UnderCurrents

journal of critical environmental studies

volume 12 $7.00

Political Natures

UnderCurrents

journal of critical environmental studies

UnderCurrents is an independent non-profit journal of critical environmental studies. We publish creative and critical writing, artwork, and photography that explore relationships between nature, society, and self. We openly 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 every issue.

FUNDING SUPPORT
York University Sponsors:
Graduate Environmental Studies Students Association
Faculty of Environmental Studies
Faculty of Graduate Studies

SPECIAL THANKS
Max Brem, Frances Chen, Rick Geater, Liette Gilbert, Steven Hermans, Lynn Fraser, Janet Morrison, David Morley, the EcoArt and Media Festival Organizers and Deborah Barndt

UnderCurrents
c/o Faculty of Environmental Studies
355 Lumbers Building
York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, M3J 1P3
Website: www.yorku.ca/currents
Email: currents@yorku.ca

SUBSCRIPTIONS
(all prices in Canadian dollars)

To receive the next issue of *UnderCurrents,* send a cheque or money order for 7$ ($15 for institutions) plus $3 for shipping and handling (international mailing extra) to:

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE
(all prices in Canadian dollars)

$5 + $3 Shipping and Handling per issue (international mailing extra). Please send a cheque or money order indicating the desired issue(s) for the appropriate amount to the address above.

PRINTER
The Incredible Printing Company

ISSN 0843-7351

by Pablo Bose and Dana Mount

Editorial Essay

Human beings, says Aristotle, are by our very nature political animals. The ways that we live our lives, the ways in which we organize our societies, the many ways through which we interact with our environments, all of these ways of being, he suggests, are essentially and ultimately political. But what does this mean, 'to be political'? Is it the same as 'being social', as being, in some way, 'artificial'? Or are the terms 'politics' and 'nature' intertwined much more closely than our present understandings of the words would lead one to believe?

Such grossly over-wrought and overly-determined concepts demand at least an attempt at definition. Yet rather than narrow the range of meanings that politics and nature might entail, in this, our twelfth issue of UnderCurrents, we invite you to join with us on an exploration that seeks to expand and broaden our understandings. By 'politics' we do not constrain our discussion to one of governments and social movements, of electioneering and power-profiteering, of rarefied decisions and elite decision-making. And by the same token, our invocation of 'nature' should not lead one to expect stories and images of flora and fauna set apart from or subsisting beyond the realm of the 'human political'. This is not, in other words, an issue devoted to the ceremonial rites of elections, nor to the whim and whimsy of trees, as we try to understand them outside of ourselves.

Our hope is to dissolve as much as possible the barriers between the concepts, to show the fluidity and intermingling between them. 'Politics' might today be appropriated by the worlds of the state and of backrooms and diplomacy, 'nature' by social movements and multinational corporations alike, but the present issue of *UnderCurrents* seeks to move beyond tired clichés and simple dualisms to embrace the complexities and ambiguities contained within these two words, to show their antithesis as a contrived rather than inherent one.

The question that our contributors ask in poetry and song, in essay and sketch, in painting and photo, is what are our political natures? How do we understand and constitute our selves? What are the spaces that we inhabit, spaces of contestation and debate, of collective action and of interconnection? What are the visions that we bring forth for our lives- visions of justice and of beauty, of freedom and of mortality, of the sublime and the terrifying? In what do we see the political and in what the natural, in what their intersect, their overlap, their indivisibility?

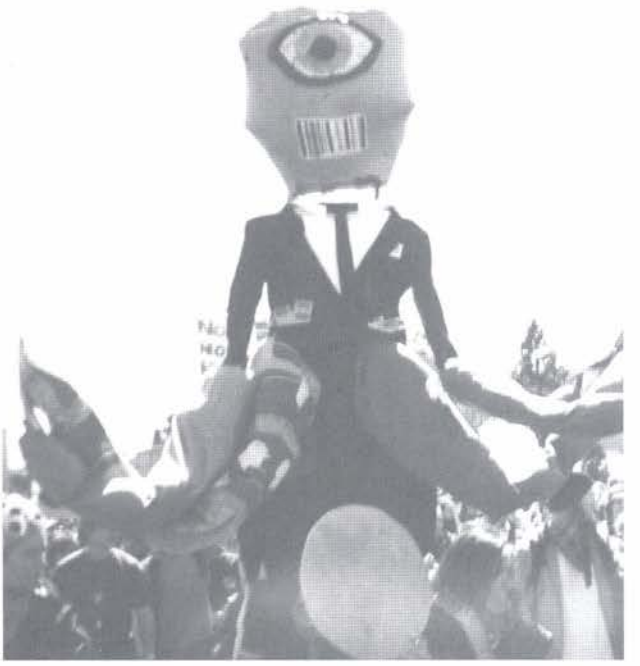
Traci Warkentin suggests this indivisibility in Scream, a poem that imagines our connection to animals based on the shared experience of inhabiting the body. The poem is weighted in its use of space, it covers the page with dripping imagery and sensitive language. Using the dryer, cleaner lines that her envisioned desert landscape conjures, Elana Wolff presents ideas on the nature of growth in her poetry. There is a sense of displacement and persistence in her lines, some most suitably set here in Toronto.

Four graduate students take us back to Brazil through their writing, where they attended the World Social Forum last winter. Their report back is a conversation on the experiences, contemplating the nature of local and national politics especially as an alternative political form gains growing support in Porto Alegre. The reflections are as much an exploration of alternative political systems as it is a critique of these alternative conventions, and the accessibility they strive for versus that which they reflect.

Richard Oddie's "Justice, Dissent and the 'War on Terrorism'" is a more detailed consideration of the current global and anti-globalization political spheres. His post-September 11th analysis of American militarism and its effect on the activist movement offers astute perceptions for all in the movement. The article extends its significance by arguing for change based on a new sensibility rooted in the philosophies of Herbert Marcuse.

Leah Burns' painting, an intimate portrait of a fish, reminds us of the individuality of the 'non-political' animals that exist within our political realms. Sau-Wai Tai offers another perspective on 'animal' through her photograph "Lawn Snakes", which depicts her interpretation of the human-built as natural.

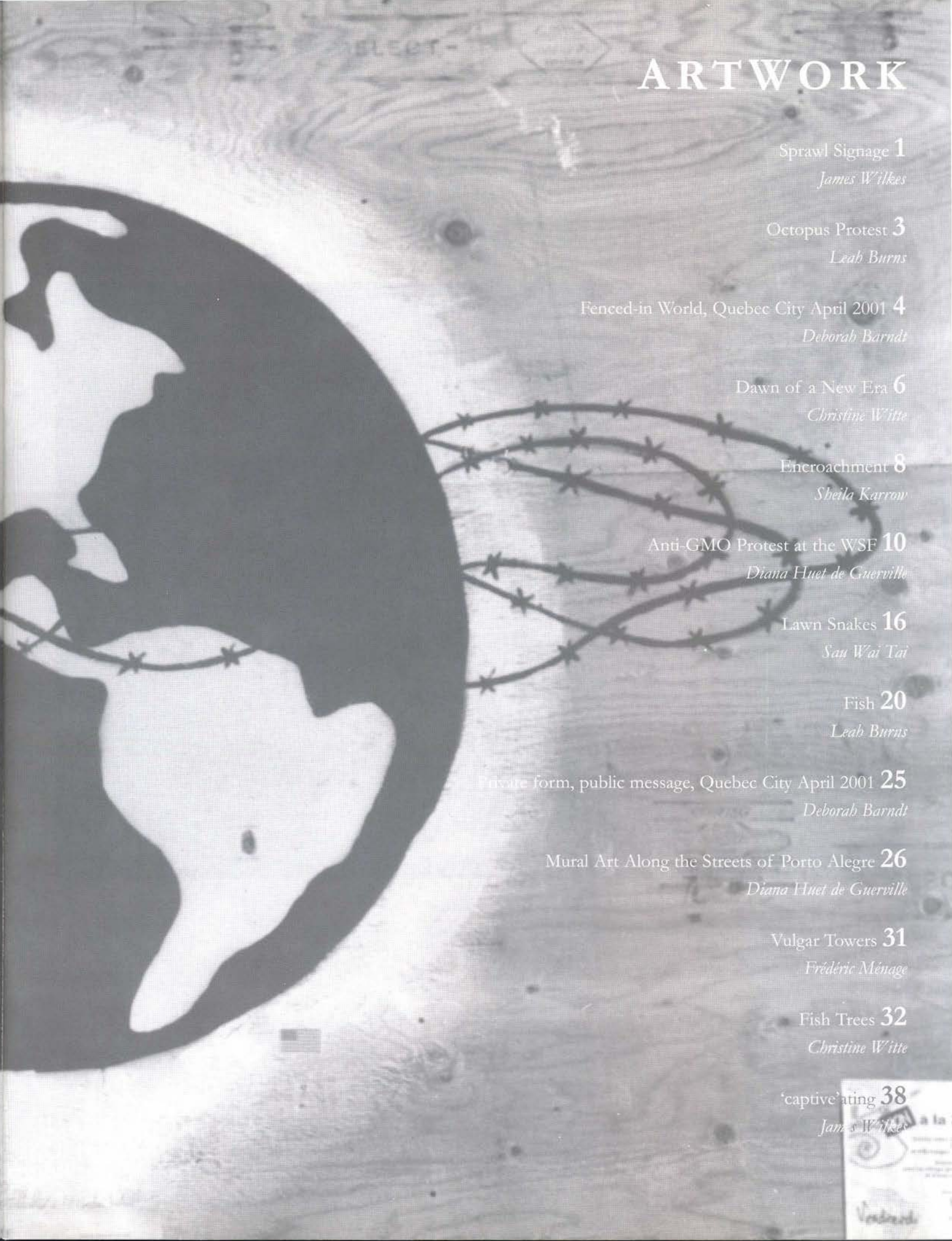
Together on these pages are the critical and creative explorations of our varied political natures. Read them well, reflect, enjoy.



Octopus Protest, photo by Leah Burns
Cover: Sprawl Signage, photo by James Wilkes

WRITING

ARTWORK



by Elana Wolff

MEN IN LINE *Eilat*

Patience found expression in these
angling
arabesques

whose prize, an inter-
mitten bite, is fish

too small to satisfy an appetite for food.
Something more absorbs these men

their backs before the sun, exposed,
buckets filling up fertility figures.
(None of the fish are given
back.)

I'm not aware of the name of the catch;
I'm not aware of numbers.

Only the shimmering struggle (which I
see)
and the arid wind; the sun-

burnt purple mountains over Aqaba in
the
valley.

Not the view that Lawrence saw in 1917
coming out of the desert with disciples.

by Pablo Bose

Is this what an environmentalist looks like?

Somewhere on the streets of Seattle, on a brightwinters day in 1999, someone called me an environmentalist. I still haven't quite recovered from the shock.

After all, I wasn't tied to a bulldozer or blockading a logging road. I wasn't protesting in front of an aquarium or splashing red paint on a fur-ensconced socialite. No, instead I was ambling along the sunny streets of Seattle's university district, a tasty falafel wrap dulling any nascent revolutionary rumblings I might have had. Turning the corner towards the rusty turnstiles of Husky Stadium, who should I have run into but one of my mother's friends, a self-described environmental activist from BC who fit just about every stereotype there was about 'tree-huggers.'

"Fancy meeting you here!" she exclaimed, "I didn't know you were an environmentalist. Funny, I never figured you for one…"

I pondered this observation for a moment and took in the sight she presented. Sandal-clad she was, hair-adorned with a flower or two (though in truth the crisp air alone should've told her that the summer of love was long since past), and the hint of tie-dye peeking out from beneath a raincoat. And there she stood, surveying me in all my shaven-headed, brown-skinned, black-clad, be-ringed glory, wondering where my regulation-issue environmentalists' gear might be, looking at me with a mixture of faint apprehension and even fainter approval.

"I didn't know you were an environmentalist," she repeated, still waiting for a response.

"Actually," I began rather lamely, " I'm here for the rally and the march against the WTO."

"Well I know that," she replied "We're all here to protest against the WTO. But who are you with?"

"Umm, well, I'm not really with anyone," I stammered, "Except my friends over there," and I motioned vaguely in the direction of my companions.

"—I'm a guest with the Turtles" she interrupted, pointing proudly towards a group of green-costumed protestors.

I didn't quite know what to make of this. After all, what does one say to an honorary amphibian? Luckily, she saved me from having to come up with any further witless stammering by clucking her tongue disapprovingly at a passing SUV and acidly remarking that the driver must be rushing through the streets on his way home to an expensive dinner of Chilean sea bass (genetically modified, of course).

"Be safe," she told me, as she bestowed a blessing and walked back to join her Turtle companions. I turned to see that my friends had already moved into the stadium by now, and ran to catch up with them, still puzzling over why she had assumed I must be an environmentalist if I was here.

I looked around the rapidly filling stands and wondered what her eyes had seen. What I saw was fairly chaotic and hard to characterize solely as an environmental protest. I saw a decrepit stadium, filled to the rafters with a surging, swirling, incoherent mass of people, signs and banners. Most carried messages decrying the threat that the WTO and its cabal of market-mad commissioners posed to the environment and to workers. Some declared allegiance or membership to this organization or that. Others carried a simple, blunt statement: "WTO Kills", "Fair Trade not Free Trade", and—ironic in a sea of mostly white activists—"Whitey Must Pay."

My reverie was soon interrupted by the beginning of the speeches. If I had thought the scene had been confusing before, things were about to become a whole lot more surreal.

Many usual suspects were there—Vandana Shiva prominent amongst them—only they had not become so familiar to me yet. After all, this was December 1999. This was long before I became used to the sight of environmental, labour, human rights, and other social justice organizations coalescing together for marches in Washington and Davos. This was a time when all I knew of Quebec City was that it had lost a hockey team and given us poutine, when the only thing I knew about Genoa was salami.

But the message that came pouring forth from the stage that day was nowhere near as (semi-) coherent or predictable as the steps to the anti-globalization dance have become these days. No, instead we had indigenous activists from Latin America telling us of the devastating effects that neo-liberal economic policies were having on their communities in one breath, and labour leaders from Texas telling us we needed to keep out illegal aliens from stealing their jobs in the next. We had Thomas Kocherry, a social justice advocate from southern India raging against '400 years of colonialism and

racism' one moment, and Jimmy Hoffa Jr. urging an acknowledgement of labour's 'place at the WTO table' in another. The latter claim was punctuated by a large contingent of Teamsters rising to their feet and chanting, "Hoffa! Hoffa! Hoffa!" near the front of the stage. Turtles to the left of me, Teamsters to the right, stuck in the middle of what, I still wasn't sure.

I'm still not sure. I still find it hard to self-identify as an environmentalist, not because I'm not passionate about environmental concerns, but rather because I'm not entirely sure what one is. On the streets of Seattle that day, I heard the chant, "This is what democracy looks like!" I haven't heard a similar one coming from environmental protests, and that's probably a good thing. After all, I certainly know what the mainstream media thinks an environmentalist should look like—probably a lot like the stereotype I slotted my mother's friend into—but I don't look like that.

I'm not just talking about the Birkenstocks that don't gird my feet, or the plaid shirt that isn't draped about my shoulders. I'm not talking about my inability to carry the tune to 'kumbaya', my unwillingness to bond around a campfire or commune with lichen. I simply have never really shaken that feeling that I got from those first few times I went to anti-logging demonstrations to save our BC forests. When I looked out at the crowds of people that had gathered, it was still overwhelmingly white and overwhelmingly middle-class. All those criticisms that were levied at the environmental movement in the 60's seemed to have been left untempered by the struggles for social justice and against environmental racism that have arisen in the decades since.

And yet there I was in Seattle, lumped by an outside observer into the category of 'environmentalist.' Why not labour activist, I wondered? Or student protestor? Disgruntled youth? I suppose some of those categories hadn't become fashionable yet. Anti-globalization chic hadn't made its way into the malls and fashion runways and video game screens yet. But what made her single me out as an 'environmentalist?'

Today, it's much easier for me to claim that mantle, if I want to. I teach and do research in a faculty of environmental studies. I have paychecks and registration fees and nametags and business cards that say that I do. My rings are stored in a little box on my mantle, my black jeans are faded from washing them in warm water, and my hair has grown out into a tsunami-like coif. Yet I'm no easier with the idea of environmentalist, if it means being slotted into the stereotype.

Why do I need a label at all, one might ask? Why not simply accept and live with—indeed revel in—the contradictions and the confusions of life? I am very much inclined towards such an attitude. I know, broadly speaking, that I fall into the camp of the 'anti'—anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-colonial—rather than under the banner of the 'neo'—neo-liberal, neo-imperial, neo-conservative. I prefer this idea of general tendencies. I don't want to live a label, with a set of prejudices and proclivities pre-loaded into my system. But I suppose there is a certain safety and security in categories, in the sense of a coherent community.

The danger arises when one begins to insist upon a static unity of purpose, a monolithic and singular way forward. Such stances bulldoze over the multiple meanings and parallel motivations that bring people together into coalitions. "We are engaged in similar struggles," said Vandana Shiva after Seattle, "But they are not identical ones."

For me, the strength and the possibility lies in that multiplicity of meaning, the creative potential coiled around difference. And that is to what I turn, as a child of the diaspora, a Canadian of South Asian heritage who is only now coming to terms with the privilege and power that accrues to me due to circumstances of gender and class and sexuality. I don't look for universals—for they are, as the theorist Nancy Fraser says, simply particulars that masquerade as everyone's interest.[1]

And so that is why whenever someone asks me today if I am an environmentalist, I think back to a winter's afternoon in Seattle and remember a chaotic and contradictory mass of people—though one that was still overwhelmingly white—and hesitantly say, "well, sort of." Not the most stirring response, I will admit. But when I think about it, I'm still really in the same position I was back then. Standing in a crowd, Turtles to the left of me, Teamsters to the right of me, stuck in the middle with who?

1 Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition*. New York: Routledge, 1997.


NO INSTITUTO DE
PRÉDIO 3, SALA 200 - FONE: 3336-5311
TRANGÊNICOS NO MEU PRATINHO, NÃO!
SOU FILHO DA MONSANTO
TO BE OR NOT TO BE
TRANGÊNICO UM ABACAXI E TANTO

by Richard Oddie

Justice, Dissent and the "War on Terrorism"

Marcusean Musings on Militarism and Pacification

Terrorism and Activism After 9/11

In the wake of the September 11th attacks on the United States and the bombing of Afghanistan, those engaged in struggles for social and environmental justice are faced with a number of emerging problems and challenges. One of the most serious is the equation of social activism with terrorism. Over the past year, journalists and politicians around the world have increasingly used language that compares activists to terrorists. The *New York Post* spoke of the "terror threat" posed by demonstrators at the World Economic Forum in November 2001, while an editorial in the *New York Daily News* at the same time warned protestors, "New York will not be terrorized. We already know what that's like."[1] That same month, just prior to the World Trade Organization ministerial meetings in Doha, Qatar, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick declared that free trade is one of the most effective and important tools in the fight against terrorism, noting that both counter-globalization activists and the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks share the same goal of undermining America's "global leadership". Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has made similar comparisons, declaring that Islamic terrorists and counter-globalization activists are "enemies of Western civilization."[2]

This indiscriminate use of the word "terrorism" is not simply a war of words, as the recent increase in military aggression around the world demonstrates. Drawing legitimacy from America's "war on terrorism", governments in other countries have taken this opportunity to aggressively crack down on dissent and terrorism within their borders, even as they engage in some of the terrorist tactics they claim to be fighting. Consider, for example, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's frequent references to the "war on terrorism" in his attempts to justify the recent series of heavy-handed "pre-emptive" and retaliatory military strikes on Palestinian cities and refugee camps, many of which have claimed the lives of numerous civilians. Similarly, governments in Russia, China, Columbia, Egypt, Macedonia and the Philippines have declared their own wars against terrorism, capturing all forms of internal dissent, from separatists to human rights activists, within this single word. Countries around the world have enacted new "anti-terror" legislation, in many cases removing or limiting existing legal rights and protections, including prohibitions against arbitrary arrest and detention.[3]

The media coverage given to these recent actions and events often remains biased in favour of national governments. The root causes of violence and terrorism, such as social injustice, poverty and political oppression, too often remain unquestioned. The Bush administration's vague, Orwellian notion of an endless war that will eliminate terrorism, person by person, "rogue state" by "rogue state", narrowly limits the boundaries of the discussion surrounding the cause of, and appropriate responses to, the attacks of September 11th, effectively discouraging questions regarding the history and future direction of US foreign policy.[4] The discussion has been framed in the simplistic, black and white terms of a battle between the civilized world, those who uphold the Western values of freedom and democracy allegedly exemplified by the "American way of life" and the barbarians, those "enemies of freedom" who are said to be ideologically opposed to such values. In this respect, the similarities between the words of George W. Bush and those of Osama Bin Laden are hard to ignore. In both cases, the enemy is defined as an evil force that cannot be bargained with. The only solution, then, is to eradicate this enemy wherever it may exist; like a cancer or infestation, it must be exterminated before it spreads.

Recognizing that the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre were deliberate strikes against prominent symbols of the military and economic might of America, Washington has mobilized to defend its position of global supremacy, calling for increased consumption to support the national economy, the further expansion and enforcement of trade liberalization regimes, an uncompromising unilateral approach to international relations, and an unprecedented twelve percent increase in military spending.[5] In addition to the chilling effect on dissent that has been brought about by the rhetoric of good versus evil and the introduction of "anti-terrorism" legislation, activists must also confront the fact that the "war on terrorism" is being used to justify social and environmental problems even as it obscures them. If sustainability, for example, was a marginal issue for the mainstream media before September 11th, it was in danger of becoming a non-issue after the attacks.

Prior to these events, the Bush administration's opposition to investment in renewable energy sources and its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol had been widely criticized, but post September 11th, talk of the "war effort", "homeland security" and the patriotic fight for "freedom" has drowned out the calls for environmental responsibility and distracted attention away from the connections between US foreign policy in the Middle East and America's economic dependency on oil. Recently, the growing debate within Canada over the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol has returned sustainability to the public spotlight in this country, and the spectacular series of corporate scandals south of the border have shaken the popular faith in free-market panaceas. Yet the conflation of the defence of freedom and democracy with increased consumer spending, further trade liberalization and military action still remains largely unquestioned by the mainstream media, at least within North America.

How can we better understand this response to the terrible attacks of September 11th? How can those engaged in the struggle for social and environmental justice and the creation of a sustainable future best respond to these events? In order to address these questions, I turn to the writings of Herbert Marcuse, a social theorist who greatly influenced the New Left, and particularly the student movement, during the 1960s and 1970s. As I hope to demonstrate, Marcuse's work is particularly relevant to our attempt to understand the present situation because his diagnosis of the ills of advanced industrial civilization focuses upon the ideological convergence of militarism and consumerism, particularly within the US, while his prognosis acknowledges the need to address issues of both social and environmental injustice in order to build a more equitable and peaceful world. Furthermore, his writings on socialism and social movements suggest strategies and long-term goals for

activism that may be worth revisiting and reconsidering in light of recent events.

The Critique of One-Dimensional Society

Like the other members of the Frankfurt School for Social Research,[6] Marcuse drew upon the theoretical foundations of Marxism, but called into question some of its basic assumptions. Faced with the decline of revolutionary workers' movements and the rise of fascism in Europe between the World Wars, Marcuse and his contemporaries realized that Marxist theory would have to be reconsidered and revitalized if it was to remain relevant to these new and dramatic changes in modern society. Marcuse's own work can be seen as a sustained attempt to update the Marxist analysis of capitalism while still retaining its essential elements and critical force. The failure of revolutionary movements across Europe, the transformation of Russian socialism into a repressive, bureaucratic regime, and the rapid development of monopoly capitalism in the US following the Second World War, led Marcuse to question Marx's theory of the perpetual crisis of capitalism, as well as the revolutionary potential of the working class. His most famous work, *One Dimensional Man*, was an attempt to explain how and why "the development of revolutionary consciousness" had been arrested in the post-War period within advanced industrial societies, both capitalist and communist.

Contrary to Marx, who argued that increasing poverty and exploitation of the working class would eventually lead to revolution, Marcuse claims that this potential was largely defused by the integration of the working class within modern capitalist society. This integration and stabilization was possible due to advances in technology and increased productivity, leading to better wages and better working conditions. According to Marcuse, these new capabilities for mass production were accompanied by new methods of mass manipulation. "False needs" were manufactured and multiplied by advertising and the mass media, "superimposed upon the individual by particular societal interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice."[7] These consumer needs for money, property, and possessions are "false" in sofar as they fail to deliver the satisfaction that they promise, and to the extent that their satisfaction supports a social order and an economic system which cannot meet the "vital needs" for food, clothing and shelter of the population as a whole. Marcuse claims that consumer needs are repressive because they actually constrain individual freedom by preventing the creation of a more just and rational social order, concealing the waste, inequality and exploitation inherent in the capitalist system. A society is "one-dimensional" to the extent that individual acceptance of social institutions and conformity to dominant social values and modes of behaviour prevents consideration of alternative institutions, values and behaviour, and forecloses possibilities for qualitative social change. Consumer needs contribute to this limitation of freedom by encouraging individuals to identify their own interests with those that are imposed upon them. Identity is increasingly shaped, supported and exemplified by commodities. "The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced."[8] In this one-dimensional society, the critical faculty of depth, the ability to conceive of a qualitative difference between the real and the possible, is lost in the endless flash and glitter of new products and new forms of entertainment.

Militarism and Surplus Repression

Writing in the midst of the Cold War, Marcuse saw the conflict between capitalism and communism as a stand off between two incomplete and unjust social systems, each lacking what the other has and each opposed to genuine socialism, "a form of life which would dissolve the basis for domination," removing power from the hands of a ruling elite and returning it to the people.[9] For both superpowers, this conflict served as a justification for increasing bureaucratic administration and military expenditure, mobilizing the population in defence against an external enemy who was believed to threaten the prosperity and freedom of all. Marcuse claims that this perpetual threat is vital for preventing social change, and the history of US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War seems to support such an analysis.[10] While capitalism has been declared triumphant over communism, numerous military "interventions" on the part of the US government during the last decade have been justified on the basis of new "threats to freedom."

According to Marcuse, such sustained militarism, frequently erupting into war, serves to unify opposing groups and conflicting perspectives within society by identifying threats to a shared way of life. In addition, militarism provides employment opportunities and stimulates economic growth. War temporarily stabilizes the social and economic system, sopping up excess production and justifying or postponing social and environmental problems in the name of national defence. Orwellian language is used to cover over, sanitize or glorify the horror and irrationality of war, describing accidental civilian deaths as "collateral damage," soldiers accidentally killed by their comrades as the victims of "friendly fire", and military assassinations as "retaliatory actions" or "pre-emptive strikes." This is the kind of "one-dimensional" language that serves to simplify complex issues, cancelling out dissenting views and conflicting perspectives by reducing the complexity of historical events to epic moments, and the struggles between different interests to mythological battles between heroes and villains. In the same way, words like "terrorism", "freedom" and "security" are now being used to paint a particular, frighteningly simplistic picture of past events and future possibilities in terms of a battle between good and evil in which all means employed to achieve victory are justified.[11]

Nature and Liberation

Marcuse invites us to imagine and work towards creating a society governed by a different reality, one based on the fulfillment of vital needs for growth and communication rather than the manufactured needs of capitalistic competition, consumption and accumulation. This would entail a new relationship with nature that would work to resolve the conflicts between individuals, societies and the natural environment. Nature would no longer be simply perceived as a threat to be resisted or a resource to be conquered and put to use. According to Marcuse, a more cooperative relationship between human beings would break down the artificial barrier between humanity and nature, allowing us to appreciate and respect the inherent value of non-human life, even as we recognize that nature's well being and survival is intimately connected to our own.[12] Life instincts would take precedence over destructive instincts, turning the longing for painlessness towards a

desire for the erotic pleasure of deeper connection and communication with others. "The drive for painlessness, for the pacification of existence, would then seek fulfillment in protective care for living things. It would find fulfillment in the recapture and restoration of our life environment, and in the restoration of nature, both external and within human beings."[13]

Marcuse regarded environmentalism, along with the women's liberation, civil rights and student movements that blossomed during the 1960s and 70s, as the manifestation of a "new sensibility" that profoundly challenged the values, practices and policies of the prevailing social order. Not only did these new social movements identify the linkages between sexism, racism, militarism, consumerism and environmental destruction, but according to Marcuse, they also literally embodied a new way of experiencing the world, articulating new needs, values, goals and aspirations that rejected the needs and values of the dominant consumer culture. He writes, "In a society based on alienated labour, human sensibility is *blunted*: men (sic) perceive things only in the forms and functions in which they are given, made, used by the existing society; and they perceive only the possibilities of transformation as defined by, and confined to, the existing society."[14] This "new sensibility", then, does not simply involve the adoption of "alternative" modes of behaviour or ways of living, but is the emergence of a new way of understanding and experiencing the world; an "emancipation of the senses" that will allow people to recognize other human beings and nature itself as subjects in their own right, engendering respect for human and non-human life and fostering sensitivity to the interconnections between one's self and the surrounding world.[15] In Marcuse's words, "The faculty of being 'receptive,' 'passive,' is a precondition for freedom: it is the ability to see things in their own right, to experience the joy in them, the erotic energy of nature – an energy which is there to be liberated: nature, too, awaits the revolution!"[16]

Nature, for Marcuse, refers to both the natural environment and human nature, historical entities that are capable of being understood and experienced differently than at present. Marcuse advocates an environmentalism that recognizes that the same instrumental rationality that reduces nature to an object for science and a resource for technology, also constrains and reduces human nature, repressing desires and promoting the false needs that perpetuate an environmentally destructive social system. The liberation of nature does not require the rejection of modern civilization and technology, but rather creative usage of the achievements of advanced industrial civilization to build a more just and equitable society that does not depend upon the exploitation of human and non-human nature for its survival.[17] A new or liberated science would emphasize the interconnections between humanity and nature, and ensure that the social and historical context of scientific inquiry is recognized and respected. Technology would accordingly be designed to eliminate unnecessary and alienated labour, removing the conditions of scarcity that promote social domination and environmental destruction. Rather than the pursuit of private profit and the production of unnecessary commodities, furthering the public good would become the primary goal of science and technology. The use and transformation of nature would be "non-violent, non-destructive: oriented on the life-enhancing, sensuous, aesthetic qualities inherent in nature."[18] Here, the contrast between the real and the possible, the present social order and a qualitatively different order, is renewed and revitalized, disrupting the conformity and complacency of one-dimensional reality. To many, this may seem like an idealistic vision, but it is precisely such models for a better future that are needed when demands for ecological health, social justice and peace are being overshadowed by the rhetoric of war and domination.

Reconsidering Strategies of Resistance

Marcuse's analysis of the connections between the exploitation of human beings and the devastation of nature reinforces this point and asks us to consider the enormous social and environmental costs of war.[19] His critique of advanced industrial society invites us to consider militarism as an essential and inevitable component of a society predicated on the values of aggressive competition and the perpetual expansion of private wealth. Demonstrating how consumerism and militarism are used to prevent fundamental change in an economic system that is becoming increasingly unjust and environmentally destructive, this critique draws our attention to the elite minority within the government and the corporate world who are benefiting most from the present distribution of power and wealth. The "war on terrorism" provides justification not only for the preservation of this system but its acceleration and expansion, at a time when its continued existence seems increasingly threatened by social unrest and environmental problems on a global scale. Having declared a war in which the opponents and objectives are subject to continual redefinition, the Bush administration has proposed a state of never-ending conflict; in the President's own words, "a task that never ends." Mobilized against an enemy that knows no national boundaries, who could be lurking in our very midst, the direction and methods of this war can continually be altered. And, as recent events have clearly demonstrated, one enemy can easily be replaced by another.

Reconsidering strategies of resistance in the light of Marcuse's vision, one must emphasize the necessity for continued efforts to articulate alternative social, political and economic models while working to transform existing institutions. Investigating the possibility of ulterior motives for the "war on terrorism" and questioning the spurious justification of war as a guarantee of security and the necessary means for the preservation of freedom and democracy, activists must struggle to gain control of the political language that has emerged since September 11th. The terms and phrases that now dominate the media, such as "terrorism", "security", "freedom" and "democracy", are defined in such a way as to limit discussion and debate. These definitions must be openly and aggressively challenged, and alternative definitions must be proposed. Those who are engaged in struggles for social and environmental justice must make clear the distinctions between terrorism and dissent, perpetual war and genuine security, vengeance and justice. We must demonstrate that lasting peace and security is impossible without addressing the social, political and economic conditions that promote and sustain violence and environmental destruction.

Street protests and other forms of direct action must now, more than ever, be complemented and guided by the strengthening of established networks between environmental, social justice and peace activists, as well as the creation of new alliances, exploring

new forms and new avenues of communication to spread a message that counters the rhetoric of perpetual war and retribution. The "war on terrorism" is being used to justify direct discrimination and the persecution of marginalized peoples around the world and so it is particularly critical at this time to make very clear the links between racism and violence, to emphasize that it is often the most vulnerable people who are exposed to the death and destruction of war. Standing together with those whose basic human rights are being violated, it is crucial to emphasize the distinction between governments and the people and nations they claim to represent, between those who declare wars and those who fight them, between the sanitized images of conflict on the television screen and the terrible devastation on the ground. Spreading the message and cultivating the practice of non-violence is essential, both to counter the growing association between activism and violence, and to build genuine alternatives to the gunboat diplomacy model of international relations and conflict resolution that is now being employed by the Bush administration.

While Marcuse's notion of a "new sensibility," a new orientation towards our understanding of reality and our treatment of human and non-human beings, may seem fanciful or idealistic, removed from the harsh reality of the present, it suggests an important message that is rarely heard in times of war: that genuine communication is possible only if one is able to respect the value of other living beings and recognize the interdependence between one's self and others. This focus on individual values and desires, set against the manufactured identities and desires of consumer culture, also emphasizes the importance of living out one's ideals at the level of everyday experience, making small but important changes in one's life that reflect those ideals. This notion of a new orientation toward the world that is developed through everyday experience, the embodiment of liberating values and desires, draws our attention to the fact that positive social change is brought about not only through public protest and media spectacles, but by more subtle and gradual means, such as conversations with others and changes in the way we choose to spend our money. While sometimes lacking in historical and empirical detail, Marcuse's critique of capitalism and his vision of a more equitable and peaceful society have much to contribute to the ongoing articulation of a new vision of global justice and solidarity. As Marcuse clearly recognized, it is when dissent becomes most difficult that it is most vital. Confronted with escalating violence, irrationality presented as rational argumentation, and a pervasive sense of powerlessness and pessimism, we must renew our commitment to global justice, continuing to dream of a better world and realizing that dream, each day, through communication and action.

Notes

1. "Econ Summit Brings Own Terror Threat," *The New York Post*, January 18, 2002; *New York Daily News*, January 13, 2002.

2. Zoellick and Berlusconi quoted in Katharine Ainger, "A Culture of Life, A Culture of Death," *The New Internationalist*, November, 2001, pp. 20-22.

3. In the wake of the United Nations Security Council's resolution that all countries should pass comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation, many fear that such legislation will be used to criminalize legitimate forms of dissent and justify human rights abuses by employing a wide-ranging and ambiguous definition of terrorist activity.

4. For a history of US foreign policy since World War II, focusing on the bloody history of CIA covert operations and military interventions, see William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower,* Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2000.

5. One of the beneficiaries of this increase in military spending is the Carlyle Group, the eleventh largest defence contractor in the United States. Carlyle currently employs a number of former US statesmen including former Secretary of State James Baker, former British Prime Minister John Major, and former US President George Bush. For more on the connections between the Carlyle Group, the Bush family and the bin Laden family, see Tim Shorrock's article "The Big Guns" in *The New Internationalist*, July 2002, pp. 26-27.

6. The Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, attempted to develop an interdisciplinary "critical theory" of modern society and culture that expanded upon the basic analysis of political economy offered by Marxism. An excellent introduction to critical theory and the Frankfurt School is provided by Douglas Kellner's *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity,* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.

7. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, p. 5.

8. *Ibid*, p. 9. Marcuse's analysis of the links between commodities and the formation of self-identity can be seen as a development of Marx's own writings on commodity fetishism.

9. *Ibid*, p. 55.

10. The "US Defense Planning Guide", a policy document written by the Pentagon in 1992, suggests that the primary goal of US foreign policy is to support and expand the global economic, political and military dominance of the United States. Important excepts from this 46-page policy statement were published in the *New York Times*, March 8, 1992.

11. The fourth chapter of *One-Dimensional Man* discusses "one-dimensional" language at length, examining how such language discourages critical thinking and dissent by diminishing the contrast between the real and the possible – what is and what could be.

12. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1955, pp. 109-110.

13. Herbert Marcuse, "Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 3, no. 3, September 1992, pp. 29-38.

14. Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1972, p. 60.

15. This theme runs throughout the second chapter of *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, pp. 59-78.

16. Ibid, p. 74

17. Ibid, p. 60.

18. Ibid, p. 67. There is a tension in Marcuse's writings between the instrumental use of nature and the recognition of nature "as a *subject* in its own right." While earlier writings, such as *One-Dimensional Man*, suggest that the "pacification of existence" requires the technological mastery of nature, his later writings stress the importance of a more respectful attitude toward nature, recognizing the interdependence between human and non-human life.

19. On the environmental impacts of modern warfare and military research after World War II, see Rosalie Bertell, *Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War.*

* Thanks to Pablo Bose, Cate Sandilands, and Mary Sealey for their helpful comments and suggestions.

There's something missing in these pages and I know it's you.
I'm still trying to keep that promise
but you're always there
behind the silence
the tears
faces turning away

You show up in the most unusual places
the tips of my fingers
the palms of my hands
invading my self esteem

by Leonarda Carranza

One thing that we all agree on, is that it was dark when we left El Salvador. Some think it was night, evening, or just before day break. But all those that have a memory of that day in May remember that it was dark.

It was dark…

There were lots of people on the bus and I was puking and puking. The bus was cramped, my legs hurt. I couldn't find a comfertable position. Sitting on my granny's lap, I kept shifting. My stomach hurt. When the vommiting would stop my legs and head would take turns throbbing. I wanted to go home. I was tired of sitting, tired of puking. People kept passing used plastic bags to my mother hoping she could contain the vomit and maybe even its smell.

But it doesn't work that way. Even once the bag has been tossed out the window, the smell keeps creeping back in through the cracks.

My mom was annoyed.

When the vendors walked down the aisles selling pops and food my granny, Nuona, bought me a coke. I liked the bubbles and the way they clung to my throat and made my nose sting. Memo, my little brother, was sitting close by on my momi's lap; he wanted the bubbles to. That's when he started fake puking. He forced the sound, and stuck out his tongue so far that he actually puked. Except there was no used bag ready for his milky vomit and it spread over us. There's nothing worse than milk puke. I felt crowded by the people and the smell of dried puke. My clothes felt sticky.

Before we left I remember my mom dressing me while I was still in bed. I wanted desperately for her to leave me be and let me sleep. I tried fighting her as much as I could, but before I was even fully awake I was dressed and my body was being pulled and pushed off my bed. She then led me to the bathroom and washed my face. The sharp cold water forced my eyes to open but not for long. She told me to brush my teeth. I could hardly see where I was going. It was dark outside and inside. No lights were on. When I finished pretending to brush, I walked back into my room determined to get back in bed. But she pushed me back into the hallway towards the living room. I remember how she turned towards me, her face serious, and sent me to say "Adios" to my father.

There was something very permanent and sad about using that word. I thought about it then but when I walked into the room and saw my father sitting in the dark, I forgot all about the finality of the "Adios". I was drawn to his face, and the lost look in his eyes. He was smoking, inhaling and exhaling, so calculated, there was a soft rhythm to his action. I liked the way the smoke filled the room, and clouded around his face, his gaze off somewhere far away from here. Far away from me.

It was only until I shuffled my body in front of him that he realized I was there, then he rose from the chair abruptly, cigarette still in hand, and wrapped his arms around me giving me the most unusual hug. It was warm and sad. I wanted to stay their and hold onto him. But just as fast as I had felt his embrace he let go of me and gently pushed my body aside.

It was only then that I realized that we were all out of bed. Eli was there, scratching her head, her eyes still shut and so was Quique and Memo, all waiting in line to say goodbye to our father. Where are we going Papi? But he didn't answer. No one answered.

When we left I was about five, Quique was seven, Eli was eight; and Memo was two-years-old. I don't think we had ever been on a bus before. My granny Nuona she was 57 and my mom, she was only 29.

by Maria Dunn

Shadow of the Rockies[1]

Living in Alberta for 25 years, I have travelled in and through the stunning Canadian Rockies countless times. Only recently did I learn that some of the infrastructure that helps us enjoy the mountain parks was built by the forced labour of Ukrainian Canadian men interned during WWI. A few years earlier, Canada had actively encouraged these immigrants (often referred to as "Galicians") as much-needed industrial workers, particularly in railway construction. However, in the face of war with the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914, the government decided that these "enemy aliens", now unemployed by the pre-war recession, were a potential menace to the community and should be detained in remote camps. Food, clothing and living conditions were poor, and on top of their expected work time, the internees often had to march many hours from the camp to their place of work.

This song takes its name from a book written by B.S. Kordan & P. Melnycky entitled *In the Shadow of the Rockies: Diary of the Castle Mountain Internment Camp, 1915-1917*.

OTHER READING: Waiser, B. *Park prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946*. Calgary: Fifth House, 1995.

Young stranger,
as you walk these trails of beauty
And you feel the mountain air caress your face
As you stand in the shadow of the Rockies
Remember who toiled in this place
Please, remember who toiled in this place

I.
They courted our labour and called us to settle
The Great Canadian Plains
But how fickle the love of a fair young Alberta
For her "enemy aliens"

II.
Oh pity the young man in 1914
Who hadn't a job or a trade
And doubly so the man from Galicia2
For he was soon detained

III.
Our invisible hands worked in nature's cathedral
For the pleasure of tourist and town
Six days a week at slavery's wages
Still we were not wanted around

IV.
In a camp the lay beneath Castle Mountain
Rotten food and sodden tents
The most glorious place in the world is ugly
When seen through a barbed wire fence

V.
Our footsteps and voices have long since faded
From these pristine forest paths
Yet many's the mile and the hour we trudged here
To our place of labour and back

VII.
If you listen, young stranger, the wind in the pines
Or the water over the stones
You may hear the songs we sang to each other
To remind us of our homes

NOTES:

1. The title of the song is taken from the title of the following book:
Kordan, B.S. & Melnycky, P. *In the Shadow of the Rockies: Diary of the Castle Mountain Internment Camp, 1915-1917*. Edmonton: University of Alberta: Canadian Institute of the Canadian Studies Press, 1991.

2. Galicia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time of WWI. Ukrainians were often referred to as "Galicians" in the early 1900s in Canada.
Sources used for In the Shadow of the Rockies:
In the Shadow of the Rockies: Diary of the Castle Mountain Internment Camp, 1915-1917.

Waiser, B. *Park prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946*. Calgary: Fifth House, 1995.

Doskoch, W.H. *Oral history interview by Alberta Labour History Institute*. Unpublished, 2001.

Doskoch, W.H. *Strait from the Heart: Biography of W (Bill) Doskoch, 1893 – 1941*. Self-published, 1993.
- description of his father's (Bill's) experiences in internment camps in BC and Ontario, 1915-19.


Gmin F
Chorus: Young stran - ger as you walk these trails of
Gmin Gmin
beau - ty and you feel the mountain air ca-
Cmin F Gmin
ress your face as you
E♭ B♭ F
play in the shad - ow of the Rock - ies re-
F Cmin B♭
member who toiled in this place Please, re-
F Gmin
member who toiled in this place Verse: They
B♭ B♭ F
1. court - ed our lab - our and called us to
2. pit - y the young man in nine - teen and
B♭ B♭ B♭
set - tle the great Can -
four - teen who hadn't a
B♭ Gmin Gmin
a - di - an plains but how
job or a trade and
E♭ E♭ B♭
fickle the love of a fair young Al -
doubl - y so the man from Ga -
Gmin Gmin F
bert - a for her en - e - my
li - cia for he was
F Cmin
a - li - ens oh
soon de - tained chorus: (Young)

by Diana Huet de Guerville, Charlie Clark, Simone Arsenault-May & Lindsay Telfer

Widening the Cracks in Consent:

Reflections on the 2002 World Social Forum

Silent resistance needs to be transformed into stories of resistance. Hidden cracks in our social consent need to be made visible, private feelings of anger need to find a collective voice for saying "no". Cracks in consent occur, then, when silent sufferers speak up, when silent suffering gets translated into the language of resistance. - dian marino1

In the winter of 2002, a group of Master's students from York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) travelled to the second annual World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil. This international meeting of social movements convened under the theme 'Another World is Possible' and brought together an estimated 70,000 delegates from 131 countries. From January 31 to February 5, nearly 5,000 organizations lent their voices to the proceedings, and shared one overarching goal: to combat the negative effects of corporate globalization and offer an alternative to the worldview put forth by the financial and political elites at the World Economic Forum (WEF), which took place simultaneously in New York City.

Introduction

Simone: In creating a space focused specifically on resistance to globalization and the pursuit of a better world, the WSF represented both a collective rejection of the hegemonic force of neoliberal capitalism (which values economic efficiency and the right of corporations to pursue endless profit regardless of the social and environmental consequences) and a collective affirmation of the urgent need for alternative visions and practices. For five hectic, exhilarating, overwhelming, but ultimately inspiring days, the masses that gathered in Porto Alegre transformed their private feelings of anger into a collective 'language of resistance.'

Unfortunately, the powerful messages articulated at the forum have garnered precious little attention in North America. Consequently, the four of us who had the privilege of being a part of this significant event wrote this piece to share our experiences with a broader audience. In particular, we considered the political relevance of the WSF as a site of struggle for social justice – as a particular 'crack in consent' that could be widened, stretched, then filled and re-formed. What follows is our collective reflection on our participation in the Forum, our motivations for going, and the lessons we take away with us.

Who we are and why we went

Diana: We are four students/activists in our twenties, four women and one man, three Canadians and one American, all Caucasian and with varying degrees of heterosexual and class privilege. We were drawn together not only out of our common bond as students in the same program, but also because of our shared experiences of activism in Canada: from our time on the picket lines of York University during the 11-week CUPE 3903[2] strike, to our participation in the Quebec City protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, as well as local actions in Toronto to challenge globalization. Our passion for global justice is what motivated us to attend the WSF, however it is our position as students that enabled us to acquire much (but not all) of the necessary funding to travel to Brazil, since we had access to some institutional support, which we then supplemented with donations from several organizations and a fundraising party. The cost of the Forum itself was minimal, and we were also fortunate enough to have a friend in Brazil who hosted us for much of our time there. However, we were unable to recoup all of our costs in the end, and so some of us had to fill in the gaps with credit cards and students loans in order to take advantage of the opportunity to attend the Forum.

Charlie: For me, going to the World Social Forum fulfilled two purposes. One was a desire to make concrete connections with people from other countries who are also involved in a struggle against corporate globalization. Additionally, I had done some research on the Worker's Party (PT) in Porto Alegre in Brazil as well as the MST, a landless peasant movement in that region and I felt that going to the WSF would be a great opportunity to see and learn from these movements first-hand. The other purpose was an opportunity to challenge my own status quo, in part by exploring alternative visions and gaining a sense of hope for what 'other futures' could be possible.

Diana: My motivation for going to the Forum actually arose out of my frustration with left politics in North America, which I found to be focused on critique at the expense of working towards constructive, creative solutions. I was also worried about the future of resistance in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and was in dire need of inspiration. I wanted to be around people who not only believed in changing the world, but who wanted to work out practical ways to make links among activists, build coalitions, and actually create alternatives.

The PT (Partido dos Trablhadores)

Diana: The story of the WSF begins with the Partido dos Trablhadores (PT), the Worker's Party that governs both the city of Porto Alegre and the state of Rio Grande do Sul, as PT's political and financial support were critical components in ensuring the forum's success. At the forum we learnt that PT emerged originally as part of the opposition to the military dictatorship that had controlled Brazil until the early 1980s. It was inspiring to learn of PT's work over the past twenty years to create the vital and vibrant (although imperfect) participatory democracy that now exists in those parts of the country where the party is in power. A cornerstone of that democratic process has been the participatory budget system initiated in Porto Alegre in 1989, and subsequently adopted by 70 other cities across Brazil. This system has created a mechanism of neighbourhood and issue-specific assemblies in which citizens from all over the city articulate their priorities regarding how the municipal monies are to be spent. By 1999, this alternative approach had been expanded to the state level, as the Worker's Party was elected

in Rio Grande do Sul, and resulted in engaging over 200,000 people in a statewide participatory budgeting process. This experiment has been extremely popular and effective, with hundreds of thousands of participants who hail from all parts of the social spectrum.

Charlie: The success of this experimental budgeting approach is due in large part to the experience PT gained during its time as part of the opposition to the military dictatorship, steadily building connections and alliances through grassroots organising and action. When the party was finally elected to power in Porto Alegre in 1989 it existed as a widespread network of community groups, with a membership drawn from a broad range of social movements such as labour, feminism, the landless movement, anti-racism, environmentalism, youth, and queer rights. Given this history, it is understandable why PT has generally favoured popular democratic processes over the more traditional and autocratic mechanisms familiar to previous governments and institutions in the region.[3] While the results have sometimes been less than perfect, the successes of the experiment in alternative budgeting do make it a hopeful and concrete example of an alternative vision in participatory democratic governance.

In the case of Porto Alegre, ten years of participatory budgeting has led to a significant redistribution of social services and resources in the city.[4] Poorer districts have seen the development of bus systems, water services, paving, schools, and health care centers. There has also been a dramatic reduction in corruption, and an upsurge of popular participation in the political workings of the city. In our travels in Porto Alegre we had a chance to witness some of these changes. The bus system was efficient, free on Sundays, and always free for children, there were housing projects occurring in various poor districts (*favelas*) in the city, and many people we spoke with discussed the educational initiatives in place. At the same time, Porto Alegre was far from a utopia, and poverty and inequality are still significant problems in the region. There were also those who criticised PT for their ongoing participation in the global economy, as demonstrated by the existence of various multi-national corporations in the city, and concerns that they were becoming less radical as they became more established as a party and a mainstream political power.

Diana: This power—due in large part to the success of the participatory budget process—has grown to the point that PT now governs almost 200 cities and several states, and boasts of over 50 federal deputies and a handful of senators. For the first time since the party's inception, PT is poised to take power at the federal level, with Lula da Silva, the party leader emerging victorious in the run-off to the Brazilian presidential race in 2002. Lula commands the attention and devotion usually reserved for pop stars in North America. I witnessed this first hand when I stumbled upon a massive and jubilant rally that greeted his visit to the World Social Forum Youth Camp.

Lindsay: Such success and popular support begs the question: is the rest of the world ready for a worker's party to be at the helm of one of the most important economies in South America? This is a question that concerns many supporters of the PT. Will global pressures water down PT policies on localization and most especially on trade? Will obtaining greater power corrupt PT leaders? Or will the PT maintain its vision and provide the world with a truly alternative model of governance?

Charlie: The PT's growing recognition and political support is happening at a critical time in South American politics. Witness the continued political instability in Venezuela (including popular protest against both President Hugo Chavez *and* his US-backed corporate opponents), the massive grassroots Argentine neighbourhood mobilisations in response to national financial meltdown, the ongoing struggles engaged in by popular movements all over the continent (from the Zapatistas in Mexico to the CONNAIE in Ecuador), and one can see that South America is becoming an increasingly intensified site for progressive resistance to globalization. At the same time, the United States is dramatically increasing its military presence and control in the region through the development of programs such as Plan Colombia, the Andean Initiative, and Plan Puebla-Panama, demonstrating the importance of that region for oil and other resources. South America will be an increasingly important region in the global political scene as well, as these struggles play out. The stakes are high and the threats are immediate to progressive forces in that region as well, as demonstrated by the murders of two PT mayors in Brazil in the week before we arrived, as well as ongoing killings and incarcerations of trade union, indigenous, and peasant leaders throughout the region.

Charlie:: It was in this dynamic context that the World Social Forum took place. Organized in a city where there have been fascinating experiments taking place in local democracy, hosted by a political party that is poised to take the federal presidency and to continue to shake up the political landscape of Latin America. The PT helped create a unique environment that brought people from around the world together to strengthen their spaces of dissent and promote alternatives. By welcoming 70,000 people to a city that has become world-renowned for its participatory budget process and relatively radical approaches to education, social services, and democracy, the setting was a lively place to carry on the discussion of coming up with "alternative worlds' to the one that is being presented by our current global leaders.

The World Social Forum Itself

Lindsay: 50,000-70,000 people marched in the streets of Porto Alegre on the opening day of the forum to celebrate the belief that another world is possible. We marched with a contingent of Canadian activists, which ranged from labour workers, to youth activists, and political representatives. Many of these people we had not met or known before. We came together in the march to show that we stood together with Brazil and South America. To be part of a march in Brazil, to see the solidarity and the strength of the people, was truly inspiring. The groups of youth, the political organizations, the women, the rural workers, and individuals from all over the world were all are standing together in order to build alternatives.

Simone: The WSF was a dynamic and multifaceted event, with a constant flow of things to do, see, taste, and hear. The 'WSF 2002 Official Program,' a 185 page bilingual (Portuguese and English) newspaper, was our roadmap, without which we would never have been able to navigate our way through the week. This document laid out the building blocks of the WSF, which included conferences, seminars and workshops, individual 'testimonials', cultural

events, an International Youth Camp, a Women's Tent, and an Afro-Brazilian Forum, reflecting the immense diversity of the participants. The many approaches and themes represented included a dizzying array of sessions, including ones on participatory democracy, corporate globalization, environmental sustainability, women's rights, indigenous struggles, food security, militarism, alternative economic structures, labour, education, refugee and immigrant issues, human rights, and even on media and the Internet.

Lindsay: One of the most effective workshops I attended was held by Via Campesina, a peasant organization representing small and middle-scale producers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities from Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Europe. When I walked into their workshop I was immediately confronted with a table of lush tropical fruits ready to eat. I stopped to wonder if it would be okay to enjoy just one grape. At that moment a drum began to beat at the far end of the room, and Via Campesina representatives entered at the far door. My eyes scanned the room to notice a group of suited individuals entering through another doorway while holding signs depicting the names of corporate food conglomerates – Monsanto, Coca Cola, Parmalat, Nestle, Sadia, and McDonalds. Guarding the table of lush fruits, the corporations effectively shielded the food from the approaching rural workers. A powerful moment of silence encompassed the room as each participant, for just a moment, got a glimpse into the feeling of hopelessness that peasant workers from around the world feel when they are confronted daily with the global corporate take over of their domestic food supply and subsequently their right to food.

While the workshop presented by Via Campesina was extremely powerful, in general I had very mixed emotions about the workshops, conferences, and seminars I attended at the Forum. At one level I was excited to have met people from all over and shared stories, successes and frustrations with them. On another level, I was extremely disappointed with the direction that many of the larger seminars and conferences took. For example, I looked forward to the food security conference as an opportunity to connect with activists from around the world and to discuss and develop solid alternatives to a neo-liberal agenda, which prioritizes corporate profit above the needs of rural workers rights, family farms, and women. While the rural workers' stories were inspirational, I could not get my head around a panel of six people that included only one female voice. Ironically, many of the men spoke of the importance of the women's perspective. So why was this voice marginalized? My frustration only grew as I saw a series of people to come forward to the stage to share their experiences from their own countries and struggles: 9 speakers, 9 men. Though I was greatly touched by many of the stories, my disappointment in the gender inequity of the speakers made me question the inclusivity of the struggle. It reminded me again of the necessity to ensure that we must achieve participatory standards within our own organizations before we can even begin to implement them on a broader, more encompassing scale; we will otherwise simply recreate the world we are trying to transform.

Simone: Nevertheless, the importance of connections that were made between workshop participants cannot be underestimated. For example, we facilitated a workshop at the WSF entitled "Student/Worker Activism in Canada: From York University Picket Lines to Quebec City Street Protest." Our presentation was well-received and its discussion period offered a unique opportunity to hear about the experiences of university students from Brazil, Argentina, Italy, the United States and Canada.

Diana: As a result of our conversations with other students during our workshop, we were able to see that many of our struggles are similar, since we are all fighting for access to education on some level. In Canada and the US, the high cost of education limits access; in Brazil, university is free, but spaces are so limited that very few students can actually attend. We also discussed our common experiences of the corporate invasion of our campuses as public funding for education dwindles, and our concern that intellectual freedom is being severely compromised in the process. Yet students have not been idly standing by – despite the challenges, student resistance seems to be growing, and young people form a loud and active part of social change movements in North and South America. In fact, perhaps the most gratifying part of presenting our workshop was talking with our South American counterparts about the ways in which activists in the North are fighting against the system – challenging their assumption that North Americans were just part of the problem and had no interest in creating a better world.

Charlie: Furthermore, amongst the Brazilian and Argentinian youth we met it was refreshing to learn how well developed their knowledge and experience of progressive politics and the role that active struggle plays in social change is. They were able to tap into a lively heritage and climate of popular resistance that provided a foundation of support for alternative thinking and struggling. This climate was a juxtaposition to the often fragmented and disenfranchised progressive atmosphere in Canada.

The MST: Movimento Dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra

Diana: As part of the forum, we also had the opportunity to learn about one of the most powerful and successful movements in all of Latin America: the Movimento Dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), or Landless Rural Worker's Movement. The MST had a strong presence at the forum and the Youth Camp, but even more inspiring were the visits we made to the MST settlements thorough a visitation program organized by the WSF.

Linday: The MST is a success story that provides an example of how the landless poor have gained ground in shaping the future of land and agrarian reform in Latin America and in Brazil in particular. With close to 60% of Brazilian land in the hands of a few Brazilian elite landowners, the ability of the landless poor to feed themselves has been hindered throughout the years. In the early 1980s, a grassroots movement emerged, showing that people had to take action for their own futures. This movement grew to become known as the MST and advocated for massive land reform in Latin America. Through a series of successful land squats the MST has gained access to over 15 million hectares of land in Brazil thus aiding over 250,000 families who would otherwise be living in abject poverty.

During our visit to the MST settlement, we were amazed at the relaxed atmosphere, the sense of community, and the belief in a cooperative lifestyle. In speaking with one couple, it became clear to us that it was a truly unique community. The diversity and

productivity of the farm spoke for themselves. This particular MST farm[5] cultivates 140 hectares of rice using a chemical-free, combined aquaculture technique, which yields up to 40% higher yield than a neighbouring conventional farm that uses chemical additives, such as pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides. The 370 hectares are home to 38 families, 18 of whom are involved in an agricultural cooperative. In short, not only does this community produce enough to fulfill approximately 80% of its own food needs, but this is done using ecologically sound and sustainable techniques.

Charlie: According to Gaurencho, one of the MST leaders at COPAC, the cooperative I visited, since the PT has come to power in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, it appears that the relations with the police have improved and there has been more support for land reforms. The MST and the PT overall seem to have a working relationship as social movements, and the MST was a very visible presence throughout the World Social Forum. At the same time, it appears that tensions do exist. One clear example of this was the fact that a group of urban landless in Porto Alegre occupied a building in downtown Porto Alegre the day before the World Social Forum began, in protest of the continuing lack of housing in that city. The occupation continued undisrupted throughout the forum, as an ongoing sign that things are still not perfect in that region. These ongoing tensions will no doubt increase if the Worker's Party comes to power nationally in Brazil and faces the land reform question more broadly as the central governing power.

Another important aspect of the MST is their awareness of their role in the wider movement against neo-liberalism. One of the women at COPAC made it clear that establishing local cooperatives was not the end goal of their movement. She told us that "this is not only a local problem but it is a global problem, and we have to fight for the whole global system." The MST activists I met were well-versed in international issues and the impacts of neo-liberal policies in Brazil and around the world. This was further demonstrated by the fact that at COPAC two positions are held by people whose main role is to stay connected to the rest of the MST movement and the wider struggles in which they are involved.

Lessons/Implications/Conclusions

Diana: Perhaps the most important aspect of the forum itself was that it created a space for the articulation of a different kind of politics that could challenge massive apathy and empower people to participate in governing themselves. The PT showed by example that there are other ways to organize political processes than those to which we have become accustomed. They have embodied such alternatives by encouraging public participation in local governance and demonstrating an avowed commitment to social justice, a commitment that extends beyond rhetoric and has manifested in concrete changes at the local and state levels. How far the PT will be able to take its progressive agenda is unclear, given that Brazil must continue to function in a global political economy that prioritizes corporate profits and free markets over social and environmental justice. Nevertheless, the very fact that the PT explicitly positions itself against the neoliberal capitalist model is cause for some celebration and a certain level of optimism. Though we cannot simply copy the PT and expect their model to work in North America, the lesson is above all that other models do exist and can work. Though we will have to find our own ways of political organizing for our own particular circumstances, we can and should learn from the PT, along with the multitude of other social movements that gathered in Porto Alegre.

The forum's importance as a nexus for such cross-cultural exchange cannot be understated, as a site for multi-directional flows of information, rather than the North American and Eurocentric media and knowledge flows which dominate our societies. In my short time in Brazil, I had the privilege of learning about and from countless social movements (like the MST) and political experiments (like the PT's participatory budget process), of which most North Americans are most likely unaware. In bringing together these disparate voices; indeed, in giving them a space to be heard, the WSF was a tremendous success.

However, problems of exclusion persisted, despite the incredible diversity among those present. Ghettoization of certain interests was evident: the women's tent was isolated and hard to find; indigenous peoples were offered one large morning session to air their concerns, but had very little voice otherwise, save as artisans selling their wares; and Afro-Brazilians were granted their own side conference, only to have it hidden in the very back of the program, not integrated among the rest of the workshops. Furthermore, there were noticeably few delegates from Asia and Africa, and language served as another means of exclusion since the four official languages of the forum were English, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

Access was also a key issue – no matter how affordable the conference fees may have been, the costs of flying to Brazil are prohibitive for a large majority of the people who might have wanted to attend – the biggest proportion of conference attendees were, understandably, Brazilians, and those who came from father away tended to be politicians, academics, or NGO professionals. Though the organizers did apparently offer some financial support to those that professed need, it could never have been enough for everyone who might have wanted it. Consequently, it seems that the model set by the forum, in terms of creating a space where alternatives can be articulated and discussed, needs to be replicated on a smaller scale, at the local level. However, while opening space is important, it is not enough in itself. The question remains how to make sure that we embody the alternatives that we are striving for.

Charlie: There were also examples of particular groups trying to claim control of parts of the forum. One particularly noticeable case was how ATTAC, an activist organization based in France, became quite manipulative in trying to dominate the agenda of the development of an international direction for social movement organizing.

Diana: These omissions and exclusions need to be addressed in honest and creative ways, without the defensiveness that tends to accompany any such discussion. Too many people who are fighting for social justice think they are automatically immune from corruptive influences, and are consequently unwilling to acknowledge the ways in which they perpetuate the very things that they claim to challenge. This attitude is quite evident, not only at the WSF, but in many other 'left' spaces that I have been a part of, among people who cannot seem to

acknowledge that we are fighting not just systems of oppresion, but ourselves as people who can never claim to stand completely outside of those same systems.

Thus although the WSF was an amazing site of creativity, resistance, and courage, it was an imperfect space. It is a work in progress that can be admired for serving as a source of inspiration for activists who can afford to go there, and which must also be critically and constructively evaluated in an effort to expand upon its considerable potential for engendering social transformation.

1 Wild Garden: Art, Education and the Culture of Resistance (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1997), p. 26.
2 The York University union of graduate assistants, teaching assistants and contract faculty
3 de Sousa Santos, Boaventura, "Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre: Toward a Redistributive Democracy," Politics and Society. v. 26(4) 461-510. see in particular section III. "The Evolution of Participatory Budgeting: On Learning Participatory Democracy" pp 475-485.
4 Abers, Rebecca. (1998a). "From Clientelism to Cooperation: Local Government, Participatory Policy, and Civic Organizing in Porto Alegre, Brazil," Politics and Society. v. 26(4) 511-537. see http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky or www.unesco.org/most/southa13.htm
5 All of these communities are separate and distinct from one another and are governed in accordance with the desires and needs of specific localities.

mine

by Norman

this my addiction

to touch all i can

i the landlord conquistador

with tentacles omnipresent

and vampire's teeth

suck at the neck of the earth

it is mine

mine in which to feed

to nest to romp mine to leach

and never look back

it my playpen

i its plague

by Patrick Lavoie

The Politics of the Biosphere:

Lessons from the Niagara Escarpment and Maya Reserve

Introduction

Biosphere reserves are generally conceived of as an important part of the current global conservation strategy. Yet how does a particular region receive such a designation and such protection? How does scientific knowledge and the interests and desires of specific groups affect these designations? In what ways do the main actors involved in these processes exercise power in order to shape the policies and protocols that govern biosphere reserves?

I will explore these questions in two parts. In the first section of this essay, I examine the concept of the biosphere reserve itself, by looking briefly at the UN's Man and Biosphere (MAB) program and some of its main features. In the second part, I investigate some of the broader questions of the politics of naming biosphere reserves by drawing upon notions of situated knowledge and framing to examine two specific cases: the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (Canada) and the Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala).

The concept of situated knowledge or 'positionality', as expressed by Sandra Harding, suggests that all knowledge is dependent on or corresponds to a context, and that it is unreasonable to hold science or scientists responsible for providing universal absolute truths. The politics of biosphere reserves provides a particularly suitable example for utilizing this theoretical perspective since so much emphasis in such cases is put on the scientific management of nature and the involvement of stakeholders.

The idea of situated knowledge is further related to the concept of "framing". Frames refer to how meaning is shaped by context so that "the frame ends up defining the centre". Briefly, this means that the determination of general parameters of reference limits possibilities of interpretation and the number of options available in specific situations. The general argument emerging from this paper is that the power to frame issues related to biosphere reserves through the use and promotion of knowledge and representations is tightly linked with decisions about how and in whose interests conservation is articulated.

The Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme

The MAB programme was officially launched in 1971 by the United Nations to establish a worldwide network of conservation areas and to undertake cross-disciplinary research linked to policy and management issues for environmental conservation. For this reason, the MAB programme collaborates with the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), a body comprised of scientific academies, institutions and associations. Although it incorporates many sub-programs, the MAB focuses mainly on the concept of the biosphere reserve.

Biosphere reserves have three main functions: conservation, development and logistics. While the first two functions are self-explanatory, the logistics function involves providing support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local, national and global issues of conservation and development. The biosphere reserve zoning model, which can be visualized as three concentric circles, roughly corresponds to these three functions. The inner circle of the reserve is the "core area" where almost no human activity is allowed to take place; it is set aside for monitoring and traditional uses. The second circle is the buffer zone which is used for research purposes. Finally, the transition or cooperation zone is where human activities such as agriculture and settlements can take place. This model can be further adapted to different biomes by multiplying and juxtaposing core and buffer zones. Nonetheless, the emphasis is put on the stakeholders' responsibility for negotiating sustainable ways of living that would interconnect all of the different zones.

The biosphere reserve designation process varies significantly from country to country, as well as on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, a general pattern can be discerned. The first stage in obtaining a designation is to complete a biosphere reserve application. The application can be filled in by any party, such as a community, a national park staff or a government. The motivations for establishing a biosphere reserve can be anything from preserving a community's direct environment, to improving research capacities, to publicizing an existing park. The application form has two parts: the first requires a description of the general characteristics of the area and the endorsements of the concerned authorities, while the second involves a detailed description of the human, physical and biological characteristics of the area and the institutional arrangements under which the reserve would function.

Once the application is completed, it is submitted to the local national association of biosphere reserves which, in turn, submits it to UNESCO through UNESCO's National Commission. The Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves (ACBR) then reviews the applications and recommends which ones should be awarded designation. The approval is done at UNESCO's general conference which takes place every two years. It is important to note that the whole process frequently involves informal inputs from different scientific organizations and that policy-making does not end after the designation process is over, just as a biosphere reserve is not necessarily managed as one simply because it possesses the title. Indeed, the MAB program's heavy reliance on scientific input does not imply a straightforward process in attaining the biosphere designation. As the two following examples of the Niagara Escarpment and the Maya biosphere reserves demonstrate, there are many other political forces and influences involved in the awarding and maintaining of such a label.

The Niagara Escarpment (Canada)

With its diverse forests, wetlands, plains, recreational areas, historic sites and cliffs, the Niagara Escarpment is one of Canada's most scenic landforms. Serving as habitat to rare and endangered animals and being a part of Ontario's historical heritage, the escarpment was designated as a biosphere reserve in 1990 after almost two decades of independent provincial conservation measures. Public concern over the escarpment emerged as early as the late sixties, prompting a provincial task force to investigate potential means of protecting the escarpment and its vicinity from inappropriate and uncontrolled development. At that time, and still today, the main threat to the escarpment consisted in the rapid growth of the aggregates industry. This industry benefited from large sand and gravel deposits dating from last stages of the Wisconsin glaciation and the escarpment's proximity to two major cities: Toronto and Hamilton.

Acknowledging the threat these quarries posed to an exceptional geological

formation, the Ontario government passed the Pits and Quarries Control Act (PQCA) which prohibited the establishment of new quarries on the escarpment. After much public debate, the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA) was eventually passed in 1973, thus setting the stage for the preparation of the first environmental land-use plan in Canadian history: the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP). What is exceptional about both the Act and the Plan is that they take precedence over other special or general Ontario laws. However, since quarries already existed on the escarpment (as aggregates are needed for development and the industry provides numerous local jobs) the quarries were grandfathered into the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The potential threats posed by the quarries are now manifesting themselves anew.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), along with a special working group named the Joint Agency Review Team (JART), is currently reviewing a proposal for the expansion of the aggregate production operations which have taken place in this reserve since its beginnings. In order to promote its project, the proponent, Dufferin Aggregates, has used various discursive strategies which are aimed at convincing the review team and the public of the necessity and sustainability of its proposal to expand the existing quarry. To do so, the aggregate company emphasizes its status as a "good corporate citizen" and the various partnerships it maintains with community organizations. Moreover, it advocates the need for further aggregate production and the importance of the quarry for local employment. By stating the amount of aggregates needed for various projects, it gives the impression further development is desirable on the escarpment. Dufferin Aggregates' case overlooks whether or not more development is beneficial to the public and life on the escarpment. The case for the extension of the quarry largely relies on the proponent's image as a leader in site rehabilitation as well as on its corporate environmental record.

There is no doubt that the financial resources needed to develop such an extensive expansion project are considerable when compared with those of local citizen groups. Nevertheless, Patano (2002) demonstrates how local actors on the Escarpment have been able to promote counter-discourses designed to undermine the proponent's oversimplified claims to necessity and sustainability. To gain legitimacy for their counter-discourses, citizens opposed to the quarry expansion raised significant concerns regarding their quality of life, property values and the natural environment. The accuracy of the knowledge and representations put forward by the proponent then came under wider public and media scrutiny. This put pressure on the JART and the NEC responsible to decide the proposal's fate.

Patano (2002), for example, highlights a particular case in which citizens were able to establish the dangers the project posed to endangered species. She also notes that citizens were concerned by the fact that the quarry was using its buffer zones to expand, which jeopardized the integrity of the biosphere reserve. A worried citizen was also able to make a case against the safety of the water quality measures established by the proponent. Other issues raised included the hazardous nature of diesel fumes emitted by the trucks, traffic flow and road conditions. These concerns illustrate the detail-oriented nature of citizen concerns and the situatedness of each party's knowledge. The proposal was portrayed by the public as being an oversimplified case in favour of the development project. Still, what is of critical importance is that the need to mine in the reserve is contrasted by the fact that the same material is abundantly available in other nearby areas not located in the reserve; thus questioning the biosphere reserve designation's significance.

A decision favourable to the expansion project could set a precedent, opening the door to other questionable "sustainable development" projects on the escarpment. Ironically, the burden of proof is rarely placed upon proponents to prove that a project is truly sustainable. Rather, the reverse is true and opponents with far fewer resources at their disposal find themselves all too often in a position where they must prove that a project is ultimately unsustainable. Alternatives, too, are rarely mentioned; for example, the fact that the same mineral extracted on the escarpment is found outside the biosphere reserve.

Although the final decision regarding the case has not yet been officially made, this case study exemplifies many of the problematic issues associated with Northern biosphere reserves, as well as with conservation areas more generally. Let us now turn to the Maya biosphere reserve which illustrates some of the issues dealt with in Southern biosphere reserves.

The Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala)

The Maya biosphere reserve is located in the Guatemalan rainforest region of Peten. Representing a third of the nation's territory, it is Guatemala's least occupied area and consists mainly of highly forested lowlands. Despite these favourable environmental factors, the Peten area has been affected by some of the highest rates of deforestation in Central America. In an attempt to address this problem, the Maya biosphere reserve was established in 1990 by the Guatemalan government. So far, it seems these efforts have not been very successful due to weak governmental support of conservation strategies, neglect of the socio-historical causes of deforestation, lack of grassroots support, economic and political opposition and other difficulties attributed to development efforts in the South.

After looking at the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Sundberg (1998) noted that the biosphere reserve model tends "to depoliticize the landscape by neglecting politics as a shaper of ecologies". In this sense, it seems the biosphere reserve model, which seeks to address some of Guatemala's national parks' model's shortcomings has also failed. Here again, the discourse perspective is useful to analyze the emergence and polarization of identities. However, contrary to the Canadian case, government and NGOs are not selling an image, but rather a discourse which attributes deforestation and land degradation to the activities of local farmers. By defining deforestation in oversimplified terms, certain institutions have contributed to the perpetuation of the root causes of poverty in that they buy into the migrant-as-culprit discourse which ultimately affects land distribution patterns. Sundberg also demonstrates how Guatemalan authorities, along with their partners USAID and CONAP, have been responsible for the development of conflicting socio-economic activities.

The intense colonization and development campaigns of Guatemala's Peten area and brutal dismantling of the organization responsible in leading them have resulted in many forms of social instability. Guatemala's development agency (FYDEP) has focused on colonizing the Peten for 28 years and now that this institution is dismantled, dispersed NGOs and government institutions with limited resources lead and manage projects taking place within the reserve. Sundberg refers to

this phenomenon as the "balkanization of the landscape". It is by correlating deforestation with migration as well as picturing peasants as backward individuals who are ecologically unconscious and ignorant of sustainable agricultural techniques, that the various funding and management institutions were able to attribute deforestation to the latter group. Their "migrant-as-culprit" discourse also mistakenly constructed the Peten's environment as being unsuitable for swidden agriculture. The authoritative fact-like status achieved by this discourse is another manifestation of the power and resource imbalances mentioned in the previous case study.

Despite the powerful promotion of discourses by various governmental and non-governmental institutions, strong alternative discourses emerged resting upon the adaptation of migrant farmers to new environmental conditions, their agroforestry knowledge and their innovative coping strategies. The question which remained was whether the alternative discourse could prevail or at least induce doubts about the legitimacy of the dominant discourse. The counter-discourses pointed to more complex causes of deforestation such as types-of-use systems and the intensity and frequency of use. This in turn re-politicized deforestation by alluding to the economic and social realities of actors: situated knowledge.

The implementation of the Maya Biosphere Reserve has worsened and perpetuated social and economic inequalities in Peten. The poor links between the governing authorities (governmental and non-governmental organizations) and the Guatemalan population have caused significant social disruption, dissent, unjustified arrests, fear and anger. For instance, the supervision of local participation to the reserve's activities by NGOs has resulted in the selection of individuals fitting specific Western ideals. This has caused social tensions since community leaders, who have authority and the respect of their peers, were left out of the process. Hence, the Maya biosphere reserve, with its lack of coordination and other distorting factors, was essentially shaped to fulfill the needs and aspirations of NGOs. This meant that local the population's demands were not considered to be conservation or development-oriented. The narrow definition of these terms and the blame attributed to migrant farmers allowed various agencies to pursue their conservation experimentation on Guatemala's Peten. It then seems that NGOs have and will continue to benefit from the reproduction of the socio-political and historical forces that had triggered deforestation and the biosphere reserve designation in the first place.

Knowledge Issues in Biosphere Reserves

According to Harding (1996), science and knowledge do not exist in a vacuum; rather they are always situated. "Scientific bias" manifests itself in various forms in the two case studies presented here. Whether it is through the over-representation of Western scientists or science, the centrality of Western ideology with respect to conservation or the privilege given to experts and big science, this "scientific bias" is instrumental in the emergence of closed circles of experts who tend to share the same visions and interests. This often results in the devaluation of local knowledge.

The most obvious, and yet the least questioned, ideological component of the MAB programme is its cornerstone: the concept of the biosphere reserve. However, the biosphere reserve concept ought to be questioned in fundamental ways. On the one hand, it assumes that conservation, in spite of buffers and transitional zones, can be achieved through a network of disconnected islands; such an assumption is problematic as it neglects the importance of linkages and diverts attention from the islands of activity. In fact, national and international research networks and facilities tend to privilege the study of natural phenomena within the reserves as opposed to the physical and social aspects of the interactions between the cooperation zone (and its extension) and the reserve.

Furthermore, the rhetoric surrounding biosphere reserves tends to underestimate the ecological impacts of eco-tourism. It is seldom mentioned that biosphere reserves' staff are encouraged to advertise the reserves as being part of the prestigious World Network of Biosphere Reserves. This in turn encourages intensive use, fostering conservation areas to become laboratories for recreational and tourism activities and threatening to undermine the objectives that motivated the nomination of conservation areas in the first place. At this time there are few studies dealing accurately with the impacts these activities have on the environmental integrity and biodiversity of reserves. This is in large part due to the lack of funding and staff (especially social scientists) in national research facilities. On the other hand, the concept of biosphere reserve privileges a Western conservation ideology which fails to recognize that many cultures do not make such spatial separations when dealing with resource use and conservation issues. The representation of conservation as the biosphere reserve's zoning model then precludes other issues from being put on the policy agenda.

The kind of cultural specificity described above also exists in the policy-making that follows the "biosphere reserve" designation. The political priorities addressed in biosphere reserves tend to overlook the needs and concerns of local communities instead privileging industrial interests, scientific research and NGO interests regardless of the impacts they can have on property values, regional growth, socio-cultural interactions, benefit distribution and land value. This neglect of local concerns can be attributed to inherent power imbalances and the difficulty of reaching consensus within diverse "resistance coalitions". It is unavoidable that interest groups benefit differentially from the establishment of biosphere reserves, but the fact that some groups are consistently able to influence decisions in their favour can be problematic.

Conclusion

The point here is not to completely dismiss either science or biosphere reserves as valid tools to manage environmental problems, but rather illustrate their situated character. It seems biosphere reserves still embrace a green developmentalism ideology which assumes there is a universal currency that can be used to value resources, often reducing them to commodities. Contrary to this ideology, this article demonstrates that perspective plays an important role in determining the relevance of knowledge in specific situations. I believe that we now have to find innovative ways to deal with conservation issues while acknowledging these multiplicities. Environmental and social education emphasizing genuine discussion processes aimed at better understanding the positions, interests and values of all stakeholders is a path that must be explored. It is crucial that all be receptive to other points of view in order to preserve environmental and social diversity. Finding different ways to address local expectations of conservation schemes

and making local knowledge a legitimate part of policy-making thus seem to be the first steps to alternative conceptualizations of conservation.

REFERENCES

Danaher, Geoff, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, 2000. Understanding Foucault. London: Sage.

Egan, Brian, 1995. Development, Poverty and the Environment: The Political Ecology of Deforestation and Conservation in Peten, Guatemala. York University, MES thesis.

Foster, Jenny, 2000. "Doing Less with Less: the Ontario Provincial Government's Environmental Streamlining has Weakened the Niagara Escarpment Commission's Ability to Protect One of Canada's Natural Treasures." Alternatives, v. 26 (1), p.4-5.

Harding, Sandra, 1996. "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is Strong Objectivity?" Feminism and Science, Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen E. Longino (eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.235-48.

Healy, Robert G., 1997. "Sustainable Development Projects in Biosphere Reserves: Recurring Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them." Ecodecision, vol. 23, p. 39-40.

Idris, Kamil and Michael Bartolo, 2000. A Better United Nations for the New Millenium; The United Nations System - How it is now and how it should be in the future. Boston: Kluwer Law International, p. 151-52.

Jasanoff, Sheila, 1987. "Contested Boundaries in Policy Relevant Science." Social studies of science. Beverly Hills: Sage, vol. 17, p. 195-230.

Latour, Bruno and Steve Woolgar, 1986. Laboratory Life; The Construction of Scientific Facts. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Litfin, Karen, 1994. Ozone Discourses. New York : Columbia University Press, p. 14-51.

McAfee, Kathleen, 1999. "Selling Nature to Save it? Biodiversity and Green Developmentalism". Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 17, p. 133-54.

Patano, Sandra K., 2002. Winning Back More Than Words? Discourse and Power in the Dufferin Aggregates proposed Quarry Extension. York University, BES thesis.

Pease, Kelly-Kate S., 2000. International Organizations; Perspectives on Governance in the Twenty-First Century. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, p.18-35.

Pendergast et al., 1999. "The Gaps between Theory and Practice in Selecting Biosphere Reserves." Conservation Biology, vol. 13, no.3, p.484-92.

Read, Ian, 1977. Land in Demand: The Niagara Escarpment. Agincourt: The Book Society of Canada, p. 36-48.

Searle, Rick, 2000. Phantom Parks; the Struggle to Save Canada's National Parks. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd., 234 pages.

Solecki, William D., 1994. "Putting the Biosphere Reserve Concept in Practice: Some Evidence of Impacts in Rural Communities in the United States." Environmental Conservation, autumn, vol. 21, no. 3.

Sundberg, Juanita, 1998. "NGO landscape in Maya biosphere, Guatemala." The Geographical Review, July, v88 i3 p.388 (2).

Vandergeest, Peter, 1996. "Property Rights in Protected Areas: Obstacles to Community Involvement as a Solution in Thailand". Environmental Conservation 23 (3), pages 259-68.

Vulgar Towers, photo by Fredéric Ménage

by Elana Wolff

BOLLS

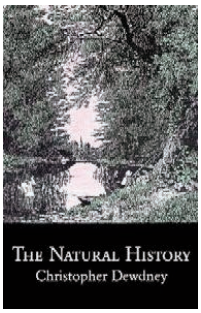
Driving home on Bathurst Street
I see a sudden cotton tree
and understand they also grow in cold

in lion-hearted March in Spartan-yards.
Formed from slim deciduous limbs
whose lingering leaves
get masked
to bolls
that won't become designer clothes or batting.
But little fists
that power me to Israel and Egypt where
the cotton boils on bushes
in its actual abode.

There's this image I have of stomping on cotton
in a chain-link
bin in
a field
near Ein Harod.
Alone in the heat for long enough
I dare to take my t-shirt off.
I stand there sweating
gaping
at my naked cotton bra.

The bolls beneath my feet are pliant fibre:
I'm pariah white
and strafed with blood
from scrapes with bracts and burs.

The Natural History



Dewdney, Christopher.
2002. Toronto: ECW Press.
102pp. $16.95
(softcover)

Reviewed by Jenny Kerber

The publication of The Natural History marks the culmination of twenty years of work produced by Toronto poet and artist Christopher Dewdney. An accomplished interdisciplinarian, Dewdney has ranged into fields as diverse as visual art, literary theory, electronic media, geology, and molecular biology. This volume unites the four interlocking sections of "The Natural History of Southwestern Ontario," each of which has been published in earlier texts, often in slightly different forms accompanied by anecdotes and illustrations.

The pleasures of this long poem yield themselves more easily when one gains familiarity with Dewdney's previous work. For example, although the final section in The Natural History is simply titled "Permugenesis," the 1987 volume of the same name is followed by the subtitle "A Recombinant Text." This provides important clues into why Dewdney subjects certain words and phrases to continual modification that echo and haunt the landscape of the poem. For example, the opening line, "August's amniotic haze is our dream aether, our lens of distance" mutates and resurfaces near the end of the book as "August a haze amniotic our darkness rarely witnessed" (3, 84). If the word is a unit of information analogous to a strand of DNA, then Dewdney is a kind of scientist-poet who combines and recombines the poetic code to create new variations in meaning, often with unpredictable and wildly creative results. Instead of laying out the building blocks of poetry as a periodic 'memory table,' as he has done in earlier work, here Dewdney includes a "Bibliography of Creatures" outlining the flora, fauna, microclimate, and topography which contribute to the natural history of his chosen locale.

As the recombinant texts continually erupt within the main text, the surfacing of earlier forms alludes to another of Dewdney's central concerns, namely the geological and paleontological structures of the Escarpment region of Southwestern Ontario. The limestone corridors of the Escarpment are frequently referred to as "stone libraries,"(3) repositories of paleontological memory preserved in the text of fossils. Elsewhere, the Escarpment is called an "ancient museum" where "[s]pace solidifies into limestone each time the entire perceptual memory of a life becomes trapped in the sediments" (7). The recombinant structure of the text is thus repeated in the continual process of submersion and resurfacing of history as encapsulated within natural cycles, resulting in untidy layerings of both geological strata and memory. Humanity also leaves its own traces on the landscape, and Dewdney is careful not to excise culture from his version of natural history. At one point, "Cenozoic bivalves forage under the waves" of Lake Erie, illuminated by the "[f]ar red glow of smelters and factories to the north" (29). To interpret such a passage as an environmental lament, however, would be both limiting and misleading, for Dewdney has posited elsewhere that "there is no division between nature, culture and technology. Vinyl is as natural as lichen" (Foreward, The Secular Grail).[1] While at times the integration of technological language seems forced (witness the description of water that "glistens digitally in the computer sunlight" (8)), at other points it is spellbinding, as in the following description of cumulonimbus thunderheads: "Billowing like convoluted foreheads of brooding fetuses, their water-brains filled with grotesque electric thought impulses and thunder. Their silence raining on the land" (28).

In spite of the extreme precision of the scientific terminology employed throughout the work, there is also an erotic and lush sensuality to this poem that leads the reader to feel slightly drugged, lingering in a hazy dream-like state that mirrors the thick Ontario summer heat. The hermaphroditic persona frequently participates in the humid fecundity Dewdney conjures up, and the text is full of dreamy couplings that sometimes border on self-indulgence. Who knew there was so much sex going on in the wilds of Southern Ontario? Notably, the perils of sharp branches, boulders, and above all, winter are left out of the equation. Dewdney has softened the edges here considerably, leaving the reader with two options: one can either get incensed by the incomplete experience of nature, or sit back, mix up a tall cool drink, and savour it.

In response to queries about why he would devote so much poetic energy to one small region of Canada, Dewdney's answer might best be found in a line from the poem itself: "Because of its mathematical precision at the infinite disposal of curiosity" (77). I cannot think of a more convincing justification for the preservation of a rare landscape, nor a more eloquent statement about the continuing necessity of poetry. This volume should appeal to those interested in gaining a deeper poetic and ecological appreciation of the Escarpment region of Southwestern Ontario, and is a must-read for aspiring nature poets hoping to follow the lead of one of Canada's most adept wordsmiths.

note

1 Christopher Dewdney, The Secular Grail (Toronto: Somerville, 1993): foreward.

The Arbutus/Madrone Files

Laurie Ricou. *The Arbutus/Madrone Files: Reading the Pacific Northwest.* Edmonton, NeWest Press, 2002, 239 pp.

Reviewed by Catriona Sandilands

In between finishing Ricou's delightful Files and starting to write this review, I took a walk around the Victoria neighborhood that used to be (and possibly still is) my home. The grey shades of the early winter sky were, of course, framed by famous West Coast greens: fir, rhododendrons, cedars, the odd incongruous palm tree. And blackberries. No matter where you walk around here, there are blackberry bushes: dense, knotted, ugly clumps that throw out long, sharp branches to snare unwary winter pedestrians like me (although I think they prefer, sadistically, the thinly tee-shirted pickers of the late summer). Blackberries aren't native to the Pacific Northwest but they are so much part of my sense of the landscape that it's hard to imagine, say, my parents' Garry Oak yard without its feral berry hedge, or an August without its rituals of scratches and jam.

Blackberries are possibly second only to broom on the *Southern Island Native Plant Gardeners' List of Demon Species*, but there they are, a significant element in the vocabulary of the place. They are part of the functional lore of the West Coast; they are also part its storytelling and literature. So it is no surprise that they have prompted writers like Tom Robbins to think blackberries metonymically: "the aggression, speed, roughness, and nervy upward mobility of blackberries symbolized … everything they disliked about America, especially its frontier" (*Still Life With Woodpecker*, 129). Now, over twenty years after he wrote that memorable passage, one can even smell a sort of Starbuck's aroma in Robbins' blackberries, along the lines of a brambly cyber-network of vines and connections working at caffeinated speed.

Ricou has written *The Arbutus/Madrone Files* to explore these sorts of imaginative leaps of Pacific Northwest place. His book, as he describes it, is about writing and reading "the Arbutus/Madrone region, a region sharing a biogeoclimatic zone, and flora and fauna, and icons of place, yet bisected by an international boundary, and, hence, sometimes subtly, sometimes blatantly, by differing histories, different needs and aspirations, and differing 'languages'"(1). The organizing trope of the book thus indicates doubleness, the fact that the region is both one place and two nations. More accurately, however, like the tree of the title, the region is organized by and embeds cultural multiplicity. What is an Arbutus in BC is a Madrone in Oregon, but even that distinction leaves out (for example) the array of names the tree has worn among the many First Nations whose languages produce and reflect different ideas of place altogether. I would say, then, that Ricou wants to write of a doubled region, but ends up doing so in a way that reflects the region's multiple locations in different languages and histories, different movements and scales, different perceptions and currents.

The book is cleverly divided into twelve different "files", each of which discusses a significant thread that Ricou pulls through the literature of the region, and twelve subsequent "afterfiles" that function as part bibliographic essay, part rebuttal to each file. There is no particular symmetry among the files, and no singular texture or coherence to any of the conversations between or among them. The result of all of this polyphony is a richly textured compilation of stories, analyses, connections and revelations organized in such files as (obviously) "Raven", "Salmon" and "Rain" and (less obviously) "Kuroshio" (for the Japan Current), "Great Blue Heron" and "Sasquatch". The uneven and overlapping filing system is clearly intentional. Ricou encourages us to "think of these files as winding and stringing: spin the salmon thread, pull the logging thread until it touches the raven thread"(2) in order to find, in the literary landscapes of the Arbutus/Madrone region, an uneven and overlapping sense of place. The best metaphor I can come up with for the book's central argument is thus a sort of bug's eye regionalism: the cultural and biogeographic terrain clearly influences writing and speaking about this place, but the terrain is also multiply perceived and itself moving.

Some of the individual files allow me to nod with satisfaction. Ricou's treatment of Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, for example, is particularly beautiful; he describes, in its dense layerings of exile and silence, a "Northwest that is so pacific it has no voice"(76). Here, Ricou dares an overt Canada-U.S. comparison; John Okada's *No-No Boy* prompts him to note that there were, in fact, national differences to the treatment of Japanese Canadians and US-Americans during and after the war (Canada was the more racist). Here also, Ricou places the writings of non-Anglo authors at the center of the thematic organization and writing of "place"; this Kuroshio Pacific Rim, this exile and banishment, this racism, is as constitutive of the region as rain and salal. Indeed, throughout the *Files* Ricou has clearly included a range of interactions among the racialized cultures of the region, and gives a central place to First Nations languages, practices and texts.

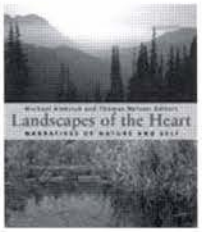
Ricou also wants to keep us on our (national, political, literary) toes. In places, he deliberately chooses some fairly obscure Canadian and US-American texts to prompt in both nations of readers a renewed sense of conversation across borders; his "findings" allow new readings of old canons, new insights and comparisons. In other places, he chooses to make some

very sharp political points. In his "Salmon" file, for example, he plays with the fish as a metaphor for homing, attachment, quest and transformation, but he also describes the literature of a salmon economy, revealing that the historical transformations of fishing cultures are, in so many ways, dependent on migration and return. Indeed, between his "Woodswords" and "Anasayú"[1] files he is able to touch some of the profound ambivalences and tensions that the Pacific Northwest embodies (and writes) about trees, forests and regional economic resource dependence; the poetry of logging sits, poignantly, against the possibility of thinking from the place of the tree.

To be sure, Ricou's themes and literary choices are idiosyncratic. I'm sure anyone familiar with either Canadian or US-American literature could list significant absences (the one that dismays me is Jane Rule, whose keen sense of Vancouver and the Islands as places of political asylum might not quite fit with Ricou's tendency to emphasize fluidity over national identity). I'm also sure that anyone would be able to come up with other files, other processes that constitute the place (Ricou opens this door himself, noting such possibilities as a Gold Rush File, a Wobblies File, and a Whale File, and I think I would particularly add an Odd Intentional Communities File). But Ricou makes no claim to summary or survey. He offers the particularity of his choices with great pleasure and dares us, in his refusal to define the place, to read and compose our own files: cedars, shades of grey, blackberries. This is, after all, a region that is not one, a place "whose marker is the arbutus/madrone, a tree with paper-thin bark, which seems sometimes to have no bark at all"(154).

1 Anasayu means "arbutus" in Kesh, a language from Ursula Le Guin's Always Coming Home. Borrowing from (fictional) Kesh and (traditional) Kwakw'ala root-meanings, Ricou suggests that the word can signify "learning with"; this is the closing thought in his final file, perhaps the closest he gets to a normative vision for the religion.

Landscapes of the Heart: Narratives of Nature and Self



Michael Aleksiuk & Thomas Nelson, Editors. Edmonton: NeWest Press. 2002, 238 pp.

Reviewed by Mark Dickinson

Can colonists and newcomers ever become "indigenous" in some form, accepting ecosystems and their original inhabitants on their own terms? Can the settler arrive at a peaceful relationship with landscape, and join the web of complex interrelationships that characterize healthy ecologies? This new anthology from NeWest Press probes these controversial questions, and offers some evidence that this transition is taking place along the margins of mainstream society.

To some degree or another, all the stories in this collection of personal narratives feature the same recurring theme – of people and place inextricably woven together into an organic skein, like figures in a Huichol yarn painting. In the context of this book, the transition from settler to native seems to occur within those individuals who have planted themselves down in a particular stand of forest, or on the banks of a certain river, ocean or grassy plain, and over the years and decades have become attuned to the subtle changes in the ebb and flow of larger natural processes.

There is a strong conversational feel to many of the stories in this volume, giving the book as a whole the feeling of sitting on a couch with the authors and hearing them recount their experiences over a friendly cup of tea. Stories by Lisa Lynch, Richard Pickard, and Michael M'Gonigle worked particularly well. All writers were effective in summoning up a palpable sense of place, and their own connection to its mysteries. This is comfortable, polished, and engaging reading. However every once in a while the personal touch becomes a bit too intimate, self absorbed, or intrusive, and backfires – case in point one author who compares the sweat worked up while hiking in his favorite tract of forest to the
sweat of lovemaking.

Eco-psychology bears a heavy stamp on this anthology, as many entries focus to some degree on the therapeutic and healing aspects of human contact with the unspoiled natural world. Because of this, these entries occasionally place themselves on thin ice: by focusing on nature as a place of healing, they run the risk of replacing the psychologist with the forest, the forest as shrink, and in the process turning the non-human into yet another separate and distant Other, though this time as a benevolent dispenser of peace and tranquility.

The second to last essay by the veteran Arctic anthropologist and activist Robert G. Williamson offers a fresh point of reference to the discussion, and in effect brings this collection back down to earth. In more than four decades of research and community involvement with the Inuit, Williamson learned that every geographic feature in the Inuit landscape is known not by the points of a map and compass, but through a centuries-old symbolization of the collective experience of the community. This is a 'namescape' drenched in memory and dream, in birth and death, an ecological theatre for the community where a great round of living and dying and sharing the land with its other inhabitants over countless generations have produced a richly layered narrative and experiential web. The traditions of the Inuit, and of indigenous peoples the world over whom at present struggle to hang onto the places they have lived and loved over successive generations, serve as a gentle reminder that our own fledgling marriages with our surroundings are still in their infancy.


When it comes to water, corporations are thirsty for profit.
They want to take over Canada's public water systems through privatization and public private partnerships. That's bad news for the environment.
Corporations won't push conservation. They want to sell as much of their 'product' as possible.
Keep water in public hands
Find out why public works best for Canada's drinking and wastewater systems – from source to tap. Visit cupe.ca today.
CUPE
Canadian Union of Public Employees

Simone Arsenaut-May is a Master in Environmental Studies candidate, studying Participatory Approaches to Organizational Change. She is interested in facilitating processes whereby people work to address and improve the problematic dynamics that exist within their work environments, activist circles and communities. She also hopes you enjoy this article!

Deborah Barndt combines academic work (as a FES teacher and researcher) with artistic work (as a photographer and cultural animator) and activism (as a popular educator in social movements in Canada, U.S. and Latin America).

Pablo Bose is a doctoral student in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. His current research focuses on justice, democracy, and social movements. For the past four years he has worked with the Friends of River Narmada, a North America-based support network for a people's movement in North Western India.

Leah Burns is a community artist and a student completing her Masters in Environmental Studies at York University. She likes turnips and brussel sprouts. She is not a bunny.

Leonarda Carranza is working towards a Masters in Environmental studies where she is looking at Central American Diaspora and community development.

Charlie Clark has recently finished his Master's in Environmental Studies at York University and is now living in Saskatchewan and has got his fingers into various community-based programs.

contributors

Mark Dickinson is a former FES student and a current Ph.D candiate in Canadian Studies at Trent University.

Maria Dunn is a singer and songwriter who brings characters to life in original music that pays homage to her Celtic roots and Canadian upbringing. Her debut album *From Where I Stand* was released in 1998.

Diana Huet de Guerville is currently completing her MES, which is focused on feminist/ecological resistance to globalization. She is now living in Hadley, Massachusetts and planning her next big adventure.

Sheila Karrow is an artist and teacher from Waterloo, Ontario. Her environmental images depict the struggle between human existence, sustainability and the natural world.

Jenny Kerber is currently working towards a Ph.D in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Her research draws upon ecotheology and ecocriticism in order to examine literary depictions of the Canadian Prairie environment.

Patrick Lavoie has completed a graduate degree in environmental studies at York University. His research interests include the ields of sociology of science, resource management policy as well as social issues. He is currently the coordinator at the Collectif de Recuperation de Longueuil` in the Montreal Region.

Frédéric Ménage: 'a friend of FES community, Frédéric lives in Montreal and is trying to find the best angle for a shot of the suggestive olympic stadium tower'.

Dana C. Mount, an undergrad at York, is in the third exciting year of discovering where her majors, Environmental Studies and English, intersect.

Richard Oddie is a musician, writer and activist living in Hamilton, Ontario. He is working towards a PhD in Environmental Studies at York University. He also records and performs electronic music and has recently completed a new audio-visual project for the Canada Council for the Arts.

Catriona (Cate) Sandilands teaches at the intersections of gender, nature, politics, and literature (among other things) in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. She grew up in Victoria with Arbutus/Madrones, Garry/White oaks, and transnationally feral blackberries.

Sau Wai Tai recently completed her MES at York University. She earned her degree by playing with "dirt" with a community of students that was attracted to the same endeavor.

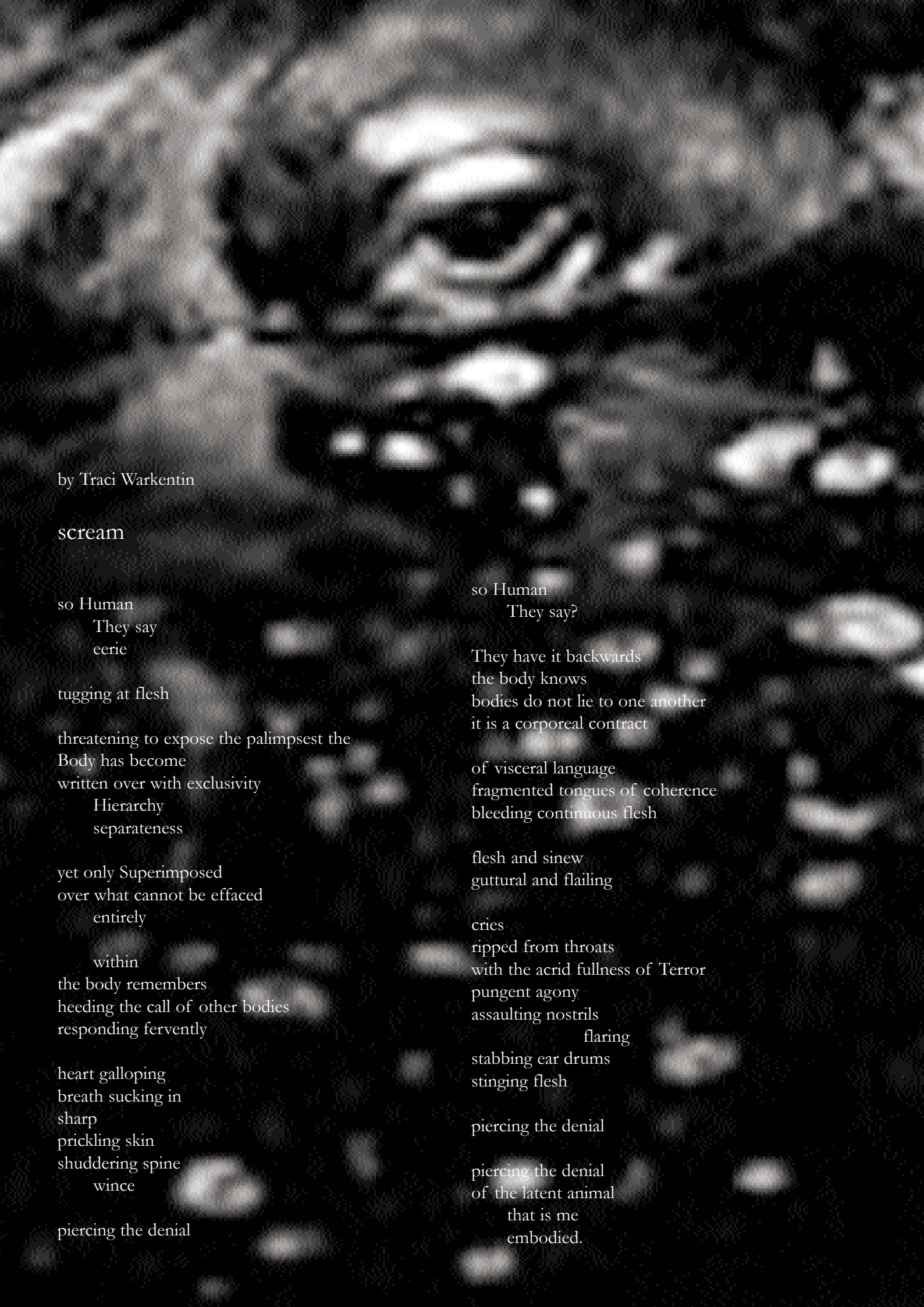
Lindsey Telfer is a graduate of the Masters of Environmental Studies Program at York where she focused her research on community based food systems. She has travelled internationally examining food systems in Canada, Central America, the US, Brazil and Europe. Lindsey currently works as the National Coordinator of the Sierra Youth Coalition, the youth run branch of the Sierra Club of Canada.

Traci Warkentin is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Her work focuses on integral tensions between embodiment, ethics and epistemologies in human-animal relationships. She is also exploring the roles of poetry and narrative as modes of inquiry and as evocative performances of her research.

James Wilkes, primarily a wildlife photographer, is a graduate of the BES program at York where he examined the role of wildlife photography in nature preservation.

Christine Witte was born in Germany and came to Toronto in 1998 to do her BES at York. After graduating in 2002, she moved to Vancouver for her MLA (Master of Landscape Architecture). She is hoping to someday design intricate and beautiful buildings with rooftop gardens as well as surrounding landscapes.

Elana Wolff's first collection of poems, Birdheart, was published by Guernica Editions in 2001. Her monthly column, "How to Approach a Poem" appears in the arts newspaper *Surface&Symbol*.



by Traci Warkentin

scream

so Human
        They say
        eerie

tugging at flesh

threatening to expose the palimpsest the
Body has become
written over with exclusivity
        Hierarchy
        separateness

yet only Superimposed
over what cannot be effaced
        entirely

        within
the body remembers
heeding the call of other bodies
responding fervently

heart galloping
breath sucking in
sharp
prickling skin
shuddering spine
        wince

piercing the denial

so Human
        They say?

They have it backwards
the body knows
bodies do not lie to one another
it is a corporeal contract

of visceral language
fragmented tongues of coherence
bleeding continuous flesh

flesh and sinew
guttural and flailing

cries
ripped from throats
with the acrid fullness of Terror
pungent agony
assaulting nostrils
                flaring
stabbing ear drums
stinging flesh

piercing the denial

piercing the denial
of the latent animal
        that is me
        embodied.

submissions

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
Volume 13 Artifice/ Artifact

The UnderCurrents Editorial Collective invites artwork and writing exploring the boundaries between the 'natural' and the 'artificial/artifactual'.

Send your submission to the UnderCurrents Editorial Collective, either in hardcopy to the address above or preferably electronically to currents@yorku.ca.

Please include your full name, address, a brief bio, email address and phone number. Artwork in b&w, 600 dpi scanned .jpg or .tiff files, writing in .doc files.

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

For further information, see www.yorku.ca/currents

Left: 'captive'ating, photo by James Wilkes

UnderCurrents

355 Lumbers Building, York University
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3 CANADA

currents@yorku.ca
www.yorku.ca/currents