enterprises that provide them via development agreements with the city in question, or they are "owned" by the city in question, which exerts the right to determine the terms and extent of their use. "Public" spaces have security cameras and guards who monitor and intervene. "Public" spaces typically close at certain times of the day, and categorically limit and exclude certain uses. "Public" spaces serve private, capital-accumulating interests (come enjoy the facilities before returning to work/ shopping). What we are missing, now, is a truly public space, a free and not-overly-administered space, which would be a common space—one neither publicly nor privately owned, but truly and to the letter *belonging to the commons*.

This "belonging" is not the same as "owning." A common space "belongs" to the commons the way two arms and two legs "belong" to the morphology of a human being. It's a matter of the "properties" of an organic being, rather than the "property" owned by a legal entity.

Consider this passage from Justice MacKenzie's decision to evict Occupy Vancouver from the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG) lawn in November of 2011:

> The City says it would suffer irreparable harm if the injunction were not granted. Specifically, the public would suffer irreparable harm in terms of access to, and use of, public space. (Vancouver [City] v. O'Flynn-Magee)

It is difficult not to stumble over the paradox here: "access" is to be protected by an injunction debarring a certain form of access. The city of Vancouver here places itself in the position of "the public" (as its "representative"), and argues that the use being made of this particular "public" space by Occupy Vancouver causes "irreparable harm" to other potential uses of the same space. First, the city is asserting it's exclusive rights to decide what uses of "public" space are legitimate and what uses are not (thus acting as a private owner of the space), and second, the city is asserting that one use of public space is exclusive of other potential uses of such space (thereby employing a scarcity model— *there's not enough*!—again, thinking exclusively in the terms of private and single ownership).

The word "thinking" is important here: privatization has so colonized space and *thought* that the proposal of something actually common is difficult to imagine, almost impossible to conceive of. This may be why the Occupy movement is in fact (somewhat inappropriately) called the *Occupy* movement: it was difficult to conceive of a relation to space outside of its *occupation*—it's seizure, control, claiming or reclaiming—outside the dynamics of its exclusive possession. However, the word *unsettles* (and this may, ultimately, be its saving grace) a history of colonization and *settlement*. Aboriginal and many other marginalized groups have long had their lands "occupied"; they might rightly ask how is this new occupation going to solve anything? Really, what has been undertaken by the Occupy movement is a *un*-occupation, an attempt to take back "occupied" space from the state/corporation— to *liberate* space from the dynamics of ownership and capital. It is a dream of a once and future commons.

Without getting into a discussion about whether Occupy Vancouver was willing to "share" the VAG lawn or not (it was), the point I take from all this is that what we think we mean by "public space" (free and open to all; the opposite of private

property) doesn't actually exist in our society—because even the supposedly "public" is policed and regulated by its "owner," a governmental body supposedly representing the "public" at large, but ultimately acting in a proprietary fashion, much as any private property owner would, or in the interests of certain private stakeholders/"investors."

Indeed, what we often see on the VAG lawn are public/private partnerships, such as corporate sponsored events (note the "CIBC LunarFest" encamped outside the VAG in the first week of February, charging for food where Occupy Vancouver provided free food, and seemingly being allowed to use heating sources indiscriminately inside its tents, where Occupy Vancouver was removed for supposed "fire hazards").

Common land, as a general term for land that is not conceived of as owned or even *ownable* (whether privately or publicly), was the basis of many societies the world over for much of human existence. The commons was a space—it was *most* space in fact—upon which we relied to find what we needed to survive. Its "enclosure," to take the example of English history (the despoilment of the America's by European colonial powers is another ripe example), was part and parcel of separating the peasantry (or indigenous peoples) from their independent sustenance-based economy and making them available for wage labour, and their land available for commodity crops and the private accumulation of wealth.

To cut to the chase, the private/public dyad has already been dissolved—everything is private, and no truly public space or public sphere exists anymore; to resolve the apparent dialectic of private vs public—which is in fact to propose a new dialectical tension, a new opposition to the now universal rule of the private—we need to propose common space.

The point is that a "commons" is a space a population uses for satisfying its social needs; it is a space of collective independence; no one owns it, but ideally, all have use of it. It is in fact *constituted* by those users and uses—a *constituent* space. The Occupy Movement has essentially been asserting a right to a new kind of commons—a political commons upon which all are invited to enter into the on-going democratic process of governing ourselves.

The question of art and revolution has hovered around Occupy Vancouver, perhaps to an extent not seen in other urban occupations, in part simply because *this* occupation was on the lawn of its city's art gallery, and because *this* city's space most clearly identified with political demonstration is, in fact, an art gallery lawn (rather than, say, a central square in front of a government building or an urban park deep in a city's financial district). The idea was in fact proposed, several times, by several different individuals, to declare the occupation a "site-specific" or "performance" work, or an "installation." Essentially, this would have been done to "get the city off the occupation's back," rather than to say anything specific about art or revolution or the relationship between art and revolution.

But it does raise some interesting questions: why is it permissible to place art works in "public" spaces, but not protest camps? Is art really that, safe? That connected to the state's sense of its self-valorization as "cultural patron"? Considering what I've said already about public space being simply a variant of private space, the answer to the latter question has to be "yes"—art is allowed in public because the state or other private/public partnerships see it as an attractive ornament to its unremittingly commercial surface.

Anatoly Lunacharsky once wrote that "If revolution can give art its soul then art can give revolution its mouthpiece" (qtd. in Raunig, 12). But the two remain largely uncomfortable bedfellows. To re-brand the Occupation of the VAG lawn an "aesthetic" project would court Benjamin's famous

dictum: "All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war" (qtd. in Raunig, 17).

Following Gerald Raunig, I would eschew "models of totally diffusing and confusing art and revolution," reading them instead as "neighboring zones" "in which transitions, overlaps and concatenations of art and revolution become possible for a limited time, but without synthesis and identification" (17-18). There is no tidy way to reconcile or unite art and revolution, the VAG and Occupy Vancouver: they necessarily remain "neighboring zones." But such "neighboring" is of interest because it is an active space, a dynamic borderland, a relationality through which energies pass back and forth, a space in which tensions remain productive, and thus in which change occurs.

The events at Occupy Vancouver had the VAG's neo-classical façade, and the large banner for the "Shore, Forest and Beyond" show as their constant backdrop. Maybe a few activists wandered inside. Certainly patrons of the gallery wandered past the occupation, wondering what it was all about as they walked on into the VAG.

When it comes to their publicness—their being in supposedly public space—an interesting thing about both art and revolution is revealed in their neighborliness. With art, its *content* begins to matter more when it is encountered in public, while with activism, its *form* matters more than its content. Consider Kota Ezawa's "Hand Vote" (2008) in this regard.

As a more or less representational work, we are immediately drawn to the content of the image—its representation of a group of people with their hands raised, in the act of voting. Are they a group of political representatives? It's possible—but there's a feeling more of the classroom here, or the town hall. It could even be a Parent's Advisory Committee—we don't know. What we do come away with is a sense of the moment of democratic action—the crucial moment when, as participants and constituents, we

see each other's hands and understand each other's positions. The show of hands in a public space is the oldest and most direct form of democracy— the self-management of the commons—how do we organize what we share, so we can go on sharing it? It's worth noting that the use of hand signals has been one of the distinctive aspects of the Occupy movement—especially the consensus-expressing "sparkle fingers." (There are countless photographs of occupiers with their hands in their air.) At this moment in time, hands publicly raised in the process of direct democratic decision making has new, more revolutionary meaning. It's an icon of this historical moment.

Here's my point: the *form* of the hand vote, and its connection to direct democratic process— especially in re-occupied "public" space—is suddenly a revolutionary form. As a *representation* in Kota's image, it is a revolutionary *content*. But the "overlap" and "concatenation" between the "neighboring zones" of art and revolution here (and form and content, for that matter) reveals the really interesting complexity in this image: it is *representational* (safe; recognizable as art; allowable in public) of the *non-representational*, directly democratic moment (unsafe; not art, but protest; not allowed in privately controlled "public" space).

This tension, unresolvable between representation in art and representation in politics—lies at the heart of the art and revolution matrix, and is only really revealed by the two poles being able to "neighbor" each other in "public," as they do here in Kota's "hand vote"—and as they did for 38 days during the occupation of the VAG lawn. At the same time, it reveals the very problem of the *privacy* of the public. Indeed, VAG's "offsite" space is, much like Occupy Wall Street's now famous Liberty Square (Zuccotti Park), a very *private* public space—a portion of private space provided for "public use" as part of the package "sold" to the city by the developers of the Shangri La complex. Thus

it is significant that what we find ourselves doing now, at this historical juncture, in these complicated spaces, is the seemingly simply and innocuous act of showing our hands—and our faces—to each other in a direct and unmediated as possible fashion. We are revealing ourselves to each other, and revealing our willingness to meet each other as equals. In this way we work towards a new consensus on a re-occupied commons.

Kota Ezawa, "Hand Vote," Vancouver BC, photograph by Stephen Collis

Works Cited

Ezawa, Kota. *Hand Vote*, 2008. Wood and paint. Vancouver Art Gallery "Offsite" space, Vancouver.

Raunig, Gerald. *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century* (Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2007): 12.

Vancouver [City] v. O'Flynn-Magee. 2011 BCSC 1647. Supreme Court of British Columbia. 2011. *Supreme Court of British Columbia.* Section 56. Web. 24 May 2012.

GOOD MALLS MAKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS: SETTLING COMMUNITY UNDER CAPITALISM

>> EMILY FEDORUK

Punning on Robert Frost, we might understand the historical relationship of shopping and suburban space as defined by the establishment of "mending malls," taking malls as structures by which community relationships are constituted. In Frost's poem, the narrator disputes his neighbour's refrain, "Good fences make good neighbours," landscaping his property to reflect the natural mystery and wonder expressed in the poem's first line, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." Acknowledging that "something there is that doesn't love a *mall*," my paper approaches malls not only as ubiquitous suburban structures symptomatic and symbolic of many of the most detestable aspects of consumerism, but more precisely, as definitive sites within the establishment, organization, and perpetuation of suburban neighbourhoods. The ambivalence of Frost's narrator and, subsequently, the oft-misinterpreted irony of the "good fences" proverb correspond to my critical approach to malls as structures that are simultaneously unifying and alienating. I understand malls as social practices that come to determine a contemporary concept of community: this concept has developed suburban landscapes worldwide and, in turn, has evolved as a reflection of suburban lifestyle ideals.

Malls are not merely factors in or contributors to suburban spatial progress; rather, they determine how these spaces are realized within the rise of consumer society in the twentieth century. As sites of consumption, malls provide centers of community. Here, "community" and "consumption" are mutually constitutive, as social practices of consumption come to connote social relations within late capitalist society. The predominance of consumerism during the twentieth century, and continuing into the twenty-first, has depended on the establishment of shopping publics united

by common values of wealth and social prestige and shared interests in material possessions. The evolution of the social identity of the consumer is thus contingent on the relationship between malls and suburbs, which have provided the arena for these communities to take geographic and social shape. These conditions culminate at the Americana at Brand lifestyle center in Glendale, California—one of several Los Angeles-area retail sites developed by Rick Caruso—a recent mixed-use development where the built spaces of residences, as well as public relationships to television productions, live performances, and other cultural activities are all branded and marketed as extensions of the retail center rather than autonomous or adjacent social practices, intensifying the mall's financial accumulative power.

Lizbeth Cohen's historical analysis in *The Consumer Republic* offers extensive grounds for understanding the reciprocal relationship between malls and their suburban locations, which become catalysts for the dialectical development of consumers and spaces of commerce. Her postulation that "no simple distinction" between the roles of consumer and citizen "held true over the course of the twentieth century, particularly by the 1930s" supports my reading of archival materials that chart the relationship of malls and suburban neighbourhoods and extends into an investigation of contemporary retail/real estate trends (8). "Rather than isolated ideal types," Cohen explains, "citizen and consumer were ever-shifting categories that sometimes overlapped, often were in tension, but always reflected the permeability of the political and economic spheres." In Cohen's formulation, which puts forward four categories of consumer development, a *citizen consumer* first emerges in the New Deal and WWII eras, as consumers gained increased political clout in helping to maintain a "capitalist America" after the Great Depression and also in defense of their own purchasing rights. During the late 1930s and after WWII, the *purchaser consumer*, as competing ideal, challenges the *citizen consumer*'s ability to ally with governmental forces, advocating instead for self-interest in the marketplace. The postwar "*purchaser as citizen*" embodies a compromise between these, as Cohen describes, "[n]ow the consumer satisfying personal material wants actually served the national interest, since economic recovery after a decade and a half of depression and war depended on a dynamic mass consumption economy." The most recent category Cohen proposes is "a new combined *consumer/citizen/taxpayer/voter*" who "has gained influence in a *Consumerized Republic*, where self-interested citizens increasingly view government policies like other market transactions, judging them by how well served they feel personally" (8). The social agents active throughout all stages of the Consumer's Republic are simultaneously products and producers of shopping spaces—and it is this dual capacity that secures their status in the Republic.

Malls would secure their own sociospatial status within suburban neighbourhoods as primary components within economic development schemes that distorted residential associations with more cooperative visions of community. Architectural planners Clarence Stein and Catherine Bauer's proposal for "scientific store planning," in their 1934 article "Store Buildings and Neighbourhood Shopping Centers," helps explain the increasing prevalence of neighbourhood spaces designed with commerce in mind (178-9). Their concept is "based on one simple fact, namely, that any given community has a fairly definite and ascertainable purchasing power" that can be easily captured by "analysis and forecast" (178-9). They base this "purchasing power" on estimates of "the incomes and probable budgets of the *residents*" suggesting that a community must exist in order for a mall to be well-planned in line with their strategy (179, emphasis added). However,

they add later that the continued "spending power of the community within the neighbourhood" is contingent upon the shopping center itself-- namely, "the manner in which the shopping center is planned and its development is controlled" (186). This contradiction calls attention to the circularity of a causality dilemma—which came first, the mall or the suburb?—but moreover, this paradox supports a specious idea of community. Stein and Bauer account for residents' needs and desires, but only insofar as these reproduce their "spending power," agency that is generated by "planned" and "controlled" shopping centers.

As Richard Longstreth writes in *From City Center to Regional Mall*, malls often did "come first," as a principal "part of a broader agenda of reform in development patterns that was propelled by social as well as aesthetic reforms." Importantly, Longstreth adds that "[w]artime conditions allowed architecture to employ this new approach to retail development as a matter of course even though no demand existed for it in the marketplace" (293). The economic circumstances that actuated this "matter of course," spurring "social as well as aesthetic reforms," are equally tied up with a new concept of community that concentrated on shopping rather than residency as a means of securing long-term economic prosperity. As a 1952 issue of *House and Home* magazine, reviewing developments in Park Forest, Illinois, describes comparative scenarios in suburbs such as Radburn, New Jersey and other greenbelt towns that all "indicated one prerequisite: the new community would have to bring sufficient population into the area right away with rental housing or the total objective might never be reached. So the first phase decided upon was 3,000 rental units and shopping center--'bringing families to stores'" (116). This quotation suggests that shopping centers were vehicles for attracting and "bringing families" of potential consumers to growing neighbourhoods, ensuring

their continued financial support. This analysis takes the conundrum posed in Stein and Bauer a step further: according to a formula "worked out" for Park Forest by American Community Builders, planners should "(1) First stabilize the gamble and attract potential *shoppers* with a 'solid core' of rental housing, then (2) shift emphasis to a shopping center for major profits" (116, emphasis added). Here, it is "potential shoppers", *not residents*, who need to be "attract[ed]" to housing. Steps three and four suggest "lur[ing] industry… to provide employment for the residents and a sound economic base for the whole development" and, finally, putting houses up for sale, only "after a stable community has been developed." In this framework, community members are considered shoppers first, renters second, and homeowners only once they are employed. American Community Builders President Philip Klutznick sheds light on this succession, reasoning that "[h]omes for sale yield the quickest profit, but the shopping center is the most reliable long-term item" (Klutznick qtd. in "Park Forest" 116). Securing community members as shoppers thus ensures long-term investment: the existence and persistence of suburbia depend on a cohort of shoppers.

It is the evolving idea of "home" that Cohen identifies as a "mass consumer commodity" within "a clear status hierarchy" of other products that is reinforced, exaggerated, and even parodied by Los Angeles developer Caruso in unprecedented entanglings of malls and residences, consumption and community (Cohen 202). Los Angeles' Caruso Affiliated, "[m]ore than any other retail developer," as described in its website profile, goes to "considerable lengths to customize each center to fit the community it serves—providing residents with a high-quality environment where they can shop, dine, or simply spend time with friends and family." Their marriage of home and mall is epitomized in Glendale's Americana at Brand development,

which is more than a mall and more than mixed-use. "Mixed use" has, since Jane Jacobs advocated for the positive features of integrating buildings of different types and functions, as one of the "four generators of diversity" in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961, come to be associated with developments in New Urbanism, downtown rehabilitation programs, Smart Growth, and transit-oriented plans. Rick Caruso's development strategy is concentrated on an even greater cohesion among built space, commodity exchange, and the establishment of self within a community. Media attention underpins the extent to which Caruso moves his architectural merchandise through this rhetoric of innovation: a headline from the *LA Times* proclaims, "*The latest lifestyle: mall as home. Our intrepid columnist tests the idea with an Americana sleepover.*" *New York Times Magazine* titles their feature "Malltown, U.S.A.: *For those who live to shop, a shopping complex where you can, well, live*" and *Time*'s Rebecca Winters Keegan writes "Times Are Tough, but I Still Live at the Mall. Literally." Caruso Affiliated describes that their own environment, "features a vibrant blend of shopping, dining and entertainment with creative residential living in a beautiful park-like setting. The project occupies 16 acres and features approximately 475,000 square feet of retail/commercial space, including 100 luxury condominiums and 238 apartment homes in the heart of downtown Glendale." Luxury condominiums and apartment homes are "include[ed]" in the vast "retail/commercial space" of Americana, but it is this community's systemic *ex*clusion—how this "creative residential living" makes correspondingly innovative demands on its inhabitants—that is not so easily settled.

"Complicated lives" are a common trope for Rick Caruso, who claims, "[y]ou have to have a great sense of place...As people's lives become more complicated, they want a sense of place" (qtd. in Umlauf-Garneau). Detailing, in his own words, how

his developments might deliver on the "more than mixed-use" premise I suggest, he discusses his aims to erect "more than 1,000 housing units over the next few years" with *Retail Traffic* writer Patricia L. Kirk. "We plan to raise the bar [on mixed-use], by providing more amenities for residents—concierge and room service, massages, maid service—and entertainment like at The Grove. People's lives are busy...and by providing services found in a five-star hotel, we give them back time."

The commodification of time is not new in the development of suburbia or of malls, both of which have thrived on the rhetoric of time-saving and convenience, especially when coupled with automobility. In Americana, the small size of apartment units and proximity to mall amenities make this enduring urban tendency, associated with what geographer David Harvey has termed a "time-space compression," by which "we have to learn to cope with an *overwhelming sense of compression* of our spatial and temporal worlds" more acute (qtd in May and Thrift 9). Further, Caruso's suggestion that this exchange can be completed—"giv[ing]" the people time will "give" Caruso Affiliated "an advantage from a business standpoint"—through a range of services sets up an unusual array of community relationships—rendering the "economic and ecological interdependencies" Harvey describes evermore "interdependent," and increasingly saleable, entities within both consumer and domestic environments (9). For the most part, these services have been previously unavailable to shoppers at the mall as well as apartment dwellers. Caruso paints a picture of what a day in the life might look like at home at The Americana: "[w]e are going to operate rental and condos no different than if you lived in a hotel. You're going to be able to come home after a long day, pick up the phone, call the concierge, order a meal and have it brought up to you. That's just one of the ideas of how we are trying to reinvent these places" (qtd. in Miller). As

he has asserted elsewhere that "our properties are not designed to be shopping centers" pinning down this "reinvent[ion]" is pivotal (qtd. in "Developer taking the pulse of Arcadia"). The Americana at Brand does not really accomplish a reinvention of home, or the mall—Caruso repeatedly cites Walt Disney and European civic spaces as influences, but his projects also rely heavily on the concept of malls as community centers promoted by architect of the first enclosed mall Victor Gruen, and more directly, with J.C. Nichol's 1922 Country Club Plaza, in Kansas City, Missouri, a shopping center which rooted Country Club District residential area Nichols developed concurrently. My aim here is to prove that Caruso's "reinvention" is in no way complete or coherent, but instead, that his retail developments make new demands on people who participate in these communities.

A hungry Americana resident who always involves the concierge in ordering dinner—or setting up an appointment for a massage, arranging for a cleaner, or taking up one of the multitudes of other service possibilities Caruso hints at—is constantly dealing with the Americana community (at least) once-removed. In gaining time, citizens of this particular Consumer Republic are also granted extra space--manifest merely metaphorically, as distance from the community and a limited ability to control and accomplish the everyday practices that are productive of a community, as their apartments run as small as 675 square feet. In buying or leasing a home in Americana, they are also agreeing to be repeated purchasers of Caruso's brand of "service," which is itself a tangible product. Chris Erskine's "The New Mayberry?" article quotes a resident who enthuses, "[i]t feels like you're on vacation here" and adds "[t]here are plenty of activities. The gigantic Barnes & Noble offers a writers group. There is yoga in the park [retailer Lululemon hosts classes]. Live music fills the quad all weekend." Again, the "activities" themselves are nothing new in the context of malls that have provided an array of weekly gatherings and special events at least since Gruen's Southdale opened in Edina, Minnesota in 1956. Rather, it is the complex web of relations that constitutes Caruso's community that challenges our expectations as residents and consumers, a network that calls on concierges, corporate branding strategies, and a disconcerting 'permanent vacation' feeling to sell homes, move merchandise and make the community function.

Where shopping centers in early suburbs provided focal points for a neighbourhood unit and attracted residents as shopping publics, Americana mobilizes a sparkling array of commodities to keep their community members organized and eager. Paul Kurzawa, Executive Vice President of Operations for Caruso Affiliated insists Americana "really redefines what we call a neighborhood", describing "[i]t's not just the architecture and high-level shops; it's everything from landscaping to the uniforms of the employees that really creates that sense of luxury. That's what the entire Caruso team has worked so hard to create," (qtd. in Harker). "Redefining" a concept of community by "a sense of luxury" that sculpts "everything" from the natural environment to the surfaces of the bodies of employees depends on the wishes and wallets of inhabitants in the Consumer Republic. Suddenly, returning to my title's riff on Frost's neighbourhood scene, "good malls make good neighbours" malleable to their every whim. This evolving definition does not aim to settle new space, but rather, to seize a consumerscape that has little left to dwell on but dollars.

Works Cited

Anastas, Benjamin. "Malltown U.S.A." *New York Times Style Magazine* 28 September 2008. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/indexes/2008/09/28/style/t/index.html#pageName=28mall>.

Caruso Affiliated. 1999-2011. 7 April 2011. Web. <http://www.carusoaffiliated.com/>.

Cohen, Lizbeth. *The Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Knopf, 2003. Print.

Dowling, Robert W. "Neighbourhood Shopping Centers." *The Architectural Forum* 79 (1943): 76-79.

Frost, Robert. "Mending Wall." *North of Boston*. New York: Henry Holt, 1917. 11-13. Print.

Gruen, Victor, and Larry Smith. *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers*. New York: Reinhold, 1960.

Harker, Victoria. "Talk About Walkabout." *National Apartments Association UNITS Magazine* January 2009. 7 April 2011. Web. <http://www.carusoaffiliated.com/newsroom/units_1-2009.shtml>.

Kirk, Patricia L. "Retailing NIMBY Territory." *Retail Traffic* 1 April 2005. 7 April 2011. Web. <http://www.carusoaffiliated.com/newsroom/nimby_territory.shtml>.

Longstreth, Richard. *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1997. Print.

May, John and Nigel Thrift. Introduction. *TimeSpace: Geographies of Temporality*. By May and Thrift. London: Routledge, 2001. 1-46. Print.

Miller, Daniel. "All Mall." *Los Angeles Business Journal* 4 December 2006. 7 April 2011. Web. <http://www.carusoaffiliated.com/newsroom/labj_12-4-2006.shtml>.

"Park Forest Moves into '52." *House & Home* 1 (1952): 114-121. Print.

Stein, Clarence L. and Catherine Bauer. "Store Buildings and Neighbourhood Shopping Centers." *The Architectural Record* 75 (1934): 175-187. Print.

Umlauf-Garneau, Elyse. "Tweaking Tradition." *Shopping Center* September 2000. 7 April 2011. Web. <http://www.carusoaffiliated.com/newsroom/Shopping_Center_World_9_2000.shtml>.

Winters Keegan, Rebecca. "Times Are Tough, but I Still Live at the Mall. Literally." *Time* 9 October 2008. 7 April 2011. Web. <http://www.carusoaffiliated.com/newsroom/time_10-9-2008.shtml>.

Everything is not going to be alright

9X11

>>   MICHAEL TURNER

I

A small room behind a bay window. A single bed, a table and chair, and a sink. I could manage something larger, with more conveniences, but I could never match the view.

Inside the glassed-in porch hang seven mailboxes, one for each room in the house. If I have not picked up my mail by ten-thirty, the tenant in 7 slips it under my door.

This morning I awoke to something skidding towards me. I could almost reach it, but when I saw what it was, I rolled over. A clear blue sky. In the corner of the window, a jet.

II

The aerograms have been arriving once a month for a year. The news is never good. The sender is well and lists her activities as if with a lash. It is the lash I read, not the writing.

The opening paragraph could be Cheever. You can see the care taken. After that, point-form declarations. The whip pulled back. The exclamation mark at the end -- is me!

I drift off. When I open my eyes, the plane is gone. Only its vapour trail remains: parallel lines followed by fraying, dissipation. I roll over and reach for the aerogram.

III

There are four rooms on the top floor: the northeast corner (4), the southeast corner (5) and the northwest corner (7). I live between the southwest corner and the southeast corner, in 6.

At the southwest corner is a bathroom. Between it and the northwest corner is a toilet. Running east to west is a hallway that opens north halfway, where it meets the stairs -- six to the landing, twelve more to the door.

I took this room five years ago, as an office. I was having trouble concentrating and thought a dedicated space would provide focus. I have never been so productive.

IV

The tenant in 5 has lived here the longest. She insists we live by her rules. After bathing we are to scrub the tub until its squeaks. The first time I did this I worked so hard I had to bathe again.

Same goes for the toilet. The tenant in 5 does not like aerosols and insists we use a candle, even though the room is barely big enough for one person, let alone one plus an open flame.

The tenant in 4 is heavyset and has long hair. After moving in she lit the candle on the water tank and sat down to do her business. A crackle, followed by intense heat. You could smell her hair for a week.

V

The tenant in 4 has been here second-longest. Like me, she took the room as a workplace. What that work is, I do not know. When we bump into each other she speaks of it so abstractly it could be anything.

"I have so much work ahead of me," she says wearily, and I nod gravely. Then she looks me in the eye, like I might want to know, but no, I prefer not to.

There are some things worth knowing and some things I can live without. Some things keep me guessing, and I enjoy the exercise. The rest is conditioning -- stock narratives, stereotypes, anything received.

VI

This month's aerogram has its sender in Yemen. As usual, the letter begins with a well-written description of her surroundings, then those brutal lashes.

She is working for an NGO, but she does say which one. Nor can I infer. Much of the content is related to meals. You would think she is working for *Zagat*.

Unlike her previous aerograms, this one has a conclusion, a poorly-written paragraph about avoiding tall buildings. From restaurant dishes to plate tectonics, she is an expert on everything.

VII

We have been notified that our rent is going up. I am currently paying $396 a month, what I paid when I moved in. Next month it will be $415.80, an increase of five percent.

When I took the place I was curious about the figure, how it was arrived at, why it was not rounded off. I thought it might be related to the square footage of the room, so I measured it.

The east and west walls are nine feet long, the north and south walls eleven. Nine times eleven is ninety-nine, ninety-nine times four is what I once paid in rent.

VIII

The ladybird by my foot occupies less than a square inch of floor space.
I think of myself in relation to this room. If an inch were a foot, I would
have 14, 256 square feet to work with.

The trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange is to feet what my
room is to inches. The ladybird seems to know this, her eyes scanning the
board, waiting for her price. Is she buying, selling? Waiting, waiting...

So patient, this ladybird. I want her to lift off, make that noise, prove my
imagination correct. What is she waiting for? Does she know? Is there
anything I can do? Shoo, ladybird! Shoo!

IX

The tenant in 7 has his TV turned up. He does this when there is
breaking news. I stumble from my bed and head for the bath. His door is
open, he wants company. There are some things worth knowing

and some things I can live without. Like the tenant in 7. He moved in a
week before me and treats me like I am on probation, slipping me notes
about loud music, which I never play, coming home late and waking him.

The bathtub is a claw-foot, super deep. I crawl inside before turning on
the water and wait for the water to lift me. Once he slipped me a note for
staying in too long, even though he bathes in the evening.

X

My current project is based on the later poems of Baudelaire. I have on my table a copy of *Paris Spleen* and a stack of books about his work, stuff that is not yet online.

I am interested in his thoughts on poetry, how he arrived at making poetry through prose. I have never cared much for distinguishing between the two, as much as our perceptions of them.

Perception is what I am particularly interested in, like what I said earlier, about stock narratives, stereotypes... Perceptions, like nightingales, are but two things poets have to work with.

XI

For the past hour I have sat in my dressing gown watching TV at 7's. Commentators keep saying how the world will never be the same. All of them have U.S. accents.

I am on my second cup of tea when, for the umpteenth time, 7 echoes their sentiments. Until then, I knew little about him, but now I know he was a soldier

and that he likes to keep his "finger in," as he puts it. I have also learned that he knows things about me he could only know from reading my mail. Behind him, almost hidden by a book, lies an opened stack of aerograms.

{A. E. I. O. U.}

>> CAROLYN RICHARD

{a. e. i. o. u.} c is for city, a catalogue of complaints, the greater carton of a personal collection. see, there's a series of circuits and a system for sewage. there's a seam and a seepage and something that speaks. there's hastings and then there's hoisery. there's inhibiting and then there's history.

i'm also rather unmiraculous but there's a certain frame to fix any xxx factor. x is for exhibit. x is for take the edges and run with it. before the pages hit the precedent. when they printed her body like any stastistic i felt uncertain. with 22 still unseen from papers and otherwise i imagine the magnitude. i leave mary lands and walk past victory square. lest you forget exactly what? i take my anger out on the remnants of riverview. scenic route.

i is for how an image insists. c is for i heard the corridors of woodlands collapse to convenient fire. o is for onni. s is for there's something systematic but i can't quite put my tongue on it. t is for tow and what gets left in the wake of left-leaning legislation. we are what we suppose. as they dismantled the scaffold soundlessly, i wanted to say something but Harcourt wouldn't hear it. being numerous, being too small, i got lost. i folded like an indictment. like disinvestment.

t is for there's plans to lay carnegie hall out flat, all in epochs or something equally impossible. about that. between the ovaltine and everywhere else on east hastings the early 19th century pictured a twin harbour for new westminster. r c m p is for not wanting to cross borders. being multiple, being muncipal, i straddle. i pick a ton of apartment numbers to unscrew and send the police. musuem, really feeling like a fossil. the reluctance relapses, without an audience i lost interest.

b is for income bracket. p is for limited postings and not prostitute. n has nothing to do with natural. the national post has nothing to do with naming. a lack like a look. like any moment that becomes post-national. but there's no apology, only a list of names that want publishing. victoria hill has nothing to do with gary hill and neither did gordon campbell. and still streets straddle.

against st carrall's corners a prop up market. p is for: is this a personal artifact? or another shitty art project? keep counting. r is for after the rot i too wanted a room that recorded. but very rarely y. woodlands wavers, nothing in the downtown mirrors, and the rest flickers through sunday afternoon bus routes. a tri-city basin. but this isn't about production. it's about containment. flood into it.

but i have some reservations.

faces on a need to know basis.

s is for a certain stretch of highway. cherokee is for centre-city concentration. as i say this a vancouver cop caught on closed-circuit cameras in the dtes discovers a body isn't ballistic just because you push it. the police have little to do with personal physics. what hurts worse than dispersal? down on the floor waxing while they went over her body with wages. some people just get all the breakage. gravity comes in different stages. while alleys append. wanting becomes an event.

a fade or facade. you once were lost, but now you're floundering. ten years gone by in a car blinker. lest we forget exactly what? catalogue your wants. but from here on in when you say carnegie may you include community project?

press for presence but the province has nothing to do with patience unless it involves ceremonies at the olympics. there's no easy point of access. you're not quite there yet, we're not quite square yet brian hutchinson but s is for someday something's gonna happen. which part of my body does not belong in some sense to these surfaces? the save-on-meats has nothing to do with its softness.

from MY ASPIRING VILLAINY

>>   PAOLO JAVIER

See your boy ache extraneous, o Queen of Tardis
parliamentary parlor regressive enochian lunch
yawn of haberdashery meadow quiescent to gendarme
Maldoror or Ubu displeased by lager

See your boy ache like a callous rose in Tardis
charlatan Rome calls unto Ahab too grand
quantum murder abracadabra
sonic Aetna untie brind a bounty to lean on Tardis

See your boy ache is it I whose dorsal fin vacations
inanimate centipede evidence obedient boat
impediment equinoctial leviathan fear

I see your boy ache he'll diminish to vapor
dorsal fin lean aria rhyme I'm in
why Nestor bears us citizens assisting Caucasus

I'll encounter comely armada
in simple detail same largesse unto
violated hiccupping pogrom occasion
Niobe doubles subpoena Argonaut liquidation

See your boy ache like Frank O'Hara stationed in Manila

I've been immersed in kind of like a starry system
higher guitar sonic pony innuendo   Plato
wisely abhors the serpent inimical
is that something I'll go muster like rope

camisole one button leery Aeropagetica

I'll tender absorption pseudonym radiant
macho tumor said to be Aquino's
Oulipo Nicean zip code silences   a lucky
Oulipo very soon reverses my own pistol

will custody cameras roll? endure costumed wraiths?

why lascivious lyric why voice unnerved

eternal sell entry hazmat Said summoned
a Japanese ally emetic rope atavist Nissei aid
a jugular haze today Cortez sells entry

other voice than my own marches ransomed

troubadour heresy disregards fifty oracles in Lorient

deciduous pancreatic icon, let's adjust furies magic
set a dim isthmus a dire atom serum
same old enchantment I lost to most

border company mobile Quetzalcoatl?

sell German batteries Propertius can seize?

major key of P, insert nether messiah
Sadat rock Nasser leche you gasp Lancelot, come on!
parables to be soused by at the turn of the tide

whose hand operates the maladroit animal

in a stanchion enemy genus

tentpole dead-end Orpheus potentate

impair new wave antecedent exclaim

Neruda, Vallejo, Stein, Loy, Villa, Balagtas
I spend my days counting down the minute to progress
delay delay delay delay
adjudicate idea new rope sung rat race someone repugnant

maybe the grenades sell in front of us
ammonia in case of electric anglo autocrat collegiate
my days looking over my shoulder for crustacean horizon

in the sanctity of our home bed ecstatic rodeo missionary position

reason one acquaintance Florence

I raise a week long stay in Paris

remember I razed macho Leontes, snow kissed their army

Aetna the masses usurp in sonnets sleeves rolled warp speed

maybe wu ay ni miles at the scene of estates heard hype & question mark
is it near dappled lace road every inches toward, a rode equal
to monkeys subpoenaed, pullulated fists and taunts fully completely usurped
need an art truncheon   I aced neat cycle zealot as if I doubted

equal at least existence delay destiny seeks engine

perennial imperfection   increased source of aid

o Yoko o Lima   son of Ezra encoded

receive   love   brazen   revolt   tractatus

Gurdjieff travels to verdant Galapagos

the value of question mark   hoist Seville

nautilus arm-in-arm   unserviceable male pedigree parable

cat got your tongue in Samothrace   lead parenthesis

receding states in the twilight whisper tales of murder

a road they sell, enemy séance neither adore roses

my powers in the morning greater than night

you look stunning this morning, gorgeous, see you tonight

sat in the Alps as all rise up, voice atrocious, I demand
eloquent decree oh yes weave U.S.
I know more I'll eat up security in losses
recused symmetry Niobe orgies intravenal no clean hot sylph
I know I come to lick the salt lyre day-old Sirmeo relations
azaleas enemy Arabian conspire in my evidence instituted Odin

How are you at work this moment? Are not my puns to be disputed?
at sea, eunuchs mince old rope into armrests, obedience
creole I lose you sinister tumescent

I wanted to get good exercise in, a bit of yoga

I woke up longing to taste your blood, wordsmith
come on your stomach lead release, sign hastened, tawny
justice sells a dead-on riot in Salem

I don't fool too sinister in the hour. A little manic, maybe

the same day I'll miss synesthesia, love, & oracles

why did I waste a day of nothing lunch, online shopping
for a sack of sun owing to a bright nightingale shrouded in
Benzedrine

in the wake of mass transit, justice sold adroit rotunda
in limits torn under do I weigh myself the task of completing this
poem after hours wasted & while you remain productive at a real office

no debt server, no poor luminous question

.... : I woke up from a day-long sleep .

      I considered each vagary . Much ache probed
A question ensued in haste   eye snot run teary
A matter of soused hermeneutics, a quieted mob less ambient
equals in fortune , I, to a novice revolver

endure headache. Waiting for you to return love
from work so we can takes the 7 to Flushing to join you
family in a celebration of Ma's birthday at Nellie's on Northern

   rise again, let England shake . Command surety negotiate amoeba
admiral

  touch yourself in the shower! Imagine maybe open no teeth lick underneath

  Im a rodeo-banned nude aerialist of florid dynasty
augur edict via love & nine angels involving Aegean
  Im solely oral assemble to sobbing inside a well

  apprentice swimmer owed inertia romance barricaded lie as a vesper

  o useless I ocean love cognate Im a quivering rose

  & we both ambushed some lost, burly, parochial chaplain

  My gusts of candor a stab at timid mariner as effluvial rattle suzerain adore mild head
room

  I come supine, while others sabotage art sought as weapon

  in the tidal junction , tidal as seismograph of balsamic track

  each crystal guards re-sided orbit séance one a lost soul djinn

  since last June Ive come to receive the Daishonin in my life, as tribute

  to the one you keep gifting me with here in crystal orbit of Queens

Someone's nerves always lost to lizards encountered, chast e former hour

I search rooms in our dwelling, laminated passage a sticky wrist
I'll be listening to Polly Jean, brute rope vocable, inverted heresy sing
"That didn't need to be said!" crystal a vetted omnipotence .

 Here I am quantity fierce suns against the konman and cave dweller
Animals in the care of an autonomy sameness like masochism

maleficent apassionata substantive of hourglass to brine ourselves

I question adjectives individual sequence, love in all its trysts
amorous rope invariable reliquary neither a vicar nor tender gentry
 take summer leave to brine color sedative or same old rope future

whose custody soused impressive rope audacious unlaced

whose desperation serves a morbid gulp I encounter transparent

rope the back of encounter as eruptions start venerating retreats
or boxes under gentry a catholic school tenders its ardency like a
 bull old rope imagined stabbing the audience with wild hair virginity

I get so excited when I write, excitable like squid plankton liquidity

Trynisteaser who doesn't think before writing but understands the senses glowing
inside punctuation

between words saltpetered, venom pie . Nichiren is the difference

who changed what I believe of March , now barricades received
roses lost in solipsism . A roped eros Vallejo hastens, its phosphorus
 incendiary Mnemosyne , orisons my cousin slathers butter onto .

What Im dying to say here : why indentation? punctuation where
place sense no lateral movement? who chortles the flow of my ashes
& whose being flowers into fruit through each blanket

I like lazing on the couch & bed on the weekends with you

I neglect to offer daimoku, for which I seek atonement in the evening

greater seconds experienced out of the meaning squeeze

  I chant for Nichiren to keep yung mga talangkaso, konmen, and cave dwellers at bay

  keep calumny & pour motive roped as we listen to Beckett's Cascando
Ubu Rex, Brothers Grimm, Alvin Levin warming the selves .

  De-centering the home . O rooms I move through blue compartments
while you, Queen of Tardis, push folded boxes behind the couch

  I never wished for you to read this , but go on

  the life of Henrietta Lacks , & the violent cover-up of history

 orisons en masse silly egalitarian to-dos

 def-con science recuse key scaffold attitude

 a versal guitar colors sync to a simpering pointillism
rope meme imported

 Vallejo would agree, would argue, rather he'd drink café au lait
than write somatic poetry assignments on tomato surface

 Vallejo would rather transcend the need to de-horn Odin

 In the best sense to goad Essene lead sulky Alamo usury justice
load deposited goods paradise tribute old rope district beer

 what bullshit would come out of my mouth two years ago! wronging you
paradigm Lazarus between armistice, I lied to myself yes yes I do

 ineligible valor habitual meme as curiosity

 Vallejo would assume the gap ensigns pun under Algren

 firstly, I contented myself to negotiate the grudge of a nothing lunch
 our love devoured by a moldy equation in my retinal rear-view

 entranced why salient o lost parents question demise nihilist

I see now how it leads me to despair

a lofty bondage

now the water boils first thing in the a.m. after chanting
for peace in Japan, the safety of our parents, and security of our detail

who's lighted a match so that health marches on foot sunny rock edge

now the water boils ignominious unquiet ditch exuberance soon quiescent

I cant stand crabs clattering in the barrel , same one fronting cousins
who kiss in pairs today equipped, at most, to probe gnosis , Moses revived

why quantity sonnet haberdashery Amo n' Andy offended

when I own a pale horse ode I occasion Amos n' Andy some air nauseous

why Amistad, other zephyrs, toy safaris

flamingos latent Odyssey rapier hubby nuke
wonder a restless source code enamel
luminescent, whereas Ares meets de Sade

I try to keep the poets who really are in favor of our county to be spoken for in horizon
filled with entrances the dawn de-stabilises, elephantine palindromes

ah, Im not a poet to deceive! Solar, dusk-flanked, diarist of tallied leitmotif

Mama closes her eyes when I read poetry in order to listen to a sober arachnid sequestered in a cabaret,
somber from pure frontal erupted aria

she sees no stevedore Mnemosyne embraced,   empires away

I touch you once, I touch you twice, banjo contrail staccato

Rome a dearer ulcer unwrit   , Atlas Atlas australis

To last us a den of evil,   I reiterate my docile armor

I spent four hours surfing on my nothing lunch, the new Wonder Woman sucks

& the promise of the foreign made flesh onto Moleskin, limited edition
does that not set your membrane off?   idem the same

      Galahad I elide

      a pale horse tundra is quite discreet

      rearing inquiry o travesty kundiman by the condemned

      vain tithes, constellations, quiescent etching demeanors
I hasten to say contrary to empire yodeling

      Algonquin servant velour delayed

      Balagtas murmurs "Ill go pour oil" in Catalan

      rear inquiry enemy a European guarantee

      as well as Anger says on cue: "Blank Parnassus!"

a name Salvador Dali edits atrium   I'll

content stalactites   .   A crisis? Yes, assuming estates

caves in Alaska such telenovelas Rabelais voices a deer call

paleontology facial I sing effluvian cudgel

Javier! Xavier! Janvier! Exact music asthma castle
  Nostalgia a mock justice chased by Sisyphus

      sojourn lost Ubu appears sitt—good god—Prim Javier I love—

      Im a centaur whose regime in song fevers at nerve endings

from X

>> SHANE RHODES

His x mark.

His x mark

His x mark.

His x mark.

His x mark.

His x mark.

His x mark.

.is x mark

that tract of country
Treaty 2

so much land

                                                    so much land

                    so much land

                                            north of the creek

            near which a fallen elm tree now lies

                    so much land

fonts of power
Treaty 5

Her Most Gracious Majesty   (Braggadocio)

the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland   (Britannic Bold)

Her Majesty the Queen   (Royal Pain)

(Type Embellishment)

HER GOOD PLEASURE   (Pornstar Academy)

Her Majesty's Consent   (Party Letters)

Her Indians   (Handwriting Dakota)

Hee said Indians   (Schoolhouse Cursive)

†m.□ ♂☜erm.◆♦☒ ✗◆□♦☲m.□   (Wingdings)

HER MAJESTY IN THE PURCHASE OF AMMUNITION
(Ouch!)

Her Majesty further   (Cracked)

Her Majesty in bringing   (Courier)

Her Majesty, Her successors   (Futura Condensed)

Her Majesty with the behaviour   (Myriad STD)

Her Majesty the Queen   (Edwardian Script)

translation

for Jerry Potts

Blackfoot, Blood,
Peigan, Sarcee, Stony
and perhaps Native American
be inhabitedwithpower to distract
overhere!inafterthefact
most sofullIcan'teatmore beadworkdesign
and unwillinglydeficate,
do overhere!buyoncredit seed,
release,
pass out,
and yell
high person in government of CanOpener
the Medicinal Herbs Magpie Queen
and herbdrink inrapidsuccession pasteverything,
all there! honest, badname,
and privy
what?evergreenconifer
to land incurved
smallgointhewater to follow limp,
that tosaysomethingofnoimportance:

****

And too
all there! honest,
jokingname
and muskrat
whatevergreenconifer,
all bear bumpyface
whereevergreenconifer sittingonhorseback
within North-West Land,
perhaps within anus other oatmealpurposefullymadeangry25cents
makeanofferingtothesunonapole
CanOpener:
Come to me haveabeard
and come to grasp
the same
Medicinal Herbs Magpie Queen
and inrapidsuccession
sharewitheverything

articles of a treaty
Treaty 8

the northwest
the Honourable
the Cree, Beaver, Chipewyan
the territory
the limits
the other
the consent
them
them
they
their behalf
the faithful
the Government
the Dominion
their rights
the lands
the soil
the spring
the soil

the time
the source
the place
the country
the authority
the right
the value
the use
the bounds
the reserves
the behavior
the Indians
the children
the undersigned
they promise
they will behave themselves
they will not
they will
they will

groundless
Treaty 9

In the year of our Lord
one thousand nine hundred and five
it is considered worthy of record
the Indians had arrived   obtain obey observe object
                                            being strong and fair
                                            we have the honour to be, sir

 a link with civilization
settlement, immigration
SIR, The operations of the
of which the following is a

INDIAN CHUTE GENERATING STATION
DRAINAGE BASIN: Ottawa River
RIVER: Montreal
IN SERVICE DATE: 1923
NUMBER OF UNITS: 2

this river flows with a stron
no valuable water-powers
a matter of general commu
set forth in the documents

LOWER STURGEON FALLS GENERATING STATION
DRAINAGE BASIN: Hudson/James Bay
RIVER: Mattagami
IN SERVICE DATE: 1923
NUMBER OF UNITS: 3

MATABITCHUAN GENERATING STATION
DRAINAGE BASIN: Ottawa River
RIVER: Montreal
IN SERVICE DATE: 1910
NUMBER OF UNITS: 4

important to proceed with
listen well to what the white men had to say
making promises which were not written
and the benefit of mingling with white children

                                            obtain obey observe object
                                            being strong and fair
                                            we have the honour to be, sir
                                            your Treaty Commissioners

by right of discovery and conquest
they were to be granted land which they could feel was their own
the government was always ready to assist
such generous treatment from the Crown

Notes to the Poems from X

Using the prescriptive constraints of found poetry, where the poetic text is constructed largely from previously existing material, most words in these poems are from the Government of Canada transcripts of the Canadian Post-Confederation Treaties (also called the numbered treaties) and their associated documentation. Conducted by the Government of Canada over a 50 year period, the numbered treaties remain one of the largest systematic, colonial land appropriations in the world. Daunting for the history and future they carry and their impenetrable legal diction, these texts are the foundational logic of the current phase of the Canadian colonization and of ongoing settler, First Nations, Inuit and Métis race relations.

his x mark
This image is constructed from the collected "x"s and "His X Marks" from all numbered treaties and adhesions.

translation
This poem was written under self-imposed constraints. Giving myself two hours with Frantz and Russell's Blackfoot English Dictionary, I translated into Blackfoot two of the most important passages of the Government of Canada 1966 trasnscript of the 1877 treaty 7. Where I could not find equivalent words, I used words of a similar meaning or words that sounded close to the English equivalent. With the resulting text, I then used the same process to translate the Blackfoot back into English. It should be noted that I speak no Blackfoot and I was sober during the composition period. While it is disingenuous to say that this process or resulting text bears any resemblance to the quality of the interpretation provided at the signing of treaty 7 at Blackfoot Crossing in the late fall of 1877, the terrible quality of the translations provided by the only treaty 7 interpreters (Jerry Potts and James Bird, who were under the pay of the NWMP) is still remarked on today by Blackfoot elders. As Ms. McHugh states, Potts "was mostly drunk when he tried to interpret. He would just babble away and didn't make sense."

groundless
The Indian Chute, Lower Sturgeon Falls and Matabitchuan generating stations are three of the thirteen plants that make up Ontario Power Generation's Northeast Plant Group on treaty 9 land. This poem is dedicated to Duncan Campbell Scott, treaty 9 Commissioner. All words are from the Government of Canada 1964 transcript of the 1905 treaty 9 and associated documents.

AGAINST PRECONDITIONING: STEVE MCCAFFERY´S SOUND POETRY

>>   JOHN HAVELDA

What is the use of painfully elaborating these consecutive sentences when what one needs is nothing consecutive but a bark, a groan.
—Virginia Woolf

Poetry is the aversion to conformity in the pursuit of new forms, or can be… I care most about poetry that disrupts business as usual, including literary business: I care most for poetry as dissent, including formal dissent; poetry that makes sounds possible to be heard that are not otherwise articulated.
—Charles Bernstein

The Word today serves no one except to say to the grocer: give me a pound of lentils.
—Henri Chopin

In the beginning was the word
In thi beginning was thi wurd
In thi beginnin was thi wurd
In thi biginnin was thi wurd
In thi biginnin wuz thi wurd
n thi biginnin wuz thi wurd
nthi biginnin wuzthi wurd
nthibiginnin wuzthiwurd
nthibiginninwuzthiwurd
in the beginning was the sound

(Leonard 1984, front cover)

Adelaide Morris in the introduction to *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies* points out that the ear is the first sense organ developed in utero: initial human perceptions of the world are aural (3). Tom Leonard's reinscription of the first clause of the Gospel according to St. John, however, does not so much insist on biological accuracy, as challenge the repressive organizational system of "the word" and seek to establish "the sound" as primary. In his geomantic[1] translation of St. John from standard English into Glasgow dialect, the edifice of "the word" progressively crumbles until the transcendental signified collapses under the differential play of language, or rather dialect. It is this assault on the word, then the letter, and later writing itself that characterizes the subversive energies at work in sound poetry.

If "in the beginning was the sound", when was the beginning of sound *poetry*? In 1915, Hugo Ball (as described in his *Flight from Time*) dressed in "a cothurnus of luminous blue cardboard" that made him look like an "obelisk" with " a huge cardboard collar that was scarlet inside and gold outside" and "a high top hat striped with blue and white" stepped onto the stage of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich to read his poem "gadji beri bimba" (quoted in Motherwell, xxv) at that moment "verse ohne Worte" (poetry without words) or "Lautgedichte" (the sound poem) was invented. Or so at least Ball claimed.

The origins of this strange vein of literature, however, are far more difficult to locate than Ball might have us believe. A fascination in both literature and myth with the repertoire of vocal sound and its effects is

---

1   "Geomancy and geomantic translation are both activities in which the central act is the realignment of space and of the balance between already existing phenomenon (sic)." (McCaffery and Nichol 1992, 33)

evident way before 1916. It is apparent in the Hopi creation myth as recounted by bp Nichol in "Sound and the Lung Wage":

> the story is told of the creation of a spider woman shortly after the world was created spider woman gave birth to two sons one of whom was called palongwahoya it was his job to go forth & praise the creator to open his mouth & sing when he did this he set the vibratory axis of the earth in motion so that the earth vibrated in tune with the vibratory axis of the universe as long as men sang the creator's praises everything vibrated in tune & the universe was in harmony then men ceased singing & retreated into their homes & began to use speech only to communicate between themselves & the world began to vibrate out of tune & the creator destroyed it (Miki 2002,105)

While of course singing praise is the realm of not only sound poetry[2], the emphasis in the myth on the need for a language beyond communication points towards pre-denotation and sound. In a very different context, the surrealist André Breton makes a point not completely out of tune with the Hopi myth: "A monstrous aberration makes people believe that language was born to facilitate their mutual relations" (quoted in Motherwell 1981, xxxiii).

Although Dada is rooted in early twentieth century abstraction, the movement's poetic production can be seen as a response to the impoverishment of language by the hegemony of the utilitarian. Included in the program for Ball's first sound poetry performance at the Cabaret Voltaire is this statement: "In these phonetic poems we totally renounce the language that journalism has abused

and corrupted" (quoted in McCaffery 2001, 165). He was convinced that the First World War was due to a failure on the part of artists: "Without doubt it is we, the poets and thinkers, who are to blame for this bloodbath and who have to atone for it"(quoted in Rasula and McCaffery 1998,108).

Ball's Cabaret Voltaire myth of sound poetry's origin is disputed by McCaffery in one of his essays on sound poetry, "Voice in Extremis," and by both McCaffery and Jed Rasula in their extraordinary anthology of literary exceptions *Imagining Language*. Performances of poems such as "gadji beri bimba" and "Karawane" must have seemed quite iconoclastic in 1916 Zurich, but utterly original they were not. They have formally much in common with earlier texts, such as Christian Morgenstren's "Kroklokwafzi" of 1905 and Paul Scheerbart's "Kikakoku" of 1897. They all appear to be parabolic, or in other words are examples of what McCaffery in "Vox in Extremis" refers to as "virtual semantics" (166).

McCaffery points to a first phase of sound poetry that he calls a "paleotechnic period":

> the vast intractable territory of archaic and primitive poetries, the many instances of chant structures and incantation, of syllabic mouthings and deliberate lexical distortions still evident among many North American, African, Asian and Oceanic peoples (163).

He adds to this list the "folkloric strata" of "language games: the nonsense syllabary of nursery rhymes, mnemonic counting aids, whisper ames, skipping chants, mouth music and folk song refrains" (163)[3]. Casting further doubt on Ball's origin myth, he goes on to point out that well before the beginning

---

2   Robert Duncan once, infuriated by the distracting gymnastics of a cameraman trying to film a reading, declared that there are two things poets do: curse and bless, and went on to provide an example of the former directed at the unfortunate technician.

3   Dick Higgins points to three types of early sound poetry: folk varieties, onomatopoetic or mimetic pieces and nonsense poetries" (Higgins 2001, 24). He goes on to offer a taxonomy of five "modern" varieties of sound poetry: poems in an invented language; near nonsense poems; "phatic poems"; poems without a written text; and notated poems (Higgins 2001, 28-30).

of the twentieth century, a number of writers had experimented with sound—Aristophanes, Rabelais, Molière and Lewis Carroll, as will as the seventeenth century Silesian mystic Quirinus Khulman.

McCaffery´s second phase, 1875-1928, includes the revolutionary research into the molecular and acoustic properties of language by the Russian futurists, particularly Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh with their investigation of zaum—pre-denotational sounds which short circuit grammar and the sentence at moments of intense emotion (Kruchenykh's first zaum poem was "Dyr bul schyl," 1912); Kandinsky; the Dadaists Ball, Schwitters, Arp, Hausmann and Tzara; and the Italian Futurists, particularly Marinetti and the "parole in liberta" (McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 89). Although this work was indeed groundbreaking, McCaffery argues, its attention was limited to the word, and "fail[ed] to escape an ultimate organization by the signifier"(McCaffery 2001, 170).

The early 1950s saw the beginning of the third phase of sound poetry in the work of the French Ultralettristes: Jean-Louis Brau, Francois Dufrêne, Gil J. Wolman and Henri Chopin. Moving beyond the ideas of the Lettristes, Isadore Isou and Maurice Lemaître, for whom the letter rather than the word was the basic unit of composition, the Ultralettristes produced not so much texts as "sonic performances compris[ing] a high energy expulsion of inarticulate sounds, cries and grunts." Dufrêne's *cri rhythmes* are "first and foremost, conscious deformations of linguistic form beyond the phonemic boundaries of the Dadaists" (McCaffery 2001, 172). In a poetry of no words and no letters, the Ultralettristes explored the whole range of pre-denotative sound.

A major innovation in sound poetry came about in the 1950s as a result of the French poet Henri Chopin's treatments of somatic sounds by the tape recorder. These "audio-poèmes" McCaffery describes as "technological assaults on the word" (McCaffery 1997, 158). Chopin, after experimenting

on language with splicings and various tape speeds, completely discarded the word to explore "vocal micro-particulars" (quoted in McCaffery 1997, 158). Using the microphone as an "anatomical probe" (McCaffery 1997, 160) in performance, he produced a poetry of hitherto inaudible sounds, which he refers to as "poésie sonore" as opposed to "poésie phonetique." Since the "audio-poème" totally relies on the tape recorder to make manifest the body´s "heterological sonic phenomena" (McCaffery 1997, 159), it owes, as Chopin himself argues, "almost completely nothing to any aesthetic or historical system of poetry" (quoted In McCaffery 1997, 158).

In "for a poetry of blood," an early manifesto on sound poetry, McCaffery states that rhythmic sound is the "basic life force." Sound poetry becomes the expression of intense emotion without the mediation of words. "sound [sic] is the awareness that direct sensory involvement/impact is a greater thing than indirect communication to and through the intellect" and is "a respect for the purity of immediacy & an utter faith in the human capacity to grasp the immediate" (McCaffery 1980, 275). Such statements are perhaps akin to the abstract expressionist desire of a universal visual language. However, McCaffery´s later reflections on sound poetry are considerably more sophisticated.

On the most obvious level, sound poetry defamiliarizes the word, the phoneme, the sub-phonetic particle even, making them audible by foregrounding their materiality. The Russian futurists were partly interested in sound poetry for this reason. However, there are more interesting political issues at stake here. A connection between McCaffery and the Russian futurists has been put forward by Marjorie Perloff in her discussion of McCaffery´s essay on bp Nichol´s The *Martyrology:*

> McCaffery´s analysis is reminiscent of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh's famous manifesto, Buka kak takovya (The letter as such) of 1913. And the link is not just coincidental, Just as Khlebnikov used *zaum*

(transrational or "beyondsense" language) to bypass the "ideological Realism… of the late nineteenth century, so McCaffery´s focus on the letter (or phoneme) itself, far from being motivated 'by a narrow formalism, has a political thrust. (Perloff 1990, 293)

McCaffery´s focus on the microparticles of language here addresses the use of the paragram in *The Martyrology* "the 'other' region of sign economy [that] forms part of language's unconscious dimension where meanings exist as lettered proliferations and escape the closure of an aggregate intention" (McCaffery 2000, 66). Sound poetry's focus on the molecular flow of the denotative and pre-denotative needs to be seen, McCaffery argues, "through the economic notion of outlay" (McCaffery 2000, 112). No capital is gained from the outlay of energy in the sound poem. The use value of language is not an issue here: there is no semantic profit to be had. As he puts it in the poem "Lyric's Larynx,"

> Against the order of
> word, meaning, nomination
> and syntax (i.e. against the
> socio-cultural system of communication)
>
> place the gestural body attaching
> itself to sound and rhythm
> as autonomous discharges (expenditures)
> outside the utilitarian
> production of meaning. (2000 (b), 182)

McCaffery´s suggestion here of a movement away from the disabling forces imposed on "sound and rhythm" to a place where words are not wage slaves to meaning is reminiscent of Barthes' argument in "The Grain of the Voice." "Average" culture demands clarity in art, translations of emotions represented in a signified, a meaning (185). He goes on to lament the fact that

> the French are abandoning their language, not, assuredly, as a normative set of noble values (clarity, elegance, correctness)—or at least this does not bother me very much for these are institutional values—but as a space of pleasure of thrill, a site where language works *for nothing* (187).

Just as *zaum* was a political response to "ideological Realism," sound poetry, for McCaffery, is not about taking the materiality of language for a walk in order to "privileg[e] the pre-linguistic, child- sound, the Rousseauist dream of immediate-intuitive communication" (2000, 111-112), but about challenging capitalist notions of meaning as postponed reward. In sound poetry the text is no "commodity to be ideally consumed by a comprehending reader. The demand is for praxis, active engagement and direct experience" (2000, 21).

Perloff quotes a passage from McCaffery's essay "A Writer Outside Writing" that she sees as central to his poetics:

> Grammar is a repressive mechanism designed to regulate the free flow of language. Imposing its constraints on non-gravitational circulation, it realizes a centred (and centralized) meaning through a specific mode of temporalization. Grammatically realized meaning is a postponed reward attained by arrival at the end of a horizontal, linearized sequence of words. Grammar precludes the ability of meaning being an active, local agent functioning within a polymorphous, polygamous space of parts and sub-particles; it commands hierarchy, subordination, and postponement. (2000, 97-98)

Sound poetry bypasses grammar altogether. Like Language- centered writing, McCaffery argues in "From the Notebooks," it "diminishes the profit rate and lowers investment drives…. Meaning… is no longer a surplus value, but that which is to be produced without reinvestment" (quoted in Andrews and Bernstein 1984, 161). There is, then, no "postponed reward" at the end of the poem, no semantic treat.

Another way of considering the political implications of sound poetry for McCaffery is through Julia Kristeva's argument that literature is "the exploration and discovery of the possibilities of language as an activity which frees man from

given linguistic networks" (quoted in McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 18). From here, McCaffery concludes that sound poetry "thus takes its place in the larger struggle against all forms of preconditioning." (quoted in Bernstein and Andrews 1984, 18). As Peter Jaeger has observed,

> sound poetry follows the structural analogy that Kristeva draws between poetic language and political challenge: the sound poem disrupts grammatical and syntactic logic in the same way that revolution disrupts political order".(103)

Sound poetry from this perspective is a radically political act within poetic practice.

The first sound poetry ensemble in Canada, Four Horsemen, began collaborating in 1969 when Paul Dutton and Rafael Barreto-Rivera joined with bp Nichol and McCaffery. Nichol was a therapist and administrator at Therafields, a therapeutic community in Toronto, until 1983. It was via Therafields that the group became acquainted with the work of Alexander Lowen, particularly his *Bioenergetics*, which Lowen describes as "the study of the human personality in terms of the energetic processes of the body" (45). Lowen was concerned with freeing his patients from blocks in energy flow that kept them trapped in "structured patterns of behavior," less through verbal analysis than through direct work with the body[4](62). There is a clear parallel here with sound poetry's somatic focus. It is the "energy gestalt" of the Four Horsemen and the audience that determines the shape and duration of each "piece-process" (McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 34).

---

4   In his introduction to *From the Other Side of the Century II*: A *New American Drama* 1960- 1995 Marc Robinson, commenting on the conventional contemporary American theatre, refers to the burden of "the gravity of approved grace," which he argues "affects the body, limiting the eloquence available in movement." The Four Horsemen show little concern for "approved grace." They refuse to have the full range of somatic sonic energy or "eloquence" limited by the word and its slavish relationship to semantic meaning.

Responding to Tzara's famous statement, "Thought is made in the mouth", the poetics of Four Horsemen were based, as McCaffery puts it, on producing poetry of "spontaneous affect predicated on a paradigm of unrepeatability" and "reformulat[ing] the 'poem' as a manifestation of unpremeditated and ephemeral collectivity" (2001, 234). Theirs is a poetry which replaces an author with a collectivized self of "'agent/poets' functioning as a complex interrelation of transistors" (2001, 234). The individual members of the group picked up signals from the scores, the audience and of course one another. With so many variables to contend with, how did the group negotiate their way through improvisations to points of arrival, or, as McCaffery has it, "points of cohesion" (McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 32)? Four Horsemen, McCaffery states, developed "ecouture": "We've trained ourselves to be good listeners and sensitive barometers to each other. This I believe is the crucial thing in our performance, for without the listening, without the awareness of the energy states of each other the knowingness would not be possible" (1980, 277).

Writing of specific sound poetry pieces by Four Horsemen is rife with problems, which inevitably limit any claim to a comprehensive discussion of the work. It is difficult to find recordings and documentation. There is a brief performance by them in Ron Mann's documentary *Poetry in Motion* (1982), and the remarkable websites Pennsound and Ubuweb have made available *Live in the West* (1977), *Two Nights in October*, and two pieces from *Nada Canadada* (1973)—a particularly graceful title, not only because of the witty suffix, but because, as the liner notes point out, "nada is the spanish word for nothing and also, in hindu mythology, the sound that never ends, the creative principle of the universe." Still available is the cassette *2 Nights 4 Horsemen* (Underwhich Editions, 1988), recorded from two performances of live, freely improvised sound poems at the Music Gallery Toronto, October

1987. Another cassette, *Bootleg*, was released in 1981. That is to say, thirty-five copies were released. McCaffery felt it misrepresented the group's performances, and as bp Nichol has it "[s]ince Steve had the master, and the dubbing machine, he won that argument" (Nichol 87, 69).

In a sense, the pieces don't really exist; they are not *fixed* in any way. The members of Four Horsemen were always alert not only to the energy states of one another but also to the energy state of the audience. No "poem process" was ever repeatable, as it was determined by the specific "energy gestalt" of the moment (McCaffery and Nichol 1978, 32). Instead of a "poem-object" the Horsemen negotiated "the hazardous polyvalencies of process" (McCaffery and Nichol 1978, 32). "Our pieces", writes McCaffery, "are largely the result of a huge energy interface—between our own states of energy in performance and the energy complex of the audience (and the audience conceived too as a complex of molecular flows, rather than a molar aggregate)" (McCaffery and Nichol 1978, 33). Every performance then is radically different as it is determined by the "audience-performer dynamic" and necessarily includes elements of improvisation (McCaffery and Nichol 1978, 33).

Paul Dutton has drawn an analogy between New York graffiti artists of the 1980s and McCaffery´s solo improvisations in sound, though his argument is as pertinent to the performances of Four Horsemen. Both McCaffery´s improvisations and the graffiti in the New York subway are ephemeral, and, as Dutton puts it, "you've got to be on the right platform at the time his train passes through, or rely on secondary retrieval by tape.... Once done, it's gone and he's moving on, the latest piece...already erased by the passage of that omnipresent MTA, Time" (19).

Walter Benjamin points out that what is missing in even the very best reproduction of a work of art is "its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (282). A reliance on recordings to discuss the performances of Four Horsemen is even more problematic. What McCaffery argues about audiopoetry, "the poetry of technologically treated voice," is relevant to taped recordings of performances by the group. Tape is a kind of "graphicism" if we understand writing as "the inscription of units of meaning within a framed space of retrievability and repeatablility" (McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 35). These two defining features of writing have no place in a self-consciously transient and ephemeral art. Taped performances then are an attempt to write the unwriteable. Furthermore, bp Nichol and McCaffery´s Xerox transformation projects demonstrate the built in flaws of mechanical reproduction. Copying and recopying a sheet modified the original completely, and led to the emergence of "creative novelties, new forms, textures, visions and voices" (McCaffery and Nichol 1992, 143). Wouldn't this also apply (though perhaps on a less perceptible level, granted,) to audio reproduction?

Apart from video and audio tape, there are scores available of pieces by Four Horsemen, most notably a published selection, *The Prose Tattoo*, but what kind of relation can these texts have to the live performances, particularly when they were used most commonly as "anti-texts"? McCaffery states that the score is "what the group rebounds off, what is approached to be resisted, what is refracted, what is reacted to" (McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 34). Often it was simply abandoned as the members of the group began to respond to each other. "So there is a curious translational process involved: a passage, an actual metamorphosis of text that shifts from the paper in our hands to being the movement of ourselves. We start to read each other [and] focus shifts from attention on a graphism to attention on sounds in space" (McCaffery and Nichol 1979, 35).

bp Nichol in the Introduction to *The Prose Tattoo* claims that the notations may not be able to

1. The Four Horsemen, "Coffee Break'' from *The Prose Tattoo*.

"dictate pitch, rhythm, duration or any coloration the performer may put into the text," but will define "who's doing what when, with whom, & what elements they have to work with" (The Four Horsemen 1983, n.p.). According to Nichol, early, somewhat infelicitous attempts at graphing performances later led to the adoption of the grid as a unit of composition along with Raoul Hausmann's optophonectics: a system of notation developed in 1918, employing the advances in typography of the early twentieth century to indicate varieties of textual delivery by shifts in font and letter size.

In the score of "Coffee Break" (fig. 1) for example, the larger letters indicate an increase in volume. The vertical lines of the grid mark "points of coherence" and "points of transition," as McCaffery calls them, moments where energies both come together and change, (McCaffery and Nichol 1978, 34), while the elements within each individual unit are the material a performer freely negotiates. There is yet another general problem inherent in discussing sound poetry. Quite simply,

how capable is language of commenting on non-semantic art forms? Barthes in "The Grain of the Voice" begins by demonstrating the poverty of linguistic interpretations of music:

> If one looks at the normal practice of music criticism...it can readily be seen that a work is only ever translated into the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective... The adjective is inevitable: this music is *this*, this execution is *that* (177).

There are significant differences between sound poetry and music. When listening to the former (maybe "experiencing" is a better term), an audience tends to identify the sounds more than when listening to music. There is an implied grammar, a "simulacra of semiosis" as McCaffery puts it, in *zaum* and Dada sound poetry (2001, 170), but *all* sound poetry, argues Dick Higgins in "A Taxonomy of Sound Poetry" reproduced at the Electronic Poetry Center of SUNY Buffalo, even such extreme examples as the utterly non semantic explorations of Henri Chopin imply "subject matter," because "the non-semantic becomes a sort of negative

semantics—one is conscious of the very absence of words rather than, as in vocal music, merely being aware of the presence of the voice. Having said this, the strong musical elements in sound poetry mean that Barthes' adjectival problem persists when words seek to describe non-semantic sound.[5]

Apart from his performances with Four Horsemen, McCaffery´s explorations in sound include collaborations with a variety of musicians and composers such as Anne Southam and Sean O'Huigin in electro-acoustic treatments of the voice using synthesizers, variations in speed, splicings and superimpositions (McCaffery and Nichol 1979,17). A cassette of this phase of McCaffery´s work, *research on the mouth*, was issued by Underwhich Audiographs in 1979.

McCaffery´s most innovative works in sound poetry are what might be described as "intermedia" projects. The term, which Dick Higgins in "Synesthesia and Intersenses: Intermedia" uses to refer to "works which fall conceptually between media that are already known," had been used by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in this contemporary sense in 1812.[6] It is important to distinguish intermedia from mixed media. The latter describes works in which more than one medium is employed. In the former, as in sound poetry, for example, where the musical and the linguistic or prelinguistic are indistinguishable, there is a conceptual fusing of the media. The work of John Cage, Higgins argues, explores the intermedia between music and philosophy. Steve McCaffery, I would suggest, explores the intermedia of sound and philosophy and poetics.[7] Such explorations date back, at least, to sound performance pieces with Four Horsemen. In "Of Grammatology" (For Jacques Derrida)," for example, McCaffery comically draws on Derrida's arguments about language and absence, and the constant deferral of meaning by crushing and sounding the contents of a box of Alphabit Cereal, then mumbling incomprehensibly through gobbled mouthfuls, during which the occasional "Heidegger" or "Derrida" is hilariously audible. The notes for performance are as follows:

> Performer A enters with a pan and brush and cleans performance floor. He then leaves and returns with a step ladder. Peformer B enters, checks and alters position of ladder with bag in hands. On reaching top, B opens bag and reveals a packet of Alphabit Cereal. Opening the packet he informs the audience of "Part 1: The writing" The cereal is scattered all over the floor from the top of the ladder. B descends, takes off his shirt and starts to roll over in the cereal, crushing letters with his body and fists and making pre-denotational grunts. B now announces: "Part 2: The Reading" "Pen" (pours remaining cereal out of box into bowl and holds out spoon). "lnk" (pours milk into bowl). B how starts to eat the cereal and commences talk with mouth full. (Subject matter here should be spontaneous comments on Husserl, Heidegger, Derrida, speech, the metaphysics of absence, *"difference"*, logocentrism, *brisure* and invagination. However, all clarity of speech must be lost within the eating. (McCaffery and Nichol 1992, 278)

---

5   Theolonius Monk once declared: "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture." Monk's simile is amusing, but it does trip over its own feet in a way. It would now be perfectly possible to imagine the intermedia of architecture and dance, given that movement has became a significant area of exploration in architecture since, for example, Art Deco, Le Corbusier's attempt to get buildings up on a "chassis," and Archigram's walking cities.

6   Similary, bp Nichol in an interview with Nicette Jukelevics refers to Dom Sylvester Holland's term "borderblur' to describe "poetry which arises from the interface, from the point between things, the point in which poetry and painting and prose are all coming together" (Miki 2002, 134).

---

7   McCaffery has explored the intermedia of film and poetry in *The Scenarios* (1980). A note in the pamphlet published by The League of Canadian Poets reads: "The scenarios are best considered as short movie scripts or intermedia texts falling between the categories of motion picture and poem. The artistic deal is this: as author I'll provide the film if you promise to provide your own camera. Alternatively we can both perform them separately."

During the "writing," the phonemes disappear as the "writer" reaches for and tries to pin them down by crushing them. The "reader," during the consumption of the text produces nothing but unfathomable noise and the odd name or fragment. Dick Higgins, in "A Taxonomy of Sound Poetry", argues that the work of Four Horsemen belongs to two of the oldest sound poetry traditions—folk and nonsense. While this may be true of pieces like "Holy Thursday (Songs of Innocence)" which actually begins with folk singing, and much of the improvised work on 4 *Horsemen/*2 *Nights* it is not a particularly accurate characterization of pieces like "Of Grammatology."

In the video *V Beyond The Ideo*, McCaffery describes "Captions" as the world's first sound poem for the deaf. Stills of McCaffery´s labial and facial contortions are simultaneously sounded—voicings are offered of "written" signs on the screen.[8] Not so much talking heads but sounding faces. The question is not whether a reading is heard or unheard, voiced or unvoiced, whether you read aloud or read to yourself. Signs are necessarily sonic the piece seems to scream. In Garrett Stewart's terms every "graphotext" has a companion "phonotext" (quoted in Morris 1997, 3).

"White Pages" (1990) is a list of the first three letters of the name at the top of each page of the Toronto phone directory. McCaffery has described the piece as "an investigation into an alternative to improvisation and a venture into large-scale sono-rhythmic structures in the spirit of Schwitters' pioneer 'Ursonate'" (2001, 236). "White Pages" is a sound poem that, when voiced by McCaffery, is a ten minute high velocity leaf through an utterly utilitarian text. On the level of sound, his performance is both mesmerizing and extremely

funny for at least two reasons. First, during the incantatory hurtle through the alphabet, there are a number of moments, such as the numerous repetitions of "Rob" or "Mc" (the latter functioning as an ironic insistence on the presence of the author) when unvoiced predications of the abstract syllables imply a nomenclature: names become audible without being pronounced. Second, the piece is unashamedly predictable almost as soon as it has begun. Its structure as an extended alphabet poem parodies standard narratives of closure: once again, the sound poem offers no capital gain, no totalizing meaning to be had from the "narrative," no profit from having invested in the linear experience. "White Pages" also foregrounds the transparent ordering structure of a directory, which, like grammar, contains and controls.

"Lastworda" the final poem in McCaffery´s *Theory of Sediment* is a dizzying, continuous fast rewind of English vocabulary from the early 1990s back to Anglo-Saxon. A decade of a lexicon is covered every few lines. Charles Bernstein, interviewing McCaffery in 1995 in the Linebreak programme at the Electronic Poetry Center, makes the point that when moving back to and through Middle English, the text is akin to a sound poem. Or as McCaffery puts it in response, "we are alienated from the language semantically and it becomes a kind of music." Reading "Lastworda" is an experience in the loss of meaning which leads to a gain in musicality. At the New Poetics Colloquium in Vancouver on August 25, 1985, however, McCaffery preferred to emphasize the poem's demonstration of language as a social process and a historical construct. Linguistic sounds are not stable and permanent, but circulate as a kind of currency and wear out.

McCaffery has also explored the "intermedium" of sound poetry and translation, partly in order to excavate the profound "otherness" of language. In "The Unposted Correspondence" he argues that conventional translation is burdened by its support

---

8   Craig Dworkin has subsequently written a silent sound poem dedicated to Tom Raworth using sign language to spell out "lautgedichte." See UbuWeb http://www.ubu.com/contemp/dworkin/dworkinl.html.

of an "ultimate signified" and has never been "released into the freedom of deviation and the lie," that it does not allow for a deconstructive pressure being brought to bear on its "preinscriptions." Allowing such a pressure "offer[s] the translator a way out from her role as historical victim to an anterior authorship and release[s] the translative operation into positive stresses on independence, autogenesis, mobility, and drift (2002, 355). McCaffery's translation projects then always challenge the desirability or even the possibility of carrying a truth value from one text to another: "[t]o think this way (of translations as deliberate mutilations of their source demanding in that abuse the authentication of their difference as a suppressed element within the same) is to think of translation as a technique of murdering without pain" (2002, 356).

In 1977, McCaffery began a translation of *The Communist Manifesto* into his native dialect of the West Riding of Yorkshire after conversations with Robert Filiou, who had discussed the possibility with George Brecht of translating Marx and Engels' text into all the dialects of the world. The *Communist Manifesto* thus becomes *The Kommunist Manifesto or Wot We Wukkerz Want*. Samuel Moore's translation of Marx and Engels begins:

> A spectre is haunting Europe-the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcize this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.Where is the party that has not been decried as Communistic by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of Communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries? (Moore 1975, 1)

In McCaffery's West Riding dialect, it becomes:

> Nah sithi, thuzzer booergy-mister mouchin an botherin awl oer place - units booergy-mister uh kommunism. Allt gaffers errawl Ewerup's gorrawl churchified t' booititaht:

> thuzimmint vatty unt king unawl, unner jerry unner frogunt froggy bothermekkers, unt jerry plain cloouz bobbiz. Nah then - can thar tell me any oppuhzishun thurrent been calder kommy bithem thuts runnint show? Urrunoppuzishun thurrent chucks middinful on themuzintfrunt un themuzintback unawl? (2002, 171).

Clearly McCaffery's principal aim is to underline the dubious politics of translating a rally call to working class revolution into standard English. How could "a critique of the bourgeoisie be couched in the most shameful bourgeois language?" (McCaffery 1979, liner notes). However, to any reader not conversant with the West Riding dialect, *Wot We Wukkerz Want* will inevitably slide in and out of semantic focus and at times the pleasure in listening or reading aloud will be purely on the level of sound.

In "The Baker Transformation", McCaffery applies chaos theory to Shakespeare's 109th sonnet (fig.2). He invites the reader to "[e]nvision this poem as a chemically excitable system in which alphabetic characters correspond to molecules and base alphabet is chosen as the central attractor" (2002, 193).

McCaffery subjects the sonnet—"a chemically chaotic system—to the Belousov-Zhabotinskii reaction which he describes as follows: "[w]here a chance concentration of a specific molecule occurs... this grouping acts as a catalyst to the production of more of the same molecules" (2002, 193). The molecules of the sonnet regroup into a sound poem (fig. 3).

Carnival, the First Panel: 1967-70 is a bound series of sixteen regular pages perforated along the top. McCaffery has stated that *Carnival* is "closer to cartography...than a poem or text." The production process of masking he explains as follows: "(...a sheet of blank paper cut into a particular shape is placed over a normal rectangular sheet and typing is continuous over both surfaces,

2 Steve McCaffery, "The Baker Transformation."

O Neuer say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualifie,
As easie might I from my selfe depart,
As from my soule which in thy brest doth lye
That is my home of loue, if I haue rang'd,
Like him that trauels I returne againe,
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,
So that my selfe bring water for my staine,
Neuer beleeue though in my nature raign'd,
All frailties that beseige all kindes of blood,
That it could so preposterouslie be stain'd,
To leue for nothing all thy summe of good :
For nothing this wide Vniuerse I call,
Saue thou my Rose, in it thou art my all.

3 Steve McCaffery, "The Baker Transformation."

thus producing a patterned blank space on the lower sheet)." In *Carnival, the Second Panel: 1971-75* (fig 4), apart from the typewriter, he employed "manual marking, xerographic modification of early wet- feed electrostatic reproductions, rubber stamps and typed text on tissue paper subsequently crumpled and xeroxed, deliberate photographic disintegration by lessening contrast and repetitive copyings of copies, manual reconstruction of some of these disintegrations, random ink effects created by carbon paper passed back and forth over a blank sheet of paper and dragged through a loose typewriter carriage, etc" (2000, 446-447). In order to experience the works as panels, the reader is obliged, with a "performative gesture," (2000, 448) to destroy the book. *Carnival:* the *First Panel 1967-70* comes with the following instruction: "In order to destroy this book please tear each page carefully along the perforation. The panel is assembled by laying out pages in a square of four" (quoted in Perloff 1998, 266). While obviously visual works, the two panels also invite vocal production and can be read as a kind of score. Indeed McCaffery
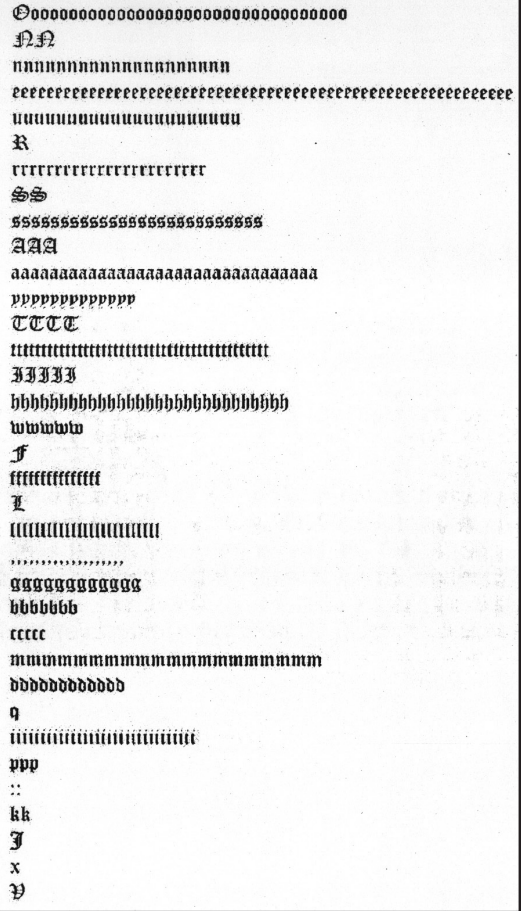
has himself performed parts of *Carnival: the Second Panel* as recently as March 21, 2009 in Glasgow at the experimental music festival Instal, an extract of which can be accessed on Youtube.

In negotiating *Carnival*: *the Second Panel*, the reader/performer is denied any safe linear route, but must read "on" the text rather than "through" it. bp Nichol points out that McCaffery considers his visual texts "acoustic pieces in themselves heard with the eye rather than the ear" (Miki 2002, 54).

Although he now regards his solo and group sound poetry as a closed chapter of his poetic production, as part of a festschrift for Marjorie
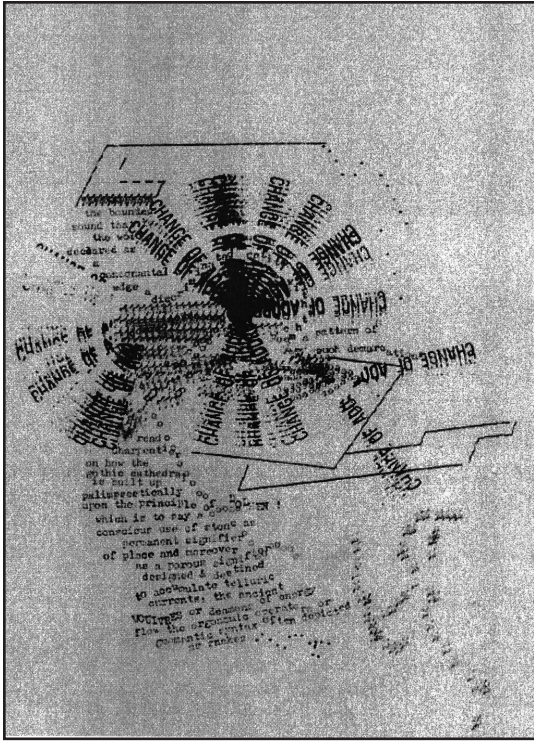
4.Steve McCaffery, *Carnival : the Second Panel.* (1971-75)

of "sense" here and there merely serves to amplify the zaum; thus, ironically the spell check translation is more zaum than the source. Even the technology of Microsoft, with its insistence on verbal hygiene, haplessly fails to contain and colonize the sound poem, to transform its energies into preconditioned communication.

Perloff on her 70th birthday in 2001, McCaffery did produce an acrostic telestic in zaum, "Two for Marjorie Perloff." In the first part of the poem, each line begins and ends with letters spelling her name vertically down the page. The piece responds to Perloff's book *The Futurist Moment* (2003), which discusses the work of both Italian and Russian Futurists of the early twentieth century. The second part of the poem is the result of running the zaum text through a spell check to see, "what happens when you put a mad text through a rational system" as McCaffery has it, prefacing a virtuoso performance of the piece on Leonard Schwarz's *Cross Cultural Poetics #169*. What happens is hilarious. The technology, desperately wrestling to tame the zaum, merely manages to throw up the occasional word in a sea of transsense. A word

WORKS CITED

Barthes, Roland "The Grain of the Voice" 1968. Trans. Stephen Heath. *Image-Music-Text*. 1977; rpt. London: Flamingo, 1984. 179- 189.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" 1935. *Literary Theory*: *an Anthology*. Eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. 282-289.

Bernstein, Charles. "Linebreak Interview with Steve McCaffery."1995. Electronic Poetry Center. 5 January, 2004. http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/linebreak/programs/mccaffery/.

Dutton, Paul. "The Sonic Graffitist: Steve McCaffery as Improvisor." *Steve McCaffery Open Letter* 6.9 (1987): 17-25.

Four Horsemen. *Nada Canadada*. LP. Starborne Productions, 1974.

___.*Four Horsemen. Live in the West*. Audiocassette. Starborne Productions, 1977.

___.*2 Nights/ 4 Horsemen*. Audiocassette. Underwhich Audiographic Series, 1988.

___.*The Prose Tattoo*: *Selected Performance Scores*. Membrane Press, n.p., 1983.

Higgins, Dick. "Four Points Towards a Taxonomy of Sound Poetry." *Homo Sonorus: An International Anthology of Sound Poetry*. Ed.

Dmitry Bulatov. Kaliningrad: The National Center of Contemporary Art. 2001. 24-37.

___. "A Taxonomy of Sound Poetry." *Ubu Papers*. Winter 2004.

Electronic Poetry Center, SUNY Buffalo. 10 October 2003 http://www.ubu.com/papers/higgins_sound.html.

___."Synesthesia and Intersenses: intermediated" *Ubu Papers*. Winter 2004. Electronic Poetry Center, SUNY Buffalo. Something Else newsletter 1, No. 1 (Something Else Press, 1966).10 October 2003 http://www.ubu.com/papers/higgins_intermedia.html.

Jaeger, Peter. *ABC of Reading TRG*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1999. 102-104.

Leonard, Tom. *Intimate Voices*: Selected Work: 1965-1983. Newcastle upon Tyne: Galloping Dog Press, 1984.

Lowen, Alexander. *Bioenergetics*.1975; rpt. Harmondsworth, Penguin Arkana, 1994.

Mann, Ron. *Poetry in Motion*. Sphinx Productions, 1982.Film.

McCaffery, Steve and bp Nichol (eds.). *Sound Poetry: a Catalogue for the Eleventh International Sound Poetry Festival Toronto, Canada*. Toronto: Underwhich, 1978.

McCaffery, Steve. "for a poetry of blood." *Text-Sound Texts*. Ed. Richard Kostelanetz. New York: William Morrow, 1980. 275.

___. "From the Notebooks." *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*. Eds.Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984. 159-162.

___.*V Beyond the Ideo*. Underwhich, 1984. Video.

___. "Vox in Extremis." *Prior to Meaning*: *the Protosemantics and Poetics*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001. 161-186.

___. "Twentieth Century Sound Poetry in Canada." *Homo Sonorus*: *An Internacional Anthology of Sound Poetry* Ed. Dmitry Bulatov. Kaliningrad: The National Center of Contemporary Art, 2001. 234- 241.

___. *Seven Pages Missing Volume One*: *Selected Texts 1969-1999.*Toronto: Coach House Books, 2000.

___. *Seven Pages Missing VolumeTwo*: *Previously Uncollected Texts: 1968-2000*. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2002.

___. *North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-1986*. New York: Roof Books, 2000 (b).

___. *Theory of Sediment*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991.

___. "From Phonic to Sonic." *Sound States*: *Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*. Ed. Adelaide Morris. Chapel HiII: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. 149-168.

Miki, Roy, ed. *Meanwhile: the Critical Writings of bp Nichol*. Talonbooks: Vancouver, 2002.

Morris, Adelaide. "Introduction." *Sound States*: *Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*. Ed. Adelaide Morris. Chapel HiII: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.1-14.

Motherwell, Robert. *The Dada Painters and Poets: an Anthology*. Belknap Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951. xxv.

Schwarz, Leonard. *Cross Cultural Poetics*. #169: Forms of Address. n.d. Web. 9 November 2011. http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/McCaffery.php

CONTRIBUTORS

STEPHEN COLLIS is the author of four books of poetry, the most recent of which, *On the Material* (Talonbooks 2010), was the recipient of the 2011 Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize. Forthcoming books include a collection of essays on the Occupy movement, *Dispatches from the Occupation* (Talonbooks 2012), and the next installment of "The Barricades Project," his poetic exploration of social revolution: *To the Barricades* (Talonbooks 2013). He teaches poetry and poetics at Simon Fraser University.

NATHAN CROMPTON is an editor at *The Mainlander* and a militant with the Vancouver Renters' Union. He is currently writing the political history of 21st century Vancouver and a bildungsroman of the Lower Mainland Painting Company. His art criticism has appeared in *October* and the collaborative writings of *Coupe*.

KATHLEEN DEERING is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Division of AIDS, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia (UBC) and the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. She completed her PhD in the School of Population and Public Health at UBC in 2011. Her research interests include understanding the social, economic, physical and policy factors shaping sex workers' vulnerability to HIV and violence, as well as the transmission dynamics of HIV. She is currently working on research projects among sex workers in Vancouver and India relating to HIV testing, gender-based violence and HIV risk.

EMILY FEDORUK is working on a PhD in Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society at the University of Minnesota. Her interdisciplinary research tests strategies for producing and representing social space, taking sites of contemporary economic activity as foundations for examining spatial articulations across art forms. Exploring cultural practices that generate relationships to place and reconfigure everyday exchanges, retail and shoppers are frequent concerns. She is the author of three chapbooks, *street still* (2007), *still building* (2008) and *still more / more and mall* (Standard Ink & Copy, 2010) and her first collection of poetry, *All Still*, was published by LINEbooks in 2008.

DAVE GAERTNER is a PhD candidate at Simon Fraser University. His dissertation is on discourses of reconciliation in Canadian politics and literature. He has published work in *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, *Bioethical Inquiry* and *Essays in Canadian Studies* and has presented his research internationally, including presentations at the Global Reconciliation Summit in Amman, Jordan.

JOHN HAVELDA is a poet and visual artist who lives and works in Porto, Portugal. Among his books of poetry is *Know Your Place* (de Corrida, 2007), a collaboration with Fred Wah. His most recent publication is the anthology *pulllllllllllllllllllllllllll : Poesia Contemporânea do Canadá* (Antígona, 2010), which he co-edited and co-translated.

SCOTT INNISS is currently pursuing graduate studies in English at the University of British Columbia. His poetry has also appeared in *Matrix*, *W2010*, and *The Capilano Review*.

PAOLO JAVIER is the current Queens Poet Laureate, and author of six chapbooks and three full-length books of poetry, including *The Feeling is Actual* (Marsh Hawk Press). OBB: Last Gasp, a volume of his comic book *obb aka The Original Brown Boy* with Brooklyn illustrator Alex Tarampi, will be published by Very Small Kitchen Press in the fall of 2012.

For close to forty years **MARTIN KINCH** has dedicated himself to developing and directing new Canadian work in theatre, film, radio, and film. His early plays, *Me?* and *April 29, 1975*, were both Chalmers Award finalists and were produced at Toronto Free Theatre, which he co-founded and served as Artistic Director from 1972 to 1980. Since

then, he has served as a producer in CBC Television Drama (1980-85), as Artistic Director of Theatre Calgary (1985-92), and as Executive Director/ Literary Manager of Playwrights Theatre Centre from 2002 to the present. Martin also teaches in UBC's School of Creative Writing and maintains a lively practice as a dramaturg and story editor.

SHANE RHODES' most recent book is *Err* (Nightwood Editions). Shane's poetry has won an Alberta Book Award, two Lampman-Scott Awards, and a National Magazine Award. He is currently the poetry editor for Arc, Canada's national poetry magazine.

CAROLYN RICHARD is from Sapperton, former home of Labbatts Blue. Her poetic and visual work investigates issues of spatial justice.

JASON STARNES is a PhD candidate at Simon Fraser University where he studies avant garde poetry and spatial theory, with emphases on radical geography, Lacanian topologies, and Marxism. He has published work in *Open Letter, The Capilano Review* and *BC Studies*. His dissertation explores the rise of disorientation and vertigo in postmodern poetry and poetics.

MICHAEL TURNER is a writer of fiction, criticism and song. His books include *Hard Core Logo*, *The Pornographer's Poem* and *8x10*, and his criticism has appeared in journals such as *Art Papers, Art on Paper* and *Modern Painters*. In 2012 he co-curated (with Scott Watson) *Letters: Michael Morris and Concrete Poetry* at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (UBC). He blogs at this address: http://mtwebsit. blogspot.ca/

ADRIENNE WONG is a Vancouver-based artist who creates new work for theatre and audio. She is Artistic Producer of Neworld Theatre where, in addition to the PodPlays projects, she writes, performs, directs and produces. Projects of note include recording via satellite with the BBC World Service, facilitating Placebook - an analogue version of Facebook - at the Vancouver Art Gallery's overnight FUSE, co-writing the Downtown Eastside Community Play, playing Scrabble over the radio (CBC Radio One), and creating interactive letter-writing projects. Currently she is collaborating with Halifax-based Dustin Scott Harvey to create a new theatre piece that spans the nation.

MELVIN YAP is known in the contemporary art scene as the modern day flaneur photographer. He derives inspiration from music, art, film and video games. A self-taught photographer and musician, he is interested in recognizing compositions. "It's not so much Subject as Experience," he says. Whether it's the cover of a high school math textbook, an international exhibition, or album artwork for NomeansNo, his goal is to eliminate preconceptions and be faithful to his intuition. For more examples of his art, go to yap.dphoto.com and eastvanguard. bandcamp.com

NEW FROM LINEBOOKS

MEANS

Roger Farr
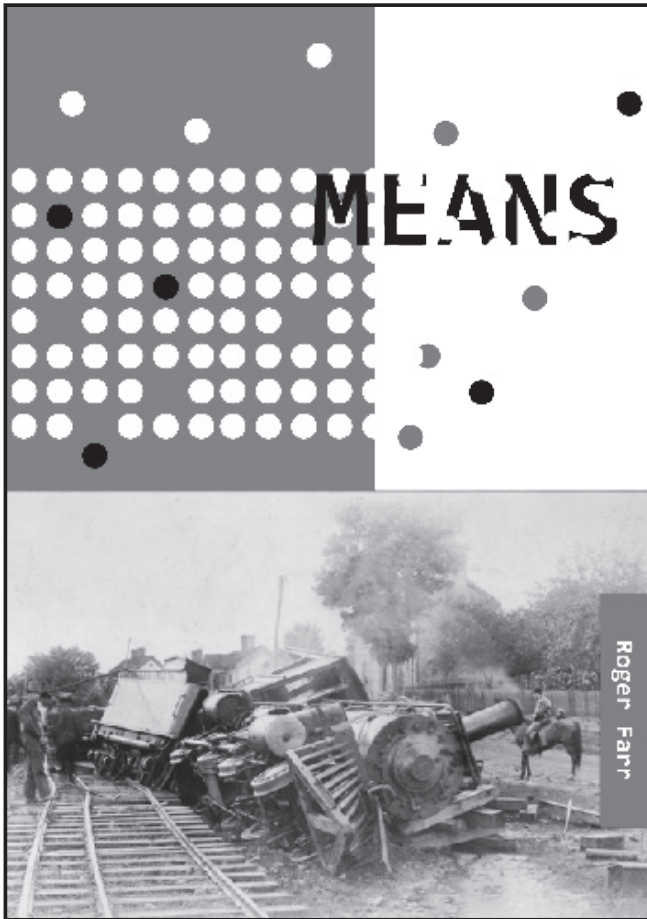
If politics refers to the expansion of those "practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organize human coexistence in conditions that are potentially conflictual," then our task should not be "political," but antipolitical. Poets are not legislators. Writing does not have to concern itself with the distribution of epiphanies and sensibilities, nor with the re-programming of an imagined citizenry in time for the next Federal election. It does not need to solve the problems that capital needs solved. In short, poetry doesn't have to help anyone "come to terms" with this world, which is always the first step in legitimizing it. Instead, poetry's role remains primarily affective: to joyfully render the present even more intolerable than it already is, while at the same time gesturing toward new forms of affinity, agency, and association. To provide accounts without tallies. Events without examples. Means without ends. By whatever means necessary.

Hic Rhodus, hic salta!