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viceVersa



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grano

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David Hockney
Great Pyramid
at Giza with
Broken Head
from Thebes
[1963]

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EDITORIAL

THE TRIANGLE AND BATH WATER

Le Triangle et l'eau du bain

Only the name is circumstantial, when one considers the so-called economic-social-political circumstances! An excuse to stigmatize a mess for which nobody wants to take responsibility. In this present day, who is ready and willing to believe that the "sacrifices" proposed by government and big business are truly necessary? Many observers believe that the present phenomenon is structural, whether we dub it crisis, recession, depression or something else. Even non-specialists see an inherent characteristic of wild capital, whose internal logic is punishing all of society.

In France the average citizen has become aware of this fact. Here, on the other hand, social sensitivity being less developed, citizens construe lay-offs and cost-of-living increases as natural disasters. The media, wisely piloted, have addressed the recent French events as little as possible. Information about the crisis we are living through is despairingly neutral. How is it then possible to defend what is actually good about our democracy? How can one throw out the bath water, while saving the baby?

We must begin by giving the political sphere new life.

That's what *Vice Versa* tries to achieve, poco a poco, in the Triangle and through its élan towards its Mexican half-sister *Viceversa* (see page 22).

We propose certain solutions, remedies, antidotes; among them, counter-information, ecological conscience and the ancient ideal of social justice. And art? It's not excluded. But please, it's not a matter of art things: objects-made-by-artists, gathered, packaged and sold as Art. It's a question of the artist's gaze at the world. We must translate this look, this absence of self-interest, this form of play into politics...

To enrich our reflection, while waiting for the Age of Aquarius, let us read the opposite page, *The Alternative*, a manifesto we believe in and with which we wish to introduce a new *Vice Versa* season. [L. T.]

La conjoncture économique-politique n'a de conjoncturel que le nom! Une excuse pour stigmatiser un marasme dont personne ne veut assumer la responsabilité. Qui aujourd'hui est prêt à croire utiles et nécessaires les sacrifices qu'exigent les dirigeants des gouvernements et ceux des grandes entreprises? Nombreux sont ceux qui, désormais pensent ce phénomène structurel, qu'on l'appelle crise, récession, dépression ou autrement. Même les non-spécialistes y voient une caractéristique inhérente au capital sauvage, dont la logique a fini par pénaliser la société entière. En France, les simples citoyens s'en sont aperçus. Ici, par contre, la sensibilité sociale étant plus mince, les gens prennent les congédiements et l'augmentation du coût de la vie pour des fatalités naturelles.

Les médias, sagement pilotés, ont parlé le moins possible des événements français. L'information sur la crise que nous vivons, est d'une neutralité désespérante!

Comment peut-on donc défendre ce qu'il y a de bon dans notre démocratie? Comment jeter l'eau du bain tout en sauvant le bébé? Il faut commencer par redonner du souffle au politique.

C'est ce que *Vice Versa* essaie de faire, poco a poco, dans le Triangle et par son élan vers sa demi-soeur mexicaine *Viceversa* (voir page 22).

Parmi les solutions, les remèdes ou les antidotes, nous proposons: la contre-information, la conscience écologique et le vieil idéal de la justice sociale. Et l'art? Il n'est pas à exclure. Mais attention, il n'est pas question des choses artistiques, des choses-faites-par-les-artistes, ramassées, emballées et vendues comme de l'Art. Il s'agit plutôt du regard de l'artiste. Ce regard, cette absence d'intérêt, ce jeu, il faut les faire passer en politique...

Pour réfléchir et en attendant l'Ere du Verseau, lisons dans la page à côté, *The Alternative*, un manifeste en lequel nous croyons et avec lequel nous comptons amorcer une nouvelle saison de *Vice Versa* [L. T.]

Il Triangolo e l'acqua sporca

La congiuntura economico-politica che ci chiede ancora sacrifici, non convince nessuno. Ormai sono molti a pensare che questo fenomeno, lo si chiami crisi, recessione, depressione o altro, non ha niente di congiunturale. Anche agli occhi dei non specialisti appare come un'essenzialissima caratteristica del capitale selvaggio, la cui logica ha finito per penalizzare la società. In Francia se ne sono accorti. Qui, la sensibilità sociale è minima e la gente prende i licenziamenti e tutto il resto per delle calamità naturali. I media, saggiamente pilotati, hanno parlato il meno possibile degli avvenimenti francesi e sulla crisi informano con assoluta neutralità! Allora, come difendersi, come difendere ciò che c'è di buono nella democrazia? Come buttare via l'acqua sporca ma non il bambino? Bisogna ridare fiato al politico.

È quello che *Vice Versa* cerca di fare poco a poco nel Triangolo e con uno slancio Nord/Sud verso la sorellastra *Viceversa* di Città del Messico (vedi p. 22).

Tra le soluzioni, gli antidoti, i rimedi proponiamo: la controinformazione, la coscienza ecologica, il vecchio ideale della giustizia sociale. E l'arte? Non è da escludere. Ma non tanto le cose artistiche, le cose-fatte-dagli-artisti, raccolte, impacchettate e vendute come Arte, quanto lo sguardo dell'artista. È questo sguardo, questo disinteresse che bisogna riuscire a portare in politica...

Per riflettere e in attesa di entrare nell'Era dell'Acquario, leggiamo nella pagina affianco *The Alternative*, un manifesto al quale crediamo e con il quale contiamo iniziare una nuova stagione di *Vice Versa*. [L.T.]

ViceVersa

Montréal

The
magazine for

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ATTENTION WRITERS!

Famous...infamous...would-be...have-beens
here's an opportunity for your fiction to appear
in the Triangle Montréal-Toronto-New York!
Vice Versa Magazine is preparing
its FICTION issue of April 1996.

Theme: *Three cities in a tale*

Looking for fiction pieces in English, French,
Spanish and Italian that touch upon events in
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Submission must include at least two of the cities.

Length: not exceeding 1250 words

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ou vous étiez écrivains à un moment de votre vie ...
voilà donc une occasion de faire connaître votre
création dans le Triangle

Montréal-Toronto-New York !

ViceVersa prépare un numéro de fiction (avril 1996) .

Sujet: Un court morceau sur les trois villes.

Nous cherchons des courtes nouvelles
en français, en anglais, en espagnol et en italien se
référant à ce qui se passe dans le Triangle par
nos villes. Les morceaux choisis devraient toucher
au moins deux villes à la fois.

Longueur: pas en excès de 1250 mots.

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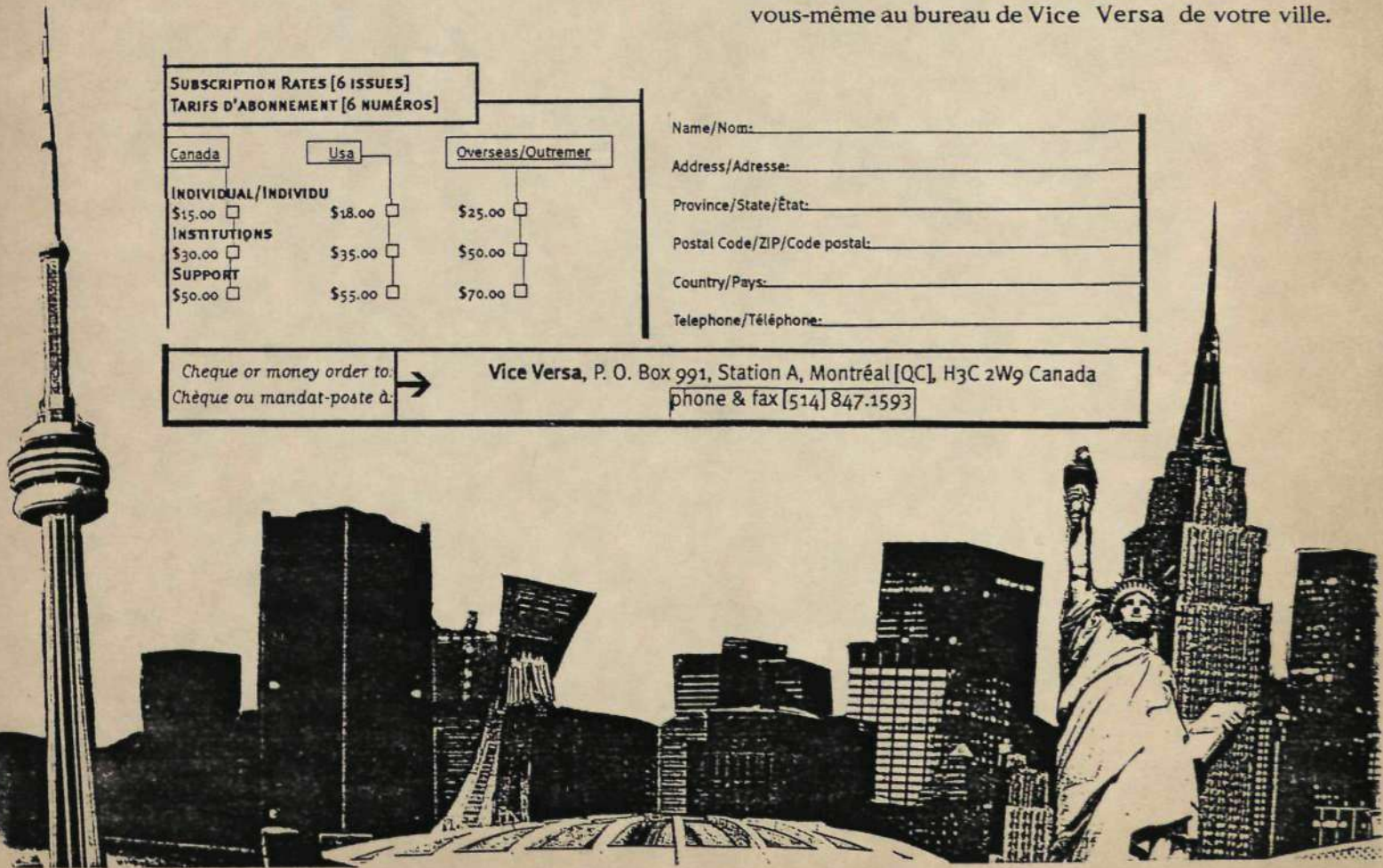
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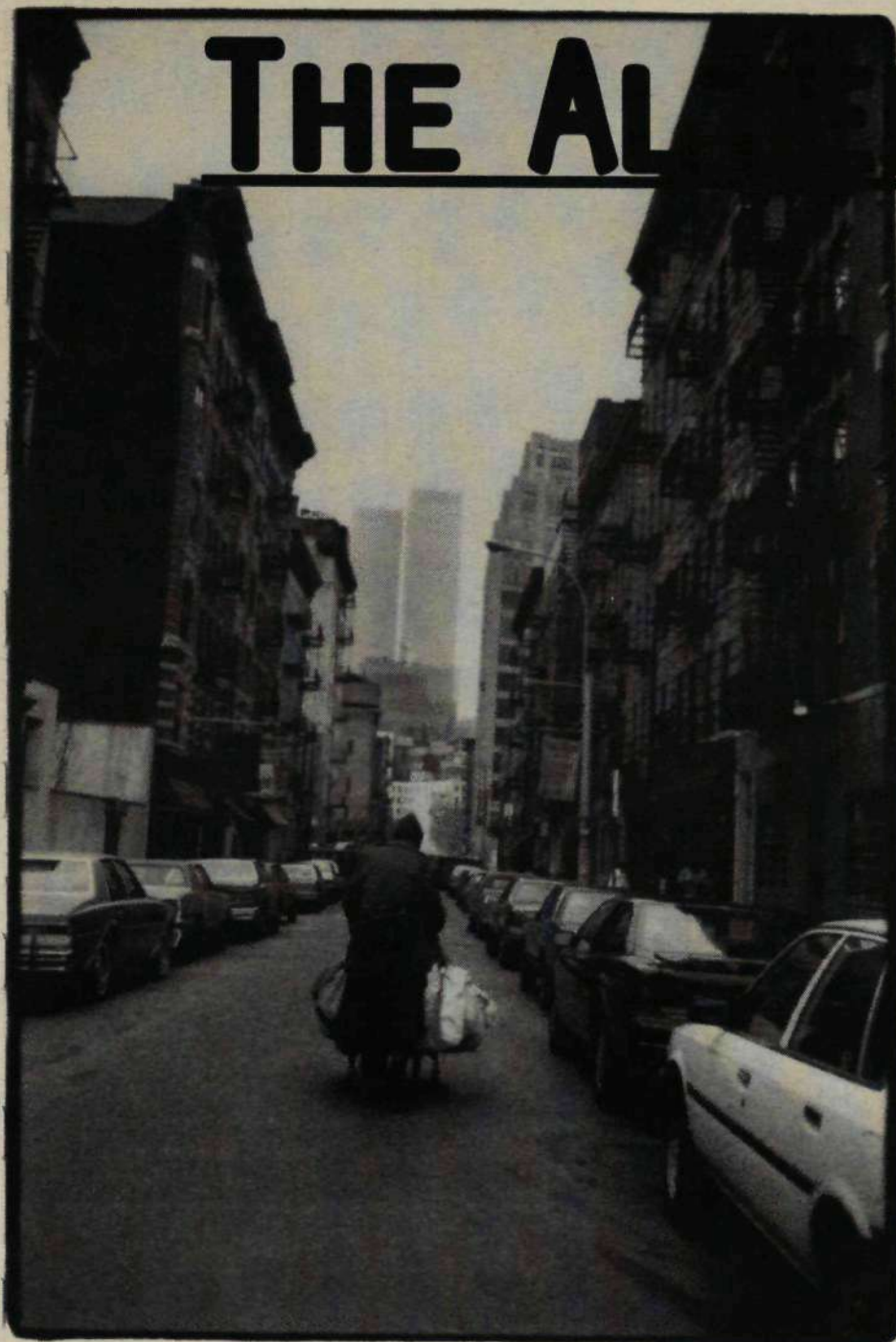
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THE ALTERNATIVE



A POLITICAL MANIFESTO FROM PARIS A GLOBAL FIX FOR A SICK PLANET

Translated from French by Andrew Seleanu

photo: gilbert duclos

We have entered an era of profound transformation, particularly in those countries known as "advanced." This process goes to the root of the most basic structures of society. The mutation brought about by information technologies alters the very notion of progress, as it has been known for millennia. The change challenges the traditional role of work and its function as a basic matrix and societal bond.

Socio-cultural change favours skills in forming new relationships and in situations one might refer to as "social symbiosis"; it fosters personal self-fulfillment as it creates a new involvement in a collective social project.

Capitalist free-market economics is proving unable to tame productivist and mercantile mechanisms. It is not serving people's needs. We must invent a pluralist economy which leaves room for factors other than market forces. Such factors are social usefulness, the needs for real social development or new ways of sharing wealth: goods and services.

Thus financial, monetary levers of intervention become crucially necessary. They

must be political, yet they require transparent and democratic public institutions, adapted to all sectors of society. A participatory democracy, enlivened by active and autonomous citizens must reinvigorate traditional representative democracy and transform power relationships.

These deep socio-economic transformations should take place as part and parcel of progress and civilization. Our task is historical and long-term in nature. These changes affecting the course of civilization would give priority to the quality of life, as opposed to quantitative growth, to full-time, but equally, to fulfilling activity for women and men, rather than traditional full employment. The protection of the environment would be promoted. Convivial competition as opposed to runaway economic competitiveness, an economy with a human face rather than techno-economics serving "King-money" and the cult of economic competition. This culture-enhancing policy, integrated into political life, would give new meaning to the latter.

A recasting of thought-patterns dwells at the

centre of these concerns. Today, knowledge, in its far-reaching implications is becoming the governing social force, inseparable from our private and social lives. Complex and encompassing the full spectrum of the sciences, present-day knowledge tends to integrate and fuse its methods with philosophical, poetic, mythical and artistic creativity...

At an individual level, educational reform would be aimed at teaching how to understand the world. Such reform would help to put in a larger context and inside a global setting knowledge and information.

Students would become aware of the dangers to which information overload exposes them and would become more sensitive to the risk of losing their powers of reflexion. Socially, communication in a network including others, as well as sharing widely one's various experiences, would foster the emergence of collective wisdom and life-experience.

Taking such a perspective, economic and social differences between societies engaged in worldwide integration are no longer tolerable. This integration process, which at present

exclusively serves transnational corporations, must lead to a responsible world of human solidarity. Room for action may be limited in the case of nation-states, such as France. However, in the case of larger and more complex geopolitical formations, such as, for instance, Europe, the conditions for the alternatives of action contemplated in this proposal, are favourable, if made subject to a three-point proviso:

A clear turning-away from the methods of the institutions generated at Bretton Woods, is called for. These institutions are: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, all forward bastions of the "mandatory single-thought syndrome", i.e. the extension to all human activity and to the entire planetary space of the logic of "capitalist free-market economics."

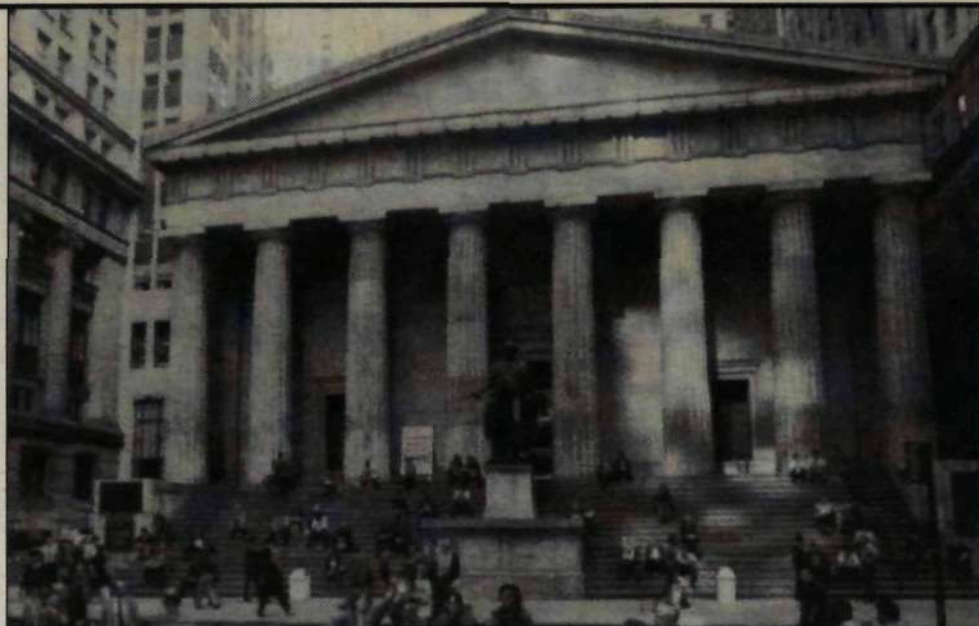
Putting an end to the hypocrisy of aid to the Third World, the ultimate form of colonialism. It is necessary to open the democratic dialogue between the countries of the North and South for a mutual cooperation and economic exchange policy;

Within this framework, preparing at a global level an economic, ecological and social contract setting limits to competition.

A policy of worldwide cooperation and civilization with an ability to inspire anew a planet beset by mental turmoil, is conceivable only if it rests on renewed ethics.

Active alterability. openness to the other human beings seen as beneficial to us precisely because they are different from us, can make us sense and rediscover the rights and duties of the planetary social bond: the life-experience of responsibility and solidarity.

As we approach the 21st century, these orientations would crown the conquests of the French and American revolutions and render meaningful the Rights of man - to freedom and to safety- as proclaimed by the Universal UN Declaration of Human Rights. †



The New York stock exchange on Wall Street

This text was published in issue no. 33 of *Transversales Science Culture* for May-June 1995. The magazine, describes itself as "a bi-semestrial interactive and convivial newsletter, co-authored by a group of researchers, decision-makers and citizens, independent of any financial support." The editor is Jacques Robin. The members of the editorial group are: André Bourguignon, Jean Chesneaux, Dominique Genelot, Michel Hervé, Anne Brigitte Kern, Roger Lesgards, Jean-Paul Maréchal, Gérard Mendel, Edgar Morin, René Passet, Armand Petitjean, Riccardo Petrella, Martine Rémond-Gouilloud, Joël de Rosnay, Jacques Testart, Patrick Viveret.

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L t T R R C a R S

**Letters
Lettres
Cartas
Lettere**

Dear *Vice Versa*,

Your focus on the Toronto - New York - Montréal triangle as explored through interviews with mayors and taxi drivers offers divergent glimpses into three essentially dissimilar versions of urban modernity in North America. Toronto - a Calvinist, Gothic - puritanical, aseptic modernity - a faded epiphany of taciturn, vaguely spooky Protestant asepsis which produced the steam engine, the polyrhythmic clangour of mechanical phalli in the textile factories, and lately the quixotic Golem-quest that is

artificial intelligence. Toronto - Salt Lake City without the missionary zeal, a slate-grey Midwest manqué. Toronto - not New York's Nietzsche - no dance over the abyss but a somnambulistic passacaglia of monadic solitudes cryogenically preserved in their unthawed otherness, not New York's melting cauldron but a theme park of fossilized ethnicity where capital "v" for Vice can still produce a cabbie's wide-eyed bemusement over the demise of Toronto the Clean. But where Toronto's organic vintage - Calvinist modernity is gloomy thrice-coded expressionism, New York's forced, historic,

MILANO UNDERGROUND

LA METROPOLI ITALIANA SI CERCA SOTTOTERRA

marco chironi

fotografie: massimo chiaradia

Milano come Montréal e Toronto? Shopping centers e servizi turistici e culturali nel sottosuolo della metropoli lombarda come i meravigliosi centri sotterranei nelle due città canadesi? Staremo a vedere nei prossimi mesi gli sviluppi e la possibilità di attuazione di un progetto che cambierebbe il volto del centro storico milanese riportando in vita le arterie sotterranee (un spazio di quasi 18 mila metri quadrati) che si stendono dalla piazza del teatro alla Scala lungo tutta la Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, fino alla piazza del Duomo e al Palazzo Reale. Si tratterebbe di una realizzazione urbanistica che non solo darebbe respiro ai flussi turistici della Galleria soprastante, percorsa ogni giorno da migliaia di



persone, aprendo tra l'altro ampi spazi ai servizi della amministrazione pubblica (uffici informazioni comunali e una grande banca dati per studenti, per esempio) e agli esercizi commerciali, ma costituirebbe

un'opera rilevante anche da un punto di vista architettonico, replicando, sottoterra appunto, l'innovativo tema spaziale-funzionale inaugurato cento anni or sono con la soprastante Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, progettata dall'architetto bolognese Mengoni e subito assunta a salotto cittadino per eccellenza. Il celebre "passeggio coperto", mentre è diventato un modello copiatissimo, imitato in tutto il mondo nella struttura dei centri commerciali, basti ricordare

T T e R T A S E

exhausted modernity is a Bartokian allegro barbaro, a spasmodic St. Vitus dance of erstwhile aleatoric flashpoints. The broken cohesion of collective identity - America's mythic Corpus Cristi shattered into fourteen million very private individual solitudes - the cooled melting pot's congealed precipitate. Between break-outs of pseudo-random violence, amid the shattered glass of window panes in broken-in homes, the wrinkled faces of senescent fourteen-year olds... No deuterium in Montréal, though - here, modernity has suffered rather than secreted the violence of speeded-up pressurized time.

Like Brasilia, Montréal had rejected the graft of geodesic-dome, subarctic-sci-fi-underground-city modernity, engineered and delivered shrink-wrapped by the high priests of technocrat-friendly internationalism - Safdie, Fuller, Calder. And so it goes - holes in the walls of Expo's pavillions, slabs of concrete falling off the Olympic Flying Saucer's roof. All this manifest precarity pitted against ubiquitous geological permanence - the edge of Earth's exposed skin - the Canadian shield, witness of the planet's fiery birth pangs, visible from the surging extrusion of metamorphic rock that is the city's Royal

Mount. And on the surface, Montréal's sometimes sinister North American reality ("l'amère Amérique": the oil refineries as seething, slithering serpents in Ducharme's *L'avalée des avallées*) vibrates with febrility in the fiery winter of mechanical power.

Anatol Orlovsky, Montréal

Dear Sirs,

After one night spent sleeping on an abandoned copy of *Vice Versa* in the railway station of Firenze, and one morning waiting for

Toronto, Montréal, Düsseldorf, ma anche Parigi, con il nuovo Louvre e il Forum des Halles. Negli U.S.A. addirittura un centinaio di shopping centers sono stati denominati, in omaggio al prototipo milanese, "galleries". Un modello architettonico, però che non ha realizzato appieno in questi ultimi trent'anni i suoi obiettivi di luogo di aggregazione e incontro, raccogliendo offerte commerciali e culturali in un insieme casuale (non ancorato cioè a ricerche di mercato) piuttosto che in un sistema integrato di attrezzature operanti nel mercato, dotato di un organismo decisionale che agisce secondo strategie, progetti e obiettivi comuni. "Per aumentare l'attrattività - sottolinea l'architetto Giorgio Gentili, autore del progetto della galleria "underground", è indispensabile interessare tutti gli spazi disponibili non solo quelli del livello pedonale, ma anche quelli del sotterraneo." Gentili si scaglia contro l'ipotesi di una "città policentrica" con il conseguente rilancio delle periferie, che tutte le giunte comunali milanesi degli ultimi decenni si sono impegnate, in verità con scarsi risultati a realizzare. "Milano - sottolinea l'architetto - non è Londra, Parigi o Berlino, non raggiunge i due milioni di abitanti e le sue dimensioni sono assai minori delle aree parigina o berlinese. Ma, soprattutto, la città è nata e si è sviluppata attorno ad un unico centro storico, che ora deve recuperare e valorizzare il suo insostituibile ruolo di importanza civica e turistica. Questo non significa lasciare le periferie a se stesse e al loro degrado, ma reinvestire i profitti ottenuti con il rilancio economico del centro nel recupero dell'hinterland cittadino."

Secondo Gentili, questo rilancio deve inevitabilmente passare attraverso il recupero della vasta e per ora sottoutilizzata area sotterranea che subisce da anni una gestione irrazionale e non redditizia. I locali potrebbero essere trasformati in un organico centro multifunzionale, comprendente esercizi commerciali al dettaglio, esercizi di ristorazione e di somministrazione, attrezzature socioculturali e di intrattenimento, servizi paracomunali e unità artigianali e di servizio. Per l'organizzazione degli spazi si potrebbe ricorrere alla teoria degli shopping centers, in particolare ai principi del "merchandising plan", senza d'altra parte cedere tutti i locali ai privati: si tratterebbe anzi di destinare un'ampia porzione del sottosuolo alla sosta e all'incontro del pubblico, recando beneficio anche agli enti pubblici e culturali adiacenti, in primo luogo il teatro alla Scala, sotto il quale Gentili sogna di creare un secondo foyer, meno snob ed elitario di quello superiore.

C'è ora da chiarire se il mega centro sia destinato a venire realizzato: in Comune, di fronte alla determinazione di Sergio Bontempelli, un consigliere comunale che ha presentato il progetto alla commissione competente per l'approvazione, si frappone la solita inerzia e l'immobilismo di alcune forze politiche che compogono la Giunta milanese. A noi spetta solo la speranza che, ancora una volta, la città di Milano non perda una grande occasione per il rilancio della sua immagine internazionale, uscita piuttosto appannata dai tanti scandali dei primi anni Novanta. ↗



Marco Chironi è un giornalista italiano che vive tra New York e Milano.

L I T E R A R Y

trains and reading your magazine, I have realized what a prodigious luck was mine. *Vice Versa* is one of the most exciting cultural magazines I've ever read, something without parallels in our country as regards breadth of subjects, variations in style and, specially, blend of cultures and interests. May be it is definitely this cultural mix which makes it so different and which can soon be appreciated here in Europe and Italy, where we really miss analogous enterprises. *Vice Versa* brought me the flavour of a country where the integration of people from different countries has already produced the beautiful

results which your magazine testifies. Moreover, it provides a thorough multifaceted image of the Canadian and Québécoise culture, which has delighted all the friends I have passed your magazine to. Here in Italy very few centres can give us such a deep insight into what is going on in your country. It would be nice to find *Vice Versa* on the newspaper stall (instead of on a railways station's bench).

Sincerely,

Michele Pipan, Trieste, Italy

Dear Vice Versa,

I was introduced to your magazine for the first time by one of my professors at Carleton University. He asked me what I thought of the magazine, particularly the new "triangular" approach. After reading through issues 49 and 50 I thought the idea was provoking. When I decided to write you this letter all I could think about was the triangular symbol that has been created to promote the magazine - a new and interesting approach. I began to think about what kinds of meanings or ideas emerge from the traditional triangle.

J'ACCUSE

THE AMBIGUITIES OF A MULTI-FACED MAYOR IN THE VIEW OF A NEW YORKER

carole ashley

illustration: pierre-paul pariseau

In 1982 Assistant Attorney General Rudolph Giuliani made a fact-finding trip to Haiti for the Reagan Administration. He found that Haitians had nothing to fear from the "friendly" government of Baby Doc Duvalier, who "personally assured him" that political repression "simply does not exist." Giuliani chose not to look into the vast amount of information available on torture and political murder in Haiti. Haitians who could provide testimony on Duvalier's crimes were never called. When Giuliani gave the stamp of approval to Duvalier, United States policy-makers were able to justify the forced return of Haitian refugees, claiming the goal of the Haitians was not political asylum, but economic immigration. Meanwhile Cuban refugees continued to get the green light. The Haiti policy is reminiscent of the US and European governments' betrayal of Jews fleeing Nazi Germany who were prevented from landing and seeking asylum.

As a candidate, Giuliani proved flexible. In 1989, when he ran against Mayor Ed Koch, Giuliani talked vaguely about his support for unions, education and drug-treatment. This approach failed. In the 1993 campaign against liberal Democrat David Dinkins, New York's first African-American Mayor, he changed tactics. In spite of his limited success as a prosecutor, he had a reputation as scourge of the Mafia and crooked Wall Street investment bankers. Both conservative and liberal journalists helped foster the image of an incorruptible crime-



fighter. Overlooking his support for the death penalty, enough liberals joined right-wing Catholics and right-wing Orthodox Jews to give Giuliani a majority. Whites were enticed by Giuliani's pledge to rid the streets of young criminals and the drugs they pushed. His promise had a racial subtext, since poor African-Americans and Hispanics are more likely to use crack, it's cheaper than powdered cocaine. Prison terms are much longer for crack. African-Americans withheld their vote in record numbers. Their suspicions were confirmed shortly after Giuliani's election, when Deputy Mayor Peter Powers told a reporter, "two white boys can run this town." In a 1994 *New York Times* article Giuliani gave his opinion on individual rights: "Freedom is about authority. Freedom is about the willingness of every single human being to cede to lawful authority a great deal of discretion about

T T e R T A S E

I asked a few friends what they thought a triangle symbolized. After some discussion, some key ideas emerged such as conflict, strength, power and equality.

The idea of conflict is rooted in the "love or hate triangle".

One person said that having three points, eliminates a linear or smooth relationship between two points because there will always be a point in the middle. Another said that the triangle to him represented strength: "It is the strongest geometrical figure". When I personally thought of the triangle, the first thing that came to mind was the industrial

triangle in northern Italy - where Milano, Torino and Genova share the majority of the Italian wealth and power.

So in this sense, industry and capital emerge out of the idea of a triangle. The Gay and Lesbian group "The Pink Triangle" seemingly to me represents equality. The triangle is open to many interpretations and ideas which inspired me to read the magazine. The magazine breaks down many barriers that often limit a reader's experience and offers a different outlook at the world we live in. This magazine, because of its diverse framework represents or speaks to and for different

experiences and ideas. I feel this approach to literature is needed today.

To my knowledge there is no other magazine that has taken this innovative and risky approach to writing. I congratulate and admire the Vice Versa staff in providing a tolerant and thought inspiring magazine.

I will be happy to become a subscriber and I will recommend this magazine to all of my friends and family.

Yours truly,

Davide Di Labio, Ottawa

what you do."

Back in 1989, candidate Giuliani, enlisting the liberal *Village Voice*, said: "It's cheaper to treat drug addicts than to jail them. It's safer to have decent prisons than to torture inmates in overcrowded and inhumane facilities." By 1995, Giuliani's "support" for preventative action long abandoned, 20,000 prisoners were crammed into New York's Rikers Island. 92% of them are African-American or Hispanic. Incarceration has become an alternative to drug treatment, education, infant and maternity care and the pursuit of civil rights. Giuliani ordered the Child Welfare Administration to "close two cases for every one you open." In 1995, he finally got rid of the popular Schools Chancellor, Ramon Cortines, and installed Rudolph Crew. Putting so-called religious principles or "family values" before the lives of young people, the Mayor and the new Schools Chancellor then killed the program for condom lessons in the high school AIDS curriculum and agreed on further cuts in school funding. Giuliani appeals to those who are against secular education.

The 1981 movie *Escape from New York* got things the wrong way round: instead of Manhattan becoming a prison, prisoners are being sent out of the city, or to its periphery. The poor, uneducated and homeless are also being pushed out of Manhattan below Harlem. As for the maligned "welfare mothers," they are being put to work at the minimum wage. In *Amazing Grace* (1995) Jonathan Kozol describes the appalling conditions of life in Mott Haven in the South Bronx, one of the poorest areas in the nation. The median household income is \$7,600. One in four women who give birth is HIV positive. Children sleep with oxygen tanks next to their beds because of asthma. As in Harlem, waste incinerators and treatment plants that were to be built on the waterfront of Manhattan below 96th Street are pushed into the South Bronx.

A massively increased police force has been given the power to control the "underclass," whom they can now search on suspicion, not only on the supposed commission of a crime. During the 1992 Giuliani versus Dinkins mayoral contest, a demonstration of 10,000 police was held outside City Hall. Candidate Giuliani supported the organizer, Phil Caruso, head of the Police Benevolent Association. Caruso was angry at Mayor Dinkins' refusal to let the police be armed with semi-automatics and at his attempt to establish an all-civilian review board. During the riot Giuliani made a rousing speech in behalf of the police, repeatedly screaming what the *New York Times* called "a one-word profanity." None of the rioters were removed from the scene, or, as far as we know, even reprimanded. The cops have now got their semi-automatic weapons. In a 1989 interview with the *Village Voice*, Giuliani said "I've tended to look at things from a law-enforcement point of view."

At the United Nations 50th Anniversary celebrations in October, 1995, the Mayor was New York's host. Fidel Castro was left out of the city's welcoming festivities. "It's my party," said the infantile Giuliani in response to criticism. The fact that the reception was paid for by taxpayers did not concern him. (The UN is not subject to New York law, even murder or rape by a delegate cannot be prosecuted.) Manhattan was turned into a moving fortress, police and bodyguards armed to the teeth. Castro took his entourage to Harlem and the South Bronx, where the welcome he received from liberal and radical African Americans and Hispanics.

On the third day, some of the UN anniversary participants were

invited to Lincoln Center to hear Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Among them were a number of dictators or their representatives guilty of horrendous crimes. No matter, they were of interest to the US, and no doubt to some of Giuliani's corporate supporters. PLO President Yasser Arafat, who arrived with two of his aides, had received his invitation from the UN along with everyone else. Just as the concert was about to begin, Giuliani noticed Arafat and instructed security people to eject him. The Mayor's men claimed Arafat and his aides left immediately without protest. Arafat and witnesses said he stayed until after the music started, he said he then had another event to attend.

He said he was "very proud" of his action, which reminded some of us of the way perceived enemies are hauled out of public places in police states. A senior Administration official said "the incident was an embarrassment to everyone associated with diplomacy." The Israelis were puzzled by Giuliani's behavior since they were negotiating peace with Arafat as the leader of the Palestinians. Giuliani claimed Arafat wasn't a head of state; a US Government spokesman responded that was only because the state was not yet formed.

Arafat's expulsion from the concert hall gave Giuliani a boost with certain constituencies. Right-wing Orthodox Jews cheered; on their agenda was de-recognition of the Palestinians, scuttling the peace process and continuing the fight to retain the Occupied Territories for Fundamentalist settlers. In this sense Giuliani's grandstanding worked against the interests of mainstream Israelis and Prime Minister Rabin's deal with Arafat. Some of the same Jewish extremists who roared their approval at Arafat's humiliation later expressed their delight at Rabin's assassination. They are now barred from entering Israel. The Orthodox extremists' mirror image, the Christian Fundamentalists, were also pleased.

Jonathan Kozol writes in *Amazing Grace*: "The city spends \$58,000 yearly on each adult inmate, \$70,000 on each juvenile—nearly ten times what it spends to educate a child in its public schools." Giuliani continues the huge tax abatements and cash incentives for corporations in the city. What's bankrupt about New York is not its resources, financial or human, it's the misuse of funds and poverty of the profit motive. The Mayor gives himself and the police a raise and cuts child support and education. He cuts funds for people with AIDS. He forces homeless people, often mentally ill, from their doorways. The gap between rich and poor grows wider; Giuliani continues to antagonize and set one group or race against another. In August, 1995, the West Indian American Day Parade was held in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Shortly before, Bishop Cecil G. Riley, minister and Jamaican community leader, expressed his feelings about Giuliani's participation: "I am not only disappointed, I am totally ashamed that he should be invited to lead this parade."

Giuliani has not become the unanimous mayor, as the newspapers and the political spin doctors would have it. 1

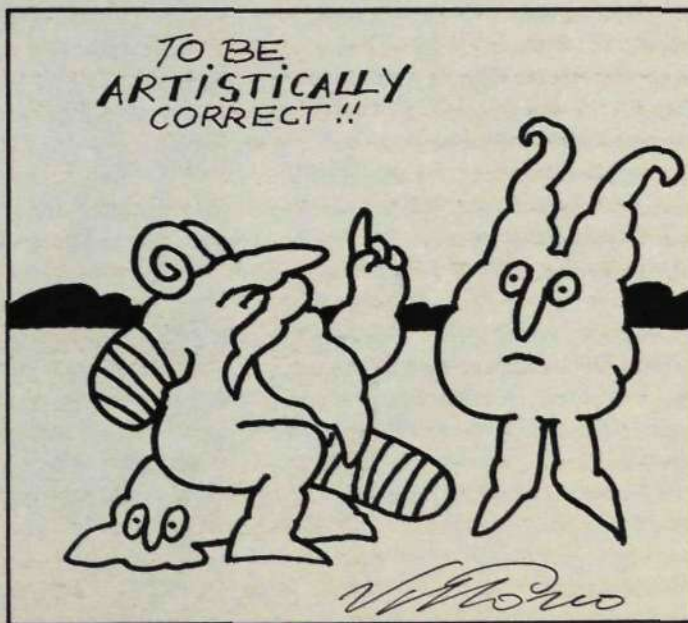
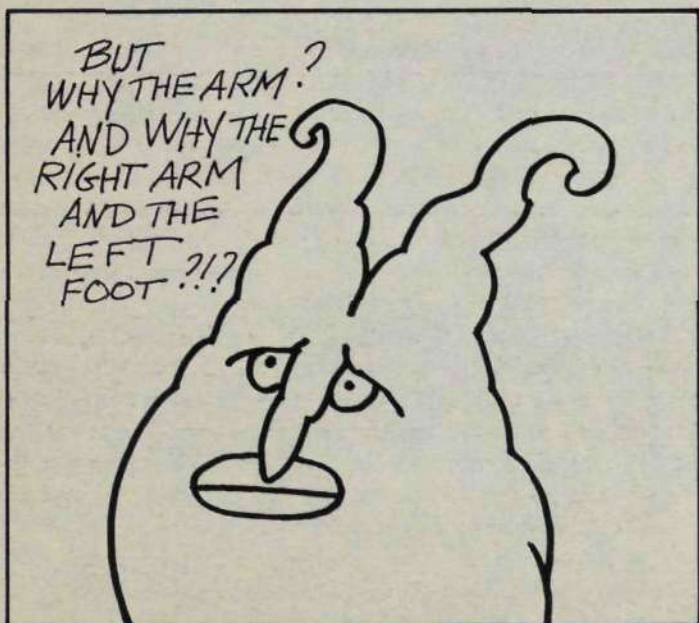
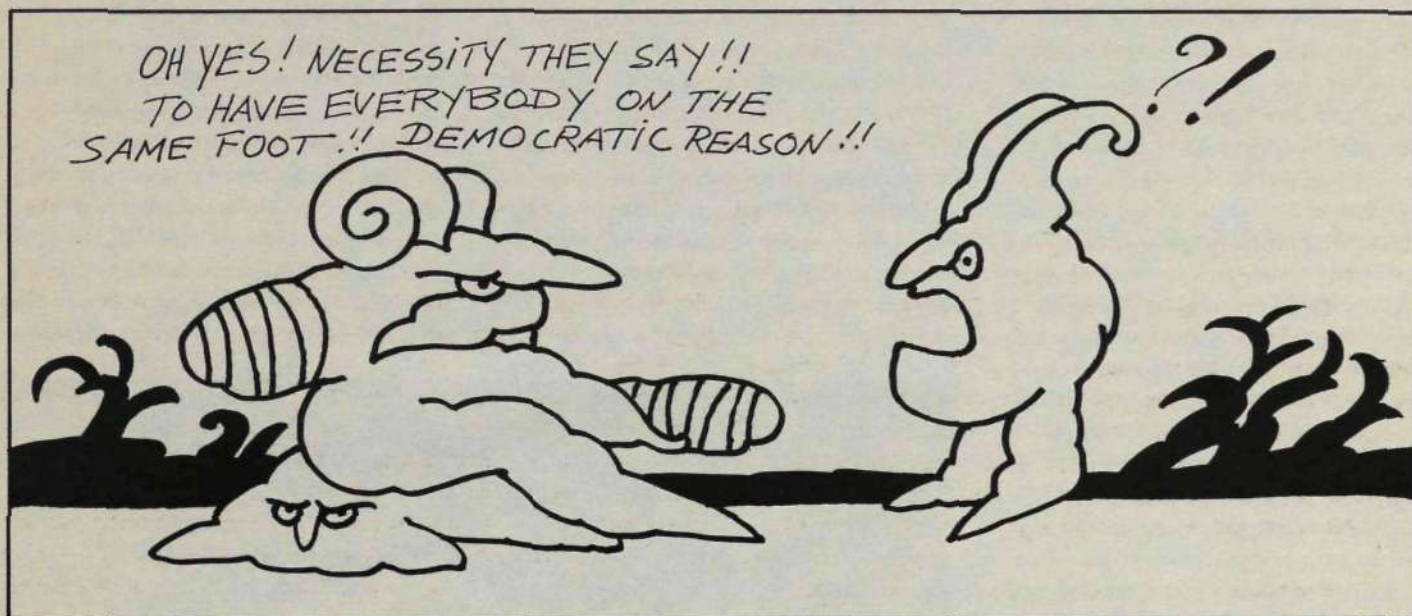
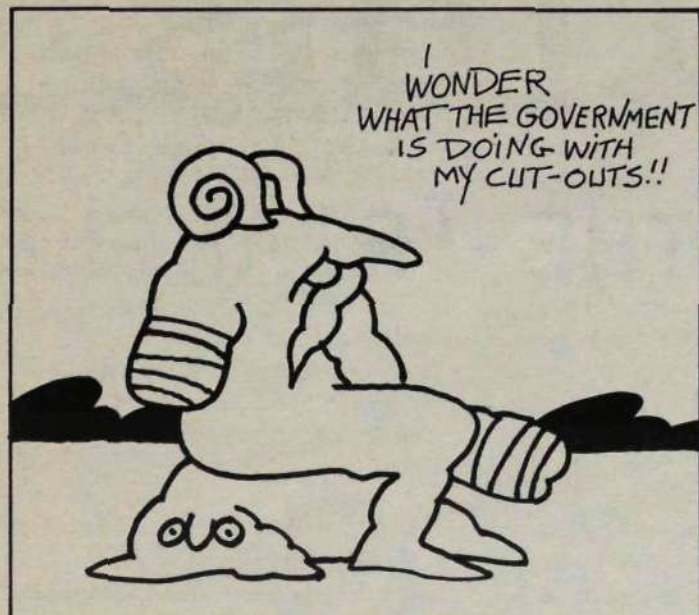
Thanks to Louis Proyect; David Wilson, *Weekly News Update on the Americas*; Mitchel Cohen, *Red Balloon Collective*.

Carole Ashley is a British writer and translator who lives and protests in New York.

New York City demo [Summer 1995] against Giuliani administration budget cuts of social services



VITTORINO



PEACE, CAFÉ AND NEW REALITIES

EX-YUGOSLAVS IN THE TRIANGLE

donalduccioletta

photos: carole ashley
gilbert duclos
vincenzo pietropaolo

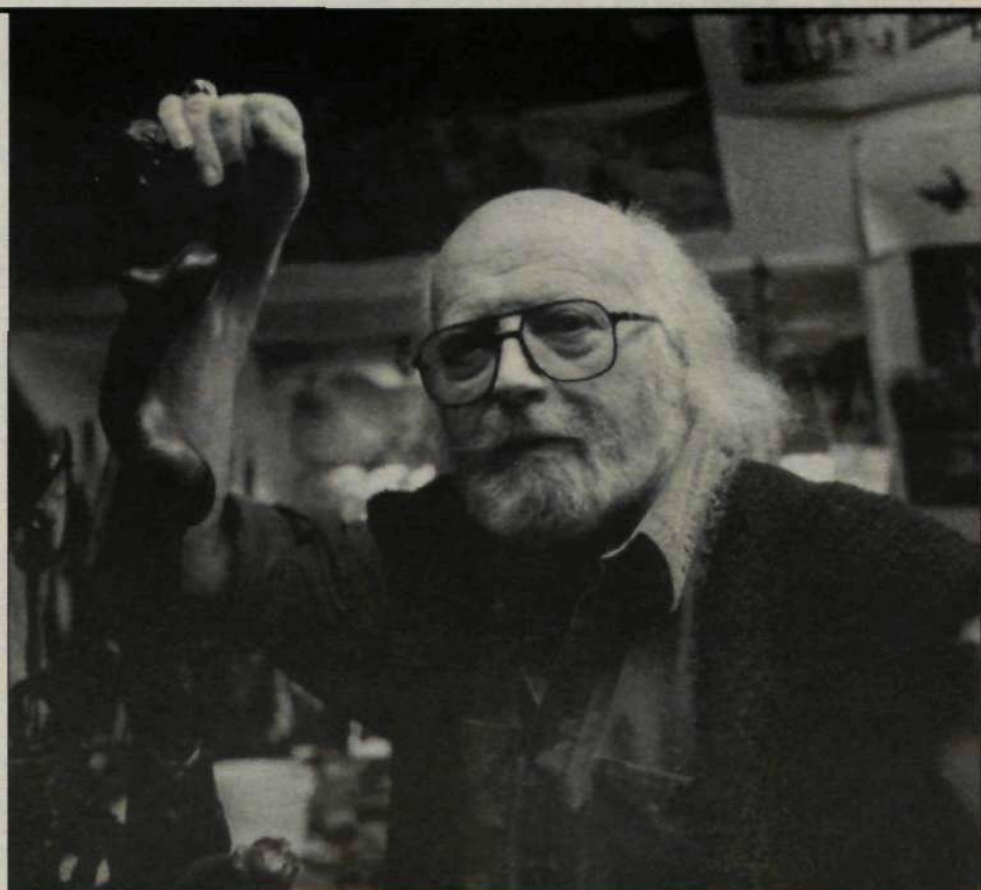
As we hailed the arrival of 1996 with a yearly litany of new year's resolutions and hope for the future, the expectation of a tentative peace for the people of ex-Yugoslavia loomed high on the agenda as a priority for this war-torn area of Europe. After four long years of barbarous confrontations of all sorts, based on centuries old positions of hate and intolerance fueled by propaganda, the cry for "peace at last", "peace at last" could be heard around the world. After four years of reading and witnessing on our television evening news these shocking events evolve before our very eyes, we learned of places called Tuzla, Vukovar and many others, which up until now were not part of our historical memory. Of this part of the world most of us were culturally illiterate. Yet throughout this human disaster one city came to be seen as the symbolic Armageddon of man's folly at the end of the 20th century. A hundred years of industrial development, space travel, 50 years of the United Nations, the experiences of the two World Wars - and a series of others- peace marches, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the international year of the child, the international year of women, etc..., etc..., yet we witnessed and cried Sarajevo. We saw Sarajevo an Olympic city of 1984 become, through the marvel of the global village, the Beirut of Europe.

"They not only wanted to kill and destroy but also to eliminate any form of vibrant culture", charged Joso, an ex-Yugoslavian artist and cultural icon living in Canada for over thirty years. As I sat in his Toronto restaurant, Joso's, sipping a full-bodied cappuccino, I listened to this Hemingway-like figure decry the little importance placed on the loss of cultural treasures lost to the world because of this insanity but remembering also the lack of support for culture in Canada. "How can we preserve and criticize the loss of historical treasures in a war zone if we cannot do it in our own backyard", he urged as he placed, in a purely East-European gesture, another cigarette

in his cigarette holder. "Yes, yes" he continued as he lit up, "we are being submerged by intolerance and the destruction of Sarajevo and all of ex-Yugoslavia is just a micro-cosmic example of the rest of the world".

While listening to this multifaceted character, I couldn't help but let my eyes wander liberally and freely around the interior of this cosy restaurant, a much frequented eatery for the Toronto literati. The walls of the establishment were covered literally with works of art, painted by himself. Paintings depicting all the different features of the human body, the

majority of which were women with a generous sprinkling of the male presence. Here were artistic endeavours surrounding us in an atmosphere of sensuousness and erotica, projecting hope through the human contact of love, while we discussed the hopelessness of loss and death. At times throughout the conversation this setting seemed to me a little contradictory regarding the subject matter of our encounter, but later I realized there could be no better environment to confront the realities of this insane war, which had projected so much hate, than by the elevating experience



Joso in his restaurant, surrounded by artistic endeavours in an atmosphere of sensuousness and erotica, projecting hope through the human contact of love [photo: VP]

of love and lovemaking. "All we do is fucking hate each other" echoed my host, "maybe that is why I paint love".

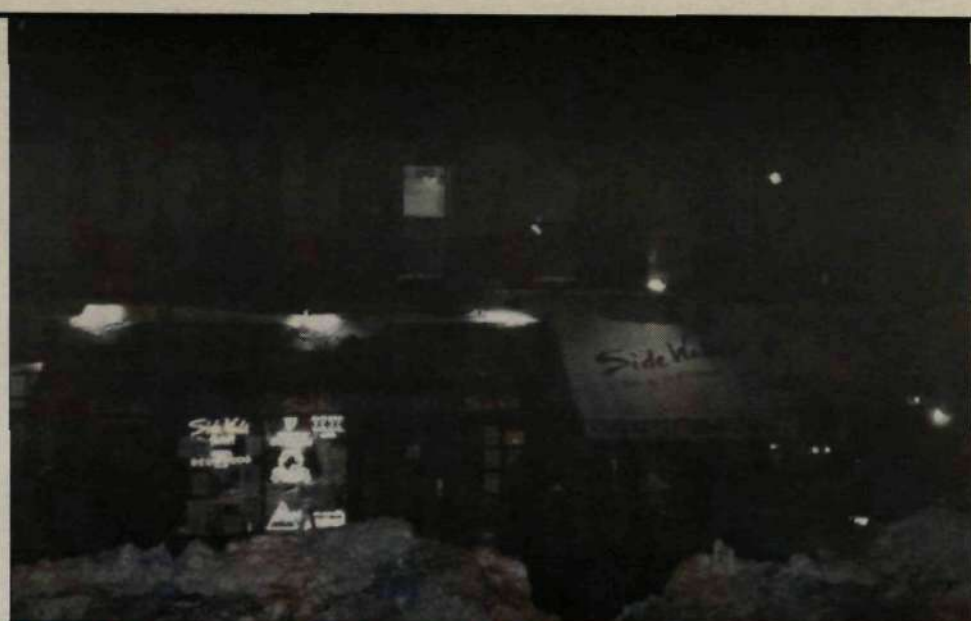
Known throughout Canada, with his own television program of popular songs from around the world on the CBC in the mid-sixties, he was part of duo known as Malka and Joso. For many years they were a fixture on late Saturday nights, bringing us through their different songs closer to the cosmopolitan flavor of our world. "I was always interested in art, painting, sculpture therefore after my singing career it was only natural that I take up this new life, even though as I found out it was hard to make a living even in this rich country (Canada)", he recalled between two puffs. "My best friends in Toronto are struggling artists, we talk a lot about culture and art but we do very little, in fact we are all victims of that crazy war", he said, his face portraying this message of sadness. He has begun to offer to young budding potters in recent years, the use of the kiln situated in the backyard of his restaurant. He firmly believes that if we give the youth a creative environment, anyone can produce some form of art; this from a man whose son and daughter are accomplished artists in their own right.

Originally from Dalmatia, Joso had undertaken in 1990 with the help of his talented children, the restoration of an old castle in the area of his birthplace Zadar. But with the advent of the war he had to abandon the project, still hoping that once peace has come to the region that he can return to fulfill his dream. A genuine feeling of recreating history - the one of his boyhood - has guided this project. "We must build, not destroy" he reiterated.

As our encounter, originally scheduled for one hour, stretched into two hours our host became more animated in his statements and gestures. This vibrancy became for me a sign of hope for the future and a genuine belief that through a participatory enjoyment of art and culture, man might eventually discover peace. At first, for an old political hack such as myself, I found this a little too optimistic, yet the fire in his eyes and in his gestures were starting to make me a believer. A good cappuccino, a good conversation, between open minds could lead to better things. Actually Sarajevo in the past had been such a place and now many of its occupants were searching elsewhere to rekindle such an atmosphere.

The Lower East Side of New York City has always been since the beginning of the massive immigrations to the United States in the late 19th century, a haven for those who could not remain in the country of their birth. Just as Italians, Russians and Jews had found a home there, so too had Puerto Ricans and Haitians later on, and now with a new wave in the 1990's being taken up by the exiles from ex-Yugoslavia. New York and the American dream still remain important lures for the displaced peoples of the world.

A place in New York which serves up this vision of America and is a spot where displaced people can rekindle a sense of community lost



The Sidewalk Café in New York City has provided a home away from home for the refugees of ex-Yugoslavia [photo: CA]

through war and displacement is the *Sidewalk Café*. A café owned by Israelis, people who know something of displacement and loss, remains a home away from home for a small community of newly arrived immigrants from this war torn area of the Balkans. Following in the receptive tradition of the Lower East Side, the *Sidewalk Café* offers large areas within its confines for large groups to assemble. The café has already been featured in a past issue of *New York Magazine*.

A place to forget the past, yet a place for hope. Like all American bars in New York and especially one situated on the Lower East Side, its purpose is one of accommodation and renewal. This bar has provided a home away from home for the refugees of ex-Yugoslavia, but more importantly it has played the role of the intermediary who intercedes between the past and the unknowable future. As in all cases where newly arrived immigrants congregate, places such as the *Sidewalk Café* serve to integrate them into society and in this case American society. *Sidewalk Café* is transitory, where people come and go, coming from the past and going into the future. As one of the owners explained, "new groups of immigrants show up, stay for a little while, maybe two to four months and then after settling into an American way of life, move on to new horizons and realities".

From the exterior it resembles your typical American bar, with no pretense - welcome to America. It prepares one to accept the rugged individualism characteristic of Yankee philosophy. Yes, welcome to America. Forget the past. Go out and make it in the New World. This may sound a little harsh to well conditioned North Americans such as ourselves, but to new arrivals it is a slogan of hope, of possibility. A sidewalk, is a way, a passing by, where motion overtakes stagnation. *Sidewalk Café*, for the displaced people of the Balkans is a temporary home in New York, preparing them for a permanent home in the Americas.

This feeling of being home can be seen when we visit *Café Sarajevo* in Montréal. This café

located on a side street in the hip part of town (around St-Laurent Blvd.), has an exterior, except for its name on the marquee, which at first glance doesn't give any indication of the treasures that can be found within. When we enter, a somber exterior gives way to a picturesque version of a late 19th century salon somewhere in Vienna. Having adjusted our eyes to the warm amber lighting, we realize that we are in the midst of a medium size rectangular room surrounded by "divans" each with their particular upholstered design accompanied by small coffee tables, creating an atmosphere of relaxation and détente. The walls are decorated with paintings and creations by local artists. We immediately feel that we are welcome. Actually the invitation should read "welcome to my salon."

This café has been opened for the past two years, and on any given night one can expect to be welcomed by the husband and wife team of Osman (a Bosnian-Muslim) and Lilianka (a Croat) who are also the co-owners of *Café Sarajevo*. Behind the bar is Julie, a Franco-Québécoise and George, a Serbian, while in the kitchen preparing all the Bosnian delicacies is Mira, a Bosnian from Sarajevo. This is a place of harmony whose only "raison d'être" as explained by Lili "is to remain universal."

On the particular night of my visit I was greeted in a very warm and friendly fashion by Lili, telling me her husband was out on business. While sipping my Turkish coffee, Lili explained the various events that were held here. The café placed host to poetry readings, Jazz, Blues, Bosnian music, and any cultural event that wished to come to the café. Actually, the night of my presence there was a group of university students with their three piece combo celebrating a special event. "We give the opportunity to all to come and do their thing (poetry, small celebrations, book launchings etc...) free of charge", pointed out my host. "People come here because they are free, no nationalists, no partisan politics, only people meeting people" she continued.

After my second Turkish coffee, I started to get the feeling that I was in some cosmopolitan

city of eastern-Europe. This feeling became highlighted as I listened to the wonderful accented language spoken by Lili, whom I kept imagining as some diva who would, at any minute, say to her patrons upon entering the café "Welcome darlings" in that sensuous East-European accent. Thank God, two coffees are my limit.

"We want this café to be a home away from home, not only for the ex-Yugoslavs, but for anyone who is seeking a place to exchange and live", she continued. "Our intention is to make this a universal cultural center open to all, no matter what language, race, or religion, a little Sarajevo, what Sarajevo was, we want to

recreate it here as much as we can", she reiterated. "Even my Muslim friends come here, the only thing that counts is being respectful" she added.

Already I sensed they had succeeded.

Already I felt the permanent fixture of *Café Sarajevo*. Even I, as a North American, began to understand by being in this café with Lili and her staff, what it must have like to be in Sarajevo before the hate. To be in Sarajevo as an Olympic city and taste the international atmosphere that was unique to that part of the world.

There should be many more *Joso's*, *Sidewalk Café's* and *Café Sarajevo's*, spreading their

welcome, their love of art and culture, and their place of refuge. Hopefully out of the rubble of that insane war, humanity will learn something. Of course I am an eternal optimist. But nevertheless we still have these bars of hope.

Viva Sarajevo! "Café!" ✱

Thanks for their assistance to Domenico D'Alessandro in Toronto and Carole Ashley in New York.

Donald Cuccioletta teaches American History at Université du Québec à Montréal and is a member of the Editorial Board of *Vice Versa*.



When we enter in Café Sarajevo, a somber exterior gives way to a picturesque version of a late 19th century salon somewhere in Vienna [photo: GD]

La GUERRE

dedans

Sylvain Turner

illustration: Jacques Laplante

PENDANT PLUS DE TROIS ANS, LES MÉDIAS NOUS ONT PRÉSENTÉ LES IMAGES DU CONFLIT QUI A MIS À FEU ET À SANG LA BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE, DÉLESTANT CETTE GUERRE, UN PEU PLUS CHAQUE JOUR, DE SON CARACTÈRE TRAGIQUE. MAIS SUR LE PLAN HUMAIN, LOIN DES CAMÉRAS ET DES APPAREILS PHOTO, QU'EN EST-IL DE CES ACTEURS OBLIGÉS, HOMMES, FEMMES ET ENFANTS, QUI ONT SUBI LE CONFLIT OPPOSANT SERBES, CROATES ET MUSULMANS? QU'EN EST-IL DE CES GENS QUI, DANS CERTAINS PAYS, SONT TORTURÉS PAR DES RÉGIMES DICTATORIAUX? QUE DEVIENT L'ÊTRE HUMAIN LORSQU'IL EST CONFRONTÉ À UNE SITUATION EXTRÊME?

Afin d'obtenir des réponses à ces questions et d'en savoir un peu plus sur le drame que vivent les victimes de guerre et les réfugiés, nous avons rencontré Hortense Flamand, une psychologue qui travaille depuis plus de dix ans auprès de personnes vivant des situations extrêmes, soit des gens confrontés à un danger de mort. Il s'agit généralement de victimes de guerre, de réfugiés, de gens atteints du sida ou d'un cancer. Depuis plus d'un an elle travaille aussi

à la fondation de Psychologues sans frontières, un organisme dont la mission première sera de soulager la détresse psychologique des populations vivant des situations extrêmes.

DES CONSCIENCES ASSIÉGÉES

Les victimes de guerre et les réfugiés vivent un drame similaire à bien des égards. Leur situation est néanmoins différente. Menacés de mort, voire torturés, c'est une attaque personnelle que subissent les réfugiés. Les victimes de guerre, quant à elles (on parle ici des civils), ne sont pas menacées personnellement, mais collectivement. Généralement, l'intensité du traumatisme est donc moindre pour celles-ci. Toutefois, la durée de la guerre est déterminante pour leur santé mentale. «Après trois ou quatre ans de guerre, explique Mme Flamand, la personnalité commence à s'adapter, mais il y a des conséquences. Ce qu'on remarque chez les personnes qui vivent la guerre, c'est qu'il peut y avoir un temps de latence assez grand entre l'apparition des symptômes et l'événement. Il y a des personnes qui réagissent tout de suite, d'autres,

Vice Versa

in 1996

N. 51, FEBRUARY/MARCH BARS OF HOPE

Peace, cafés and New realities: Ex-Yugoslavians in the Triangle. Encounters with Iberian Nationalisms.

N. 52, APRIL/MAY TALE OF THREE CITIES

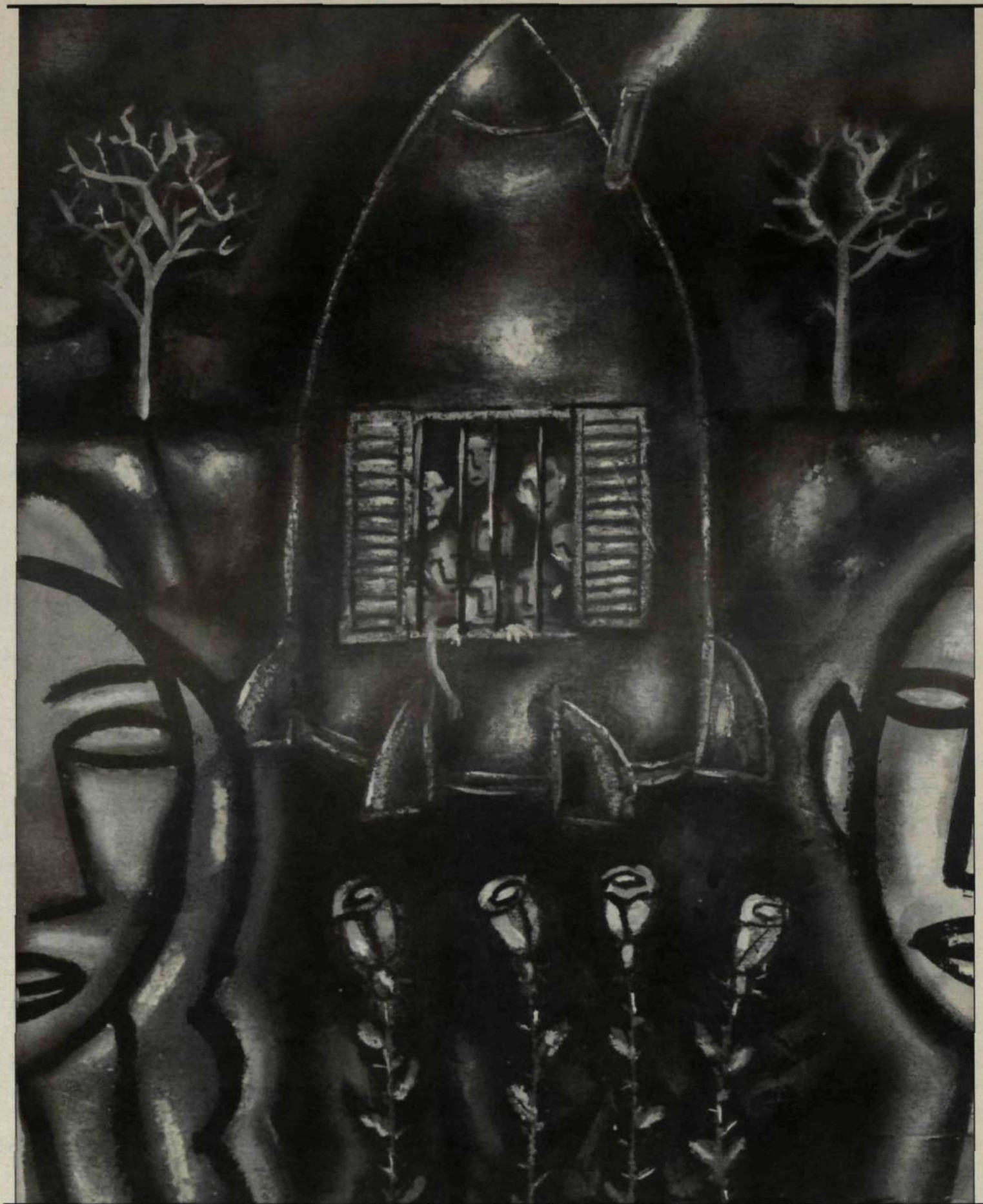
The first Fiction Issue on the Triangle from some of the best writers, known and unknown, living in Montréal, Toronto and New York

N. 53 JUNE/JULY DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL

This issue will broaden and articulate — with the participation of a large group of contributors: thinkers, writers, artists and ordinary people — an extraordinary adventure organized by Vice Versa. A video about how people view democracy today will initiate a thought provoking conference on that same topic in a Montréal penitentiary. A musical-political-artistic happening, with a video forum linking theatres in Montréal, Toronto and New York, will follow.

N. 54 AUGUST/SEPTEMBER HOLLYWORLD

Showbiz in the 21st Century and the screen war between the United States and the rest of the world.



plus tard. Après deux ans, par exemple, c'est sûr que la personnalité est plus touchée. Plus on intervient vite, moins il y a de risques qu'il y ait de séquelles.»

Curieusement, les victimes de guerre semblent s'adapter à la vie en temps de conflit et développent une solidarité «de survie». «Au Burundi, raconte la psychologue, les gens me disaient qu'ils s'habituait à la guerre. Je parlais avec une psychologue burundaise qui affirmait, au contraire, que les gens avaient des symptômes. Elle disait: "Le soir, on ne sait pas si on va recevoir une grenade sur la maison. Est-ce que nos enfants vont revenir de l'école? Qui est mort ce matin?"»

La pensée intrusive est l'un des symptômes qu'on observe le plus fréquemment chez les victimes de guerre et les réfugiés. «Par exemple, explique Mme Flamand, la personne entend un bruit dans la rue qui lui rappelle les bombardements, et ce souvenir-là déclenche la scène vécue. Le sommeil est alors perturbé, la personne fait des cauchemars, l'angoisse et la dépression augmentent, et tout ça entraîne une perturbation du comportement. Isolement, dépression, difficultés au travail et dans les relations avec les autres: l'individu présente des symptômes de stress post-traumatique.»

Les deuils impossibles font aussi partie de l'horreur que vivent les victimes de guerre. "Les gens sont massacrés et on ne trouve pas les

dépouilles, soutient la psychologue. Ils sont sûrement morts, mais tant qu'on ne voit pas la personne, on ne peut pas faire le rituel et amorcer le deuil. Il y a plusieurs Rwandais dont 50, 60, 80 parents sont morts ou disparus. Ce sont des situations très pénibles."

UNE INTÉGRATION ARDUE

Heureusement, on peut dans la plupart des cas retrouver une certaine sérénité. Il y a des personnes qui y parviennent assez bien, d'autres ont toutefois besoin d'aide. Or les réfugiés ont tendance à s'isoler. «Ce qui les caractérise, nous explique Mme Flamand, c'est le silence. Il y en a qui témoignent et ça leur fait du bien. Mais parler de la guerre ouverte, en général, c'est plus facile que de parler de ce qu'on nous a fait personnellement. L'impact émotif est trop fort. Et en plus, on se bute souvent à l'incompréhension.»

En fait, les réfugiés ne consultent pas facilement: «Lorsqu'ils immigreront au pays, ils reçoivent une liste détaillée d'organismes susceptibles de leur venir en aide, mais il y a peu de ressources spécialisées comme le sont les services d'un ou d'une psychologue.» Aussi, les réfugiés qui éprouvent des problèmes de fonctionnement sont souvent dirigés vers les ressources par d'autres professionnels: «Les avocats spécialisés en immigration recommandent beaucoup les services d'aide lorsqu'ils se rendent compte qu'ils ont devant eux des gens aux prises avec des problèmes et qui, souvent, ne peuvent pas témoigner.»

Lorsque la personne consulte, une autre difficulté risque de se présenter: la langue. «On travaille avec des interprètes quand on ne

parle pas la même langue que le client, nous apprend Mme Flamand. Bien sûr, il faut faire une *alliance* avec l'interprète, mais il faut aussi que l'interprète soit capable de prendre ce que la personne va raconter. Un autre problème, c'est que la personne ne veut pas toujours s'ouvrir à un membre de sa communauté, de peur que tout se sache.»

L'intégration des réfugiés n'est pas chose facile. «Bien sûr, ils sont heureux d'échapper à la persécution, affirme la psychologue, mais ils ont souvent laissé enfants, parents et amis derrière eux. Alors, en plus de l'adaptation, ils doivent faire le deuil de la vie qu'ils ont connue.»

Outre les ennuis inhérents à l'adaptation au pays d'adoption, le réfugié rencontre une difficulté d'ordre légal: l'audition à l'immigration. Elle est de taille pour lui qui, bien souvent, est habité par la peur. Les structures gouvernementales étant ce qu'elles sont, le réfugié a souvent l'impression d'être jugé, nous dit la psychologue: «Quand il passe devant l'immigration, toute la scène lui revient. Plusieurs réfugiés ne sont pas capables de parler, ils s'écroulent... C'est si terrible que j'ai vu des réfugiés décompenser à la fin de leur audition.»

Mais avec de l'aide, et du temps, ces gens blessés par la guerre ou les actes répressifs d'un régime dictatorial peuvent-ils retrouver la paix? «On ne peut pas oublier, affirme la psychologue, mais on peut s'en remettre. Complètement? Ce n'est pas possible. De toute façon, toutes nos expériences nous transforment, mais c'est très possible de se remettre à fonctionner.»

Sylvain Turner est un jeune écrivain qui vit à Montréal.

ENCOUNTERS WITH IBERIAN NATIONALISMS

TRAVEL, CULTURE AND POLITICS IN CATALONIA AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY

text & photos: andrew seleanu

Around midnight, the *fiesta de la Verge Mercè*, the celebration of the Virgin of mercy, the patron saint of Barcelona, had reached climactic pitch. Revellers were drifting round and round, in a maze of interlocking backcourts and under partially covered alleyways, in the neighbourhood of Gracià, just north-east of the city centre.

It was late in August and the stagnant air clung to one's skin like a sticky, warm fluid; still, dancers could vibrate with frantic energy. As I looked at the sky, it bore faint traces of stars and had the radiance of a Van Gogh Arles painting.

Pushed along by the crowd, my Catalan friends and I were engaged in the *movida*, the manic movement of Iberian merrymakers. From place to place, we stopped to dance to the beat of little bands posted along the promenades and at their intersections. Locals tried their hand at jarring versions of American rock music. Panamanian and Dominican musicians were performing salsa and merengue rhythms. In a vague way, I had expected a South American-style sexy, swirling movement;



instead I discovered the signature dancing of Barcelonians: a bit sturdy-footed, although enthusiastic...

After midnight, everyone was experiencing a pleasant drowsiness. Some resonant, half-remembered Spanish lines occurred to me, and I uttered them:

Arriba España! (equivalent to "long live Spain") I had arrived in Barcelona just a day earlier and was unfamiliar with local sensibilities. Suddenly, Lluís, my companion, a serious-looking young accountant, turned tense, almost belligerent: "Say that again and I shall punch you out - or someone else will!" I was stunned. "Anything objectionable about an innocent jingle, such as *Arriba España?*" I enquired.

Lluís explained, passionately: "This was a fascist slogan of the civil war, aimed against us

Catalans. It reminds us of Franco's oppressive dictatorship. For forty years our language was banned in our own city, Barcelona." I expressed my embarrassment. Lluís' anger gradually eased. As the *movida* resumed, we joined a *sardana*, an old Catalan dance connecting men and women in an undulating human chain. Carousing and street partying continued until three o'clock in the morning.

For several weeks in August 1994, a heat wave of unusual intensity had engulfed Barcelona and the neighbouring Costa Brava. The air temperature, in the shadow, at noon, would rise to 37 degrees C (100 degrees Fahrenheit) and seldom dropped beneath 30 degrees C during night time. The proud civic monuments of Plaza Catalunya, Plaza España, the cathedral compound of Sant Jaume, in the picturesque Gothic quarter, loomed unclearly across a trembling screen of heat and air pollution. In those days, even a dip in the tepid, oily waters of the Mediterranean did little to reinvigorate the body.

Then came September and the heat abated somewhat. In the balmy air of early fall, I

Barcelona,
Barrio Gótico



explored the complex patterns of the city and talked to some of its denizens. Ramblas, a renowned pedestrian mall leading to the harbour, a broad avenue lined with bushy trees, was a source of delight with its birdsellers, flower vendors, mimes posing as Roman legionaries and sundry street performers. Along with a dense crowd of tourists were swarms of pickpockets, completing the hectic ambiance of Ramblas.

It gradually became clear that issues of language and nationality mattered a great deal in Barcelona. It was common for old-stock Catalans to grumble at the presence of economic migrants from the south of Spain.

In turn, Spaniards objected to the cold-shoulder treatment dealt out to them by Catalans: longer-established, better-off and sometimes their employers. I detested an expression valuing ethnic "purity": "*Catalan, born to Catalan parents*", a passport to a little extra privilege, I thought.

Juan Valdez, a janitor born in Cordoba, Andalusia, had spent ten years working in Germany before coming to Catalonia. His view of Catalans was not at all uncommon among Spaniards living in Barcelona: "Cold, unapproachable people, these Catalans," he said.

Alberto Torres, a retired engineer and a Barcelona native, volunteered a few historical explanations. In 1977, two years after the death of dictator Francisco Franco, Catalan was proclaimed as the exclusive language of public display. It is a law enthusiastically enforced.

If a shop lapsed, putting up a Spanish sign, young vigilantes might have fun and vandalize the sign - and the business! In 1978, following intense nationalist pressure, Catalonia received the status of an autonomous region, inside Spain. The *generalidad* possesses its own flag, a legislature, powers to raise taxes and extensive broadcasting services in the Catalan language. From the Palau de Sant Jaume, *Su excels* (his excellency) Jordi Pujol, the wily Catalan prime minister, is wielding power to cement or to undo ruling coalitions in Madrid.

When Juan Carlos, the king of Spain, comes

to Barcelona, he addresses Catalan subjects in the *Catalans* language.

"Neither separatist, nor regionalist, but nationalist," is a slogan favoured by Pujol, as Catalonia wrests increasing powers from the Spanish government and as it conducts its extensive, parallel foreign diplomacy. Pujol even awards Catalonia's (his own?) official decoration... the cross of Sant Jordi.

Native Catalans like to dwell on what makes them different from their Spanish neighbours. Frequently I used to hear: "We are more businesslike, more practical, more thrifty." Business and manufacturing in Barcelona do indeed go back to the high Middle Ages, when Catalans, in part descended from the Phoenicians and the ancient Greeks, crisscrossed the Mediterranean aboard their trading caravels and galleons. Often, the subject of *machismo* came up: "Spanish machismo is illustrated by bull-fighting, a savage sport," assert some Barcelonians, even as their Plaza de Toros monumental (the bullring) remains a classic venue for some of the most exciting bullfights in the Spanish-speaking world.

Yet, there is a Catalan "essence" vividly present in my recollection: for instance, a little park on a hillside in the Pedralbes quarter, off the tourist beat: with a dizzying variety of Mediterranean flowers and diminutive, murmuring fountains. Shady walks of palm trees and cypresses shutting out the searing sunshine. The warm chime of nearby church bells, invariably, on the hour, day and night. A gargantuan fish-market, off the Ramblas. On sparkling ice: skate, snapper, eels, shark, sea-pike, sole with both eyes on the side, gaping tuna heads, threatening sword-fish. Still life, as though from a Velasquez painting.

The abundance of underwater life is certainly linked to the teeming, luxuriant vitality of Catalan art and applied arts. A century ago, Catalan genius blossomed in the encounter with Art Nouveau. In Parque Guëll, overlooking the metropolis, Antonio Gaudi and his brilliant collaborator Josep Maria Jujol created coral-like mosaics and sculptures from

the humblest of materials, a varied cornucopia of sun-flowers, cuttle-fish, squid and starfish. On the fashionable Passeig de Gratià, Gaudi's *La Pedrera* (the stone quarry) apartment compound has the undulating grace of a sand beach shaped by an outgoing tide. It makes one giddy, as architecture rarely does. In Jujol's sculptures, crafted of metal discarded from construction and in the paintings of the great Catalan, Juan Miró, the motif of a mystical, stylized bird recurs, a counter emblem to Catalan earthy practicality.

I was walking along a narrow, straight street in an old, run-down neighbourhood, strangely called Barrio Chino (the Chinese quarter). Linen was put out to dry on balconies, in doorways prostitutes were waiting, the sidewalk was littered with used plastic syringes pointing to heroin use...

Then, I came across the tiny, Romanesque church of Sant Pau. Father Jordi Serrano welcomed me into his sanctuary: of modest proportions in reality, its dome seemed huge. The walls were constructed of homely cut blocks of stone, yet the octagonal, perfect shape of the choir conveyed a fantastic sense of esthetics and mathematics. The gentle light of sunset filtered in delicately through the light-blue stained glass of the church transept.

"I am speaking to you in Spanish, but my language really is *Catalans*... This Catalan country of ours, one day shall have its place at the United Nations alongside the other nations. One day our taxes shall stay in Catalonia, instead of feeding Madrid." With pride, he showed me the ten volume Catalan encyclopedia with the names of hundreds of writers, composers, poets - especially poets, the fruit of fifteen years of scholarly labour. Entries on churches and monasteries were abundant and accompanied by many colour plates and erudite text in Catalan. Father Serrano said: "We're very proud of our Catalan identity. Our language was officially recognised by the European Union in 1991. Now, all their documents are also translated into Catalan."



Hendaye,
Basque fiesta

I grasped the fact that the Catholic clergy traditionally have been at the forefront of nationalist struggle: during the dictatorship and now, in the democratic period.

On the 11th of September, on the national day of Catalonia, the *Diada*, dust was raised by a sudden breeze from the sea. I was in Plaza Catalunya, as about 15,000 young nationalists clashed with the Barcelona police. Supporting the Catalans, were sympathizers from other West European nationalist movements.

Along the red-striped yellow flag of Catalonia, one could notice the green, white and red Basque banner and the small, emblematic axe of the Basques; the clover leaf and Celtic harp of the nationalist Irish as well as the lion rampant on a green background of the Scottish nationalists.

Demonstrators took chairs and tables from cafés and hurled them at the police charging in waves. A few youths were immobilized and thrown into police vans. Bystanders explained to me that some young Barcelonians make it a point of honour to spend a few hours or days in jail in recognition of their national day. They riot, even as the moderate nationalist, Pujol, holds power at the Palau de Sant Jaume. True, Pujol is a *grand bourgeois* while the demonstrators are students of modest background.

The bull run at Pampeluna, in the Navarra region of north-east Spain, is heavily attended by Basques and by tourists alike. In the narrow, cobbled streets devotees of the event are often maimed; recently an unwary American student was pierced to death by a rampaging bull.

During last summer's fiesta, someone unfurled a large poster, which read: "ETA wishes you and your families happy holidays." Black humor lovers must have appreciated the message. ETA, the Basque separatist urban guerilla group, looming almost quietly but decisively in the Basque country and operating throughout Spain, is dreaded for abductions, assassinations and a knack for lethal, precision-engineered bombs. (The last of a long roll of victims, six military men were killed in Madrid

in December 1995, as a remote-controlled bomb exploded under their van.)

The Basques are *not* ETA, it must be noted. Overwhelmingly, poll after poll shows that they reject terrorism but support nationalist policies in their own autonomous region of Spain. For thousands of years Basques have spoken an immensely rich, poetic language, unrelated to any other European tongue; their folk traditions are highly libertarian with equal rights granted women since time immemorial.

The Spanish state has been highly repressive towards the Basques, particularly in the Franco era: the civil war saturation bombing of the town of Guernica, the theme of the celebrated Picasso painting, shall forever stay in the annals of the most savage warfare.

I had my brush with ETA, a hint of its presence, in Hendaye, a historic town and tourist resort on the Atlantic ocean with a hazy, temperate climate marked by regular rain, on the French side of Chingudy Bay, prolonging Bidassoa River and forming a frontier between France and Spain. This traditionally has been cigarette and cattle smuggling country. In the early 1900's, Hendaye was already a posh resort. Amongst others, the French ship captain, writer of exotic novels and voluptuary, Pierre Loti, spent his summers there.

In the lower town, by the beach, with its handsome cubist villas, surrounded by magnolias, the French and Spanish tourists were having their summer parties and fun. The wide beach, known for big surfing waves, was packed with sunbathers.

By chance, I checked into a rustic hotel, "Le Relais de Hendaye" in the picturesque old town, atop a hill. A "special mood", a weird silence prevailed in the old town. There were few people, shop-keepers were uncharacteristically subdued. It was peak tourist season, in August, yet my hotel was almost empty. Gaelic songs from Ireland were played by the stereo system in the dining room (a strange Basque-Irish affinity?).

One night, a portly gentleman serenaded, hauntingly, a middle-aged lady... I could hear upstairs: "Euskadii..." (Basque for Basque Country) It had the ring of a wistfully patriotic

song. Then for an entire day, the old town was cordoned off and abuzz with the beats and trills of a Basque folk festival.

I remember the grave, long-winded choir music blared by loudspeakers, the even, continuous drumbeat, the shrill flute music and lots of untiring, teenage dancers.

One day, late at night, I was having a bottle of Perrier water in a fairly deserted bar, nearby. A skinny, sallow-faced, insignificant-looking man insisted on speaking to me. He made me understand that someone had checked my passport, that I was being watched and he also subjected me to a scary kind of cross-examination. I got the message: beat it! For some reason, my presence in the old town was unwelcome. Soon, I packed up and moved to a place in the lower town where nobody vexed me.

After two more days, the tax office of the French government, a beautiful Renaissance building, located across the square from "Relais de Hendaye", was blasted by a bomb hidden in its basement. Newspapers from the neighbouring Spanish city of San Sebastian considered this to be ETA work, part of a complex pattern of settlements of accounts. Hardly a week goes by without the assassination of a politician, a policeman or a businessman in the Spanish Basque country. In France, ETA prefers to inflict heavy property damage. One aspect of Basque violent nationalism swiftly demolishes, by little explosive charges, fast-food joints and plastic: unseemly types of untraditional construction.

On the dark oak counter of El Bodegón (the saloon), a cozy wine bar in Barcelona, I was enjoying a Spanish omelet accompanied by red, Riojas wine. While I was having a genial talk with the tall, bony owner, don Hernan Gutierrez, a native of La Mancha, in central Spain (don Quijote country!).

Amid the banter, don Hernan raised the issue of regionalism and nationalism, which somehow was hanging in the air of that bar. He pointed at the well-to-do, boisterous young men and at their girlfriends, speaking loudly, the Spanish way, across the bar:

"Look at them; all of them are Catalan nationalists. Why? because their friends are. None of them like Spain. But they aren't the only ones.

Our country is increasingly a country of villages, with a village mind set. Since 1986, we have 17 autonomous, self-governing regions in the country. I tell you, we are disintegrating... for now, in our mentality. Soon, we'll be at each other's throats. In 15 years, return and you'll see... ten, twelve, separate countries, instead of one Spain. " I must, of course, make allowance for don Hernan's hyperbole, the rich caricature, but the message was clear, unmistakable. Some nuances are necessary, however.

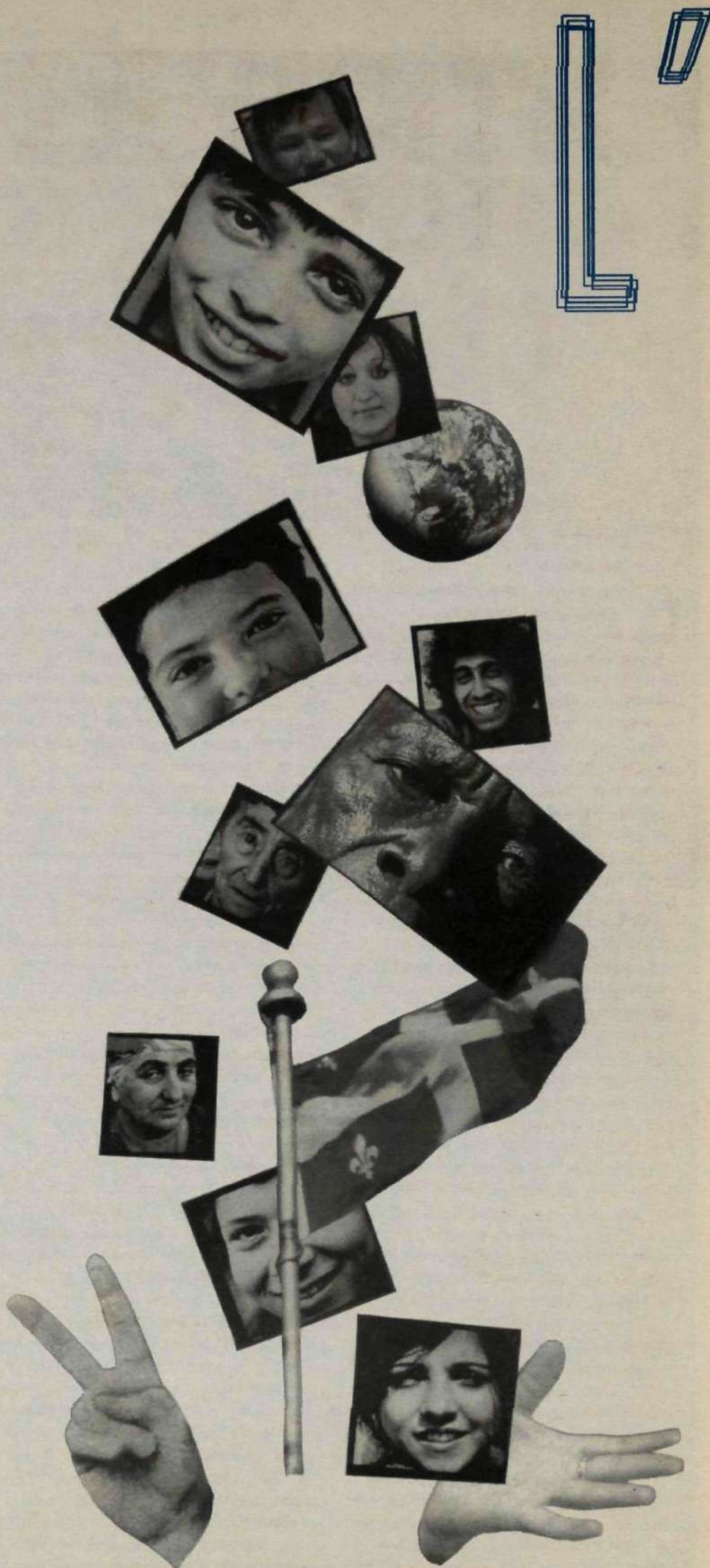
Poor regions, such as Andalusia, have an economic stake in maintaining a strong central government in Madrid, capable of redistributing national income. The statements of their politicians bear this out.

Relatively richer, industrial regions such as the Basque country (with its incongruous terrorist movement) and Catalonia, may want to pursue the logic of regional autonomy to its extreme conclusion: national independence with recovery of complete state powers, in line with other small nation nationalisms en vogue in Europe, today.

Manuel Vazquez Montalban is a Spanish language writer, born and bred in Barcelona. A former trade union leader who spent years in prison during the Franco dictatorship, he is also the creator of the fictional private eye Pepe Carvalho, who explores modern Spain in a dozen books full of intrigue, cynicism womanizing and gastronomy. The character is famous beyond the borders of Spain. In Montalban's recent critical essay *Notes from the Planet of the Apes*, he offers us some very graphic clues, as to why, in the age of enforced technological links, of a "global village" no one has really voted for, nationalism and regionalism maintain their strength. People refuse to live in what Montalban calls "the unending present." "Recovering the past, means understanding what is being imposed on us today..."

Montalban's own version of Catalan nationalism is perhaps another way of stating his refusal to live on a "planet of resigned apes, where, only apparently, the seas of blood shed by liberal-capitalist civilization have dried. This civilization, so busy today covering the world with hamburgers and Kentucky Fried Chicken, served by the UN's blue-helmeted delivery boys..." Montalban's nationalism is itself of a very ambiguous kind, cultural, hardly territorial. Elated by the fall of the Berlin Wall, he was bitter to see, " so many other walls come up" - so soon! ↓

Andrew Seleanu is the assistant editor of Vice Versa. He takes special interest in Latin American and East European affairs as well as the ramifications of nationalism.



ENTREPRISE FAMILIALE

tri-CÔTÉ

Kamenev

illustration: pierre-paul pariseau

photo: emmanuelle farraut



Charte de la
confédération des Six
Nations Iroquoises,
dont se sont inspirés les
fondateurs des États de
l'Union.

[Musée Kateri

Tekakweta, Kahnawake]

**OU L'EFFET PARIZEAU EXPRIMÉ PAR UN LECTEUR
CULTIVÉ DANS UN HEBDOMADAIRE CULTUREL DISTRIBUÉ
GRATUITEMENT À MONTRÉAL**

Les vagues de l'après-référendum continuent d'échouer sur la grève déserte de la pensée, les morceaux d'absurdité qu'a générés la tempête..

Toutes les métaphores sont bonnes pour redire de manière plus hypocrite, parfois, ce que Parizeau n'a pas gardé sur le coeur. La frange dure de la souveraineté continue de se faire entendre au détriment d'un bon nombre qui ne voyait pas un Pays aussi étroit.

À ce sujet, un lecteur du journal *Voir* (semaine du 20 au 26 nov.) a adressé, au courrier des lecteurs, une lettre. Il y contenait la mésaventure d'"une famille très nombreuse de Québécois francophones (appelons-les les Côté), propriétaires d'une entreprise familiale qui existe depuis dix générations".

En gros, il s'agit d'une "famille de bien-pensants" qui se met à adopter un paquet de petits "zoulous". Les petits "zoulous" deviennent grands et prennent part au capital de l'entreprise.

Dans une optique de *politically correctness* propre au continent nord-américain, les Côté, un peu bonne poire, ont favorisé le contact de ces bâtards avec leurs origines (école, religion, mariage).

Quelques générations plus tard, ces ingrats récupérés se mettent à ruer dans les brancards.

À un moment stratégique, ils contrent une proposition que les Côté de souche mettent sur la table. Le contenu de cette proposition n'est pas spécifié, mais le rusé poète veut, bien entendu, parler de la souveraineté.

La pénétration insidieuse du corps étrangers a ainsi fait chavirer le projet de ces philanthropes invétérés.

Cette histoire, qu'on aurait pu écrire aussi comme une fable de Lafontaine, résume une analyse répandue, contre toute évidence, chez une partie de ceux qu'on désignent ou qui se désignent de "souche".

Il eût été judicieux de se demander d'abord (vraiment au hasard de l'errance de la pensée, genre: en trébuchant dessus), pourquoi dans les rangs des "Québécois-francophones-tricotés-serré", autour de 40% des frères de sang n'ont pas adhéré à la proposition.

Dans le fond, les "anglos" et les "zoulous" font les frais d'une chicane de famille repoussée aux calendes grecques. Ce qui n'est guère courageux.

Il paraît que, contrairement à une idée très répandue, même les autruches ne se mettent pas la tête dans le sable...

L'histoire de ce brave lecteur a été substantiellement figolée pour faire apparaître les tri-Côté comme des victimes de leur grand coeur.

Le sens commun y est largement suscité.

Il n'y a que le monde végétal qui se caractérise par des souches ! De même pour les racines ! À force de rester accroché aux images, on en perd le fil.

Enfin, notre talentueux conteur occulte délibérément sur quoi s'est construite l'entreprise Côté et ce qu'est devenue l'entreprise précédente, celle des Sauvages.

Selon lui et avec beaucoup d'amnésie, l'entreprise Côté serait née *ex nihilo*.

Pourtant à une certaine époque, si ma mémoire ne me trahit pas, Gilles Vigneault écrivait une chanson très émouvante, intitulée fort à propos, *La Quête du Pays*. Dans cette pièce, à la recherche du pays, il avait creusé jusqu'à rencontrer le jour à l'autre bout de la terre, en vain.

Il finit par interpellier un indien qui passait par là :

"Peux-tu me dire comment j'vais faire pour trouver mon Pays?"

Y s'amène et y me r'garde

Y m'écoute et pis y rit

Il y pense et y s'assit

et dans son langage il me dit :

"Depuis ton arrivée, j'ai eu beau t'observer, je ne comprends pas ce que tu cherches. Si c'est le pays, tu devrais l'avoir, tu me l'as volé. Je me demande ce que t'as fait avec."

Ceux que les Côté, une fois leur entreprise bien assise, ignorent avec un mépris fleurdélié, n'ont plus le droit, depuis, à l'existence digne des êtres humains. Ils n'existent pas, ils n'ont jamais existé. Cherchez-les. Vous les trouverez parqués dans des réserves. Loin des yeux, loin du coeur.

Leur entreprise est passée de l'autre Côté. Eux, par exemple, en ont complètement perdu le contrôle.

Quand l'examen de conscience sera fait dans les règles de l'art, peut-être que les Côté en reviendront les mains lavées. Après avoir largement été mis à contribution dans un apartheid que peu de monde dénonce. Peut-être même à leur insu...

Ainsi, l'histoire de l'entreprise tri-Côté apparaîtrait enrichie. On saura qu'elle s'est construite selon la devise "Après moi le déluge".

Amérindiens, merci de votre hospitalité! Même si personne ne veut en entendre parler, vous êtes les oubliés du gâteau.

Quant aux "zoulous", ils ont compris que le paternalisme n'était pas de la franche camaraderie.

Par ailleurs, s'ils sont devenus ingrats, ne serait-ce pas là l'Histoire qui se répète?

À quand la rencontre franche autour d'une table, pour jaser des vraies affaires?

À quand ce pays illuminé et construit sur la fraternité humaine, au lieu d'une condescendance hypocrite, finalement très vieux *british*.

À quand un *Nous* incluant tous ceux qui travaillent la terre, et pas seulement les Grands Propriétaires, ceux qui le sont depuis dix générations...

La grande leçon que ce *Nous* pourrait donner au reste du monde serait, par exemple, ne pas retomber dans le déjà-vu de la bêtise humaine. ↓

3 M É X I C O AÑOS EN LA NARRATIVA

COYOACÁN, PERO UN POCO MÁS LIGERO

Álvaro Enrique

El tiempo es la única medida incuestionable del genio literario. De la segunda mitad mexicana de este siglo podemos aventurar que Rulfo será un narrador universal y Arreola - como Schwob y Duhamel, sus maestros -, un autor duradero y secreto. Solamente a distancia es posible discernir que regimientos terminan por marcar el paso en el desfile de los narradores de una época.

En términos de libros, tres años no son nada. No bastan para la invención de una corriente estilística más o menos autónoma; ni siquiera para su afirmación en el gusto general, en caso de que tal noción no sea un espejismo.

Los tres años de vida del proyecto que hoy se llama *Viceversa* coinciden más o menos con los que lleva de marcha esta década. En el lustro que termina apenas se han afirmado en la narrativa mexicana y su crítica ciertas tendencias que tal vez terminen forjando una suerte de *spleen* literario que defina a nuestro fin de siglo.

Los asistentes al caótico e irregular coctel editorial hispánico de los años noventa hemos visto desarrollarse algunos hechos más o menos anunciados: el derrumbe - según se va viendo, definitivo - de los pilares vivos del boom, y el ascenso del grupo de autores latinoamericanos del medio siglo que, ahora se ve, sólo fueron considerados menores por una cuestión mercadológica. Pitol, Cabrera Infante, Monterosso, Pacheco o Bryce Echenique se han asentado como influencias centrales - tal vez



**EN EL LUSTRO QUE
TERMINA APENAS SE
HAN AFIRMADO EN LA
NARRATIVA MEXICANA
Y SU CRÍTICA
CIERTAS TENDENCIAS
QUE TAL VEZ
TERMINEN FORJANDO
UNA SUERTE DE
SPLEEN LITERARIO
QUE DEFINA NUESTRO
FIN DE SIGLO**

las definitivas - en las siguientes generaciones de escritores; la fragua literaria quedó ya lejisimos del mausoleo barcelonés en el que Fuentes, Varga Llosa o García Márquez se imitan a sí mismos. Hemos visto también el espectacular y solitario crecimiento del grupo de narradores españoles de entre 40 y 50 años. Javier Marías, Enrique Vila-Matas, Félix de Azúa, Álvaro Pombo o Juan José Millas apenas han encontrado competidores de este lado del Atlántico; el desarrollo económico de la España comunitaria ha terminado por demostrar que para producir una novelística firme se requiere de escritores de tiempo completo. Por otra parte, el diálogo con las letras iberoamericanas se ha perdido definitivamente: apenas sabemos un poco de lo que se escribe en Cuba por gran cantidad de exiliados que nos llegan - con sus libros - de ese país; de lo que sucede al sur del continente no sabemos nada. Nuestras editoriales - demasiado ocupadas en culpar al gobierno como para ponerse ellas mismas a generar un mercado - no nos han concedido ni un solo título de esa "generación del boomerang" que tanto revuelo causa en los países del cono.

En México, tres fenómenos van anunciándose como definitivos para la época: el surgimiento de una literatura ligera que poco a poco - y a golpes de suerte - va ensanchando el mercado nacional de lectores;

a los autores light les debemos, aunque nos disguste su descuido en la escritura, que algunas editoriales hayan sobrevivido al mortal

From Vice Versa to Viceversa...

LITTLE DID WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE A GORGEOUS-LOOKING HALF SISTER WHO'S BEEN ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN MEXICO FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS.

WHO COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED THAT OUR FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD AN ADVENTURE DOWN THERE! SO LIFE GOES: WELCOME TO THE FOLD, VICEVERSA!

VICEVERSA IS A GOOD IDEA... IN THE MEXICAN MAINSTREAM: MEDIA, CULTURE, PHOTOGRAPHY, IDEAS AND LIFESTYLE. UNDER THE DIRECTION OF FERNANDO FERNÁNDEZ THE MAGAZINE'S THIRTIETH ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO REVIEWING THE LAST THREE YEARS IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE OF MEXICO.

WE CHOSE TO REPRODUCE THE ARTICLE ON WRITING, A BRIDGE THAT WE HOPE EVENTUALLY WILL SPAN NORTH AND SOUTH!

VICEVERSA

EDICIÓN DE ANIVERSARIO



3 AÑOS DE CULTURA CON OTROS OJOS

1995. Por otra parte, sigue vigente - y seguirá para siempre, según parece - la literatura osesionada con la reseña hiperrealista de la vida urbana y los conflictos de la clase media; por estas fechas estamos cumpliendo ya 35 años de novelas y relatos sobre chavos de Coyoacán. Más recientemente destaca la circulación de una narrativa de orientación cosmopolita y escasa preocupación por los problemas de clase e identidad nacional; lamentablemente los autores de esta última tendencia parecen pertenecer a sectas que podrían terminar por asfixiar sus talentos. Aunque entre las dos últimas corrientes destacan algunas obras, no se vislumbra aún la constancia que pudiera promover un salto cualitativo hacia la universalidad.

Tres años tampoco bastan para afirmar que la influencia de alguna casa editorial sea definitiva; apenas son suficientes, en todo caso, para instalación de ciertas modas. En esos términos podemos decir que mientras las empresas editoriales más ambiciosas se han empantanado en la búsqueda obsesiva del mercado teóricamente masivo de las tiendas de departamentos, un grupo estable de firmas más

preocupadas por la calidad de sus publicaciones que por el diseño de sus portadas - *Era*, *Vuelta*, *El Equilibrista*, *Cal y arena*, *Siglo XXI*, el *Fondo de Cultura Económica*, el *Consejo Nacional para Cultura y las Artes* - sigue interesado en mantener la tradición libresca que mal que bien hemos ido construyendo a lo largo del siglo XX. En fechas recientes, editoriales novísimas como *Heliópolis* o *Aldus* van haciéndose de espacios y autores que tal vez con el tiempo adquieran un valor estratégico en el mercado literario

internacional.

En su ensayo "La narrativa mexicana hacia el fin de siglo", Adolfo Castañón senala con puntería y optimismo el crecimiento exponencial del número de autores y corrientes literarias generadas en nuestro país a partir de los años 50. Ojalá la enorme responsabilidad que significa vivir un fin de siglo produzca la chispa necesaria para que de esta gran acumulación de talentos en desarrollo surja una novelística mexicana de altura y consistencia incuestionables. ✎

**A LOS AUTORES
LIGHT LES DEBEMOS,
AUNQUE NOS
DISGUSTE SU
DESCUIDO EN LA
ESCRITURA, QUE
ALGUNAS
EDITORIALES HAYAN
SOBREVIDO AL
MORTAL 1995**

Álvaro Enríque ha sido crítico literario en publicaciones como *El Nacional*, *El Economista*, *Vuelta* y *la Jornada* semanal. Actualmente escribe guiones para radio y es profesor en la Universidad Iberoamericana.

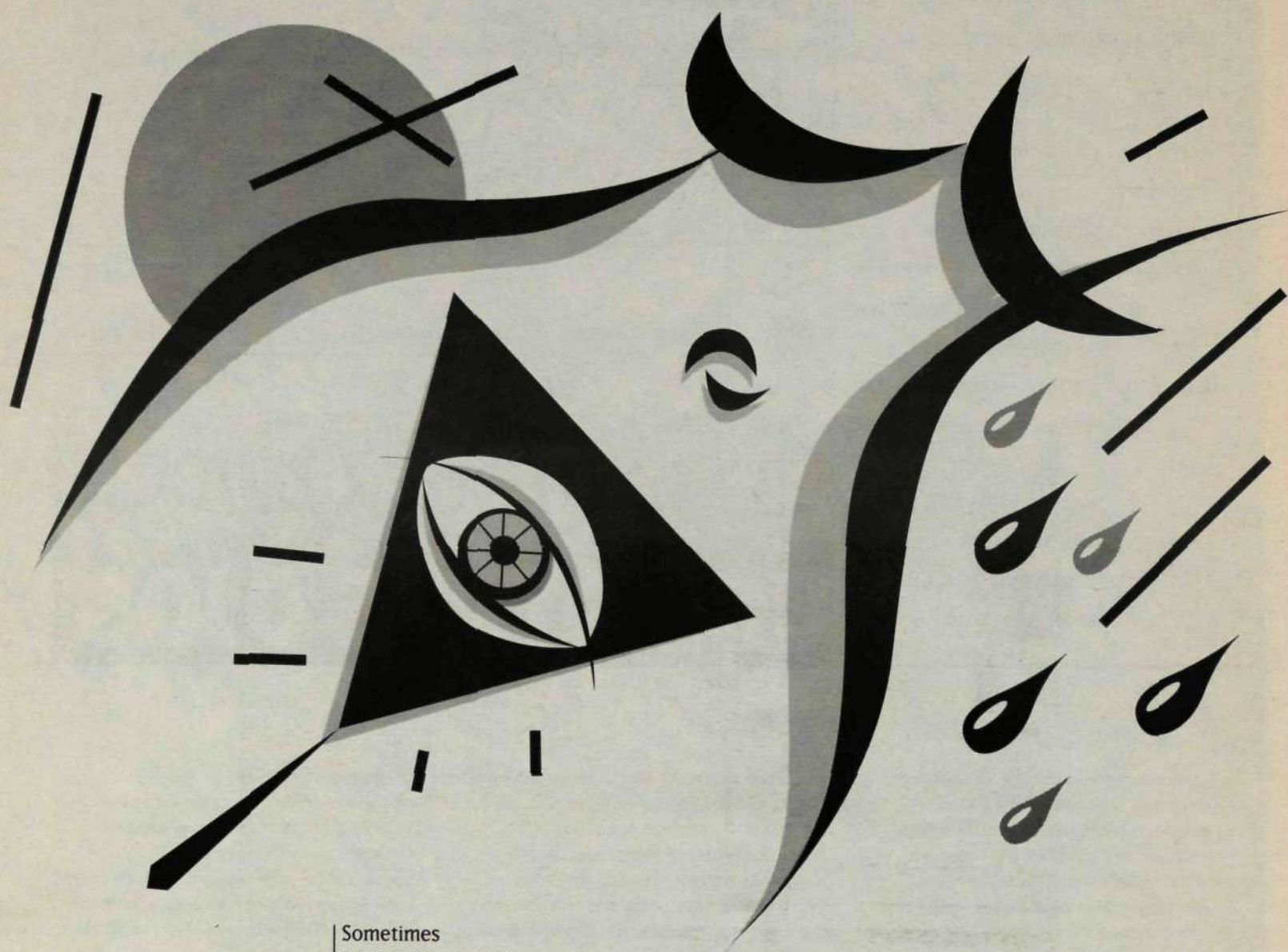
[This article was first published in the Mexican magazine *Viceversa*, n. 30, November 1995]

G O D

phelonise willie

illustration: rémy simard

AS RAPIST



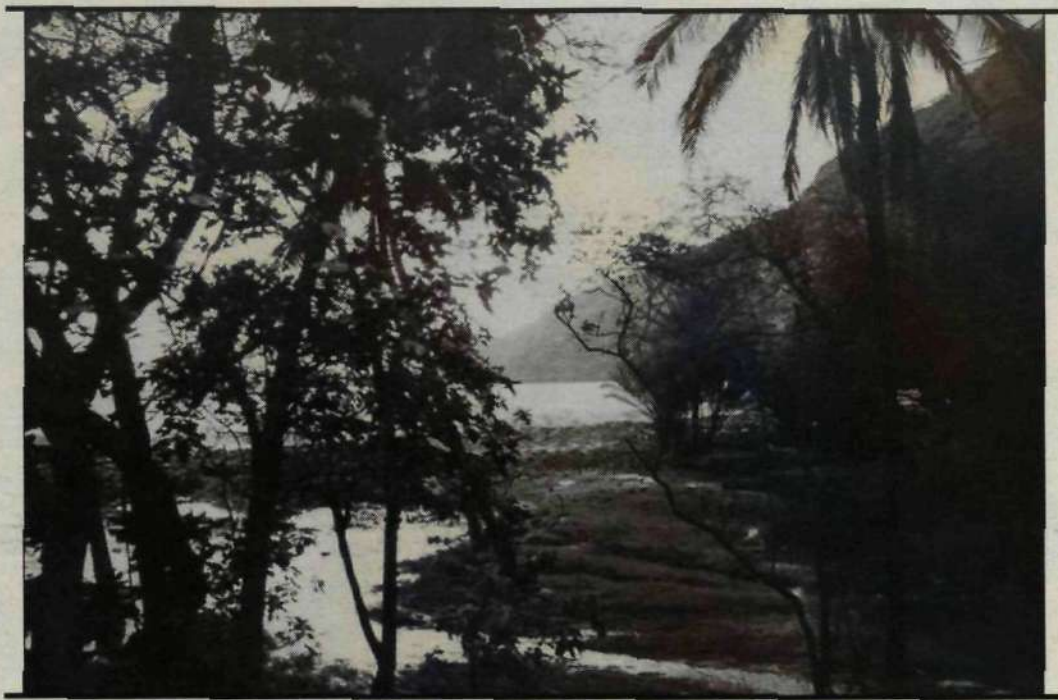
Sometimes
I fall asleep and dream
in the shower
dreaming of wild desire and exotic realities
all wet and soft within my reach
turgid as the sweet waters massaging my brain
molesting my breasts
and returning an Earth to me again
so drenched in a thrall of sudden pleasure
it drowns me inside its decadent Heaven
until I cry out to God to turn off his faucet
remove his slippery fingers from my privacy
and slip back inside
the dark sewers of my eyes
so that I may walk into
the dry reality of other people's sunlight
with at least a small facade of sobriety

KEALAKEKUA BAY, HAWAII 'I

(The Big Island)

JUNE 1995

text & photos: paolo spedicato



I arrive in Honolulu for a celebration at the University of Honolulu at Manoa, a two-day affair. I have time to stay a few extra days and to get around. It's my first time here.

My expectations? Hawaii'i as just another place ruined by the Americans and by international tourism, another Puerto Rico. But I soon have second thoughts. The tourists' downtown Honolulu aside, occupied by ugly glass buildings and hotels and literally besieged by a crowd of young Japanese couples on their honeymoons; Waikiki, the local Copacabana, is a remarkable beach and the sea is clean. The climate is unreal. At any time of the day or night a gentle breeze tempers the June heat.

I have just discovered America's Polynesia whose reminder is a long parade honoring king Kamahameha I who unified the island and founded the monarchy in 1810.

All of a sudden, I find myself in the middle of a three-day festival, with

marching bands and almost a beauty pageant of princesses on horseback, one from each island, while tourists and locals cheer from the margins. I easily survive a visit to the *S.S. Arizona* Memorial, dragged by a journalist friend, on his way to Japan to cover the 50th Anniversary of Hiroshima.

He wants to go there just out of professional curiosity. So he says. But I am quite ready for my next jump and I buy a three-day package trip to Hawaii'i, the biggest and the southernmost of the islands. The first day I tour the Caledras and slopes of Mauna Loa but the second day I am on my way to pristine beaches and archaeological sites of which I heard so much about in Honolulu.

It is mid-afternoon when I get to Kealakekua Bay. Only a few American visitors are standing in front of the beach covered with big dark rocks. The weather is changing and the sea is rough. The



following day an antiques dealer in Hilo will tell me that once, before being totally transformed by a hurricane, it was the loveliest beach in the entire island. The bay is a place of intense, eerie beauty. You immediately spot a truncated pyramid erected by the local historical association in memory of the "first Christian service officiated in the Hawai'ian islands," on the occasion of the burial of William Watman, one of Captain James Cook's mariners.

A series of signs tell me that this is not an ordinary place: "Removal of sand or rocks prosecuted," "No animals except seeing eye dogs." Another "Keep Out" sign and a barrier unequivocally placed at the stairs of the entrance to the temple (*heiau* in Hawaiian) Hikiau. Upon my return to New York, I will discover that Kealakekua means "the pathways to the gods." I cannot restrain myself, the tourists are gone and I quickly move to the shrine's esplanade. There are two platforms at its center, one raised on top of the other: the one at a higher position may have been the altar for sacrifices and offerings.

Flowers have been left on the surface by local visitors. The whole structure may well be an impressive example of land art made of volcanic stones assembled with no mortar, suspended between the hills and the

The temple Hikiau

THERE ARE TWO PLATFORMS AT ITS CENTER, ONE RAISED ON TOP OF THE OTHER: THE ONE AT A HIGHER POSITION MAY HAVE BEEN THE ALTAR FOR SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS. FLOWERS HAVE BEEN LEFT ON THE SURFACE BY LOCAL VISITORS

ocean. Back in New York, an Italian friend will tell me that some years ago she and her husband were caught walking on the site by some locals, who threw stones at them. My visit continues undisturbed. Pervaded by the powerful presence of the monument, I just cannot feel any sense of violation, of trespassing. I gather hibiscus flowers from a nearby plant to lay them down on the highest stony platform.

In the distance just across the bay one can see a white stele: it's the site where Cook was killed by the natives of the village of Kowroa, February 14, 1779. The story has been told and studied over and over again in books and in paintings, as if projecting the power of a primordial event: the quintessential fatal encounter in which a native culture has to face for the first time the intrusion of Westerners, this time represented both by the benevolent figure of the white navigator-scientist and by the might of the British guns and occupation.

The bay and site I am looking at is the place of one of the most

extraordinary occasions for "mythmaking", by the Hawaiians who, dominated by a cast of manipulative priests, may have interpreted Cook's arrival during the Makahiki festival, the local thanksgiving, as god Lono's (or Orono's) return, by the Europeans, most importantly, who transform Cook's killing into a myth central to the history of sea voyaging and into a

The temple Hikiau

THE WHOLE STRUCTURE MAY WELL BE AN IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLE OF LAND ART MADE OF VOLCANIC STONES ASSEMBLED WITH NO MORTAR, SUSPENDED BETWEEN THE HILLS AND THE OCEAN





hagiography serving the imagination of the conquering Europeans: "The apotheosis of Captain Cook."

The British knew that they had overstayed their visit to the bay. In need of repairing the mast and sails of the *Resolution*, they had come back to the bay and replenished huge supplies of vegetables and hogs. The funeral service for the ordinary seaman Whatman though, very dear to Cook and almost a father figure to him, buried at the feet of the temple Hikiau, had raised serious doubts in the minds of the Natives about the divine nature of the British. And then, in a fast train of events, the dismantling by the British of the wooden palings and images of the shrine for firewood, the theft by way of retaliation of a British cutter by the Hawaiians, Cook's attempt (used successfully before) to kidnap the Hawaiian king in order to trade him for the stolen cutter, the increasing hostility of the villagers, the killing of Cook and a few other British mariners in a skirmish, the Hawaiians returning Cook's remains on board the *Resolution* the next day.

I sense that my coming to Hawai'i has not been sterile, not just another visit to a tourist parade that money and time and curiosity can buy. At Kealahou Bay myth and history still resonate. Are we not still part of the same problem? - I ask myself - Isn't the comedy of errors still going on? Yes, but with a twist: this is repetition with a difference. Perhaps Captain Cook is being killed a second time.

Look at Hawai'i's sovereignty movement for cultural and political autonomy gaining ground in the archipelago. Still with us are CNN images of Tahiti's airport and downtown burned down in protest against the Murora atoll (and later the Fangataufa atoll) French nuclear tests.

Kealahou Bay

THE TRUNCATED PYRAMID
ERECTED BY THE LOCAL
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION IN
MEMORY OF THE "FIRST
CHRISTIAN SERVICE OFFICIATED
IN THE HAWAII ISLANDS", ON
THE OCCASION OF THE BURIAL OF
WILLIAM WATMAN, ONE OF
CAPTAIN COOK'S MARINERS.
A SERIES OF SIGNS TELL ME
THIS IS NOT AN ORDINARY PLACE

After years of grievances by the Maoris reclaiming native lands in New Zealand, here's Queen Elizabeth II giving formal assent to a parliamentary bill including payment of \$112 million and the return of 39,000 acres to the Tainui people as atonement "for treaty violations and the invasion of its lands in 1863," even though "she would not apologize personally" (*The New York Times*, November 2, 1995).

Think of the mass protests in Okinawa against the case of the local teen-ager raped by three American servicemen

and against the overall presence of the American military base, which controls and occupies the greatest portion of the island.

Perhaps Captain Cook is being killed a second time in Polynesia. Only this time the mythmaking process, the sacred alliance between media, money and land exploitation, cannot go easily unnoticed or undeconstructed, and we are left with witnessing a new return of the Natives.

Do not take for granted that in Polynesia they are happy ones. A

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LUCIEN BOUCHARD

COMMENT DEVENIR PREMIER
MINISTRE OU L'ART DE
PRENDRE LE POUVOIR SANS
SE SALIR LES MAINS

Baruch Levinstein

photomontage: mario tremblay

Avant le référendum, j'ai dû être le seul chroniqueur à prédire que le *Oui* allait gagner. Je me suis trompé. De peu. Il s'en est fallu de 26 750 voix pour que le *Oui* l'emporte. Imaginez un peu le triomphe: le magazine *Vice Versa* aurait été le seul média à annoncer une victoire inespérée. Après un succès pareil, la crédibilité nationale et internationale de la revue aurait été incontestée et les ventes seraient montées, montées, montées au point d'assurer la sécurité financière de toute l'équipe de rédaction au moins pour quelques semaines. Il s'en est fallu d'une marge de 0,6 %... Bon. Je prends acte de la volonté de la majorité, aussi mince soit-elle. J'accepte la démocratie telle qu'elle est.

«C'est la faute aux ethnies, c'est la faute à l'argent !» s'est écrié le soir même le professeur Jacques Parizeau toujours prodigue d'explications simplètes. Mais cette fois, les élèves, même les plus appliqués, se sont montrés moins obéissants. Cette erreur de trop lui a coûté son poste de premier ministre. Certes, il n'aurait pas pu le garder bien longtemps. Au moins, en partant de son plein gré, économise-t-il à ses caciques l'odieux de fomenter, à défaut d'un putsch (n'exagérons rien) un *push out* dont le bon maître connaît bien et l'art et la manière qu'il a appliqués naguère avec succès mais sans gloire contre un certain René Lévesque.

SE SOUMETTRE OU SE DÉMETTRE

Ainsi s'évanouit la thèse du suicide politique. Et ne résiste pas davantage l'excuse de l'ivresse puisque deux ans auparavant le savant homme avait déjà tenu des propos semblables: les

leçons, c'est lui qui les donne, il n'a rien à apprendre puisqu'il sait déjà tout et plus encore (voir *Vice Versa*, numéro 40). Plutôt que de se soumettre à la volonté de la majorité, fût-elle ethnique ou argentée, il a préféré se démettre. Dommage: je commençais à trouver presque sympathiques les bourdes du professeur. Son successeur tire autrement parti des faiblesses de la démocratie. Il va gouverner, fort d'une légitimité qui partout ailleurs qu'au Canada et qu'au Québec serait la marque des usurpateurs.

Les louvoiements de Lucien Bouchard d'une formation politique à l'autre (Crédit social — droite—, Parti libéral, Parti québécois et Parti progressiste-conservateur), témoigneraient des honorables hésitations d'un personnage à la recherche d'une cause potable à défendre. Ils trahissent au contraire son ambition de mener une carrière publique et politique et, à cette fin, de choisir le meilleur véhicule possible. Comme la route était barrée partout, mieux valait attendre. Et, plutôt que de se frayer un chemin au sein d'un parti en bûchant dur, c'est-à-dire en s'acquittant d'humbles tâches pour prouver sa compétence, son dévouement, sa fidélité auprès des militants, il a préféré un raccourci: gagner la confiance d'un homme clé. Brian Mulroney représentait le levier idéal pour donner l'impulsion à l'irrésistible ascension de Lucien Bouchard.

Le voici ambassadeur du Canada à Paris. Le poste est prestigieux. Dans ses bureaux, Lucien Bouchard reçoit fréquemment son ami Brian Mulroney, premier ministre, lui aussi en quête de renommée. Ô vanité! Ne lui propose-t-il pas de créer et de lancer une revue scientifique internationale qui serait diffusée dans les pays du Commonwealth et dans les pays de la

francophonie? Brian débloque un crédit de trois millions de dollars pour ce projet.

Naturellement, l'un et l'autre se moquent bien de savoir si, ce faisant, ils massacreront les initiatives de rayonnement scientifique qui existent déjà au Canada. Ils improvisent. En fait, ils se construisent un petit piédestal pour leur statue personnelle. Un conseiller et un ami aussi précieux que Lucien ne pouvait être maintenu si loin bien longtemps. Bénéficiant du prestige de son ambassade et de l'appui du premier ministre, Lucien Bouchard se fait élire député sans difficulté. Il est aussitôt nommé ministre de l'Environnement. À peine installé, il s'empare des trois millions destinés à la revue scientifique et les recycle dans un projet de revue exclusivement consacrée à l'écologie. La gloire de ce vertueux détournement lui revient exclusivement; quant à Brian, il en sera pour ses frais. Cette modeste anecdote montre combien Lucien Bouchard ne s'embarrasse pas de scrupules.

UN OPPORTUNISME SANS SCRUPULES

S'accaparer à son avantage des initiatives de ses partenaires ou bien se décharger de leurs erreurs ne le fait pas rougir. Il est passé maître dans l'art de faire toujours porter à d'autres l'odieux de situations qu'il contribue à créer ou alors de tirer profit à leur détriment de succès qu'il ne mérite pas. Il ne se salit jamais les mains. Quand il rompt avec Mulroney à la suite de l'échec de Meech, songe-t-il une seconde à secourir son ami? Pense-t-il seulement qu'il trahit ceux qui l'ont élu sur la foi de son allégeance au Canada? Il fonde aussitôt le *Bloc québécois*, un groupe de députés pas du tout élus pour proposer l'indépendance du Québec à

la Chambre des communes mais qui va profiter de cette tribune pour se bâtir une crédibilité politique à bon marché. La crise économique du pays suscite la perte de confiance de la population à l'égard du gouvernement: Lucien Bouchard réussit à attribuer cette crise au fédéralisme.

Bien sûr, toutes les catastrophes proviennent du fédéralisme. C'est ainsi que Lucien et son Bloc se gagnent une faveur populaire telle qu'elle leur permet de se constituer, un peu plus tard, en opposition officielle à Ottawa. Depuis, le sort du Canada se joue entre deux francophones: Jean Chrétien et Lucien Bouchard! La démocratie a de ces désinvoltes!

LE JEU DE L'ÉQUIVOQUE

Au cours du référendum, c'est une fois encore sans risque que Lucien Bouchard fait campagne. Il est évident que sa connaissance des arcanes fédérales assure aux yeux des citoyens plus d'intérêt à ses propos que les lourdes démonstrations du professeur Parizeau et que les avalanches de chiffres de Daniel Johnson. Lucien Bouchard a beau jeu de miser sur les sentiments: la fierté, l'humiliation, etc. Dès lors victoire et défaite sont à son avantage. En cas de victoire, n'est-ce pas lui qui négociera le partenariat? Autant dire qu'il est déjà premier ministre du Québec. Il a imposé à M. Parizeau l'idée astucieuse du partenariat,

ce qui assure une défaite honorable, autant dire une victoire morale.

Il en cueille aujourd'hui les fruits.

Au moment de gouverner, il sait parfaitement que ce ne sont pas les «ethnies» ni moins encore les «puissances de l'argent» qui sont à l'origine des 26 750 suffrages manquants.

Il sait que la perspective de voir débarquer leurs collègues de Hull a effrayé les fonctionnaires de la si francophone et si pure ville de Québec.

Il sait que les circonscriptions les plus pauvres de Montréal n'ont donné au mieux qu'un faible appui au *Oui*.


Il sait que les études économiques de M. Le Hir étaient peu fiables.

Il sait qu'il ne faut pas diviser les Québécois mais les unir autour d'un projet où il n'y aura que des Québécois: c'est pourquoi l'abolition de l'appellation communauté culturelle ou ethnique s'impose. Très inspiré par un certain général de Gaulle, Lucien Bouchard sait admirablement tenir des discours dont il est facile de retourner les termes «je vous ai compris». Il arrive — il faut l'admettre — que ce soit une excellente politique.

Elle n'a qu'un défaut: elle laisse des rancœurs persistantes. Lucien Bouchard devrait s'inspirer davantage du courage et de la franchise d'un certain Pierre Mendès-France qui conduisent à des relations cordiales durables.

PLÉBISCITÉ SANS L'AVOIR DEMANDÉ

Les menaces dont il a fait l'objet ne traduisent rien d'autre qu'une crise de confiance dans la démocratie: quand on ne peut pas s'exprimer avec son bulletin de vote, on s'exprime autrement. Aussi mince soit-elle, la majorité du *Non* n'en est pas moins une majorité. Il convient de la respecter. Sinon, ce sera la guerre civile. On peut considérer aujourd'hui que Lucien Bouchard a été plébiscité sans l'avoir été vraiment. Certes, il est l'homme politique le plus populaire de l'heure au Québec. Est-il pourtant dans la nature des choses qu'il soit placé à la tête du gouvernement actuel sans même l'avoir demandé? Car c'est le Parti québécois qui a sollicité sa candidature alors qu'il n'était même pas membre de ce parti. C'est sans même être député qu'il dirige *de facto* le gouvernement. C'est sans mal qu'il sera élu dans Jonquière: une simple formalité. Il a décidé de ne pas tenir d'élections générales l'automne prochain. Aurait-il des scrupules à balayer ses opposants? Aurait-il déjà commis sa première erreur? Difficile à croire.

Mais alors que cache-t-il donc? 

Baruch Levinstein est théologien, philosophe et diamantaire. Il vit entre Amsterdam, New York et Montréal.



BEATING THE ODDS:

A VISIT TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF REGENT PARK

text & photos: Marisa Comoglio

Toronto - The voice at the end of the phone was cordial and youthful. "By all means, come down to see us!" Aldo Di Giovanni, the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Downtown Toronto, was available anytime. I got off the street car at Dundas and Yonge leaving behind the affluent atmosphere of the Eaton's Centre and entering the historical and colorful area of Cabbage Town, in East York South.

I decided to walk, to immerse myself into the life of Dundas Street East and its neighbourhoods. Strip joints, karaoke bars, run down apartment buildings, convenience stores. Many signs reading For Sale, For Lease, For Rent and, most of all, Further Reduced, in much larger letters. Kids running to the corner store to purchase, with a few coins a bag of potato chips or a chocolate bar with a rich and famous basketball player on the wrapping, possibly their only meal of the day. Women carrying bags of cereal boxes and their groceries, while pushing strollers. Men standing on corners, smoking intensely, staring into nothingness. Some drinking beer, openly.

The Club is located in the basement of one of the Regent Park buildings: there are kids in groups standing outside, ready to leave it seems. Others just arriving, their youthful voices and laughter covering the sound of the heavy traffic. I wait by the reception area and start chatting with Jessie Siriska, 13, who is minding the phones. "I was a problem kid," he says without embarrassment, looking directly into my eyes. "I had temper tantrums and spit a lot. I was four and nobody wanted to deal with me. Not even my mother. I was thrown out of clubs and groups and kindergarten. I could not play with other kids..." He is politely answering the many calls and he is holding his working schedule for tomorrow's outing with the Club. He nods, staring ahead, as if looking at himself into a mirror. His clear eyes shine when he says that somebody took him to the Club. "Things changed. It took a while. But things changed. I had been very angry."



Now Jessie is making some money by preparing sandwiches for the kids who did not bring their lunches, and is taking pictures with a second hand camera, for the guys who can afford to pay \$1.50 to immortalize an outing to the park or the pool with their best friends. Aldo Di Giovanni, who has been with the Club for ten years, is a dynamic middle-aged man who and has been involved with young offenders and children considered "at risk" most of his life. He guides me through the Club, a series of rooms located in the basement area: the walls have been painted a few times, but the humidity has been seeping through the concrete, requiring more and more paint.

It is clean and tidy. There are voices

of children behind the doors: and then voices of teenagers, explaining games or trying to get the attention of the kids. The furniture is run down. The sofas donated to the Club are worn out by the kids' activities. The rooms, located in the windowless basement, are simply decorated but clean and well organized with toy boxes, shelves, chairs and small tables. Located in prominence on the bare walls there are What's Up schedules with routines and activities, and What's the Rule charts. The first determining the daily activities, the second summarizing three basic points related to the process of decision-making and the possible outcomes of such decisions.

Everyone seems to know exactly what to do, and the conversations between staff and children are cordial and clear. After the tour I am invited upstairs in Aldo's office which is located in a converted apartment, on the ground floor of the building.

Gayle Bowen, the Director, knocks lightly and enters with a man. "He has to go North, to visit his brother who is dying of cancer," she says: "he needs to borrow \$20.00 for the bus fare." Aldo, without delay, pulls a twenty out of his pocket and hands it to the man. "Do you need anything else?" he asks looking at him with concern. "No," he replies, "I have the rest of the fare. Thank you. I will pay it back." He leaves, quietly. "Do you know him?" I ask Aldo. "No," he says

simply, "there is no need to know him. He will come back." In this neighbourhood, I am told, this sort of event happens very frequently. People who are desperate and need a helping hand wander into the office knowing that they will not be rejected, and that their concern will be addressed immediately. Many return with little delay the money received. Many come back to offer their services in exchange or just show up to say thank-you. Others bring their children or grandchildren asking for advice.

"The principles sustaining our programs are very much derivative of Montessori's projects with youth, which took place around 1907 in the poorest areas of Rome," Aldo informs me. Maria Montessori, an educator and physician who died in 1952, established educational programs in centres and parochial schools stressing development and initiative through self-reliance so that children can learn by themselves the things that most interest them. "In order to avoid wasted efforts by learning the wrong habits, there was much emphasis on discipline." He continues. It was reported that the Montessori method enabled children to learn to read and write much more quickly and with greater facility than had been otherwise possible. In time, because the method brought about concrete results and success to the learning process, it was gradually adapted to suit the needs of wealthier classes. It was subsequently adopted by educational institutions established by and for the middle class. Today, comparatively few children can enjoy learning from such programs.

The objectives of the Boys and Girls Club are very different from the classical educational setting's objectives, says Di Giovanni while we talk about education and learning. It is a "recreational centre", but times have changed and the need of preparing children, from a very young age to cope with the pressures and demands of today's economic and social environment, is enormous.

Academic or artistic achievements are not at the forefront of this approach: Di Giovanni suggests that we should emphasize children's competencies evaluation at a more basic root level. The purpose is to offer them some leverage ahead of time, a positive good start. The school system has a fixed way of evaluating the development of pupils, and while it may have worked well in the past, it has not progressed, and has remained fossilized. For instance, at the kindergarten level, if a child has difficulties in socializing, in playing with other children, the competency of writing his or her name will be of little importance. The child's ability to solve problems will be the determining factor. This viewpoint goes in parallel with the Montessori's method: the environment has to be conducive to learning and when the child is ready, he will go ahead, and after the decision-making process, will start solving the immediate problem of "having to learn."

What the Club is offering, according to its Statement of Mission, is an environment where kids are guided to learn and master the basic skills to solve problems. The ABC Model of Development which is at the base of the process was designed to offer an experiential approach to developing basic competencies within the individual. It was condensed into a manual written by Aldo Di Giovanni, Prof. Robert J. MacFadden of the University of Toronto, and Deborah Goodman. Recently the Club has made available on the Internet some of its programs, and has produced a multimedia CD-Rom. This is for training adolescents on the operational aspects of the Club itself, with particular emphasis on the value of the activities that it offers.

The competent functioning of an individual, according to the ABC Manual, is measured by the ability of the individual to solve significant

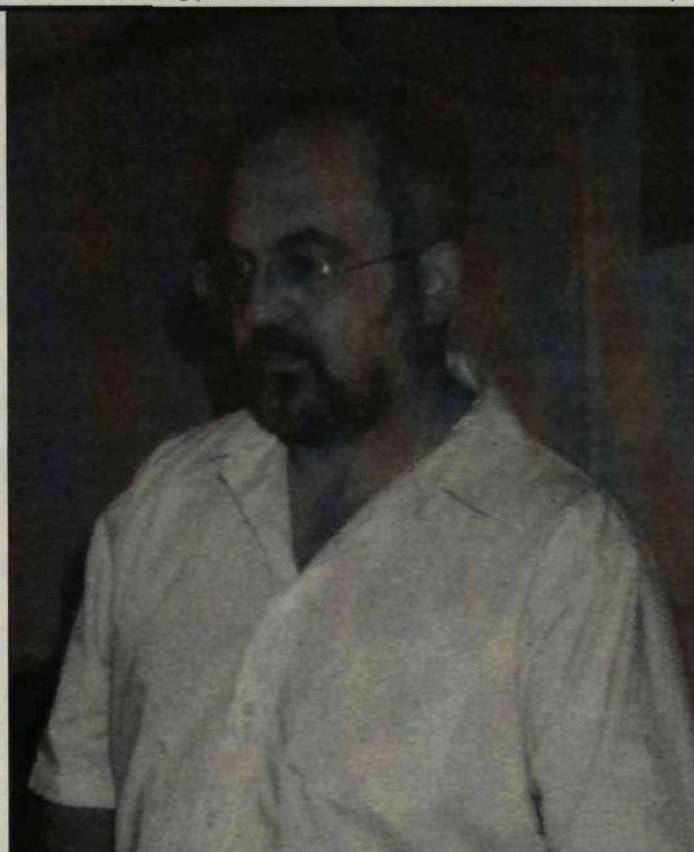
problems, and attain goals without substantial difficulty. "Coping, Learning and Adapting are three important separate activities for an individual," explains Di Giovanni, "and problems with any of these functional requirements cause difficulties in meeting demands and attaining goals."

Coping? Learning? Adapting? Yes, according to the paradigm, to cope in situations, to learn from the experience, and to adapt as a result of the previous actions is the core of survival.

"There are also eight basic competencies that are essential for coping, learning and adapting. They are interrelated: mental decision-making, mental problem solving, task completion, actual problem solving, mutuality, team building, self-management, and positive self-imagining, are mind-based, and require thinking skills and motor skills." Di Giovanni says that it would be quite useful to add the development of these skills to the elementary school curricula, as it would provide the student with the possibilities of looking at alternate ways to doing things. From coping with social difficulties, to choosing a career, to overcoming discrimination, the answer seems to go back to the original question: "Now, how am I going to deal with this problem?"

The State and the Community have a vested interest in providing

their younger citizens with the adequate and proper tools to function well, be productive, be proud of their contribution and of who they are. Bureaucrats and educators have been listening to the presentations made by the Club for support and grants, but, in most cases, their response has been slower than the business world's response. "Many business people have expressed their interest by using the competencies with their own children, and their associates. And this could actually be part of the next step in development for the Boys and Girls Club of Downtown Toronto: a program designed for youth at large." This would in turn bring the additional funding necessary for training and development of teenagers and adolescents who are working part time during the winter months and full time in the summer months, and would allow the implementation of other programs for the community of Regent Park. "We are primarily a youth centre.



Aldo Di Giovanni, the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Downtown Toronto

We get the kids who show interest in our Club, we train them and we provide them with some remuneration. They spend 20 per cent of their time in training and supervising, and 80 per cent in applying what they have been trained for. The application per se is also a way of training. In return they have to provide programs for children from the age of 4 to the age of 12."

"The old approaches of counseling, recreational activities, and guidance programs did not fully work", says Di Giovanni. The Club tried to convince kids on how to manage themselves, to stress the importance of self esteem, and convey the fact that they were appreciated. "It did not work, because kids need incentives. We decided to use work as a vehicle. We evaluate their ability to deal with the crises that arise in the group of children they are supervising. We have charts detailing these crises and what was done about them."

Thirty adolescents are now employed by the Club. They work 10 hours per week in the winter time and 40 hours in the summer, they provide programs for activities and outings for 80 children and use the ABC model of development for addressing crises and solving problems.

Tracking is a regular term in their vocabulary, and it represents the way in which the ABC model is delivered. There are eight types of Track

Formats available in the ABC model, which can also be taught through hands' positions, in silent, symbolic and effective gestures. The Track Masters are those who have mastered the ABC routines and are ready to transfer their skills to other kids, while the Track Groups are the groups who work as a team to develop their competencies collectively; Fast Tracking is designed to assist one person with a specific, particularly complex problem, while EveryDay Tracking, and Enviro-Tracking are related to changing perceptual focus or managing the environment in which the competencies are used.

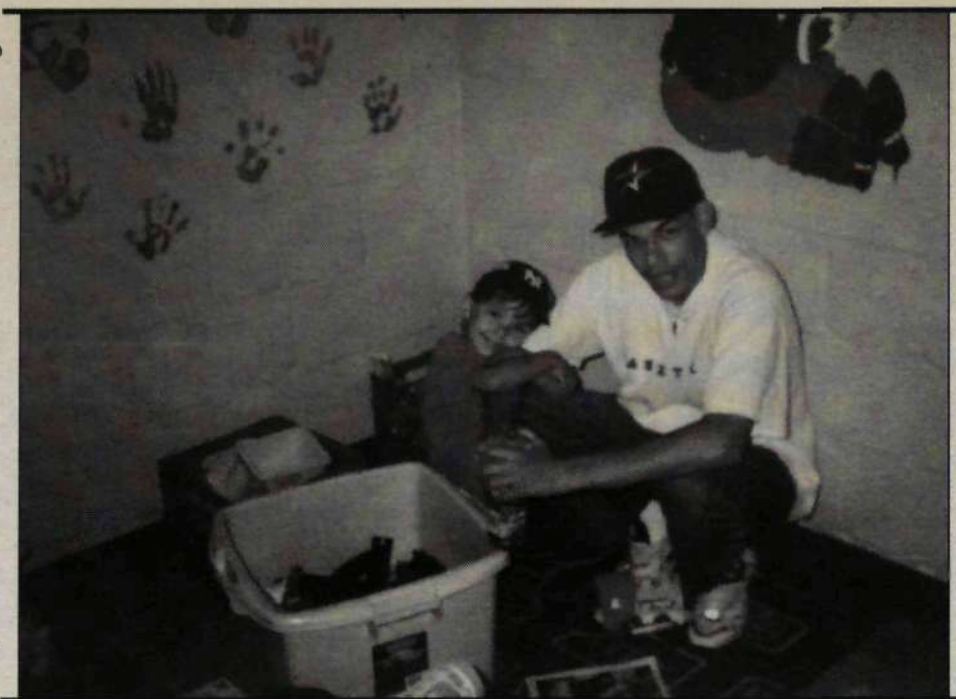
"To us it's not relevant that, during a craft class, we have made a sail boat", says Aldo, "What counts is the way we have dealt with decision-making and team building, task completion and problem solving. Then the craft activity itself is placed into a different dimension of experience." The value of the experience is different, it seems, because the emphasis is shifted from being in a feel-good society to doing smartly and doing well, in a more difficult environment. A parallelism to the times and economics of the seventies and eighties and the current situation of the nineties. "It's like talking about this fellow, who is a good runner but is running on the wrong road, perhaps even in the wrong direction," concludes Di Giovanni. "To correct the error, he thinks that by running faster he will solve the problem. We don't have to do more: we have to do things better, smarter. Our society, as well as any other society, will have to come up with some pretty good answers that will help us get us to where we are going. We have to prepare our kids, and offer them some tools and support."

"...The business community would be remiss if it ignored opportunities to support youth services like those offered by the Club, both financially and with human resources," says Bruce Clarkson, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Club and an executive with Sears Canada. In an interview, a few days earlier, he had stressed that "... by helping kids to acquire the skills needed to learn and work, we can complement and support the educational system, and hopefully reduce the odds that any individual will be unable to find employment."

After the chat with Aldo I stop at the reception counter again. Kids are grouping around the phone and talking about the events of the day. Blossom Patterson, a volunteer coordinator for three years, discusses the schedules for tomorrow with Natalie and Margie. Gayle Bowen, the teenager who started coming to the Club at the age of 15 and now is its Director, makes some suggestions for tomorrow's trip to a local park. Van Bui, Laura Minquini and Tuyet Ngo, with a vociferous group of happy kids, have just returned from a trip to the local pool and are completing their reports. Arnim Kennedy wants to meet with Aldo and Claudia Saldorriaga talks to me about her large family and her beautiful mother. They are serious and sincere, polite. Many have grown up in this neighbourhood, have escaped the traps set by the drug dealers and the pimps. They have survived the despair of a neglected part of the city and managed to cope, learn and adapt, and master some difficult skills.

Jessie seems reluctant to go home. He is checking his schedule for tomorrow, again, and comes near me, his freckled face full of light. He wants to be certain that I have the whole story.

The Fast Tracking program designed to meet the demands of children who act in reflex, was adopted to help him. Patrick, the teenager/counsellor who supervised him never gave up on him. With



patience and perseverance he helped him to "count to ten" in the moments of great conflict, instead of ignoring him or punishing him. Everybody in the Club was behind Jessie, Ivy-Jane and Pat and the many other children who needed special attention and care: they were offered support and reassurance. Jessie learned the skills, and he is now mastering the competencies. His mother, Gail, told me in a phone interview

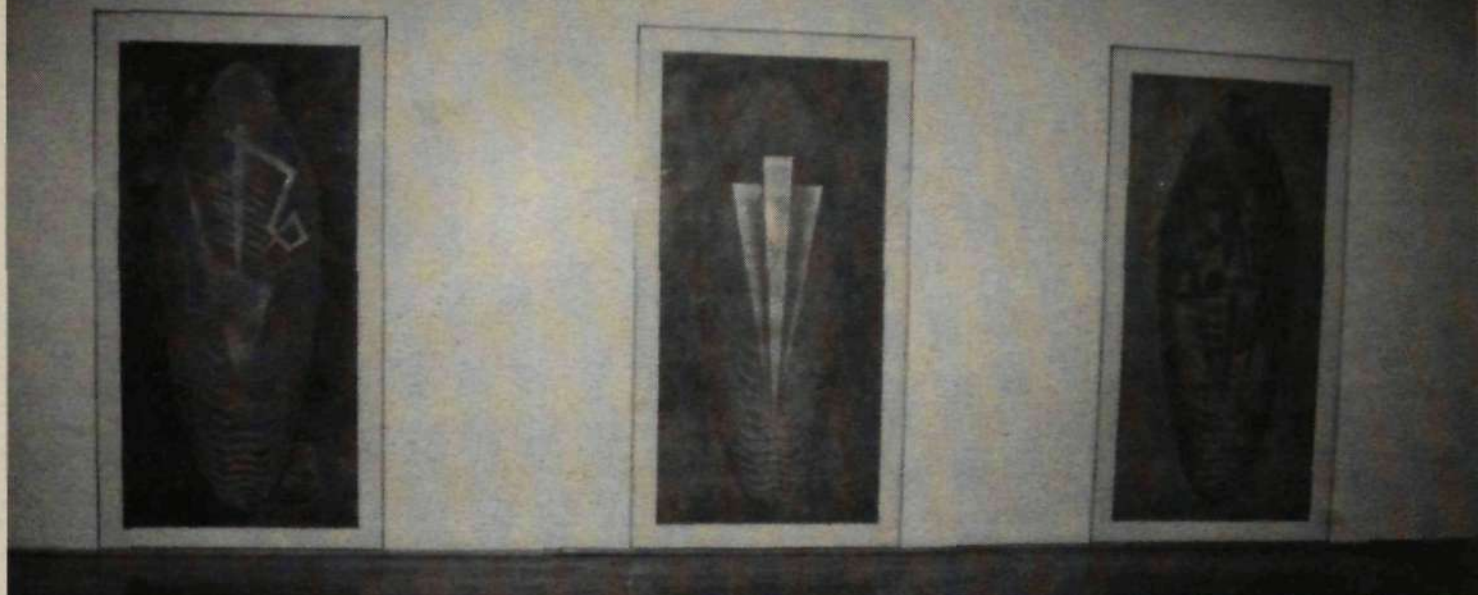
that he is doing well in school and is now in the Cadets. "Perhaps one day he will be a pilot", she said with pride. "He spends hours polishing his boots to perfection and ironing his uniform, just so." "Funny," Gail added, laughing, "I never taught him how to iron!" ¶

NOTE: The Club was started by the Optimist Club of Toronto in 1926. In 1949 it became the Boys Club of Toronto (but it did provide programs for girls) and in 1965 officially it joined the Boys Club of Canada. In 1970 the Clubhouse moved to its present location in Toronto's Regent Park. It was incorporated in 1972, when it became a member of the United Way. For most of its existence it has provided traditional after-school care of loosely organized recreation and social programs. Since 1990 it has evolved. The services it provides can be described as structured, recreational programming for development of children and youth. Its Statement of Mission is "Exist so our members Cope, Learn and Adapt everywhere anytime."

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FERMENTATIONS



ARNALDO POMODORO

AN ENCOUNTER WITH

domenico d'alessandro & corrado paina
photos: domenico d'alessandro

V.V.: *In your work, you have suggested the introduction of a type of termite, a virus injected into solid geometric forms.*

Do you see this virus as a debilitating illness or as a liberating force from an unsustainable static ideal?

As a pun on Ilia Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers' book, Order Out of Chaos, can we say that you introduce chaos into order?

A.P.: I have said that it might be seen as a type of termite, but in a joking way. Sculpture must participate in a space, live in a space, it cannot be seen only in a frontal fashion.

I have created frontal types of works, bas-relief sculpture; the latest among these is in New York, it is very large, twelve metres by three and a half metres. But above all, I believe sculpture must be at the centre and then move about to establish new centres.

So what does one do when, for example, he loves Brancusi, Boccioni and is fascinated with all the findings of Constructivism, of Futurism, of Cubism, etc. So, I thought to give life to a form, to uncover the interior, to travel into the interior, jokingly I say, as if eaten by a termite. My message is another, it is to demonstrate that today we cannot be against technology and science, but at the same time we must not

abuse them. Therefore, I did not ask whether I was introducing chaos into order.

When I did these works and used geometric solid forms, I did not think of creating chaos, but instead, an internal fermentation of the sculpture. Give life to the sculpture, vitality, energy, dynamism.

V.V.: *The concept of the portal in a world where boundaries can no longer be contained by physical walls, at the dawn of the "global village" concept, the "portal" brings to mind a passage to another dimension.*

What is this dimension for you?

What is the message or direction implied in the project for York University in Toronto?

A.P.: The portal for York University is a type of cippus on which one wants to write.

We are in a university in which we must study. It is not coincidental that the project is entitled, "The Doors of Knowledge". The portal, cippus, commemorative tablets, is in the Mediterranean/Mesopotamian tradition where one finds a message. It is a wall, and this section of wall is a portal with engraved signs that signify various passages.

Those that mark the beginning for man, to have made the first sign, perhaps to recognize the

road leading to a battle or to tell him where to find shelter, refuge, where to defend himself from animals. This conquest, this legend is the search for knowledge.

The door is divided in two parts.

On the one side, there are the usual references to archaic language, and on the other, when rotated, the portal becomes a strip that reminds us of our modern machinery.

V.V.: *Someone said: "Art is the thing that makes life more interesting than art."*

You have said that the artist inhabits dreams. Is this dreaming a way to reflect on reality or an escape from it?

Perhaps in dreaming we search for that liberating seed that eludes us in reality, but through art it might be possible to plant this seed in reality.

A.P.: Life is always hard for artists, but it is very interesting. I am very happy to be able to express myself in this way.

Sincerely, I wish only to work because in working I destroy my anguish. I don't know if my anguish is expressed in my work, in it I try to express my anguish but also introduce signs that may have positive implications upon life. I am happy to be in the world and able to work,

Falsetto

Esterina, your twenty years threaten you,
 rose-grey cloud
 that little by little snares you in itself.
 You understand and do not fear this.
 Submerged we see you
 in the smokiness that the wind
 rents or thickens, with violence.
 Then from the wave of ashes you emerge
 baked more than ever,
 fixed on a farther off adventure
 your intent face resembles
 the archer Diana.
 Your twenty autumns rise,
 gone by springs entangle you;
 now, a presage tolls, for you,
 in the Elysian spheres.
 That it should not yield
 the sound of a cracked
 vase!; I pray it shall be,
 for you, an ineffable concert
 of collar-bells.

The uncertain morrow does not frighten you.
 Gracefully you stretch yourself
 on the salt-glistening reef
 and in the sun you burn your limbs.
 You recall the lizard
 motionless on the barren boulder;
 you, an insidious youth,
 the other, the slip-loop of grass of the little boy.
 Water is the force that tempers you,
 in the water you find and renew yourself:
 we think of you as a seaweed, a pebble,
 as a sea creature
 whom the saltiness does not corrode
 and returns to the shore more pure.

You are quite right! Do not perturb
 with idle doubts the smiling present.
 Your gaiety already binds the future
 and one shrug of your shoulders
 razes the tiny fortresses
 of your darkling tomorrow.
 You stand and set forth along the narrow
 diving-plank, over the shrilling whirlpool:
 your profile is cast
 against a background of pearl.
 You hesitate at the apex of the wavering axis,
 then laugh, and as if plucked up by a wind
 you plunge into the arms
 of your divine friend that catches you.

We, who belong to the land-locked race,
 can only gaze at you.

Eugenio Montale

[translated by Antonino Mazza]



BRONZE MODEL FOR YORK UNIVERSITY PORTAL, TORONTO

I hope to live a while longer, this year I'll turn seventy.

It is true that art can be liberating. Someone said: "All the anguish expressed in art is discharged and brought to bear upon others." I think that altogether this anguish brings emotions that will have a positive effect, not a destructive one on life.

V.V.: *In your collaborations with architects and landscape architects, for example the concept for the expansion of the cemetery in Urbino, nature has been interpreted according to the measure of man. The biological diversity is reduced to a minimum. Given the importance of preserving what little is left of nature, how important is the ecological identity of a site for you?*

How do you go about interpreting this identity in works of sculpture?

A.P.: To me the cemetery project was a very innovative one in the sense that it was an absent type of architecture. On this hill we thought to introduce a road, similar to those roads that traverse valleys with mountains on either side. In order to avoid the road following a mountainous terrain we dig and go straight, on either side we are left with walls. Here is where I thought to do a bas-relief and place the caskets. It is a road that makes us think of death and prepare for it. That is, while visiting the tombs of our deceased we are confronted with our own mortality and the concept of "death".

It is not a typical occupation of space as in the model of the 1800's.

V.V.: *In the era of modern urbanism the role of the artist has been systematically reduced from that of the past.*

Art is relegated to the realm of exceptional

events, away from the norm.

In what ways can we reconnect the metaphorical discourse of a people in today's condition?

What perspectives do you see for artists that try to partake in the processes that determine our urban condition?

A.P.: I believe it is extremely difficult to resolve this dilemma in the era in which we live.

It is an important debate that we continuously have with architects. To this end, I am very pessimistic, I feel there are no possibilities for reaching a compromise.

The types of housing found on the periphery of European cities are inhuman beehives, determined by necessity, by complex situations. I am not for high density housing that become labyrinthic cells.

Neither am I in favour of the two-storey or one-storey housing developments of American horizontal sprawl. We are in need of a new concept of urbanity, it is a complex problem that needs further discussion. We cannot even begin to speak of sculptural interventions in this type of planning. If we could at least introduce a sculptural sign or a painted house to give a sense of place without creating labyrinths.

It is a very complex problem even for architects with whom I have had many discussions. We are all in the hope that there will be opportunities to partake in projects which are less complex and less inhuman, comprehensive from the community's point of view. [D. D'A.] †

Many thanks to Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Toronto

SCUDI DI SEPPIA

UN INCONTRO CON ARNALDO POMODORO [2]

....E PRIMAMENTE
UN SALDO EI FECE SMISURATO SCUDO,
DI DEDALEO RILIEVO, E D'AURO INTORNO...
[ILIAD, LIBRO DICIOTTESIMO]

E ntrare nella sala dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Toronto è stato come profanare la tenda di un guerriero impegnato in battaglia. Gli ossi, appesi alle pareti, come scudi, come le parti essenziali di una panoplia di un titano pronto a sfidare gli dei dell'Olimpo, confermavano il senso di violazione. Sul dorso colorato degli scudi invece delle fantasie e dei paesaggi di Vulcano v'erano i segni di una scrittura cuneiforme, che richiamava simboli di guerra e peana.

Il modellino in bronzo del portale concepito per la Vary Hall all'Università di York era posto su una base rettangolare in legno bianco al centro della sala come l'ultimo frutto della conquista. Arnaldo Pomodoro dopo una conferenza all'Art Gallery è volato a New York e l'intervista telefonica conferma le impressioni di Toronto. Pomodoro è un'artista dalla profonda umanità e dalla modestia direttamente proporzionale alle sue sculture.

V.V.: Sono andato a rileggere Ossi di seppia... vorrei chiederle il significato di questo gemellaggio con la poesia e vorrei sapere se si può parlare di equazione poesia e scultura?

A.P.: Gli artisti fanno spesso lavori dedicati ad artisti, è un'equazione perfetta. Per esempio ho lavorato con il poeta Attilio Bertolucci e ne è

scaturito un libro con dei fogli che contengono il mio lavoro e le sue poesie. I fogli sono fatti in un modo che non si possono distaccare perché in genere il collezionista prende l'incisione, la incornicia e accantona la poesia. A me questo pare offensivo perciò da molto tempo io uso dei versi e li inserisco dentro il mio lavoro. Direi che la scultura e la pittura hanno un punto di vantaggio rispetto alla poesia. Il poema può essere letto e può essere anche detto ma la scultura e la pittura non hanno bisogno di traduzione. Sono quelle che sono, l'emozione è immediata, la poesia è più complessa.

V.V.: Quindi il pubblico che guarda una scultura non deve sottoporsi alla stessa concentrazione e disciplina di chi legge una poesia?

A.P.: Direi che l'attitudine è la stessa, una mostra può essere letta e nella maggioranza dei casi chi entra in una galleria o in un museo sa dove sta entrando. La poesia è il frutto di un lavoro incredibile, una ricerca verso la perfezione, per scrivere una poesia occorre lo stesso tempo di una scultura.

V.V.: Il catalogo della sua mostra dice che "le acqueforti e acque tinte su rame e calcografia dal titolo Sogni, sono ispirate a Montale sul tema dell'osso di seppia che rimanda allo scoglio dove si svolge la vita all'origine, al guscio stesso come scudo... icona assoluta... proiezione fantastica della mente nel sonno..."

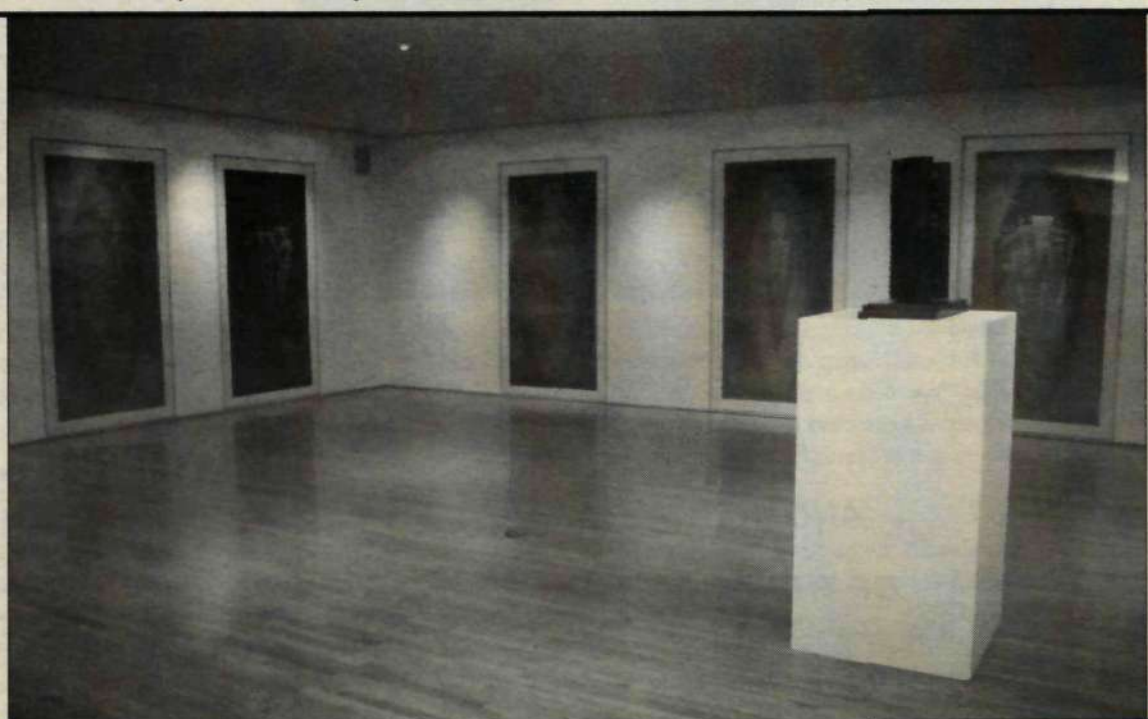
A.P.: Accomuno il caso dell'osso di seppia alle poesie di Montale perché effettivamente si

parte dall'origine, la vita viene dal mare... l'osso di seppia rappresenta la costola di questo strano pesce dal quale pare sia l'origine della vita. Questo osso di seppia l'ho trovato in una bottega di un orefice dove ho fatto i miei primi esperimenti scultorei perché sono un autodidatta e non ho mai frequentato una scuola d'arte. L'orefice mi ha mostrato che con l'osso di seppia si poteva fare una fusione con un metallo come l'argento, l'oro e il piombo. Non avendo i soldi ho sperimentato il piombo e ho capito che i segni che io incidevo, dove poi colavo il piombo, avevano un sapore incredibile che rimandava all'arcaico. La tessitura dell'osso di seppia era così bella di per sé che aveva dato al mio segno un elemento molto più forte di quello che era il segno stesso. Dopo con l'andare del tempo questi segni si sono naturalmente rinvigoriti, arricchiti e mi hanno permesso di fare dei piccoli rilievi... la forma dell'osso è ovoidale ma si traduce in un rettangolo e mettendo insieme varie fusioni ho fatto un mosaico che ha creato un rilievo. Dal piccolo osso potevo farne anche uno molto più grande e in tre mesi ne ho fatto uno di un metro per due. Questo lavoro mi ha permesso di interpretare tutti questi segni che vanno dall'uomo della preistoria, passando attraverso i graffiti, passando dagli itti ai sumeri, ai camuni, fino ad arrivare ai segni assolutamente matematici di una macchina moderna.

V.V.: Una visitatrice ha definito la sua opera mascolina, guerrafondaia, bellicosa...

A.P.: Mascolina va bene, bellicosa no a meno che non si intenda in termini poetici e cioè che che io combatto per proporre le mie idee ed in

VIEW OF
THE "DREAMS"
EXHIBITION
AT THE
ISTITUTO
ITALIANO
DI CULTURA,
TORONTO



questo senso io difendo l'espressionismo astratto. Allora in quel senso sono guerrafondaio. Effettivamente questa sagoma ingigantita a misura umana con dei simboli sopra che sono dei sogni e potrebbero essere come ho già detto e scritto i sigilli di tribù o di casati, quindi in quel senso c'è questa aria. Ma direi che è molto aristocratica, sono fermi, statici. Nella mia scultura a New York intitolata "le battaglie" c'è un riferimento a Paolo Uccello e alle battaglie che l'uomo deve fare. Quella potrebbe essere considerata guerrafondaia.

V.V.: Montale scrive nella poesia *I limoni*, "ascoltami i poeti laureati / si muovono soltanto fra le piante/ dai nomi poco usati..." lei è uno scultore laureato?

A.P.: Io non sono uno scultore laureato, casualmente a Pesaro mentre lavoravo al genio civile e pensavo di fare l'architetto ho capito che il mio interesse si spostava verso le arti figurative.

V.V.: Sempre in *Ossi di seppia* Montale scrive "Codesto solo oggi possiamo dirti/ ciò che non siamo/ ciò che non vogliamo." Lei oggi sa ciò che non è, ciò che non vuole?

A.P.: Io mi ritengo fortunato perchè volevo studiare all'accademia ma la morte di mio padre mi aveva costretto a fare l'istituto tecnico per geometri e mi sono ritrovato a fare esperimenti da solo, perciò non mi sono laureato. La mia è una ricerca che è venuta man mano, sempre più forte che ha vinto ogni altra. Quando insegno, ai giovani dico sempre di non disperare, perchè se per loro oggi è difficile trovare un lavoro, quando io ero giovane

lavoravo ma non volevo fare quel lavoro.

V.V.: Nel corso della conferenza all'Art Gallery lei ha mostrato al pubblico due filmati sulla sua attività di set designer. Abbiamo visto macchine di immense proporzioni spinte da legioni di lillipuziani muoversi sulla piana di Gibellina sconvolta dal terremoto. Perchè Gibellina?

A.P.: Ho usato quello spazio dopo un invito del sindaco Ludovico Corrao che, dopo il terremoto pensava di dare vita alla nuova Gibellina, ricordando la vecchia città e costruendo la nuova facendo del teatro, facendo teatro. Ho aderito perchè il luogo è straordinariamente bello, tutti quei ruderi erano affascinanti, tanto è vero che ho inventato delle sculture che venivano portate su questi ruderi come dei sarcofaghi, come delle casse di risonanza. Per l'allestimento dell'*Oresteia* di Eschilo in siciliano abbiamo lavorato per tre anni su questi ruderi trasformando il luogo che è stato poi coperto da un cretto di Burri sul quale si continuano a fare spettacoli.

V.V.: Aratri giganteschi, cocchi, obelischi di immani proporzioni, che relazione c'è tra scultura e teatro? E che cosa cerca nel teatro che non trova nella scultura?

A.P.: L'esperienza è stata formidabile perchè nel teatro naturalmente il gioco è al massimo e non c'è il rigore continuo necessario nel realizzare una scultura. Ho potuto sperimentare all'aperto visioni e progetti che erano sulla carta e sono diventati realtà. Queste prove mi sono servite dopo per la scultura. Tanto è vero che nel mio capitolo della mia ultima monografia c'è un paragrafo intitolato "Dalla

scultura al teatro alla scultura" perchè infatti vi è tra i due un legame continuo, più giocoso. Il teatro richiede degli elementi: un aratro, un obelisco, quindi le famose macchine teatrali che sono nuove...

Quando aggancio il telefono penso che Pomodoro è riuscito a far sognare Toronto con gli ossi di seppia, a far rivivere Gibellina e a realizzare il sogno di Montale "potere/simili a questi rami/ieri scarniti e nudi ed oggi pieni/di fremiti e linfe/sentire/noi pur domani tra i profumi e i venti/ un riaffluir di sogni." [C. P.] V

Domenico D'Alessandro, Corrado Paina and Antonino Mazza are members of the Toronto Editorial Board of *Vice Versa*.

Poems by **Eugenio Montale**
from *Ossi di seppia/The Bones of Cuttlefish*, Mosaic Press,
Toronto, 1983.
Translated by **Antonino Mazza**



**"DREAMS":
ANOTHER VIEW
OF THE EXHIBITION**

In Limen

Rejoice if the wind which enters in the orchard
steers towards you the surge of life:
here, where a dead
tangle of memories sinks,
it was not a garden, but a reliquary.

The flutter that you hear is not a flight,
but the quivering of the eternal womb;
see how this patch of solitary earth
is transforming itself as in a crucible.

A torment is on this side of the steep wall.
If you set forth you will stumble,
perhaps, upon the phantom which will save you:
here is where the stories compose themselves, the actions
deleted for the game of future.

seek one broken skein in the net
that enmeshes us; you, leap out, flee!
Go, for you I prayed it, — now my thirst
will be slight, less bitter the grudge...

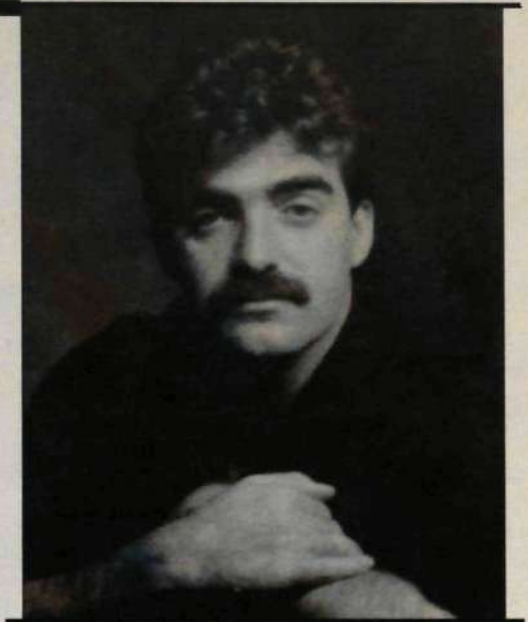
Eugenio Montale
[translated by Antonino Mazza]

A LESSER STATE IN THE ARTS

AN INTERVIEW
WITH

NINO RICCI

Corrado Paina
photo: Rafy



On November the 29th Ontario culture was legislated into a state of siege. A Renewal Plan for Ontario "aimed at restoring the province's financial and social well-being through economic stability and job creation" was presented to the Legislature by the minister of finance Ernie Eves.

In this plan the Conservative government charged forward with a barrage of cuts without precedent in the history of Ontario.

Project grants, operating grants and operating agencies will go from a systematic revision to a savage amputation.

Here is a partial list of the casualties: Ontario Arts Council funding reduced by 19% in 1996-97 from its current level, decrease funding in 1996 for the Ontario Science Centre, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the Royal Botanical Gardens, all by an average of 7% from their current levels, elimination of \$100,000 in annual provincial funding to CIRPA (Canadian Independent Recording Production Association), 13% cut to the annual funding of the National Ballet School, eliminating total funding to CJRT-FM (\$1 million) and the list goes on.

Nino Ricci, writer and winner of the Governor General award and current president of PEN (a national organization of writers active in protecting human rights and freedom of expression) has been an outspoken critic of cutbacks to culture, and in particular of federal cuts to the CBC (\$227 million over the next 18 months).

V.V.: THE ALREADY INSIGNIFICANT BUDGET ALLOCATED TO CULTURE HAS BEEN FURTHER REDUCED. WHY IS CULTURE ALWAYS A TARGET IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC CRISIS?

N.R.: I think the perspective with which it is normally approached by people doing cutbacks is that there are certain essential services: education, medical services, culture and when you make those kinds of hierarchies, culture is always at the bottom. It makes me uneasy to feel that I'm making some kind of special pledge for the arts, as if they are more special than doctors or teachers or whatever. But in some ways the current climate has polarized us in those ways and in ways that are not really reflective of how society functions and the ideal

would be to restructure our thinking in such a way that we are considering how to reorganize our society, looking at it more holistically and not as separate entities.

V.V.: ISN'T IT A PARADOX THAT ENTERTAINMENT, A MAJOR FORCE IN THE PROVINCIAL ECONOMY IS SEEN AS A TARGET OF CUTS, IN PARTICULAR WHEN THE RATIONALE BEHIND THESE CUTS IS JOB CREATION AND ELIMINATION OF THE DEFICIT?

N.R.: I think it is so partly because the connection is not really understood. When you look at the States, although I wouldn't hold the States up as a model of positive cultural activity, you see that culture is their main export and it accounts for the world hegemony. It's true that their culture is exported everywhere, often in extremely negative form but the point is that they have gained world dominance through the exportation of their culture, so that in itself alerts us to the fact that if you don't have a strong culture you are not going to have credibility in other areas. I'm not arguing for cultural imperialism, I'm opposed to cultural imperialism, but if we don't have our own articulate culture then we become the victims of that cultural imperialism.

V.V.: WHAT WILL THE AFTERMATH OF THESE CUTS BE?

N.R.: I don't know. In some ways I feel obliged to take a doctrinaire position and say, "If these cutbacks continue it will be the apocalypse of our culture." I'm not sure that's the case. I think that culture is strong enough in this city and that there are enough people committed to it that it will carry on. People have become innovative in finding new ways to get by, knowing that certain sources of money are not available to them anymore.

V.V.: IN THE U.S. PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS FINANCE CULTURE AND THE ARTS. DOES THE SAME MENTALITY EXIST IN CANADA AND IN TORONTO IN PARTICULAR?

N.R.: Not that I've seen but I guess it could be developed. It's not something that I feel all that comfortable with because inevitably you get tied to it. I think it does get dangerous and I think it does tend to

produce more conservative art. You are less willing to bite the hand that feeds you.

V.V.: CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF A CORPORATION FINANCING MORE CONSERVATIVE ART THAN GOVERNMENT?

N.R.: It's always consequential that if you have a corporation buying visual art, whether they like it or not, that it looks good in the boardroom or that it's been proven to be a good investment. They are much less likely to put money into development. You always hear these stories in Canada about some strange project that has been funded - you know the guy in Vancouver dropping a rat from the 9th floor - and these stories make it seem like money is being thrown away on frivolous projects, but for me these stories are always encouraging because who else would fund something like that? It's important for a culture to be strong, that you have an eccentric fringe, the weird and strange things nobody else would fund, that somebody would be encouraging that level of creativity because that's often the source at which the real lasting art eventually gets produced.

V.V.: WHAT IS PEN GOING TO DO AGAINST THOSE CUTBACKS?

N.R.: We are not a pro-artist advocacy group against cutbacks. Primarily we fight for freedom of expression. Lately we have been active on the issue of custom seizure, i.e., books written by gays and lesbians that have been seized at customs. We work for civil rights and human rights internationally.

V.V.: BUT ONCE THAT ARTISTS' CREATIVITY AND THEIR PHYSICAL SURVIVAL IS COMPROMISED BY THESE CUTS DOESN'T THIS BECOME A PEN ISSUE?

N.R.: Theoretically...

V.V.: HOW WILL NINO RICCI BE AFFECTED BY THOSE CUTBACKS?

N.R.: I'm affected both as an artist and as a consumer. My first

publisher Cormorant has been unable, even though it's one of the most successful publishers in the country, to survive on its own. It was close to folding until it went into partnership with a larger publishing house, Stoddart. It's a viable situation for the short term but as more and more small publishers confront the need to do this eventually the kind of grassroots publishing of new writers will be affected. Until now, small publishing has been at the forefront of publishing new writers and fostering new voices. Even established artists are having a hard time getting published. As a consumer of theatre, new music and visual arts, the more that this underground expression of art becomes embattled... I'm not saying it will die but you will see less and less of it. The real test will be in 10-15 years because in the meantime books will be published, plays will be mounted... But because the fostering of new talent has not happened, you'll have the artists established enough to survive but you won't have the group beneath that. We are in a vulnerable period of history where the new media culture is the one that dictates the images that we'll see, the way the world will be structured. It will be that much more important to maintain a healthy, real culture to project our own real, truer image... If we go into the next millennium without that cultural strength, we risk being overwhelmed by the hegemony of people or promoting only a consumerist, capitalist money-driven image... which may happen nonetheless... ↑

Corrado Paina has worked as a journalist for television. He is the author of short stories and plays and a member of Vice Versa's editorial board in Toronto. His first book, Di corsa, was published in 1995.

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