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Learning to Read Writing from Non-Ruling Relations of Power

Zusammenfassung

Résumé
Au cours des trente dernières années, la politique issue des nations occidentales, de ces États nations au système représentatif, s’est de plus en plus intéressée au côté privé, et de ce fait cache ou efface de la vie, sur laquelle, paradoxalement, est basée le contrat social des États libéraux. Si de nombreuses théories s’intéresse à ce phénomène, c’est le plus souvent d’un point de vue politique qui les mène à ne considérer que les aspects relatifs à la vie civique. Une focalisation sur la vie privée et domestique n’est développée qu’à partir des théories sociales, dont celle de Dorothy Smith qui porte sur le concept de "non-ruling". Trois siècles de démocratie représentative ont, selon ses études, mené une partie de la population à vivre dans ce type de relation (non-ruling) et de là, à produire un art qui ne soit motivé ni par la transgression, ni par le dépassement de l’idéologie de l’État nation. Le but du présent article est justement de démontrer que leur production artistique offre d’une certaine façon, une réponse esthétique aux tensions générées par la mondialisation, et ce, tant sur une base individuelle que nationale.

Conceptual Grounds

Over the past twenty years the political philosophy of western representative nation states has become increasingly aware of the hidden and obscured lives upon which the liberal social contract is based. A clear if rather schematic way of looking at this is by way of a contrast between Habermas and Pateman. Habermas critiques liberal representative states by adding a concept of the "civic" to the governmental, and insisting on the complex relations between the public and the private. Simultaneously Pateman was constructing a critique by adding concepts not only of the civic but also of the "domestic", and by distinguishing between areas of the ruling and non-ruling public. I interpret the "ruling" to include the private, and the "non-ruling" to include the personal.

In both cases the analysis is attempting to account for the obscured or hidden presence of the civic and the domestic, upon which nation state capitalism was founded. However, the political response has only been given to the civic, with most attention to the political function of the domestic coming from sociologists such as Dorothy Smith and her influential elaboration of non-ruling relations.

It has become apparent through the extension of studies on the relation between the nation state and the civic, that the figure of the artist in liberal representative democracies is the licensed transgressor of ideological structure: hence so many aesthetic theories which focus on transgression, subversion and transcendence. There have been analogous critiques of the simultaneity of the autonomous yet universalist individual in politics (based on an isolation from situatedness), or of the value-free assumptions in both empiricism and idealism in philosophy (based on a denial of history), or of the debate between quantitative and qualitative methodol ody in the social sciences (based on a privileging of method which can evade the contextual). Yet in aesthetics there has been little critique of the artist as the isolated genius who speaks on behalf of others nor of the ability of art to achieve pure truth, and virtually no comment on the concept of "beauty" as profoundly tied to ideology. More important, there has been little analysis of why aesthetic value is usually only given to productions coming from those people who are implicitly or explicitly represented within structures of ruling power (i.e. subjects and that part of the civic world defined by "citizen", in other words the historically enfranchised). And most worrying, there has been no sustained study of why it is so difficult to value aesthetic production coming from the majority of people who are in positions of non-ruling power, and in recognised domestic and civic places that raise issues of class, gender and age, and those of race and ability imbricated particularly deeply with class.

Under nation state structures the artist and intellectual work hand in hand: the intellectual critiquing the legitimating representations of the state and the artist transgressing and transcending those representations and in doing so providing the intellectual with vocabularies and structures for further legitimisation. The history of psychoanalysis has documented in detail the repressions and anxieties experienced by individuals living with those representations. However, that ideological relation is predicated on the economic power of the nation state. With substantial economic power moving inexorably toward various elements of global
financial control, the relation between the individual and state changes. The ideological structures that become economically powerful are those exercised by transnational finance, and they exert their representative control initially on the nation rather than the individual. In this developing structure, the intellectual and artist no longer work to demonstrate and enact the repressions of the represented individual within the nation state, but instead work toward defining the responses of the nation under the pressure of global ideological structures. The nation increasingly becomes marked and recognized as a cultural rather than an economic unit, just as the represented individual was a cultural rather than economically powerful unit under the nation state.

Those people who have, over the past three to four hundred years of developing liberal representative democracy, consistently worked within non-ruling relations, have produced art that is not for the purposes of transgressing or transcending nation state ideology. I would like to suggest that their work may be in a better position to offer aesthetic responses to the pressures of global ideology both on the individual and on the nation. In other words, we need urgently to develop and extend criteria for understanding and valuing work from positions of non-ruling power. And further, to do so, we will need to change the way that we value aesthetic work. Just as in politics, philosophy and the social and physical sciences, there has been a massive shift toward conceptualising situated knowledge, so in the arts we need to move toward an understanding of situated textuality. Indeed, a primary missing element in theories of situated knowledge, is any concept of the situated textuality that is necessary for its articulation and communication.

What has this got to do with literature, voice and women?

One of the largest constituencies of people who live much of their lives within non-ruling relations is that of women. Many of the genres and rhetorical stances their artistic work takes up are difficult to value within traditional aesthetics. If we look at writing alone, the work done in journals, letters, life-writing and poetics, is often considered embarrassing or only of interest for its content. Indeed, it is frequently difficult to get any of this work published and disseminated because it is so situated within particular communities that profitable sales are not feasible. However, in Canada between the late 1950s and the early 1990s, there have been exceptional government subsidies for printing, publishing and writing — although not for reading. Canada experienced at least a 30 year period of literary expansion which also enabled a considerable number of publications that did not obviously fit traditional aesthetic criteria. Among such publications one could cite work from First Nations writers, from survivors of abuse, from women of sexuality and gender different to the fixed ideological set of heterosexuality, from writers with some temporary or on-going diminishment of conventional ability, from people who had emigrated from cultures with non-western aesthetics, particularly from cultures steeped in orature rather than print, or women in domestic settings wanting to talk about what they value in their daily lives.

Many of these writings adopt rhetorical stances that are situated within textual communities so specific and local that they resist the ideological pressure of ruling relations, not the least by being apparently unsuitable for publication. When they are circulated outside those communities they can be embarrassing for their appar-

ent naivete, otherwise read as non-conventional aesthetics. To acquire aesthetic value in other places the writings need to be situated within textual communities of those places, and need to be laboured over, carefully and with some vulnerability in the work on the articulation of grounds that can be valued in that other place. The process begs the question: why bother? why not content oneself with the writings of one’s own locality? And this is a serious and difficult question to answer.

However, as the fact of the Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien implies, people recognize that in our attempts to understand those of different cultures and societies we also come better to understand ourselves and the grounds we take for granted. This is my understanding of what standpoint theory has recently developed into, and in the elaboration that follows I shall explicitly extend the concept of situated textuality into standpoint. Standpoint also attempts better to understand the contexts that govern the ethical decisions that we necessarily make every day of our lives, decisions that have effects that ripple out ecologically to all parts of the world. Moral and ethical issues are raised rather more acutely in our study of writing from positions of non-ruling relations. Furthermore, there is also the possibility that aesthetic negotiation in areas not overtly concerned with national cultures, may lead to transnational collaboration among individuals that results in common ground more resistant to transnational global ideology, and more able to generate vocabularies of critique for the artists and intellectuals of the nation.

This essay first argues from these theoretical grounds, and then offers some work on situating texts from positions of non-ruling relations.

**Situated textuality**

Standpoint theory is an area of discussion I became caught up in mainly because of its profound challenge to the sciences, including computing science, that I had practised for many years. It made sense to me partly because of the congruency with issues such as objectivity, isolation and the fact/value separation with which I was already concerned (Hunter, 1984) and partly because it so clearly fitted into a gap in contemporary rhetorical theory — a gap delineated by comparison with the consensus-making stance for participatory democracy within classical rhetorical theory and its subsequent history. However my on-going exploration comes from attempts to find ways of talking about written texts that have not received conventional or traditional aesthetic commentaries, which are not perceived as “literature”. This exploration is the self-consciously political action of an educator: We can all enjoy and work with texts, but without a sustained attempt to find a vocabulary or strategy for saying or communicating or writing what it is we value in the texts and why we spend so much time working on them, they slip away. The written texts do not get reprinted, nor even in some cases printed; they do not get circulated and read by others. Therefore what we value becomes thin or confined, does notextend out and inform other ways of life. The latter part of this paper attempts a number of different readings of some writing by Lee Maracle, as well as a reading of a transcription of oral stories by three First Nations Elder women, *Life Lived Like*
a Story. The attempts here are political in the sense of legitimacy: finding ways to recognise and agree to accord value, and in the sense of agency: finding ways to repeat that value in actions.

The feminist critiques of objectivity in the sciences, are based on three elements: First, the autonomous isolated individual, second, rationalist analytics in the service of absolute value-free logic, and third, neutral objectivity with verisimilitude and exact replicability primary among its several strategies. The critiques elaborate on the ways in which these elements erase all people who do not fall within the boundaries of the representational parameters — including women. Yet isolation, absolute neutrality and objectivity, have been the hallmarks of science since the classical period. Whenever they have strayed into politics they have consistently been critiqued by rhetoricians. Only when science and politics form an alliance in the seventeenth century does science begin to make claims on the universality of the modern liberal man. Yet the rhetorical strategies of the communication of science became congruent with those of the social contract in representative democratic states, promising the liberal state the same success with the real that science achieved through experiment. At the same time autonomy, truth and beauty, parallel to isolation, neutrality and objectivity, have also been the hallmarks of aesthetics, of arts and criticism, in the modern western world.

Standpoint theory takes a different position. It has asked: could you do science differently if you did not erase people outside the institutional representation? and if so, how could you do it differently? And what this essay attempts to do is ask the same question of the arts. In philosophy of science and drawing on discussions of Marxist theory and frequently referring to the distinction between ruling and non-ruling power made by Dorothy Smith (Smith, 1987), these questions are specifically bound to the claim that women doing science do it from a special position outwith the systematic; hence they can be more engaged and engaged with different things. Women in science can more sharply expose its assumptions because they are not part of the prior agreements, hence they can be more objective. And precisely because they are not part of the prior agreements about the laws of science, they may prioritise other agreements including agreements about strategies for dealing with the actual world that are different from those used by institutional science, strategies with a different understanding about power relations between the observer and observed and generating different kinds of knowledge. Here I would want to emphasise that these different kinds of knowledge are not simply those relationships of intense beauty that have been documented by a number of practising scientists. Those private relationships are satisfying but they are premised by the positions of privilege within which most of those practitioners work. Other kinds of knowledge, possibly not so completely defined and defining, can come from people who work in a wider negotiation with other people, collectively working with science as a medium for human communication.

Standpoint theory is concerned with situated knowledge as necessarily partial, and with retaining a concept of the real in terms of critical realism rather than naive realism - a distinction made most discreetly by Hilary Rose (Rose, 1994). It is also concerned with re-defining the "individual" to account for people who are not subjects, or to account for the not-subjected of people's lives. These emphases lie close to those of discourse theory in two of the three areas, and it is important to distinguish between the two. Situated knowledges are similar to discourse systems, and both have been accused of relativist pluralism. The notion of varieties of individuals or of identity is similar to the study within different discourse studies of the relation of the subject to ideological representation. But the concern with the "real" separates the two, for discourse studies is profoundly caught into construction and even constitution rather than any notion even of critical realism. Because discourse studies are systematic they cannot easily deal with the notion of a "real" that is external to the system. And reality is messy, it asks that systems overlap and get mixed up rather than remain distinct.

To understand the grounds of distinction between discourse studies and standpoint theory, it is helpful to turn to two writers who in the early 1970s began different but related critiques of politics and ideology. Carol Pateman and Dorothy Smith. In 1973, Pateman made a profoundly influential critique of the liberal democratic social contract that underwrites many of the representative democracies in the Euro-American west (Pateman, 1979 and 1991). Her work has illuminated that of many other political thinkers since in defining the basis for the liberal social contract as the isolated autonomous individual (also known as universal man), the notion of objective knowledge, and the idea of neutral and therefore unquestionable truth. In many ways the analysis is similar to that made by Habermas, yet Pateman increasingly focused on women and defined the areas of the relations of power as government, the civic and the domestic. Whereas for Habermas the split between the government and the civic interacts in various ways with the split between the public and the private (Habermas, 1987), for Pateman there is the government, the civic and the domestic, interacting with the ruling public, the civic public and the non-ruling public. I understand her concept of the ruling public to include the private, and her concept of the non-ruling public to include the personal.

Whereas for Habermas there are liberty, equality, fraternity and special rights for women and others, for Pateman liberty, equality, fraternity are special rights for men. This distinction makes a fundamental difference to any discussion of "rights" occurring for example with respect to the welfare or social security state. For a long time the liberty, equality, fraternity of the liberal democratic social contract only refers to between 5 to 20 per cent of the population, depending on the extent of the franchise. These are the citizens of the nation, and hence subject to the state through ideological representations which define access to ruling power. Even with enfranchisement the remaining 80 percent have only representative access to ruling power, only actual access if they acquisse to the permitted representations or obligations which have already been put into place by people not necessarily of their class, colour or gender.

In Pateman's more recent work (Pateman, 1995), and throughout the work of Dorothy Smith, one finds not a critique of ruling relations but a turn to the 80 percent. Smith points out that most of those supposedly with the "vote" have no actual access to ruling power. She asks how and why we value the social and political, non-ruling relations of power that involve so many people; and claims implicitly that that valuing, will through its articulacy encourage. If not allow communi-
cation with and possible change of ruling relations of power. For Smith, in terms of understanding the socio-political world of the liberal state, there is ruling power and non-ruling power; she does not elaborate on the civic.

From Pateman and Smith one can derive three areas of the elaboration of power. There are ruling government relations mediated by ideology through representations of the subject – what I have earlier discussed as the ideology-subject axis. There are also the tensely contradictory distinct systems of discourse where subjects, the 5 to 20 percent historically enfranchised and therefore subject to ruling relations, contest those representations on the edges of government and in the civic, especially in fields related to capitalism because involvement in capital necessitates close engagement with ruling relations. Those representations are fundamentally connected to the representations of psychoanalysis. And there are the non-ruling, civic and domestic relations of power, simultaneously negotiated among and between individuals and groups, which are inflicted by subjecthood, by the contradictions of systematisation in discourses, but also by local daily communications, discussions and negotiations. Many feminists interested in modulating ideological representations by way of Foucault have translated Smith’s “non-ruling” into the discourse study area that analyses specific systematic moments along the ideology-subject axis, in terms of subjects dealing with their contradictions (Ramzouoglou, 1993). While this theoretical move is important, indeed vital since discourse studies are currently the main voices to which ideology responds, it misses the point that people without access to ruling power cannot be subjects because subject by definition are enfranchised citizens with a contractual agreement with government. Disfranchised people are not citizens, nor do they have the same representational relation to ruling power. Discourse studies can also be class-blind. In neglecting those people without subjecthood, it misses the strategies that could be employed as economic power moves from national to multinational to global. This is potentially disastrous, since that move renders increasingly ineffective the rhetoric of discourse studies which is bound to nation state capitalism.

The three areas delineated by Pateman and Smith, government / civic / domestic, or ruling / discourse / non-ruling, establish a pattern that has been taken up by standpoint theorists who do focus on the non-ruling and excluded. One finds not only the feminist critique of objectivity in science with which the preceding chapter was concerned, with its focus on the exclusion of women’s knowledge, but also the feminist critique of politics that analyses the curious simultaneity of the autonomous yet universalist man whose isolation obscures their situatedness. In philosophy, one finds the critique of value-free assumptions in both empiricism and idealism, because the notion of “value-free” denies history (Code, 1995). And in sociology there is the debate between quantitative and qualitative methodology which charges the enumeration, verisimilitude and repeatability (as distinct from the broader and various strategies of repetition) of the latter with an evasion of the contextual (Rose 1993). In each case the obscured, evaded, denied, excluded situated knowledge is without authority, and often, if not usually, without words. The critiques delineate tacit knowledges of various kinds, and all recognise the need to work on words to bring those tacit knowledges into communication.

Many developments of feminist standpoint theory end by focusing on the absent textuality of science, its inability to communicate through an engaged and interactive stance either with its topic of study in the actual world or with its audience – the inability to engage its public audience has inflicted both that audience’s understanding of science’s relations with the actual as well as the understanding of many scientists involved in the technoscience at the service of and subject to industry and business. Consistently, the critiques of science turn to the arts, on the basis that the arts are there precisely to offer strategies for interactive and public communication. The arts have traditionally refined textual approaches to offer contexts and supply the situatedness for situated knowledge. Rose, Fox-Keller and Harding all turn to genre, metaphor and narrative, and Code, working explicitly from these feminist standpoint critiques of science, elaborates on the need for narrative to do what cannot be done from the subjectivity of isolated man, value-free logic and objectivity, and develops the use of story to educate one in the sensitivity to collaborative and ecological connections that builds epistemic responsibility (Code, 1995, p. 184). However, the arts are not consistently “good”, and these feminist critiques of science have come to a halt with the notion of situated knowledge, without taking on board the need for a situated textuality necessary for the articulation of that knowledge.

An on-going critique of the arts and criticism, of aesthetics, could begin to resolve this temporary hiatus. A standpoint critique can be taken to arts and criticism very cleanly, since for the past 300 to 400 years most “canonical” art has been produced by the 5 to 20 percent who have been recognised citizens, subjects of the state. This is largely for economic reasons; citizens were usually by definition property, therefore more or less affluent enough to buy the leisure time necessary to work on art; they lived within a community of capitalist owners of the various institutional and industrial technologies needed for the dissemination of the arts: For example the capital intensive business and industry of publishing and printing which has such a large impact on book production. Even though proximity to this community has slightly less impact on the writing in periodicals it is only necessary to look at the rationale for relaxing the press controls in the 1840s (that anyone substantial enough to own a press would probably be a self-interested member of the middle classes) to understand the continued influence. These canonical writers addressed issues pertinent to their lives, which, because they were at least partially represented subjects of the state meant they were addressing represented and representable issues. Hence their work could be appreciated by others in more or less similar positions, with access to the media (and it is media technology that conveys the representations that make ideology possible), and generating a critical vocabulary for discussion of common interests: a critical vocabulary that draws on concepts of (in)adequate language to license the artist as transgressor of ideological representations and provider of a transcendent language.

This critical vocabulary for appreciation is an embodiment of the liberal social contract: the isolated genius who simultaneously can speak on behalf of all, conveying absolute truth, through pure beauty. It is a vocabulary for the subject, and not for the individual writers who appear, from say the letters and diaries of the Romantic poets, to have engaged in quite different relations in the imposition on
their writing of the non-ruling areas of civic and domestic life. Furthermore, from a standpoint position, the 80 percent who are not represented, however inadequately, are not only attempting the strategy of pushing embodiment into ideological representation, but also attempting the strategy of articulating the not-yet-represented or even embodied. These people know there is only a restricted amount that can be gained by worrying about transgression and transcendence, the fruits of (in)adequate language, if one is not represented at all.

There have been attempts to critique the isolated genius, for example Barthes or Foucault on the “author”, but these are often treated as an aser of the “individual” rather than a critique of subjectivity. Similarly there have been attempts to critique pure truth, particularly in the work of Derrida, although his critique along with other moral stances, is usually dismissed as caught in an essentialist / relativist dichotomy rather than an analysis that proceeds alongside that dichotomy and on another border with the ideological relations of governing. Yet there is no recent critique of beauty as something wrested from ideological obscuring into cultural articulation at the moment it loses its power within ruling relations, no analysis of the extraordinary joy it offers at that moment when it still fits so precisely into the structures of social representation, and no critique of the ensuing pleasure and the conditions of its continuance or dissipation. Most of all, there is no critique of why it is so hard to value aesthetic production from those not in the 5 to 20 percent, from valued domestic and civic places that raise issues of class, gender and age, and those of race and ability imbribated particularly deeply into class. This material tends to be called “popular” but not analysed as a different aesthetic, taking into account different writers, audiences, media. It is often subjected to the same critical analysis as canonical art, and hence always appears to be inadequate to representation, which is tautological since it is not represented, and held to fail. The material is dismissed as is the entire field of craft work: it is skilled and with tacit knowledge, but since it is not transgressive or transcendent it is not immediately relevant nor can it be appreciated.

However, a critique carried out with a view to situated textuality, and using a rhetorical analysis of the standpoint of women as effectively disenfranchised and excluded from ruling relations of power, would look at the critique of genius made for example by Barthes and insist that it is the subject, not the individual who is being displaced. This is something auto(bio)graphy studies do: insist on personal materiality, the reality of individual experience and existence. These studies often offer analyses not only of non-ruling relations but also their position with regard to ruling relations, and the negotiations of individuals. Trying to deal with these situatednesses is messy and not easy to categorise.

A rhetorical analysis concerned with situated textuality would take the arguments about the insistence of presence and the absolute along with pluralist relativism, and position them within a situated knowledge. This would not only base critique in a position of historical immediacy, and look at the untidy relations between people within non-ruling relations of power, people without representation, and move toward what so many are beginning to discuss as ethics, but it would also add to this an understanding of morality and ethics as engaged and negotiated best probable grounds for action, neither relative nor absolute. These grounds may have been produced from one position but the strategies can cross specific groups, address and change ruling relations.

And parallel to the critique of epistemology, a critique of aesthetics would argue first for the need to value the 80%+ of excluded literary and verbal arts, but not through a critical poetics but by way of a rhetorical analysis that offers a vocabulary for talking about the articulation of tacit knowledge as a textuality of limitation rather than adequacy. The work on words would not be a second-order textuality satisfied with the idea of language as a code, nor a first order textuality continually transgressing representation toward a transcendent beauty, but a textuality where people work on words together to build common ground. It’s in this attention to common ground that epistemology and aesthetics overlap, and the tacit knowledge becomes articulated or textualised.

This work is vulnerable work. Unravelling the representative leaves moments, sometimes longer of freefall. We need support and need to want to do it, hence we need communities with a shared sense of what has to be done. Readers have always known this, but in a rapidly expanding communicative world, those communities of commitment are more difficult to identify, to form, to belong to. Students of literature spend their time learning how to belong to those communities from the past, but I do not want to wait 100 years to appreciate writing by women who are my contemporaries.

Situating the Text

One of the many reasons that literary aesthetics has largely escaped critique is that writing from positions on non-ruling power is not usually published or disseminated. In Canada however, from the late 1950s until the late 1980s, the government operated an extraordinarily courageous programme of cultural politics. One result of which was substantial subsidy for writers and publishers, in turn encouraging a considerable number of publications that did not fit traditional aesthetic criteria. There may be problems. Some commentators have said that there is too much literature published, that a large proportion of it is rubbish. But, a new text by a new writer is often indistinguishable from rubbish unless it fits a conventional aesthetics. If it is new or different then the reader must spend time and energy and commitment finding a vocabulary of response. And we may find it is all for nothing, that the writing does indeed give nothing back. The chance we take is even higher in drama.

Among many possible examples from autobiography, life-writing, writing from immigrant communities, writing from the newly literate or communities new to publication, writing as therapy, language-focused writing, writing from oral-based cultures, I would like to turn to a few examples from some writing by Lee Maracle and from Life Lived Like a Story (Cruikshank). First the work of Lee Maracle: her early writing was often rejected as crude or naive. For example, early in I Am Woman (Maracle, 1988) the narrator says:
At the same time as it considers an issue that has been discussed from Plato to Arendt, the text is structured by religious sentiment with distinct echoes of the Christian liturgy, which could be read as crude modulations of a subtle discourse.

Although each example raises important issues, even in terms of radicalising western aesthetics, each may also be read as maintaining a stylistic status quo, putting too much bias in the autobiography. Now, it is possible to “save” the writing. For example, we could read the split between narcissistic and sententious as a personal and public split strategic to an oral performance. Or, I Am Woman and Sojourner’s Truth (Maracle, 1990) could each be read within gender studies and race studies as elaborations of “abject” positions for resistance in post-Foucauldian discourse. Or, one can read especially in Sojourner’s Truth, the loss of control over genre as skillful manoeuvring of literary device, sophisticated dislocation of grammar, register and narrative. These readings would allow us to “make sense” of the texts. However, they would continue to work within the ideology/subject axis, even as counter-discourse. They would not require us to ask how and why we have agreed to the criteria for justification of this aesthetics. They would not necessarily encourage us to negotiate with the text, to work on an assessment of common ground that might provide a basis for agreement and then in the repetition of those agreements find that they acquire value in our daily lives and become legitimating factors in our traversal of non-ruling relations and ruling relations.

In this case I have been struck that none of the recuperations of the text, whether against or for the text, allows for humour: for example in “Polka Partners” how does one deal with the point when the doctor tells the First Nations community workers that she is a lesbian. There is huge embarrassment on their part, and for readers educated within political correctness, there is embarrassment for these people, condensing and patronising. But is this scene funny or not? I have talked elsewhere about the way ideology lets people from non-ruling relations participate in culture but nearly always only as tragic subjects, and hardly ever as comedic or socially integrating (Hunter, 1997). Yet it is I think significant that the western readers’ comfort with positioning of several First Nations’ texts as tragic, belies the humour and the comedy of these texts; as if the white western reader cannot accept that the lives being described have any hope, an implicitly cynical and potentially racist denial of the possibility of hope. At the same time, without such hope against the odds, First Nations peoples would not have managed to reclaim so much of their culture, tradition and social participation as they have over the past 30 years. And the residual cynicism that is implied, belies in the white western reader a profound lack of agency in their own lives. One of the fascinating things about looking at First Nations writing in Canada is that it flowers in the 1970s to 1980s, precisely when the western post-1968 revolution sets in. Native peoples were marching, arguing, debating, negotiating throughout the ‘Me’ generation, throughout Generation X’, whose populations sat around worrying about lack of agency. Perhaps negotiating with the texts a little more, on different grounds, may even lead to a re-structuring of western values, a re-learning about agency.

Or, take the book Life Lived Like a Story which I initially found impossible to read. The text is transcribed by Julie Cruikshank from the oral accounts of three Navajo
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Native women elders, Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith and Annie Ned. When I first read it I felt like an eighteenth century Swedish literate: someone who could recognize and even say a word from a page, but for whom it had no meaning. I would not have continued to read it had it not been put my way by someone I trusted.

Yet as I have read and re-read it, minute repetitions have begun to cohere around certain words, give them significance. This work is labour intensive, part of my daily life. I cannot bring an armory of strategies to it; when I have done so I find myself commodifying the work. Instead I find I am working with the recursiveness of possibilities. Not with the repetition at the foundation of cliché or even of opposition, but possible words and phrases that you say to others when trying to articulate a response, and sometimes they pick them up and return them to you or say them on to others, and in the reiteration the words and phrases leave traces that can net together and form a common ground on which to articulate our feelings. The work is difficult to do on your own, although it is possible with just the pages of the text and some social and historical understanding. Yet it is far more valuable to do it in communities of writers and readers. Writers do this kind of thing all the time, but readers don’t and this is a major problem with western aesthetics.

It has taken me a long time to find it, but listen to Annie Ned talk about these things:

Long time ago, what they know, what they see
That’s the one they talk about, I guess.
Tell stories – which way you learn things.
You think about that one your grandma tells you.
You’ve got to believe it, what Grandma said.
That’s why we’ve got it.
It’s true, too, I guess –
Which they work at moccasins ...
Which way they make sinew ...
Which way to fix that fishnet ...
Some lazy women don’t know how to work,
Don’t believe what old people tell them.
And so ... short net! (Ned, 1992, pp. 317-8)

I do not understand many of its significances but I do understand the way it brings together storyteller audience and text into a community.

We can dismiss a text or recuperate it, but what is difficult is learning how to negotiate with it. The former leaves you within ideological representations permitted to subjects the latter contains much potential for opening up representation. In negotiating, people labour on the articulation of grounds, often at first with just a glimpse of commonality and shared ground, that we seize upon and repeat and in the to and fro of repetition texture the movement into ground, valuing and legitimating it. Repetition and coherence are the basis for verbal textuality, and the stance that engages them and builds through them. The phonological, grammatical, thematic, topical repetitions are not in themselves “good” or “bad” but more or

less historically appropriate for situating knowledge within specific material conditions of a shared community, trying to find out what can be said from the tacit fields of our lives into a situated textuality. This is what “writing the body” tried to do, what the new aesthetics of auto(bio)graphy tries to do, what Afro American studies, gay-lesbian theorists try to do: work on articulation not representation. After all, there is no point doing so if the ideological system doesn’t represent you. They work on ways of saying things from the tacit of non-ruling relations, so that representations can be changed. My own primary commitment is to learning to read and value the domestic, however I would also like to learn to read mainstream texts in a different way, from a domestic aesthetics.

The experience of shared common ground in traditional aesthetics a la carte is a shock of infringed selfhood because it is a beauty that should only happen once, be rare and unique and somehow less valuable if in common – what we value under the word “originality” – it is tied to subjechood and nation state ideology and “art”. But working on aesthetic shock precisely as recognition of shared common ground is, to pursue my domestic topos, aesthetics in the kitchen. It is a shock of shared common ground that I have felt in engaging with a number of Canadian women writers (Hunter, 1996); it is a shock of recognition of common work, of shared value, and has hope in it as well as joy. It is akin to finding someone who has retained or built a memory in common with one of your own, and common memory, whether found or worked on, is the basis for all collective action. Knowing that we share that is what makes it possible but also makes it possible as political agency.

So if the model for art that I started with suggests the tight pairing of the artist with the nation state, as the nation state shifts toward global economic relations that relationship changes. The artist no longer transgresses nation state representations on behalf of the privileged individual, that top 5-15% who were actually citizens, and therefore subjects of the state and subject to its ideological representations, but works toward doing so in order to articulate the changes in the nation state, an intellectual activity. Now, this is absolutely necessary if the nation state is to resist global representations put in place to control markets, but it also colludes in reinforcing national ideology with all its negative effects as well as the individual sustaining of subjectivity.

I would suggest that it’s in the work with material and with reality, on tacit knowledge or with ruling relations and the relations of the artist/nation state, that can be the most enabling for the individual within global relations. Possibly because it is hidden from the global, obscured, too far away at the moment (like the artist in the early nation state), art from people working largely within non-ruling relations, from an immediate standpoint, a communality, is not concerned with subjectivity, with subjective/objective, with absolute/relative, with desire, but with negotiation, probably the best grounds, value and agency. This art is not only enabling for the individual but also helpful in the end for the nation because it offers strategies of resistance rather than opposition to global power. But it is also capable by way of the rhetoric of its stance of forming cross-national grounds, alliances and action.
Johann Georg Greinek

Zwischen Region und Nation

Abstract
One economic result of the "Quiet Revolution" in Quebec has been the foundation of Quebec Inc., a network of francophone public enterprises, strongly related to private-public partnerships and enhancing the francophone private sector of Quebec's economy. Nevertheless, in the current process of globalization, Quebec's regional economy suffers tremendously from the downsizing of Keynesian interventions and from its staple orientated "old fashioned" structure, as well as from its mostly fordist mode of production. In this essay I am going to analyze some geopolitical conditions of Quebec's regional, globalized economy. In addition it is stated that the idea of interlocking enterprises realized by "Quebec Inc." inside Quebec's society during the past decades is useful as a basis and as an example for a newly restructured, modernized, regional economic network - beyond all discussions about national sovereignty.

Résumé
L'un des résultats économiques de la "Résolution tranquille" a été la fondation de "Québec Inc.", un réseau d'entreprises publiques, qui entretient des relations privilégiées avec des entreprises semi-privées et qui a revigoré le secteur privé de l'économie du Québec. Néanmoins, dans le processus contemporain de mondialisation, l'économie régionale du Québec souffre extraordinairement des coupsures de l'interventionnisme Keynesien, de son orientation démodée vers l'exportation des ressources naturelles et de son mode de production fordiste. Dans cet article, j'analyserais quelques conditions de l'évolution de l'économie régionale québécoise.

De plus, je proposerais un modèle selon lequel les entreprises engagées dans un réseau régional comme celui réalisé par Quebec Inc. restructuraient et modernisaient à la mort des discussions sur la souveraineté nationale du Québec.