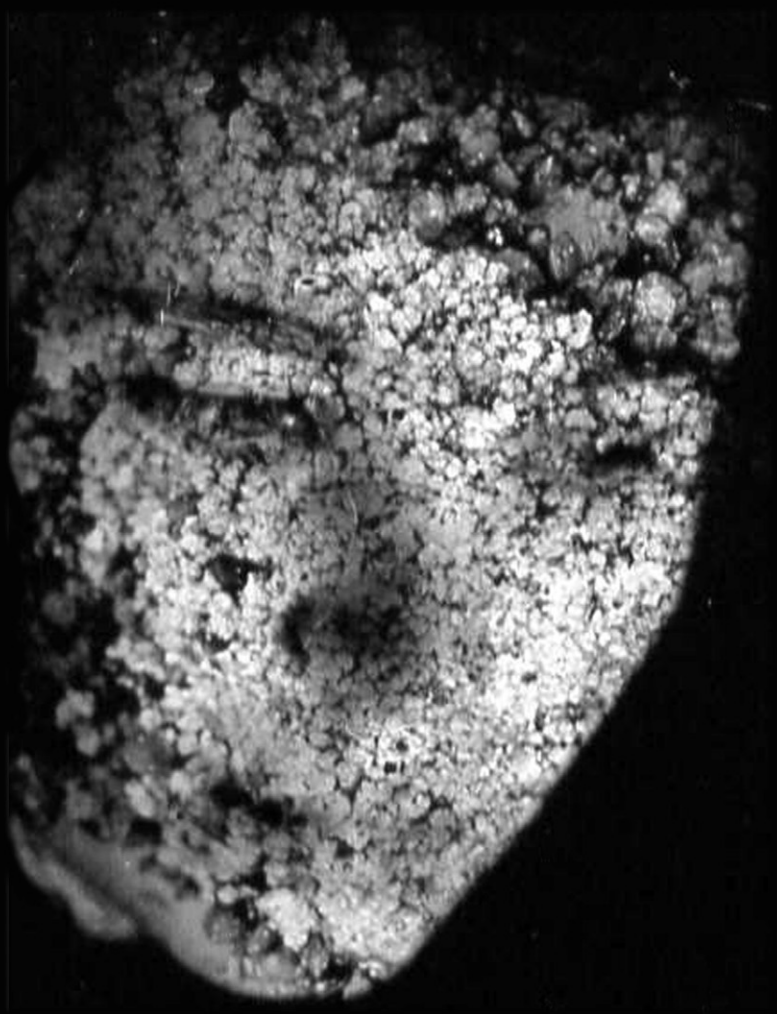
UnderCurrents

journal of critical environmental studies

volume 13 $7.00



Artifice / Artifact

UnderCurrents | journal of critical environmental studies

Funding Support
York University Sponsors:
Graduate Environmental Studies Student Association
Faculty of Environmental Studies

Printer
The Incredible Printing Company

Special Thanks
J. Scott Amort, Bruce Erickson, Laine Pond, David Morley, Janet Morrison, Leela Viswanathan, and the EcoArt and Media Festival Organizers

c/o Faculty of Environmental Studies
355 Lumbers Building
York University
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3 CANADA
Email: currents@yorku.ca
Website: www.yorku.ca/currents

UnderCurrents is an independent non-profit journal of critical environmental studies. We publish creative and critical writing and artwork that explore the relationships between nature, society and self. We open and explicitly provide space for discussions of 'environment' which challenge the conventional boundaries and assumptions of academia and environmental discussion. UnderCurrents is produced by an editorial collective that employs a collaborative editing, design and distribution process to support the publication of each issue.

Subscriptions and Back Issues
Please fill out the subscription/back issue order form on page 31 of this issue and send it to the above address with an accompanying cheque or money order for the appropriate amount.

Submissions
Please see Call for Submissions on page 39.

UnderCurrents
ISSN 0843-7351

Editorial essay

by Jennifer Cypher and Catherine Phillips

As we put this issue together the last days of 2003 swirled around us, with all the artifice and artifacts that this time of year seems to generate. The steamy-windowed café where we planned the final week of tasks was full of holiday greenery, all artificial. Part of our conversation revolved around the artifacts still to be purchased or made for friends and family. The reality of our intimate connections with artifacts and artifice seems heightened at this time of year. We buy and bake and celebrate, undeniably caught up in webs of things and crafts and greenery (artificial or otherwise).

How did we get here? The texts and artworks within this volume present external and internal collisions of nature and non-nature and question them in various ways. When are artifacts 'natural' elements for humans or non-humans? How does language designate gendered bodies and human-created landscapes as natural? How do artificial landscapes reflect human ideals? Is the cultural construction of a nature unsullied by the human hand an ideological, or even practical, artifact? These are some of the questions considered from a variety of perspectives and in several different formats; they reflect the diversity and malleability of the meanings of all these terms.

Artifice means feigning ('faking it'), and several of the pieces discuss and/or demonstrate this aspect of the term. The ability to be false is not presented in an entirely negative light; even when faced with an onslaught of fake nature or feigned identities there are many ways in which the artificial is seen as something useful, meaningful, even natural. The ability to camouflage can be a survival technique for non-humans as well as human beings, as is pointed out in Lenore Newman's article on gender transformation. The meaning of artifice that addresses to human crafts and skills is also shown, but with a twist that acknowledges the crafts and skills of the non-human as well; again artifice is not presented as a strictly human attribute. In Aileen Penner's 'Cancer at Sims Creek', a man's ability to track bears in the midst of clear cuts is contrasted with the skill of cancer to kill him, a stark reminder that humans and nature are both skilled in destruction.

The term artifact refers to human handiwork of all kinds. A particular use of the word indicates what we humans create and leave behind, 'historical artifacts'. Can artifacts become 're-natured'? Rusted cars return to their basic elements and olive oil tins nurture new plants. Matthew Cowley explains how a particular greenhouse can connect, and reconnect, us with nature and human nature in a built environment. Do artifacts have multiple lives? Bert Oldershaw changes objects found while experiencing and exploring a beach through his art, their close proximity and precise arrangement constituting a new meaning for them as found and placed objects. Even language may be understood as both an artifice and as a set of artifacts used to define and construct environments in literal and figurative ways, as is suggested in the piece by Jennifer Foster.

The articles, prose, poetry and artworks in this issue point to existing and possible intersections of artifice and artifact, the places in which these two concepts work in tandem to create meaning. We are all situated at these intersections, positioned to receive and create meanings of our own from them, with them, in spite of them. There is meaning in artificial greenery and in our exchange of various artifacts, meaning about nature and non-nature and the relationships between them. The question of what meanings can be made through living with artifice and artifacts is one posed throughout this volume, and one we invite you to pose for yourself.

Cover image: Leah Burns, Textured Expressions, retouched photo

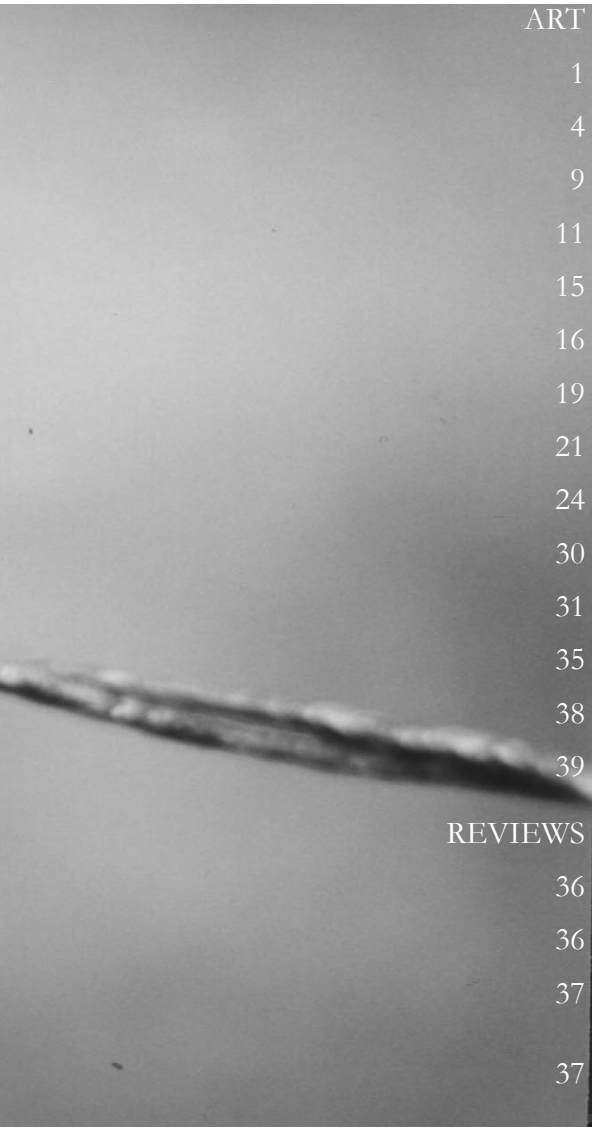
UnderCurrents

Vol. 13

Artifice / Artifact

Contents

WRITING



ART

REVIEWS

Richard J. Mount, Rusted Barbed Wire, photo

The Natural Ambiguity of Native Species

by Jennifer Foster

Mainstream ecological wisdom suggests that native species are essential to the preservation and promotion of ecological health or integrity: they are often deemed to be the 'natural', 'authentic' and 'original' occupants of particular habitats. Philosophically and pragmatically, they are generally considered crucial to biodiversity at scales ranging from the local to global. The past five years in particular have witnessed an explosion of publications and workshops expounding the virtues of native species as the rightful residents of bioregionally defined locales, to the extent that commercial chain nurseries have even caught on and showcase native species from their stock. In contrast, exotic species are commonly framed as artificial invasives that present fraudulent accounts of nature. As Stephen Murphy remarks, exotics are both symptoms and causes of ecological degradation (Murphy 1999). Where native species evoke ecosystem quality, exotic species suggest devastation. However, upon scrutiny, classifications of exotic and native species (and adjoining assumptions) may be shortsighted and superficial. By constructing native species as more natural (and ecologically more desirable) than exotic species, a particular set of values is engaged that situates humans as arbiters of authenticity in settings where authenticity is irrelevant to shifting ecosystem dynamics. Rather than constructing dichotomous and absolute categories of native and exotic species, it is more useful to conceptualize species as occupying varying and shifting roles within complex environmental relationships. Decisions that favour native over exotic species should not rely on a single tenuous criterion of "naturalness," but should reflect more nuanced evaluations that are ecologically and culturally contextualized. This essay investigates distinctions between native and exotic species by considering how they play out in the field of ecological restoration. The essay first presents challenges to the "native species are best" position from within realist ecological studies and practice, and then profiles ethical and cultural constructivist challenges to the position.

Removing exotic species and replacing them with native species has become a *pro forma* objective for even the most elementary terrestrial and aquatic restoration projects. The rationale is not only that native species perpetuate global biodiversity by supporting local biodiversity, but that they are adapted to local rainfall levels and have evolved in association with other biotic and abiotic features. Therefore, native species are better equipped than exotics to cope with drought, disease and insects and generally require less maintenance (Johnson 1995). Meanwhile, the ecological impacts of invasive species have been well documented, and there is good reason to be concerned about displacement of native species and habitats, impacts on related species and reduced genetic diversity (for example see McNight 1993; Pimentel et al. 1999; van Driesche and van Driesche 2000). Exotic removal with native replacement is a strategy widely endorsed by institutions ranging from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust in Toronto to the Evergreen Foundation. But who gets to decide which species are exotic and which are native? These categories may appear straightforward, and they are certainly presented as such to eager weekend restoration participants lined up with work-gloves and shovels, ready to save a local site. However, even cursory probing of the categories reveals that they are not as cut-and-dry as initially assumed.

At a minimum, a species is considered native if it has a historical relationship with a particular terrestrial or aquatic ecosystem. Native species may be depicted as those that have evolved over geological time in response to changes in the physical characteristics and biotic processes of their location, for example resulting from climatic changes, shifts in surface and groundwater, or interactions with other organisms (Leadbeater 2001). As such, all species are native to somewhere, but the term 'native species' is generally understood as an expression of legal jurisdiction (for example, a species might be native to a particular province). The term 'indigenous species' narrows the geographic scope from state-defined territories to more localized settings, implying species of local origin and therefore adapted to local conditions. Thus, a species may be native to a province but not indigenous to a particular region within that province. For example, species like the Kentucky Coffee Tree or Southern Flying Squirrel may be native to Ontario but not indigenous to the James Bay region of the province. Despite this important distinction, the terms 'native' and 'indigenous' are regularly used interchangeably, resulting in frequent misattribution of non-indigenous species as historic residents of specific areas.

Exotic (or alien) species are plants and animals that have been introduced from 'elsewhere' (external nations or regions). The Society for Ecological Restoration, an international collective of restoration theorists and practitioners, defines an exotic species of plant or animal as one "that was introduced into an area where it did not previously occur through relatively recent human activities" (SER 2002). Exotics are typically sorted into categories of naturalized species, invasive exotics, and cultivars. As aliens that survive and reproduce without human assistance, naturalized species are possibly the least offensive to restorationists, even though they are not generally recognized as part of native plant communities. Naturalized species have "been around a long time" and are somehow appreciated as close to natural because their

direct link to human influence has become less obvious over multiple human generations. In contrast, invasive exotics are the primary target of most restoration efforts. These exotics reproduce aggressively and can displace indigenous plants and disrupt native plant communities by changing the food-web patterns of the invaded community. They are species that outcompete or overexploit other species or modify basic local ecological dynamics. A great deal of attention within the ecological restoration community is devoted to understanding and managing (if not eradicating) invasive exotics, which evoke a sense of ecological panic about environmental ruin and inspire calls for immediate action. A third category of exotic species is cultivars, or varieties of plants created by horticultural practices. Cultivars are often cloned in large numbers from an individual and sold by commercial nurseries. These include everything from showpiece rosebushes to everyday marigolds and begonias. For the most part, they are considered ecologically benign and unthreatening, as they do not reproduce voluntarily. Still, cultivars do occupy habitat and generally require fairly intensive management in terms of soil supplement and watering.

Although categories of native and non-native species may appear forthright, ecological sciences offer no concrete guidance in the categorizing process. Rather, any ordering is an exercise in speculation and judgement about the thresholds for distinguishing between exotic and native species. Underlying the dilemma is the impossibility of determining what constitutes a 'natural' invasion rate, even in general terms (van Driesche and van Driesche 2000). Although humans have helped propel much inter-ecosystem movement of species, particularly given the processes of colonization and globalization that have come to distinguish human occupations of space, we have no baseline against which to measure invasion rates.

The geographic domain of almost any species invariably shifts over time, even if only over the space of several dozen metres. A pivotal development in ecological understanding over the past thirty years is recognition that ecosystems do not exist in a 'static state' or 'static states', but rather in constant states of flux (Pickett and Ostfeld 1995; Forsyth 2003). Landscape patterns and functions are constantly changing, and species migrate in and out of regions and particular settings within regions. As such, the notion of any species residing permanently in a specific place is shaky. Given that both biotic and abiotic circumstances change over time in any ecosystem, conscientious restorationists must confront the question "native at what point in time?" which triggers the question "how local is local enough?" If we recognize the ecological heterogeneity of a typical North American landscape, composed of varying ecosystems knit into a larger landscape pattern, we must also accept that the scale of landscape interpretation can almost always be refined. Does a species qualify as native or indigenous because it is known to have resided two kilometres away one hundred years ago, or should criteria be more exact? Decisions about whether to adhere rigourously to fine-scale locality or allow local generalization thus underlie any native/exotic classification scheme.

Even if we run with the cut-and-dry normative distinctions between native and exotic species, not all restorationists agree that native species are the only restoration option, or even the best one. In this regard, van Driesche and van Driesche comment that "addressing the impacts of nonnative species in a meaningful fashion requires a measure of discrimination, for portraying all alien species as damaging is counterproductive" (van Driesche and van Driesche 2000: 106). Similarly, Leslie Jones Sauer recognizes impact in terms of degree and context: "how fast it spreads, how widespread it is, and, most important, to what extent it replaces whole communities of native species" (Sauer 1998: 63). To begin with, some exotic species are the only species capable of survival on a particular site. Most landscapes are patchworks of areas where local wildlife has become dependent on exotic and mixed exotic/native ecosystems, and humans have come to depend on many exotics as cultivated crops. Where sites have been severely modified (for example as a result of soil compaction, flood or damage from salt) exotics may present the only viable option for vegetative cover. In situations where native species take a long time to propagate and non-natives provide healthy habitat, the case for elimination of exotics is not strong. Moreover, even if we agree to remove exotic species, successfully doing so is an entirely different matter. Sauer points out that "there are, by definition, no effective natural controls for exotic plants that are currently invasive" (Sauer 1998: 82). Many invasive species are extremely resistant to extermination, often reproducing prolifically after human attempts at starvation, drowning, desiccation, seed destruction, burial, or physical removal. Sometimes the only option available to restorationists intent on elimination of exotics is application of herbicides, which carries a whole new set of environmental problems, contradictions and contentions. What's more, the outcome of an ecological restoration project is not always considered attractive, particularly in the early stages of restoration, and vital public support may be compromised by native species purism. When people want and expect a beautiful site in the short-term they may be demoralized or regard the project as a failure if the results are deemed unappealing. In these instances, introducing horticultural species can bridge the aesthetic gap to maintain public support during early project stages and non-flowering periods.

While normative reasons to resist automatic preference of native over exotic species may be persuasive, there are also profound ethical and value-based dimensions to the argument. From an environmental ethics perspective concerned with understanding intrinsic environmental qualities and environmental beliefs, the artificial/natural dichotomy is not helpful as a classification scheme for exotic and native species because it does not recognize the complex and dynamic circumstances surrounding and affecting specific species or species associations. If artificiality is contrasted with naturalness as the product of intention and design, Eric Katz contends that ecosystem naturalness should be assessed according to the origin (whether or not it stems from human intent), historical continuity (interrupted or uninterrupted ecosystem processes) and authenticity (the combination of origin and historical continuity) (Katz 2000). According to this view, all ecological restoration is artifactual by virtue of human intentionality, regardless of the type of species introduced or purged. It also follows from this view that exotic species are of necessity artifactual, as direct and indirect agents of human intent and as vectors through which origin is contested and historical continuity is

interrupted. Herein lies the reasoning of exotic species' categorization as inauthentic artifacts. However, by reducing naturalness to a single criterion, the absence of human intentionality, Katz presents an unduly simplistic organizational scheme and misses multi-faceted and nuanced interpretations of naturalness (although he does concede that there may be a natural/artificial spectrum). For example, one may argue that an exotic species itself is not artifactual, but its position within an ecosystem may be. Or similarly that planting 'natural', indigenous species inserts an element of artifact upon an ecosystem. It is also unclear whether a native species' naturalness (based on authentic origin and historical continuity) is attenuated where its life system is tied to exotics. Indeed, it is possible to dismiss the category of 'natural', given that the by-products of human intent such as global warming, ozone depletion and acid rain have most likely invaded every earthly nook and cranny, rendering the category of 'artifactual' an irrelevant counterpoint. Rather than commit species to dichotomous categories (or positions along a spectrum) it is more useful to consider artifactuality and naturalness as ideal categories that signal environmental values.

From a value-based interpretation, the link between native species and 'naturalness' must be challenged. That any particular species is not a natural resident of a specific space is never a matter of empirical fact or a purely material phenomenon, but is entirely interpretive and must be fully bracketed within ideological arrangements of what is (or even might be) natural. This relates closely to Neil Evernden's discussion of physical and moral pollution, wherein perception of 'matter out of place' and a system of proper places within the environment (an environmental norm) prompts the use of purported laws of nature to both defend and destroy environmental features or to sanction moral codes (Evernden 1992). He stresses that the theory and practice of ecology are actually irrelevant here, but rather it is the social function of ecology as an authority on 'naturalness' that is of consequence. In a heterogeneous society, not everybody agrees on the proper (i.e., natural) order of things, and Evernden points out that "it is not just the environment that is at risk, but the very *idea* of environment, the social ideal of proper order" (Evernden 199: 6, original emphasis). Where ecology tells us what is natural and healthy, we must question seminal concepts of ecological health and integrity. Bruce Hull and David Robertson explore the construction and use of these very concepts and find them value-laden, imprecise, subjectively interpreted and politically employed (Hull and Robertson 2000). Nevertheless, native species regularly stand as a convenient and popular yardstick for assessment of ecological health and integrity. For example, in a popular guidebook for restoration practice, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust asserts, "those areas with the highest percentage of native species are considered to be the most natural" (WRT 1995: 25). It is not difficult to detect popular and insidious rationales for development where the presence of non-native species certifies a site as already degraded (and unnatural). In such instances, shrewd developers often tip the scales towards development permit approval by promising to improve the biophysical conditions once they are done, by restoring the site with native species and ostensibly 'recovering' it, a value-added argument deplored by Robert Elliot in Faking Nature (1997). In these situations, restoration is a redemptive rationale for development, where developers may gain a foothold in 'degraded' sites with pledges to enhance naturalness by reintroducing native species. Of course, this is not the only way that native species are engaged in restoration work, but it is certainly one that harnesses the artificial/natural divide in ways that support and perpetuate environmentally destructive attitudes and behaviours.

Yet objection to mandatory prioritization of native species may extend beyond assumptions underpinning the concept of naturalness to express different value systems and beliefs. The spread of exotics may be likened to evolutionary change, conceivably a natural process. Some value systems might maintain that we do not have a right to decide what should exist (particularly given human agency in the spread of non-native species). In many cases, exotics are planted for a culturally significant purpose (for example, in memory of a deceased person or pet), and their removal may be considered disrespectful to personally or culturally valued symbols. Attempts at exotics' extinction may also be viewed as analogous to racial and cultural cleansing among humans, and admittedly, many indigenous species purists use language and expressions strikingly similar to that of ethnic purists (see for example, Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn 2003).

The point here is not to discredit native species, but rather to question the automatic privilege they often retain in ecological restoration work and to explore the value systems that underpin such privilege. Indeed, there are numerous compelling reasons to emphasize native species: they are well adapted to local biophysical and climatic conditions (at least where these have not been severely altered); they are vital to biodiversity; and awareness of them helps impart a sense of the uniqueness and history of a particular place. By building sensitivity to the ecological details of specific places, we may inch toward more respectful environmental relationships. By considering the social values that inform the ways species are framed, we may become more sensitive and responsive to diverse environmental world-views. But these things will not happen if we gravitate to native species simply because we perceive them to be more natural, and if we lose sight of the important roles that exotic species may play in complex and shifting ecological and cultural dynamics.

References

Elliot, R. (1997). Faking Nature: The Ethics of Environmental Restoration. London: Routledge.

Evernden, N. (1992). The Social Creation of Nature. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Forsyth, T. (2003). Critical Political Ecology: The Politics of Environmental Science. London: Routledge.

Gavine, K. (1995). Natural Invaders: Invasive Plants in Ontario. Toronto: Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

Gröning, G. and Wolschke-Bulmahn, J. (2003). The Native Plant Enthusiasm: Ecological Panacea or Xenophobia? Landscape Research. v. 28, n. 1. 75-88.

Hull, R.B. and Robertson, D.P. (2000). The language of nature matters: we need a more public ecology. In P. Gobster and R.B. Hull (Eds), Restoring Nature: Perspectives From the Social Sciences and Humanities. Washington: Island Press. 97-118.

Johnson, L. (1995). The Ontario Naturalized Garden. Toronto: Whitecap Books.

Katz, E. (2000). Another look at restoration: Technology and artificial nature. In P. Gobster and R.B. Hull (Eds), Restoring Nature: Perspectives From the Social Sciences and Humanities. Washington: Island Press. 37-48.
Leadbeater, D. (2001). So what is native anyways? In Native Plant Resource Guide. Society for Ecological Restoration - Ontario Chapter. 16
McNight, B. (Ed). (1993). Biological Pollution: The Control and Impact of Exotic Plant Species. Indianapolis: Indiana Academy of Science.
Murphy, S. (1999). Eight questions for ecological restorationists. Alternatives. v. 25, n. 2. 19-20.
Pickett, S.T.A. & Ostfeld, R.S. (1995). The shifting paradigm in Ecology. In R.L. Knight and S.F. Bates (Eds). A New Century for Natural Resource Management. Washington: Island Press. 261-278.
Pimentel, D., Lach, L., Zuniga, R., and Morrison, D. (1999). Environmental and Economic Costs Associated with Non-Indigenous Species in the United States, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.
Sauer, L.J. (1998). The Once and Future Forest: A Guide to Forest Restoration Strategies. Washington: Island Press.
Society for Ecological Restoration International Science and Policy Working Group. (2002). The SER Primer on Ecological Restoration. Available at: www.ser.org. Accessed 25/03/2003.
Van Driesche, J. and van Driesche, R. (2000). Nature Out of Place: Biological Invasions in the Global Age. Washington: Island Press.
Waterfront Regeneration Trust. (1995). Restoring Natural Habitats. Toronto: Waterfront Regeneration Trust.

Leanne Amort, untitled, photo

Almost Full

by Elana Wolff

December moon,

skim as milk in the afternoon, the blue alluding

through like dolorosa.

I eye the pale archaic planet, mute as light, immense

and low and feel

like il postino

in that film about Neruda and the postman.

The postman so undone by love and desperate for metaphors

can only author O -

assuagement in the bar-scene

as he reaches for a small white

ball the girl has put between her lips to muse him.

Sheila Karrow, Loss of Innocence, mixed media

Cancer at Sims Creek

by Aileen Penner

A man I knew, John Clarke, who lived much of his life on the Coast Mountains trekking through ancient forest died in January 2003 of brain cancer. Now in Toronto, I received an email from my friend in Vancouver announcing his death. Immediately memories flood back about the Witness weekend I spent last summer with John and others at Sims Creek.

In the backseat of Duane's four-door tracker, its shocks lost long ago, I feel every bump along the rough logging road, and taste the dust kicked up by the cars in front as we head into the Elaho Valley. Located about one and a half hours north of Squamish BC, this area sees more clear-cut logging every year. Careful of the logging trucks that may be barrelling down to unload at the mill in Squamish, Duane has the headlights on and the six vehicles drive as a unit. After about 40 minutes of being jostled in the backseat, our carpool convoy stops along the side of the road to let campers out to pee.

I choose a semi-secluded spot behind a large slash pile from the open clear-cut across the road. I squat and watch the stream of hot pee splash up on my hiking boots. Amateur. Everyone piles back into the cars and I watch the green and brown landscape through the window as we drive another 45 minutes to Sims Creek where we will set up camp.

John Clarke's idea of being 'in' nature is to bushwack through the underbrush, blazing your own trail. This, however makes me nervous; I am anxious about losing the trail, the spiders I might run into, the bears I might see. He is one of three people ever to receive the Order of Canada for mountaineering. A naturalist who spent 35 of his 57 years exploring over 10,000 square kilometres of ancient coastal rainforest, John rarely gets lost in the forest. In fact, I am certain he would never consider himself 'lost'. Today the old growth forest will swallow us all for a few hours.

A sharp blast of the air horn calls the group to gather at the middle of the sandbar stretched along Sims Creek in the breathtaking Elaho Valley. I rouse myself from the shady place beside my tent where I've been writing. I walk to the river and watch John dunk his orange and blue striped sweater into the glacial river and wring it out. He then slowly pulls it overtop his head and walks over to the circle of people. Feeling unsure and anxious, I dig my toes into the cool sand, and listen as Aaron Nelson-Moody, Squamish artist and wood carver, welcomes us to the land and recollects the history of his people, the importance of the territory and the significance of what they consider to be illegal logging taking place in the valley. With a traditional blanket draped over his right shoulder he says, "We would like everyone gathered here today to be a witness to this land." He pauses and looks up the valley. "To be with open hearts and to tell others what we have seen and heard today," he says as he folds his hands at his waist.

The weekend wilderness education camping trip I am on at Sims Creek is called the Witness Project. It is a sacred honour to be called to 'witness' in the Coast Salish tradition. This 8000-year-old ceremony, called 'Uts'am' often goes on for three days. In a Witness circle, everyone is an active listener in a shared process of remembering our connection to the land and to what is being said. In the summer of 1995 John helped develop this unique partnership with the Squamish First Nation that expanded into the Witness Project. The Squamish Nation awarded John the rare honour of a traditional naming ceremony in which he was given the Squamish name of Xwexwsélken, or Mountain Goat.

John is dressed in blue shorts and a long-sleeved white dress shirt underneath a knit sweater with orange and green patterned lines. He wears thick grey socks inside brown battered hiking boots. His plastic brown-rimmed glasses seem too big for his thin, pink face shaded by a blue baseball cap. He has just come out of intensive radiation therapy. The treatments for his brain cancer have made his wild white hair fall out long ago. I question my right to write intimately about John; I only knew him for two days.

John has cancer: a malignant brain tumour. There are no scars under his baseball cap because he hasn't had surgery. Ironically, poisonous radiation is likely the only thing that will allow him to see his son'[s first birthday. His cancer started in the brain, it didn't spread from another location in the body. Silently, cells multiplied for months uncontrolled in the valleys of his brain. The cancer cells don't recognize this man is in love, newly married with a baby, and an experienced mountaineer and environmental educator. These particular cancer cells are also aggressive and have formed a mass with momentum to steal his energy. Cancer is unpredictable. Apart from a known association with exposure to vinyl chloride, there are no known chemical or environmental factors that cause brain tumours like his.

Unlike his great treks in the summer months, this is an adventure without challenge for John. He has automatically lost. As the cancerous mass continues to grow, John's immune system must deal with both the radiation and the cancer. Treatment can only stall the violent reproduction of cells for so long. Soon death will come as a result of uncontrolled growth within the confines of the skull. I imagine being in nature is a form of resistance for John - resistance to illness, death, hospitals, and toxic chemicals as treatment.

I know death is a part of life - I know.

The other campers and I pile into Chief Bill Williams' truck. John slowly pulls himself up into the cab alongside Chief Williams. As we round the bend in the flattened grass corridor that leads to the main logging road, John points out a known grizzly path and shouts, to us in the box, "Shel! Remember when we found fresh grizzly scat here last summer?"

Grizzlies? Shit - don't panic. I know how interconnected the spiders and the grizzlies are in the forest ecosystem - I know.

I am really afraid of two things: spiders and bears. Two of my greatest fears are dying from a spider bite or a bear attack. Where I live in Vancouver BC, there is little chance of dying from either - the odds are greatly in my favour.

Last year while hiking the Diez Vistas trail at Buntzen Lake a spider

bit me, only further confirming my fears. The trail of 'ten views' runs along the top of a ridge of mountains surrounding Buntzen Lake north of Port Moody. As my friends and I were hiking, we didn't realize the two forks reunite farther along the trail at its highest point, and we veered off the path. As I hiked through the thick brush to meet up with the trail, single spun silk threads grabbed my face and I felt something pinch the inside of my right leg. Panicked, I quickly brushed it off. I know there are no black widows in this area yet I couldn't push down the concern that rose in me as I quickly went through the symptoms: Immediate pain and swelling? Yes. Headache, rash and/or itching? Oh god, yes. Anxiety and sweating? Yes - but this is normal for me. Nausea, vomiting and tremors? Well. o.k. no - not yet.

The truck bumps along the rough logging road to the area where we will start our hike. The path will pass through an old clear-cut and then an approved cutblock to witness two Douglas Fir trees over 1000 years old - 'the sisters'.

To government and industry, this area is known as Tree Farm Licence (TFL) no. 38. To the Squamish Nation, it is known as Nexwáyantsut, and is designated a 'wild spirit place' in their land-use plan. The clear-cut looks like the area had been mowed by giant lawnmowers. Large squat stumps litter the area the size of five soccer fields. A dirt and gravel road winds through the open space with piles of tree waste collected alongside for burning. This particular area was logged a year ago and there is the hint of green vegetation sprouting up from underneath the debris left behind. Stepping off the road the sound of my boots creates loud crackles as I step on dry, brittle leftover branches on upturned earth.

Despite my neuroses about spiders and bears I still love to hike. I like the repetitive motion of placing one boot in front of the other on a narrow footpath under a canopy of branches. The sun is hot as we walk up the winding switchbacks through the grey corpses in the clear-cut. Below, the Squamish River cuts the valley in two. Looking North, patchy mountainsides seem to layer in front of one another to an invisible end point. John and our small group of eight listeners pause at the first bend in the open clear-cut.

"When we finish our hike you'll see that Interfor's logging road ends about ten kilometres from here," John says. "Five years of intensive clear-cutting in the Sims has seen the lower valley be nearly logged out." He puts one hand in his pocket and pulls out a map of the area.

John continues, "In the steeper and narrower upper Sims valley," he makes an invisible dot on the map, "the forest is of much lower timber value, but it is incredibly important to grizzlies."

"Grizzlies are creatures of habit," John says in soft tones.

"When I explored beyond Interfor's proposed road route into some of the last old growth of Sims valley, I found well-used grizzly trails," he adds placing the map back in his pocket and putting one and up to shade his eyes from the direct sun.

"What do you mean creature of habit?" I ask.

John answers, "Well grizzlies often place their feet in exactly the same place on the same path for generations. And I found one of those trails in that upper Sims Valley. Because of the narrow nature of the Sims Valley, Interfor's roads would have to go right over the bear trails and through the middle of their summer feeding areas - the avalanche chutes where leafy annuals grow." He walks slowly up the road and our group follows.

Half-way to the second switchback he stops to survey the clear-cuts beyond the river valley. "That clear cut was done last year." He speaks slowly and carefully as he directs out attention east.

"Do you see the way the clump of trees in the middle of that clear-cut have all fallen over?" Everyone in the group nods. The blistering heat reddens the backs of our necks.

"That's what the logging companies call 'variable retention strategy'." He takes a long pause. "You see if they leave small islands of trees in the cut-block, it isn't considered a clear-cut." John then adds, "of course it's useless for wildlife habitat. And as you can see, these small clumps of trees can't stand up to strong winds."

John is in no hurry to get out of the searing heat. We come across a trickling stream and he lowers his body into a push-up-like position. With one arm deep in the pool of water, he tilts his face up to the falling water and drinks in big gulps. The rest of us slurp from our plastic bottles anxious to cross the last hundred meters of clear-cut.

I cross the arbitrary line where clear-cut meets ancient forest. The sensations are immediate as my body cools with the shade of the tall trees. My hands and feet slip as I cross moss that is soaking in all the forest juices. John is first in the forest and tells us to follow the red tape hanging from the tree branches. Taking a closer look, the red tape trail-markers are actually markers for the continuation of Interfor's logging road.

Inside the forest of douglas fir, sitka spruce, western hemlock and western red cedar, I immediately have to crawl under a fallen tree. Downed, rotting trees are a good sign of a healthy ecosystem. On my way out from under the log, I notice several species of fungi popping up from the floor. The rainy, foggy and cool climate on the coast has sustained some of these forests for four thousand years. The forest is quiet and I can barely hear the steps of my boots on the path. Narrowing to a slim footpath, the trail winds past tall, brooding firs and I head towards the sound of a stream.

This terrain is home to John even in the last months of his life. He lived a large part of his life on the mountain and in the forests and valleys along the BC coast. But today he seems lost.

John, along with Chief Bill Williams, are at the font of the group and experienced guides Shel and Duane, are at the back of our large group. I am following the steps of Scott in front of me, who is following Lindsay, who is following Matt, who is following someone else, and suddenly we are six separated from the larger group. The red-tape trail markers have long since disappeared. Suppressing panic, I have to pull more and more invisible spider threads off my face as we trudge through thicker and thicker brush. Our 'path' is now a mix of twigs, needles and leaves, indistinguishable from the rest of the forest floor. Shel comes quickly from the back and asks where John and the rest are? I tell him that somehow we got split off and we can't hear them anymore.

Shel calls out, "John! Bill!" No answer. I try hard to keep myself from the sense of alarm rising in my chest as I notice Shel doesn't know where he is either. Shel has been involved with Witness for years and is one of the reasons I am here. He has spent many summers with John on month-long treks to various peaks and valleys. A photographer, popular educator, musician, and today wilderness guide, Shel's manner of tucking his long curly brown hair behind his ears gives me comfort. Shel goes ahead and looks for John and the others. After about 20 minutes, he comes back to where we are and says he's found them at the stream.

Relief. When our group of six arrives at the edge of the cliff, John is clearly irritated and annoyed. At us? At himself? I don't know. The four men huddle and discuss the situation.

John tells Shel, "I'll do a wreckie up this way" he gestures up the mountain. "Shel - you go that way." John points east.

"Bill - maybe you and Duane can head towards the ravine," John says to Chief Williams.

They all hike quickly in different directions and distances of 100-150 yards to get a better vantage point. John is up and down faster than the others and says, "There's no way through up there."

Chief Williams climbs back up the slope and tells John that there is a way to negotiate a path down to the river.

John then takes the first steps down the steep ravine, ignoring the tangles of prickly devils club to choose good footholds and trees to support the traverse. Shel stays behind to make sure everyone gets down safely. John quickly works a path to the roaring stream where he knows there will be a good place to cross. Negotiating thorny vegetation and branches that threaten to whip our legs, we cross the stream and meet up with the path a few feet up the mountain. John is sure-footed as he sets out a quick pace at the front of the group and he ascends as easily as he descends. Sword ferns decorate the bank opposite the stream as I trip over a root from the complex system that intertwines with the path. In this multi-layered canopy, moss-padded branches hold up lichen dangling over the edge. Although they nest here, the spotted owl and marbled murrelet are not out today. Past the grove of red cedars, Shel shows me the bark-stripped scars from a culturally modified tree. A living artifact. He tells me that the Squamish women have stripped bark from this tree for centuries to make clothing and baskets.

After hours of slogging through the bush my tired, hungry, mosquito bitten, branch-whipped body finally arrives at the two 'sisters'. And the two firs are truly immense - at least 15 to 20 feet in diameter. This is what thousand-year old trees look like? I think: is this it?! My reaction is unpredictable, and I'm disappointed in myself. What right do I have to write intimately about these trees anyway? I am too tired to stop and reflect.

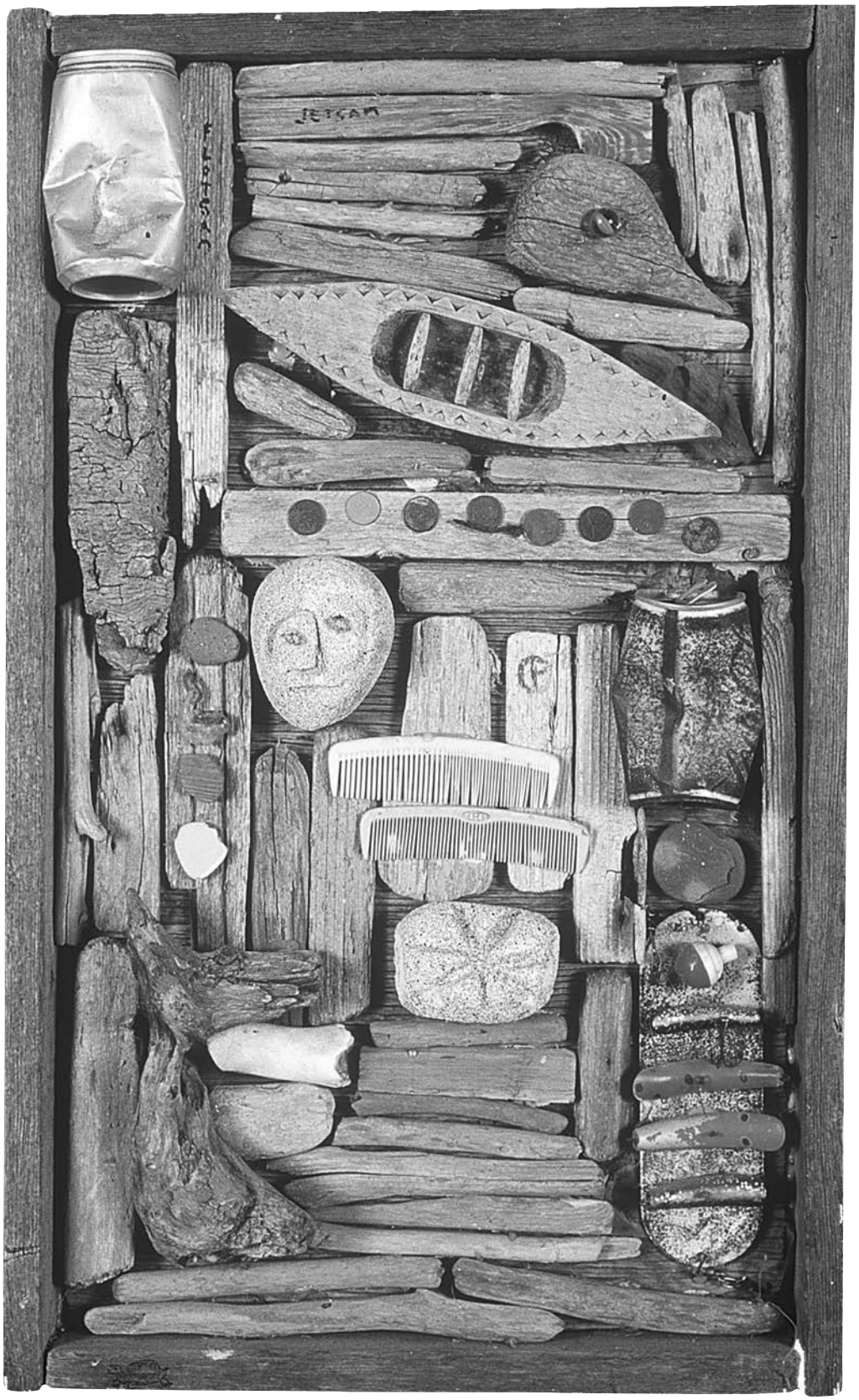
Then I see John standing off to the side, quietly contemplating these ancient beings. I wonder what he is thinking. The tree is said to be about 1200 years old. John's life will only measure 57 rings.

John again doesn't follow the winding path down the mountain, but instead hikes through to the next switchback. In about fifteen minutes, I reach the fading sunlight at the end of the logging road.

It may have been the cancer or the chemical treatments, I don't know, but John did almost everything in slow motion. He spoke in slow, soft, deep sentences. He gestured in slow waves. He even ate slowly. In fact the only thing he did with any great speed was hike through the forest. He was incredibly nimble for a 57-year-old cancer patient.

Interfor continues to push their logging operations into the last remaining old growth in the upper Elaho valley. In January 2003 John died of his brain cancer, nine days after his son Nicholas turned one.

Opposite page: Bert Oldershaw, Flotsam & Jetsam, found objects


JETSAM

Landscapes of Contradiction in Las Vegas:

the costs of sustaining hyperreality

by Liette Gilbert

Introduction

Las Vegas, increasingly imploded by the same imagineering principles used by the Walt Disney Company, has come to represent both the commodification of reality and the production of hyperreality. The nature of landscape has been highly commodified. The mature lush palms and specimen trees growing in the casinos' neon lights create an instant landscape faster than the 6-hour road trip delivery from a Southern California nursery. Inside the casinos and hotels, forests of lush vegetation (made of preserved trees rebuilt of natural materials or handcrafted from silk to steel) reach a climax of artificiality. Nature on the Las Vegas Strip is a 500-year olive tree in Caesar's Palace or a 60' tall chestnut tree on the promenade of Paris Las Vegas that is native to a naturalist-sculptor's studio in San Diego prominently listed on the Baron's 500 Leaders for the Next Century (Naturemaker 2003). Hyperreality has replaced reality, making artifice the predominant nature along the Strip.

But this artifice is not limited to the Strip or to the city itself. It is anchored in the history and future of the Las Vegas Valley where the daring contrast and the perfect blurring of nature and artifice irritate and surprise. The desert landscape is far from being simply a system of natural features. It is better understood as a "self-conscious cultural collection" of simulated spaces superimposed in place and time, functioning and evolving according to natural processes, social practices, and ideological assumptions (Cronon 1996). In this land of hyperreality, the toponymy itself simulates contradictions: Las Vegas once meant 'the meadows' but is now characterised by the most technologically advanced waterworks for displaced dolphins, reenacted pirates battles, and desert-scorched beachgoers. It is the *terra nullis* perception of the surrounding Las Vegas Valley desert that has allowed for Las Vegas to become and maintain itself as the urban capital of hyperreality. This short essay reviews three regimes of hyper-growth that have made Las Vegas Valley a place where artifice has unquestionably naturalised and where these constructions of hyperreal environments create landscapes of contradiction.

Federalisation and militarisation of the landscape

The complex geology of volcanic, sedimentary and tectonic activities characterising the Las Vegas Valley is reshaped by the forces of gambling, militarisation, and (sub)urbanisation. For more than 10,000 years humans have occupied the Las Vegas Valley desert; however, it is relatively recent changes that have significantly altered the landscape. Nevada's high level of federal land ownership, combined with low population density and a perception of the valley as a desert wasteland, make this environment an 'ideal' location for federal projects and defense programs. The construction of the railroad in 1911 linking the Union Pacific mainline from Utah to Southern California triggered the rise of the city of Las Vegas. In 1929 the Las Vegas economy was boosted with the construction of Boulder Dam (now Hoover Dam), Lake Mead, and the first interstate expressway to Los Angeles (with Hollywood connections later traveling back to Las Vegas).

Having secured an abundance of power and water, in 1941 Las Vegas became the prime site for two other federal projects: the Basic Magnesium Plant and an aerial gunnery school (now Nellis Air Force Base). Clear skies, year-round flying weather, vast areas of public lands, and hill and canyon topography make southern Nevada an ideal site for military training. The 2.9 million acres occupied by Nellis Air Force Range (including the Nellis Air Force Bombing and Gunnery Range) is the largest air and ground space available for military operations in the western world. In 1951 the Nevada Test Site was established for nuclear bombing practices, weapons production, and waste dumps.

In the two decades following the construction of the Test Site, 651 US and 19 UK nuclear weapons have been exploded in the Las Vegas Valley (Wilson 1992). In 2002, Yucca Mountain (occupied by the Western Shoshone Nation) was approved by US Congress as the national repository site for 77,000 tons of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Its location 100 miles north-west of Las Vegas, the safety and security hazards related to underground storage, the transportation of nuclear waste (across 43 states), the political and environmental pressures on Nevada to 'host' the nation's nuclear waste for the benefit of other states, and mounting evidence of unsuitability of the site because of interacting geologic, hydrologic and tectonic conditions, are some of the most obvious concerns about nuclear waste policies and impacts on natural and human landscapes (Strolin 1989; Eureka County Yucca Mountain Information Office 2003). The nuclearisation of Nevada's desert defines an end to what was once perceived as an uncontaminated frontier.

Gambling on the landscape

Gambling in Nevada was made legal in 1869, became illegal in 1913, and was re-legalised in 1931 for the enjoyment of Hoover Dam builders, and later for defense personnel. Federal spending on development in the Valley and city was quickly replaced by Hollywood capital. In 1946, Bugsy Speigel transformed the Las Vegas Strip into a world-renowned spectacle of gambling and entertainment. The development of early casinos (the Flamingo, Desert Inn, Sands, and Caesar's Palace, among others) was fuelled by illegal and legal organ-

Opposite page: Robin Collyer, VCR Hospital, photo Courtesy: Art Gallery of York University

ised-crime financing, which changed the moral and urban landscapes of the city, and ensured tight control of the gaming industry's legislation (Rothman 2002).

After the passage of the revised Corporate Gaming Act in 1969, the shady activities of mob kings were replaced by the glitzy public image of corporate princes like Howard Hughes, Kirk Kerkorian and Steve Wynn. In the 1980s and 1990s these men demolished casinos less than three decades old and erected a new generation of resort developments owned by giant gaming conglomerates composed of hotel chains and entertainment corporations. The new Las Vegas mega-casino resorts (The Mirage, Treasure Island, MGM Grand, Paris Las Vegas, etc.) no longer market themselves as simple casinos, but rather as tourist and family-oriented entertainment attractions. In 2001, Las Vegas attracted more than 34 million visitors. Gaming revenues alone reached 7.6 billion dollars in Clark County and 6 billion in Las Vegas, while the economic impacts of tourism generated 31.9 billion dollars (Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority 2003). Sin City became Dream City.

Las Vegas' built environment and gambling/entertainment economy celebrate the production of simulation and artificiality by constantly proposing seductive representations of affluence and mobility to be consumed as fast as capitalism renews itself. However, this fascination for the hyperreal conceals other environmental realities.

Urbanisation of the desert landscape

The Las Vegas metropolitan area's population grew from 273,000 in 1970 to 1.3 million in 2000, keeping Las Vegas the fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States throughout the 1990s (Moehring 2000). New residents, attracted by the lure of an ever-growing service economy (with many unionised jobs), have expanded the (sub)urbanisation of Las Vegas into the adjacent desert, spreading with it all the socio-political, economic and environmental contradictions such growth entails. The result has been a sea of master-planned residential subdivisions designed for singles, families, and retirees sprawling across the desert of Clark County. Developers have benefitted from lower property taxes outside the city because of the enormous property tax revenue paid by the casinos on the Strip, which is not part of the City of Las Vegas but part of Clark County. This particular tax structure continues to leave many residents of the city without adequate services and underfunded schools, libraries, parks, recreational services and amenities (Moehring 2000). Boosters (real estate developers and resort operators) proudly promote the unregulated growth climate to attract development, but not without exacerbating tensions over the commodification of water, air and land.

Perhaps only in Las Vegas could urban sprawl actually be presented as the solution to a water crisis when the desert city's aquifer was simply running out of water. Having reached the limits of Nevada's allocation of the Colorado River Compact negotiated in 1922 between seven Southwestern states, in 1989 the Southern Nevada Water Authority (serving almost two thirds of the Nevada population) filed claims on every drop of available ground water in most of the southern part of the state. It also filed claims on the Virgin River, a tributary of the Colorado River intended to be channelled through a two-billion-dollar pipeline against much public opposition. Yet it appears that the Authority did not actually support the costly construction of this proposed pipeline. It preferred instead to let the Virgin River flow closer to Lake Mead, building a much shorter pipeline from Lake Mead, and securing the capacity of the city's drinking water. This solution was made suddenly possible by the fortuitous reform plan of the Bureau of Land Reclamation providing voluntary transfers of water between the signatory states of the Colorado River Compact and allowing Nevada and California water agencies to negotiate the banking and leasing of future water in Arizona (Christensen 2000).

With water supply secured for the Valley, urban development accelerated almost overnight and created a major air pollution problem in Southern Nevada. In recent years, air pollution levels have ranked Las Vegas Valley among the most unhealthy in the United States due to vehicle emissions, construction dust particles, and wood-burning fireplaces. The problematic levels of carbon monoxide and construction dust particles regularly prevent the city from meeting national air pollution standards prescribed by the Environmental Protection Agency (Moehring 2000). Persons with respiratory diseases, allergic reactions, and the elderly are often advised to stay inside when brown haze veils the sky of Las Vegas Valley, while car reliance remains unquestioned, and pollution citations on construction sites are accepted as business expenses (Parker 2002).

As urban sprawl spawns highway and road systems between suburban subdivisions, the already limited open space system (park ratio is less than 2 acres per 1 000 residents compared to the recommended national standard of 10 acres per 1 000 people) is increasingly threatened by urban development (Parker 2002). Although Vegas is the epitome of recreational and cultural opportunities for visitors, amenities are virtually absent for residents. The shortage of public spaces for residents is just another contradiction, contrasting with casinos, hotels and resorts that constantly surpass each other in reinventing the most popular and profitable attractions.

With an economy dominated by the service sector, the burden of social and environmental costs has disproportionately impacted specific groups of residents laboring as waiters/waitresses, maids, retail and office clerks, and janitors on the Strip. Despite many unionized jobs, newcomers settling in Las Vegas are challenged just as much by the gap between dream and reality as they are by the gap between nature and artifice. The concrete manifestations of urban sprawl in the desert rest on the same ephemerality of development, artificiality of land, air, and water resources, and commodification that boosted the origins of Las Vegas. As Lyotard once wrote, "capitalism inherently possesses the power to derealise familiar objects, social roles and institutions to such a degree that the so-called realistic representations can no longer evoke reality" (Lyotard 1984: 143).

Conclusion

The conflation of the simulated and the real, once reserved to Disneyland, has spread through Las Vegas. Not only does it represent the new model of urban development for popular entertainment, it also blurs the pretensions and the manifestations of 'reality' Although it may be difficult and even futile to differentiate between representation and simulation when speaking of Las Vegas, the production of hyperreality rests on particular conditions of capitalism inscribing many social and environmental contradictions in the landscape. These contradictions, never fully revealed in a three-day package at a casino-resort, are nevertheless inherent to the production and consumption of Las Vegas as a neon oasis in the desert.

References

Christensen, J. (2002). Build It and the Water Will Come. In H.K. Rothman and M. Davis (Eds), The grit beneath the glitter: tales from the real Las Vegas. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Cronon, W. (1996). Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. New York: Norton.

Eureka County Yucca Mountain Information Office. (2002). Nuclear Waste Update. Available at: www.yuccamountain.org.

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. (2003). Press & Media. Available at: www.lasvegas24hours. com/press/faq.html.

Lyotard, J.F. (1984). The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge. In P. Brooker (Ed), Modernism/Postmodernism. London: Longman.

Moehring, E.P. (2000). Resort City in the Sunbelt Las Vegas 1930-2000, second edition. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

Naturemaker. (2003). Naturemaker Steel Art Trees. Available at: www.naturemaker.com.

Parker, R.E. (2002). The Social Costs of Rapid Urbanisation in Southern Nevada. In H.K. Rothman and M. Davis (Eds), The grit beneath the glitter: tales from the real Las Vegas. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Rothman, H. (2002). Colony, Capital and Casino: Money in the Real Las Vegas. In H.K. Rothman and M. Davis (Eds), The grit beneath the glitter: tales from the real Las Vegas. Los Angeles: U niversity of California Press.

Strolin, J.C. (1989). Nevada and the Nuclear Waste Issue: The Rest of the Story (to date). Nevada Public Affairs Review, v. 1. 16-19.

Wilson, A. (1992). The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to Exxon Valdez. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Peter Rear, untitled, photo

Orca

by Elana Wolff

Downtown Holiday Inn, Vancouver

We arrived at night in the aqua room
that had beckoned us in from the drizzle.

Wearing my street clothes, I watched from the side
while she in her swim suit, immersing toes first,

demurred.
At the opposite end of the pool, submerged-

a huge black and white killer whale.
Painted true-to-life, it seemed to sway

and swell authentically
in rhythm with the swimmers.

How afraid my daughter was: she didn't
dare go in.

She only tempted danger, flirting-
dipping skittish toes and giggling.

Big eyes batting long dark lashes, far away from peril.

Karen Abel, Roadkill, photo

ESAC

turning environmental research into action

What is ESAC?

ESAC is a national organization that brings together environmental scholars and professionals from the public, private and non-profit sectors. ESAC was formed to further research and teaching in the environmental field, and to facilitate communication amongst its members.

Building Bridges

ESAC is helping to establish enivornmental studies as a discipline that builds bridges between academica and other communities. ESAC members are doing environmental research that is crucial and cutting-edge; covering a broad array of research areas - from the scientific to the esoteric; from the political to the spiritual.

Membership Benefits

ESAC offers many tools for encouraging communication: a membership directory, regular newsletters, an email discussion group, and an annual national conference that offers an opportunity for members to socialize, debate, and present their research. Members of ESAC also receive a subscription to ***Alternatives.***

Find out more!

www.thegreenpages.ca/esac

Join us!

ESAC ★ c/o Dean's Office ★ Faculty of Environmental Studies
University of Waterloo ★Waterloo ★ ON ★ N2L 3G1
Phone: (519) 888-4442 ★ Fax: 746-0292
Email: esac@fes.uwaterloo.ca

The Badlands of Gender:

I

On some days I cause what I like to call 'restroom chaos'.

Early one morning at a conference I stand before a mirror in a university washroom, trying to find the lucidity to present a paper. An old male professor wanders in, cries out "I am so sorry, miss!" and runs out of the room. Unfortunately, having exhausted one of the options available within society's suspect binary, his panicked brain takes him straight into the "women's" washroom. I listen to the ensuing shrieking and sigh. Gender in our society is still tightly controlled; "it's a boy" or "it's a girl" are still the only two cries to escape a doctor's lips as we squirm into this confusing world. For those of us who do not fit this model, bathroom politics are a reality of everyday survival, even early in the morning before coffee brings caution.

II

As young children Jo-Anne and I tied Ken to a tree and made Barbie and Skipper drive away in the Corvette together. They parked by the water's edge, and were found kissing energetically by my first grade teacher. My mother, I am sure, got yet another call.

My father always bought me very cool toys. Tonka bulldozers, dump trucks, toy chainsaws. I even had a Fisher Price off-shore oil platform. I loved them all, and when Jo-Anne's sister took away the Corvette, Barbie and Skipper drove off together in my Tonka Road Grader. The gender clinic assures my mother that none of these things contributed to my eventual identity as a lesbian woman and an environmentalist. I think of Jo-Anne sometimes, and wonder if she ever wakes up with a strange desire to own a pink corvette.

III

Society does not always leave space for dissent.

The wind blowing down the Don valley is strong and the moonlight glistens off of the water. Perhaps I am out for a walk, getting some air. Maybe I am taking a break from the monotony of writing. Certainly the debris of the thesis creation process fills my apartment. I have been eating delivered pizza for days. Maybe I am just out for a walk.

Or maybe my soul is so tired from pretending, so tired of every 'mister' and 'sir' that I am pacing out to mid-span to place one foot against the stone railing and then leap up and for a moment balance in the moonlit space between future and ending.

Maybe I got help shortly after that evening. Sometimes though, I wonder if I jumped. The last three years could just be the dream during the fall.

IV

If socially constructed boundaries are to remain sharp within nature's shadowlands, we must appoint gatekeepers. I have met several as I traverse the space between society's binary poles; they dwell in towers of steel and stone and glass and wield files as they would a cruel blade.

She will always be known as the woman with bad lipstick. We use the name when we gather, looking over our shoulders, shivering. The woman with bad lipstick stares at me for the first few moments of our interview, evaluating me as I try to control my fear. She once told a friend of mine that he was not transgendered but that he should have a hysterectomy if he didn't like bleeding. She is notoriously picky about who she feels can colour outside of society's lines. She rejects people on the grounds of their career, on the grounds of their lovers. And now it is my turn; she strips me naked and circles me, her shivering sacrifice.

excerpts from a notebook

by Lenore Newman

She begins her physical assessment. My chin is too long, my nose too big. I should consider surgery. My hands are pleasingly small, though scarred by my years of physical labour in the timber industry. She is thrilled by my hairless body. My height is workable, and my weight adequate. My voice, she concludes, is better than most. She grabs my genitals and tells me my body piercings are ugly, unladylike.

Psychologically, she agrees that I do not fit the box assigned me at birth. I will be allowed to occupy the other box if I am willing to follow the shortest and most direct path through the badlands. The middle ground, she makes clear, is strictly off limits. I suppose I am fortunate to live when I do; even ten years ago I would have been denied help because I am a dyke. Now it just adds a word to my official status: type two transsexual, gynophilic. As I dress and she ushers me out of her office she puts a hand on my shoulder and offers a little advice:

"Get the surgery as soon as you can dear. You need to know where you stand."

I gather up my potential and my inadequate body parts and stop at the door. I don't know that I want to face major surgery. I add her advice to that of another of the gatekeepers:

"Don't sit on the fence. You don't need a transgender community. You can be a woman, just another woman."

V

Transgendered people are commonly found in two places in society. First, in the headlines: another transgendered soul murdered for crossing society's lines. These stories make me cry with anger. Often the mainstream media justifies the crime, reporting how the transgendered person was flirting, pretending to be a 'boy' or a 'girl'. In some states we can be legally killed under 'panic defense' laws. The message is clear; survival depends on hiding, and denying who we are.

I find our other presence just as disturbing. She-male porn is one of the most popular types of adult entertainment. I surf the net out of morbid curiosity, pulling up sites with names like 'shemaleyum' and watch the screen fill with images of people like me. I often wonder who it is that looks at this porn, and why the idea of breasts and cock together so turns them on. And if we are so valuable as sexual objects why must we live in fear? If they want to fuck us, why do they kill us?

VI

A whisper of change grows, a wind blowing out of the shadows. There are cracks in their binary. Through these cracks step uncounted transgender folk and those who stand by them. Through these rifts step the army of the intersexed, one born every day in every major city, I am told. Through holes in this 'his and her' conception of the human race step the other sexes, The XXY and XYY and XO. In the same season that the new conservative government in British Columbia closes the only gender clinic in the West the North West Territories becomes the first place in North America to include transgendered people in its hate crime legislation. Everywhere in the badlands I see the tracks of those who have walked this path before me, those who dared to cross a much deeper divide or even dwell in the between spaces, people who make my journey possible, and trivial compared to their own. When I meet them they are good to me, so very giving, despite all of the trials and abuse they have endured. All around me the whisper grows, voices wearing away at social constructions and bringing change.

VII

Society's catagories are strong in the towns near the wilderness but after driving endless miles of baking road in an overheated and mudcaked car (Mustang, not Corvette), I am finally beyond watching eyes. I let the waters of Hecate strait wash my bare feet as I stand alone with my lover on a grand swath of beach nestled in a rocky bay. Eagles played overhead, eagles and ravens. Who knew there were so many birds left in the world?

I walk in the watery sunlight, naked to the world, breasts and cock exposed to the wind, unbound and unjudged.

Design, intent and the changing nature of Allan Gardens

by Matthew Cowley

Toronto, Canada's most populous urban centre, is home to millions of people from all over the world. First established as a city in 1834, the lands downtown that were once muddy ports and trading posts are now overshadowed by such architectural giants as the CN tower, the Toronto-Dominion Centre and SkyDome. While these structures are some of the most memorable shapes on the city's skyline, Toronto is also known for its green spaces, including an extensive ravine system, large urban parks and recreational refuges such as Centre Island. In fact, the City of Toronto officially operates 1500 parks, equivalent to approximately 8000 hectares of land (City of Toronto 2003) - a feature enjoyed by countless people and often noted as one of the nicer benefits of living in this ever-growing city. Over 130 years ago, when cities like New York were a fraction of their current size, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead - who designed that city's famous Central Park - raised notable concern for the "highly corrupt and irritating matters" entering the lungs of city dwellers, and fervently advocated for the provision of spaces for trees and parks in growing cities (Olmstead 1996: 338). He asked his audience, "Is it doubtful that it does men good to come together this way in pure air and under the light of heaven, or that is must have an influence directly counteractive to that of the ordinary hard, hustling working hours of town life?"

The idyllic setting Olmstead so eloquently describes may sound whimsical today but his appreciation for public parks is perhaps not so different from what many people still value about such spaces in our cities: an area of land, be it large or small, that offers refuge and space for relaxation in the midst of concrete and steel.

Indeed, it is not just the altitudinal and spatial contrast from multi-storied structures that make parks so appealing, for if we wish to differentiate such spaces from empty parking lots for example, we must also consider that for a many city dweller, public parks can offer them their most common and tangible encounters with what many of us refer to as 'nature'. Ttrees, shrubs, grass, flowers, birds, squirrels, and streams drawn together in one place represent pieces of the natural world and a particular, attractive aesthetic. And while it is not strange to think about parks as places where one can find elements of nature, we must not forget that even the large, lush areas of places like Toronto's High Park are, to a certain extent, designed spaces, and not entirely 'natural' or left to grow wild. Human hands help map out urban parks, and human hands help manage and maintain them. Of course, this may seem obvious - everyone has seen grass being cut and flower beds being manicured by park staff. But beyond this, it is less likely that we regularly consider what the original design and intent of an urban park may have been and how the 'nature' of the park and its site may have changed and evolved over time with different users of that space. Parks exist in a physical context, but they also exist in a broader social and environmental context. As such, what is the relationship between changes in the overall environment of the city and the ways in which we see and interact with certain parks? How do the things we value in urban areas and in nature intersect in such spaces? What is the significance of public parks amongst increasingly private or pseudo-public spaces in cities?

Allan Gardens is arguably one of Toronto's best known park areas, and its history, design and place in the city provide an especially interesting response to the above questions. Situated between Gerrard, Carlton, Jarvis and Sherbourne Streets, this historic spot is nestled in a relatively dense downtown neighbourhood, just west of the older residential areas that hug the edge of the Don Valley, and just east of the bustle of Yonge Street, College Park (which is not really a park, but a large office and retail building) and Maple Leaf Gardens (which is known for hockey, not maples). While the site's shape and form have been mostly unchanged for several decades, the land and buildings at Allan Gardens went through a period of substantial growth and development in its early years, and each physical change reflects the social and spatial desires of the park's upper-class associates.

In 1860, a five-acre oval parcel of land (roughly the centre portion of the current park) was given by deed to the Toronto Horticultural Society by the Honourable George William Allan for the purpose of developing a botanical garden. Allan was the wealthy son of Scottish immigrants who was, among other things, the 11th mayor of Toronto, an elected speaker of the Canadian Senate, President of the Toronto Horticultural Society for twenty-five years, and the first president of the Toronto Conservatory of Music (Allan Gardens Conservatory 1999b). At that time, The Toronto Horticultural Society was composed primarily of horticulturalists and practitioners from the elite of society (including several senior politicians of Upper Canada's government) as well as other 'practical' or amateur members whose endorsement and final acceptance was at the discretion of senior members of the Society (Allan Gardens Conservatory 1999a).

The creation by the city's wealthy and influential upper-class of something as outwardly plain as a park was not uncommon at the time. As Michael Hough has said (echoing Olmstead, above), the industrial revolution and the growth of cities changed the way many people related to open spaces:

> The psychological and physical separation between urban and rural environments widened as cities grew larger, more industrialised and more remote from the rural areas with which they had originally been connected. The urban park had an entirely different purpose from the countryside it replaced. The crops, orchards and livestock that had originally been the function of many open spaces in the pre-industrial settlements were now replaced by open spaces that catered exclusively to amenity and recreation. (Hough 1984: 14)

Furthermore, the creation of parks like Allan Gardens was inspired by a "preoccupation with the aesthetics of natural landscape" at that

Wendy Lu, untitled, ink on paper

time (Hough 1984: 15). Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, Allan Gardens grew in size as more surrounding lands were acquired from Allan and the City, and the Gardens began to be known as a place where residents of the then-wealthy surrounding neighbourhoods could even enjoy a classical music concert on a warm weekend afternoon. Yet even as the site began to grow larger and more popular, Allan and the City agreed that the entire grounds were always to remain publicly accessible and free of charge (Allan Gardens Conservatory 1999a). This is noteworthy when we consider the types of people the Horticultural Society was hoping to attract and the types of people they were hoping not to attract. From these beginnings came what was to be essentially Toronto's first civic park, but the site was completed in 1910 (Allan Gardens Conservatory 1999a). Like the pavilion that it replaced, the Palm House drew on architectural traditions combined with the trend of classical design elements using materials of the day - wood, iron, glass, brick and masonry. It was in part a tribute to the Crystal Palace, but more significantly it represented a miniature version of the massive Palm House at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew in England (completed in 1848). The Palm House still stands today and is the centrepiece both of the grounds of Allan Gardens and of the four conservatory greenhouses (the last of which was added in 1957) which branch off it in a U-shaped pattern. Together, these structures contain thousands of exotic plants from all over the world, many of which would not sur-

Matthew Cowley, Echinocactus grusonii, "Golden Barrel Cactus", from Mexico, digital photo

would see more grand design and changes as a part of the public realm before existing as we know it today.

Despite the popularity of this grand site (or perhaps, because of it), debts forced The Horticultural Society to sell the lands and holdings to the City of Toronto in 1888, maintaining the original terms of Allan's lease which was that the Gardens always be open to the public. As new owners, the City for the most part maintained the look and feel of what The Horticultural Society had built up, but in 1902 a disastrous fire destroyed the famous pavilion and most of the conservatory, leaving a vast structural vacancy that was not replaced until construction on the Robert McCallum-designed Palm House

vive long past a Toronto summer if not for their protective glass covering.

It may seem ironic that the function of the conservatory is to protect nature from nature. This, after all, is why the structure is called a conservatory - cacti, orchids and ferns coinhabit a sort of living bubble that, while bursting with life (i.e., nature) on the inside, is not necessarily a natural arrangement existing in a natural environment. To consider one comparison, after meditating upon the carefully planned circular Aldrich Park on the campus of the University of California at Irvine, William Cronon observed that,

> its symbolic role on the campus is to offer a representation of nature - pastoral, parklike, Edenic - at the heart of the university... By examining where all these trees come from, and by thinking of the vast amount of human labor that has gone into rearranging this landscape, you will begin to understand just how artificial this natural green space really is. (Cronon 1996: 52-53)

But artificial or not, nature (or at least, a certain construction of nature) at Allan Gardens is being conserved and displayed in a particular way, and the setting offered by McCallum's buildings still holds a strong appeal for visitors to the park. Can we evaluate in some way the artificial/natural status of the conservatory? One way to try to answer this is from an ecological point of view. In an attempt to untangle "the mess we have made with of our neighbourhoods, cities, and ecosystems," Van der Ryn and Cowan have called on designers to consider the natural world in their work and to practice ecological design, which they define as "any form of design that minimizes environmentally destructive impacts by integrating itself with living processes" (Van de Ryn and Cowan 1996: 17-18). The case could be made that the Palm House fits this definition, but it is unlikely that "minimizing environmentally destructive impacts" was foremost in the minds of McCallum and The Horticultural Society. In contrast to a further stipulation of Van der Ryn and Cowan's about not being bound to a particular method and profession, the Palm House represents a style, and despite its integration with living processes (indeed, the building is teeming with them), it is closer to what Hough would distinguish as a "nurtured 'pedigreed' landscape" dependent on energy inputs and horticultural technology to assist its natural cycles (Hough 1984: 6).

Nevertheless, people do not shun Allan Gardens' floral displays because they are not composed of entirely native species growing in their natural environment - on the contrary, this is one of the site's largest draws, as it has been for many years. When not attracting crowds for the seasonal flower shows, there are few places in Toronto where one can see banana trees, giant golden barrel cacti and trees from Mexico and Madagascar that are about as old as the building itself. As one reporter learned from the superintendent, "the gardens occasionally receive visits from students studying English as a second language, who find the place especially welcoming," since seeing plants indigenous to their own countries is a reminder of home (DeMara 1998: n.p.). Perhaps the most consistent and basic attraction to this pedigreed landscape for many of today's visitors is the Victorian ideal of providing a place to escape from the noise and congestion of the city. Studies have shown that visitors to botanical gardens cite relaxation, aesthetics, peace, tranquility and refuge as the foremost reasons for spending time in these spaces, even though they recognise botanical gardens as having an important role in education and the conservation of biological diversity (Hatherley 2002). Furthermore, the ecological design that keeps plants warm in the winter is attractive to people, too, for as retired urban-design professor Norman Pressman has pointed out, "our parks are never designed with winter in mind, with all four seasons, unless they tack on a skating rink or something," despite the fact that we live in a country which has such long, cold winters (cited in Saunders 1997: C20). When meandering through the Palm House, people enjoy the particular type of nature they can see, and this is part of what makes the space and one's experience with it so unique.

The effect of security is an interesting point, since it says something about a certain degree of continuity in the conservatory's space and our appreciation for it. The Palm House is a sanctuary to thousands of plants and it secures one representation of history in a changing environment. After many years, Allan Gardens has grown to be a popular place to visit for families, seniors, school groups, floral enthusiasts, couples and, notably, some of Toronto's many homeless people. This evolution has changed the context in which we interpret the site, and has not gone unnoticed by those who manage the space. In the late 1980s, the City of Toronto initiated an "Allan Gardens Revitalisation Program" which aimed to renovate and help preserve the Palm House and outdoor gardens that were showing signs of old age (Allan Gardens Conservatory 1999a). A quick scan of the local papers from that time reveals a number of articles lamenting, or at least politely commenting on how Allan Gardens has become a well-known gathering point for homeless people. It was suggested that the revitalisation program could be a means through which the disrepair of the buildings (loosely equated with the "disrepair" of the surrounding neighbourhood and the people who might live in a nearby shelter, if indeed they live at any address) could be addressed in a manner which could balance restoring the old glory of Victorian architecture with contemporary social problems (see for example Foster 1986; Holden 1987; and Monsebraaten 1986). Recognising the reality of who the park's diverse users were, City officials "began on the premise that disadvantaged people have as much right to be in Allan Gardens as anyone else" and that "bringing more people in - and not driving existing users out - would be the most democratic way to put the downtown green space to more use" (Holden 1987: A7). Working such notions into new plans to revitalise the park was, even on a small scale, a process of redesign. The original intent of The Toronto Horticultural Society to create a free space where the public could relax in the beauty of nature has been fully realised, albeit in a way which they may not have envisaged. How might we frame our understanding of these changes?

Lofland (borrowing from Strauss 1961) has made the case that what we understand as "public spaces" may more accurately be distinguished as being either locations or locales, the former being "identifiable portions of non-private space in which the inhabitants are likely to be similar and known to one another" while the latter are likely to be spaces composed of people who are dissimilar strangers "merely categorically known to one another" (Lofland 1989: 456). As such, we could argue that Allan Gardens has undergone a transition from being a location (such as it was in the 19th century, with a particular group of people creating and enjoying a particular type of place) to a locale (such as it is today, where many people/strangers who categorically know each other only as "gardener", "photographer" or "homeless person" will interact without saying a word to one another). This transition is significant not just because it says something about the continuity of appeal found beneath the glass, wood and iron, but because the news stories which document this change reveal a modulating sense of conflict between what types of spaces exist in Toronto today, how public they really may be, and what constitutes the significance of their form.

In a structural sense, there are very few places like Allan Gardens in Toronto. Of the hundreds of parks that the City operates, Allan Gardens is one of 17 sites listed as 'gardens and conservatories', and one of only four that contains accessible indoor space. One of these

four that does share some attributes with Allan Gardens is the Cloud Forest Conservatory located downtown between Richmond and Temperance Streets, just west of Yonge. Smaller than Allan Gardens and displaying a greater intensity of contemporary architectural ideas nestled amongst large office towers, this unique space was designed by Harvard professor George Baird and won the Governor General's Award for architecture in 1994 (Harvard Design School 2003). Like Allan Gardens, Cloud Gardens is known as a favourite hangout for bike couriers, business types, homeless people, and tourists - in short, a diversity of people. In addition, it also has a small indoor conservatory of plants (free of charge) that climbs up the side of an adjacent building, giving visitors a lush, green setting from which they can look down into the reflecting pool below. The overall design aesthetic draws on some of the same traditions as Allan Gardens (an intricate, pedigreed representation and arrangement of natural features), but having a different history, there is perhaps less concern over the nature of this park, it is not nearly old enough to need 'revitalisation', and from its inception there was likely no doubt in anyone's mind that it would be a public space enjoyed by a variety of people, not just those who take the time to stop and smell the roses.

Matthew Cowley, Dome of the Palm House, digital photo

To think about what other popular open spaces exist downtown, contrast this with the pseudo-public courtyard of the Toronto-Dominion Centre, an inviting green square enclosed by a ring of office towers located in the heart of the financial district. The TD Centre's website lists the courtyard as a place that holds "interesting and fun community events," and the variety of summer lunchtime concerts that tenants enjoy is notable (Toronto-Dominion Centre 2003). But is the community in its entirety really welcome? While it may be one of a few open, green spaces in the downtown core, its existence is really the result of a density-bonusing deal, and probably not of the genuine desire to invite people - particularly the homeless - to enjoy this peaceful, security-monitored space. As Ruskin has noted, the creation of such seemingly public spaces is a questionable trend in urban development processes.

> Some pleasing "public spaces" have been won by these means, both in the form of outdoor plazas, and indoor atriums and lobbies. These may accommodate small shopping centres, or provide a café and somewhere to sit down. Yet these spaces are not always fully "public." Their physical surroundings, the activities sited in them, and their distinctive atmosphere, influence which elements of the city population will feel welcome to come in, and which will not. Their enclosure and location also permit surveillance and discreet policing, in ways which open public spaces do not. Whilst they may be safer for some, they may also be more excluding of others. (Ruskin 1988: 57)

In light of this, we may ask ourselves how places like Allan Gardens are becoming especially valuable to the general public. As the downtown areas of our cities are increasingly privatised, and as parks become contested, regulated spaces (see for example Burrows 2001), does the public realm as a whole have to be carefully preserved like orchids in a greenhouse, requiring protection from the surrounding environment?

To someone who has no place to keep warm on a winter's day, the Palm House is a welcoming environment where people seeking shelter may feel greater acceptance from the staff who work there than from the increasingly gentrified Cabbagetown neighbourhood - a nearby area known as a slum for poor Irish and Polish immigrants not so long ago. On a broader scale, Allan Gardens has also been a centre of anti-poverty activism in recent years, culminating in the 'safe park' protest organised by the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty in August 1999, which raised the local dialogue on homelessness, protesting, public space and the policing of these spaces to a fever pitch (see DeMara and Millar 1999; and Ghosh 1999). Furthermore, the park's proximity to lower-income neighbourhoods such as Regent Park, Moss Park and St. Jamestown (which are continuously reported in the media as areas of high crime and social problems) has altered the context in which residents from different parts of the city frame the site as a whole. There is a sense that "many city residents may avoid Allan Gardens because of the area's bad reputation," but as one staff member stated, "people have to be realistic. It's downtown and it's never going to be like the turn of the century, when there were a lot of rich people living around here" (DeMara 1998: n.p.). Indeed, that observation is true, but there is continuity in the design of the site; plants have grown, neighbourhoods have changed, visitors have come and gone, open spaces have shrunk and the city has grown much larger and more obtrusive, giving the Palm House all the more reason to stand as a shelter over precious greenery. It is the Palm House itself which is most closely connected with life 100 years ago, but it has changed from being a sublime representation of current ideals in architecture and form to being an example of a functioning artifact from another era. As an artifact, the Palm House preserves the plants, and the design of Palm House preserves itself as an historical structure at the centre of an open space framed physically by city streets and mentally by one's perception of nature, design and public space.

In some respects, one could argue that the Palm House and Allan Gardens could be considered a heterotopia, "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1984: para 20): Victorian aesthetics, issues of urban poverty, tropical plants in a northern climate, a living artifact.

But what is critical for the continued vitality of this park is an understanding that these spaces are compatible in as much as we should ever expect them to be in the public realm of the city today.

The original intent of The Toronto Horticultural Society may have been to create a space in which the design, the users and the aesthetics were all naturally compatible, but the reality of urban public spaces today is that even in a city like Toronto which is known for its numerous parks, those spaces which people value most and identify as a part of their urban experience will always be appreciated and experienced even as the context in which they exist changes over time. Understanding this context and how these sites are situated in the broader environment can also tell us a great deal about why they are so important. Having a space for people to congregate and to enjoy elements of nature - be it pedigreed landscaping or otherwise - should not be underappreciated in our concrete jungle. Maintaining accessibility and inclusion in these spaces means that they will evolve along with the people who use them and can therefore reflect the true character of the city both past and present. It is for reasons such as these that parks like Allan Gardens shall continue to be spaces imbedded with value as long as they exist.

References

Allan Gardens Conservatory. 1999a. History of Allan Gardens' Development. Available at: www.collections.ic.gc.ca/gardens/History/index.html. Accessed 04/04/2003.

Allan Gardens Conservatory. 1999b. George William Allan (1822-1901). Available at: www.collections.ic.gc.ca/gardens/History/historyGWAllan.html. Accessed 04/04/2003.

Burrows, S. (2001). Sign, sign, everywhere a sign: rules and regulations are the order these days in New York's Central Park. The Globe and Mail, Aug. 15.

City of Toronto. (2003). Parks and Recreation: About Us. Available at: www.city.toronto.on.ca/parks/about_us.htm. Accessed 04/04/2003.

Cronon, W. (1996). Introduction. In W. Cronon (Ed.), Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

DeMara, B. (1998). Gardens offer balm for the soul. The Toronto Star, Aug. 4.

DeMara, B. and Millar, C. (1999). Park protest misdirected, councillor tells homeless: 25 activists arrested after pre-dawn raid at Allan Gardens. The Toronto Star, Aug. 11.

Foster, J. (1986). Allan Gardens may regain glory of past. The Toronto Star, Oct. 20. A6.

Foucault, Michel. (1984). Of Other Spaces (1967): Heterotopias. Available at: foucault.info/documents/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html. Accessed 04/04/2003.

Ghosh, S. (1999). Behind the scenes at Allan Gardens (and the demonstration for the homeless). Catholic New Times, v.23, n.13 Sept.19. 9.

Harvard Design School. (2003). Faculty Profile: George Baird. Available at: www.gsd.harvard.edu/people/faculty/baird/projects.html. Accessed 04/04/2003.

Hatherly, J. (2002). Myths About Visitors To Botanic Gardens. Available at: www.amol.org.au/evrsig/lib_papers/MA2002hatherley.pdf. Accessed 31/03/2002.

Holden, A. (1987). Street people's needs considered in Allan Gardens revitalization. The Toronto Star , June 9. A7.

Hough, M. (1984). City Form and Natural Process. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Ltd.

Lofland, L.H. (1989). Social Life in the Public Realm: A Review. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, v.17, n.4. 453 - 482.

Monsebraaten, L. (1986). Facelift urged for Allan Gardens. The Toronto Star, Aug. 6. A9.

Olmstead, F.L. (1996). Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns. In Richard T. LeGates and Frederick Stout (Eds.), The City Reader. New York: Routledge. 337-344.

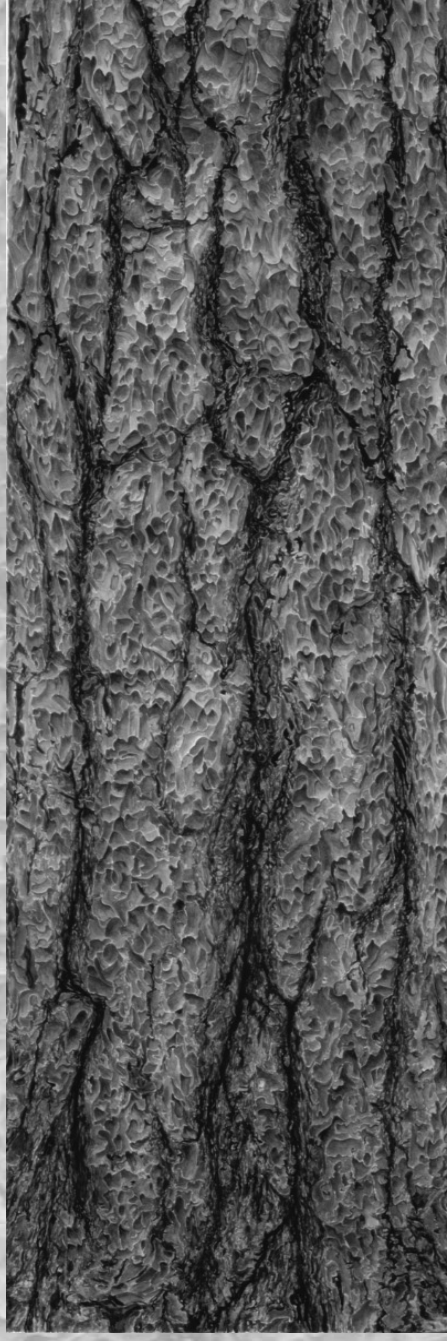
Ruskin, M. (1988). Whose Public Spaces? In Luigi Mazza (Ed.), World Cities and the Future of the Metropoles. Milano: Electra. 51-62.

Saunders, D. (1997). Park architects embraces winter designs: Summer parks don't reflect that shades of brown, white and grey dominate the landscape most of the time. A few architects are adjusting to the climate. The Globe and Mail, Feb. 22. C20.

Strauss, A. (1961). Images of the American City. New York: Free Press.

Toronto-Dominion Centre. (2003). Tenant Services: Building Maintenance. Available at: www.tdcentre.com/client/Cadillac/CF_Office_TDC_UW_V500_MainEngine.nsf/page/Building+ Maintenance?OpenDocument. Accessed 04/04/2003.

Van der Ryn, S. and Cowan, S. (1996). Ecological Design. Washington, DC: Island Press.



UnderCurrents Subscription and back issue order form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Yes, I would like to receive the next issue of UnderCurrents@ $7 ($15 institutions) plus $3 postage and handling.

Yes, I would like to receive the following UnderCurrents back issues @ $5 per issue plus $3 postage and handling:

Vol.1, Human Interaction with the Natural Environment
Vol.2, Nature, Culture, Self
Vol.3, The Representation and Domination of Nature
Vol.4, Situated Knowledge
Vol.5, Fragmenting Author-ity
Vol.6, Queer Nature
Vol.7, The Politics of Natural Space
Vol.8, The Nature of Science
Vol.9, Divisions, Boundaries and Territories
Vol.10, Other Ways of Telling
Vol.11, trans/formations
Vol.12, Political Natures

All prices in Canadian dollars. International mailing extra. Please send cheque or money order along with this form to:

UnderCurrents
c/o Faculty of Environmental Studies
355 Lumbers Building
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto ON M3J 1P3

For more information visit www.yorku.ca/currents
or email currents@yorku.ca

Opposite page: Leela Viswanathan, Living Well 3 and 2, photo
This page: Robert Wiens, Red Pine, watercolour on paper, photo: Cheryl O'Brien, courtesy: Susan Hobbs Gallery

3R's + P3's DON'T MIX

To learn more, visit cupe.ca

CUPE
On the front line
Canadian Union of Public Employees

The Meaning of the Colour Blue

by Taina Chahal

There is a city here where I walk to see how others live. I could, I suppose, see about myself only. I could be unaffected. I could come to the easy belief that, really, what is there to speak against? I could develop that voice so full of cold address to beauty. I could with some self-defacement go about the business of making my living. I could say in that way many do: oh, it's not so bad, your writing need not show your skin, it need not speak of trouble, history is a burden after all. But Neruda summons me, is waiting for me at the end of every sentence. I cannot ignore my hands "stained with garbage and sadness."

~ Dionne Brand

A Map to the Door of No Return

The language of the birds outside my bedroom window has to compete with the sound of traffic seeping through the brick walls that becomes a part of my day, like the canned music that fills my ear when I'm once again waiting for a real voice on the telephone instead of a “press three” for hours of operation.

Getting away from traffic in Toronto is almost an impossibility. Traffic leaves its filthy print everywhere; my fifth floor window is covered in the black dusty exhaust of commuting and mall'ing. In the morning, I draw the curtains open and look out a permanently stained window and see the sky already shrouded in smog, despite the new dawn. I turn away, downcast; the rays of the sun diffused behind a curtain of yellow fog.

Traveling one hour east of Thunder Bay, the cold, early morning air convinces the warmth of late summer to leave the depths of Lake Nipigon and hang a curtain of silk over the surface of the water. On the other side of the road, backed by glacier carved cliffs, St. Sylvester's church stands a silent, abandoned witness. And past the black sands of Orient Bay, unseen behind the boreal forest, lies an Ojibway burial ground where small, white wooden crosses stand, unsilent witnesses whose silence is deafening

We pass a small town named Tunis on Highway 11, the northern route that carves its way up from Lake Superior through the Canadian Shield, curves, then cuts straight across northern Ontario through muskeg. Think of Samira as we pass Tunis, but she's nowhere in sight. After the point where all waters flow south, we pass a town named Moonbeam.

In Rosegrove, named to defy the struggle of wresting plants from the oldest, hardest rock on the planet, we pass unpainted, weathered wooden homes left abandoned, doors ajar, hope having run out one night down the road.

We travel past Wabewawa Road, lined on both sides with a climax forest, its dark green broken here-and-there by paper birches with no branches or leaves, with thin, wind-bowed trunks. The black spruce have waited patiently for the birch to die, for their turn in the northern sun. Farther on, in the overgrown grass in front of a small, red, wooden mummon-mökki that has white tape slapped haphazardly over the three large cracks in the front window, we pass a sign: House for Sale. And up the road from Net Lake, stuck in the gravel at the side of the highway, right after the turnoff to the Constance Lake Indian Reserve, almost unnoticeable, a small black-and-orange sign: Garage Sale.

I thought to turn around and tell them that they should've stuck the sign before the turnoff, not after, because by then it's too late.

After swamps and bogs and blow-downs, fens and beds of reeds standing in still waters choked with bulrushes, mirror lakes reflecting clouds bottom-heavy with lilacs on a rainy day, the boreal ballet of tilting, drunken forests, and creeks disappearing into the sky, we stop at a gasbar with no gum, no mints, no chips, no chocolates, no cigarettes.

A gaunt teen swipes my card and his hair. I look across the room from the cash register and see a sign taped on a glass door leading to a roomful of empty tables and upturned chairs: Restaurant Closed.

Highway 17 winds up and down steep cliffs, providing spectacular views of Lake Superior, from miles and miles of windy shoreline to uplifted cliffs of granite and gneiss that are the remnants of the mountains that flouted the glacial river of ice. Its dramatic beauty makes it a popular route for travellers and tourists. And with the railway now gone, it's busy with transports and truckers beating deadlines.

The northern route, on the other hand, is almost deserted. It has a sneak-up-on you charm. Travelling Highway 11 is like turning a cut-glass prism slowly between your fingers and, within the slant of pink light, seeing clear as crystal into the mirror of your mind and… there you are, a drop of dew weighing down an early-morning spider web.

The northern highway, like the stillness of the morning bush while blueberry picking, underfoot, blue-dusted berries among the crunch of pale green lichen.

The freeways in Toronto are unlike either Highway 11 or Highway 17. No muskeg, no rockcuts. It's an area of low relief. The metamorphic rock has been eroded by something even more powerful than a two-mile thick, moving ice sheet: a car culture that has carried away much of the region's topsoil. There's not much to see out your window except other cars zipping by, transports and tankers, and cement walls that zip you in like a straightjacket. Grey folding in upon itself. An asphalt sky; aground in grey. Nothing more alienating than hitting the highways in Toronto.

I'm looking for my blueberry patch but I can't find it.

Yet, there is an understory to pavement too. There is an understory to this city found on the right of sunrise. When the surprise of blue breaks through the clouds.

A Friday in October, the month of the hunter's moon. I've had enough of shoebox existence, and despite my undone work, I leave North York with Fataneh and Shukria, and head downtown to listen to Dionne Brand read from her memoir, A Map to the Door of No Return.

The club on College is crowded; filled with women and a handful of men, most black, a few white (like myself); there is laughter and the clink of glasses; a temporary camaraderie emerging from our collective anticipation.

Brand reads from "The Man from the Oldest City in the World", a passage about her chance encounter with a parking lot attendant while on her way to read at a PEN benefit. She speaks the absurdity of a man who comes from one of the oldest civilizations in the world (Ethiopia) being reduced to spending his days inside a small box in the middle of a parking lot in the middle of the city among new, glass buildings:

> The man from the oldest city in the world and I are shak
> ing with laughter. Then I walk toward the theatre. Its glit
> tering glass doors, its self-conscious newness, its dispos
> able modernity. Years ago it, too, was a parking lot; in
> another decade it will become one. Around me is the
> parking lot, the great parking lot temporarily occupied by
> buildings. This is what he looks out on every day, his
> curly head shaking. (Brand 2001: 109)

She talks about the laughter they share, about their momentary and unexpected meeting ground, about finding a point of human connection among the asphalt landscape of the city, of laughing at "they" of the "civilized world" yet recognizing that she is also of the civilization of parking lots: "It is a grim laughter we share. Yes, it is at the ironic circumstances of belonging to this civilization of parking lots. I am the citizen of the parking lot" (Brand 120).

Brand looks closely underneath the workings of Toronto and finds the garbage that fills its corners. She exposes many of the troubling injustices of the urban landscape, particularly the racism and the disregard and unequal treatment meted out to many who are not white, yet paradoxically, her words enable us not to lose faith but to dream for a better place. Her words bear witness to the ugliness of the city - its racism, its alienation, its asphalt soul, its parking lots and corporate towers, and bring to light that which many don't notice, indeed, what is tossed aside, carelessly. She speaks of the garbage she finds on her hands through language birthed in the "fortunate and unfortunate" (Brand 2001: 193) beauty in which she is immersed .

Her words give utterance to the divine found in small moments tucked right beside the ugly of Toronto. They tell of sweetness and pain, despair and beauty, and evoke hope within hopelessness. Her words tug at my conscience in a bitter-sweet way, their clarity rekindling an anger towards the injustices that occur in this city on a daily level, and that are not equally borne. Hearing her read nudges me out of myself; her words set me adrift, clear-headed, breaking through the grey clouds that had been showering rain on me all week.

Walking back to the subway with Fataneh and Shukria, and weaving between the crowds of people streaming by, we pass sidewalk cafes and vegetable grocers and Vietnamese shops selling huge bunches of basil for $1.99, mangoes as big as melons, slender Chinese eggplant, and the surprise of blue tulips. We buy apples and milk and a cauliflower to bring back home. We pass Italian butchers with ham in the window and Portuguese bakeries and Fantasy Cleaners. We pass 2-4-1 Jazeera Falafel, Vicki's fish and chips and thai food, Irene's Tarot Readings, The Golden Loonie Dollar Shop, and Jacinthe's Hair Shop, no appointment needed.

We are reminded that there is texture in the street.

The storm clouds have cleared; the moon is shining overhead. We talk as we walk all the way back to the subway about the words that we've heard and about the city and the big urban sprawl that is Toronto and how to find a means of not just getting through it but finding a space so that we can do our share.

The moon casts her magic on us, warming our talk. The greens of vegetables and the yellows of fruit, the shuffle of feet and the sweat of the street stream through us and skip like a stone on the waters of our souls. Our strides lengthen and quicken; our steps are weightless; in this "civilization of parking lots" we touch ground together, and laughing, run barefoot to a midnight blue sky.

Reference

Brand, Dionne (2001). A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.

John Opiola, untitled, photo

Still Breathing

by Heidi Sander

I am an artifact
in this womb of the earth
lungs blind to air
searching memories
to find my gills

We never leave ourselves behind
surfacing between memory and experience

We are made of two worlds
the past and the present
and I keep returning to shore,
the ocean still breathing
through liquid in my cells.

Home Place

Stan Rowe. *Home Place: Essays on Ecology.* Revised Edition. Edmonton: Newest Press, 2002, 245 pp.

Reviewed by Megan Salhus

What on Earth are we doing? And who are we on Earth? These are the types of questions that Stan Rowe engages with in his book Home Place: Essays on Ecology (2002). He takes us on a journey from the Prairies of western Canada, through to the dry grasslands of China in the early to mid 1980s. On the way, through a combination of humour and deadly seriousness, Rowe imparts to the reader a sense of urgency and also of deep misgiving about the state of the West today, in Canada and elsewhere.

Rowe offers anecdotal evidence from his childhood to frame questions of humanity's maturity in relation to the non-human world, or 'Home Place'. Rowe urges us to rethink our relation with the Home Place, and like Aldo Leopold in the timeless Sand County Almanac, realise that we are one among many, all co-existing in the fragile Ecosphere surrounding the Earth.

Rowe considers the role which universities play in Western conceptions of the Earth, and pinpoints how an 'objective', 'scientific' use-value approach to the Earth, which largely excludes the possibility of attributing intrinsic value to non-'useful' aspects of the Ecosphere, has been fostered by the very institutions that should be providing the vanguard of progressive thinking. Similarly, he indicts political systems which privilege trade and economic growth over care for the Earth and its inhabitants, human and otherwise. Part of the insanity of the system, Rowe notes, is the devaluation of rural existence in favour of cities and the economic preoccupations of city inhabitants. Through elevating economic productivity and international trade at the expense of intra-national sustainability, Rowe argues that we pre-empt the possibility of reforming our relations to the Earth in a fashion more in keeping with our actual (as opposed to perceived) planetary stature.

Somewhat problematically, Rowe adopts the language of a Mother Earth, nurturing and caring for her offspring, of which we humans are of no greater import than any others. Rowe briefly explores the Enlightenment legacy of brutality towards the Earth and its attendant disenchantment; however, he does not examine sufficiently how the language of a female Earth has framed and disadvantaged actual human women. Nor does he deal adequately with the consequences of this framing and how arguably, it has fostered the type of uncaring attitude towards the Earth and its various inhabitants which is prevalent today.

This notwithstanding, Rowe offers a compelling read. Providing specific details of the wonders of the Ecosphere, Rowe eloquently argues for human commitment to the intrinsic value of the non-human systems which surround us. He examines various utilitarian arguments for more 'pragmatic' approaches to the Earth, and concludes that only a species completely convinced of its own innate superiority and invincibility would ever condone the unsustainable uses to which we have historically put a fragile, inter- and co-dependent Earth, on which we depend for food, water and life itself. In this light, the question of "Who are we on Earth?" offers the opportunity to radically rethink our actions and our attitudes towards the Home Place, and ideally, realign ourselves with principles which foster a healthy Ecosphere.

Resist!

Jen Chang et al. *Resist!: A Grassroots Collection of Stories, Poetry, Photos and Analyses from the Quebec City FTAA Protests and Beyond.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2001, 192 pp.

Reviewed by Susannah Bunce

Resist!: A Grassroots Collection of Stories, Poetry, Photos and Analyses from the Quebec City FTAA Protests and Beyond (2001) is an amalgam of narratives, poems, maps, facts, sketches and photos from April 2001's FTAA protests in Quebec City. It does not set out to be anything more than a collection of narratives and art work from protestors, and thus, apart from some smaller parts that lay out facts on the FTAA and neo-liberalisation/globalisation, there is a paucity of theoretical interpretation. This is the most refreshing part of the book yet, paradoxically, also the most frustrating. Where the book does well is in the outpouring of grief, anger, frustration, and shock - the myriad of emotions that being tear-gassed, chased, arrested and terrorized arouses in people. Resist! reads like a collection of journal entries, complete with serious introspection, wily analysis, self-doubt and projected anger. Despite their depth of emotion and descriptive analysis, these entries become both exhausting and repetitive after a while.

Resist! is organized into five thematic sections. The first is a collection of political statements from activist organizations. A particularly interesting entry is from the book's editorial collective critiquing the privatisation of water and endorsing the Bolivian Cochabamba declaration, an attempt to stop the multinational Bechtel Enterprises from buying Bolivia's water system. While a more general overarching piece on globalization and the role of the FTAA would have been a more strategic introduction to the book, this piece is one of the few that discusses the connection between economic globalization and the local realm.

The second and third sections include thoughtful, emotional testimonials and general senses of on-the-street movement through Quebec City. Jennifer Bennett's entry, 'Anishinaabe Girl in Quebec,' describes the isolation that she felt being one of a few non-white student protestors juxtaposed with the collective experience of being tear-gassed. Several entries highlight the dubious role of the local police and federal authorities in the handling of protestors, and their overall view towards the protests. A few of the selections hit harder at the institutional corruption which was clearly observable. In '(Un)Reasonable Search and Seizure in Quebec City: Lessons from an Emerging Filmmaker,' Malcolm Rogge exposes the smugness of police entitlement that was evident when the RCMP stopped him for mistakenly taking a wrong turn in his car.

Attention is given in the fourth section to the role of the media in their interpretation of the protests, specifically of the mainstream media in representing the protestors as 'extremists'. This is an important debate for understanding how images of protest can be used to criminalize dissent. The final section focuses more on self-reflexive analysis, which will be important to readers of this journal interested in the issues of activist hierarchy, racialization and gender inequality within the anti-globalisation movement itself.

Overall, Resist! is a thoughtful amalgamation of work on the FTAA Protest and an important journal by which to remember the event. However, a stronger theoretical focus with an overarching analysis of economic globalisation would have augmented the pragmatic details and provided a stronger sense of the larger political context.

Damage Control

July 17 - August 23, 2003
Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art
Reviewed by Leela Viswanathan

Water and art were brought together this summer in Damage Control, a mini-exhibition of works by Paul Butler and Michel de Broin at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA) in Toronto. Displayed together, the works by Butler and de Broin reveal notions of water, waste, and whimsy. Curated by Camilla Singh, Damage Control is part of an Ontario-wide exhibition of water-related works of art.

Included in the show is a selection of Paul Butler's work from his Positive Mental Attitude series. The Winnipeg-based Butler's scenic landscapes are cut out of magazines and some are printed to sizes of nearly 24 by 36 inches. The images are collaged with mismatched paper, and some sections in each of the images are either masked by or patched up with duct tape. This is what curator Singh describes as the artist's rendering of "a Band-aid solution to larger, global, environmental water issues." The images consist of gorgeous and powerful crashing waves, rose-coloured sunsets beyond golden beaches, and river paths that could be taken by canoe. Each of the ten images in Butler's show is plastered with a different feel-good slogan that could easily be found in a popular song, advertisement, business headline, or tourism poster. For example, You Can Do Anything (2001) features the slogan of the image's title on a vista of what looks like Lake Louise in Alberta's Banff National Park.

Butler's images could easily translate into patched-up vacation posters beckoning consumers to steal themselves away to places where the sun, sea, and sky intersect. With the slogans advocating positive thinking (like crude parodies of motivational posters found in corporate offices), these are images of places where visual therapies meet political platitudes and promises of solutions. If only we think positively, Butler sardonically suggests, our concerns about dying landscapes, declining natural resources, water shortages, and toxic drinking water might go away; so, let us address our collective depression caused by environmental degradation with peppy, pretty pictures. As noted in the exhibition's press release, Butler describes this work as "basically a visual prozac."

With these palliative notions in mind, the viewer is also presented with Blue Monochrome (2003), Montreal-based Michel de Broin's work which juxtaposes the waste of 'hyperclean' water with garbage disposal. This sculptural work is essentially a Jacuzzi installed in a mid-sized, beaten-up, rusty garbage dumpster that is pumped with industrial-strength chlorinated water. The work provokes thoughts about societal attitudes regarding the disposability, cleanliness, and recreational use of water. Accompanying this installation piece is de Broin's 'A Study in Blue Monochrome', eight Ink Jet prints (each approx. 9 by 12 inches) of dumpsters and boxes. The artist uses white oil paint to mask certain parts of dumpsters in these images. While these prints have a less powerful impact than de Broin's sculptural installation, the stamped ownership titles evident on some of the dumpsters also reinforce both private and public responsibility for garbage disposal and public waste.

Photos courtesy: Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art

Collapsing Difference

July 17 - August 23, 2003
Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art
Reviewed by Carmen Victor

Live goldfish are suspended in plastic wrap along two walls, a box of lettuce trudges across the floor propelled by an elaborate system of pulleys, while a traveling speaker suspended above transmits artificial sounds of nature. Meanwhile, coloured gels gently illuminate a wall, and clear sheets of strategically perforated plastic indicate the entrance and exit of the installation. Upon closer examination, familiar objects such as paperclips and tape are used to hold things together, while ink casually marks the edges of the polyethylene plastic suspended above. This is a sculptural interpretation of Marx's lumpen-proletariat: a box of lettuce wanders diagonally across the floor and goldfish are added as an afterthought. United, these elements form Noel Harding's 'scenic events on a path of upheaval'.

Harding's lettuce functions as a parasitic entity that exists only because of the structure erected around it. It shuttles back and forth across the gallery floor with seeming purpose, serenaded by sound from the speaker above. Yet the viewer is left with a lingering sense of futility that oscillates between two poles. The lettuce is reminiscent of Sisyphus, forever bearing its load up and back. As one of Harding's unusual recruits in this installation, lettuce becomes both a focal point and an absurd novelty in a serene tableau.

The presence of goldfish suggests meaningful historical, mythological and geographical references, but they are also cold-blooded, passionless and seemingly emotionless beings. They present the viewer with contradiction; they are zen-like to look upon, yet when the details of their maintenance are investigated, their dirtiness is exposed. In 'scenic events', goldfish function as both mute decoration and enablers of brief visual pleasure.

Harding has produced a monument of abstraction, whose components incite the problem of explanation. Though there are elements in this installation that incorporate architecture and elements of sculpture, as a whole it defies both. A clue lies in the title, which suggests both the actual journey undertaken by the lettuce traversing the gallery and the metaphoric trajectory of the history of post-industrialised western culture. Some critics have claimed that this installation has contemporary political overtones, offering an ambiguous commentary on the condition of 'war'. However, in the absence of direct reference to such a calamitous situation it is a troubling assumption, as time frame alone should not be the sole common thread through which the work is interpreted.

This installation can be interpreted as a structured mechanical exercise in technical manipulation. In addition to lettuce and goldfish, the simulated sounds of birds and the unobscured use of theatrical apparatus reveal a plan, wherein the mechanics are on full display. While the alchemy of the situation is laid bare, no one except Harding can know definitively what meaning these combined elements will produce. Harding thus reveals the means, but gracefully disguises the meaning of the set of problems to be solved. In 'scenic events', the eclectic combination of these common elements work together to collapse difference within the constellation of sculpture.

Contributors

Karen Abel is a Masters student at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Her artistic interests include interpreting cultural and environmental relationships, or what she often describes as lifescapes.

Leanne Amort is a photographer living in Waterloo, Ontario with Kypp and Mazik, one of whom is a very fat cat.

Susannah Bunce is an urban planner and a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. Her doctoral research centres on urban planning and re-development processes.

Leah Burns is a community artist and arts-based researcher who has proven that dandelions will take over the world.

Taina Chahal did post-graduate studies at the International Feminist University in Hanover, Germany, and is a PhD student in Women's Studies at York University.

Robin Collyer is a Toronto-based sculptor and photographer and is represented by the Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto.

Matthew Cowley is currently completing his Masters in Environmental Studies with an emphasis on planning and the nature of urban public spaces. He has a special fondness for the giant cacti of Allan Gardens.

Jennifer Foster's research focuses on landscape ecology, ecological restoration and landscape design. She has a daughter and a gun.

Liette Gilbert is assistant professor at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, where she also coordinated the Environmental Landscape Design certificate program.

Artist and teacher, Sheila Karrow paints images that reflect the necessity between the human spirit and the land.

Brent Kulba is living in Tokyo where he continues to observe concrete after completing similar studies in Toronto.

Wendy Lu is a Toronto-based emerging artist who studied at the Anne Tanenbaum Gallery School, the Claude Watson School of Arts, and now at York University where she is completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts.

Richard J. Mount is a Research Technologist at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. One of his spare time pursuits is exploring his immediate environment, camera in hand.

Lenore Newman is a freelance writer and trans-activist living in Toronto. She is also completing a graduate degree in environmental studies at York University.

Bert Oldershaw, former Olympic canoeist, is an artist working with beach-found objects. He is based in Hamilton, Ontario.

John Opiola has worked in travel photography and film for over 25 years, capturing images from the energy of city streets to the spectacle of outdoor adventures, whether 1,000 ft underwater or 11,500 ft on a mountain top.

Aileen Penner is a graduate student, hiker and writer working on the delicate balance between a polemic and a damn good story.

Peter Rear is a geography student at the University College London and a freelance photographer.

Megan Salhus is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. She is interested in 'resistant communities' and how they are working towards redefining humanity's place in the Earth.

Writer/Photographer, Heidi Sander travels worldwide to write about its people and places and is currently working on a collection of poetry inspired by her travels and experiences.

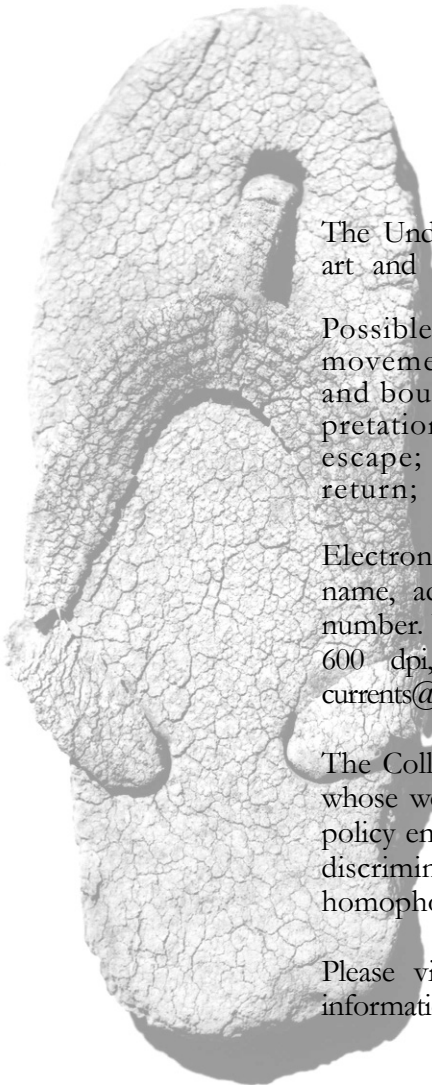
Carmen Victor is an artist and writer based in Toronto. She completed her MFA at the University of Victoria in 1999 and currently works as Curatorial Assistant at the Blackwood Gallery.

Leela Viswanathan is a PhD student at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, and a photo-based artist living in Toronto. Her research and art cut across themes of urban planning, personal narrative, and 'diversity.'

Robert Wiens lives and works in Picton, Ontario and is represented by Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto.

Elana Wolff's second collection of poems, *Mask*, will be published winter 2003 by Guernica Editions.

Brent Kulba, Concrete Watercolour, watercolour on paper



Call for Submissions

The UnderCurrents Editorial Collective invites art and written work for Vol. 14, Nomad.

Possible topics include: navigation and movement across geography, locations and boundaries; memories of place; interpretations of home; transportation and escape; transience, disappearance and return; how we know where here is.

Electronic submissions preferred. Include name, address, brief bio, email and phone number. Please submit artwork in b&w, at least 5x7, 600 dpi, .tiff files, and text in .doc to currents@yorku.ca

The Collective will work closely with authors whose work has been selected. UnderCurrents policy encourages authors to avoid the use of discriminatory discourse (eg. racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.)

Please visit www.yorku.ca/currents for more information.

Karen Abel, Discard, photo of found object

UnderCurrents
355 Lumbers Building, York University
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3 CANADA
currents@yorku.ca
www.yorku.ca/currents