

Humanitas

The Bulletin of the Institute for the Humanities

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S I M O N F R A S E R U N I V E R S I T Y





humanitas

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About the Institute

The Institute for the Humanities at Simon Fraser University, now almost twenty years in existence, initiates, supports and promotes programs devoted to the exploration and dissemination of knowledge about the traditional and modern approaches to the study of the humanities.

The Institute sponsors a wide variety of community-based activities, along with its university-based academic programs.

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Director's Letter

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

If this, as we hope, is an annual bulletin, and if I survive any vicissitudes which may come to me between now and the solemn date (September 1, 2004) on which my retirement is already inscribed in the Great Book of Pensions, this will be the first of three general reflections through which I will be reaching out to you, our friends and associates at the University, in the city and beyond.

In so doing, the first thing I want to do is to salute Professor Jerry Zaslove, founding director of the Institute. I gave this reflection the title I did (from the poem by John Donne, which is about Donne and his wife—no connection to Jerry, but a great title!)—because this newsletter, although in some sense a valediction, a saying of farewell, does indeed forbid mourning and invites celebration because Jerry has left us so much to celebrate.

He has laboured for 18 years to build an Institute on what he has called a public-sphere and public-service critical model; and this model is the gift he now hands on to me and to all of us. Those of you—faculty, steering committee members, associates, event participants—who took part in such searching enterprises as the Legacy Project, The Spectacular State or the Joanne Brown Symposium on Violence and its Alternatives, to name only three, will recognize in these titles the vision which has consistently animated Jerry and his colleagues over these past years. Jerry, thank you, and all good things to you in—retirement? The language will need a new word!

I fully support this model for the work of the Institute, and I invite you as readers of this bulletin to get in touch with me if you have ideas of how it may be developed. In acting on this vision and model, we will continue to explore the demanding issue/complex of issues which we have been calling Violence and its Alternatives. The phrase suggests,

first, that violence will be with us for the foreseeable future (earlier we used the phrase “Alternatives to Violence,” but dropped it because it suggested a too-immediate transcending of violence; this is a long haul we are all in for). Second, it suggests that there are alternatives available to us for the resolution of the disputes and struggles which keep so many people in our society from fullness of life. Of the other projects of the Institute already underway or envisaged you will read elsewhere in this bulletin.

It needs to be said, however, that the importance of this human vision is not acknowledged by all, notably at the governmental level. In an op ed piece in *The Globe and Mail* (August 30, 2001, A11), Thomas Axworthy delineates the shape of the federal government's view of higher education as exemplified in the recent commitment of funding to 2000 new research chairs. These are being allocated according to how well universities have done in attracting federal research council grants, an approach which favours large universities with medical and engineering schools. One-third of these new chairs will go to the University of Toronto, UBC and McGill; the next third to the seven schools next-ranked as recipients of research grants; and the last third to the remaining schools. The government's formula also dictates that the natural sciences will receive 45% of the chairs, the health sciences 35%, and the social sciences and humanities only 20%. If, however, the chairs were to be allocated on the basis of existing full-time faculty in these three divisions, the percentage of chairs given to the social sciences and humanities would, according to Axworthy, more than double. This is unlikely to happen; but Axworthy's bringing of the situation to our attention reminds us that we cannot take for granted understanding of and adequate support for the humanities in Canadian higher

education; and our awareness of this reality will also colour how we see the work of the Institute as an organization concerned not only for its own projects, but for the whole humanities enterprise in our University and our society.

To conclude, a word of personal introduction. I have been teaching Religious Studies at SFU since 1989, fulltime since 1993. The topics of my course offerings convey to a large extent my intellectual and research interests: world religions, Gandhi, the Holocaust, Thomas Merton. A new venture in 2002 will also be offered in the Graduate Liberal Studies program as well as the Humanities Department, a course on pilgrimage and anti-pilgrimage (by this latter term I mean our observed desire to visit such places as Hiroshima and Auschwitz, both of which I visited during my study leave which concluded at the end of August).

As an Anglican priest, I am a kind of throwback to an earlier time in England and elsewhere in which scholar-clerics comprised the largest proportion, in some cases the entirety, of the professoriate. That time is past; but in experiencing the generous acceptance of my two-hatted vocation by my colleagues, I am encouraged to believe that space exists in humanist discourse in both the university context and that of the wider society for engagement with perspectives from Religious Studies as such, as also from the living communities of religious faith and practice which in our multicultural and multifaith society are struggling to take part in discussions of public-sphere and public-service concern—the very focus of the Institute.

Vale then, to Jerry; *ave* to you our readers and supporters. I look forward to working with many of you in the ongoing work of an Institute with a distinguished past and a future both engaging and engaged.

Donald Grayston, PhD
Director, Institute for the Humanities

Humanitas: A Commentary

— Jerry Zaslove

This edition of *Humanitas* introduces the new bulletin of the Institute for the Humanities. It follows upon several previous newsletters, which also featured reports from events that we have programmed. *Humanitas* reviews many of our programs that open the humanities to various communities of scholars, organizations and citizens.

This edition of the bulletin celebrates the many years of co-operation with the J.S. Woodsworth Chair in the Humanities, the Humanities Department—a vibrant addition to Simon Fraser's Faculty of Arts—and the many community groups and individuals who have participated in Institute programs, and who have provided inspiration and critical response to our activities.

Simon Fraser's Institute for the Humanities is unique in Canada because we are connected to an academic department and an endowed chair, which gives us a mandate that allows us freedom to explore many different ways to work with social and cultural organizations and individuals. When we began in 1983 there was only one similar institute in Canada. Now there are several. At that time, many American universities began to develop institutes and centers for the humanities. Some have been inspired by new orientations to social and cultural criticism; some are heavily endowed. Most exist at the crossroads of departments and faculties—often taking on Hermes-like poses in order to tease out new critical positions and ideas. Like us, they are inspired by the need to define cultural and intellectual problems in new ways, or to search for new shelters for thought or to provoke universities to examine themselves and take action on critical social issues. Some are fashionable, some not. Universities have announced their desire to find new ways to develop public participation and enlarge public discourse in times

when the public can have a jaundiced eye about universities that are trying to be all things to all people. Our Institute has a unique mandate in this regard: to support initiatives and develop and reinforce programs in human rights and social justice, peace studies, community education, and the arts in society. Easy words to write, difficult to sustain!

However, it is clear that universities are at a socio-economic crossroads—perhaps they always have been. But the times have changed in my own 35 years at Simon Fraser. The crossroads of intellectual work and research interests intersect wider avenues and the traffic is more congested. The struggle for new intellectual programs is sometimes against, sometimes in accord with older departments and disciplines. This is an old story: the new story is that universities today must take stock of the formidable new demands from the public, industry, governments and research bureaucracies or they will be labelled as obsolete, delinquent, parasites. We hear cries for new forms of competence, and new problem-solving techniques push older forms of knowledge to the edge of extinction—witness the elimination of departments at many universities, including Simon Fraser and the University of British Columbia. Senior administrators must be all things to all kinds of people—knowledge brokers, fund-raisers, anti-bureaucratic bureaucrats as well as academics and financial soothsayers. Students pay a heavy price for being at a university that may itself not see what it is. Since 1965 when I arrived at Simon Fraser University, a small university has gone through a rite of passage that tested its legitimacy as an academic institution that could go fifteen rounds with the heavyweight Canadian universities. It seems to have achieved a level of respect that allows that it is no longer a fledgling university, or a dissident one. This means it is troubled (and graced) with the problems of growth

and expansion. But demands for results and fears of rocking the boat might be more a part of the picture than ever before. In the knowledge industries, speed of change is no less remarkable than the obsolescence of forms of knowledge. Fashion is not only the provenance of mall boutiques. The Institute itself—along with many new programs—grew at a time when expansion was controversial. Our success depended on the good will and support of several Deans and administrators who had the time to be curious and open about new mandates. A chair named after J.S. Woodsworth and an institute with our mandate had to take risks in exploring controversial issues with different audiences.

Our programs have varied, and yet maintain a coherence that I am very proud of. All programs and events are not directly reported on here. Programs range from challenges to the Canadian welfare state in the context of social democracy and equality to recognition of human rights issues. One example is our recent support of an exhibition of John Humphrey's life and work on the birth of the declaration of human rights—Humphrey was the Canadian author of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. From Chief Joe Gosnell's inspired representation of Aboriginal rights and the controversy over the Nisga'a treaty, to a one-day conference on the nuclear arsenals and arms threats between India and Pakistan at the Surrey Arts Center—at which human rights speakers from Pakistan, India and Canada spoke—the community and the Institute collaborated to bring a rights-based vision to the public. This particular event accompanied a curated exhibition of compelling photographs from India by Hari Sharma, professor emeritus in sociology. The connection to the history and cultures of Southeast Asia comes to SFU with the Institute's annual co-sponsorship of the Gandhi peace and

alternatives to violence program on October 2. We have also sponsored or collaborated with other organizations in supporting rights-based initiatives; for example, the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy and its speakers on diaspora and social justice. We have supported several programs that raised challenges to the exploitation of East Timor by the Indonesian state and military. See the commentary by Bob Russell in this issue (page 22) among other commentaries.

The humanities is a subject area, but it also studies methods about how we explore and represent modernity in artistic worlds. That is the fate of the humanities everywhere today—to be cross-cultural and to critique ethnocentrism and cultural monomania, yet to study classic texts and authors. Why? The end of the century has loudly proclaimed itself as harboring the end of just about everything and the beginning of the new. New urbanized audiences in Vancouver are asked to struggle with notions of the communal as well as its new-found identity in urban modernism—a topic at home in the humanities from the time of the polis to the various religious and utopian ideas that inform our Canadian culture. Cultures in transition will tend to resurrect ideas of community, and today the troubles of nation-state politics downloading services to the private and community sectors affect local traditions and choices. This is why it has been important for the Institute to participate in initiatives where museums and galleries are opening up avenues to new audiences and to support voluntarist initiatives. We have worked with the Vancouver Art Gallery, Presentation House in North Vancouver, Burnaby Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery, The Roundhouse in Yaletown, Britannia Community School, Britannia Community Services Center, SPARC, and Simon Fraser's continuing education programs under Mark Selman and Debbie Bell. The Institute has supported books on prison education published by New Star Books, and edited by Peter Murphy of the College of the Cariboo. We have supported the development

of a Labor Studies Archive and have worked with Mark Leier in History and the Archives' recent benefactor, Margaret Morgan of the Margaret and Lefty Morgan Endowment Fund, to further a labor and community education project that is close to the spirit of the Woodsworth legacy and the Institute's programs in social justice.

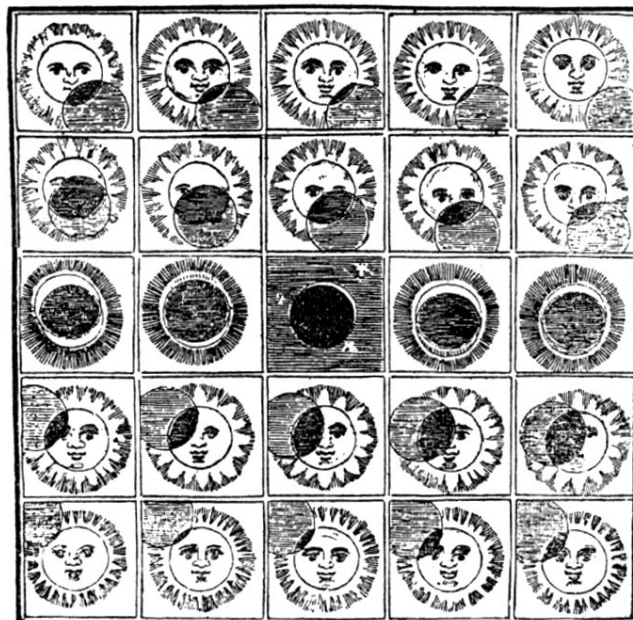
The Institute is also an important university resource and has collaborated with, and sought advice and assistance from departments and individuals from many disciplines: history, political science, geography, communications, women's studies, psychology, sociology, and criminology.

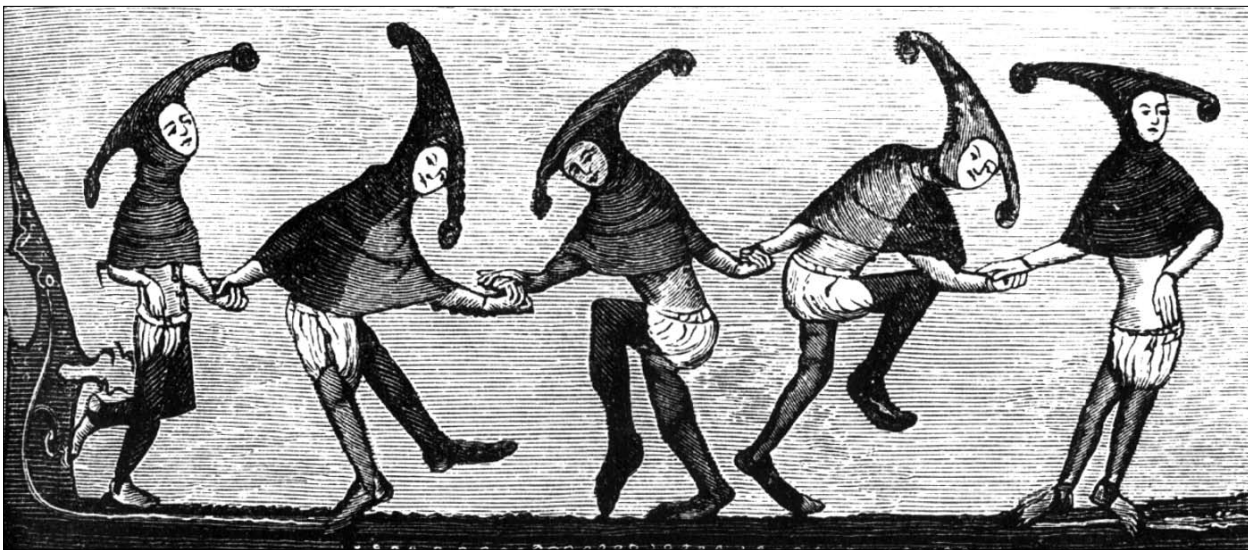
A new and important venture was undertaken several years ago with the Knowledge Network. The Institute and the educational television station produced and aired six 30-minute programs entitled "Conflicting Publics." The interviews were with seven distinguished social theorists who have changed our understanding of what constitutes the idea of the "public" today—John O'Neill, Axel Honneth, Jean Elshtain, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Arne Naess, and George McRobie. They have been aired often on the Knowledge Network. The program concept was a collaboration with Ian Angus, lead interviewer and writer, me, and

Roman Onufrijchuk of the Knowledge Network.

The mandate (and sensibility!) of the Institute's proximity to the J. S. Woodsworth Chair was recently tested by the controversy over the appointment of David Noble, social historian at York University, to the Chair. The controversy is symbolic of current controversies—symptomatic perhaps of the times—over the changing norms of the ideas of academic freedom.

Professor Noble, who is well known nationally and internationally for his written and spirited public—and one should add humanities-based—criticism of the uses of technology for the "brave new world" of the Internet-boom, weathered criticism from various administrative bodies and faculty members after his appointment was recommended by the Humanities Department after a sanctioned search for a Chair. A second review was returned to the department, only to be rejected once again by the Dean of Arts and the University Appointments Committee. The controversy was so fraught with tangible implications for academic freedom and university governance that two outside reviews of the procedures were undertaken—one by the University President, and one, at the request of David Noble, by the





Canadian Association of University Teachers.

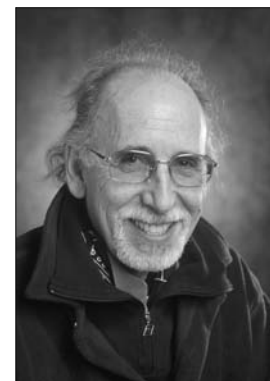
Wherever one stands on this serious controversy—some see it as the intrusion of “global order” politics into the University’s right to initiate and support criticism without fear of offending segments of the public. Others see Professor Noble’s scholarship and his public persona as an issue about his “collegiality”. Issues of academic freedom have once more stirred awareness of how a university can handle difficult issues that arise over corporate identity and what constitutes the appropriate way for controversial humanities issues to be presented to the public. This may be the real issue today—that the university is not an ivory tower. It engages the public by acting as a social movement in a restless liberal society. However, if the society itself is searching for an identity that it may have lost, both may mirror each other’s wandering in the global wilderness. The coercive forces that limit or whittle away at autonomy are not always clearly known even to those of us who work here. Funding education, finding meaningful employment for humanities students, judging the confusions about the difference between training and education determine whether this is an enclave of, by and for academics and students, or is an enclave of other social forces. One hopes it is a public resource that frames civic competence by describing fearlessly and openly how these pressures, interests and forces work. The Noble case raises all

of these issues and there have been other similar cases in Canada.

As I write, the violence of global warfare has superseded the many existing civil wars as well as continuing the old cold war by other means. Paramount: the way the wealthy and powerful “West” faces the parts of the world that live by local and community logics, not only by free trade and old moneyed powers. The technological revolution, which affects ordinary people, legislators and power-brokers who live in symbolic, ideological and religious worlds, has made the world smaller, not larger, and at the same time more overwhelming. Not least is the inability of the rich world to convey and represent its “universal”—that is geopolitical and liberal—principles for social justice, diversity and tolerance to premodern economies and cultures and, yes, to its own poor. The new “clash of cultures” (as Samuel Huntington names and describes it in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996) brings the ends of the earth right up to our doorsteps. Finally, as the shadows of a “New World Order” creep over us, what are the priorities for the humanities? Inner exile? Engagement? Cynicism? Retrenchment? Or engagement with the world of ideas-in-the-making? Who decides? In times when the whole picture is overwhelming one yearns for the facts and news that is not managed.

My colleague, Don Grayston—the Institute’s new and steadfastly

committed Director, and his colleagues—are eminently qualified to help us think through these issues. I wish to thank my colleagues and friends for the opportunity over the years to be a public intellectual where one can say, without too much piety in a world that is full of pieties, that academic freedom is not just about being free to be an academic, but is the freedom to test the limits of academic life and to participate in the life of the wider community by distributing knowledge in what Hannah Arendt described as the *vita activa*. Put another way, the future of the world may well be about the “clash of cultures” but not knowing the implication of this idea may create the conditions for having no future at all.



Jerry Zaslove
Director Emeritus
Institute for the Humanities

Make Sense Not War

Lloyd Axworthy Receives Thakore Visiting Scholar Award

The 2001 recipient of the Thakore Visiting Scholar Award was Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's foreign minister from 1996 to 2000. What follows is an excerpt from an article published in The Globe and Mail (September 17, 2001, A17). In it, Dr. Axworthy expressed many of the same thoughts at the address he gave at SFU on October 2, 2001 and in the seminar to which he spoke on October 3. It should be noted that this was written, and his addresses given, before the bombing of Afghanistan started on October 7—an initiative taken without, in the view of many, the “bona fide international mandate and ... clear culpable target” which he posited as a requirement for Canada to join in any military action there.

The Thakore Visiting Scholar Award is presented annually to an outstanding public figure who in some way carries forward the legacy of Muhatma Gandhi. The award is co-sponsored by the Institute for the Humanities, the Thakore Charitable Foundation, and the India Club.

*Excerpt from “Make sense, not war”
by Lloyd Axworthy, The Globe and Mail,
September 17, 2001*

As rescue workers continue their painful search through the debris, as families of victims move from shock to private grief, as the media resumes regular coverage and sporting events return, the shock waves from the surprise terrorist attacks against the United States continue to reverberate around the world.

The foundations that are being shaken are not those of cement and steel. They are the assumptions, practices and policies upon which our international security system has been based: inviolate borders, sovereignty, defence of the nation state. Now, it is human security that is at stake ... This changing global character of the security threat is not a recent discovery. It has been on the agenda at international gatherings for several years. The G8 has had annual discussions on a global response to terrorism, and several major treaties have been negotiated and ratified under UN auspices. But the rhetoric has far outweighed the commitment to collaborative international action. The prevailing attitude has been that the human security challenge could and should be managed primarily by domestic measures such as tighter controls at borders, or through conventional military responses such as surgical bombing strikes. Multilateralism of an effective kind was simply not a priority.

The aftermath of Tuesday's attack may change

this. There are three promising signs: First is the recognition that existing defences don't work and that even the United States, with all its military might and far reaching intelligence network, was penetrated by a disciplined ring of zealots. Second is the rallying of support by friends and allies conveying the message that we are all in this together. Third is the initiative put forward by the Bush Administration for an international coalition to fight terrorism, a clear departure from its previous postures eschewing collective responses to global issues. NATO's decision to invoke Article Five, the collective security clause that considers attack against one member as an attack against all, reinforces this approach.

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One could see such “coalition building” as a ploy to gather support for a military strike. But, Prime Minister Chretien got it right when he indicated that this solidarity was not a blank cheque for quick military intervention. His prudence should prevail. Only if there is a bona fide international mandate

and a clear, culpable target, should Canada join in any military action.

What is also in the offing is the opportunity for a number of nations to work together to apprehend the guilty parties. While it may not serve the same visceral urges for revenge that a military action provides, the coalition would better serve the battle against terrorism by using due process under international law to bring the culprits to justice. We have the mechanisms, we need only the will to use them, as we have in Rwanda and the Balkans.

More than that, this international coalition is in a position to begin constructing a highly integrated world wide system of intelligence sharing, police coordination, passport control, travel surveillance and judicial enforcement against terrorists and their supporters.

This must be based on a new framework of international

agreements setting out responsibilities of governments and individuals on such issues as harbouring suspected terrorists, financing their activities and cooperating on arrest and trial. Those countries found to have aided and abetted terrorists will be named, shamed and sanctioned. And even our closest allies must understand the need to have no truck nor trade with those who feed terror.

Canada can play an active role in shaping this agenda. I suggest we promote the idea that the Statute of Rome establishing the International Criminal Court be amended to include terrorist attacks against civilians to be a crime against humanity.

The Thakore Award: Lloyd Axworthy

—John Doheny

The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, PC, PhD, received the Thakore Visiting Scholar Award for his initiative and accomplishments as Minister of Foreign Affairs. While in that Ministry, he created the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development and brought citizen participation into the political process through a variety of peace building consultations: conferences including individuals, international organizations, like-minded governments, non-governmental organizations and representatives of his Ministry

travelling across the country speaking, consulting and listening.

His initiative for a Land Mines Treaty gained enormous support. One hundred and twenty-seven countries signed on initially and the total has now reached 139; \$500 million have been donated for removing land mines. He and his Ministry began to expose, in an effort to stop, the growing use of child soldiers. His lecture concerning Emma points out the horrors of a continuing inhuman practice. Emma was a kidnapped child who was forced to

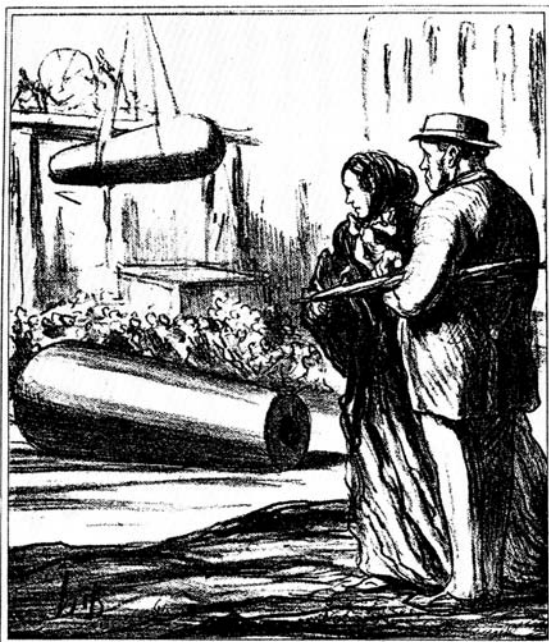
become a child-bride, was trained as a soldier to kill her own family, and became a single mother in the course of this inhumanity. She escaped her enslavement to a refugee camp and traveled briefly to Canada to plead for help and for changes in the way children are now abused in the world. Hers is “a story heard every day,” he says, “around the globe.”¹

Dr. Axworthy also speaks out often in lectures and interviews on the effects of war on women and children—the innocent victims—as well as

speaking out against the possible uses of nuclear weapons in the light of NATO activity and International Law, urging the elimination of such weapons on both moral and legal grounds.

All this activity is part of the emphasis on human security and universal peace as well as the struggle to avert crimes against humanity which are being pursued every day. Human security involves a “shift of security concerns from those focused on national interests to those affecting the individual [which] offers a different lens through which to understand and implement policy. It gives a way of translating post cold war trends into a framework that suggests responses of a global kind and does challenge the assumptions of a state based system, emphasizing the need for international cooperation and governance.”²

The UN charter on cross border aggression by states notes that “of 174 million people who have lost their lives unnaturally at the hands of others, 34 million died in traditional wars, 140 million died at the hands of their own pathological governments.”³ Clearly, these bleak statistics indicate a necessity for global action, a shifting of international focus. “This focus on the security of the individual not the state became the basis of the foreign policy approach of Canada, what we called



The World's Fair
“All men are brothers.”

our human security strategy—efforts at developing partnerships with NGO's and like minded governments to secure the safety and security of people. It led us into the Ottawa process on land mines, taking a lead on the International Criminal Court, developing a protocol for the protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping missions, a prohibition on the illegal transfer of small arms and a covenant proscribing the use of child soldiers.”⁴

Born in 1939 in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Lloyd Axworthy grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba where his father was an insurance agent and his mother was active in United Church groups devoted to helping others. These early influences led the young Lloyd Axworthy to become active in such groups, and his parents and his religion played a major part in the development of his personal ethics, as he argued in a recent TV interview. While religion remains part of his personal ethics, he insisted in the interview that it was never a part of his political action to push religion.

When he did turn to politics, Lloyd Axworthy joined the Young Liberals because he enjoyed the debates among those on the left of centre, at the centre, and on the right of centre, where one's own ideas were refined or changed—all with the hope that these ideas would lead to political and social action.

In 1961 Dr. Axworthy earned a BA in Political Science from United College (later renamed the University of Winnipeg) and an MA from Princeton University in 1963. Until 1979 he balanced his academic activity, intellectual development and politics. During that period, he taught for a year at Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. He was teaching and studying at the University of Winnipeg from 1965 to 1967 when he went to Ottawa to work for the Liberals and John Turner. From 1969 to 1973 he was professor at the University of Winnipeg where his main function was as Director of the Institute of Urban Studies. In 1972

he earned his PhD in Political Science from Princeton University with a dissertation on Federal Urban Policy.

In 1973 Dr. Axworthy was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. He taught as Professor of Political Science at the University of Winnipeg until 1979 when he successfully ran for the Federal Liberal Party. Except for a sabbatical from politics in the late 1980s when he went to Nicaragua “and discovered first hand the devastating impact of land mines and how the Contra war, a surrogate war, was destroying the lives and hopes of simple people,”⁵ Axworthy remained in office until 2000 when he decided not to run again. Upon retiring from governmental politics, he became the Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues at the University of British Columbia.

“Working within governmental politics is not good enough since politicians seldom have time to know enough about the world as they should,”⁵ Axworthy claims. “The Liu Centre was launched on the premise that scholars and practitioners, working together in collaborative interdisciplinary fashion, are able to produce fresh, coherent policy-relevant studies of value to the governance function.” The current world has changed radically from what it used to be. The old methods of governance and dealing with problems are too limited. According to Axworthy,

contemporary global phenomena “assume a number of different forms... Each is the consequence of recent human activity; each now influences humankind in unprecedented fashion. The attention of the Liu Centre will be focussed on the causative factors of that influence, not upon the products.”⁶ Dr. Axworthy expects the Liu Centre to be “a junction point of ideas and action.”⁷ in which professors, graduate students and people of action work together to affect policy for human security and universal peace.

Though Lloyd Axworthy is receiving the Thakore Award for his activities as Minister of Foreign Affairs, it might also have been extended for promise in the future of continuing and expanding these and similar activities concerning human security—the environmental problems in the world and universal peace, involving, perhaps, declaring against the militarization and consequent weaponization of space—in his new centre. Now unrestrained by political party and governmental considerations, he can allow his early feelings of individual independence to carry the research and analysis more deeply into the causes of the dilemmas leading to more effective ideas, proposals and action than nation-state government allows.

1 University of Victoria, President's Distinguished Lecture, “An Encounter with Emma.”

2 “Notes” for a lecture.

3 Lecture, Duke University, “Humanitarian Intervention.”

4 Lecture, Duke University, “Humanitarian Intervention.”

5 Telephone interview, 11 June 2001

6 Liu Centre Programme.

7 Telephone Interview, 11 June 2001.

The Thakore Award for the Year 2000:

The Narmada Struggle

—Don Grayston

On October 2, 2000, the Thakore Award was presented to Medha Patkar and Sri Baba Amte, longtime Gandhian activists. It was accepted in person only by Medha Patkar, inasmuch as Baba Amte was prevented by age and infirmity from being present with us at Simon Fraser. Those of us who were there heard an address from a woman with the heart of a tiger, “burning bright,” as William Blake said, a woman utterly committed to her struggle.

What then is the Narmada struggle in which Medha Patkar and Baba Amte have been involved since 1985? It involves the projected building of a huge complex of dams on the Narmada River, the Sardar Sarovar Project, initiated by three state governments in the northwest of India. The dams are understood by their proponents in terms of the vision of former Prime Minister Nehru, who saw them as the key to India’s economic growth. In fact what has happened is that the project has become a sinkhole for public money, a context of corruption and power-grabbing by local politicians, and, worst of all, the cause of the destruction of a way of life lived *for thousands of years* by the people who have lived in a peaceful relationship with the great Narmada River. Some 35,000 of these people, many of them *adivasis*, or aboriginal people, have already been displaced from their homes, and the many political promises of rehabilitation and resettlement unkept.

A number of events have transpired since Medha Patkar’s visit to Simon Fraser last October. In November the Supreme Court of India ruled against the Narmada Bachao Andolan (the movement inspired by Medha Patkar and Baba Amte) and authorized the state governments to proceed with the damming project. The NBA protested this by means of a rally held in front

of the Supreme Court buildings, as a result of which the NBA leaders, including novelist Arundhati Roy, were charged with contempt of court. In response to this charge, a number of prominent Indian activists, as well as thousands of village-level supporters, asked to be named as co-defendants.

In another incident, Medha Patkar, Arundhati Roy and another colleague, in an entirely fabricated set of charges, were accused of assault, public drunkenness, the uttering of death threats and the employment of goon squads to intimidate the proponents of the project. Clearly their opponents, powerful politicians and industrialists, are trying to exhaust their movement by tying the leaders up in costly court cases. Other incidents of defamation, intimidation and the killing of activists have followed.

In response, the NBA organized a *parikrama*, or village walkabout, in which activists moved from village to village in the basin of the Narmada, organizing teach-ins and celebrations through dancing and singing of the cultural importance of the Narmada, seen in Hindu tradition as a goddess and mother of the region. It has also successfully organized a *dharna* or sit-in at the Tehri Dam, which is being built in a seismically highly sensitive location, not far from the epicentre of the January 2000 earthquake in Bhuj.

Here in Medha Patkar’s own words (from a recent email) is what is happening in the Narmada struggle.

It is taken from her statement to the court (one thinks here of Gandhi before the British courts in India) in response to the contempt charge:

“I have worked for the last 16 years for the cause of ... people, tribals and peasants, who will be adversely affected by the Sardar Sarovar Project and other gigantic projects in the Narmada Valley and elsewhere. I have raised the issue of such mega-projects, the development, planning, democratic and human rights and economic issues, and the consumption of monetary and natural resources by such projects. I have also suggested just and sustainable alternatives in water, energy and other sectors. Most of those that I work with in the Valley are going to lose their lands, their homes, their forests, their communities, their culture and indeed their very identity because of this project. I have taken up their cause because I can feel their loss; I can identify with them—they are indeed like my family. I will continue to fight for them in every forum and in every way that I can. I will continue to challenge the unjust system that deprives common people, especially those in the natural resource-based communities who pay the cost for the benefit of those who already have much more than they. I will continue to help them raise their voices in protest against this system even if I have to do so against the Judiciary and the Courts. I will continue to do so as long as I can, even if I have to be punished for contempt for doing that.”

After Medha Patkar’s visit to SFU, a Narmada support group was formed in the Lower Mainland (contact Gunwant Shah, 604-421-4744). Anyone interested in receiving updates on the struggle can write the Narmada Bachao Andolan directly at medha@narmada.org and ask to be placed on its mailing list. Given the strength of both sides in this struggle, strength of very different kinds, we can expect it to continue without letup well into the foreseeable future.

Walking the Land: The MIR Centre For Peace

Castlegar, British Columbia

—Myler Wilkinson

The Kootenay region of British Columbia lies about 350 miles due east of Vancouver in the narrow mountain valleys of the Selkirk range. The region is both physically and psychically distant from the major urban centres of the province. It has always been a place of retreat, often enough of exile, for the peoples who have found their ways here: the First Nations who followed the Columbia and Kootenay river systems as traditional fishing grounds, the Japanese Canadians who were interned in “ghost towns” in the early 1940s, the young American war resisters of the 1960s and 1970s and members of the counter culture from many nationalities who came here seeking simpler more sane existences, and of course the Doukhobors who began coming to the Kootenays almost 100 years ago now and developed one of the most impressive communal-pacifist societies in North American history.

Our story, and the brief history of the MIR Centre for Peace, is bound up with all these peoples and their histories, embedded in the many layers of history which make up the social reality of this unique area of British Columbia. But in order to understand what the MIR Centre for Peace stands for, and what it might become, we must first move back from the larger levels of public history and begin with a personal story.

For as long as my wife, Linda, and I have lived in the Kootenays and taught at Selkirk College, we have been fascinated by the physical setting of

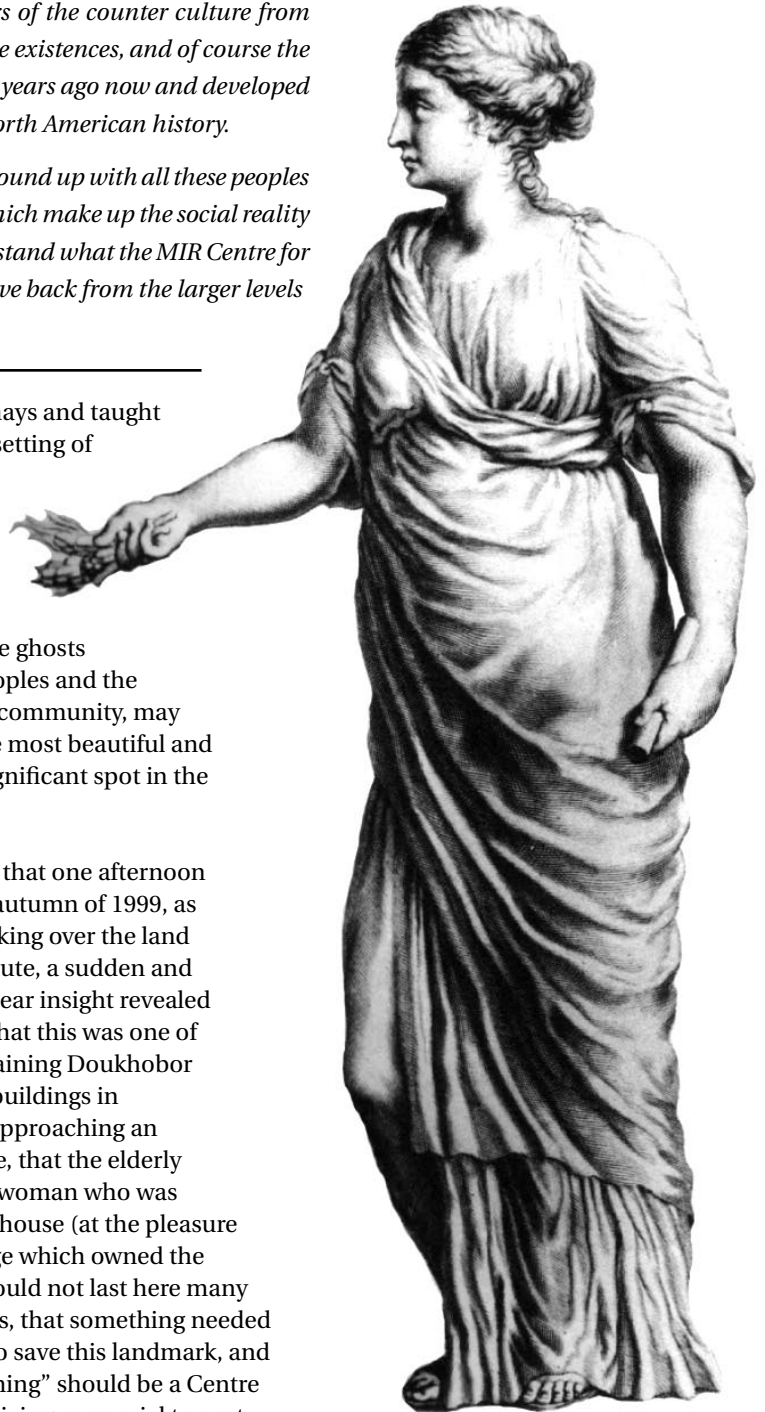
the College—situated on a point of land which overlooks the confluence of the Kootenay and Columbia rivers. A particular kind of genius of place emanates from this geography—lands where First Nations have gathered for millennia, where Doukhobors settled and began to create a flowering communal life rich with the knowledge of growing things and traditional craft, and where, most recently, was constructed the site of the first community college in the province.

For as long as we have known this magical place, my wife and I have taken a particular walk through the landscape whenever the world has become too much with us: down the hill from the main campus, through a forest to a meandering ox-bow created by the Kootenay river, across a meadow resonating with meadow larks, blue birds and other wild creatures, up a hillside path to a bluff which spectacularly overlooks the Columbia river, and finally along a winding dirt road to an old Doukhobor communal brick home surrounded by an eighty year old orchard of apple and pear trees—still flowering two generations after the Doukhobor communal experiment

came to an end. This place above the two rivers, still alive with the ghosts of native peoples and the Doukhobor community, may be the single most beautiful and culturally significant spot in the Kootenays.

It happened that one afternoon in the early autumn of 1999, as we were walking over the land along this route, a sudden and blindingly clear insight revealed itself to us: that this was one of the last remaining Doukhobor communal buildings in something approaching an original state, that the elderly Doukhobor woman who was living in the house (at the pleasure of the College which owned the property) would not last here many more winters, that something needed to be done to save this landmark, and “that something” should be a Centre for Peace, a living memorial to past belief and future practice.

Soon after this walk, the word MIR



became increasingly important in our understanding of what the Peace Centre might represent: MIR—an ancient and complex Russian word which means at one and the same time, peace, community, and world. Its original meaning emerges from the Russian village where the mir was the smallest unit of community agreement and consensus arrived at freely by the people.

This was our starting point for imagining a site for peace based in community experience and consensus but reaching out to larger worlds—a centre for “understanding and building cultures of peace” which became our most basic philosophical principle. Very soon, too, we realized that in addition to being based in the historical and cultural experience of our place, any successful Centre for Peace would need to be “vertically integrated”—in other words that old methods of understanding peace and social justice and healing were often enough sectarian in their approach, seeking one major path or goal; we soon reached consensus that many paths to understanding and building peace would need to be followed—from questions of personal, spiritual and family understanding, to issues of cultural and artistic importance, to challenges of conflict resolution based in community, global and environmental arenas, and finally to the lived experiences of peoples such as the Doukhobors, First Nations and others whose historical experience of peace, conflict and the need for healing go far beyond the merely theoretical. These voices needed to be listened to with seriousness, the threads of their stories drawn together and shared with other communities.

Events moved quickly following these initial insights: we received absolute support and commitment from the upper levels of administration at Selkirk College—people such as former President Leo Perra and current President, Marilyn Luscombe—but also from other

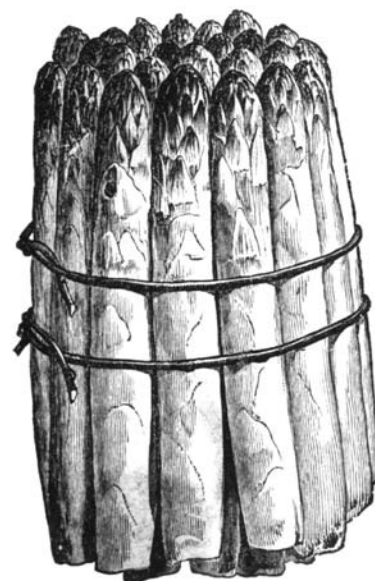
community leaders such as John Verigin Jr. of the USCC Doukhobors, and Marilyn James who represents the Siniixt people of this region. Increasingly there has been interest in the Peace Centre from community groups who want to offer their skills and financial support freely without any demand for public recognition. The British Columbia government, through the B.C. Heritage Trust in Victoria, has been very generous in providing initial funding for structural feasibility studies of the building, and then for the complete heritage renovation of the roof just prior to first snowfall last winter.

The physical structure now has been secured, and we are beginning to work on the next phases not only of the heritage reconstruction of the Doukhobor building, but also in carefully defining the philosophical, pedagogical and cultural goals of the Peace Centre. This is exciting and necessary work, which will require not only the skills and insight of our working group but also assistance from like-minded communities such as the Humanities Institute at Simon Fraser University. Professor Jerry Zaslove, then Humanities Institute Director and a friend, visited the site of our MIR Peace Centre earlier this year and we began to talk of ways in which we might work together (one of them being my agreement to serve as an associate of the Humanities Institute over the next three years).

We would be happy to communicate with all people from the SFU community who have an interest in the idea of the MIR Centre for Peace. On a very practical physical level, the Doukhobor communal home will be renovated with a strong fidelity to its original heritage structure, though we will be creating spaces and technology for modern education and communication. This will mean among other things: two spaces for traditional seminar and classroom activities, at least one or two other spaces for more creative

seminar and meeting activities, and potentially one space which would be dedicated to cultural and spiritual reflection. Our plan is to create a living museum and educational space with courses in peace and social justice studies, conflict resolution and healing, international cultures and literatures, environmental analysis and community institutes. In addition to learning spaces, we have completed architectural drawings which include space for a small library, a few offices, as well as a kitchenette which would allow for more informal community gatherings.

We have learned a few indelible lessons as far as we have come with the MIR Centre for Peace: we know now, even more clearly than we did before, of the importance of taking walks, of staying close to the earth but not fearing to raise one's eyes upwards. We have found that many other people walk the same paths, or want to; that many others, when they raise their eyes, see the same portents written in the skies above them.



Violence on Bowen Island

September 2000

—*Steve Duguid*

In September 2000 thirteen people trekked to Bowen Island for a two-day seminar on violence. The first of what is to be an annual “Joanne Brown Symposium” (named for a generous benefactor of the Institute for the Humanities) was held at the Lodge at the Old Dorm on Bowen, just a short walk from Snug Cove. From Thursday evening until Saturday afternoon the participants enjoyed that most pleasurable of academic pursuits, the discussion of and debate about complex issues in an environment abstracted from offices, electronic mail, and interruptions from the usual suspects. Host Dan Parkin provided gourmet meals, the weather was suitably benign (non-violent) and the living room-cum-seminar room seated thirteen in intimate comfort. What better place to engage with “Systemic Violence: An Interdisciplinary and Comparative Approach to Understanding, Experiencing and Responding to Violence”?

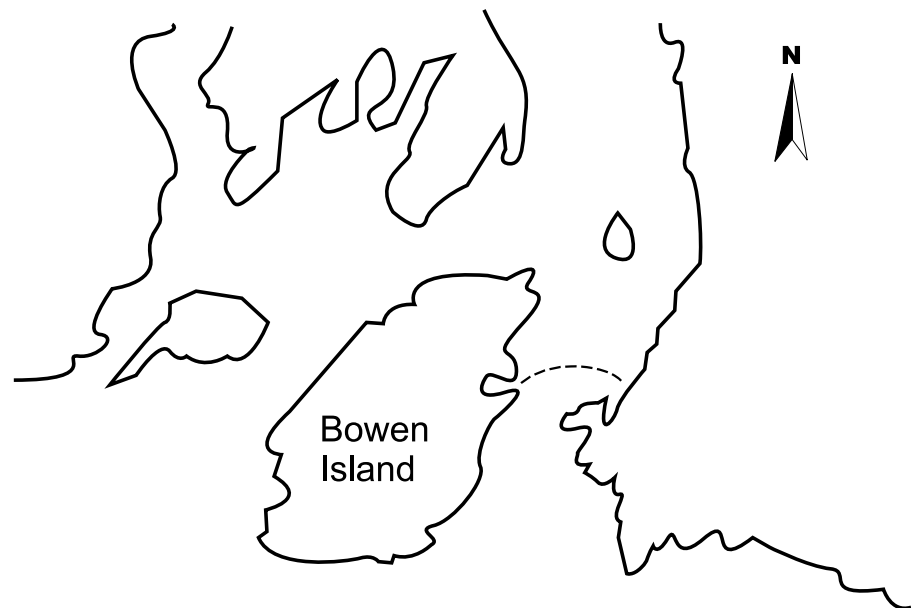
Three individuals were asked to prepare papers for the symposium; John O’Neill from York University (Sociology), Wolf Dieter-Narr from the Free University of Berlin, and Debra Pepler from York University (Director of the LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution). These papers along with the introduction to the seminar by Jerry Zaslove provided the substance around which the discussion and debate took place. The format meant that each paper could be presented and discussed at length and the speakers had the opportunity to prepare responses to the discussion. The informal setting, ample time for discussion, communal meals and evening visits to local establishments gave each participant the opportunity to explore issues in depth, ask questions, and present their own

ideas both informally and in ad hoc sessions.

In such a ‘hothouse’ atmosphere a wide range of ideas and perspectives are generated, especially since, as Margaret Jackson pointed out, this first symposium was meant to be a “painting of the landscape.” Crudely summarized, John O’Neill offered a philosophical and aesthetic look at violence with, as Ian Angus pointed out, a focus “...on violence as suffering, on the phenomenology of violence as seen by the victim.” Wolf Dieter-Narr’s contribution turned our attention to state violence and the structural dimensions of violence and, as Larry Green noted, the implications of culturally imposed “bloodless abstractions” as commonplace as “personalities reduced to job descriptions.” Finally, Debra Pepler brought the discussion to the very particular case of schoolyard violence, bullying and the other oppressions of youth. The discussion of Pepler’s work, as Ian Angus noted, was

“...pervaded by a sense of sadness, of personal hurt...” as people recalled their own memories of life in the schoolyards, neighbourhoods and streets of their youth.

In the post-mortem (!) of the symposium two points seemed to be salient in terms of where the symposium should go in its commitment to engaging with the issue of systemic violence. First, there was the feeling that such a phenomenon cannot be understood in the abstract. While it is important that we attempt to create and sustain a theoretical perspective on violence, that attempt needs to be enriched by analyses of specific types or case studies. Second, we must be aware of the danger that ‘understanding’ violence can often lead to excusing or condoning it and hence the very practice of studying violence with the aim of understanding can have violent implications.



Systemic Violence

Typicalities and Peculiarities of Violence in Our Time

September 2000

Excerpted from a presentation by Wolf-Dieter Narr, Free University of Berlin

Violence is everywhere. It is a universal phenomenon. Vertically and horizontally: *Urbi et orbi*. It seems to be almost an ontological given, an essential part of the human condition related as it is between natality and mortality.

Violence is everywhere today. It is implicit and lurks explicit in all kinds of aspects, configurations, dimensions and contexts. It ranges from collective violence in the extremes of wars, i.e. mass murder and genocidal “purges”... to violence in cities and families, particularly and especially apparent in the violence of male “people” against female “people.”

This extensive and intensive universality of violence notwithstanding, there is quite an

astonishing silence about violence at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century—at least in Western societies and their social sciences. Or to put it more correctly: according to the established mainstreams of thought and their formulas of power, violence is always a phenomenon of the generalized and the specific other. Violence is the expression of the individual and/or the collective outsider, or of marginalized people here and there. Therefore it has to be criminalized and punished either by humanitarian “interventions,” the present day just wars for example against the “rogue states,” or by criminal law procedures of various kinds, that is to say as the defense of given normalities against the permanent threat of the challenges of abnormal, i.e. anomic, behaviour.

Do utopian dreams of non-violent behaviour patterns become true? The slow, but steady expansion of civilization in a civilizing manner seems to be nothing else but the implementation of human progress hoped for since paradise lost. Taking as a symptom the astonishingly (from another point of view, the depressingly) joint language of the political personnel at large, and the (therefore) influential representatives of the social sciences, there can be no doubt: “We,” the “West,” the “North,” the OECD countries, these wonderful tandems created out of liberal democratic constitutions and freewheeling capitalism, move ahead—always—in the right direction. It is risky of course, but with risks to be taken, to pursue the golden path of global growth and its worldwide welfare dividends. “We” are moving toward a “global civil society,” its individuals competing for higher and higher achievements. The Olympic Games are both a metaphor and a “reality,” the real thing at one and the same time.

To give a hint for a possible proof of the general assertions I just have made: if one would try to summarize most of the literature on all kinds of global trends and global transformations, one would have to state two facts. First, the lack of any analysis of the inbuilt violence in regard to the main factors and driving forces of globalization; second, all indications in regard to the big problems ahead notwithstanding, an overwhelming “new positivism” exists, as I call it, of the will to power of “positive thinking”. It goes without saying that this kind of “positivism” is part of the almost structurally deceptive (pseudo-) politics in these media times. But this kind of “positivism” is part and parcel of the mainstream of the social sciences too, which encompasses about 99% of all kinds of activities that could be labeled social scientific. Insofar one could safely state: “we”—of the West/ North, of course, are living in safe quarters in the middle of our cities and faculties—“we” are all positivists now.

What about “violence”?

Equivalent to its universal chameleon and Proteus-like expression there is no term “violence,” let alone a concept, which could be used comparatively *distincte et claire*. As soon as one begins to determine the term, and as soon as one tries to be precise, to limit its aspects, dimensions and meanings, one faces the danger of covering up, of accepting quite a few non-decisions, i.e. premises which have to be taken for granted and which make one accept as given the dominant or opposing concept of “reality” and the advantages or disadvantages of this “reality”. It is not by chance that in one of the leading German dictionaries the overview about the various meanings and the multitude of uses of the term “violence”—in German



Gewalt—is probably the longest one (Cf. *Deutsches Wörterbuch* of Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, Munich 1984 Vol.6, pp. 4910–5234).

As a political scientist and someone analytically and primarily concerned with the modern state (and its “monopoly of the legitimate use of coercive power/or physical violence”) and normatively oriented to what I call a materialistic concept of human rights, I tend to focus primarily on violence as a “physical fact”. But as soon as I limit my focus on violence to its physical expressions only, I would not be able to conceive of the meaning of the modern state and its pretension, to possess “the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical violence.” I would fall into the trap of the—seeming—immediacy of physical violence. All its mediations and cover-ups, all its institutional, even its structural preconditions and contexts would escape my sight. Out of these extremely sketchy thoughts so far let me pose a necessary cautionary conclusion that might be an adequate beginning: there can be and there should not be a clear-cut definition of what violence is all about. Such a clear-cut definition would not enable us to come to grips with the multi-headed, labyrinthine-like intriguing phenomenon of violence. It would make us insensitive and indolent toward violence—even in its physical expression, and especially in regard

to violence as an extraordinary mediated phenomenon. The levels and escalators of mediation increase quite a bit in the process, which is called modernity or civilization.

There are quite a few dangers implicit in the use of the term violence in such an undetermined manner. First, as a vague term it becomes acritical. It cannot be used for analysis, which has to specify some conditions, if not causal factors, more than the other ones. Otherwise “the man without qualities” (Robert Musil’s novel) will be matched by an oxymoronic analysis without qualities, i.e. its exclusion. Michel Foucault’s universalization of the term “power”

nowhere?

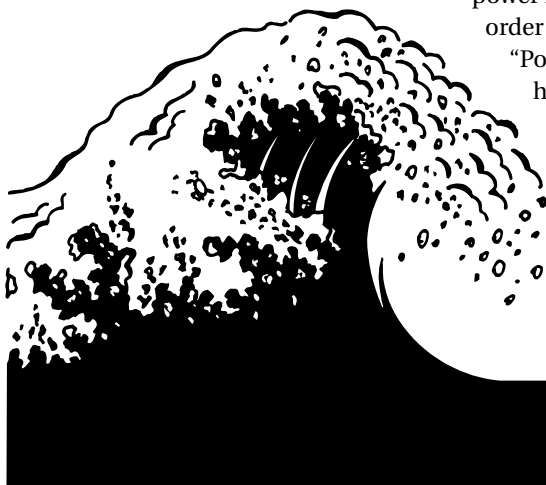
My last criticism of a catchall criticism, which becomes acritical, links the first with the second objection, i.e. the “postmodern” one. If almost all social events have something to do with violence, if everybody has to construe his or her concept of violence him-, or herself, why care about it? Everybody construes his/her own term and deconstrues all the other ones. What a joyful game of irrelevant terminological tennis. Everybody wins and loses at least once in a while and according to the circumstances.

This postmodernist stance misses examining itself as could be proven epistemologically even on its own premises. The latter are naively kept secret—the pretentious attitude of reflection notwithstanding. No doubt, Nietzsche has definitively taught us these dangers. There is no recognition possible without a specific “subjective” and even a personal perspective. But what we face as “reality,” as a “natural” and as a “cultural” one is not just arbitrarily composed. It cannot be construed just as we like it. To use an Orwellian phrase: all phenomena of violence are equal, but there are some

violences, their conditions and their effects, which are more violent and more “equal”—that is, influential than the other ones. And this inequality, this hierarchy between various forms of violence—that is it what counts, analytically as well as normatively.

Asked what we would have to criticize, we cry, “power”; asked what our criticism is all about, we cry again “power.” Then why should we care about it, if power is everywhere and, therefore in a way, nowhere?... This postmodernist stance misses examining itself as could be proven epistemologically even on its own premises. The latter are naively kept secret—the pretentious attitude of reflection notwithstanding.”

is in danger of having such an effect. It enables us to discover all kinds of power everywhere. That’s an enormous analytical progress. At the same time, it disables us to point out specific power relations in order to give a rank order to them. It tends to make us “Polyphemic”. Asked what we would have to criticize, we cry, “power”; asked what our criticism is all about, we cry again “power.” Then why should we care about it, if power is everywhere and, therefore in a way,



Violence and Love: Changing God's Mind

Metanoia: The Two Loves of God and Neighbor

September 2000

*Excerpt from a presentation by
John O'Neill, York University, Toronto*

The scandal of religion is that it is a force both for war and peace, for justice and injustice, for life and death. The Bible is clearly a text obsessed with "making" and "unmaking" bodies, as Elaine Scarry puts it in her extraordinary comparison of the Judeo-Christian scriptures and the writings of Marx. The structure of belief operates through the bodily wounds inflicted upon living creatures by their Creator: "wounding re-enacts the creation because it re-enacts the power of alteration that has its first profound occurrence in creation" (Scarry, 1985: 183). The Hebrew God is the Lord of the Weapon who commands belief and destroys infidelity. His Voice demands loyalty and promises blessings or immeasurable suffering according to the people's response. The reverberation of Biblical violence becomes a visceral response to the vicissitudes of Israel, until, as we shall argue, God Himself experiences a "change of heart" (*metanoia*), laying down the weapons of the God of Pain, to assume in His Son a life of compassion for us fellow beings. God's Law requires innocent children to be slain as a preface to the Exodus. Yet Israel's Divine adoption is part of God's "controversy" with Israel (Micah 6:1-16) and is coupled with the threat of abandonment and slaughter in response to Israel's unfaithfulness.

I am setting aside the seductive generalization of mimetic violence (Freud, 1960; Girard, 1977) as an account of Biblical violence. This is because I think it misses the *intergenerational structure of*

genocide in the family murder—the death of a child or parent or of a spouse prescribed by the male appropriation /envy of female procreation. Obviously, genocide is not a uniquely Biblical imperative. But where colonization and genealogy are identified in a tribal or national mission then genocide is the ultimate aim of political conquest. We have to ask why parents kill their children

What the master challenges as I see it, is the laborers' capacity for fraternity. What they risk in the name of justice is demanding that the master treat them equally but as exploited labor! Here, then, is the old sacrificial logic of collectively (mis)recognized violence.

in order to "understand" why other people's children, women and men are killed. The Biblical family is passionate because its Divine Father has singled it out over other families whom He can destroy in favor of the family whose line He blesses. Divine adoption is the model of patriarchal control over maternity, i.e. of the male *gift* of sperm and the priestly reinscription of circumcision that redeems the first-born son of man (Eilberg-Schwartz, 1990). Freud's oedipalisation of the question loses its intergenerational context, i.e. it ignores why Laios wished to kill his son, Oedipus. In Freud's model, the sons envy the father's possession of the mother. But the male envies the female's procreativity, i.e. mimetic rivalry is not homoerotic but heterosexual (Scubla, 1985). How is male procreative envy structured? It is structured *intergenerationally*, as we have shown, through cross-

cousin marriage where the avunculate relationship assigns to the brother ritual power of life and death over his sister's child as the one to whom he is most certainly *kinsman*. Thus patriarchy satisfies both psychosexual rivalry and the politics of intergenerational identity.

Regina Schwartz (1997:116-117) remarks on the "metaphysical scarcity" that characterizes Hebrew monotheism driving it towards particularism and exclusion rather than universal inclusion. God's gifts set off rivalry and violence because they involve *expropriation*, i.e. an identity staked at the cost of another's loss of identity (*Genesis* 12:12; 13:14-17). Territorial identity, however, is easily destabilized by kinship identity. In other words the purity of Israel (*Leviticus* 20:26) cannot be achieved without

a precarious juggling of insider/ outsider marriages. Here woman becomes the figure of instability, disorder and betrayal. Israel herself becomes a whore among the nations, unfaithful to her Divine husband (*Jeremiah* 3: 2-3) who finally resolves to replace this stone Law with a new Law of Love written in Israel's heart (*Jeremiah* 32: 39-40) to which I return later. Behind the figure of woman's disorderliness, however, there lies male envy of woman's procreativity (God is parthenogenetic). When male envy is translated into kinship, *adoption rules birth*, i.e. the father can prefer/reject sons and wives. Patriarchy I would argue underlies the scarcity of love observed by Schwartz because its arbitrariness is intrinsic to its control over offspring regarded as the continuation of the male line (patrilineage). We may think of the rituals of sacrifice and circumcision as male memory systems that erase

maternal origin. The arbitrariness of paternal love rules the “naturalness” of mother love. Behind this convention lies the sanction of *inheritance*, i.e. the bequest land which identifies kinsmen and people. The father's *word* and not the *mother-body*, is the source of male sibling rivalry. But neither are brothers in a homoerotic struggle to seduce the father, as Freud claimed. The father's preoccupation is with heterosexual envy, the desire to abrogate the parthenogenetic power of woman (with a little help from supernumerary sperm, or to avoid anachronism, from males no more significant to women than are women to men!).

René Girard separates Old Testament violence from any reflexive formulation of its aporias until its sacrificial logic is exposed in the New Testament. I think it is necessary to show that the critique of sacrificial logic underlying religion, politics and society is continuous from the Bible, through the Gospels to Hobbes, Kant and Rawls (1972). In short, I shall try to elicit the *anti-sacrificial logic* that is the underlying principle of civic peace and social justice. I want to argue that it is the God of violence who “repents”

(*metanoia*) His first performance to become the God of Love. The moment God withdraws the family privilege of the chosen people he has cancelled the law of genocide as its sanction. In effect, the God of Love suspends the family in favor of a non-sacrificial fraternity. We can then envisage an ethical covenant in which the Law of Love prescribes the exclusion of the least one among us. By commuting the violence of ethnic, class and gender difference into the violence of unjustifiable difference, we inaugurate a secular covenant of social justice and personal inviolability for which we alone are responsible (Mizruchi, 1988).

The figure of Christ's Two Kingdoms restates the political paradox of Israel's largely unsuccessful kingdom on earth by reattaching it to a kingdom in heaven just when the conquering Roman emperors were becoming divine! At this point, Jesus inaugurates the double contract that structures political modernity:

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (Mark, 12:17)

Here we have a formula for the separation of Church and State that rejects equally the history of the State as Church and Church as State. Christ's formula is not, however, a formula for doubling our social obligations. Rather it enunciates a lexical order (Rawls, 1972: 42-45) that suspends any *sacrificial* relation between society (state, economy) and the least individual. Consider the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20.1-16).

How are “we” to hear this story? We might take the viewpoint of any of the individual laborers each of whose ordinary sense of justice (equal pay for equal work) is violated by the master. In turn, even the master might attribute his dealings with the laborer as directed solely by his right of ownership, underscoring it by rejecting the egalitarian interpretation in allegiance to Derridean autonomy of the gift (Derrida, 1991; O'Neill, 1999). What the master challenges as I see it, is the laborers' capacity for fraternity. What they risk in the name of justice is demanding that the master treat them equally but as exploited labor! Here, then, is the old sacrificial logic of collectively (mis)recognized violence. However, the master's act is not simply the prototype of Rawlsian social justice because the master's model is Divine Mercy (Grace) rather than the secular inclusion of the least advantaged in any calculation of welfare. The Two Commandments are not subsumable to yield a Derridean *ethics without religion*. Rather, we must retain their “lexical order,” giving priority to the fore-gift of mercy and forgiveness.



Joanne Brown Symposium on Violence and its Alternatives

Bowen Island, October 2001

This year's symposium featured **Stephen K. Levine** from the Faculty of Social Sciences and the program in Social and Political Thought, York University. Professor Levine brings a background in social thought, arts therapy, philosophy and anthropology to the questions of violence and poesis in the arts and trauma in life. His background in poetics and the theatre provided a foundation for fifteen invited academics, psychologists and social praxis individuals to discuss violence and its alternatives. His paper written for the symposium is entitled "The Coming of Dionysos: Trauma, Mimesis, Poesis". A selection from his review "Mimetic Wounds: Trauma and Drama in Psychotherapy and the Arts" (a review of *Trauma: A Genealogy*, by Ruth Leys, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000) is printed below.

If we recognize the *dramatic* origin of mimesis, then perhaps our understanding of the mimetic character of trauma can itself be re-configured. In drama, mimesis is both conscious and enacted; there is thus none of the opposition between *blind* enactment and *conscious* recollection that structures the trauma discourse. In fact, one might say that trauma is a form of *failed* mimesis; in trauma, imitation is reduced to identification, and the distance which is necessary to recognize the mimetic performance is abolished.

The distinction between imitation and identification is important, for it leads to a new alternative for therapeutic practice. Rather than having to choose between abreaction and recollection, between a blind enactment which "repeats" an identificatory act and a specular representation which claims to "integrate" the traumatic event into the conscious narrative of one's life—an impossible alternative, as Leys shows—there emerges the possibility of *conscious enactment*, in other words, the dramatic re-presentation of the traumatic event, its shaping in artistic form. Artistic or poetic mimesis is always a kind of shaping. Mimesis is in fact an interpretative practice; its "repetition" is always a "re-interpretation." This is clear to anyone who has worked in theater; it is absurd to think that theatrical performance is a literal reproduction of anything whatsoever. Moreover, each production "differs" from every other even in the performance of

the "same" work; indeed, successive performances of the same production will always differ as well.

Mimesis is not identification. The same is not the identical. Mimesis cannot be thought within the logic of identification in which one is either oneself or another. If there is a concept which can capture the essence of the mimetic process, it is that of *resemblance* rather than identification. This means that a mimetic or imitative act is neither identical with nor different from its

The discourse of trauma is traumatizing because it repeats the traumatic structure: the tear between being and knowing in which no mediation is possible.

"object" (and of course without the logic of identity there can be neither subject nor object, at least not in the traditional sense of these terms); rather it is *like* what it imitates. The mimetic performance resembles its object; it thus obeys the logic of resemblance rather than that of identity.

This is, in fact, the basis of Plato's well-known rejection of mimesis. The poets must be banished from the just city, since their *poiesis* is based on *seeming* rather than on *being*. That is, the mimetic basis of poesis renders it the antagonist to philosophy, which

requires knowledge of what is, not the imitation of what only appears to be. The fact that Plato was unable to banish mimesis from his own thought (since, among other things, he gives what purports to be a mimetic re-presentation of Socrates' dialogic encounter) is evidence enough that this distinction, on which the very project of philosophy in the classical sense is based, is itself suspect. The advent of phenomenology was merely the last step in the restoration of the realm of appearance, a restoration which was already present in every work of art.

The discourse of trauma is traumatizing because it repeats the traumatic structure: the tear between being and knowing in which no mediation is possible. Leys herself unwittingly repeats (as trauma invariably does) the terms of this discourse by her "close reading" of the relevant texts. As Borch-Jacobsen was later to say about his own early analysis of Freud: "...this is what the strategy of deconstruction is all about: you take a theory and use its own conceptuality to highlight its internal contradictions, aporias, etc. But when you engage in this kind of parasitic activity, you obviously run the risk of becoming yourself a victim of the conceptuality you feed upon" (Borch-Jacobsen, 1997, p.216). Though genealogy is not exactly (not mimetically) deconstruction, this description applies to Leys' analysis as well. Despite her critique of memoro-politics, she repeats the theoretical aporia contained in the traumatic conception of mimesis.

Her discourse is in fact constituted by an opposition between a “close reading,” in which she identifies with her texts, and a critical analysis, in which she maintains the specular distance necessary for the practitioner of genealogy.

To go “beyond” the structural opposition of mimesis and anti-mimesis, it is necessary to “restore” the original place of mimesis as the essence of poiesis. Thus conceived, not only must trauma be envisioned differently (and perhaps even the concept of “trauma” will have to be incorporated within a broader category of social suffering) but therapeutic practice will have other alternatives than the mere “pragmatism” of techniques which Leys’ demonstration of the inadequacy of trauma theory leads her to recommend at the end of her book.

Mimesis/poiesis/catharsis—the ancient terms need to be “repeated” and therefore understood differently in order to become the basis of contemporary therapeutic practice.

One way for this to happen is to re-vision the healing practices of traditional cultures from the point of view of an understanding of dramatic performance as enacted in Greek tragic theatre. There is a relationship (of resemblance not identity) between traditional performances of healing and dramatic enactment on the tragic stage which enables the concept of catharsis to be used in both a therapeutic and a theatrical sense. The *mimesis of poiesis* produces *catharsis*—the classical formula holds true, provided we do not interpret it within the antinomies of classical thought.

The key to a therapeutic practice based on the arts lies in a re-thinking of the concept of mimesis which is at the heart of poiesis. How can we understand mimesis without reducing it to a form of identification? Perhaps if we think it from the point of view of poiesis itself, it will appear differently

than when it is conceived in terms of a philosophical analysis based on the logic of identity. Poiesis has a logos of its own. The poetic is not without thought; but its thinking is embodied. Thus the corporeal logic of poiesis requires the bodily presence of performance in order to be realized. Poiesis is performative. That is why we can speak of the performance of healing; for poiesis to occur, it must be enacted.

The difficulty, it seems to me, is that we continue to conceive of mimesis in terms of identification.

The key to a therapeutic practice based on the arts lies in a re-thinking of the concept of mimesis which is at the heart of poiesis. How can we understand mimesis without reducing it to a form of identification?

As long as we operate within a logic of identity in which thought and being, mind and body, self and other, stand in opposition, we will always fall back into the antinomies of blind identification and specular representation, immediacy and distance. The whole project of contemporary thought is to overcome these antinomies by developing a mode of thinking differently, a way of thinking the middle realm “between” the oppositions of traditional philosophical logic. The works of such thinkers as Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Derrida, Serres, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy could all be thought of as performances resembling each other in the staging of a post-representational world, a world which “repeats” (differently) the pre-philosophical worlds of traditional cultures in which poiesis is recognized to be a form of knowing, the tragic wisdom achieved only through an acceptance of suffering which leads to responsibility.

This is not a recommendation of primitivism nor an attempt to return to the Greeks (or turn to the Orient). Such an identificatory mimesis can only end in unwitting self-parody. Rather we need to look at post-modern performance and the performance of post-modernity to see how poiesis “repeats” itself today. In this sense, the critique of the metaphysics of presence needs to be continually repeated, if we are to develop a poietic phenomenology, free of all fundamentalisms, that can lead to a theory, a way of seeing, capable of responding to the trauma of our times.

To be neither victim nor executioner, we need to move into the middle realm in which we can play out our lives differently. Trauma is not only a mimetic wound; it is a wounding of mimesis itself. The identificatory incorporation of suffering can only be overcome by a mimetic embodiment in the performative or playful mode. Drama and trauma are thus indissolubly linked. Trauma is itself drama but in the form of a blind enactment of suffering. To overcome it is not to achieve a specular differentiation which provides a vantage point from which trauma can be surveyed and mastered. Rather, the catharsis of healing comes only through a poietic mimesis in which I can enact my suffering without becoming it.

If psychotherapy has indeed been wounded by the discourse of trauma, then we need to re-play this discourse differently. Otherwise therapy itself will indeed become the trauma from which we seek to escape. It remains to be seen whether therapeutic discourse can regain a poietic dimension or whether it will remain hostile to the arts. In that case, we can only hope that the spirit of poiesis will find another stage on which to perform its healing act.

Human Rights at SFU

—*Bob Russell*

Through small amounts of financial support, in the form of an honorarium or a partial payment of travel expenses, the Institute is often able to play the determining role in bringing human rights activists to SFU to give public lectures. Over the past two years, I have been involved in organizing several such events.

For the last ten years SFU has been involved in a very large (\$50,000,000) international project, the Eastern Indonesia Universities Development Project (EIUDP). For much of that time, Jerry Zaslove and I have expended considerable effort questioning the judiciousness of SFU's involvement during the Suharto's rule, largely because of human rights concerns. The EIUDP's influence on campus has been large; so it is not surprising that Indonesia has been a strong influence in human rights activities.

As some background on activities in which the Institute has been involved, I quote from a message which we sent to sfufa-forum (the faculty email forum) in September of 1999:

Several years ago the Institute for the Humanities conducted a forum on the condition of human rights in Indonesia and Simon Fraser's opportunity to influence Government policy there. Subsequently we hosted with several North American universities a forum in Vancouver which the Nobel Laureate, Jose Ramos Horta, attended. He is now in the news, as you know. One of our speakers at both of those events was Geoff Robinson, a Canadian who was for many years the Amnesty International expert on Indonesia in London and who is now a history professor at UCLA. Geoff has recently been with the Political Office Staff of UNAMET (United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor) in Dili. It has recently been reduced from a staff of 20 to 4, with Geoff being one of those, and we have been informed that there is considerable concern about his safety. After the second Forum and when it appeared that Indonesia was opening its eyes to democratic changes, with the help of Chris Dagg of SFU's Eastern Indonesia Universities Development Project, the Institute and other SFU organizations, we invited many teachers and journalists from Indonesia to discuss the questions of democratic transition and how we could assist their efforts.

We are now asking for you to use your voice in contacting the individuals below in order to express your opinion about Canada's role in achieving some meaningful and permanent action to stop the atrocities going on in East Timor.

This message resulted in a number of faculty members writing to politicians appealing for a peaceful resolution

of matters in East Timor, but while our friend Dr. Robinson was to survive the ordeal in Dili, as you know, many East Timorese did not.

A short time later, on October 25, 1999, we were fortunate to have an important individual from East Timor, Reverend Arlindo Marcal, past moderator of the Protestant Church of East Timor, visit SFU. In the March 1997 "Symposium on Human Rights and Democratic Development: the Case of East Timor and Indonesia," which the Institute had held primarily in conjunction with the Government of Portugal, Reverend Arlindo Marcal was scheduled to participate.

Unfortunately, there was strong intimidation by the Indonesian Government, and all of the East Timorese living inside of East Timor or Indonesia, including Reverend Marcal, were forced to cancel their participation. Several Indonesian security agents and private citizens sent by the Indonesian Government did attend our events on campus in order to disrupt some of our events. For these reasons, Reverend Marcal's visit was all the more significant. He participated in a forum entitled "East Timor: What Now?" Sponsors included the Institute for the Humanities and Amnesty International. Its timing was particularly opportune given that on October 20, the Indonesian parliament had renounced all claims to East Timor, and a UN transitional administration was to be put in place soon. It was also relevant to members of the university community because there was an upcoming review of the EIUDP which had been approved by Senate.

Soon after his informative talk at SFU, Marcal returned to a very difficult situation in East Timor. I received moving accounts of his activities over the next several months. Several follow-up activities occurred on campus. For example, in November I talked to an SFU student East Timor group who, determined to bring forward its concerns about SFU's role in Indonesia, was formulating a response to SFU's "Internationalization for the New Millennium" paper.

Troubles across Indonesia went on. For many months, it was unclear how many East Timorese were killed or trapped in Indonesia. In December the European Parliament called for extension of their arms embargo for Indonesia. They asked the Indonesian Government to bring to account those responsible for violations of human rights in Aceh, the Moluccas Islands, West Papua as well as other parts of the country, and in East Timor, called on all the parties concerned to

collaborate fully in a Governmental investigation, and called on the Indonesian Government to disband the special troop command Kopassus. As we shall see below, these occurrences were to shape later events at SFU.

In January 2000, the Institute hosted a lecture by Anto Sangaji, who works with Yayasan Tanah Merdeka, an organization in South Sulawesi opposing some of the activities by Inco, the largest Canadian investor in Indonesia. INCO's mine at Soroako is one of the largest in the world and has been criticized on environmental, human rights and labour rights grounds. Sangaji is originally from Ambon but has lived in Sulawesi since college. He is director of YTM, an organization which works for community self-help development, environmental conservation, political advocacy for indigenous people, and human rights. He had come to Canada to speak on the activities of INCO, particularly the threatened eviction of indigenous people due to the proposed expansion of PT Inco's nickel mine. In his talk "Mining Nickel, Moving People: A Public Forum on INCO in Indonesia & at Home," Anto gave a moving account of disruption which takes place in the local communities. He addressed in detail issues regarding INCO's operations in South Sulawesi and its planned expansion to Central Sulawesi, as well as addressing its operations elsewhere in Indonesia (Irian Jaya, Ambon, Aceh). As recently as last May, he was making news in the Indonesian press, raising concerns about effects of INCO mining on local communities.

In February of this year, Jeff Halper and Salin Shawanreh spoke in their "Israel/Palestine Science for Peace Tour". I had discovered their visit to Vancouver through a mailing of Science for Peace, an organization in which I have been involved for some time. The presentation was co-ordinated with the SFU Student Society, who also paid some expenses and helped advertise the event.

On March 12, the Institute sponsored a talk by Mr. John Rumbiak entitled "West Papua—the Next East Timor?" Mr. Rumbiak is a leading human rights activist in West Papua who works as program coordinator for the Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy in Jayapura. He has travelled extensively to promote awareness of human rights violations by the Indonesian authorities and after speaking at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva was on a pan-Canadian tour to raise awareness of these issues.

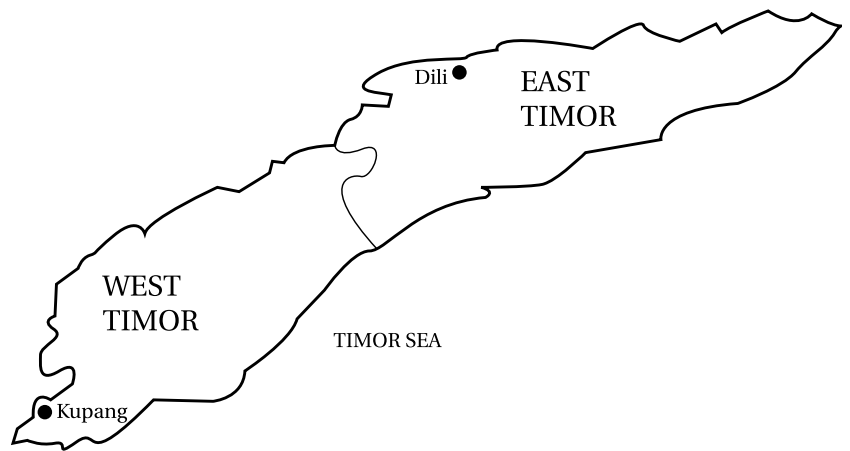
Unfortunately, there was strong intimidation by the Indonesian Government, and all of the East Timorese living inside of East Timor or Indonesia, including Reverend Marcal, were forced to cancel their participation. Several Indonesian security agents and private citizens sent by the Indonesian Government did attend our events on campus in order to disrupt some of our events.

As background, West Papua (also known as Irian Jaya) has been under Indonesian colonial rule since the 1960s. Home to a million Melanesians and forming half of the world's second largest island, West Papua is of growing concern today. The same sort of terror campaign that tore East Timor apart (militia terror groups, Indonesian troop build-up, arrest and killings of pro-independence activists) has been building in West Papua. For more than thirty years, West Papuans have been struggling for their right to self-determination. The Indonesian military has responded with massive human rights violations. The international community, including Canadian companies, has largely ignored the situation, except to profit from the exploitation of West Papua's enormous natural resources. The university in Jayapura, West Papua has been one of the scenes of mounting violence. In December, for example, a student dorm was attacked by Indonesian Brimob police, with the result that over 100 students were arrested and three killed. It is also

one of the five universities involved in the EIUDP, and a number of the EIUDP students attended the event. In addition to seeing a remarkable video on East Timor during the violent times leading up to its referendum, the audience witnessed a moving talk by Mr. Rumbiak. I found him to be a person of remarkable strength of character and presence, with an absence of bitterness over what has happened to West Papua. It is from such rare individuals that one finds optimism.

Events at SFU have taken an interesting turn in the past year. Although not well publicized in the local media, one critical situation exists at the University of Pattimura (UNPATTI), the state university in Ambon, Indonesia, which was burned in an attack on July 4, 2000. The university, one of several involved in the EIUDP, was home to approximately 10,000 students and 900 faculty members. The surrounding housing complex where many of the faculty, staff and their families lived was also attacked and burned. I became involved with an "Indonesian Assistance Fundraising Appeal" to raise money to support the people in Ambon. People involved were a broad coalition of people across campus, from those of us who have criticized SFU's involvement with Indonesia in the past, to the project's participants and supporters, including many Indonesian students at SFU, all of whom share the belief that SFU has a responsibility to aid Indonesia's citizens and universities as the country struggles with its current unrest and political upheaval.

I feel very fortunate to be an Associate member of the Institute for the Humanities. I am grateful for the opportunity it has afforded me to organize these events on human rights issues and to play some role, while SFU's involvement in Indonesia, through the EIUDP, is coming to a close.



A Just and Viable Peace? The Facts on the Ground

—Jane Power

Israeli politicians need a Palestinian state. That's the startling hypothesis that Israeli anthropologist Jeff Halper offered his audience at a February 2001 lecture* supported by the Institute for the Humanities at SFU. Without a Palestinian state, Halper explained, Israel's government will face an impossible choice. If they annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip outright, the three million Palestinians there will join the one million Arabs and five million Jews who are currently Israeli citizens, compromising Israel's identity as the Jewish state. If Israel annexes the West Bank and Gaza Strip without giving citizenship to the Palestinians, the resulting apartheid will put Israel hopelessly out-of-date by today's international standards. (Returning the territories seized in the 1967 war is repugnant for Biblical and strategic reasons.) A docile, fragmented Palestinian mini-state is the solution Israeli politicians appear to favour. This was their objective in the past seven years' "peace process." Palestinian engineer Salim Shawamreh, Halper's team-mate on a month-long, cross-Canada speaking tour, has encountered firsthand the Israeli government's move to fragment the West Bank by dispossessing its people. Three times in four years, the Israeli military's "civil administration" refused Shawamreh a building permit, each time with a different reason, while charging him a total of \$10,000 in application fees.

Giving up on legality, Shawamreh built a house. Four years later, in July 1998, as the Shawamrehs sat at lunch, 200 Israeli soldiers appeared outside with a bulldozer. By evening the Shawamrehs had joined some 7,000 other Palestinians whose homes have been demolished since 1967. His house, along with the garden and trees he had lovingly established to soften the rocky West Bank landscape, were rubble; his wife was in hospital, beaten and unable to speak; his small children were so traumatized that even two years later, they're afraid to leave their room at night. Shawamreh himself had been badly beaten.

Shawamreh was lucky: neighbours came out to oppose the bulldozer, and Halper and other Israeli and foreign activists, heading for a nearby demonstration, arrived within minutes. Several, including Halper, lay in front of the bulldozers. CNN and other TV crews appeared. Their footage familiarized European and North American audiences with the brutality of house demolition and mobilized support for the family. Meanwhile, within a month, Israeli, Palestinian and foreign volunteers rebuilt the house. The new structure lasted barely one night. At dawn Israeli troops destroyed it, too, and took away the Red Cross tent in which the Shawamrehs had been living. Again, the Israeli Committee

Against House Demolitions and the Palestinian Land Defense Committee rebuilt the house. This third structure still stands.

House demolitions are just one way the Israeli government is trying to divide up Palestinian areas, Halper emphasizes. Others are the "withdrawals" that leave every Palestinian-run town surrounded by Israeli military territory, the "bypass roads" that slice through Palestinian olive groves and vineyards, and the consolidation of Israeli settlements into "blocks" that isolate the areas of Palestinian concentration.

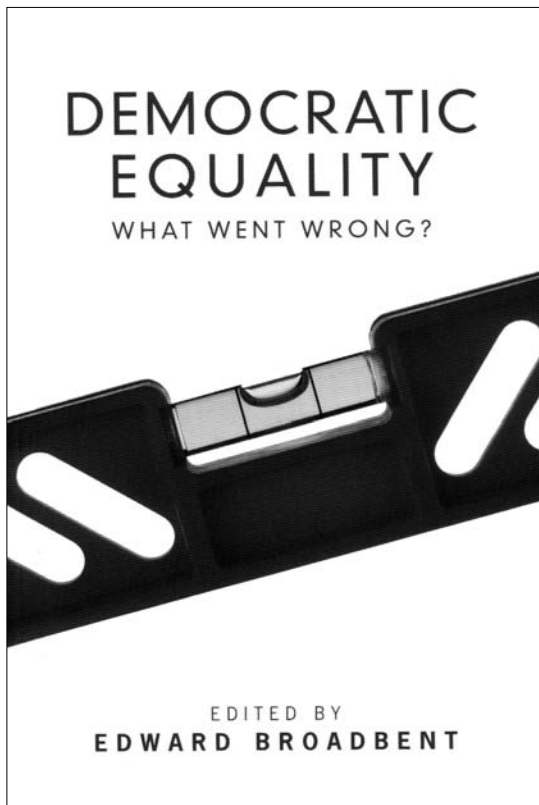
To those who ask why the Palestinians weren't content with the Clinton plan offering them "95 percent," Halper responds first that this is 95 percent of 22 percent of historic Palestine — Israel itself comprises 78 percent. Second, he notes that prisoners occupy about 95 percent of the area of a prison: it's not the territory but the control that counts.

Halper and Shawamreh offer their own "win-win" solution to succeed the moribund Oslo plan: an end to Israeli occupation, leading to productive, developing relationships between mutually reliant Israeli and Palestinian (and possibly neighbouring) states.

*Professor Bill Cleveland of SFU hosted the discussion, opening his History 465 class to the speakers and the University community.

Democratic Equality: What Went Wrong?

In November 1998, the Institute and the J.S. Woodsworth Chair hosted a conference, "Equality and the Democratic State". Papers were solicited from international scholars, social activists and decision-makers. Issues discussed were the status of social, political, and economic (in)equality, with particular reference to Canada, Britain and the United States. Participants included: Edward Broadbent, Dietrich Rueschemeyer (USA), G.A. Cohen (UK), Ian Angus (SFU), Jane Jenson (Université de Montréal), Ruth Lister, Social Policy (UK), Barbara Ehrenreich (US), Armine Yalnizyan (CANADA), John Richards (SFU), Jim Standford (Canadian Auto Workers), Bo Rothstein (Sweden), Daniel Savas (Angus Reid Group) and Bob Hackett (SFU). The conference papers were edited by Edward Broadbent and were published by the University of Toronto Press.



From the introduction to Democratic Equality: What Went Wrong? by Edward Broadbent, University of Toronto Press, 2000. pp. xv – xviii.

... democratic governments throughout the North Atlantic region initiated myriad social and economic programs explicitly aimed at furthering equality and security. In most of these countries, pensions, health care and education came to be viewed as a citizen's right, precisely because they were established for all citizens regardless of income.

Although the most important ideology of social equality based on citizens' rights was social democratic (stretching back to the end of the nineteenth century, with Edward Bernstein's

concept of the new citizen), other important belief systems underlay the new broad-ranging political consensus on the positive role of the state. Conservatives could draw upon their idea of a 'social market economy,' which had always distinguished itself from laissez-faire capitalism; liberals in quest of a positive notion of freedom could invoke T.H. Green, Leonard Hobhouse, and, above all others, John Stuart Mill.

It was no accident that when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, it contained not only the civil and political freedoms of the Western tradition but also the new egalitarian social and economic rights. The Canadian John Humphrey, who prepared the first draft of the Declaration, wrote that it "attempted to combine humanitarian liberalism with social democracy." Like Humphrey, most political leaders in most democracies had come to believe that without social and economic rights traditional political and civil liberties had little meaning for the majority. And without continuing intervention by national governments in the vagaries of unstable capitalism there could be neither social stability nor social rights.

When the contributors to this volume consider equality as a value of fundamental importance to democracy, they have at least one reasonably precise idea in mind: economic or material equality in substance or in outcomes. Thus when they advocate organizing society to ensure that a higher degree of equality prevails, they take into consideration the distribution of income and other forms of personal wealth, such as stocks, bonds and housing. They see more economic equality as being desirable for two reasons. First, those not separated by a wide gap in wealth are more likely to be able to communicate and empathize with each other

as citizens living in the same political structure. Without denying the importance of other significant differences which frequently result in other kinds of inequality—for example language, religious, ethnic, cultural, and gender differences—a significant gap in wealth not only weakens the general possibility of positive communication in society but also makes each of these other differences more likely to be seen as sources of conflict rather than forms of positive diversity. It is also the case that most liberal democracies have made significant progress in dealing with inequalities of these kinds, at the very time when economic inequality related to class has been on the increase. A second reason for favouring greater economic equality in outcomes as opposed to the classical liberal and neo-liberal (or neo-conservative) equality of opportunity, is that economic equality is seen to be fundamentally connected to the notion of free and participatory citizenship. This is particularly evident in a capitalist economy, grounded as it is on private property, differentials in market-based incomes, and the majority of individual choices being exercised in the context of purchasing goods and services.

In such a society, to make choices in exercising one's talents, capacities or interests is to participate in the market place, precisely because the means of their realization has to be purchased. Whether we are talking about going to a movie, taking a skiing holiday, acquiring a television set, having music lessons or deciding to take a day off from work, the vast majority of the choices we make to give substance to the abstract notion of freedom require money. The more choices we can make, the more freedom we have. Since choices require money, the more money we

have, the more free we are. In a market economy the rich not only have more money, they have more freedom. Thus equal citizenship in a market-based democracy, grounded in the notion of the equal freedom to make choices, necessarily implies that the state must take strong measures to achieve higher degrees of material equality than

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“Equality in substance” is a direct challenge to the neo-liberal “equality of opportunity” favoured by most non-social democratic parties and promoted by the mainstream media in most liberal democracies. What might be called the weak version of this liberal notion of equality of opportunity emphasizes the need for formal legal equality of all citizens as they confront real life in a capitalist democracy. If legal equality is provided by the state then any resultant inequalities in outcomes should be understood as just, that is, they result from differences in original capacities or effort in the market place. A stronger version of the liberal theory of equality of opportunity takes into account the need to compensate for inequalities of circumstance that individuals may be confronted with at birth or that result from market conditions.

would result from the market when left alone. Material inequalities cannot be left alone if the democratic goal of each citizen having an equal moral claim to the right of self-development is to be a reality.



Our Own Backyard: a Participatory Community Project

—Tammie Tupechka

In August 1996, the Institute for the Humanities participated in an important new initiative—a three-way collaboration with Britannia Community Education and the local community around Grandview Woodlands. The project, named “Our Own Backyard” embarked on a three-year long project in the Grandview Woodland community of inner city Vancouver, a neighborhood with a long history of social, architectural, business and educational change. This innovative and groundbreaking project utilized two important community education tools: community mapping and grassroots community planning. These tools were implemented with the intention of providing a space for community members to voice their opinions, ideas, hopes, plans and understandings of the increasingly changing community. This inner city community, like many other inner city communities across North America, has been faced with increased development pressure in the form of residential and commercial gentrification spurred on by the “status” of Vancouver as a world city and the pressure of global capitalism. Coupled

with this have been the continued influx of immigrants from the Pacific Rim and other areas of the world, contributing to this community’s “multicultural” compilation. As Jerry Zaslove termed it, this is a “community in rapid transition,” and therefore the innovative structure of the project as well as the uniquely collaborative



nature provided an important tool for community education and empowerment.

The project’s implementation of community mapping involved simply asking community members what they valued about the community. The form the maps took goes far beyond conventional maps, which often constrain the way we see our urban landscape. Our homes,

our neighborhoods and what they mean to us are not reflected in traditional maps that city planners and developers use. The people of Grandview Woodlands (re)appropriated the map, became the mapmakers, the image-makers, the documenters and documentaries of their place, their homes, their neighborhood. The people of this neighborhood created images that were meaningful to them in a variety of ‘map’ forms: banners, murals, photographs, paintings, drawings, collages, stories, clay tiles and sculptures. Nine themes emerged out of the two year long mapping process that was then used as the basis for a year long grassroots community planning process. Throughout the three-year project, over 2500 people participated, representing a wide range of community members from elementary students to elders in the neighborhood.

Funding for the project was received from various funding bodies. There was frequent consultation with the community by academics (Bev Pitman and Nick Blomley of the Simon Fraser Geography department) and social activists. The project was a recipient of a three-year grant from the prestigious Urban Issues Program of the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation. In addition, the project received grants from VanCity, the BC Heritage Trust Program and the Vancouver City Office of Cultural affairs.

Britannia Community Services Center provided administrative support and meeting and workshop space. The Institute for the Humanities provided grants and a research assistant for the process. The four main organizers were: Karen Martin, project coordinator and community member; Enzo Guerirero, from Britannia Community Education; Jerry Zaslove, representing the Institute for the Humanities at Simon Fraser University; and myself as a research assistant on behalf of the Institute. The project began several years earlier when Liz Root, now a city planner in Toronto, researched the possibilities for establishing a Humanities Store Front drop-in center on Commercial Drive. The project evolved into the “Our Own Backyard” mapping projects.

Five publications or “communities’ legacies” were created throughout the project: *Stories from Our Own Backyard: a history of the Grandview Woodland as told by neighborhood seniors*, was a cross-generational and cross-cultural oral history project that was started in Fall of 1995 with the grade 11 students of Britannia Senior Secondary interviewing seniors in the community concerning their experience of history in the community. This project set the groundwork for the collaborative creation of the “Our Own Backyard” project. *Our Own Backyard: Walking Tours of Grandview Woodland*, involved the creation of six walking tours of the neighborhood that highlighted the local history and contemporary issues of this community. Over 180 sites were researched and a booklet and audiotapes available at the local library were created. *A Pictorial History: Commercial Drive 1912-1954*, is a historical photograph book of the various heritage buildings on the vibrant focal point of commercial activity, Commercial Drive. These three historical books were the recipients of the Vancouver Heritage award of merit in spring of 1998. *Journey through the Neighborhood: Our Community Atlas*, is a spectacular documentation of all the maps created throughout the first two years of the project. Two full colour, fold out atlases that were created are available in the local library of Britannia, as well as 50 copies of a black and white version. The final publication was completed in 2001, and is entitled *Hopes, Dreams and Community Action*, and is a record of over 1000 community members’ participation in the grassroots planning process.

Although the major funding from the Bronfman Foundation ended in the summer of 1999, the project, with funding and participation provided by the Institute for the Humanities, has continued to contribute to the ongoing political process within this community. In spring of 2001, the mapping and planning document

mentioned above was used as a basis for a collaborative project between Simon Fraser University and Britannia Community Education entitled “Critical University,” (see the article in this issue).

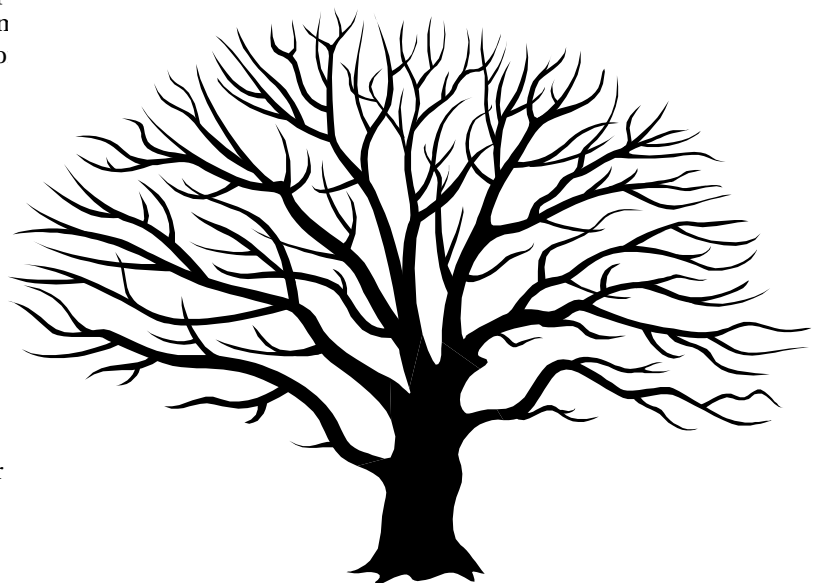
In addition, I have been conducting various workshops on community mapping. For example, in April 2001 I conducted a community mapping workshop in Victoria, BC, hosted by the common ground mapping

These three historical books were the recipients of the Vancouver Heritage award of merit in spring of 1998. *Journey through the Neighborhood: Our Community Atlas*, is a spectacular documentation of all the maps created throughout the first two years of the project.

coalition. I was the guest speaker at this conference and the way in which I was introduced exemplifies the ongoing importance of the “Our Own Backyard” project, to both theory and practice in the Grandview Woodland community and other communities. Throughout the workshop, I was struck by the multiplicity of intended or actual mapping projects that both mirrored and moved beyond the Our Own Backyard process. I am struck by how in dissemination of information is in respect to community level work. Residents, teachers, government officials, planners, students were together in the room, all discussing their understanding of mapping. The map was a

place where dialogue could begin and differences explored by various actors coming from a range of personal positions based on class, ethnicity, age and gender. The issues that we faced in the “Our Own Backyard” project are still there, but from our experience and the different ways we have shared the knowledge—phone calls, conferences and workshops across many realms of academia, community education—seem to have helped, at the very least, different people begin to both understand the power of maps and to discuss the politics of place. Mapping is a tool for social action and is becoming more widely known in many metropolitan areas. In addition, at a time when Universities are seeking community affiliation and seeing that they have a responsibility to disseminate scholarship and knowledge in forums for participatory action, “Our Own Backyard” provided a creative and

critical way to understand how political power and cultural forces can be represented and documented. Many conclusions can be drawn from this project and research is continuing.



Critical U: An experiment in utopian pedagogy

—Mark Coté, Richard Day and Greig de Peuter

The SFU homepage makes a bold promise: “We are an open, inclusive university whose foundation is intellectual and academic freedom.” This is an ideal that many in our University still hold dear. The struggle to maintain an open and inclusive environment of free scholarly inquiry and practice remains alive in the critical humanities and social sciences, despite the challenges of neo-liberalism and the corporatization of the University. However, as departments and programs are “rationalized” and funding is tied to “marketability,” new strategies are required for academic dissent and activism.

The Institute for Humanities is at the forefront of one effort to expand the University community’s critical efficacy beyond the slopes of Burnaby Mountain. Beginning last summer, the Institute again ventured off the hill to forge ties with a number of East Vancouver community organizations to develop “Critical U”, a unique community education initiative. What is noteworthy about this alliance is that it was neither initiated nor directed by the Institute or any other formal SFU organization. Rather, it was the result of the combined efforts of members of the University community and several non-profit organizations operating out of East Vancouver: the Vancouver Institute for Social Research and Education, the Vancouver Eastside Educational Enrichment Society, and Britannia Community Education. The Institute was an early and strong member of this affinity group, as was the Simon Fraser Student Society. The challenge for all the university participants was to avoid carrying pre-chiseled tablets of knowledge from the hill

into the broader community. Instead, the collective goal was to listen to the concerns and interests of those living in East Vancouver and bring our critical and conceptual faculties to bear upon relevant social issues and struggles.

The first result of this collaboration was the successful completion of



“Critical U”, a twelve-week pilot program in community education operating out of the Britannia Community Services Centre. Building in part from the work done by the “Our Own Backyard” community mapping project, “Critical U” brought various sociological, political-economic and cultural perspectives to bear upon such topics as democracy, capitalism, globalization, gentrification, mass media and consumerism. In contrast to other local community education initiatives such as UBC’s Humanities 101 program which focuses on those living in poverty in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, “Critical U”

sought to cut across a broader class spectrum in the Grandview Woodlands area. Participation was free and open to all, and previous post-secondary education was neither required nor expected. We had initially planned on an enrollment of approximately 20 people, but the staggering demand sent these numbers ever-upwards. By the first meeting, there were 38 people in attendance and 16 on a waiting list; clearly this was an initiative that was long overdue.

The pedagogical model for “Critical U” followed that of the organizing affinity group. Eschewing the top-down model often adopted when professional academics reach out beyond the classroom, the “Critical U” seminars were driven by the participants to the greatest extent possible. For the pilot project, we sketched out a series of six workshop themes, under broad categories such as “Political Literacy” and “Capitalism and Globalization.”

At the very first session in late January, we knew we were in the right place when one student questioned the spatial deployment of bodies, with the “instructors” at the front, and the “students” dutifully seated in the lecture hall. With our first lesson learned, we quickly reassembled in a large circle, a formation maintained for the remainder of the course. Ideas were flying around the circle, as the participants expanded and focused the suggested themes in directions most relevant to the community. Indeed, this lively discussion produced enough ideas to keep us busy for several years.

The next step was to seek out SFU instructors who were working in those areas, and who would be willing and able to accept the challenges of a participant-driven model. We are happy to say that the response from faculty and graduate students was very enthusiastic. Indeed, several of the facilitators commented on the vitality of discussion in the “Critical U” seminars; this can be attributed in part, we believe, to the fact that everyone was there because they chose to be there, rather than as a means to the distant end of achieving a grade or qualification. Another key factor was the wide range in the age, experience, political orientation, race and class of the participants. The absence of written work, grading schemes, and all of the regular coercive apparatus of the university was also crucial in creating and maintaining a sense of distance from an increasingly deadened world of work, school and consumerism. In the memorable words of one participant, we were taking a critical step towards “lifelong unlearning.”



Usually, the sessions went beyond the boundaries of the average SFU lectures. For example, one night, anti-capitalist activists and corporate managers considered the moral status of violent action against private property as a means of political expression. The productivity of difference without a moment of “integration” or “unification” gave rise to many such opportunities for critical dialogue and creative encounters with the “radically other.” Another night, a banjo-toting SFU labour historian facilitated role-playing with a select few as factory owners (with, of course, the requisite security force and strikebreakers) sitting on one side of the circle, and the rest as workers on the other. While the vicissitudes of production led to some swapping of chairs, the mobility experienced was enlightening for all. Later, this elaborate game of “Capitalism 101” truly became musical chairs as the facilitator picked away on his banjo in a hootenanny of 19th century labour songs.

In this sense, the “Critical U” space was truly utopian; that is, relatively delinked from the demands of instrumental rationality and professional performance. The necessity of “unlearning” was not taught by the instructors, however; it was a lesson learned by all. Throughout the planning process, and during the course itself, there was a continuous tension between intellectualizing about issues and discussing tactics for confronting them head on via activism and political intervention. This tension was never fully resolved, nor would we want nor expect it to be. Instead, it was a vital dynamic left in play. For example, following the session on consumerism and media, a guest from the Vancouver Indy media Centre came to describe the resources they make available for independent

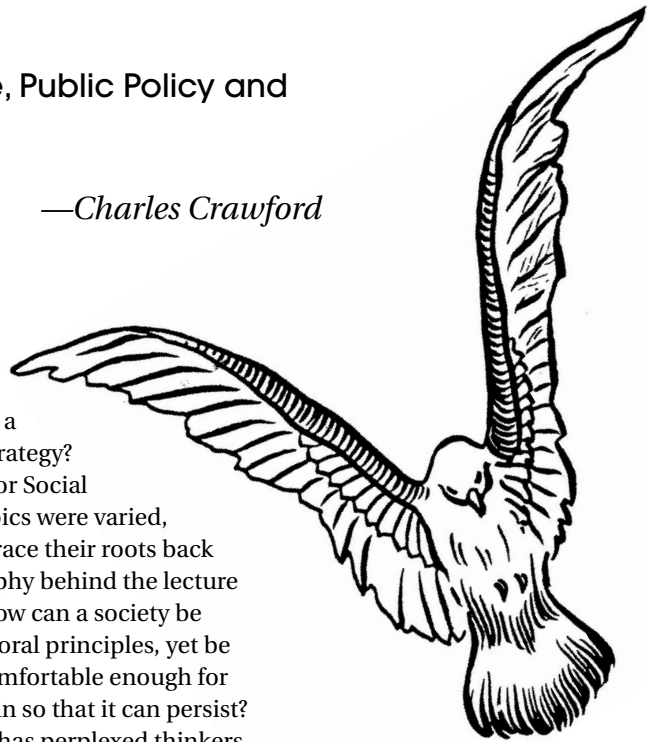
media production. Such a direct linkage of a critique of the mass media with opportunities for concrete action to create alternatives precisely embodied our collective goals. This session was noted as one of the best by participants, and in the future we hope to make more of these sorts of concrete relays between the session topics and grassroots initiatives.

For the final “Critical U” session in early May, we asked participants for feedback on the course, with an eye to what we might do differently next time. Their comments were both plentiful and instructive. As well, some participants volunteered to sit in on our organizing group for a future course, while others volunteered to design a “Critical U” website as a medium for making available reading resources and posting event notices and so on.

By the end of the course, the class size had leveled at just below 20, a number that most participants deemed to be ideal. In the feedback session, there was a clear sense of reward expressed by students for the intellectual challenge at “Critical U”. As well, many participants spoke positively on the dynamic that emerged within the group, especially in discussions. Indeed, most participants expressed a sense of loss that the course had come to a close. Though our group was small, and the course short, it was a glimpse at a collectivity in formation. Here, the utopian impulse was proven alive and well, and so too that the critical humanities and social sciences could have a role in cultivating that impulse.

Ever Since Sociobiology: Evolutionary Psychology, Human Nature, Public Policy and Private Decisions

—Charles Crawford



From September of 2000 through April of 2001, the public lecture series “Ever Since Sociobiology: Darwinism, Human Nature, and Public Policy and Private Decisions” drew audiences of up to 220 people to Harbour Centre. This lecture series was sponsored by the Institute for the Humanities as well as SSHRC and other organisations within Simon Fraser University. The series was organised by me and Catherine Salmon, a SSHRC post-doctoral fellow in the same department. It brought the following speakers and their topics to downtown Vancouver: Charles Crawford, Professor of Psychology, Simon Fraser University, on Incest Avoidance and Prevention: Legal and Evolutionary Perspectives; Dennis Krebs, Professor of Psychology, Simon Fraser University, on Moral Reasoning and Moral Behaviour: Insights from Evolutionary Psychology; Margo Wilson and Martin Daly, Professors of Psychology, McMaster University, on Family Conflict and Violence: A Look at the Marital Relationship; Kingsley Browne, Professor of Law, Wayne State University, on Women in the Workplace: Evolutionary Perspectives and Public Policy; David Buss, Department of Psychology, University of Texas, on Dangerous Passions: Infidelity, Sex and Why We Hurt the Ones We Love; Catherine Salmon, SSHRC post-doctoral fellow, Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University, on What Sex Differences in Erotica can Tell Us About Human Sexuality; Randy Thornhill, Professor of Biology, University of New Mexico, on A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion; Martin Lalumiere, Clark Institute and University of Toronto, on Is

Psychopathy a Pathology or a Life History Strategy? Implications for Social Policy. The topics were varied, but all could trace their roots back to the philosophy behind the lecture series itself. How can a society be founded on moral principles, yet be pliable and comfortable enough for people to live in so that it can persist? This question has perplexed thinkers since Plato wrote *The Republic*. Legalistic (Hammurabi, Napoleon, John Rawls), religious (Moses, Mohammed, Saint Augustine), economic (Adam Smith, Karl Marx,

“Those who attempt to use evolutionary theory to help contribute to solutions to social ills are often accused of making the naturalistic fallacy: the fallacy of assuming that what is, is what ought to be.”

Milton Friedman), and philosophic (Karl Popper) approaches have all been considered at one time or another. Darwin’s closing paragraph from *The Descent of Man* suggests a role for the theory of evolution by natural selection in the search for an answer.

“Man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy that feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest of living creatures, with his god-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers — still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin” (Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1871/1898, p. 634).

Those who attempt to use evolutionary theory to help contribute to solutions to social ills are often accused of making the naturalistic fallacy: the fallacy of assuming that what is, is what ought to be (Flew, 1978). Consider two examples: Women, more than men, evolved as the primary caretakers of children; therefore, they have traits that make them superior caregivers, and ought to be favoured as teachers and nurses and “since the demands of hunting, warfare, and male-male competition caused men to evolve larger size, greater strength, and greater aggressiveness than women, men ought to be preferred as policemen and infantrymen.” Clearly, these statements are fallacious. One cannot reason from what is to what ought to be. Although on average men are larger, more aggressive and competitive than women in all known cultures, we cannot conclude from this fact that men ought to exceed women in these attributes.

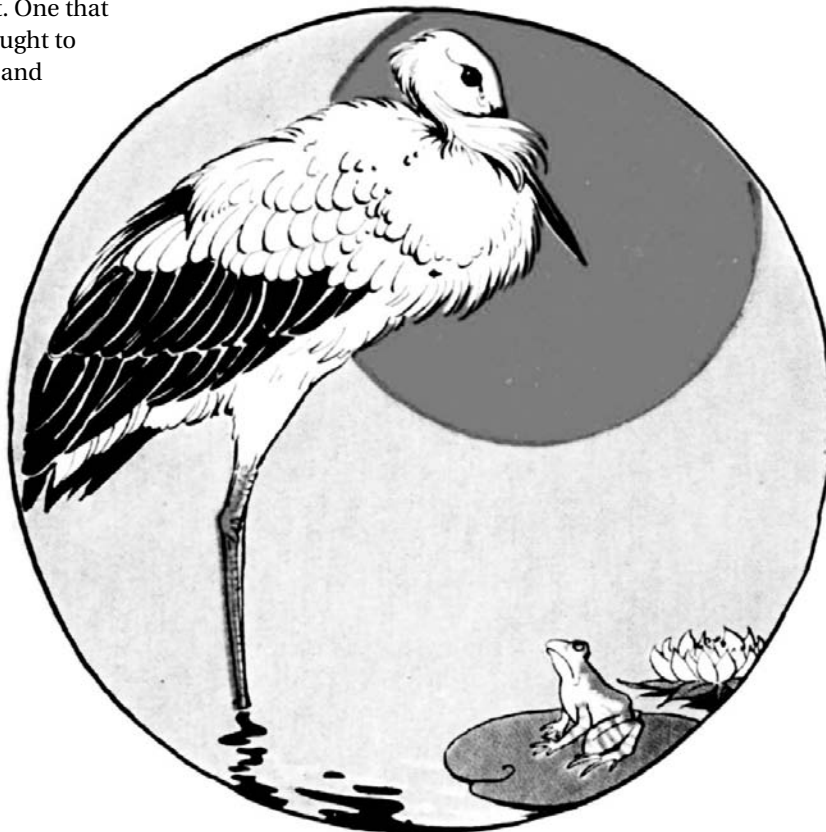
However, the identification of a naturalistic fallacy can lead us astray if we then conclude that the empirical observations leading to it are invalid, that the state of nature suggesting it ought to be changed;

or that it can easily be changed. Identifying the claims that men are taller than women, therefore, they ought to be taller as fallacious does not imply that men are not taller than women, that they ought not to be taller than women, or that the world would be a better place if men were not taller than women. Similarly, identifying fallacies concerned with gender differences in behaviour do not imply it is either advisable or easy to change the state of nature so that gender differences no longer exist. It is as fallacious to go from is to ought not, as it is to go from is to ought.

Although the naturalistic fallacy can be pernicious, another fallacy can be equally noxious. It is the Moralistic Fallacy, the fallacy of assuming that what ought to be is or what ought to be can be (Crawford, 1999). A prominent example is racial differences in intelligence ought not to exist; therefore, they do not exist; hence, anyone finding such differences must be using poor research methods or be politically motivated in their research. There are many other examples in contemporary thought. One that comes to mind is sex ought to be mutually enjoyable and personally enhancing. Aggressive sexuality is not compatible

with this ought. Therefore, sexuality cannot be the motivation for rape, and hence rape must be motivated by male aggression. Anyone putting forth arguments or data challenging moralistic fallacies can expect a rough intellectual ride. Some of the greatest tragedies of history have their origins in moralistic attempts to impose an ideology on a whole population. More than forty million people died because of Joseph Stalin's determination to impose communism in Russia. The attempt to impose a strict Muslim code on Afghanistan is the most recent example of the costs of imposing an ideology on a whole nation. The belief that "What ought to be, can be" can have noxious consequences when applied with such zeal. Many Russian communists were good people who worked hard for what they believed. But, those taking an evolutionary perspective on human behaviour were not surprised when their system failed because we worried that communism was not compatible with a human psychology shaped in the crucible of natural

selection. Some of our concerns about the adequacy of communism as a social system were based on current thinking in evolutionary psychology that has mental mechanisms producing nepotism, reciprocity, a sense of fairness, and cheating on social relationships as important culture producing mechanisms (Cosmides & Tooby, 1992). If such evolved mental mechanisms do exist, they put constraints on the kind of social systems that we can expect to function well enough to persist for some time. All of the talks in this lecture series dealt with issues that have a great impact on the society in which we live. A better understanding of them can point the way toward making changes and in particular, to areas where changes may be most easily made and in what ways such changes may be, implemented.



Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Domestic Space

—Kathy Mezei

On April 7, 2001, a workshop on “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Domestic Space,” a new and burgeoning field of study, was held at Harbour Centre, sponsored by the Institute for the Humanities, the Department of Humanities, and Graduate Liberal Studies. About sixty participants attended the daylong workshop. Presentations ranged from nineteenth century aboriginal domestic spaces, writers’ studies and scientific laboratories in private homes to the modern apartment,

Downtown Eastside, and contemporary backyards in Vancouver. Disciplines represented included architecture, history, anthropology, sociology, art and literature, and presenters included artists, architects, novelists as well as academics. Debates continued on how to represent and discuss the practice, theory and history of domestic space in Vancouver and BC. Participants also discussed ways to continue the conversations begun at the workshop.

Denise Riley at the Kootenay School of Writing

—Ted Byrne

Denise Riley first came to our attention at the Kootenay School of Writing when the poem “The Castalian Spring” was published in *Raddle Moon*. “The Castalian Spring,” reprinted in *Penguin Modern Poets 10* and *Selected Poems* (2001), is an erudite, self-mocking investigation of lyric subjectivity, a display of the heightened “linguistic unease” such a subject suffers, and a deployment of irony as a tactical response or “counterinterpellation.” The argument of the poem is coextensive with that of her latest work in philosophy and social theory, *The Words of Selves* (2000). That work investigates the ways in which our identity-formations in language make liars of us all, subject to and struggling against the control of an affectivity inherent in language itself. A gloss of “The Castalian Spring,” in fact, forms part of the central chapter of the latter book. The book is errant, prodigal and wonderfully useful, seeming to speak at one and the same moment of poetics and language practice, or pragmatics. It deals extensively with the poetic function of language, its insistence within language-event, with the metaphorical nature of language, particularly the spatial metaphors that dog the “structure” of thought, metaphors of surface and depth, inside and outside—there is an argument for, or even a practice of the surficial here—but also with naming and identity and their political fluctuations, with solidarity within difference, and with irony as practice.

Some of us read *The Words of Selves* in the context of the KSW’s ongoing seminar, presently called “Stupidity.” *The Words of Selves* expands upon the questions raised in her earlier book *Am I That Name* (1993), which dealt with the category of “women” in history. During her stay in Vancouver she gave a free public lecture at SFU Harbour Centre, co-sponsored by the KSW and the Institute for the Humanities. This was the third in a series of co-sponsored lectures that had previously included Barrett Watten and Amiel Alcalay. Her talk was entitled “The Right To Be Lonely,” and consisted of an application of the ideas developed in *The Words of Selves* to the recently expanding social definitions of the family. In particular,

it returns to questions of spatial metaphor, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, and the slipperiness of these categories and social facts. Here’s a taste.

The ‘traditional’ family’s demise is coinciding with a furious intensification of its variants. It’s as if one must count as a family in order to count, while the numbers of those living alone, across western Europe at least, rise sharply. Yet as households of single people grow, the admission of even occasional loneliness remains taboo, while to be without visible social ties is inexcusable... The question ‘how single is single’ could ask: how might such singleness be considered neither pathological nor be swept up, in an ostentatious de-pathologizing, into a compulsive sociability?... Might a properly recognised state of singleness (to wrench the notion of ‘recognition’ away from its usual oppressively gregarious tone) recast that desolate and resentment-prone metaphoricality of social exclusion—might it also somewhat allay the burden, or at least the embarrassed self-reproach, of those who may find themselves living in solitude at the very same time as they live within the family?

The KSW brought Denise Riley to Vancouver with the help of the British Council and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs. In addition to the public lecture at SFU Harbour Centre, she attended a session of “Stupidity,” animated a poetry anti-workshop over several days, gave a public reading at the KSW and talked and shopped with local poets. Denise Riley has taught, conducted research, lectured and read her poetry extensively in Europe, Australia and the US, but this was only her second visit to Canada. Other books by Denise Riley include *Marxism for Infants* (1976), *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother* (1983), *Dry Air* (1985), *Poets on Writing: Britain, 1970-1991* (1992), and *Mop Mop Georgette* (1993). A study of social philosophies, policies and ethical theories from 1890 to 1914, provisionally titled *A Condition of England*, is forthcoming.

The Humanities Department

—M.A. Stouck

The Humanities Institute at SFU enjoys a unique reciprocal relationship with the newly established Humanities Department, which offers undergraduates a number of degree options in major, minor and joint major programs. Faculty teaching in the department take an active role in the Institute, serving as its directors and on the Steering Committee; the two units also share the benefits of the J.S. Woodsworth Chair in the Humanities: the holder of this chair has teaching responsibilities in the department and research and outreach functions in the Institute. The Institute supports the department's courses through an enrichment program, while the undergraduate curriculum reflects the breadth of the Institute's interests. Its courses approach the humanities both chronologically, from the classical period through the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Enlightenment to the present, and thematically, through topics such as peace studies, the natural environment, and the close examination of particular cultures, cities and figures in the humanistic tradition. Students taking Humanities courses are encouraged to attend Institute lectures: in a recent senior seminar on Freud, a lecture series by specialists open to the public also formed a regular part of the course syllabus. In terms of organization, the Institute and the Department are formally affiliated; both units continue to seek out opportunities for creative cooperation.



Gavin Bryars: “Visual Art Collaborations”

—Petra Watson

Gavin Bryars appeared at the Vancouver Art Gallery on Thursday, July 5, 2001. The talk was sponsored by the Institute for the Humanities and the Independent Communication Association, a non-profit society, with support from the Vancouver Art Gallery. The talk brought in a large and very appreciative audience. Gavin Bryars spoke about his compositional work—its conceptual basis—the courses that he taught in England on Duchamp during the 70s and this influence on his work, and his collaborations with visual artists.

Gavin Bryars is an internationally recognized, contemporary composer. Born in England, Gavin Bryars has composed for string quartets, for voice and orchestras. His first major works, *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1969) and *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971), have been re-released to sell over a quarter of a million copies.

Gavin Bryars has worked on diverse projects with artists such as Christian Boltanski, James Hugonin, Bruce MacLean and Robert Wilson, among others. His collaborations with visual artists was the chief focus of his talk at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

During the 1960s, he first performed as a jazz bassist, and then worked for a time with John Cage. In 1981, he founded the Gavin Bryars Ensemble that continues to tour internationally. He has composed for theatre, written a number of full-length operas, as well as collaborated with dancers, such as Merce Cunningham, Lucinda Childs and Edouard Lock. He has written about his work in *Parkett*, *Modern Painters*, and other journals. A recent commission with the London Sinfonietta will premiere at the grand opening of the concert hall in Oporto, Italy, the cultural capital of Europe in 2002. Gavin Bryars' works are available on CD through various labels and his own, GB Records.

A Cell of One's Own?

—Wayne Knights

A review of Can Prisons Work? The Prisoner as Object and Subject in Modern Corrections. Stephen Duguid, University of Toronto Press, 2000. Duguid's book won the Harold Adams Innes Prize for best English-language book in the social sciences 2000-2001.

Can prisons work? What kind of question is this? Two centuries have passed since Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon project promoted the idea that prison regimes could actually correct offenders. Is it some new perversity to propose it in the year 2000? At least since the world wars this kind of optimism has been dissolved in cynicism, ideology-critique, anxiety, the celebration of difference, and, above all, realism. Hasn't it been clear for some time that the practical enlightenment was a misguided attempt to impose progress through conformity to rational norms? Isn't it apparent that there is little normatively rational about social action and that intentions and outcomes are at odds with each other by nature? Well, isn't it?

Apparently Duguid (pronounced Do Good) prefers the 18th century, an amusing, childlike time. This is why we have tenure, to protect the innocent from the self-evident. So Duguid can persist, suggesting that prisons can work by exporting this ivory tower into the prison. Just as the ivory tower implies a beautiful distancing from the influence of everyday social and political pressures, so this ivory bunker can resist the influence of the authoritarian, coercive environment of the prison. And both tower and bunker, because of their (relative) autonomy from their surroundings, can create the pre-conditions for change—change of self, community, and ethical life.

A review must fairly summarize this argument, so let me try. In the interests of self-flagellation, I should point out that Duguid, I, and several others worked in the ivory bunker as non-commissioned officers and comrades for some time. More incriminating yet, when our sentences finally expired and the ivory bunker was overwhelmed, I worked on the research project that provided much of the empirical evidence for Duguid's arguments. There are no innocents.

The Green Mile

To be fair, some people think prisons work by deterring people from committing crimes, at least when they aren't run like holiday camps. In some instances, mostly sentimental, they might see some Christ-scenario working itself out amidst the occasional injustices that inevitably arise in prison. (And if you think the mouse in the movie was unrealistic, well, I can tell you prisoners and animals are always saving each other.) Modern imprisonment was rarely intended as simple punishment for bad deeds or as an opportunity for the meek (and the mice) to inherit the earth. One of the great virtues of Duguid's book is the short, critical history of correctional philosophies in Canada and elsewhere, which is an essential context for understanding what is at stake. Nor is this a dry academic account; it has the feel of being told by someone who lived (and occasionally suffered) through much of it.

No citizen would have reason to know this, so here is a potted version of some recent salient moments highlighted by Duguid. At some point in the postwar period, and consistent with the psychologizing of social life (see Tony Soprano in analysis), we saw the emergence of a medical model. In this version, the prisoner, the deviant, is sick. Fortunately, the sick can be cured by the application of a proper science of normality. Moral, environmental, physical and intellectual deficits would be addressed through programming. One fondly remembers prisoners, asked to picture home, drawing nice middle-class suburban images in gestalt groups—as long as they were stoned. In 1974, an infamous overview of 200 such programs concluded “nothing works”. No sooner had the Emperor been declared to lack proper attire, the whole façade collapsed. A funding crisis helpfully underpinned this change of heart, but there was a genuine insight as well: the process of incarceration undermined any rehabilitation efforts it supported.

The next period, which tried to fly under the banner of the “opportunities model,” was a period in which Duguid, paraphrasing Mao, says “a hundred flowers bloomed.” This might suggest a rosy picture, of creative experimentation and happily competing ideas. More accurately, a vacuum had been created. Prisoners had to do

something in jail, particularly as sentences were getting longer (this is known as “dynamic security”). It was not as if corrections encouraged opportunities and a new tolerance; it merely made room for opportunists while the correctional professionals retreated, licking their wounds. Prisons were invaded by new institutions (universities, school boards, private contractors), new issues (black power, native rights, even inmate rights), and new faces. As Duguid says, the latter came “with minimal baggage in terms of the patterns that had been established by prisoners, treatment staff and corrections staff.”

And so the university went to prison, sometimes under the guise of educational treatment, but staffed by individuals who rarely shared the imperatives of the prison, who fancied themselves university instructors, and who saw their new students as, well, students. Some of them had even read Foucault, identified with Meursault’s rebellion, dabbled in critical theory, and yearned to smash the state—if only theoretically. The reader will enjoy Duguid’s rich account of this period, redolent of every political and cultural strain from the collapse of the dollar to the collapse of the Wall. It is in this period that the university program in BC’s federal prisons established itself and flourished. The decline of the medical model and the vacuum it left dovetailed nicely with ideas about programming and education that came to embody a contradictory relationship with the prison system.

After all, this was prison. The fences were not going to come down. So once again the great question at the heart of the university’s relationship to society was acutely posed: can society/prison tolerate the ivory tower/bunker; that is, can the context allow the university the independence of thought and inquiry that defines it? Now this is a very complex question, and Duguid’s book can be read as a commentary on this troubled issue in the largest sense—the focus on prison just sharpens the debate. The university program, like the university, ran

So once again the great question at the heart of the university’s relationship to society was acutely posed: can society/prison tolerate the ivory tower/bunker; that is, can the context allow the university the independence of thought and inquiry that defines it?

into all kinds of obstacles, including inmate/student culture opposition, conventional values, issues of security and conflicting philosophies. (There have been prison wardens, I might add, who have understood this relationship better than some university presidents.)

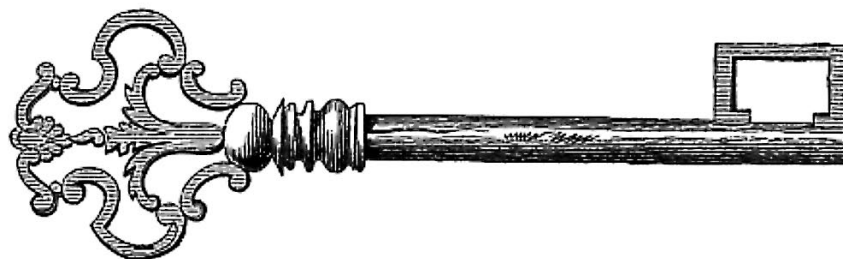
Part of Duguid’s argument is that the ethos of the university was fundamental to the distance required between the program and the prison that might make a prison work—that is, work to turn the criminal into the citizen. This citizen is conceived not as the conforming soul beloved of the medical model, but as the participating, possibly oppositional, hopefully democratic and mostly

tolerant subject of the modern world. The prison, this enthusiastic paragon of the bureaucratic and authoritarian institutions spawned by the Enlightenment, is expected to tolerate a “counter public-sphere” in its midst, a space or interstice, where experimental transformative change can take place. In effect, we need prisons to embrace a potentially explosive relationship with the programs inside it. This won’t happen any time soon, but in that period between 1974 and 1990 sufficient space did occasionally appear that could be exploited. The implications

are the heart of the book, but first we need to know the rest of the history—which will not disappoint those who hold to the “first time tragedy second time farce” view of things.

The vacuum couldn’t last; nature rushed to fill it. As befitting the whole paradoxical exercise, theoreticians of the university program’s activities, especially Duguid, found elements of their work

re-surfacing in an unrecognizable form, the medical model redux. (There are some humorous moments between the lines, brought about by the curse of self-reflection.) With Maoist metaphors floating around, it will come as no surprise that a model of theory and practice lay at the heart of the university program. The university program in BC was somewhat unique in its desire to theorize about the practice of education and the formation of academic communities in unseemly spots. This had resonance; maybe there was something rational about observed changes. Maybe it could be generalized! Embodied in institutional practices, that sort of thing. Worse,



there was empirical evaluation suggesting these theories were practical and could lower recidivism. Nothing fails like success in a prison setting. Professional correctors began to perk up. Maybe something could be done, and much better than by amateurs!

This is simplification. But as Duguid argues, making the university work in prison involves a keen awareness of the essentially paradoxical nature of the activity, in that difficult to define space in which determinism and freedom play. Piagetian or Kohlbergian theories of educational and moral development might be employed heuristically (you are going up a hill in the fog; you want to be sure every step is an upward step, *pace Sartre*), but imagine your surprise if these theories become codified steps to the top. What was suggestive was now rational. It could be reproduced, duplicated, engineered, appropriated.

Suddenly, it seemed, the complex relationship of theory and practice became the power of positive cognitive thinking. To ensure the security-conscious prison got on board, policy makers, wedded to the new dogma of cognitive development in a correctional setting, wisely tied career success to ideological agreement. Everyone was on board and the train was going to Dodge City. In the shoot-out at the OK Corral, the university program wasn't okay—too independent, too distanced, too, well, stand-offish. Besides, who needed university employees when your own correctional staff could be cognitive enablers.

This is the end of the real green mile, at least for now. Walking the green mile (and the hallways are still institutional green, and so are the prisoner's clothes) is to walk the last mile to execution. You start off, things look desperate, you get a handle on the situation, save a few mice, perhaps the warden's ass, and finally the process re-asserts itself. You discover you are indeed a dead man walking, walking on floors you cleaned every day. This is the story

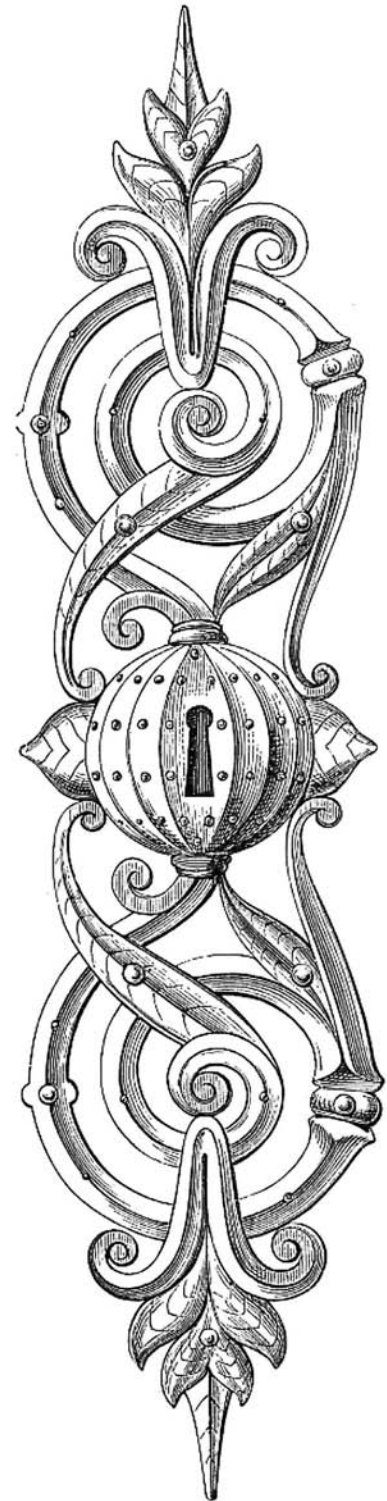
Duguid tells, although he might not recognize it in this form. The inevitable demise is no surprise, nor, ultimately, is the part your own hand plays in it. But how you walked that mile is more important than the end. So what about his analysis of the counter public sphere at the heart of darkness?

The subject-object of this history

The mythical figure of the Subject-Object identical is a temptress, and Duguid ignores the sirens' call. The uniqueness of this book resides in a deep regard of the moments when the play of subject and object, freedom and determinism enter into a kind of concrete dialogue that makes occasional sense of the apparent contradictions between them. At the sharp end, prison education is the experience of paradox and contradiction. It doesn't move on, it isn't surpassed or overcome, it doesn't issue in a new reality. And yet it does move. The prison is a determinate entity, as is the past of the prisoner and the subculture that informs it. Duguid describes how the prisoner tries to resist the identifications, roles and labels imposed on him by the prison, while all the while embracing those of "the life." He makes history, but not always as he pleases. In that gap is the play, the space in which change might be negotiated.

To illustrate this, Duguid borrows Virginia Woolf's metaphor in *A Room of One's Own*. She insists a "woman must have money and a room of one's own if she is to write fiction." Transposing, if the fiction is an authentic self in relation to the whole, and if money can mean resources and the social connections embodied by them, and if the room is the space in which the private self can determine its interactions with the public sphere, then we can begin to picture how this might look.

In assessing the more successful experiments of this period, Duguid isolates three factors essential to the transformation from criminal to citizen: "a democratic ethics, a diverse set of political linkages, and an inevitably complex set of needs and



relations.” What does this mean? He elaborates (I paraphrase slightly):

First, an ethical stance towards the prisoner, with him or her as a subject rather than an object (a file, a label, a type). Structurally, this means a democratic and participatory environment. Second, there need to be bonds with the conventional world; for example, bonds with an outside institution like the university, its students, its staff, and its resources. Finally, a structural approach that relies on the complexity of the situation, acknowledging that prisoner needs are many and unique and the intervenor’s skills and abilities are various and limited.

The last point needs a bit of elaboration. Basically, at the heart of Duguid’s book is an appreciation of the irreducible individuality of the prisoners, and staff, and anyone else. This is implied in the sub-title— from object to subject.

Once we see the prisoner as a subject, all the generalizations and labels one might apply are compromised. Evaluative studies and theory require generalization, but you can’t educate on the basis of these generalizations. Thus the university program had a loose admission policy, and resisted all attempts to stream candidates for the program or limit it to deserving or appropriate inmates. Thus one of its nominal incarnations: the Humanities Program (much preferred to the bureaucratically necessary Prison Education Program).

This discussion is necessarily abstract, which is unfortunate, because at the centre of the argument is a sophisticated empirical evaluation of

the impact of the university program, an evaluation based on a research methodology that captures the complexity of the situation described above. Without this, the book would be passing theoretical wind. Most evaluations of prison settings force complex social experience into a set of boxes marked successful/not

possibility of realistic action. And if that depresses you, then I would urge readers to look beyond the title of this work. Yes, it is about prison. But it is about much more than that. It is about education, about democratic citizenship, about the value of enlightenment and the practical value of the humanities in informing social action.

Personally, I’ve been fond of an epigram of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They suggest the prisoner in his isolated cell is the very image of bourgeois individualism that modern society wishes to impose on the subject. I always feared that the university program participated in this imposition, that in a truly cunning way it turned the criminal into a nebulous social being—not egocentric enough to be a criminal, and not autonomous enough to be a citizen.

Personally, I’ve been fond of an epigram of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They suggest the prisoner in his isolated cell is the very image of bourgeois individualism that modern society wishes to impose on the subject. I always feared that the university program participated in this imposition, that in a truly cunning way it turned the criminal into a nebulous social being—not egocentric

successful, good/bad, effective/ ineffective. Nothing can ever work, because the method and the practice are at odds with each other. Not surprisingly, this is paralleled by the contradictory relationship between the enlightenment style object (institutions) and the potentially enlightened subjects trying to live within them so typical of the experience Duguid analyses.

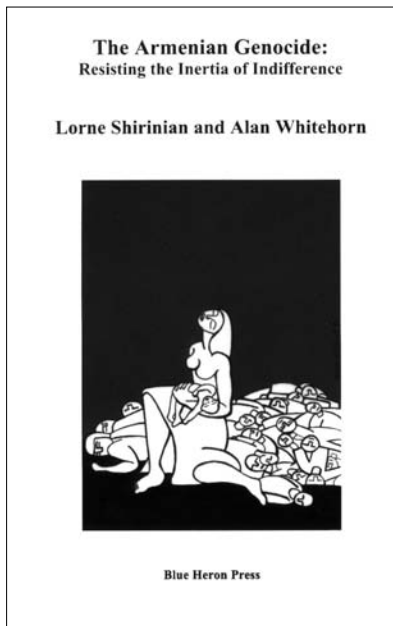
enough to be a criminal, and not autonomous enough to be a citizen. Duguid’s notion of what we might call a “cell of one’s own” points a way out of that conundrum by promoting an image of freedom and communication over the current reality of isolation and one-sided conversations.

Can this book change things? Not in the present atmosphere. In a literature marked by enthusiastic proponents of corrections and cynical critics of any activity in prison, there is little room for a radical analysis of the



Alan Whitehorn: First J.S. Woodsworth Chair in the Humanities

—Trish Graham



Ominously in 1895-1896, about 200,000 Armenians were massacred. This was to be, however, just a prelude to the state decreed forced deportation, starvation, torture and death of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in 1915 that led to the culmination of about one and a half million dead... In addition to the torture, starvation, disease, and death, homes were confiscated, property stolen, and churches and grave sites destroyed. More importantly and traumatically, a generation of children were killed or orphaned. An entire people were at peril—this is to say they were the victims of genocide...

In contrast to German actions in the post-war era, Turkey, in the main, was more successful in resisting post-WW1 efforts at occupation and intervention by European powers. As a result, it was not forced by foreign powers to deal in any sustained major way with its past genocidal deeds, nor did it foster a flourishing democratic and pluralistic culture. Right up to the contemporary era, Turkish politics have been characterized by political repression, censorship, banning of political parties, and military coups or

From 1994–1996 Alan Whitehorn was the first holder of the J.S. Woodsworth Chair in the Humanities at Simon Fraser University. During his stay at Simon Fraser University, Professor Whitehorn taught six undergraduate courses in the Humanities, appeared regularly in the local media, spoke in the community and at Simon Fraser University, and organized several public events on themes related to “Problems and Prospects of Social Democracy” and “Women in Politics.” These public events brought many distinguished speakers in the social democratic movement from across Canada to audiences at Simon Fraser University and in greater Vancouver.

Among Alan Whitehorn’s most recent publications are Party Politics in Canada (Prentice Hall/Pearson Education, 2000) co-edited with Hugh G. Thorburn, and The Armenian Genocide: Resisting the Inertia of Indifference (Blue Heron Press, 2001) with co-author Lorne Shirinian. Professor of Political Science at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, and cross-appointed professor at Queen’s University, Alan Whitehorn is currently working on a book introducing children to international politics.

From “The Armenian Genocide: A Canadian Perspective,” The Armenian Genocide, Resisting the Inertia of Indifference

threats of military intervention...

One ray of hope on the Turkish domestic front is that with increased emigration (and contact with other cultures), greater public access (e.g. through the Internet) to more diverse information, and with the passage of time, it is more likely that a new generation willing to challenge the wall of genocidal denial (e.g. the Turkish researcher, Taner Akcam)... will emerge to foster the path of greater academic freedom, democratization, and the emergence of a civil society...

If it is deemed morally necessary to send dedicated and brave Canadian peacekeepers abroad to be in harm’s way in an effort to try to stop ethnic slaughter and genocide in diverse locales around the globe, then surely it is incumbent upon the Canadian government not to undermine the moral and logical basis of these important commitments of our citizen/soldiers. We cannot and should not put forward two morally contradictory statements:

1) that human rights of an ethnic people matter today and genocide must be stopped even at the risk to

Canadian lives; while also saying 2) that human rights of an ethnic people did not matter in the past and we should forget history and focus instead on new trade deals with governments who engage in genocide denial. To allow the latter position to prevail profoundly undercuts our moral and human commitment to peacekeeping and international law. We should not say one genocide counts, while another does not. We either are a world where each individual and each ethnic group have human rights as enunciated in the UN Charter, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Or these principles do not yet prevail and the vision of justice and equality within the world community remain unfulfilled.

Anarcho-Modernism

Toward a New Critical Theory

In Honour of Jerry Zaslove

—Edited by Ian Angus

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This volume is a collection of 38 pieces unified by a combination of the playful, primitive aesthetic of literary modernism with the anti-authoritarian, anarchist praxis of radical democratic politics. This bi-polar sensibility permeates the work of Jerry Zaslove, to whom the book is dedicated.

Yet even if this sensibility pervades the book, the ideas presented here are all animated by highly conflicting attempts to articulate rigorously the anarcho-modernist stance, its literary forms and its political implications and values. In particular, all the contributors explore the fundamental tension that defines our new century—between bureaucratization and industrialization on the one hand, and the critical and autonomous individual on the other.

The five sections of the work focus on *The Industrialization of Culture; Literature and Aesthetics; Public Education and Literacy; Human Rights and Politics; and Anarchism and Friendship.*

Whatever holds together the anarchist solidarity represented in this collection, it isn't a "principle," a generality that is made to apply equally to all comers. It's a particular relation, an affinity, that perhaps can be approached through thinking about friendship as a utopia of the near, the particular and the concrete—not as a system of generalities for all. This guiding orientation is vital for the reconstruction of a critical theory adequate for our own time.

The contributors are all friends, colleagues and collaborators of Jerry Zaslove, many of whom, such as Russell Jacoby, Robin Blaser, Wayne Burns, Harvey Graff, David Kettler, Wold-Dieter Narr, Jeff Wall and Heribert Adam, are well established and widely recognized in their fields. There are also many newer authors included here whose work is sure to become equally well known over time.

Contributors

Heribert Adam • Ian Angus • Robin Blaser • Martin Blobel • Wayne Burns • Gerald J. Butler • Edward Byrne • Robert D. Callahan • Jim Chalmers • Ross Clarkson • Kath Curran • Richard Day • John Doheny • Stephen Duguid • Art Efron • David Goodway • Harvey J. Graff • Brian Graham • Patricia Kilsby Graham • Donald Grayston • Paul Green • Jane Harris • Russell Jacoby • Robert Hullot-Kentor • Paul Kelley • David Kettler • G.P. Lainsbury • Martha Langford • Ralph Maud • Kirsten McAllister • Tom McGauley • Tom Morris • Michael Mundhenk • Wolf-Dieter Narr • Richard Pinet • Derek Simons • Jennifer Simons • Peyman Vahabzadeh • Aaron Vidaver • Jeff Wall • David Wallace • Alan Whitehorn

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—David Mirhady

The study of the Greek and Roman languages and cultures (classics) has been a mainstay of western education. But things have changed. Latin is increasingly a rarity in high school education, and a familiarity with classical languages and cultures is no longer the *sine qua non* of an educated person. Moreover, the fate of classics is not isolated. The liberal arts curriculum in general is increasingly marginalized in favour of technical and above all business skills. In western Canada, departments of classics have recently been forced to merge with other disciplines, such as history and religious studies. At the same time, student interest in classical mythology and history has arguably never been higher.

Classics and Simon Fraser University

It was in part that student interest that brought me, a classicist, to the fledgling Humanities Department at SFU in the fall of 2000. The department's course in classical mythology was its biggest draw. Students are fascinated by its stories, excited by its great literature, and seduced by the evocative sculptures and vase paintings that bring the myths of the classical Greeks alive not only through texts and in our imaginations but before our eyes. Few would argue about the foundational role these stories play in a humanities curriculum. But they are also products of the specific cultures that created and nurtured them. It's appropriate that a specialist in the classical languages and cultures teach them.

Before my arrival, SFU had not had a full-time classicist with a regular appointment. Robin Barrow in the Faculty of Education is actually one of the world's authorities on ancient education. But he specializes in educational issues, and he's currently Dean with little time for teaching. By the same token, I had never taught in a humanities department before. With an undergraduate degree in philosophy, graduate degrees in classics, and teaching stints in history departments, however, I had wide experience with different disciplinary cultures in the humanities. Now we are trying to shape the disciplinary focus of our Humanities Department. Some like the term 'interdisciplinary,' but perhaps we're better off defining ourselves as "multi-disciplinary".

There is need for new considerations of the roles of classics as a discipline and its place as

one of a number of interdependent humanities disciplines, such as English, history and philosophy, as well as disciplines that may not identify themselves within humanities, such as anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. Classics has traditionally defined itself in terms of the classical languages, ancient Greek and Latin—thus the synonym "classical philology". But nowadays very few classicists are actually engaged in pouring over the medieval manuscripts and ancient papyri and inscriptions that made years of study in Latin or Greek composition a key to reconstructing fragmentary or mistakenly copied texts. Some classicists define themselves strictly in terms of one of the sub-disciplines, ancient history, philosophy, or archaeology. Others draw on various areas. Some have seen the discipline as a whole "in crisis."

Papers have been invited for a conference (see page 42) that deal with all aspects of classical studies. They will give attention, implicitly or explicitly, to how their subject matter and methods may be defined within and outside the context of the humanities disciplines. Interdisciplinary panels, which invite participation from individuals outside classics, are being particularly encouraged.

Spartacus

The keynote speaker for the conference will be Brent Shaw. For twenty years he was at the University of Lethbridge before succumbing in 1996 to the lure of the Ivy League and a senior position at the University of Pennsylvania. Trained first as a classicist, he studied at Cambridge with Moses Finley and is one of the world's most important scholars working on Roman social history, particularly slavery. In the abstract for the paper he will deliver, he writes the following:

There can be no doubt that if there is one slave from all of Greek and Roman antiquity who is known by name to the wider public, that slave is Spartacus. The Thracian gladiator who led the last of the great slave wars against the Roman state in the late 70s BC has been the subject of numerous treatments in the principal media of the twentieth century. As a popular figure, however, both Spartacus and his rebellion seem to have faded rather quickly from view since the 1960s. Why?

Part of the answer must lie in the reasons why he was even born in the first place, not as an auxiliary soldier and a gladiator who fought for the entertainment of Romans more than two millennia ago, but as a popular figure in the modern age. Spartacus, it turns out, has a rather intriguing pre-twentieth century history that might well explain some of the current attrition of his image. What were the precise circumstances of a modern rebirth of interest in a Roman slave, the leader of a great slave war? And why should that interest have determined the shape and longevity of his image? In short, what is the relationship between the courses

of eighteenth and nineteenth century European and American ideologies that created the basis for a twentieth century Spartacus whose life seems in real danger of extinction?

Shaw clearly has in mind the enormous success of the film *Gladiator*, which reflects in so many ways the time in which it was produced, just as Kubrick's *Spartacus* did forty years before. Shaw thus betrays an awareness of the historical contexts of his own writing and marks a departure from the work of classical historians a generation or two before.

With the support of the Institute for

the Humanities at SFU and the Social Sciences and Humanities research Council of Canada, the conference is taking place under the aegis of the Classical Association of the Canadian West (CACW).



Classical Learnings Conference Topics:

- Roundtable on the Teaching of Latin and Greek
- Modern Philosophy and its Classical Antecedents
- Modern Literary Criticism and Classical Literature
- Greek and Roman History and Culture
- Classics and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Programs
- Presocratic Philosophy and its Modern Analogues
- Modern Approaches and Parallels to Greek Literature
- Ancient Rhetoric in the Modern Classroom
- Children's Literature and Movies
- Ancient Science and the Modern Scientist



For further information contact
David Mirhady at 604-291-3906
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Myrna Kostash and the Grace MacInnis Visiting Scholar Program

Spring 2002

—Ian Angus



Myrna Kostash

The Institute for the Humanities is pleased to announce that Edmonton-based author Myrna Kostash will be the Grace MacInnis Visiting Scholar in Spring 2002. As visiting scholar she will meet with students and faculty and deliver the Grace MacInnis Memorial Lecture. Previous Grace MacInnis visiting scholars include Shirley Williams (1993), Joy Kogawa (1995), and Lynn MacDonald (1997).

Myrna Kostash's writing of creative non-fiction combines reporting indebted to New Journalism with a literary concern with expressive form which sustains both intensely personal questioning and political engagement. Her work has been widely reviewed and described with numerous accolades. She has been called "an extraordinarily gifted writer" by Alberto Manguel, "an incisive chronicler of social history" (*Globe and Mail*) and "one of Canada's most intelligent and conscientious writers" (*Books in Canada*). Her work has been widely read and discussed as a model of engaged and reflective political writing. She was recently shortlisted for the Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for political writing for *The Next Canada: In Search of the Future Nation* (McClelland and Stewart, 2000). Current projects deal with topics arising from her persistent travel to, and study of, the Balkans.

Myrna Kostash is the author of six non-fiction books, is a frequent contributor to periodicals and anthologies, an occasional writer for radio and the stage, and has taught creative writing at many universities and summer writing schools. She has been writer-in-residence at the Regina Public Library (1996-7), the Whyte Museum and Gallery (1995), and The Loft in Minneapolis (1994), was Ashley Fellow at Trent University (1996), and Max Bell Professor of

Journalism at the University of Regina (1989-90). She is also a frequent juror for literary competitions by the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Manitoba Arts Council, the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts, and the Governor-General's Non-Fiction Award and other organizations. She is also on the board of The Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta.

In addition, she has been active for many years in writers' organizations and in the politics of writing. She is past Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada (1993-4), a founding member of The Periodical Writers' Association of Canada, a founding member and President of the Writers' Guild of Alberta, serves on the executive committee of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, and is an active participant in many artists' organizations.

Kostash's most recent book, *The Next Canada* has provoked many reviews, critiques and accolades. It records reflections on her interviews with young Canadians (25-35) active in artistic, political and economic life. Kostash compares the views of these Canadians who will influence our future nation with the ideals of her own generation of the 1960s. While she records many fascinating cultural, economic and political shifts, her main interest is in the attitude of young people to the ideals of social justice that dominated the sixties and contributed to the formation of her own vocation as a political writer. Despite a tendency to be skeptical of labels such as feminism, socialism and nationalism, she finds that the new generation associate being Canadian with a striving for social justice. Across the linguistic divide that has come to be associated with postmodernism, she finds a continuity with the ideals of the 1960s

that sounds a new note of hope in beleaguered times.

Myrna Kostash's Grace McInnis Memorial Lecture will take its theme from the comments and debates aroused by *The Next Canada* and will reflect on the creative writing of the history of minority peoples and critical social movements.

Kostash's writing has always been socially engaged and has contributed to widening and reforming the accepted view of events. Her celebrated first book *All of Baba's Children* (1977, reissued 1987) traced the history of the generation after Alberta's Ukrainian immigrants and contributed to the construction of a multicultural history of Canada such that she subsequently became a major voice in debates concerning multiculturalism. *No Kidding: Inside the World of Teenage Girls* (McClelland and Stewart, 1987) revealed the gender and economic constraints that entrap many girls and young women. She concluded "Two things would help her realize her possibilities: democratic and non-sexist social and economic institutions; and her own conviction (let her be given space and autonomy enough!) that she can be and do more than she was ever allowed to imagine. Let her imagine herself bold and clever and sovereign. Let her imagine herself a woman." *No Kidding* was awarded the Alberta Culture Prize for Best Non-Fiction and the Writers' Guild of Alberta Prize for Best Non-Fiction.

Long Way From Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation (Lorimer, 1980) told the history of the formation of

the New Left in Canada at a time in which it was being buried by the resurgence of the Right. Kostash has a remarkable ability to tell an engaging story while undoing the settled interpretations that would relegate it to a detail. Her work is a valiant struggle for what one might call 'minoritarian history,' or history written by those excluded from power. The book can also be read as the story of the formation of Kostash's own political sensibility which is expressed in her writing as the combination of personal questioning and political engagement.

In *Bloodlines: A Journey Into Eastern Europe* (Douglas and McIntyre, 1993) she followed her own origins back before the emigration to Canada into the tangled politics of Eastern Europe. It is perhaps the most tragic of her books, since it explored the common and interwoven roots of Eastern European ethnicities just prior to the explosion of ethnic violence in that region. In the introduction, Kostash noted that "I did not know in 1988 that everything was about to change—visits to Serbia and Ukraine at the end of 1991 were a kind of coda to my journeys—and so this is not a book about the revolution. This is a book about memory." While it has been, to some extent, sadly overtaken by events, it can nonetheless be read as a reminder that the turn of events was not an inevitable result of ancient conflicts, but was a political response to the fall of communism. Perhaps this historical 'chance' was more than that. Throughout her work, Kostash writes more of memory than of revolution, though she writes often of the desire for revolution. It is a profoundly Canadian political sensibility that guides her work: the combination of memory and longing for change. Looking back, looking forward: a change that would preserve as it overturns.

The Doomed Bridegroom: A Memoir (NeWest Press, 1998) is her most personal book. It describes an erotic journey of attraction to Eastern



European dissidents that pursues and explicates a tangled relationship between politics, power and desire. Probing the misunderstandings between the western New Left and dissidents in Soviet-style societies, it nevertheless wants to assert that they had a common project of recovering grassroots democracy that has been buried by subsequent events. This remarkable book provoked Lynn Crosbie to say that "Myrna Kostash writes like a bohemian Tosca—*The Doomed Bridegroom* is a lyrical, lovesick, and compelling antidote to the commonplace memoir."

Myrna Kostash's work has always been a battle with the commonplace, an opening out of the flattened present through memory and

desire that imprecates the most personal questioning with political struggles and the experiences of the battlements. Her Grace MacInnis Memorial Lecture in Spring 2002 will be a memorable experience that the Institute for the Humanities is proud to present.

Myrna Kostash will speak at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby on March 14 and at the Vancouver Public Library on March 15, 2002. For more information, contact Trish Graham at grahama@sfu.ca or 604-291-5855.

—Myrna Kostash

Excerpt from an article written for The Globe and Mail

Here, in my sister's and brother-in-law's Lanark County home, west of Ottawa, I sit on the borderline between an ancient limestone plain and the rugged Precambrian rock outcrops of the Canadian Shield. Could there be a more Canadian place than this? I feel the literal bedrock of a Canadian self, here where the old stories of First Nations and founding nations, stamped by a red maple leaf that does not even grow on most of Canada's land mass, were first circulated in my schoolgirl's brain. The stories were then rounded out by the satisfying tale of adventure of Galician pioneers in sheepskin coats who broke sod on the great plains and threshed wheat from its upturned emptiness. Finally, the tales conclude in the collective triumph of Expo 67, the World's Fair, just in time for the exhilarating production of Canadian Culture in arts and letters, not to mention in fervent anti-Americanism during the rage that was the war in Vietnam. Where is here? literary theorist Northrop Frye had famously challenged us, and we had answered, Why, it's right here under our feet, this bedrock, these plains, these stories we tell each other. "Here" even has its own flag.

Thirty years later, a young art student from Winnipeg went to Montreal and visited the site of Expo 67, about which he had heard so much from his parents. He took his camera. But the amusement park was closed, and, when he walked to the top of a small hill to look around at the buildings he had become familiar with from photographs, he saw only grey polygons hunkered down among seedy fun park structures, a casino,

and the ruined hulk of the Canada Pavilion, poorly built on a wooden frame and now become ramshackle. The student thought he saw a group of squatters in residence, a sign of some sort of life.

What had happened between these two Expos?

One evening in November 1988 I had sat stunned in a university cafeteria festooned with the brave balloons that were meant to celebrate the victory of

Some of my interviewees felt a certain disquiet and uncertainty from the dislocations of immigration and migration or felt themselves to be inhabiting several homeplaces at once whose boundaries of race, gender and language overlapped imperfectly with the older, fixed boundary of a historical Canada.

my NDP candidate from Edmonton Strathcona in the federal election that brought instead the re-election of Brian Mulroney's Tories and the promise of a free trade agreement with the United States.

I was inconsolable. I felt that my country had been kidnapped by aliens, and I didn't mean the Americans. I meant my fellow Canadians who had dreamed the familiar dream of the continentalists in which we Canadians merge with Americans and do away with the travail required to construct our own collective. The place I could still call home was no longer nation-wide but only as wide as my neighbourhood of kindred spirits and peers who widely deplored the social and cultural

deCanadianization of the FTA era, its careless disregard of historical memory and social solidarity. It didn't occur to me that for another, younger, generation, this constricted, mean-spirited, corporatized Canada with a website for an address would be the only home they knew, and that they would love it anyway.

"There is something in the ponderous stillness of these forests..." wrote an early Irish settler in Lanark County, "something in their wild, torn, mossy darkness." That vivid apprehension of a primeval, foundational Canada was gone, it seemed to me, not only in the accelerated clear-cutting of forest—half the timber that has been cut in Canada has been logged in the last 25 years—but also in the imagined notion of the wilderness in which we pretend to be communing with the wild in our semi-natural parks and cedar-clad chalets of ski resorts. The idea of a wilderness has become at least as important to our sense of well-being as the existence of the actual forest itself. And our artists dream of walking out

of our cities, out the back alleys and straight into the boreal forest and the caribou and the Northern Lights, even while most Canadians live in cities, emigrants away from the territorial hinterland that had once borne the meaning of "here."

Of course, for aboriginal Canadians at least, roots go so deep they cannot be pulled, as a Mi'kmaq saying goes, and their artists believe they work around a centre that does not shift with a historical memory that remembers nothing older than Turtle Island itself—"here" has never been elsewhere. Are non-aboriginal Canadians condemned to be provisional dwellers of a homeplace we are not native to or can we somehow reel ourselves into the time before time of aboriginal

memory? I mean, where else would we feel at home?

But these questions, I soon learned from the “next Canadians” as I met them, were not the interesting ones. Yes, there are the ones who do struggle for the actual forests but there are many who see themselves as urban environmental activists—reclaiming the streets for bicycles, say—or, more symbolically, as sharing metaphorical landscapes of communication among media or who insist that “here” is not a geohistorical place, as it was until the Free Trade Agreement for my generation, but a series of stories they tell each other. A young DJ in Toronto, an aficionada of techno-urban music, even found that in the subdivided world of free-floating musical categories, the culture is about “people telling their own stories, bringing people together” as though huddled around some digitized version of the campfire in the Canadian woods. And a Cree-speaking computer artist in Regina believes that the World Wide Web speaks the “Language of Spiders” and allows for the incorporation of the new technology’s powers into the “living skins” of ancestral culture.

Some of my interviewees felt a certain disquiet and uncertainty from the dislocations of immigration and migration or felt themselves to be inhabiting several homeplaces at once whose boundaries of race, gender and language overlapped

imperfectly with the older, fixed boundary of a historical Canada. Where my generation experienced the perennial Canadian identity crisis as a neurosis to be cured by specific policy decisions to firm ourselves up, younger people talked of the “crisis” as an opportunity to develop a whole series of morphed identities. “Are we a techno-culture, an art, a social community, or a political space?” one wanted to know, relishing the possibilities of all at once. Some even rhapsodize the proliferation of virtual cultures that free the participant of the encumbrances of race and ethnicity, not to mention citizenship, the implications of which seem to me staggering. If identity as historically grounded in collective shared experience in a common space is declared obsolescent, then we are only here now and nothing has happened to us.

And so my young art student in Winnipeg believed it: “I’ve thought that the ultimate postmodern nation would not be based on geography but on a system of networks,” he said, dreamily.

He had told me that his generation of artists was up to something vastly more interesting than the “boring aesthetics” of the modernist suburbia to which so many of his peers had been consigned at birth. Video art, reproducible in endless multiples, excited him. So did images ripped

off underground films and circulated on computers. And leaflets copied in their hundreds at the local copy shop and distributed anonymously. And Polaroids. You even can use Polaroids. “Friends of mine have left Polaroids around the city as some kind of statement: I was here.”

I was here. The idea of those three words, metaphorically scratched onto fading Kodachrome and abandoned to the urban drift, haunted me for a long time—the pathos of the unnamed I, of the no-fixed address of here. But I needn’t feel so sorry. Even the art student feels a little wistful about the older generation’s experience of the old solidarities and certainties, the One Big Narratives of time and place, the old patriotism of the Canadian Shield and Aurora Borealis, of the tales of Manawaka and Batoche and Expo 67, even though he knows that being Canadian now means “celebrating” doubt, inconclusiveness, fluidity and improvisation. It was a dictum of Marshall McLuhan that Canada is the only country in the world that knows how to live without an identity. Knowing there is no “here” anymore on which to make a fixed, convinced and dedicated stance may make of the art student a more unassailable Canadian than he, or I, dreamed possible.



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The Mural Cover Design

The mural depicted on the covers of *Humanitas*, "Writing, Figures, Shelves and the Humanities, 2000" can be seen in the Humanities Department at the southeast corner of the Academic Quadrangle. It is a life-size, digitally constructed and composed series of images that represent each of the faculty members and programs in the Humanities area. A collaboration of all the faculty in Humanities, it is based on an idea by Jerry Zaslove and Steve Duguid and is composed and designed by Jerry Zaslove, Department of Humanities, and Greg Ehlers, Learning and Instructional Development Centre, SFU. Photography: Greg Ehlers, Spring, 2000.



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