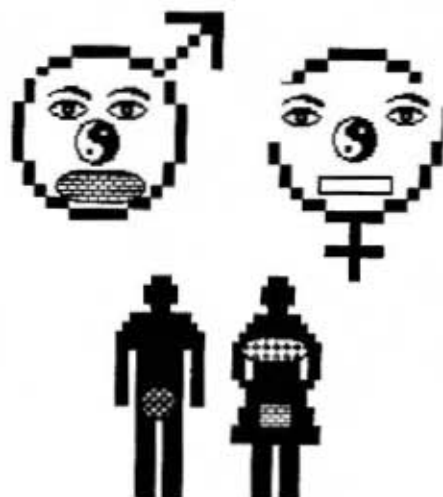


a GENDER EXPOS  T  N :**BLACK AND WHITE IMAGES**
In The **GREY** CHAIN OF BEING.

JIM PAUL

A preamble: A Clue! A SIGN of the TIME(S)?

It is interesting how the numerical demarcation of a decade spurs one to reflective stock-taking and visionary anticipation. We know that the beginning or termination of long-term social trends do not "naturally" fall into neat groups of tens. Still, as empirically-entrenched and categorically-minded consumers we must quench our never-ending thirst to link events until we have reduced them into man"age"ableness. We are more at ease when we can name where we have been and visualize where the future will be.

I recently read a newspaper article which provided name suggestions for the 80s. The suggestions include: The Retro Decade: with the return of the Stones, the Who, Batman, Woodstock, Cher, Hoffman, and Nixon; The Sleaze Decade: with Tammy and Jimmy, Pete Rose, Swaggart, Hart, and North; The Media Decade: featuring Letterman, Gumbel, Geraldo, Oprah, Koppel, and Rather; The Ignore Decade emphasizing a 'what me worry' attitude about: the deficit, arms build-up, race-relations, the environment, poverty, AIDS, and drugs; The No Decade: with no smoking, no drinking, no red meat, no abortion, no snuff, no unprotected sex, and no fun;

The Lite Decade: as applied to beer, cigarettes, sugar, coffee, and gas, and finally The Disaster Decade: featuring Chernobyl, Valdez, San Francisco. But what is interesting in this quest to name the decade is the absence of any recognition of libertarian women's movements in the 80s. If we trust our eyes, a reading of Madison Avenue advertising indicates the named libertarian women's movements of the 60s/70s are in recession. The pulp and electronic advertisements intimate the byword of the liberationist movement in the 70s as 'Wanting It All' has become deflected, in the 80s, into the action of 'Doing It All'. For the 'average' woman 'doing it all' translates into a full day at the work station, then, after stopping at day care, and doing the shopping, heading home to begin the night-shift.

TIME magazine (December 4th, 1989) speaks to this transition in a cover story entitled "Women Face The 90s". The authors ask the survey question: 'Are you a feminist?' Women in the 20-30 age range provide responses which umbrella under the descriptor 'the NO, but ...' generation. The same question to women in the 30-40 year range results in the banner-label of 'the YES, but ...' generation. The TIME authors conclude what women moving into the 90s have learned from liberationist women of the 80s is to direct their primary focus to changing the work place and to press for child-care benefits; that is where the push should be made, and not in the realm of more polarizing liberationist issues of abortion or lesbian rights. But this re-focused push is not organized as a visible liberation women's movement. Most of the surveyed women seem to believe that male attitudes are becoming more feminized, and in the 90s as the work place changes for women and men so the home-life-world will have to change accordingly. A 'silent revolution in male attitudes' is occurring because "the more 'women's work' men perform, the more respectable that work becomes" (TIME, p. 61). Less men are likely to take women for granted. "If men start taking care of children, the job will become more valuable," insists Gloria Steinem (TIME, p. 61). TIME presents, in hind-sight, a gaze at women of the 80s, and projects a fore-sight vision for the 90s. But as the rocker Neil Young sings, "there is more to the picture than meets the eye." A question then is: What exploration is possible of a desire to name and envision a world; how does this inter-play shade our language-images of gender?

SOME BACKGROUND: A Sign Language?

To define signs, to explore what they mean, how they generate meaning and how we use them is a subject for extensive study. It is not the intent of this exploration to trace its complex history. From Ferdinand de Saussure's analysis of linguistics, to the philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, and later to the explorations of signs by Roland Barthes, I seize the basic working definition that SIGNS are anything which may be used to stand for something else. Extending this elemental definition Umberto Eco (1984) claims if signs cannot be used to tell a lie, they conversely cannot be used to tell the truth; they cannot then be used 'to tell' at all. It is in exploring this interesting DOUBLE VALENCE of signs which frames this exploration of gender — as words and images.

A PERSPECTIVE: Signing In!

We are all born into a revolving/evolving/constructing world. Call this motion 'culture' or 'society' — the dizziness of the life-world reflecting the inter-play between past, present and future. A child born into this co-motion, in a short time, obtains an abundance of skills and pieces of knowledge, learns to make sense in a more or less pre-determined world. A foundation of this pre-determined world is that as participants in a Post-Freudian society we continually seek to explore influences or structures which revolve around the basic instinctive acts of desire, compliance, exclusion and repression. We know that the excluded, although out of sight, does not disappear but remains to eventually de-stabilize that which we construct to domesticate societally-chosen unwanted(s). As such, our Western culture lives a double valence. In the signs of our worlds there exists this inter-play of polarities. Our inherited logic and metaphysics is entrenched in binary oppositions. Specifically in the realm of gender the struggle of dichotomies for supremacy has long dominated, differentiated and perpetuated a vision of the differences between men and women. We live a gender dualism within a historical/cultural weightiness which attempts to perpetuate a vision, through our institutions (school, church, family), that only one 'real' narrative exists. And that 'reality-story' is one of patriarchal logocentrism and phallogentrism. As social/cultural beings born into this constructed dominant narrative we quickly become subjected to the force which drives this (loco)motion — language. David Levin (1988) framing this bipolar existence writes:

In our culture, a binary logic of oppositions has long differentiated men and women, and their respective positions within the prevailing sex-gender system have been pervasively determined according to dualisms established long ago. These dualisms are codified in our metaphysics, and veiled in false justifications. The one is identified with activity, the other with passivity; the one with mind, the other with body; the one with sky, the other with earth; the one with ego, the other with libido; the one with order, the other with disorder; the one with maturity, the other with its absence; the one with reason, the other with passion; the one with clarity, the other with obscurity; the one with the light, the other with the dark, one with culture, the other with nature; the one with spirit, the other with matter; the one with forms of consciousness, the other with the mysteries of the unconscious; the one with the making of history, the other with fate. Since men have occupied the dominant positions in these bipolar structures, the institutionalization of dualisms has functioned to subordinate and exploit women (p. 282).

Does this DOUBLE-vision seem possible? Can we SEE this?

A METHODOLOGY: Give Us a Sign!

The intent of this exploration is to discuss with you, the reader/viewer, a representation of gender by exploring gender signs. This is an attempt at a speaking with, and a looking at, the language compartmentalization and subsequent blindness which the French Freud, Jacques Lacan implicates as that which imposes upon us a gender structure. These gender structures are seen as a seat (position), or a way of being, on the great Lacanian (CHAIN) TRAIN of BEING from which we view interactions with self and others. The repeated gesture of this exploration is to frame gender-appearance oppositions. Hopefully in the engagement between sign valency, some exchange is possible. There is no attempt here at mystically seeking to unite differences. As rough as it may seem the desire is CONTACT, and the continual calling into question one's identity. Why frame the exploration in this manner? Elizabeth Wright (1984) outlines Lacan's position regarding the importance of HOW/WHY we see our gender as we do, and writes:

desire is lodged to a degree in all that is seen, every observer taking his object-world for granted, but since the unconscious is inscribed in that desire there will be a mis-seeing, a *meconnaissance*. Unconscious and repression, desire and lack — this dialectic opposition is present in every visual recognition. ... (there is) a 'scopic drive' for this lodging of desire in looking, a subject's search for a fantasy that represents for him/her the lost phallus. ... The eyes, as one of the modes of access for libido to explore the world, become the instruments of the this drive. A drive is not just pleasure-seeking, but is caught up in the signifying-system, characterized by the subject's first entry into that system. ... This signifying process comes to affect all looking, every recognition at once a finding and a failure to find (pg. 116-117).

Elaborating further on this scopophilic drive Kaja Silverman (1983) explores Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" which argues that classic film text dramatically differentiates between male and female subjects on the bases of vision, and she writes:

The former (the male) of these is defined in terms of his capacity to look (i.e. as a voyeur) and the latter in terms of her capacity to attract the male gaze (i.e. as an exhibitionist). This opposition is entirely in keeping with the dominant cultural roles assigned to men and women, since voyeurism is the active or 'masculine' form of scopophilic drive, while exhibitionism is the passive or 'feminine' form of the same drive. As a means of emphasizing this point, Mulvey describes the male subject as the imagined source of the gaze, and the female subject as the imagined recipient of the gaze (p. 222-223).

Finally, to place this exploration in perspective and to frame the dangers of LOOKING at particular meanings associated with images Peter McLaren (1988) writes:

there is always an overdeterminate or 'preferred' reading of images within the dominant culture. To believe that one can escape this sovereign or imperial reading by an exercise of critical reflection alone also presupposes that people make choices only on the basis of semantic understanding, and not through either the mobilization of desire and affect or a form of deintensification of experience David J. Scholle calls the 'spectacle stance of the audience'. In their engagement with forms of media-generated images, viewers become the most vulnerable to the political agenda behind such images precisely when they feel they can intelligently distance themselves from their discursive articulation and persuasive power (p. 68).

So welcome to an ENCOUNTER of the GENDER KIND. The desire present in this quest is as Joan Gallup (1982) writes, "if words there be or body there be, somewhere there is a desire for dialogue, intercourse, exchange (p. xiii). Initially this exploration begins with a brief overview of Lacan's understanding of language and gender as framed through Gallup's putting to question Lacan's basic gender premises. Then, a presentation of several gender sign-frames — a text and an image — created from a random sampling of opinions of men and women, at the University of Alberta, by asking men/women to speak their understandings of gender. This exploration of the greyness of the black and white of gender requires you to participate in the SLOW DOWN through space provided at the bottom of each gender-frame. In the desire to respond an ALTERITY (the trying to put self in the place of other) sensitization may create an understanding that a text exists because it suppresses other texts. There is a need to look for the silences in the naming of sexual differences by opening up the narratives themselves associated with how we genderize our world-view.

Buffalo Springfield opens our journey:

Sign, sign everywhere a sign,
Blockin' off the scenery, breaking my mind,
Do this, don't do that
Can't you read the sign?

So all aboard. Take your seats — M E N and W O M E N or is it as we have long been inherently taught:

M E N' What Other MEN!

THE EXPLORATION PROPER: The Sign Us TRAIN.

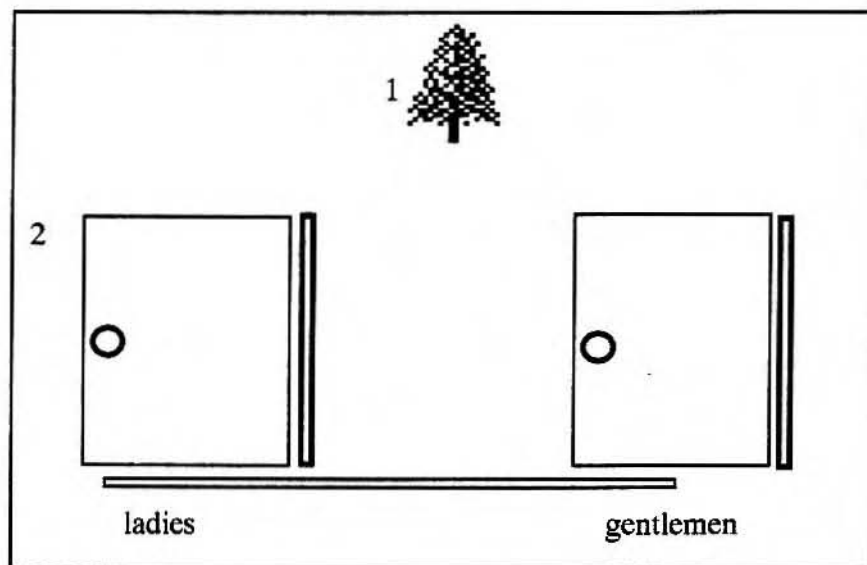
Chapter One, "Lacan and psychoanalysis," in Sarup's (1989) text AN INTRODUCTION TO POSTSTRUCTURALISM AND POSTMODERNISM focuses on Lacan's position that "meaning only emerges through discourse as a consequence of displacements along a signifying chain" (p. 12). Sarup writes, "To illustrate that there is no unequivocal meaning, Lacan relates the following story:

A train arrives at a station. A little boy and a little girl, brother and sister, are seated in a compartment face to face next to the window through which the buildings along the station platform can be seen passing as the train pulls to a stop. 'Look', says the brother, 'we're at Ladies!'; 'Idiot!' replies his sister, 'Can't you see we're at Gentlemen' (p.12).

Sarup explains that each child is able to see only one of the doors. Each child visualizes a one-to-one correspondence between the word and the 'thing' and Sarup writes, "Through the biological given of sitting on one side of the compartment or the other each sex is placed in a structure and as such is unable to see that structure. Lacan seems to be saying: we are all sitting on one side of the compartment or the other; we are all subject to the blindness imposed by our seats in the compartment; there is no other way of being on the train (chain)" (pg. 13-14).

Intrigued by this story I discovered that Gallop (1982), in her text, THE DAUGHTER'S SEDUCTION, explores Lacan's framework and the thrust of his theory rooted in the use of language which constitutes the world a child is born into. It is also the grounding by which a child is named, and is that which defines the context each child discovers him/herself in. Gallop notes Lacan would have us believe that "language 'speaks' man; man does not speak" (p. 8). It is in Lacan's (1970) essay "The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious" where he presents his theory of the signifier and the relationship between the influence of language and sexual differentiation. Lacan introduces the following drawings to illustrate these relationships (see next page).

Gallop explains that the first image of the TREE is the classic method of presenting the relationship between the SIGNIFIER and the SIGNIFIED. There is a one-to-one correspondence between the WORD and the 'THING'. Therefore the MEANING of the word TREE can be learned through the drawing of the thing (TREE) which illustrates it. So the WORD 'stands for' the THING. But this classic way of understanding the relationship between signifier and signified is, as far as Lacan is concerned, inadequate. To indicate the inadequacy Lacan drew the second image of the DOORS. Here the relationship between the words and the doors points to a more complex relationship than the one-to-one correspondence functioning in the first image (tree). In the second image the reference is to two identical doors. The pair of signifiers in the identical door image can only be understood (1) in



relation to each other, as in each is NOT the other, and (2) by the context in which each signifier has been learned (what Lacan calls a 'SIGNIFYING CHAIN') (Gallop, 1982, p. 10). With this door image in mind, Lacan relates the story of the two children, a boy and a girl, on the train (cited earlier).

Gallop writes that each child is able to see only one of the doors. Each child sees an image which is like the tree drawing and which leads one to a confidence that words actually have delimitable 'things' which they 'mean.' But interestingly it is the girl who sees 'gentlemen' and the boy who sees 'ladies'. It is as if one could only see the sex one was not. And in such a sight it is as if only the sex one is not produces the quest for a wholeness. Gallop writes:

The 'physical consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes' have a structure similar to that of the situation in this anecdote. Through the biological given of sitting on one side of the compartment or the other, each sex is placed in a structure, and as such is unable to see that structure. The biological differences are only of import to men and women in so far as they institute the subject into the play of the signifier, a play unknown as long as one accepts the first model of language, the model of the one-to-one correspondence (p. 9-10).

In her analysis, Gallop indicates that despite the illusion of one-to-one correspondence, and whether or not the subject knows it or not, he / she exists within a relation to an arbitrary boundary between the two realms of LADIES and GENTLEMEN. It is the signifier which installs the boundary irrevocably upon his / her vision. To clarify Gallop writes:

Because of the rule of the signifiers over the signified, the two words 'LADIES' and 'GENTLEMEN', ... constitute, by their very installation, the two doors, although, in some mystical prehistory prior to the signifier's arrival, the doors are identical. Similarly, it is not the biological given of men and female that is in question in psychoanalysis, but the subject as constituted by the pre-existing signifying chain, that is, by culture, in which the subject must place himself. A biological reading of Freud sees only the subject already inserted into his position of blindness without that chain, and does not see the subject's placing himself or the chain as chain. The first image of the subject is then very much like the first image above, the drawing of the tree: a one-to-one correspondence is assumed between, for e.g., the word 'woman' and a woman. By such a reading, the only delimitable 'thing' the signifier 'woman' could possibly 'mean' is the biological female. Whence springs the whole normalizing moralism of biological psychology (pg. 9-11).

But the rub is, as Gallop notes, that understanding the existence of the signifying chain does not mean it is possible to remove self from blind situations. By just knowing that a second rest room door exists somewhere beyond a range of seeing does not free one from the seat. She writes, "What Lacan has sketched in the above passage is a situation of desire. The register of desire is where the 'cessation of hostilities' is 'impossible'. Although one can hypothetically reconstruct a pre-linguistic, pre-cultural 'real' (positing two doors as originally identical, the human child as naturally bi-sexual), this mythical prehistory cannot erase the situation of desire which is the result of the preversion of the need by the signifiers presence" (p. 11). So what does all this mean? Gallop responds:

An exposition of the structure articulated of need and desire will not institute an idealistically utilitarian return to the need, to the biological, to the pre-perversed 'real.' As Lacan writes, 'far from yielding to a logicizing reduction, there where it is a question of desire we find its irreducibility to the demand the very energy that also keeps it from being collapsed back into need. To put it elliptically: that desire be articulated, precisely for that reason it is not articulable. We mean, in the discourse appropriate to it, ethical and not psychological.' The demand is made within language's imaginary register, where the first model of one-to-one correspondence is presumed to operate, and thus, the demand is assumed to be delimitable. Desire is that portion of the pre-articulate need which finds itself left out of the demand — the demand being the register of ethical discourse. Of course, Lacan can indicate the marginal place of desire, but he does this in the only way

possible — in psychological discourse. In ethical discourse, spoken from our place as subjects attempting to signify ourselves in the signifying chain, we are all sitting on one side of the compartment or the other: we are all subject to the blindness imposed by our seats in the compartment; there is no other way of being on the train (chain) (pg. 11-12).

Gallop believes that, to date, the feminist battle against the constructs of a male-dominated society seems entrenched in having us consider the entire structure which makes the realm of 'gentlemen' and 'ladies' appear defined and absolute as they do in the one-to-one correlation. To engage in this activity implies the feminist is somehow *outside* the structure. This positioning ignores "the subject's needs to place himself within the signifying chain in order to be any place at all. There is no place for a 'subject,' no place to be human, to make sense outside of signification, and language always has specific rules which no subject has the power to decree" (Gallop, 1982, p. 12).

Gallop's advice seems to both those language-labeled as 'feminist' and 'chauvinist', as bi-polar extremes, is that they must come to grips with their places (seats) on the train of life and the desire located in each place (seat). Desire especially cannot be banished from discourse. Attempts to do so, such as in empirical or positivistic narratives, results in a language which is irrational in its claims to rationality. Then the unconscious through lapses, gaps and dreams manifests itself as a desire-disrupter, a desire-subverter of rationality.

So what is the question Gallop would have us face. It is a question such that "if patriarchal culture is that within which the self originally constitutes itself, it is always already there in each subject as subject. Thus how can it be overthrown if it has been necessarily internalized in everybody who could possibly act to overthrow it?" (Gallop, 1982, p. 14). If as Lacan tells us we are born into a motion; into a language, and into a way of seeing and once entrenched into the conventions of this language are we not then essentially over-determined by it. A struggle against this over-determination must be possible if 'reality' can be put to doubt. Reality being the stance, the perspective, the position, the seat we occupy as a result of what we behold. The question then is to *question* the signifier-signified relationship.

What follows now is a presentation of several gender-frames. Each frame contains an image and a text. The object of the frames is to SLOW (show) DOWN the train of Lacanian train of BEING. LOOK at them. REACT to them.

SIGNING OUT.

This exploration was an attempt to stare back at our genderized culture where our authoritative language is essentially VISUAL. Our world narrative features the dominant positionality of maleness which fosters an eye-orientation and values spectatorship, objectivity, magnification and/or reductionism, and mastery; femaleness is the binary opposition adopting an ear-orientation and valuing participation, inter-subjectivity, emotional response, intimacy, involvement and collaboration. Perhaps attempts, at this point in our exploration of gender differences, to reduce the gaps between the bi-polar structures is an impossible project. To date approaches to do so seems to require the sacrificing of one pole to the other. An alternative may stem from the desire to TASTE, TOUCH, SMELL, HEAR, and SEE obliquely our gender differences first. That is to specifically explore the differences through an orientation to remembrance and to encourage the stimulation of sexual voices rendered silent by our patriarchal history and contemporary visual-technologically dominant narratives. We need a sensitivity to the fundamental ambiguity of all narrative as story. It is an ambiguity which must be understood not as pathology but rather as that which is essential to the very survival of speaking, thinking and acting.

Gallop makes note that in Lacan's train (chain) story the train is stopping. The framing of the rest room doors only comes into the children's vision with this slowing down of the moving train. It is then the two different signifiers—LADIES and GENTLEMEN become noticeable through the existence of a syntagmatic chain. This chain is represented in the story as if already constructed. Perhaps, this 'all-read'"ness' is a natural-survival adaptation created as a result of the train's constant (loco)motion. It is in times of rapid motion when we seek that which is constant; even if only an illusionary stability. Gallop's challenge seems to be that we need to explore structural representations at a syntagmatic level. But can this be done at 'living speed', or can the shake up, of the dominant-subordinate relationships which one is born into and determined by, be sought to a greater extent when the train is slowed down. This 'slow down' quest could be a way to make contact and confront the desirable pleasure of the agreeing NOD. As the train rocks along, it is easy to slip into its suturing, nodding rhythms. We feel secure in specific track-rhythms especially the ones we were weaned on. Once headed down the track a process of belief, amply reinforced, results in a certain solidification as we get comfortable in our gender seat. BUT although we may be rocked into a gender sleep, such slumber will eventually be eroded by that which has been excluded in the motion, noise and hypnotic gaze of the leading track as the rusting windows move us along our journey — that is the stillness; the silence, and the Other. Thus we need to see / smell / touch / taste / hear textual-frames which STARE back at us. That is, we should desire to slow the train down and let the landscape peer into our compartment. To do so may begin to flip our Being and our Reality. By exploring gender signs on textual / imagery levels, there may be a way to contribute to the revelation that we are essentially metaphorical beings — nothing more and nothing less than living displacements.

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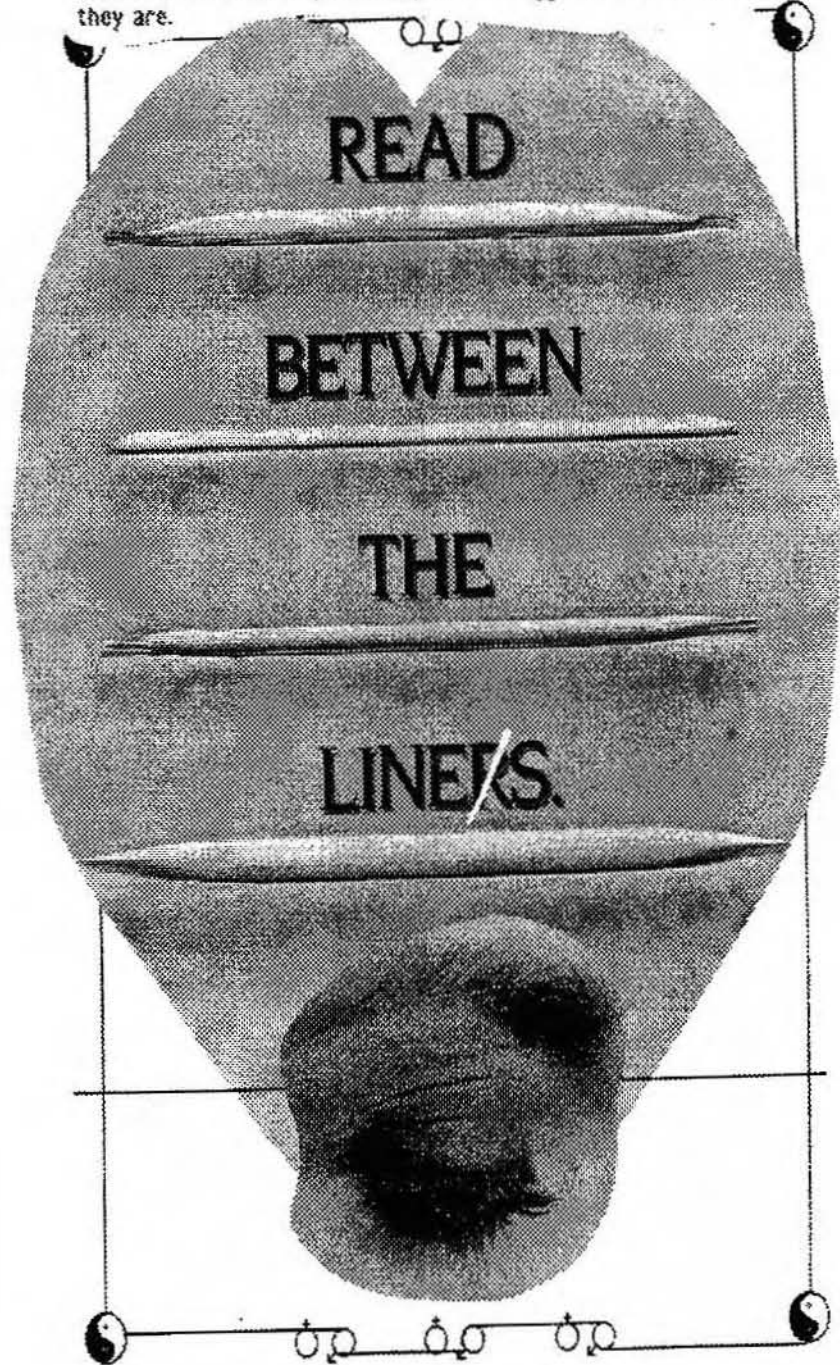
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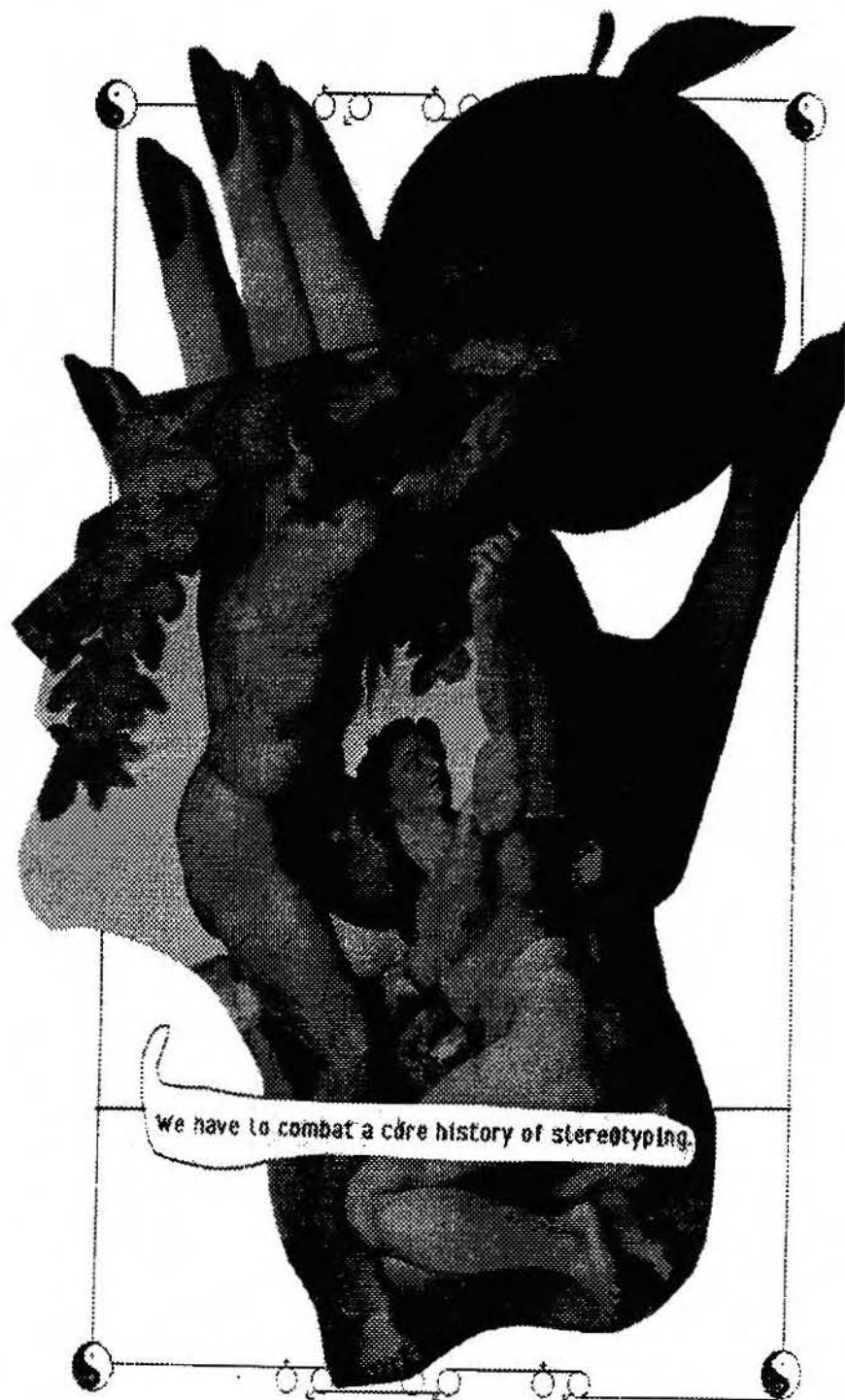


Sometimes I feel we are living a myth. I mean why are looks so important?



With most people there is always something between the lines. That is where you really have to look to find out who they are.





THE NEED FOR OPENNESS IN ART EDUCATION

DAN NADANER

Can art education tolerate art? It looks more and more like the answer is no. Art requires imagination, play, openness and critical questioning. Art education, as an institution, tends to produce practices inconsistent with imagination, play, openness, and critical questioning. The dominant practices of the field tend to define, to reify, to certify, to enshrine.

The task of this paper is restorative, rather than indicting, so I will confine myself to a very brief evocation, in this paragraph, of what I mean by the anti-art tendencies of art education. Art education (the institution, not the concept in general or the practices of individuals) is increasingly concerned with systems, and disseminating those systems. Conferences are held to hear lieutenant experts discuss what the experts meant. Other conferences are held to package the understandings of what the lieutenants meant. Other conferences are held to make it law that classroom teachers should present those packages to children. In this process, art is reduced and often misconstrued. But even when it is well construed, it is reified, which is to say, turned into something definite when it is not something definite at all. This is the single greatest problem in art education: reification. Other problems are quite obvious as well, such as magnifying the misconstruals with the support of great centers of money and power. The centers of money and power can disseminate constricting ways of thinking. But reification is of the most crucial concern because it underlies all of these problems and consequences.

Reification is a habit of thought, and it is antithetical to the spirit of art. Artists practice openness, and when they encounter an institution (art education) which practices definition and closure (which is to say, reification), they tend not to sympathize with that institution. Thus the historic rift between art and art education.

It is disturbing and saddening that the rift should be getting wider at this time. One of the dominant trends in current art education, "Discipline Based Art Education," is adding to the rift, even though it ostensibly seems to bring art education in closer touch with the history and practices of art. In its most idealistic formulation, DBAE wants to be about "art," the sort of thing Rembrandt and Van Gogh did: not about "school art," the sort of thing done with sponges and macaroni on Friday afternoons. DBAE proponents — i.e., the Getty Foundation — have posited a concept of art as a "discipline," but they have failed to join that concept to a larger understanding of the spirit that art depends on. As a result, DBAE has contradicted its own purpose, producing some new school art experiences that are contrary to the spirit of art, and repressing some old school art practices that were not really so bad. "Aesthetic meaning," the cursory defining of design ele-