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**Identity Politics In Canadian Artwriting:  
*C Magazine* and *Parachute* 1983-1996**

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**A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Art History**

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## ABSTRACT

Identity Politics in Canadian Artwriting: *C Magazine* and *Parachute* 1983-1996

Abbie Weinberg

This thesis attempts to determine where *C Magazine* and *Parachute* fit within international developments of theories on identity. Focussing on the period 1983-1996, the study analyzes articles published in these magazines and contextualizes them within theoretical and critical art discourse. Chapter One presents a history of "new art history" and explores the critical milieu from which these journals grew. It also outlines the specific histories of *C Magazine* and *Parachute*. Prefaced and contextualized by a brief history of international debates about essentialism, Chapter Two examines these magazines' publication of articles dealing with feminist issues. Foregrounding the developments of gay and lesbian studies and queer theory, Chapter Three explores the appearance in *C Magazine* and *Parachute* of articles that address issues of sexual identity. This study is framed by an ongoing discussion of Homi Bhabha's conceptualization of the double inscription of identity through performative action and pedagogical formation, as elucidated in his essay "DissemiNation," published in *Nation and Narration*.

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*For my parents.*

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## Introduction

### Reasons for an Inquiry

"Books tell stories." This phrase begins Donna Landry's and Gerald MacLean's book *Materialist Feminisms*.<sup>1</sup> Their book tells the story of post-structuralist critiques of essences and identities with regard to feminism and socialism, suggesting that the political action of the latter two "isms" has not necessarily been co-opted by the deconstructionist project, as has often been asserted elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Theirs is not a story particularly concerned with articles published in journals, let alone those in journals about art. Mine is. While my study shall not dare to boast as broad a history as theirs (nor does mine look at socialism within these contexts), it attempts to explore similar issues as they are emergent in *C Magazine* and *Parachute*.

My work is preceded by four theses that deal with art journals in Canada. In 1988, Robert Graham wrote "Understanding *artscanada*: history, practice and idea."<sup>3</sup> An M.A. thesis, Graham's study focuses on the framework which supported *artscanada* (1943-1982), "illuminating the terms of formation and operation which have shaped national arts organizations and the policies which brought them into being."<sup>4</sup> More recently, in 1997, Louise Moreau wrote "Making Art Modern: The first decade of *Vie des Arts* magazine and its contribution to the discourse on the visual arts in Quebec during the 1950s and 1960s."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, *Materialist Feminisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>By the "deconstructionist project," I am referring to the influential tenet of post-structural theory - adopted and adapted by feminist theorists - of analysing the ways in which identities, positions and discourses are constructed through representations (visual and verbal).

<sup>3</sup>Robert Graham, "Understanding *artscanada*: history, practice and idea," M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1988.

<sup>4</sup>Graham, "Abstract," n.p.

<sup>5</sup>Louise Moreau, "Making Art Modern: The first decade of *Vie des Arts* magazine and its contribution to the discourse on the visual arts in

Her M.A. thesis analyses, from a socio-historical perspective, the magazine's relationship to cultural policy and its history and content; as well as its perspective on the implications of the modernist aesthetic. Tim Clark's M.A. thesis, "Michel Foucault, Critical Modernism, and Writing on the Visual Arts in English Canada," and Lon Dubinsky's Ph.D. thesis, "Canadian Visual Art Magazines as Cultural Formations," were both written in 1991 and are discussed within my own text.

Tim Clark, in his thesis, has stated that there was a "massive expansion and development of the institutional context that supported writing on the arts in Canada," largely as a result of post-war federal and provincial policies on arts funding.<sup>6</sup> As Clark has observed, this expansion assisted in the production of journals such as *C Magazine* and *Parachute* which would in turn be vehicles for the dissemination of major theoretical work of this century. Clark's concern being critical modernism, he focussed on "two significant sets" of work: that produced in post-war France "under the various and often confusing titles of structuralism, phenomenology, critical feminism, marxism [sic] and post-structuralism"; and, that "produced partly as a consequence of the foundation, in 1923, of the Frankfurt School of Sociology."<sup>7</sup> As my concern is with issues of identity generally, and gender and sexuality specifically, I will focus on some similar currents - namely critical feminism and post-structuralism. At the same time, I will look at others, such as queer theory and postcolonial studies, which are absent from Clark's thesis.

This is not an argument for or against the positions it examines, but instead an exploration of how these theoretical projects are undertaken within the Canadian art context. If nothing else, the deconstructionist project has undermined any possibility for

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Quebec during the 1950s and 1960s," M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1997.

<sup>6</sup>Tim Clark, "Michel Foucault, Critical Modernism, and Writing on the Visual Arts in English Canada," M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1991, iii.

<sup>7</sup>Clark 2.

claims of objectivity, and thus this thesis is undoubtedly filtered through my own desire to discern in these journals what has been called a "new cultural politics of difference."<sup>8</sup> My hope, however, is not to undermine the possibilities within certain theoretical positionings for political action. Rather, I intend to lay bare the aspects of such positions which hinder such a project, seeing as most of these theories were borne out of a desire for liberation from oppression of all kinds.

Liberation projects have often begun in the streets, in revolutions, in protests, in activism. The theoretical currents discussed in this thesis are not the exclusive property of those "isms" which find themselves quoted, critiqued and upheld throughout the following pages and they owe much to the consciousness and activity of non-academics throughout history - those for whom "theory" may even be a dirty word.

The discrepancy between individuals' actions in the construction of nationhood and the institutional inscription of nationhood has been described by Homi K. Bhabha as a distinction between the performative and the pedagogical, respectively.<sup>9</sup> He states:

The scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*.<sup>10</sup>

The writing of articles and their publication in magazines represents a fugue of the performative and the pedagogical. Both the pedagogical and the performative are present in

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<sup>8</sup>This is a concept elucidated at great length by Cornel West in his "The New Cultural Politics of Difference," *October* 53 (1990): 93-108. Elizabeth Grosz also discusses it, but more briefly in *Space, Time, and Perversion* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 54.

<sup>9</sup>Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," ed. Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 291-322.

<sup>10</sup>Bhabha 297.

the cultural inscription of identity through a critical art discourse produced by individuals' acts and gestures.

Lon Dubinsky has noted in his Ph.D. thesis, "Canadian Visual Art Magazines as Cultural Formations," that Canada has a very distinct relationship to communications (which includes magazines). He states:

What distinguishes the Canadian situation is the extent to which communications is an intellectual and institutional concern. For one thing, intellectual life in Canada is greatly taken up with communication as a system and process.... There is an ongoing attempt to regulate communications through legislation by maintaining state agencies, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and The National Film Board.... No segment of Canadian society appears untouched by a preoccupation with communications and this includes the visual art world.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the institutional inscription of individual writers' and critics' work through their publication in art magazines such as *C Magazine* and *Parachute* is representative of their transformation from performative to pedagogical aspects of nation formation, especially within the Canadian context. How one author's work is inscribed with authority through its publication, and the ensuing shifts that it may in turn effect upon the discourse of its location are intriguing topics to be sure. This never-ending process of re-inscription has shaped the theoretical and political movements that will be discussed herein.

In the first chapter, a history of "new art history" will be told through a discussion of some of the key works and authors that have brought it to fruition. Therein, a history of journals and magazines - *C Magazine* and *Parachute* included - will be presented. I will explain their reciprocal role both as vehicles for the above discussions and purveyors of shifts themselves. Focusses will be on the changes that feminism, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis have made to the writing of art history. Also included here is a discussion of certain articles published in *C Magazine* and *Parachute* that have taken issue with these very changes in the structuring of art history. This chapter attempts to make clear the link of visiting scholars, symposia and art exhibitions with changes to artwriting in Canada. As

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<sup>11</sup>Lon Dubinsky, "Canadian Visual Art Magazines as Cultural Formations," Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, 1991, 1.

well, it charts a more material (rather than theoretical) history of the two magazines in question: who was involved with their inceptions, why they were created and how they have shifted over the years, if at all.

Following this, the second chapter takes up a much more specific aspect of the journals: their publication of articles that deal with feminist issues. The impetus here is to expose intentional and emergent essentialisms within the feminist theory published in the magazines. This section addresses a history of essentialism's critiques in specific locations, such as: feminism's relationship with the discourse of painting; psychoanalysis's tenuous anti-essentialism; the role of deconstruction in the destabilization of media-stereotyped imagery of women; and later, new "feminist subject positions" that have resulted from the developing dialogue between essentialism and deconstruction.

The third chapter presents the prevalence and development of theories of sexuality as they appear in the magazines. Issues addressed are: gay art practice and "gay art history"; queer theory, s/m practices and transsexuality; the role of medical and media discourses in the production of sexual identities; and, the interplay of race, ethnicity and sexuality in the construction of identities. Attempting to chart the emergence of previously suppressed or hidden sexual identities, this section looks at recent histories of gay and lesbian studies, queer theory and postcolonialism. Unlike the second chapter which is based on numerous articles about feminism, this one with fewer references, is reflective of the lesser amount of material that has been published thus far, in these magazines.

Throughout this thesis I will examine Lon Dubinsky's assertion that *C Magazine* is "more an archive and only incidentally a magazine,"<sup>12</sup> and, how *C Magazine* contrasts with *Parachute* in this aspect of its own "identity." At the same time, distinctions between pedagogical and performative formations of identity will be a constant preoccupation throughout the second and third chapters.

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<sup>12</sup>Dubinsky 116.

In conclusion, this thesis will demonstrate how identity politics manifested in articles in *C Magazine* and *Parachute* are representative of shifts in the larger arena of critical discourse, as well as being closely related to the local experiences and activities of the magazines' writers/critics. Ultimately, this inquiry into gender and sexual identities will attempt to discern how we have arrived at the present moment of a paradoxical identity politics based on "undone" identities.

## Chapter 1

### Foundations

The first part of this chapter charts the course of the new art history through a brief introduction to it as a body of work, including some of its main impetus and influences. A more in-depth look at its manifestations is then provided through a section focussed upon the "Crisis in the Discipline" issue of *Art Journal* (Winter 1982). The second part of the chapter outlines the rise of British and North American journals which deal with the discursive fields of representation: artistic, political, philosophical, theoretical. Following, in more detail, are the histories of *Parachute* and *C Magazine* - two such Canadian journals which are the main objects of my study. Here, a discussion of which types of theory are marshalled in the magazines is presented through an investigation of a few major representative articles published in each. The purpose of this chapter specifically (and of the entire thesis, generally) is to link changes in the discipline of art history on an international level with the shaping of these two Canadian journals.

What has come to be called the new art history grew from different seedlings, in a number of locations, during the late sixties and early seventies, and most importantly was the result of both shifts within the discipline itself and pressures from other academic and political spheres exerted on (and often welcomed by) art history. The complexity of the new art history was reflected in two stages, the first being a questioning of the purposes of art history as a discipline and the second being a modernization of its tradition through the introduction of new approaches.<sup>1</sup>

In his now-famous article of May 24, 1974, "The Conditions of Artistic Creation," British art historian T.J. Clark called for an archaeology of art history: "a critical history uncovering assumptions and allegiances."<sup>2</sup> He suggested the usefulness of a social history

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<sup>1</sup>A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello, "Introduction," *The New Art History*, eds. Rees and Borzello (New Jersey: Atlantic Highlands, 1988) 2-10.

of art, not for purposes of diversification but as a tool in the formation of new questions about art history and new ways of asking questions about art history. He suggests that "style' is the form of ideology [which] indicates the necessity and the limitations of a history of styles."<sup>3</sup> He goes on to say that "the notion of the 'representative' artist, who gives us a complete depiction of the 'possible consciousness' of a class - a notion dear to a certain brand of Marxist history - seems ... a figment."<sup>4</sup> Ultimately he makes a case for the ability of an inquiry (if done properly) to speak volumes about how ideologies work; his argument is based on a consideration of "the conditions in which a certain 'subjectivity' - utterly false, utterly undeniable - was constituted and given form."<sup>5</sup> It is, according to Clark, only through an interrogation of the ideological constitution of the subject that the scope of art history's ambitions - to determine how ideologies work - may be fulfilled. This short tract had far-reaching consequences and ultimately played a large part in the revolutionizing of the study of art history, as Clark's point was "to challenge the structuring values of the discipline itself."<sup>6</sup> For T.J. Clark, the "social history of art" was "the place [sic] where the questions have to be asked, and where they cannot be asked in the old way."<sup>7</sup>

In 1988, A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello edited an anthology of writings on the new art history. What becomes apparent through the selection of essays is the multiplicitous nature of the changes to art history as an academic discipline. Many art historians, such as Lynda Nead, Jon Bird and John Tagg, took cues from Clark,

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<sup>2</sup>T.J.Clark, "The Conditions of Artistic Creation," *Times Literary Supplement* 24 May 1974: 561.

<sup>3</sup>Clark 561.

<sup>4</sup>Clark 562.

<sup>5</sup>Clark 562.

<sup>6</sup>John Tagg, "Art History and Difference," in Rees and Borzello 165.

<sup>7</sup>Clark 562.

suggesting ways in which hegemonic power relations within society could be exposed and examined (with ultimate hopes of social change). However, they did not all look to a social history of art as their primary force. For many, early feminism was a strong influence. According to Paul Overy, "new art history has taken note of semiotics and structuralism at a theoretical level and of feminism at a pragmatic level."<sup>8</sup> Feminism first entered the scene in what many women have recently called the "add women and stir" brand of feminism. This was an insertion of women into an already existing (and unsatisfactory) canon of great male artists. As Canadian art critic, Dot Tuer, has phrased it, "the first generation of feminists, following in the footsteps of the suffragists, voiced political demands to ensure a place for women within the historical continuum."<sup>9</sup>

A second generation of feminists began questioning the very structure of history (and by extension the art historical canon), "seeking an articulation for a plurality of 'woman' and exploring the aesthetic and psychoanalytic dimensions of experience."<sup>10</sup> Tuer notes Julia Kristeva as one theorist who "links the disillusionment women felt with socialism in a European context."<sup>11</sup> Tuer suggests that "a microscopic parallel [to the European context] can be drawn in the relation of women artists to Canada's system of alternative spaces."<sup>12</sup>

For author of *Woman/Image/Text*, Lynne Pearce, the "feminist critique" of this second generation came "as a radical rereading of canonical and popular texts which exposed their sexism, misogyny and pornography, and frequently laid explicit blame on

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<sup>8</sup>Paul Overy, "The New Art History and Art Criticism," in Rees and Borzello 136.

<sup>9</sup>Dot Tuer, "To Speak of Difference," *Parachute* 43 (1986): 42.

<sup>10</sup>Tuer 42.

<sup>11</sup>Tuer 42.

<sup>12</sup>Tuer 42.

their authors/producers."<sup>13</sup> In effect, this kind of critique drew attention to the possibility for the reader's role to be politicized, instead of passive, thus beginning to alter the framework within which art was viewed and history was written. Eventually integrated with post-structuralism by some (as well as with Marxism, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and other approaches), feminist reading strategies enabled the production of new meanings for works of art, often by reading "against the grain."<sup>14</sup>

Post-structuralism, in the words of Terry Eagleton, "was a product of that blend of euphoria and disillusionment, liberation and dissipation, carnival and catastrophe, which was 1968. ... Unable to break the structures of State Power, post-structuralism found it possible instead to subvert the structures of language."<sup>15</sup> Post-structuralism is largely the result of work by a few major French theorists: philosopher Jacques Derrida, historian Michel Foucault, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and psychoanalyst and philosopher Julia Kristeva. In the Rees and Borzello anthology on new art history, Adrian Rifkin, Marcia Pointon and Victor Burgin were among the writers who discussed post-structuralism's influence. Mark Lewis has written in *C Magazine* that if "the prefix 'post' [in post-structuralism] can signal anything, it's a dual insistence that texts and art works can no longer be considered to be 'structures' that are independent of the subject that makes sense of them and that the critical tools that are brought to bear on works of art and texts have to be problematized and examined for their own internal presuppositions and relations to a more generalized logos."<sup>16</sup> This self-reflexivity, i.e., the "critical tools brought to bear on

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<sup>13</sup>Lynne Pearce, *Woman/Image/Text* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 3.

<sup>14</sup>Pearce 11.

<sup>15</sup>Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) 142.

<sup>16</sup>Mark Lewis, "Concerning the Question of the Post-Cultural," *C Magazine* 8 (1985): 57.

works of art" is reminiscent of Clark's earlier call for a critical inquiry into art history's history.

In the winter of 1982, an issue of *Art Journal*, subtitled "The Crisis in the Discipline," was published, addressing the shifting language and methods of new art histories: which questions were being asked and how. What seems clear from this issue is the temporal context of shifts within the discipline and the necessity to focus on subtleties, as opposed to becoming too concerned with the idea of "newness" in the field. In his editorial, Henri Zerner states that "strictly speaking there can be no history of art," thus undermining the idea of a discipline of art history proper.<sup>17</sup>

In his article for that issue, Donald Preziosi brings attention to the role of ideology in the perpetuation of theoretical frameworks - "The working theoretical framework or presuppositions of a given method are in general the ideology that the methodology seeks to perpetuate"<sup>18</sup> - and foregrounds the intensely historical nature of the new art history:

[T]he changes in our discipline are coming about not by turning away from its history, but rather by paying close and careful attention to the history of its textual protocols and metaphorical mechanisms. In the contemporary movement towards an archaeology of the discipline, we have begun not only to deconstruct received art historical theories and practices - including, of course, our own - but also to sketch outlines of a discipline of art study that moves beyond the various art histories in which we have all been trained.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Henri Zerner, "Editor's Statement: The Crisis in the Discipline," *Art Journal* 42 (1982): 279. In the spring of 1972, the *New Literary History* also published an issue which dealt with changes to the discipline of art history, called "Literary and Art History." I felt that it was, however, not as relevant to the concerns of my study as was the winter 1982 *Art Journal*. I would nonetheless like to note one text: John Passmore's "History of Art and History of Literature: A Commentary" (575-587). Therein he states that "it is very difficult to say a great deal about a painting, except by talking about its relation to something else, whether to other paintings, other arts, contemporary social movements, contemporary beliefs, or contemporary ideas" (579). His assertion connotes the omnipresence of interdisciplinarity within the study of art history and in fact alters the question from "Why other disciplines?" to "Which other disciplines?"

<sup>18</sup>Donald Preziosi, "Constru(ct)ing the Origins of Art," *Art Journal* 42 (1982): 321.

<sup>19</sup>Preziosi 325.

Oleg Grabar goes on to note that "there is no doubt about the universality of an activity called art, but there cannot be a universal history of art, because the range of epistemological and psychological needs and expectations has become unmanageable."<sup>20</sup> He also stresses that "the increasingly specialized and endless subdivisions of knowledge may find their epistemological umbrella in the systemic concerns of the end of the twentieth century, instead of in the classical, biblical or aesthetic culture of an earlier generation. Later generations will discover their own needs and histories."<sup>21</sup> His demarcation of history as something that could be discovered in relation to the needs of a particular time underscores the current of new art histories: that there is not a group of given fact, the remains of which we must connect like dots to get the full picture, but that in fact the subjects of ideologies produce history and thus there is always a subject making (political) choices as to what is to be included and what is to be excluded from histories.

Joan Hart reinforces this common theme in "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," published in the special issue of *Art Journal*. She observes that "the essential condition of man [sic] (or, as Heidegger put it, the distinctive ontological mark of man) is the fact that he is temporally and historically situated,"<sup>22</sup> and that "according to Dilthey, the logic of cultural sciences is not an unchanging, *a priori* foundation, but is dependent on language and its content, which changes throughout history."<sup>23</sup> Hart stresses the historical context of people's understanding and construction of the world and history as mediated through language. Citing Hans Gadamer, she emphasizes that understanding is contingent, contextual and provisional.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Oleg Grabar, "On the Universality of the History of Art," *Art Journal* 42 (1982): 282.

<sup>21</sup>Grabar 283.

<sup>22</sup>Joan Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," *Art Journal* 42 (1982): 297.

<sup>23</sup>Hart 294.

This integral role of language in social formation is analyzed in a somewhat different manner in *Art Journal* by Rosalind Krauss in her "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View."<sup>25</sup> In this article "language" includes photographic production in terms of its role in culture and history. Here she borrows from Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, and suggests that we must strive "to reveal discursive practices in their complexity and density; to show that to speak is to do something - something other than to express what one thinks."<sup>26</sup>

The concern for discursive practices expressed in Krauss's article was echoed in one of the key forums for new art historical expressions during the 1970s: the journal *October* (which had Krauss as one of its main editors). Art history saw its shifts manifested in new journals, such as *October*, which aimed to deal with literature, politics and art. In essence, *October* attempts to deal with "culture" and "representation." Some other American journals dealing with similar issues are: *Critical Inquiry*, founded in 1974; *Grand Street*, founded in 1981; and *Representations*, founded in 1985. *October* was founded in 1976, with an editorial that read like a manifesto:

We have named this journal in celebration of that moment in our century when revolutionary practice, theoretical inquiry and artistic innovation were joined in a manner exemplary and unique.... Our aim is not to perpetuate the mythology or hagiography of Revolution. It is rather to reopen an inquiry into the relationships between the several arts which flourish in our culture at this time, and in so doing, to open discussion of their role at this highly problematic juncture.

*October* is planned as a quarterly that will be more than merely interdisciplinary: one that articulates with maximum directness the structural and social interrelationships of artistic practice in this country.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Hart 298. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), was a German philosopher.

<sup>25</sup>Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42 (1982): 311-319.

<sup>26</sup>Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976) 209, in Krauss 317.

<sup>27</sup>The Editors, "About *October*," *October* 1 (1976): 3.

*October's* founding editors were Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Annette Michelson and Rosalind Krauss, but they were soon to be joined by other art historians such as Douglas Crimp, Hal Foster and Craig Owens.

The above-mentioned American journals had British counterparts such as *Screen* (the journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television), which began in the early seventies and was "instrumental in introducing structuralism, semiology, Russian formalism, Althusserian Marxism, and the work of Lacan"<sup>28</sup> to England, as well as integrating serious reflection on theory into the academy. In addition, *Block* appeared in 1979, coming out of Middlesex Polytechnic. Among *Block's* early writers were John Berger, Marxist art critic and writer; Jon Bird, whose background includes the study of art and art history, as well as much writing on semiotics; and Lisa Tickner, a well-known feminist art historian. The first issue's editorial addressed the tenuous relationship between theory and practice:

'Block' will, we hope, be of use to artists, art teachers and art students; indeed anyone interested in visual culture and its role within society. Obviously, 'Block' will consist largely of theoretical writings, but we are aware that the production of theory and its relation to practice is itself a vexed question; therefore the theory/practice issue is one we think important to address.<sup>29</sup>

At roughly the same time as these journals appeared in Britain and the United States, journals concerned with similar issues were started in Canada. Noteworthy, is that the journals mentioned above are (were, in the case of the now defunct *Block*) refereed and magazines like the ones to be discussed in the following paragraphs are not. Also, the former are journals whose scope is wide, covering art among other concerns. Conversely *Parachute* and *C Magazine* (and most of their compatriots) are art magazines with much narrower agendas. Nonetheless, the latter refereed journals had and continue to have (with

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<sup>28</sup>Tim Clark, "Michel Foucault, Critical Modernism, and Writing on the Visual Arts in English Canada," M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1991, 96.

<sup>29</sup>"Editorial," *Block* 1 (1979): 1.

the exception of *Block*) great influence on artwriting and theorizing, as well as playing a role in the shaping of these Canadian magazines.

In 1972, the Vancouver Art Gallery began publishing a newspaper-style bulletin called *Vanguard*, which was to become a full-fledged art magazine by 1979, under the editorship of Russell Keziere. By 1984, *Vanguard* had a format which included reviews, analyses of Canadian and American contemporary art, and historical essays, and attempted to consider a range of media. *Vanguard's* contents were influenced by theoretical developments from around the world, as evidenced in its inclusion of articles by many Canadian writers citing international theorists in their writing.<sup>30</sup> In 1976, *Parallèlogramme* began its career as the publication of the Canadian Association of Non-Profit Art Centres, announcing the activities of alternative gallery spaces around the country. More recently (1995), *Parallèlogramme* has evolved into *Mix*, which still reports on the activities of alternative galleries, but also includes articles, interviews and debates about the state of the arts in Canada. In 1977, under the editorship of Clive Robertson, *Fuse* began raising "specific political and social concerns rather than attempting to cover a wide range of issues and exhibitions."<sup>31</sup>

Amidst these, in the late fall of 1975 *Parachute* began publication in Montreal. Printed on inexpensive paper with a heavy brown cover, according to Lon Dubinsky *Parachute*:

emerged from aspirations and interests which were uppermost in artist-run centres such as Véhicule [1972-1982]. Its founding editors and many of its earliest contributors were directly affiliated with parallel galleries or at the very least were ardent supporters of work shown in these settings.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>My histories of *Vanguard*, *Parachute* and *C* are largely informed by Lon Dubinsky's Ph.D. thesis, "Canadian Visual Art Magazines as Cultural Formations," McGill University, 1991, and Tim Clark's M.A. thesis, as in note 31.

<sup>31</sup>Dubinsky 16. There were also a number of other art magazines in production in Canada during this period; however, their content was less relevant to this study. Among these are: *Canadian Art*, *Vie Des Arts*, and *The Journal of Canadian Art History*.

Founding editors Chantal Pontbriand and France Morin focussed on certain artists and aesthetic issues, and extended coverage to include the international scene. In their words, *Parachute* aimed "to capture art in progress, to develop critical tools to better understand it."<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting that *Parachute* aimed to address the artistic and theoretical concerns of relatively small group of people, much in contrast to the general goal of magazines like *artscanada* and *Vie des Arts* which attempted to popularize art within a wide audience.<sup>34</sup>

Lon Dubinsky's analysis of *Parachute*'s contents separates it into three categories: 1) a focus on several artists who lived and worked in Montreal, 2) international ties with European artists (more than American ones), and 3) a forum for theoretical exercises and treatises. "There were contributions from European writers while other pieces were from contributors throughout Canada who had discovered semiotics, structuralism and other theoretical currents."<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, Pontbriand stated in a recent editorial that "we have always tried to avoid subjugating art to other disciplines."<sup>36</sup>

France Morin left *Parachute* during its fifth year and shortly thereafter, an editorial board consisting of writers, artists, curators and academics was appointed.<sup>37</sup> By issue 28 (1982), the brown paper cover was replaced by full colour, and the size reduced slightly to 10" x 12". In her editorial for the fifth anniversary of *Parachute*, Pontbriand (who remains Editor to date) claimed that the magazine hoped for an increase in approaches together with

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<sup>32</sup>Dubinsky 83.

<sup>33</sup>Chantal Pontbriand, "Transit," *Parachute* 80 (1995): 5.

<sup>34</sup>Please see Robert Graham, "Understanding *artscanada*: history, practice and idea," M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1988; and, Louise Moreau, "Making Art Modern: The first decade of *Vie des Arts* magazine and its contribution to the discourse on the visual arts in Quebec during the 1950s and 1960s," M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1997.

<sup>35</sup>Dubinsky 100.

<sup>36</sup>Pontbriand 5.

<sup>37</sup>Dubinsky 116.

a proliferation of possible readings.<sup>38</sup> This commentary alludes to the theoretical developments within art history and art criticism mentioned earlier, as well as stressing the role of the reader as integral to both the survival of the magazine and the accrual of meaning to the texts therein.

Some very important texts published early on in *Parachute*, were to have an effect on writing on the visual arts in Canada. These include: Jean Papineau's interview with Jean-Francois Lyotard (in French), summer 1978; Douglas Crimp's "The Museum's Old/The Library's New Subject," spring 1981; articles on the work of Hans Haacke by Tony Brown and David Craven, both summer 1981; Bruce Barber and Serge Guilbaut's interview with artists Adrian Piper and Martha Rosler, fall 1981; Hal Foster's "Re: Post," spring 1982; and Kate Linker's "Representation and Sexuality," fall 1983.<sup>39</sup> In the latter text, for example, American critic Kate Linker presents an in-depth discussion of Lacanian psychoanalysis and the possible uses of its gendered subjectivity for a feminist project. She also discusses at length the work of four artists whose work is "engaged in examining purposefully hidden areas within the field of subjectivity." These are: Mary Kelly, Victor Burgin, Silvia Kolbowski and Barbara Kruger.<sup>40</sup> Key in this text is its addressing of the role of representation in the constitution of the subject and the exercise of power. Linker writes:

Representation, hardly neutral, acts to regulate and define the subjects it addresses, positioning them by class or by sex, in active or passive relations to meaning. Over time these fixed position acquire the status of identities and, in their broadest reach, of categories. Hence the forms of discourse are at once forms of definition, means of limitation, modes of power.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Chantal Pontbriand, "Five Years," *Parachute* 21 (1980) 4.

<sup>39</sup>These are merely a few of the many texts published in *Parachute* that demonstrate the influence of contemporary theoretical currents.

<sup>40</sup>Kate Linker, "Representation and Sexuality," *Parachute* 32 (1983): 17.

<sup>41</sup>Linker 12.

This article offers the tenets of psychoanalysis of a particular kind - Jacques Lacan's re-reading of Freud - while underscoring the need for a continual critique of how knowledge is produced. Much like her predecessor, T.J. Clark, Linker calls for a radical inquiry into the construction of meaning and explains that "it is ideology's work that fixes ... meanings as timeless and immutable, above the field of material conditions, rather than as shifting and in process."<sup>42</sup> This text is particularly important for Canadian readers as it is one of the earliest to deal with psychoanalysis as a feminist tool for art historical reading.

As well as lengthy articles, *Parachute*, particularly from the early 1980s until the present, has published innumerable reviews of art exhibitions which were affected by new theories, as well as having an effect on them.<sup>43</sup> One such review was Laura Mulvey's "Magnificent Obsession" (1986).<sup>44</sup> Mulvey is concerned with the "conjuncture between feminist politics, psychoanalytic theory and deconstructive aesthetics [which] combined to produce a radical avant-garde across the visual arts."<sup>45</sup> The article discusses an exhibition (of the same name) of the work of five artists who studied together at the Polytechnic of Central London: Karen Knorr, Mark Lewis, Geoff Miles, Olivier Richon and Mitra Tabrizian. The interest of this essay to Canadian artwriting lies not only in the theory Mulvey presents, but also in the work of one of the artists, Mark Lewis. Lewis has published articles in Canadian journals, presenting the theoretical currents (post-structuralism, feminism, postmodernism) which have influenced his work, both visual and written, thus underscoring the links between European theory and Canadian artwriting.

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<sup>42</sup>Linker 12.

<sup>43</sup>These include: *Altered Situations, Changing Strategies*, Toronto, 1984; *Reading and Representation in Political Art*, Toronto 1979; *Museums by Artists*, Toronto 1983; *Pluralities*, Ottawa 1980; *Hans Haacke*, Saskatoon 1987; *Jenny Holzer*, Toronto 1982-83; *Language and Representation*, Toronto 1981-82.

<sup>44</sup>Laura Mulvey, "Magnificent Obsession," *Parachute* 42 (1986): 6-12.

<sup>45</sup>Mulvey 7.

During the same period that Linker, Mulvey and Lewis were producing their texts, there were many symposia, conferences and visiting artists and scholars whose influence was felt in Canadian artwriting. These include: *Performance et multi-disciplinarité postmodernisme* (conference, Montreal, 1979); *Art et Société* (colloque, Quebec City, 1981); *Feminism and Art Symposium* (Toronto, 1985); *To Speak of Difference* (debate and exhibition, Toronto, 1986); Martha Rosler at the Banff Centre (late 70s); and Mary Kelly, Martha Rosler and Benjamin Buchloch at NSCAD during the same period.

According to Tim Clark, in his study of Michel Foucault's effect on artwriting in Canada, *C Magazine*, which appeared in the fall of 1983, along with *Parachute* and *Vanguard* became "one of the major institutional roots whereby a large portion of writing that was underwritten by French and German critical and theoretical projects went 'public'."<sup>46</sup> *C* grew out of *Impressions*, a magazine which had been published since about 1970. According to present editor Joyce Mason, "By 1980, while it continued to be primarily a magazine of visual projects, articles and interviews were appearing regularly."<sup>47</sup> Richard Rhodes took over editorship from Isaac Applebaum in 1983, prepped for the job through his experience as the Toronto editor for *Parachute* and a frequent contributor to *Vanguard*. It was at this point that the name change occurred.<sup>48</sup>

Rhodes' ideas for *C* included a desire to focus on "the vitality of the Toronto scene," and to create a forum where "ideas, writing projects and art could play off each other."<sup>49</sup> "C's goals were sufficiently flexible to accommodate a range of

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<sup>46</sup>Clark 81.

<sup>47</sup>Joyce Mason, "A Once and Future C," *C Magazine* 40 (1994): 17.

<sup>48</sup>Since the birth of *C* was not so much the appearance of a new publication, but more the transformation of an old one, it managed to receive funding from the Canada Council's Aid to Periodicals Program from its very inception. Normally a new magazine would have been required to publish three issues before being eligible for such funding.

<sup>49</sup>Mason 17.

contributions,"<sup>50</sup> and contained much more visual material than either *Parachute* or *Vanguard*. With a large format (9" x 13.5") and good design, *C* "quickly became an internationally recognized and respected art magazine."<sup>51</sup> Rhodes edited *C* through issue 27 (September 1990), leaving its contents to speak for itself and watching its success grow. Initially printed on newsprint, *C* was "refreshingly gritty, reminiscent of *Parachute's* early issues."<sup>52</sup>

By 1985, *C's* content was more diverse, but disputes ensued between Rhodes and assistant editor William Wood. Wood's concern was to concentrate more on Canadian issues, whereas Rhodes was being drawn to international work. Wood, feeling that *C's* approach often amounted to following fashions rather than actually being involved with issues,<sup>53</sup> left and went to work for *Vanguard*. By 1986-87, the newsprint was replaced with regular stock, the format was reduced to standard size, and *C's* content was fairly similar to other journals such as *Parachute*: three or four major articles, some reviews, and then a few artists' projects or interviews. But *C* differed from *Parachute* in that it covered more Ontario artists, while *Parachute* was more inclusive of Quebec artists. It should also be stressed here that during *Parachute's* early years it was primarily a magazine produced by and for a francophone community, and included only sparsely anglophone articles. This is in great contradistinction to *C Magazine* which is (and always has been) a completely anglophone publication.

Rhodes felt that much writing in magazines during the late 80s and early 90s - *C Magazine* included - bowed to the dogma of theory and became in his words, "an extension of graduate school mentality."<sup>54</sup> Along with Joyce Mason,<sup>55</sup> who joined the editorial staff

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<sup>50</sup>Dubinsky 116.

<sup>51</sup>Mason 17.

<sup>52</sup>Dubinsky 115.

<sup>53</sup>Dubinsky 118.

in June of 1989, Rhodes worked toward more "direct, accessible and engaged voices" for *C*.<sup>56</sup> This mutual goal became clearer once Mason became editor, in the winter of 1991, as she provided each issue with an editorial.

In part, no doubt, a ploy to increase readership - a necessity for the survival of any such specialized publication - Mason's editorials are colloquial, often referring to the seasonal weather changes. The editorials provide a context for each issue, although they rarely list contents or attempt to give cohesion to disparate articles. According to Dubinsky, "Rhodes considers *C* something of a repository for the unedited work of artists and writers, a tenet that makes *C* more an archive and only incidentally a magazine."<sup>57</sup> This may well have been true of the early years, given the nature of Mason's editorials, I believe *C* has become less an archive and more like a conventional periodical, with a tone similar to magazines such as *Details* or *Interview*. Thus, my study will not examine articles published in *C Magazine* once Joyce Mason took over.<sup>58</sup> *C Magazine*, in the six years since Mason has been Editor, has dealt only occasionally, if not superficially, with issues of identity that relate to contemporaneous critical and theoretical debates.

Regardless of Mason's or Rhodes' aversion to "exclusionary" art writing, *C* has published articles that analyze the intricacies of recent critical theory. Unlike *Parachute*, which publishes the work of influential international authors, *C*'s major theoretical articles deal self-reflexively with Canadian and American uses of European theory (primarily

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<sup>54</sup>Mason 17.

<sup>55</sup>Mason's own history in art publishing extends beyond her work as editor of *C*, having taken over as managing editor of *Fuse*, from Clive Robertson and lasting there until 1985. Then she did freelance editorial work which included replacing Tanya Mars as editor of *Parallèlogramme* and copyediting for *C*.

<sup>56</sup>Mason 17.

<sup>57</sup>Dubinsky 116.

<sup>58</sup>A few of the articles I discuss were published in issues right after Mason took over, but they are reflective of the older *C*, as Mason's influence had not yet pervaded the magazine.

French). Three such articles are Bruce Ferguson's "The Eiffel Tower, Only Morceaux" (March 1989), Mark Lewis's "Concerning the Post-Cultural" (1985), and Walter Klepac's "Some Postmodern Paradigms" (1991). A review of these three essays is useful insofar as they are three of the most extensive theoretical essays published in *C* that pertain to more than a single exhibition or artist.

Klepac's text differentiates between normative postmodernism and radical postmodernism, and states that "the intent of [much] radical postmodernist art and critical practice is to make the presence of mediation apparent and, where possible, to reveal the ideological construct behind that mediation."<sup>59</sup> He also notes that "a considerable amount of radical postmodernist art and critical writing centres around the issues of race, gender and sexual orientation."<sup>60</sup> Klepac highlights the importance of French post-structuralism for artwriting in support of postmodernist art work and discusses the challenges to the western episteme put forth by two main proponents of post-structuralism, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Ultimately, Klepac suggests that post-structural themes and concepts are reduced to "tenets of a kind of postmodernist catechism," in their most frequent appearances in normative critical practice.<sup>61</sup> His argument is for the most part general but he does note a few art historians toward the end. Among them, he cites Rosalind Krauss and her "attempt to demonstrate ... that the critical subject is the Cartesian fiction of the modern western episteme", as exemplary of normative postmodernist art critical discourse.<sup>62</sup> He ends, nevertheless, by countering the "postmodernism" of Krauss's project with Griselda Pollock's assertion that "we are modernists living in a postmodernist universe."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Walter Klepac, "Some Postmodern Paradigms," *C Magazine* 30 (1991): 20.

<sup>60</sup>Klepac 21.

<sup>61</sup>Klepac 24.

<sup>62</sup>Klepac 25.

Mark Lewis's "Concerning the Question of the Post-Cultural"<sup>64</sup> ironically takes issue with another of Klepac's texts published in *C*, "The Order of Words: The Order of Things."<sup>65</sup> Lewis's goal here is to "point out some of the particular problems of using critical theory within art criticism and practice."<sup>66</sup> It is "through" Klepac's text that Lewis charts the course of his own arguments. Lewis is concerned for the reduction of "a complex set of ideas and practices to a homogeneous entity, or worse, to an identifiable programme of techniques," that comes with the translation of critical theory to the more general arena of *C Magazine* and other journals.<sup>67</sup> Within the text, he deals with major French thinkers such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard, as well as feminist theorists like Jane Gallop and postcolonial critics such as Gayatri Chakavorty Spivak. Herein Lewis's project is to outline the important differences played out through post-structuralism, with a focus on sexual difference. He does this through a detailed analysis of what the "post" in post-structuralism is all about.

Post-structuralism is again at issue in Bruce Ferguson's "The Eiffel Tower, Only Morceaux." This article presents a dénouement of critical theory dealing with the primacy of vision within Western thought. Ferguson notes a questioning of this primacy within "the 'new' art historical realm" and cites Norman Bryson and Svetlana Alpers as seeing "'vision' as an overdetermined 'naturalization', like language itself and, thus, in need of analytic splitting (distancing)."<sup>68</sup> He refers to Martin Jay's assertion that "'French' thought has been specifically preoccupied with an 'anti-visual' methodology throughout the

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<sup>63</sup>Klepac 25.

<sup>64</sup>Mark Lewis, as in note 16..

<sup>65</sup>This text, originally published in *C Magazine* 3 (1984) is discussed at length in Tim Clark's thesis, as in note 24.

<sup>66</sup>Lewis 56.

<sup>67</sup>Lewis 56.

<sup>68</sup>Bruce W. Ferguson, "The Eiffel Tower, Only Morceaux," *C Magazine* 21 (1989): 13.

modern period."<sup>69</sup> Ferguson questions the relationship between post-structuralism (recent French thought) and postmodernist art practice, and suggests that:

In the parlance of structuralism, it is as though the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified which has been relentlessly deconstructed in linguistic modernism is reconstructed by transliteration with French texts as signifiers and modern (North American) artworks as signifieds.<sup>70</sup>

Ultimately, Ferguson calls for "criticism" to "take into account its own relations to the objects of its construction and not just the self-reflexive qualities of writing."<sup>71</sup>

There can be no doubt that the rise of new art history, largely shaped by feminism and post-structuralism has helped chart the course of artwriting in Canada. The articles from *Parachute* and *C Magazine* mentioned here, as well as many others to be analysed within the next two chapters of my thesis are demonstrative of the theoretical currents which have come to direct inquiries into art production (and artwriting for that matter) in this country. The next chapter examines more extensively the intersecting discourses of feminism and post-structuralism as they are manifest in debates around essentialism, and attempts to discern where *C Magazine* and *Parachute* fit in contemporary gender theorizing.

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<sup>69</sup>Ferguson 16.

<sup>70</sup>Ferguson 22.

<sup>71</sup>Ferguson 34.

## Chapter 2

### Feminisms and Essentialisms: Theorizing Difference

This chapter investigates the deployment, intentional and emergent, of essentialism within articles concerned with feminist issues published in *C Magazine* and *Parachute*. The idea behind essentialism, simply put, is that things have an essence. Originating as the binary opposite of "accident" in Aristotelian philosophy, essence is the non-accidental *nature* of things. But beyond being just a philosophical concept, essentialism is a political and critical concept. Essentialism within the feminist context, represents a charge made against some feminists of essentializing (naturalizing and/or universalizing) the categories "Woman" and "women." The crisis of "Woman" was largely the result of French post-structural and psychoanalytic theory (as explored in the previous chapter and noted to have had a distinct effect on writing in both *Parachute* and *C Magazine*). The crisis of the "other woman" (otherwise understood as the deconstruction of the category "women") was largely the result of feminist interventions by women who did not fit into the feminism of middle-class white heterosexual women (i.e., women of colour, lesbians, working-class women).

The goal of this chapter is to first, provide a cursory history of the debates around essentialism as they have developed in feminist theory; and second, to use this historical account to contextualize similar debates as they have arisen in articles from *C Magazine* and *Parachute*. The articles from these magazines were chosen for their theoretical content (i.e., articles in which there is an implicit, if not explicit, position taken vis-à-vis essentialism and/or a critique thereof through deconstruction). Rather than specific individual artists or exhibitions these articles deal with "issues." There will, nonetheless, be reference to other articles so as to determine whether the arguments made in the primary ones are representative of views generally held in the magazines or if they are in contradistinction to such views. Throughout, there will also be reference to articles and

ideas as articulated elsewhere so that a sense of *C Magazine's* and *Parachute's* place in the larger scope of identity politics will become evident.

There are two threads which will connect the discussion following the historical section on essentialism. First, there will be a repeated return to Homi Bhabha's conceptualization of pedagogical and performative identity formation, as explained in the introduction to this thesis. And second, there will be a return to Lon Dubinsky's assertion that *C Magazine* acts as more of an archive and is only incidentally a magazine, as noted in the first chapter. Conversely, *Parachute's* articles will demonstrate that it is much more akin to a standard scholarly art magazine. The splitting of articles based on the performative/pedagogical distinction is enhanced through the characterization of *C* as an archive and *Parachute* more as a magazine.

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Essence, originally thought of as characterized by natural qualities, is not limited to nature. Within the feminist context, essentialism can refer to natural as well as biological, or universal social characteristics. Elizabeth Grosz sees this widening of essentialism as an elision of essentialism with naturalism, biologism and universalism. She recounts their elision as follows:

Essentialism, a term that is rarely defined or explained explicitly in feminist contexts, but which has a long and illustrious history within the development of Western philosophy, refers here to the attribution of a fixed essence to women. Women's essence is assumed to be given and universal and is usually, though not necessarily, identified with women's biology and "natural" characteristics. Essentialism usually entails biologism and naturalism - but there are cases in which women's essence is seen to reside not in nature or biology but in certain given characteristics....<sup>1</sup>

She goes on to say that biologism is a particular form of essentialism; that naturalism is not necessarily biological, but possibly theological or ontological; and that universalism is different but similar - it may be conceived purely in social terms.<sup>2</sup> Grosz's

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 47.

<sup>2</sup>Grosz 48.

account suggests that the qualities essentialized are necessarily ahistorical and do not take into consideration historical, geographical and cultural differences between women.<sup>3</sup> Essentially, essentialism confuses social relations with fixed attributes.

Grosz's analysis of essentialism, first published in 1990 in the anthology *Feminist Theory: Critique and Construct*,<sup>4</sup> is one of many accounts of essentialism from a historical perspective that have surfaced in recent years. Beginning as early as 1978 with Stephen Heath's "Difference" published in *Screen*,<sup>5</sup> and increasing especially since the late 1980s, feminist theorists have demonstrated a renewed interest in essentialism and its critiques - in essence, of essentialism as a body of knowledge in-and-of-itself.<sup>6</sup> Among these works are Denise Riley's 'Am I That Name?' (1988); Diana Fuss's *Essentially Speaking* (1989); Janet Todd's *Feminist Literary Theory* (1988); Naomi Schor's "The Essentialism Which is Not One: Coming to Grips With Irigaray," *differences* (1989); and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Imperialism and Sexual Difference," *Oxford Literary Review* (1986) and *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Grosz 49.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth Grosz, "Conclusion: A Note on Essentialism and Difference," *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, ed. Sneja Gunew, (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>5</sup>Stephen Heath, "Difference," *Screen* 19.3 (1978): 50-112.

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that the overview I provide is but a brief one, especially given the rising problematization of essentialism over the past decade, which has made its analysis an increasingly murky affair.

<sup>7</sup>Denise Riley, 'Am I That Name?' (London: MacMilan, 1988); Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Janet Todd, *Feminist Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988); Naomi Schor, "The Essentialism Which Is Not One: Coming to Grips With Irigaray," *differences* 1.2 (1989); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Imperialism and Sexual Difference," *Oxford Literary Review* 8 (1986): 225-240; Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Methuen, 1987). As well as these, Diana Fuss also suggests that the anthology *Men in Feminism*, edited by Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (London: Methuen, 1987) was influential in the growing discourse of essentialism.

The two crises (of "Woman," of "women") as mentioned above, were the result of pressures from multiple spheres. First, psychoanalytic and linguistic deconstruction influenced feminism by asserting that the category "Woman," like all other signifiers, was not a thing-in-itself, but an identity constructed through representation and social relations. As such, the only viable route for "post-structural" feminists to achieve the liberation so desired was to lay bare how "Woman" is constructed through discourses, discourses of representation among them, in patriarchy. The "post-structural" critique of essentialism was part of the forced confrontation of feminism with its own complicity with an imperialist logic that resulted from the "fundamental shifts in Western philosophy represented by the names and influence of Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard."<sup>8</sup>

Among the key texts which influenced North American intellectuals were Jean-Francois Lyotard's 1979 publication *The Postmodern Condition* (written for presentation to the Conseil des Universités of the Government of Quebec) and a few years earlier, Gayatri Spivak's English translation of Jacques Derrida's crucial text *Of Grammatology* (1976). Spivak's translation was the first instance of this important work of deconstruction theory to be available outside francophone circles.<sup>9</sup> While Lyotard's study denounced the meta-

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<sup>8</sup>Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, *Materialist Feminisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993) 6. Examples of articles that deal with the specific authors and their effect on the theorizing of gender difference are Biddy Martin's "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault," *New German Critique* 27 (1982): 3-30, revised and republished in Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby, eds., *Feminism & Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988) 3-19; and, Naomi Schor, "Dreaming Dissymmetry: Barthes, Foucault, and Sexual Difference," *Men in Feminism*, eds., Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (New York: Methuen, 1987) 98-110.

<sup>9</sup>Since *Parachute* publishes work by francophone writers and critics, one would think that the work of French theorists would be discernible in writing therein earlier than it would surface in anglophone journals, such as *C Magazine*. While this is the case in terms of an adoption of "general" French theory (for example, see Renee Payant, "Irene Whittome: Le Discours Blanc de l'Invention du Classement au Classment de l'Invention," *Parachute* 7 (1977): 10-15; Jean Papineau, "Jean-Francois Lyotard, De La Fonction Critique à la Transformation," *Parachute* 11 (1978): 4-9; or, René Payant, "Roland Barthes..." *Parachute* 19

narratives of Modern thought, Derrida's influence was felt in terms of language. And the work of a third important figure, Jacques Lacan, altered conceptions of subjectivity through a re-reading of Freudian psychoanalysis.

In relation to theories of representation, post-structuralist thought was largely adopted by North American theorists along two lines (although one needs to be careful not to see these as clearly distinct from one another, they no doubt overlap). First, deconstruction as a tool or approach in critical art discourse (both theory and practice) was appropriated in intellectual circles such as that of the journal *October*.<sup>10</sup> As discussed in

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(1980):24-25); it is oddly not the case in terms of a specifically feminist use of French theory. One of two articles dealing with feminist issues, published in French, is Barbara Page's "Pourquoi la femme ne crée-t-elle pas? La création féminine et les réalisatrices allemandes," *Parachute* 37 (1984-85): 9-13; and it alludes more to Linda Nochlin's famous article "Why Are there No Great Women Artists?" than to any hint of French deconstructionist or psychoanalytic theory. In fact the article is an account of German women filmmakers, working during the seventies, which unproblematically essentializes "woman" ("la femme") throughout. The second article published in French that is at all worth noting in a feminist context is an interview: Thérèse St. Gelais, "Ulrike Rosenbach: Un Féminisme en Évolution - une interview," *Parachute* 57 (1990): 28-30. Similarly to Page's article, what comes forth in this dialogue is an unproblematic view of "women." Also, as Ulrike Rosenbach tells the story of her life and art, it becomes clear that while she was a feminist in the sixties - the time of feminism - one can no longer be a feminist in the same way, as planetary concerns have turned to ecology, it is no longer the time of "women." It seems clear that the lack of articles in French that deal with feminist issues (for there are French articles about women artists that don't) is noteworthy, rather than the articles themselves being representative of trends in *Parachute*. Distinct in *Parachute* is a difference across the language divide of what is deemed relevant to critical art discourse. This fact is even more interesting when one considers it in light of the foregrounding of French feminist theory in certain English texts published in *Parachute* (these will be discussed further on in this chapter).

<sup>10</sup>Hal Foster, Douglas Crimp, Rosalind Krauss and Craig Owens, all influential critics, were all "early" proponents of French intellectual theory in the American context. Examples of early articles by these authors concerned with issues of post-structuralism are published in the anthologies *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983) and *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), as well as in *October*. There were also, as noted in the first chapter of this thesis, some articles published by some of these writers in *Parachute*: such as Douglas Crimp's "The Museum's Old/the Library's New subject," 22 (1981): 32-37; and, Hal Foster's "Re:Post," 26 (1982): 11-15. It should also be noted here that books such as Jonathon Culler's *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism*

the previous chapter, *C Magazine* and *Parachute* also showed the mark of these new theories in quite distinct ways.

Second, the revision of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory by French feminists such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous provided another "layer" to theory that was then appropriated by North American writers and critics.<sup>11</sup> As well as English translations of the latter authors' works in the early eighties,<sup>12</sup> Jane Gallop's 1982 publication *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, the 1980 anthology *New French Feminisms* edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, and Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 1985, which critiqued Anglo-American socio-historical

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after *Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982) were influential in the North American context. One essay of particular interest to feminists is Craig Owens' "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," published in *The Anti-Aesthetic*. It is discussed in Linda S. Klinger's article "Where's the Artist? Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theories of Authorship," *Art Journal* 51 (1991): 39-47. Noting his conclusion that "'women's insistence on difference and incommensurability may not only be compatible with, but also and instance of postmodern thought," contributing to 'the discourse of the Other,' which challenges the patriarchal hegemony of modernist thought, including aesthetics," Klinger suggests that the present uncertainty "regarding the whereabouts of the artist is all the more disquieting since the nominal acknowledgement of 'difference' by 'postmodern culture' augured well for her," 44. Owens influential essay is also discussed at length in Bart Testa's "The Epic of Concatenation," *C Magazine* 10 (1986): 46-56, in relation to the work of Laurie Anderson. It is, however, used more for its comments on authorship and postmodernism than for its discussion of feminism particularly.

<sup>11</sup>It should be stressed that my analysis of French feminism will not draw out its extraordinary complexities. Further, the French feminist psychoanalytic theory adopted in *C* and *Parachute* is concerned for the most part with the deconstruction of "Woman" rather than with other noteworthy currents such as *écriture féminine*. While both *écriture féminine* (largely shaped by Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous) and the work of Julia Kristeva are referred to occasionally within the articles that I will be discussing, overall the dominant position taken by the authors is a deconstructionist one.

<sup>12</sup>Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

feminism and championed the French feminists, would prove to be key texts in the "Americanization" of French feminist theory.<sup>13</sup>

The linguistic and psychoanalytic deconstruction of socially-produced identities has been useful both for those critics concerned with postmodernism as an alteration of modern Western epistemes (without necessarily specific gender-based political concerns) as well as for those feminists concerned with the deconstruction of the category "Woman". Demonstrating "Woman" as "produced" rather than "born," these methods assert that her oppression is not the result of nature, but of culture. Post-structural theories of subject constitution relate to experience in that they analyse the mediation of experience through language and discourse. Nonetheless, they stem from re-visions of the work of earlier theorists (such as Edmund Husserl and Ferdinand de Saussure) rather than from personal experiences. This, leads to their characterization as representative of pedagogical inscriptions of subject constitution. Moreover, the pedagogical "nature" of these inscriptions is upheld by the firm entrenchment of post-structural and psychoanalytic theories within the institutional context.

Conversely, the second type of critique of essentialism mentioned above relates more closely to performative aspects of identity formation: acting out by individual members of the culture, based on gendered, raced, sexed and classed identity characteristics. This critique of essentialism (the crisis of the "other woman") directed at feminists during the same time as the first critique began is the result of the performative gestures of the women's liberation movement along with the Civil Rights movement and anti-war activism. It is represented by polemics such as the Combahee River Collective of

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<sup>13</sup>Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980); Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985). Again it is important to note that while these theories were available earlier to French-speaking intellectuals in Canada (and elsewhere) there is little evidence of their uses within the feminist context in *Parachute*.

Boston's 1977 text, "A Black Feminist Statement," published in the anthology *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* in 1982.<sup>14</sup> The title of the latter book suggests the omission of black women and other women of colour from the "women's movement," and suggests that the struggle must be against "interlocking systems of oppression - racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression."<sup>15</sup> As much writing of the later eighties and nineties has shown, race as well as ethnicity, class, and sexuality are but a few of the qualifiers that need to be addressed within feminisms if they are to be politically viable now and in the future.<sup>16</sup> As Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean have observed:

A Feminism based on the assumption that there could be a category 'Woman' outside philosophy or male fantasy, or a category 'women' within the social world, untraversed by differences of, among other specificities, class, sexuality, race, nationality, or ethnicity, will be bound to repeat the imperial gesture whatever its intentions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*, eds. Gloria T. Hull and Patricia Bell Scott (Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1982).

<sup>15</sup>Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, *Materialist Feminisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993) 44. Many black "feminist" cultural critics have written of the necessary choice often made by black women to ally themselves with either the women's movement and feminists or with the struggle for black liberation and either choice necessarily requiring the subjugation of one aspect of their identities for the sake of the other. For instance see bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989).

<sup>16</sup>In "The Essential Representation of Woman," *Art Journal* 51 (1991): 48-52, Flavia Rando also outlines what she calls the two "crises" in Feminist Theory, calling what I have noted as the second critique of essentialism "the crisis of the 'other' woman," 48. For Rando and others the questions put forth by these two crises lead to "a schism in much feminist theory between discussions of 'woman' and of differences of culture, ethnicity/race, sexuality and class," 48. Among further reading on this subject is Linda Alcoff's "Cultural Feminism versus Poststructuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13 (1988): 405-437, as well as Landry and MacLean's extensive study *Materialist Feminisms*, as in note 17.

<sup>17</sup>Landry and MacLean 9.

New feminisms resulting largely from the double-barrelled critique of essentialism became more prominent by the mid-eighties. As well as entering refereed journals such as *Screen*, *October*, and *Critical Inquiry*, and art magazines like *C Magazine* and *Parachute*,<sup>18</sup> the new faces of feminisms were seen in anthologies such as Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt's *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture*.<sup>19</sup> Also by the mid-eighties, the concept "Woman" was replaced by the concept "gender". The late eighties and early nineties have continued to see the deconstruction of a singular category of feminism from many angles. In recent years there has specifically been a call to return to essentialisms of sorts, but to use them for political gains. The latter call for an intentional deployment of essentialisms is represented by Gayatri Spivak's notion that "one shouldn't throw away things, but use them strategically."<sup>20</sup> Spivak has been a key critic in the propagation of such a position. She states:

...I think it is absolutely on target to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism, universalism as it comes to terms with the universal - of classical German philosophy or the universal as the white upper class male ... etc. But strategically we cannot. Even as we talk about feminist practice, or privileging practice over theory, we are universalising. Since the moment of essentialising, universalising, saying yes to the onto-phenomenological question, is irreducible, let us at least situate it at the moment: let us become vigilant about our own practice and use it as much as we can rather than make the totally counter-productive gesture of repudiating it....<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>As well as those from *Parachute* and *C Magazine* that will be discussed in this chapter, please see Rosemary Betterton, "A Question of Difference" and Susannah Radstone, "'Woman' to women," both *Screen* 26.3-4 (1985); *Screen* 28.1 (1987) Special Issue on Difference; Barbara Creed, "Form Here to Modernity - feminism and postmodernism," *Screen* 28.2 (1987): 47-68; *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985) Special Issue: "Race", *Writing, Difference*.

<sup>19</sup>Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt, eds., *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Race and Class in Literature and Culture* (London: Methuen, 1985).

<sup>20</sup>Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990) 10, in Landry and MacLean 147.

<sup>21</sup>Spivak, "Criticism, Feminism and the Institution," *Thesis Eleven* 10/11 (1984-85): 184, in Grosz, *Space, Time* 57. Denise Riley makes a similar point in 'Am I That Name?' She states:

Similarly, Diana Fuss, a feminist who has written extensively on the subject of essentialism, compares the efficacy of essentialism within feminism to other theoretical discourses. She wonders whether "social deconstruction [can] entirely dispense with the idea of essence" and suggests that, even though "feminism and deconstruction are fundamentally incompatible discourses since deconstruction displaces the essence of the class 'women' which feminism needs to articulate its very politics,"<sup>22</sup> there is an underlying dependence upon essentialism in deconstruction.

In her book *Essentially Speaking*, Fuss attempts to explode essentialism's essentialism, saying that "in and of itself, essentialism is neither good nor bad, progressive nor reactionary, beneficial nor dangerous."<sup>23</sup> Instead she chooses to focus on how "the sign essence" is both used and emergent in contemporary critical discourses. Fuss works within the oppositionality of essentialism and constructionism to demonstrate their co-dependence. Informed by Fuss's work (as well as that of Grosz and Spivak), I will spend the rest of this chapter analyzing the deployment of essentialisms in *Parachute* and *C Magazine*.

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One of the results of the the postmodernist critique was the destabilization of painting as a vanguard medium. Although the "death of painting" was only a temporary (illusory) occurrence, its supplantation by scripto-visual work was partly the result of a post-structural feminist critique. Issues relating to feminist responses to problems with the discourse of painting are discussed later in this chapter through John Roberts' "Painting

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The black abolitionist and freed slave, Sojourner Truth, spoke out at the Akron convention in 1851, and named her own toughness in a famous peroration against the notion of woman's disqualifying frailty. She rested her case on her refrain "Ain't I a woman?" ... A new Sojourner Truth might well - except for the catastrophic loss of grace in the wording - issue another plea: "Ain't I a fluctuating Identity?" For both a concentration on and refusal of the identity "women" are essential to feminism. This its history makes plain, 1.

<sup>22</sup>Fuss 24.

<sup>23</sup>Fuss xi.

and Sexual Difference,"<sup>24</sup> (*Parachute*, 1989) as well as Carol Laing's "How Can We Speak to Painting?"<sup>25</sup> (*C Magazine*, 1990).

Following, another section will address the issue of women and representation in terms of mainstream practices - advertising photography and film. By 1983, the feminist use of psychoanalysis entered *Parachute* in the form of Kate Linker's "Representation and Sexuality" as mentioned in Chapter One.<sup>26</sup> And, by 1985, we would see in *Parachute* the culmination of postmodernism's concern with mass culture combined with the deconstruction of gender stereotypes in an issue dedicated specifically to advertising.<sup>27</sup> Three of the articles to be discussed in this section (tKate Linker's "Ex-posing the Female Model or the Woman who Poses for Money,"<sup>28</sup> Kate Davy's "Buying and Selling the Look,"<sup>29</sup> Silvia Kolbowski's "Discordant Views,"<sup>30</sup> ) are from that issue. The last article discussed in this section, Shonagh Adelman's "She Kisses Like She Kills,"<sup>31</sup> published in *C Magazine* in 1991, adopts a relatively cursory use of psychoanalysis, and only alludes to uses of French feminism in film theory. Generally, there is not such a clear use of French psychoanalytic feminism in the early years of *C Magazine*. All of these articles take issue with the ability of representation to shape reality through the social construction of

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<sup>24</sup>John Roberts, "Painting and Sexual Difference," *Parachute* 55 (1989): 25-31.

<sup>25</sup>Carol Laing, "How Can We Speak to Painting?" *C Magazine* 25 (1990): 19-25.

<sup>26</sup>Kate Linker, "Representation and Sexuality," *Parachute* 32 (1983): 12-23.

<sup>27</sup>*Parachute* 40 (1985).

<sup>28</sup>Kate Linker, "Ex-posing the Female Model or, the Woman Who Poses For Money," *Parachute* 40 (1985): 15-17.

<sup>29</sup>Kate Davy, "Buying and Selling the Look," *Parachute* 40 (1985): 22-24.

<sup>30</sup>Silvia Kolbowski, "Discordant Views," *Parachute* 40 (1985): 18-20.

<sup>31</sup>Shonagh Adelman, "She Kisses Like She Kills," *C Magazine* 29 (1991): 12-18.

identities, while nonetheless depending upon (in some cases accidentally, in others not) essentialist assumptions. I will attempt to discern whether the underlying assumptions foreclose the political efficacy of their arguments, or whether the essentialisms are deployed in such a manner as to expedite an effective politics of difference.

The final section will look at the female subject: her necessity, her constitution, and her viability in political terms. Herein Shonagh Adelman's "Redefining the Female Subject"<sup>32</sup> (*C Magazine*, 1991) and Renée Baert's "Subjects on the Threshold"<sup>33</sup> (*Parachute*, 1993) will be discussed, with particular attention to the following themes: how a female subject could be conceived without essentializing her; whether or not female subjectivity is necessarily the antithesis of the deconstructionist project; and whether or not representation of women is politically viable at all.

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Writing in *Parachute* in 1989, John Roberts is concerned about the role of essentialism in the structuring of women's relationship to painting:

In short the question of painting *for* women today is how do women represent sexual difference across the spaces of the social without essentializing difference, without turning the pursuit of a female "visual economy" into the language of the Other?<sup>34</sup>

In his article "Painting and Sexual Difference," he outlines three "crude categorizations" of feminism's relationship with painting within the British context: an anti-painting argument; an anti-functionalist argument which views painting in a wholly positive light as well as the possibility of a distinct female visual economy that links female bodily experience with painting;<sup>35</sup> and a female-centered approach which defends a figurative tradition as a basis for a feminist narrative.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Shonagh Adelman, "Redefining the Female Subject," *C Magazine* 28 (1991): 24-32.

<sup>33</sup>Renée Baert, "Subjects on the Threshold," *Parachute* 69 (1993): 14-21.

<sup>34</sup>Roberts 26.

Roberts' aim is to expose the underlying philosophical bases of the three positions as well as to highlight their political efficacy for the feminist project. Throughout he attempts to contextualize the feminist arguments for and against painting within a larger critical art discourse that lays bare the inadequacy of certain moves based on historical antecedents. He is taken to task, however, by Carol Laing in "How Can We Speak to Painting?"<sup>37</sup> (*C Magazine*, 1990). Therein Laing aims to find a place for women within painting, as a woman and a painter herself. While her discussion is grounded in a material historical account of her own relationship with painting, his is a more distanced theoretical account of someone else's history. Nonetheless, his arguments are based substantially on essentialist and anti-essentialist positions as they have been played out elsewhere. In a "reply" to Laing's article, Sheila Butler supports my assertion, noting that Roberts is "*describing pragmatically* the political position in which women painters find themselves"<sup>38</sup> (my italics).

Roberts, in his discussion of the anti-painting argument, refers to Mary Kelly's article of 1981, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism," in which she "called for a feminist practice of 'statements' against the ambiguities of painting."<sup>39</sup> First published in *Screen*, Kelly's article is representative of early proponents of the scripto-visual and of a refusal to abide by the oppressive patriarchal legacy of painting. In a more recent forum (than her

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<sup>35</sup>Joanna Isaak's article "a work in comic courage: Nancy Spero, " Parachute 51 (1988) outlines this idea of a distinctly feminine painting. She notes that "finding a language, a mode of writing, 'l'écriture féminine', has been the special problematic of the French feminists.... Spero has set herself a comparable task in the field of representation, trying for what she calls "la peinture féminine," 12. It is largely to this sort of work that Roberts' second argument in the case of women and painting refers.

<sup>36</sup>Roberts 25.

<sup>37</sup>Laing 23.

<sup>38</sup>Sheila Butler, "More Thoughts on Painting," *C Magazine* 28 (1991): 12.

<sup>39</sup>Mary Kelly, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism," *Screen* 22.3 (1981): 62, in Roberts 26. Kelly's text was reprinted in *Art After Modernism*, as in note 9.

article), an evening seminar held in June of 1989 at the Vancouver Art Gallery,<sup>40</sup> Kelly reiterated a somewhat altered position vis-à-vis painting:

So we're not saying that there is no hope for painting; we're saying that historically it's very specific, very strategic...and not "anything goes" and not every woman needs to be supported.... Otherwise...the nature of feminist interventions is being massively displaced and marginalized by being described in terms of a choice about media.<sup>41</sup>

While it is precisely a "choice about media" that is at issue in both Roberts' and Laing's pieces, they neither intend to displace feminist interventions, nor do they attempt an erasure of historical specificity. In fact, the historical specificity of the case against painting is key for them both. In the debates around both painting and essentialism, it is an elision of "nature" and "history" that has informed essentialist thinking and painting as a gendered medium. This elision is outlined by Roberts and Laing. Over the course of their own historical accounts, both authors acknowledge a confusion between the aesthetic resources or medium of painting and its history (or past uses):

But painting, it was said, was too contaminated and still too much at one with its patriarchal, high art history to be a viable medium, especially for women. Too bad, in retrospect, that its history became confused with its nature, as a medium.<sup>42</sup>

Painting, therefore, may be in the interests of the power of men (and capital), but its aesthetic resources are not identifiable with those interests; painting does not *carry* sexist bias, but may be promoted given the social and political conditions of emergence.<sup>43</sup>

These tracts represent the breaking moment in the anti-painting argument for women. As well, they parallel the debate over the essentialism of women: there has been a confusion of women's history with Woman's nature. Of course, artists such as Mary Kelly do not see

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<sup>40</sup>*Different Perspectives: Perspectives on Difference* (seminar), June 12-16, 1989, Vancouver Art Gallery, organised by Judith Mastai.

<sup>41</sup>Mary Kelly in "Mary Kelly and Griselda Pollock In Conversation," ed. Judith Mastai, *Parachute* 62 (1991): 27. This article is the transcript of the last evening seminar held at *Different Perspectives: Perspectives on Difference*, as in note 39.

<sup>42</sup>Laing 21.

<sup>43</sup>Roberts 28.

painting as a necessarily politically viable medium - even though there has been some conceit to painting as not "essentially" unviable.<sup>44</sup>

In his article, Roberts posits that feminist theories of painting opened from the anti-painting argument under the realisation of this misconceived elision:

Essentially painting was reframed within a theory of sexual difference that sought to critique the idea of there being a practice or set of resources that was in the best interests of women, that was more combative of patriarchy than another.<sup>45</sup>

*Parachute's* publication of Roberts' article in 1989 was timely as the critiques he offered were informed by the recent decade of writing on essentialism as noted earlier in this chapter. However, Laing claims that Roberts "splits painting from theory."<sup>46</sup> Where and how he does this is not evident to me. It is my belief that Roberts' tract is in large part an attempt to demonstrate both the possible pitfalls of essentializing painting and women's relationship to it, and the dangers of extracting feminist theories of painting from the larger context of critical art discourse.

As well, Laing asserts that Roberts offers "the old chestnut that somehow it is only *women* who are different," or that "it is only *painting* that is riddled with ambiguities."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Kelly's focus on specificity, and her aversion to generalizations about media is shared by other artists who were influential during the same time period. For instance, Martha Rosler, in an interview with Jane Weinstock, published in *October* in 1980, stated that "[t]he question of medium per se isn't terribly interesting to me. Meaning is, and I use the appropriate medium." *October* 17 (1980): 17. Rosler's work was well-known in Canada at that time, *Fuse* having published two articles on her work in their special issue on Feminist Resources (*Fuse* 4.2 (1980)). Interestingly her work was "played off against" that of Carolee Schneemann, an artist whose most influential works were produced in the sixties and seventies and were representative of a return to imagery of the female body as *feminist intervention*, only to be eschewed in later years as essentialist by a newer generation of feminists. Kelly's work is also well-known in Canada, *Parachute* having published her important text "No Essential Femininity," as well as Paul Smith's *Mother as Site of Her Proceedings: Mary Kelly's Post-Partum Document* in issue 26 (1982):29-35. "No Essential Femininity," having been published in 1982, is not discussed in this thesis which begins its investigation in 1983, but it is nonetheless noteworthy.

<sup>45</sup>Roberts 28.

<sup>46</sup>Laing 23.

Roberts' text is concerned with painting and women, but by saying that "[i]t is no surprise ... that painting as the site of innumerable contradictions and historical investments in our culture should be so divided as a space of meaning for women,"<sup>48</sup> he clearly suggests that it is not only for women that painting is a site of contradiction. In fact, his phrase alludes to much work about the "end of painting" in a more general postmodern context.<sup>49</sup> Nor can his statement that a "theory of sexual difference that sought to critique the idea of there being a practice or set of resources that ... was more combative of patriarchy than another"<sup>50</sup> be ignored in this regard.

While Roberts may not be as clear as Laing in her criticism of those other mediums such as photography and film as oppressive, his impetus is also different: Roberts is not a *woman* trying to find or make a space for women in *painting*. He does not have the same vested interest in proving that other mediums are just as bad as (or worse than) painting for women. The political is not always personal. It is this point of distinction between the two articles that exemplifies a differential positioning of the two magazines within the cultural spectrum. Laing's account, a personal historical narrative, originally presented at two conferences, one on a panel called "Biography as Art"<sup>51</sup> - is too narrow to be considered representative of the larger discourse around women and painting. Her case for painting is too overwhelmingly biased and her arguments are undermined by contradictions in her text.

Laing glosses over the scripto-visual work of the late seventies and eighties that is said to have replaced painting, and while making a case for the specific medium of *painting* and critiquing some of the essentialisms often charged against *women in painting*, she

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<sup>47</sup>Laing 23.

<sup>48</sup>Roberts 26.

<sup>49</sup>On the "end of painting", see Thomas Lawson, "Last Exit: Painting," *Art After Modernism* 153-165, as in note 9.

<sup>50</sup>Roberts 28.

<sup>51</sup>Laing 24.

unproblematically asks that readers understand "the writing woman as a metaphor for the painting woman, on the grounds of a continuous and shared experience of the world."<sup>52</sup> Thus Laing gives away a certain theoretical naivete, as well as her own essentialism of "woman." Published in 1990, "How Can *We* Speak to Painting?" lacks the theoretical and political perspective often offered in other articles published in *C*. One must assume that based on the theoretical sophistication of texts such as those by Shonagh Adelman regarding feminist strategies and artistic practice, Laing's views are not by and large the views of *C as a magazine*. Instead in this case, *C* is acting as an archive of one author/artist's work.

Unlike Laing, Roberts specifically regards the place of the scripto-visual within discourses around painting as "feminist/deconstructive photography and 'post-object work' [that] continues to rework [the] basic assumptions" that reading is problematized by a breakdown of narrative flow, thus involving the spectator in the world of meaning production.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps owing to a distinct preponderance of articles about scripto-visual work in *Parachute* over the years, or in fact merely as a result of Roberts' own desire to adequately support his points, his extensive discussion of the scripto-visual refuses the theoretical porousness that allows my critique of Laing. What is clear in Roberts, much more than in Laing, is that while there may have been a return to painting as a viable medium in recent years, and the scripto-visual may not be *the* answer for feminist representation, it was and continues to be an important aspect of feminist art production.

These two accounts of women's relationships to painting represent opposing ends of the spectrum of identity inscription. One is personal, an archived gesture, a remembering of gendered experience and a reaction to that experience - a performative act. The other is a distanced historical account, based on conceptualizations of gender, but not

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<sup>52</sup>Laing 23.

<sup>53</sup>Roberts 26.

on one individual's experience in the world; grounded in theories published elsewhere and by now institutionalized, it is an account of the pedagogical inscription of gendered experience. In *C Magazine* we see an archive of Laing's performative act, in *Parachute* the layered imprint of Roberts' contribution to a pedagogy of gendered identity.

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The pedagogical inscription of gendered experience is also one of the functions of mass media representation - namely advertising and film. This section will discuss articles representative of a constructionist position. Each attempts to deconstruct media-produced identities of "Woman." There are nonetheless essentialisms emergent within them.

In 1985, *Parachute* dedicated its fortieth issue to advertising. At that moment, general shifts in artistic representation toward scripto-visual inquiries were notable in the work of many artists, as well as in that of art historians and critics. No doubt, this trend was also owing to the preponderance of psychoanalytic theory as mentioned earlier, which was specific in noting the constitution of the subject as partially a result of representation's exclusions. Although preceded in 1984 by *October's* dedication of issue 28 to psychoanalysis, it seems then, that *Parachute* is a forerunner in the propagation of psychoanalytic deconstruction in the Canadian context. This is underscored by the fact that Kate Linker's much-cited 1983 article, "Representation and Sexuality," was first published in *Parachute*. For *C Magazine*, the impetus to publish articles that use psychoanalysis is much less clear, and in fact evident uses of psychoanalytic theory are more concerned with the re-empowerment of women than with the analysis of "Woman's" construction per se.

Kate Linker's article "Ex-posing the Female Model or the Woman who Poses for Money" (*Parachute*, 1985) focusses on models and their role in the shaping of reality through representation. Citing Jacques Lacan (and Luce Irigaray in passing), Linker exposes the fashion model "as a concept, an ideal type and a fantasy ... an image or

representation of femininity."<sup>54</sup> She sees modelling as an interchange between money and sexuality as they dominate Western apparatuses of power.

Similarly Linker suggests in "Representation and Sexuality" that "as a subject in process, in language, woman is at liberty to counter anatomy and with it, the claims of essential femininity, freeing her self from the fixed terms of identity by recognition of its textual production."<sup>55</sup> Her analysis, drew largely from Jane Gallop's *The Daughter's Seduction*, which is itself a reading of French psychoanalysis. Craig Owens and Julia Kristeva have both written of the validation afforded ideology through its quotation (a pedagogical inscription), even when there is an explicit questioning or denial (performative gestures) of the values it perpetuates.<sup>56</sup> In this, Linker validated the sexism that psychoanalysis helps to stabilize through its particular (essentialist) construction of difference in relation to the phallus. Even though the Lacanian phallus is a linguistic concept (the power to generate meaning), it functions as an invisible support for patriarchy. As Jane Gallop has written, "As long as the attribute of power is a phallus which can only have meaning by referring to and being confused with a penis, this confusion will support a structure in which it seems reasonable that men have power and women do not."<sup>57</sup> To speak of the phallus, therefore, is to desire the phallus.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Linker, "Ex-posing" 16.

<sup>55</sup>Linker, "Representation" 17.

<sup>56</sup>In *Sexual Subversions*, Grosz notes Kristeva's positioning of women in reaction to the phallus as either aspiration or shunning, "[b]oth positions, Kristeva points out, involve the unquestioned given value of the phallic - one by affirmation, the other by denial," 92. And Craig Owens addresses the double-bind of transgressing the boundaries of pre-existing knowledges in his tract on "pseudo-expressionism," claiming that "In all discourse, quotation represents authority." Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 148.

<sup>57</sup>Jane Gallop, *Thinking Through the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 127.

<sup>58</sup>As Gallop also notes, the Lacanian desire to control meaning is necessarily a desire to have the phallus. " At the same time, "such

Speaking of the phallus is a common practice in feminist articles published in *C Magazine* and *Parachute*. While this section continues to discuss those articles from *Parachute* that deal with psychoanalysis, the contradictory situation of *C Magazine* should be noted in passing. I have stated that *C*'s interest in psychoanalytic feminism is both less prominent than *Parachute*'s and manifests itself differently. Noteworthy, however, are two articles, published in *C Magazine*, that use the signifier "phallus" without actually adopting a psychoanalytic method. Reesa Greenberg's "Problems with Picasso: Fe-male and The Phallus"<sup>59</sup> cursorily mentions "the theory of the gaze" and Laura Mulvey's notable text "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"<sup>60</sup> but is predominantly an historical materialist feminist account of the discourse around Picasso. Here, it seems there is a clear collapse of the phallus/penis distinction, that results from the "structure in which men [Picasso] have power and women do not."<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Kass Banning's "The Mummification of Mommy: Joyce Wieland as the AGO's First Living Other"<sup>62</sup> included oddly displaced references to the "phallic." This article is again an in-depth historical account, this time of Joyce Wieland and the intersecting discourses that have produced her otherness. And yet again there is a cursory adoption of the terms of psychoanalysis. It would seem that these articles point to a tendency in *C Magazine* to call attention to knowledge of certain theoretical currents, without engaging with them critically. This is in direct contrast to the engagement with psychoanalytic theory evident in Linker's articles in *Parachute*.

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attempt to remake language to one's own theoretical need, as if language were merely a tool one could use, bespeaks a very un-Lacanian view of language," 126. For further discussions of the phallus, please see *differences* 4.1 (1992), special issue on "The Phallus."

<sup>59</sup>Reesa Greenberg, "Problems with Picasso: The Fe-male and The Phallus," *C Magazine* 8 (1985): 19-24.

<sup>60</sup>Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6-19.

<sup>61</sup>Gallop 127.

<sup>62</sup>Kass Banning, "The Mummification of Mommy: Joyce Wieland as the AGO's First Living Other," *C magazine* 13 (1987): 32-38.

One article in *C Magazine*, Shonagh Adelman's "She Kisses Like She Kills" (1991) attempted to expose the mechanisms by which women (with particular emphasis on the *femme fatale* in *film noir*) are constructed in Hollywood movies. She suggested that the *femme fatale* is "emblematic of a symbolic fear of castration" and thus exposed her own validation of Freudian psychoanalysis.<sup>63</sup>

Adelman described Barbara Stanwyck's role in *Double Indemnity* as follows:

While appearing to embody femininity, to represent woman as body, she defies essentialism by using the very image of herself as body in order to gain control. The paradox of her situation is that she can only empower herself through the employment of her own fetishized image.<sup>64</sup>

Here Adelman called the manoeuvre a defiance of essentialism. However, essentialism was not defied. It was, instead, deployed strategically to initiate a shift in power. The resulting "loss of control or rational thought signals the collapse of masculinity ... and ultimately destroy[s] a man's autonomy/difference."<sup>65</sup> The result is the destruction of sexual difference as a hierarchical category through its own playing out.

The violent, sexy woman on screen as discussed by Adelman is representative of a trend in some feminist theory to go beyond deconstruction of gender stereotypes and construct new identities - but ones that do not conform to traditional ideas of "positive" representations of women. For instance, another article published in 1991, this time in *Art Journal*, Christine Tamblyn's "No More Nice Girls: Recent Transgressive Feminist Art," discusses the recent incorporation of taboo subject matter (i.e., cultural stereotypes about "bad girls") by feminist artists who have eschewed "positive role modeling."<sup>66</sup> Even this newer trend owes part of its legacy to psychoanalysis. As Tamblyn states, "the notion of

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<sup>63</sup>Adelman, "She Kisses" 13.

<sup>64</sup>Adelman, "She Kisses" 16.

<sup>65</sup>Adelman, "She Kisses" 16.

<sup>66</sup>Christine Tamblyn, "No More Nice Girls: Recent Transgressive Feminist Art," *Art Journal* 51 (1991): 53-57.

creating positive role models is regarded as untenable by feminist writers who have employed insights gleaned from psychoanalytic theory to analyze how representations function through exclusion."<sup>67</sup>

Adelman's article, unlike Carol Laing's, does not seem representative of *C Magazine* as an archive. Her engagement with gender theory was on par with the production of contemporary critics in other journals, such as Tamblyn in *Art Journal*. Her basing an article upon recent film theory (she noted Jacquelyn Suter's "Feminine Discourse in Christopher Strong" and Elizabeth Cowie's "Film as Progressive Text - A Discussion of Coma," both 1988)<sup>68</sup> was also emblematic of this critical engagement, which suggests that rather than "archiving" one writer's work, here *C Magazine* is contributing to the pedagogical inscription of gender.

Gender inscription was again at issue in Kate Davy's article "Buying and Selling the Look" (*Parachute* 1985). She elucidated the relationship of body image to distorted representations of reality within advertising. Taking a constructionist position, Davy aimed to investigate how "these distortions turn back upon and shape reality."<sup>69</sup> One of her main concerns is the manifestation of eating disorders in women as result of body image problems. She notes that although eating disorders are beginning to cross race and class lines, they remain gender specific.<sup>70</sup>

Davy's assessed the relationship of illness to an essentialist idea of women, held up somehow by the culture at large, as follows:

Because body image is inextricably linked to eating disorders, feminists are also reluctant to engage in a rigorous investigation of the culture's standards for the ideal female body. Like the 19th century hysteric, the bulimic and the anorectic are

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<sup>67</sup>Tamblyn 53.

<sup>68</sup>Both in *Feminism and Film Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>69</sup>Davy 22.

<sup>70</sup>Davy 22. She neglected to qualify the gender-specificity of eating disorders; in fact, anorexia, although not common in boys, does exist.

perceived as fostering an emotional disturbance that is stereotypically female. When the women's movement is strong, women who seemingly embody the culture's prescribed gender traits for the weak, emotional, diseased females, are somewhat of an embarrassment. The dominant culture latches on to them as proof that women are "naturally" weak, emotional and ill.<sup>71</sup>

It seems, that *Parachute's* devotion of an issue to advertising, including Davy's and Linker's articles investigating the construction of "the culture's standards for the ideal female body" denotes a distinct willingness on the part of feminists and the institutions that support them (such as certain art periodicals) to engage in such a "rigorous investigation." In fact, other articles published in *C Magazine* and *Parachute* also point to this willingness as a veritable trend in recent critical art discourse. For instance, Reesa Greenberg takes up the "implications of the white West's insistence on the ideal female as slim youth" in her article about the artist "Jana Sterbak"<sup>72</sup>; and in "Texta Scientae (The Enlacing of Knowledge): Mary Kelly's Corpus" Monika Gagnon analyses the implicit subversion "of the construction of the Woman by/through dominant images of/for Woman," in Mary Kelly's work.<sup>73</sup> Gagnon's article about Mary Kelly's work is noteworthy as it represents another exception to the general tendency in *C Magazine* not to engage deeply with psychoanalytic theory. Largely owing to Kelly's use of psychoanalytic theory in her work, most of Gagnon's article was involved on some level with psychoanalytic concepts: Woman, fetish, phallus, gaze.

The re-contextualization of images by/for woman allowed a subversion of the construction of the Woman in Mary Kelly's work. In a similar fashion, Silvia Kolbowski examined the re-viewing of images of women in magazines in her article "Discordant Views," (*Parachute*, 1985) in an attempt to find space for women to produce their own meanings and subjectivities. In her text there was an implicit exploration of the role of

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<sup>71</sup>Davy 24.

<sup>72</sup>Reesa Greenberg, "Jana Sterbak," *C Magazine* 16 (1987): 50-53.

<sup>73</sup>Monika Gagnon, "Texta Scientae (The Enlacing of Knowledge): Mary Kelly's Corpus," *C Magazine* 10 (1986): 24-33.

context in the production of meaning and an explicit formulation of context as a space in which women can restructure their representations. Context is one of numerous factors upon which meaning is contingent, as seen in recent semiotic theory. In their essay "Semiotics and Art History," Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson stressed that a sign is not a thing, but an event; this dynamism of the sign makes all acts (of looking, of creating, of speaking) fluctual.<sup>74</sup> Context may have been traditionally seen as a fixed framework within which a text could be viewed, but it too is fluctual. Bal and Bryson asserted that:

The idea of 'context', posited as platform or foundation, invites us to step back from the uncertainties of text. But once this step is taken, it is by no means clear why it may not be taken again; that is, 'context' implies from its first moment a potential regression without brakes.<sup>75</sup>

The notion of context as expounded by Bal and Bryson is one that developed throughout the eighties, culminating in their extensive account of the development of semiotics, particularly since the advent of post-structural theory. As such, Kolbowski's 1985 article proves to be an early Canadian example of the use of such theoretical underpinning for a feminist project. Referring primarily to Carol Squiers' "Design for Living" exhibition, Kolbowski emphasized that there is a space for social change when the context of viewing a group of images is changed from its original intent. While she did not take issue with the essential characteristics of the images of women used by Squiers there was an implicit strategic deployment of essentialism in that those images were used to raise consciousness in viewers.

There is a certain semiotic "progressiveness" in Kolbowski.<sup>76</sup> Her tract, along with Davy's, represents a deconstruction of pedagogically-inscribed identities. *Parachute*,

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<sup>74</sup>Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," *Art Bulletin* (1991): 174-208.

<sup>75</sup>Bal and Bryson 177.

<sup>76</sup>Her text is a precursor for later work dealing with similar issues of the intertextuality of representation, such as Pamela A. Ivinski, "Women

much more than *C Magazine*, engages with deconstruction as a feminist strategy. While Adelman's "She Kisses Like She Kills," Greenberg's "Problems With Picasso," and Kass Banning's "The Mummification of Mommy" all laid bare the structures and systems that have oppressed women, they are not as engaged with the pure deconstruction that is *Parachute* in the mid-eighties. Gagnon's article on Mary Kelly, was the sole deconstructionist in *C*'s midst.

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The two remaining essays to be discussed examined the development of feminist art practice over the last twenty years. Shonagh Adelman's "Redefining the Female Subject" (*C Magazine*, 1991) and Renée Baert's "Subjects on the Threshold" (*Parachute*, 1993) parallel my historical account from the beginning of this chapter, thus underscoring the importance of the contestation around the sign "essence" in feminist theory. They are also representative of a developing fugue of the performative and the pedagogical. Drawing on a wealth of theory and presenting the performative works of female video artists, these articles are rare instances of the fusion of the two in these journals.

Adelman's "Redefining the Female Subject" attempted to figure out how, as feminists, we can represent women - if at all.<sup>77</sup> She used feminist video production in Canada as a vehicle for her discussion. Noting the play of history ("the legacy") in the marginalization of women, Adelman was quick to point out the double-bind of representation facing feminists:

The view that images of women are inevitably co-opted by dominant cultural meanings allows only for critical deconstructive strategies and precludes attempts at alternative representations. The assumption that dominant discourses are omnipotent in coding visual media leaves them unchallenged and accepts the inscrutable force of mainstream signifying systems to define women's roles. ...For fear of objectification, the visual representation of women is evaded. This assumes

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Who Turn the Gaze Around," *Print* 47.5 (1993): 36-42; and, Mignon Nixon, "'You Thrive on Mistaken Identity'," *October* 60 (1992): 58-81.

<sup>77</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 24.

the primacy of the male gaze, of a male audience. ...[W]e must recognize that men have always had the privilege of being addressed.<sup>78</sup>

In response to this dilemma, Adelman suggested that co-option may have to be risked in order to create representations of women, by women and for women. By staging this dilemma in the first place, however, she accomplished much more. Here Adelman was alluding to the long history of debates about essentialism.

Going on to examine the variation within feminist discourses on representation as moving from representing women in more realist terms to a "disassembling of the logic of the mediated image,"<sup>79</sup> Adelman split the two sides geographically, claiming a polarisation between Anglo-American and French feminisms. Clearly, her move was informed by a decade of theorizing of this geographical/ideological split.<sup>80</sup> What she considered the positive role model strategy raised questions of what should be represented and how it should be represented. Here, she stressed the danger of making certain qualities more valuable than others, of creating an ideal that will "obscure difference" and ultimately mirror a patriarchal system with one set of qualities replaced by another.<sup>81</sup> Adelman articulated this negative view of realistic representations as a "position, aligned with an avant-garde aesthetic, [that] tends to associate identification with subjective fixity and, consequently, with political inertia."<sup>82</sup>

The result of the above dichotomy, according to Adelman, is that in their "attempts to redress the balance between the omnipresence of male fantasies of women and the near-

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<sup>78</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 25.

<sup>79</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 25.

<sup>80</sup>Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1985), noted this geographical split while heralding French feminist thought and denigrating that of Anglo-American counterparts. Janet Todd (1988, 73-76) and Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (1993, 48-49) have both criticized her interpretations.

<sup>81</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 26.

<sup>82</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 26.

absence of women's self-imaging," feminists have to "walk a fine line between utopian vision (which can slide into essentialism or simplicity) and deconstruction (which can duplicate stereotypes or become obscure)."<sup>83</sup> The idea suggested here, that subjective fixity is the result of any image of women, and therefore bad, begs the question of whether representation is essentially negative, a premise implicit in the articles addressed in the last section (due to their psychoanalytic derivation) and yet not addressed explicitly by them. They all suggested that certain kinds of images of women - those made by men and for men - were bad; but what this later formulation offered is both a strategic deployment of essentialism for political means and also a freedom from the necessary essentialism of men as the conscious supporters of women's oppression. It is reminiscent of Spivak's strategic uses of essentialism, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

In conclusion Adelman acknowledged claimed that "the importance of recognising and mapping out the position of the female subject within the economy of representation."<sup>84</sup> It is this very same mapping out of the position of the female subject that was at issue in Renée Baert's "Subjects on the Threshold," which incidentally also used Canadian feminist video production as a vehicle for its discussion.

Baert's article presented a history of feminist positionings that follows discursive rather than chronological developments.<sup>85</sup> She based her discussion on the two decades that proceeded from the second wave of the feminist movement which she called "the awakening to the politic of sexual difference and the search for a female subject position within (or without!) patriarchal culture."<sup>86</sup> Baert, like Adelman, saw this story as one with

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<sup>83</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 26.

<sup>84</sup>Adelman, "Redefining" 32.

<sup>85</sup>Baert 15. Baert's article, even more than Adelman's, parallels the history of debates in feminism as they were elucidated at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>86</sup>Baert 14.

two major sides: the interrogation of established forms of knowledge and the writing of new stories.<sup>87</sup> Because of a lack of a "readily available subject, or authorial, position for women to occupy," Baert viewed the feminist subject as "on the threshold."<sup>88</sup>

Throughout her text, Baert was concerned for the role of language in the play of subjectivity, specifically with what she calls "problems with the pronouns."<sup>89</sup> Using Lisa Steele's *Birthday Suit with Scars and Defects* (1974) as an example of works "from a period [that] valorized a female self," Baert suggested that it was a period whose revelation was that a female "I" cannot be spoken transparently: it is marked by gender.<sup>90</sup>

Another generation of works took this marking as a cue to examine, through critical practice, the social construction and production of gender. Baert stated:

If a generation of feminist work produced a new definition of women as speaking subjects, the strategy of negation - of producing an irruption in the flow of ideology, of refusing the representation of an "identity" that can only be recuperated anew - is a refusal of this embodiment.<sup>91</sup>

Thus, while deconstruction can "destabilize pre-coded identities" it is unable to "articulate new subjectivities."<sup>92</sup> This underscores the importance of performative gestures that disrupt a stable pedagogy of gendered identity. At the same time, Baert's emphasis on deconstruction points to the necessary coexistence of the two in fugue, if new subject positions are to be produced.

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<sup>87</sup>Baert 14.

<sup>88</sup>Baert 14.

<sup>89</sup>Baert 15. Carol Laing, in "How Can We Speak to Painting?" similarly notes "the bad fit of language to [gendered] experience," 21.

<sup>90</sup>Baert 16.

<sup>91</sup>Baert 18.

<sup>92</sup>Baert 18.

Baert took issue with psychoanalysis while travelling her trajectory of feminisms and seemed to identify what I would call the essentialism perpetuated by psychoanalytic theory regardless of its intended constructionist position:

While psychoanalysis demonstrates that gender is symbolic rather than biological psychoanalytic theory also constructs women around the phallic sign, the not-man. Woman, as the Other through whom male subjectivity is constituted, serves as the guarantor of the masculine subject only; there is no guarantor for the female. ...The position of "I" is foreclosed. The subject position is one of an unrepresentability, a " "93

Baert then moved beyond the position that saw gender as a construction of social relations by acknowledging that although it is that, it is also a structure *constitutive* of social relations. She then addressed a new generation of work which explored female subjectivity from the point of view that it is "an unfixed construct that is also an *embodied* positioning."<sup>94</sup> This new "subject of feminism" is a site of differences: it "opens the conception of the female subject as constituted not only in sexual difference - from man from Woman - but also in differences of race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, and other cultural relations."<sup>95</sup> Thus Baert's account parallels the crisis of the "other woman" described in this chapter's earlier history of essentialism.

Adelman's "female subject" and Baert's "subject of feminism" both point to an essential (embodied) femaleness but unlike "woman" or "women" their difference is no longer negative (the Other to man); instead, they imply by their very subjecthood the

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<sup>93</sup>Baert 18. Baert turned to Elizabeth Schroder's *I Can't Get Over What I Saw* (1985) to demonstrate the problem of this psychoanalytic construction. "A female character in voice-over recounts an unhappy romantic episode. Finally she asks, in a voice at once plaintive and exhortative, 'How many artists do you have to fuck before you become one?'" 18.

<sup>94</sup>Baert 19. Kim Sawchuk's article, "Biological Not Determinist: Nell Tenhaaf's Technological Mutations," *Parachute* 75 (1994): 11-15, provides a more in-depth look at one artist's theorizing of this "new" space of female subjectivity.

<sup>95</sup>Baert 19. This new subject of feminism is largely the result of the theorizing of the late 80s that was propelled by the double-barrelled critique of essentialism as I outlined it in the introduction to this chapter.

consciousness required to free them (us all) from the grips of patriarchal definition. But as Baert has specified, we are subjects on the threshold, subjects in process.

Baert's "Subjects on the Threshold," and Adelman's "Redefining the Female Subject" are both representative of the recent tendencies in feminism to use past theoretical productions strategically. Similarly, articles published in the early nineties in *October* and *Critical Inquiry* and newer journals, such as *differences*, present this type of historical account of how feminists have arrived at the present moment of the paradoxical identity politics based on undone identities.<sup>96</sup>

Adelman and Baert are both critically engaged theorists representative of new developments in theorizing gender. Their two texts suggest that *Parachute* and *C Magazine* were on the front lines of gender theorization, by the 1990s. They also both mark the increasing movement of performative acts (represented by the videotapes discussed in each text) into pedagogical inscription through an interplay of practice and theory that is largely the result of feminist interventions into critical discourses of representation. The renewed focus on the embodiment of identity, undeniable as discourses of race, ethnicity and sexuality are increasingly theorized and performed, is also a factor in the performative pedagogy of difference, to be sure. As the following chapter will demonstrate, in distinct yet equally important ways, *Parachute* and *C Magazine* were forums for developing discussions of sexuality. Sexual identities, much like gendered ones, are going through a de-essentializing process as "compulsory heterosexuality" is destabilized through practical and theoretical interventions.

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<sup>96</sup>See, for example, *October* 71 (1995), special issue on "Questions of Feminism," in which the diverging discourses of feminist theory and practice are elucidated through a collection of (performative) responses to particular questions. See also, Jane Gaines, "Feminist Heterosexuality and its Politically Incorrect Pleasures," *Critical Inquiry* 21 (1995): 382-410; and, Kathy E. Ferguson and Kristie M. McClure, "Politics/Power/Culture: Postmodernity and Feminist Political Theory," *differences* 3.1 (1991): iii-vi.

### Chapter 3

#### Emerging Sexualities

This goal of this chapter is, first to present a historical account of the rise of gay and lesbian studies and queer theory; and second, to investigate the appearance and "nature" of articles published in *Parachute* and *C Magazine* concerned with similar issues of sexuality. There is attention to gay art practice and art history, s/m practices, transsexuality, and the intersections of gender, sexuality, nationalism and colonialism, all within the realm of representation. The continuing framework of pedagogical and performative distinction is developed throughout this chapter, along with the ongoing notation of instances in which *C Magazine* is representative of an archive. In this chapter there will be an exploration of the relationship of history writing to homosexuality and a questioning of the political valency of writing a "gay art history" through a discussion of Tom Folland's "Uneasy History,"<sup>1</sup> Andrew Sorfleet's "On History and Everyday Life,"<sup>2</sup> and Earl Miller's "Accidental Subversives,"<sup>3</sup> all published in *C Magazine* in 1991. Subsequently, a discussion of Susan Douglas's "Slave and Master: Picturing the Politics and Poetics of S/M"<sup>4</sup> (*Parachute*, 1994), Lisa Brown's "Transsexuality: Crossing Over or Becoming"<sup>5</sup> (*Parachute*, 1992), Jim Drobnick's "In Pieces of Pieces"<sup>6</sup> (*Parachute*, 1992), Laura U. Marks' "Nice Gun You Got There"<sup>7</sup> (*Parachute*, 1992) and Marks' "Sexual Hybrids From

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<sup>1</sup>Tom Folland, "Uneasy History," *C Magazine* 29 (1991): 33-36.

<sup>2</sup>Andrew Sorfleet, "On History and Everyday Life," *C Magazine* 30 (1991): 9-11.

<sup>3</sup>Earl Miller, "Accidental Subversives," *C Magazine* 29 (1991): 23-27.

<sup>4</sup>Susan Douglas, "Slave and Master: Picturing the Politics and Poetics of S/M," *Parachute* 76 (1994): 29-33.

<sup>5</sup>Lisa Brown, "Transsexuality: Crossing Over or Becoming," *Parachute* 65 (1992): 34-39.

<sup>6</sup>Jim Drobnick, "In Pieces of Pieces," *Parachute* 64 (1992): 13-17.

Oriental Exotic to Postcolonial Grotesque"<sup>8</sup> (*Parachute*, 1993) will foreground some of the discursive intersections that inform cultural sexual stereotypes.<sup>9</sup>

As the last chapter demonstrated, the interrogation of the concept "woman" evolved over the last few decades in various ways. There has also been an increased focus on specificities within gender groups. As noted earlier, sexual specificity is one of the aspects of identity that differentiates women. Emerging discourses of sexuality are partially indebted to the work of certain feminist theorists who have brought attention not only to women's oppression, but also to what has been called "compulsory heterosexuality"<sup>10</sup> through an examination of their own lesbian experience. Further, the move to interrogations of gender (as opposed to "woman" only) has brought with it the exploration of constructions of masculinity, and the de-essentialising of "men" into different sexual groups, most often using the binary homo/hetero.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the single most important publication in the foregrounding of debates around sexuality Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality (Volume I)*, in 1978.<sup>12</sup> This work, which outlined the historical construction of Modern sexual identity and repression in the Victorian era, brought to the fore the complex discursive systems that "invented"

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<sup>7</sup>Laura U. Marks, "Nice Gun You Got There," *Parachute* 66 (1992): 27-32.

<sup>8</sup>Laura U. Marks, "Sexual Hybrids From Oriental Exotic to Postcolonial Grotesque," *Parachute* 70 (1993): 22-29.

<sup>9</sup>There were no articles published in *Parachute* in French that made inquiries into sexual identities their object of study.

<sup>10</sup>Please see, Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience," *Powers of Desire*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983) 177-205; or, Teresa de Lauretis, "The Female Body and Heterosexual Presumption," *Semiotica* 67.3-4 (1987): 259-279.

<sup>11</sup>I say "most often" because, as I will discuss in this chapter there are other "categories" such as transexuality and inter-sexuality, which relate to both gender groups, yet they are often erased from many discussions of sexuality.

<sup>12</sup>Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

heterosexuality and homosexuality. Foucault's key work opened the doors for a plethora of texts theorising the "construction" of the sexual binarism. Many of them were influenced by his work, such as Jeffrey Weeks' *"Foucauldian" Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (1981).<sup>13</sup> There were also studies of homosexuality published earlier than Foucault's, such as Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History* (1976),<sup>14</sup> which has been heralded as a "groundbreaking ... compilation of four hundred years of state discourse about queers,"<sup>15</sup> but they were comparatively few and far between.<sup>16</sup>

Besides these academic re-inscriptions of sexual identity that took into account the theoretical currents of post-structuralism and Foucauldian discourses of power (pedagogical inscriptions), concern with sexual identities also occurred on a more practical (i.e., performative) level. The event most notably written about in gay and lesbian history of this century to date is the Stonewall Riots, which occurred in New York City in 1969. In his book *becoming visible*, Kevin Jennings notes that the riots which began "in response to a routine police raid on a gay bar called the Stonewall Inn, marked a critical turning point in gay history."<sup>17</sup> Stonewall, commemorated every year by the Gay Pride Parade, marks

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<sup>13</sup>Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London: Longman, 1981).

<sup>14</sup>Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976).

<sup>15</sup>John Greyson, "Security Blankets: Sex, Video and the Police," *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Gay Film and Video*, eds. Martha Gever, John Greyson and Prathiba Parmar, (New York: Routledge, 1993): 394n.

<sup>16</sup>Other key examples are Guy Hocquenheim, *Homosexual Desire* (London: Alison, 1978); and, Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet, 1977).

<sup>17</sup>Kevin Jennings, *becoming visible* (Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1994) 195. As Jennings' book points out, however, the gay rights movement which is often seen to have begun with Stonewall, actually dates back to 1867, when Karl Heinrich Ulrichs gave speeches about gay rights, in Germany. For a fuller account of Stonewall than Jennings

the "coming out" of the contemporary gay and lesbian movement and the end of the "homophile" movement of the fifties and sixties which "preached 'fitting in' as the way to win acceptance."<sup>18</sup> The shift is marked primarily by a more militant attitude and a politics of visibility rather than invisibility. In effect the shift is to a politics of difference.

The year 1969 was also important for "homosexuality" in Canada specifically, because homosexual activity was partially decriminalized through Bill C-150. Otherwise known as the omnibus bill, it included the reform of abortion law, contraception law, and gun-control measures, among other things.<sup>19</sup> The twentieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, and of Bill C-150 was celebrated in Toronto in 1989 by artists with an exhibition called "Homogenius," held at Mercer Union.<sup>20</sup> Tom Folland's "Uneasy History," and Andrew Sorfleet's "On History and Everyday Life" (both *C Magazine*) were written in connection with that exhibition.

The combined pedagogical and performative shifts in "homosexual" discourse were brought to a head with the onset of the AIDS epidemic, commonly noted as beginning in 1982. Because of the relation of AIDS to the body, particularly sexed bodies, and AIDS' contagion through sexual contact, sexuality was brought to the fore in medical, legal, governmental and media discourses. Along with the performative AIDS activism of groups such as ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) in the U.S. and AIDS ACTION NOW! in Toronto, the discourse of AIDS began to be theorized within academic contexts. As Richard Fung has noted, the notion of gay promiscuity as the cause of AIDS is widely

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provides, please see Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1983).

<sup>18</sup>Jennings 195.

<sup>19</sup>For an in-depth account of Bill C-150, as well as the more general policing of sexuality in Canada, please see Gary Kinsmen's exceptional study, first published in 1987, *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, 2nd ed. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996).

<sup>20</sup>"Homogenius," Mercer Union, Toronto, June 22 - July 22, 1989. There have been three more "Homogenius" exhibitions (in 1991, 1993 and 1995), all existing as catalogues only and all put out by Mercer Union.

promoted among liberal audiences through books and television.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Tom Folland has written that "the AIDS epidemic has revitalized the image of the diseased vagina of the nineteenth century prostitute in the the gay man's anus, thereby providing rationale for legal prescriptions."<sup>22</sup> Thus, representation and its role in the construction of sexual identities became an even more politically charged focus for many theorists and critics.

The 1980s also proved by and large to be the decade of the birth of gay studies as a discipline. In 1981, Vito Russo's study of homosexuals on film, *The Celluloid Closet*, was published.<sup>23</sup> Emmanuel Cooper produced his study of homosexuality and art, *The Sexual Perspective*,<sup>24</sup> in 1986, the same year that Jonathon Dollimore's "Homophobia and Sexual Difference"<sup>25</sup> came out in the *Oxford Literary Review*. Perhaps most noteworthy, however, is Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal study of 1985, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*.<sup>26</sup> This book has been deemed extraordinary by Craig Owens, in his own "Outlaws: Gay Men in Feminism," of 1987.<sup>27</sup> And Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean have this to say:

If the rise of sexuality as a category of historical investigation, with its recent watershed in gay and lesbian studies, owes a great deal to Foucault in the general

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<sup>21</sup>Richard Fung, "Burdens of Representation, Burdens of Responsibility," *Constructing Masculinity*, eds. Maurice Berger, Brian wallis and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995) 293.

<sup>22</sup>Tom Folland, *Stigma: Gay Politics - Gay Aesthetics?* (Toronto: Mercer Union, 1989) n.p.

<sup>23</sup>Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

<sup>24</sup>Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

<sup>25</sup>Jonathon Dollimore, "Homophobia and Sexual Difference," (Special Issue: Sexual Difference) *Oxford Literary Review* 18 (1986): 5-12.

<sup>26</sup>Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

<sup>27</sup>Craig Owens, "Outlaws: Gay Men in Feminism," *Men in Feminism*, eds. Alice Jardine and Paul Smith, (London: Methuen, 1987): 219-232.

sense, in the US context, within English departments, the figure of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is cited with almost equal frequency.<sup>28</sup>

Preceded by a few key textual moments in the seventies, such as *Jump Cut*'s 16th issue dedicated to "Gay Men and Film,"<sup>29</sup> and *The Body Politic* as a purveyor of gay journalism throughout that decade, the eighties saw an explosion of gay and lesbian studies in periodicals. *Jump Cut*, *Screen* and *Fuse*, are journals that were particularly prominent in the propagation of articles dealing with homosexuality. In 1981, *Jump Cut* dedicated an issue to "Lesbians and Film,"<sup>30</sup> as well as publishing individual articles throughout the decade, such as Tom Waugh's "Men's Pornography: Gay and Straight."<sup>31</sup> Similarly, *Screen* published such articles as Simon Watney's "Hollywood's Homosexual World,"<sup>32</sup> and Richard Dyer's "Don't Look Now - The Male Pin-Up,"<sup>33</sup> both in 1982; Mark Finch's and Richard Kwietniowski's "Melodrama and *Maurice* - Homo Is Where The Het Is,"<sup>34</sup> and Peter Mathews' "Garbo and Phallic Motherhood - A 'Homosexual' Visual Economy,"<sup>35</sup> both in 1988. *Fuse* was also a noteworthy venue, publishing innumerable articles on "Gay and Lesbian Politics and Culture" throughout the eighties.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, *Materialist Feminisms*(Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993) 179.

<sup>29</sup>*Jump Cut* 16 (1977).

<sup>30</sup>*Jump Cut* 24-25 (1981).

<sup>31</sup>Tom Waugh, "Men's Pornography: Gay and Straight," *Jump Cut* 30 (1985): 30-35.

<sup>32</sup>Simon Watney, "Hollywood's Homosexual World," *Screen* 23.3-4 (1982): 107-121.

<sup>33</sup>Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now - The Male Pin-Up," *Screen* 23.3-4 (1982): 61-73.

<sup>34</sup>Mark Finch and Richard Kwietniowski, "Melodrama and *Maurice* - The Homo Is Where The Het Is," *Screen* 29.3 (1988): 72-83.

<sup>35</sup>Peter Mathews, "Garbo and Phallic Motherhood - A 'Homosexual' Visual Economy," *Screen* 29.3 (1988): 14-42.

*October* has also been an important publisher in this field. Most notable is the dedication of issue 43, in 1987, to AIDS. Edited by Douglas Crimp, *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/ Cultural Activism*, featured several influential and much-cited essays. Among them, Leo Bersani's "Is the Rectum a Grave?" which is cited in Tom Folland's catalogue essay for the "Homogenius" exhibition. As well as this issue, *October* has published other articles about homosexuality and representation, including an English translation of chapter four of Michel Foucault's second volume on sexuality, "Erotics" (*October* 33, 1985), published a few months before the full translated volume appeared.<sup>37</sup> An earlier article, Douglas Crimp's "Fassbinder, Franz, Fox, Elvira, Erwin, Armin, and All the Others"<sup>38</sup> (*October* 21, 1982) is concerned not with a historical perspective on homosexuality, as is Foucault's, but rather with issues of representation for the "gay producer." He states:

A filmmaker who is gay evidently has only two choices: either he makes films which are not about homosexuality, in which case a disguised homosexuality will be the inevitable result...or he makes films about homosexuality, in which case he necessarily presents his *version* of homosexuality. Homosexuality, it seems, cannot merely be there; if there, it has to be in the foreground. No matter what the film's official pretext, the subject is "coming out."<sup>39</sup>

Tom Folland's catalogue essay for "Homogenius" interestingly presents a parallel problem. This is actually evidenced in the discourse around the catalogue essay, namely in Andrew Sorfleet's criticism of it, Folland's reaction to this criticism and, in turn, Sorfleet's rebuttal to this reaction. Folland apparently does not wish to present a *version* of homosexuality in his catalogue essay, and so instead foregrounds the politics of the homosexual transgression of "the historically constituted psychic conditions of

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<sup>36</sup>please see "Gay and Lesbian Politics and Culture" sections of *Fuse* indexes (published yearly for the previous year) as the articles are too numerous to mention here.

<sup>37</sup>Michel Foucault, "Erotics," trans. Robert Hurley, *October* 33 (1985): 3-30. Michel Foucault, *The Uses of Pleasure. Volume II of The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

<sup>38</sup>Douglas Crimp, "Fassbinder, Franz, Fox, Elvira, Erwin, Armin, and All the Others," *October* 21 (1982): 63-81.

<sup>39</sup>Crimp 69.

heterosexist, capitalist patriarchy."<sup>40</sup> He discusses neither the artists nor the artwork in the exhibition. For this he is criticised by Sorfleet in "Homomyopia,"<sup>41</sup> wherein Sorfleet calls for the writing of a "local gay art history."

Folland, in his article "Uneasy History" (*C Magazine*, 1991) reacts to Sorfleet's criticism by drawing attention to the problematic nature of trying to write a "gay history" while at the same time acknowledging that gay artists are necessarily positioned outside the (white male heterosexual) mainstream of art practice and writing. Turning to a Marxist critique of history as an example, Folland suggests that history "is based on many such exclusions and revisions: women, gays and lesbians, natives and immigrant peoples."<sup>42</sup> Problematizing the notion of history itself, he asserts that accepting "even provisionally, the concept of an unarticulated history is again to accept a conventional notion of history."<sup>43</sup>

For Folland the exhibition displayed diverse work and "not all of it related to issues of sexuality, or drew formal or thematic coherence from these issues."<sup>44</sup> Rather than attempting to "forge historical links" or "outline a particular stylistic or thematic unity" Folland decided to write about cultural and political theories of sexuality.<sup>45</sup> By not explicitly expounding a "gay art history," Folland was able to discuss what he felt were the issues relating to production of the work without accommodating "the conventional structures of art history" - and for this, he was criticized by Sorfleet.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Folland, *Stigma* n.p.

<sup>41</sup>Andrew Sorfleet, "Homomyopia," *Fuse* 13.1-2 (1989): 44-47.

<sup>42</sup>Folland, "Uneasy" 34.

<sup>43</sup>Folland, "Uneasy" 34.

<sup>44</sup>Folland, "Uneasy" 34.

<sup>45</sup>Folland, "Uneasy" 34.

<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, Folland notes that Donna Lypchuk "confidently asserted" that his text actually was a local gay art history, "Uneasy" 34.

Folland also suggests that work by gay artists produced in the seventies and eighties may have been outside or marginalized by a dominant aesthetic discourse, but that there was no "clear sense of making a conscious contribution to an essentialist and easily identifiable gay art history."<sup>47</sup> Following Crimp, however, one would have to see an ever-emergent gay art history, a constant "coming out." Nonetheless for Folland, to *write* a history of art practice is necessarily to essentialize and/or universalize it. For Folland, the universalizing of aesthetic practices that occurs when they are validated through an accession to dominant historical paradigms, denies difference and allows the containment of otherness by dominant cultural discourse. To take the work of the artists is to take the performative (one act, one gesture, one version) and turn it into the pedagogical (institutionalization and validation of acts, gestures, versions through the writing of "history"). There is an implicit refusal in Folland to perform as pedagogue. He suggests instead, that to speak of "gay reading practices ... would enable not only the theorization of gay representations but also their lack."<sup>48</sup>

Andrew Sorfleet, on the other hand, calls for a local gay art history in his article "On History and Everyday Life" (*C Magazine*, 1991). This rebuttal to Folland's, argues against Folland interpretations of what a gay art history might look like. Sorfleet states that instead of the historical links that Folland assumed were called for by Sorfleet, what he would rather see is history based in the "life-experiences of people who produce work, to help contextualize the way in which people will view it."<sup>49</sup> Sorfleet states:

In his catalogue essay, Folland began to analyse those political, social and historical terms, but neglected to relate the work back to the everyday - to provide viewers with specific information required to make meaning of the more obscure personal, historical and art-historical references in the work.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Folland, "Uneasy" 35.

<sup>48</sup>Folland, "Uneasy" 36.

<sup>49</sup>Sorfleet, "On History" 9.

<sup>50</sup>Sorfleet, "On History" 10.

The question remains as to how "the everyday" is separated out from "political, social and historical terms."

Earl Miller's "Accidental Subversives" (*C Magazine*, 1991) would seem to provide the kind of history for which Sorfleet is looking. While underscoring Crimp's notion of the subject of homosexuality always "coming out," Miller's text is also symptomatic of the telling of versions of homosexuality, namely those of Attila Richard Lukacs and Evergon, noting throughout the article personal, historical and art historical references in their works.

Miller suggests that "Evergon's photo-based works and Lukacs's paintings depict images of gay sexuality without the intention of constructing an arena for political discourse."<sup>51</sup> For Miller, there is an "accidental" subversion resulting from the apolitical intent of the artists, a reading that contests the political nature of gay sexuality.<sup>52</sup> Any artist aware of the silenced lineage of gay sexuality and given the historical references in their works, Lukacs and Evergon are not exceptions - cannot expect overt representations of gay sexuality *not* to construct an arena for political discourse. The eagerness of the two artists to display gay sexuality is in itself a transgression of what Leo Bersani has called "a certain refusal to speak frankly about gay sex."<sup>53</sup>

Lack of political intent is something that Miller sees as a commonality between Evergon and Lukacs. He states:

Lukacs and Evergon although employing strategies of recovery side-step painterly heroism by incorporating humour and kitsch into their images, severing their work from the authoritative signification of historical icons. Furthermore, when this patriarchal domain is placed in a gay-male context, they position themselves as

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<sup>51</sup>Miller 23.

<sup>52</sup>Please see Richard Easton's "Canonical Criminalizations: Homosexuality, Art History, Surrealism and Abjection," *differences* 4.3 (1992): 133-175, for a discussion of this fact, especially pages 137-147.

<sup>53</sup>Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43 (1987): 221.

outsiders from the "system."... So, how may their art production, as I have suggested, be seen as political?<sup>54</sup>

How can positioning oneself outside the system *not* be seen as political?

Miller notes Evergon's assertion that "showing work is more propaganda than doing it," an observation made during an interview between Evergon and Penny Cousineau.<sup>55</sup> While Evergon may not intend to be political when he makes work, he is aware of its entrance into political discourse as soon as it is shown. Evergon seems clear on the pedagogical inscription of performative acts once they enter public discourse. Miller does, in the end, state that their work "attests that private fantasies become politically charged when they are removed from the insular security of artists' studios and placed in a more vulnerable public position."<sup>56</sup> Thus, Miller too is aware of the increasing fugue of the performative and pedagogical in the "publication" of positions that do not adhere to normative gender stereotyping. Through this fugue, the way is forged for alternate identities to be constructed in and through representations such as those by Lukacs and Evergon.

However, Miller's work lacks an explicit critical questioning of how the cultural codes used in Lukacs' and Evergon's works have come to represent gay male sexuality over time. Such a questioning is in effect what Folland attempted to do with his exhibition catalogue (in my opinion, successfully), rather than paralleling Miller's text which unproblematically presents the signifiers of gay male sexuality. It seems the implicit essentialism in Miller's text is what Folland was hoping to avoid.

Conversely, Sorfleet's utopian desire is for a gay art history that does not conform to such essentialism. He states:

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<sup>54</sup>Miller 26

<sup>55</sup>Penny Cousineau, "Evergon: An Interview," *Photo Communique* (1982): n.p., in Miller 26.

<sup>56</sup>Miller 26.

My call for a local gay history was not about surrendering to a colonizing project by contributing to an essentialist and universalist narrative, but rather to write narratives based on locality - in the localness of making history.<sup>57</sup>

It seems, then, that the discrepancy between what Sorfleet wants and what Folland wrote is an argument over what constitutes one's locality, how one theorizes one's own history. The discrepancy between these two men's opinions of what constitutes writing a gay art history points to a key aspect of gay and lesbian studies: what Simon Watney has called the "unhelpful and unconvincing notion of a single gay community."<sup>58</sup> Similar to "the crisis of the other woman" in feminism, the discussion between Folland and Sorfleet points to "the crisis of the other gay man." In this way, their debate in *C Magazine* chronicles a central aspect in contemporaneous queer theory debates. Folland's and Sorfleet's discussion reads as a time-delayed conversation in *C Magazine*. Without many references (none in Sorfleet's case) to other gay studies' works, Folland's article along with Sorfleet's and Earl Miller's seem akin to the performative - with regard to sexuality. There is a clear acknowledgement of other published texts about art history in their articles but references to a pedagogy of sexual identity are few and far between.

As well, these articles foreground (through their lack) "the crisis of the other gay" as it is evolving by the early nineties elsewhere: the difference in theorizing sexuality between the genders. Across the continent, a plethora of events occurred (such as the "Conference on Homosexuality" at Yale University in October of 1989; the "How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video" conference at the Anthology Film Archives in New York City, also in October of 1989; the foundation of Queer Nation in 1990; the foundation in April 1991, of the Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies at the City University of New York; and a "working conference on theorizing lesbian and gay sexualities" at the University of Santa Cruz in February of 1990). Many of these events produced anthologies or journal

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<sup>57</sup>Sorfleet, "On History" 11.

<sup>58</sup>Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and the Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 25, in Folland, n.p.

volumes.<sup>59</sup> Subsequent questions about "the respective and/or common grounding of current discourses and practices of homo-sexualities in relation to gender and to race"<sup>60</sup> were being pondered.

These questions are conspicuously absent from *C Magazine's* contributions to gay studies. The only articles therein that deal with sexual identities - Folland's, Sorfleet's and Miller's - discuss male homosexuality, not lesbianism. Nor do they address issues of race or ethnicity. Emergent in *C* is a distinctly white, male homosexuality, which by 1991, when these articles were published, denotes a chasm between *C Magazine* and the currents of contemporary theories of identity. Conversely, *Parachute*, while also *en retard* in the publication of articles about sexuality at all (the first being in 1992),<sup>61</sup> seems to have attempted to "catch up" in terms of gender and race, owing in large part to the work of Laura U. Marks ("Nice Gun You Got There" and "Sexual Hybrids: From Oriental Exotic to Postcolonial Grotesque"), of Susan Douglas ("Slave and Master: Picturing the Politics and Poetics of S/M") and of Lisa Brown ("Transsexuality: Crossing Over or Becoming").

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<sup>59</sup>Yale's conference resulted in the publication two years later of *Inside/Out*, ed. Diana Fuss, (New York: Routledge, 1991); "How Do I Look?" produced *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, eds. Bad Object-Choices, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991); foundation of the CLAGS at CUNY brought about the publication of *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures*, ed. Martin Duberman, (New York: NYU Press, 1997); and, the University of Santa Cruz's conference resulted in *differences'* special issue, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities," 3.2 (1991).

<sup>60</sup>Teresa de Lauretis, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities, an Introduction," *differences* 3.2 (1991): iii.

<sup>61</sup>In 1991, *Parachute* published an article about the work of gay artist Micah Lexier (Jerry McGrath, "A Sense of Measure," *Parachute* 61 (1991): 43-46), but its noticeable disinterest in the sexual specificity of Lexier's work has led me to leave it outside the main body of my text. Noting at one point that "[i]n these works it is a gay sexuality that comes to the fore," McGrath suggests that sexuality may be looked at as an "appetite of developed tastes....at least in its mature phase, beyond initial hormonal compulsions," 45. To me, this is evidence of what Leo Bersani has called a "certain refusal to speak frankly about gay sex." Bersani, as in note 52, 221.

Interestingly, and regardless of their particular topics of discussion, *Parachute's* articles are written by women, as opposed to the three by men published in *C Magazine*. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, writing by feminists on lesbian experience has affected shifting discourses of sexuality. At that point in the text, there was not a clear distinction made between lesbian and gay studies; but, if one re-reads the early books and articles in gay studies, it will become clear that they are pre-eminently concerned with male homosexuality. A parallel survey of texts was published in Teresa de Lauretis' "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities, an Introduction,"<sup>62</sup> which explicitly draws attention to the contrast of early (1971-85) studies of homosexuality with later inquiries such as Steven Epstein's "Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity," (1987)<sup>63</sup> and the anthology *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (1989).<sup>64</sup>

De Lauretis asserts that "the discourse of white gay historiography and sociology, which added women on as an afterthought, with little or no understanding of female socio-sexual specificity, developed separately from the printed discourse on white lesbianism."<sup>65</sup> Apparently *C Magazine* has not found the addition of "lesbian" to gay studies, or the separate discourse of (white) lesbianism, noteworthy. Similarly, *Parachute* did not, during the years under study in this thesis, devote any single article to lesbianism specifically. While these two journals may be unprepared to "authorize" lesbian experience in their pages, *Parachute* has, at the very least, tipped its hat to queer theory.

De Lauretis juxtaposes the term "queer" to "lesbian and gay," intending to problematize, and possibly transgress and transcend the ideological liabilities of the

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<sup>62</sup>de Lauretis iii.

<sup>63</sup>Steven Epstein, "Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity: the Limits of Social Constructionism," *Socialist Review* 17.3-4 (1987): 9-54.

<sup>64</sup>Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and Georg Chauncey Jr., eds., *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (1989), in de Lauretis iv.

<sup>65</sup>de Lauretis iv.

discursive distinctions of lesbian and gay "life-styles, sexualities, sexual practices, communities, issues [and] publications."<sup>66</sup> "Queer," in not adhering to any one given term, avoids the essentializing characteristics of gay identity politics. Elizabeth Grosz writes:

[T]he question of sexual difference is at the very heart of lesbian and gay theory and politics; while the proliferation of "queer" is bound to include bisexuality, heterosexual transvestitism, transsexualism, and sado-masochistic heterosexuality.<sup>67</sup>

It is through the publication of Susan Douglas's and Lisa Brown's articles, that *Parachute* has (even if cursorily) acknowledged the advent of queer theory.

In Douglas's "Slave and Master: Picturing the Politics and Poetics of S/M" (*Parachute*, 1994), the abject culture of those for whom "s/m is obscene ecstasy" is explored. Douglas describes s/m as "an object, a bodily gesture that is at the same time an utterance, a statement that reflects a mental pose.... [It] denotes a commitment to a political philosophy articulated on disavowal."<sup>68</sup> The contestatory strategy of the s/m politic, according to Douglas, is indicative of "a place for the continuous (re)negotiation of subject positions and gender performances, and a process of continuous transformative work on the social and cultural environment."<sup>69</sup> This ongoing renegotiation and transformation suggests the role of the performative on shifting the construction of the pedagogical.

Her text provides examples of artists who practice or expose s/m practices, such as Robert Mapplethorpe, the Kiss & Tell collective, Attila Richard Lukacs and Della Grace. While her theorizing of s/m experience and display is defined by its political agency to negotiate subject positions, Douglas evades any clear-cut definition of characteristics of s/m

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<sup>66</sup>de Lauretis v.

<sup>67</sup>Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 249-250 n.

<sup>68</sup>Douglas 29.

<sup>69</sup>Douglas 30.

practice. Perhaps she intends this. However, some of her examples do not clearly characterize s/m practice. She cites, for instance, Della Grace's *Three Butches* (1992); a replacement of the more traditional *Three Graces* with three women with shaved heads, focussed stares, ripped jean shorts and army boots. Douglas states that "[i]ndexed as sex radicals by means of their vestimentary and sartorial (dis)array, the three transgressors charge the space of the representation."<sup>70</sup> While there may be an implicit relation to the politics of s/m in this image, to a "novice viewer" the "starkly polarized opposition between sex-radical or s/m lesbians and mainstream of cultural-feminist lesbians"<sup>71</sup> is not clear within the picture, nor is it made clear by Douglas's text. Douglas's obfuscation of particularity in her discussion of s/m (although likely the result of her own adherence to a "continuous re-negotiation of subject positions") leaves uninitiated readers in the dark. While this strategic move not to make s/m performance "available" in a pedagogical context may reflect the very politics (and poetics) of s/m, the transgressive possibilities of s/m are undermined by its remaining "out there," ungraspable and therefore unacknowledgeable in any real sense. In order to alter the pedagogical inscription of sexual identities, which as I suggested above, could result from the s/m politic, there has to be a fugue of the pedagogical with the performative. But Douglas's own performance (her text) denies this fugue.

Notwithstanding, Douglas's work is significant in that it does point out some historical antecedents which may affect consumption of s/m practice. She refers here to Isaac Julian's 1992 film *The Attendant*, which "plays out the sadomasochistic fantasies of a black, closed museum attendant through a meditation on a painting."<sup>72</sup> Douglas notes:

Even as his representation of interracial s/m delineates what Teresa de Lauretis once called "a new discursive space and a performative discourse of queer subjectivity,"

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<sup>70</sup>Douglas 31.

<sup>71</sup>de Lauretis viii

<sup>72</sup>Douglas 31-32.

he makes present that, for men and women of colour, queer or not, s/m can carry the memory of imperialism.<sup>73</sup>

The power play between sexual and racial identities exposed here is also marginally explored in Lisa Brown's "Transsexuality: Crossing Over or Becoming" (*Parachute*, 1992), which investigates in part, Jennie Livingston's 1991 film about "Harlem fags, transvestites, and transexuals," *Paris is Burning*. Brown's text, however, focusses primarily on theoretical, practical and cultural aspects of transsexuality. Using the works of Foucault, as well as Deleuze and Guattari, Brown puts forth a theory of "becoming" in terms of sexual identity: "Becoming is not a masquerade....The plane of consistency is not a pre-existent space, it is in a constant state of flux."<sup>74</sup> This idea of becoming, described lucidly in Brown's text is representative of the pedagogical/performative fugue which is conversely denied in Douglas's text.

This may in part be due to a difference in subject matter, since transsexuality can be a reinforcer of gender stereotypes. The most salient point in Brown's essay explores this reinforcement through the "transsexual experience." She states:

A common goal for many transsexuals is full integration into society. For the most part these people choose to identify themselves as women first, transsexuals second. Consequently, the process of transition is perceived as a limited journey between two points. The paradox of this gender transgression is that it can reinforce the idea that there are only two genders, each with a corresponding sex.<sup>75</sup>

While noting that there are transsexuals for whom the process is an ongoing transformation (what Brown has after Deleuze and Guattari called "becoming") she also lays bare the role of medical discourse in the reification of gender/sex binarisms as they appear in the above-quoted tract. "Medical caretakers....protect our cultural notions of the relations of genitalia and gender role."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Douglas 32.

<sup>74</sup>Brown 37.

<sup>75</sup>Brown 38.

<sup>76</sup>Brown 38.

Brown's focus on medical discourse in the first section of her text points to its role in the pedagogical inscription of gendered and sexed identities. This is an issue taken up in a different way by Jim Drobnick in "In Pieces, Of Pieces" (*Parachute*, 1992). Drobnick's text, which addresses Robert Gober's work around the body, takes up the discourse of AIDS and the performance of mourning. As noted earlier in this chapter, the advent of the AIDS epidemic has highlighted the role of representation in the construction of sexual identities. As such, artists and critics alike have made inquiries into the cultural mapping of disease within homosexuality.

Gober's body part sculptures in wax "mirror the human loss in the community" according to Drobnick.<sup>77</sup> And yet at the same time they react to the media and government discourses that blame homosexual promiscuity for AIDS, and vilify the gay man's anus, as Tom Folland has written. Drobnick states:

Contrary to the rabid and sadistic scrutiny placed on the gay, male body because of AIDS, and the moralistic use of the physical deterioration of the PWA as a metaphor of - and punitive retribution for - the "sin" of homosexuality, the explicit homoeroticism and humour recuperates the male body from the fear it manifests in the popular imagination.<sup>78</sup>

This excerpt, and Drobnick's text more generally, is representative of a trend in recent queer theory to focus on AIDS discourse as an object of inquiry. Partially informed by activism, and partially informed by theoretical currents such as post-structuralism and Foucauldian discourse theory, as well as deconstructive reading practices, there is an increasing awareness of how AIDS and HIV status are imbricated in the construction of identity.<sup>79</sup> Borrowing heavily from a wealth of recent writing on AIDS and sexual identity

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<sup>77</sup>Drobnick 13.

<sup>78</sup>Drobnick 14.

<sup>79</sup>Some recent texts include Douglas Crimp, ed., "AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism," special issue *October* 43 (1987); Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, eds., *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art and Contemporary Cultures* (Montreal: Véhicule, 1993); Diana Fuss, ed., "IV: Acting Up: AIDS, Allegory, Activism," *Inside/Out* (New York: Routledge, 1991) 291-372; and, in *Parachute*, Anne Whitelaw's "Exhibiting AIDS," 73 (1994): 53-55, which, as its title suggests, discusses the complexities

(such authors as Simon Watney, Greg Bordowitz, Richard Dyer and Judith Butler), Drobnick's text contributes to a growing pedagogy of sexual identity that is affected and informed by the acts and gestures of artists and activists alike. This text therefore connotes a fugue of the pedagogical and the performative.

The investigation of the cultural codes brought to the fore by the discourse on AIDS has as well underscored the role of representation in the construction of identity yet again. John Greyson, an artist and critic, has produced work which examines cultural codes, while at the same time performing an implicit critique of representation. In "Nice Gun You Got There" (*Parachute*, 1992), Laura U. Marks discusses his *oeuvre*.

Marks investigates how Greyson attempts to destabilize the "contemporary project of masculinity" - and his subversion is anything but accidental. For Marks, "[c]ritiques of masculinity confront the broad cultural abstraction of the masculine with the particularity of the body, revealing how masculinity is constructed in specific times and places."<sup>80</sup> In essence, a destabilization of "the masculine prerogative of anonymity and asexuality" ensues from such critiques. Greyson, according to Marks, strategizes to overwhelm categorizations of masculinity and sexuality.<sup>81</sup> The critique of representation in Greyson's film and video is integral to the political and ideological critique he makes of constructed identities.

Marks's discussion of Greyson's varied works investigates many of the ways in which his "anti-narratives" expose and undermine sexual stereotyping. Among these is

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of exhibiting representations of people with AIDS. Since this article does not take specific issue with the construction of gay identity, it is not discussed in the main body of this text. Also, for an extensive bibliography of sources about AIDS and representation, please see Craig Owens, "Course Bibliography on Visual AIDS," *Beyond Recognition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 358-366.

<sup>80</sup>Marks, "Nice Gun" 28. Two relevant, recent texts on the construction of masculinity are: Andrew Perchuk and Helaine Posner, eds., *The Masculine Masquerade: Masculinity and Representation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994) and Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson, eds., *Constructing Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>81</sup>Marks, "Nice Gun" 28.

*Urinal*, a piece that "assembles a motley crew of artists, active in the 1930s, who were thought to be gay or lesbian, to investigate washroom sex arrests."<sup>82</sup> In discussing his imperatives for constructing this film, Greyson stated:

I wanted the film to serve as an explicit challenge to the essentialism of some gay history which unproblematically claims such artists as les/gay heroes. I also wanted their closeted/bisexual status to mirror the reality of the men often caught in washroom busts, men who are often not any part of what we (again problematically) call a gay community.<sup>83</sup>

Here, Greyson's words remind one of Folland's and Watney's assertions about essentializing a gay history and allude to those contemporaneous debates within gay and lesbian studies mentioned earlier. As well, his incorporation of famed artist into his own production connotes the ongoing layering of performative gestures, eventually culminating in an altered pedagogy of sexual identity.

In her essay on Greyson's work, Laura Marks draws attention to the particular ways in which he deconstructs the production of cultural identities. For instance, in *The Making of Monsters* "the privileged signifier is hockey, not, for example, football."<sup>84</sup> Heraldizing Greyson's "authority of the local," Marks explains how the subtle distinctions in the ways people experience reality do not necessarily, when re-told, allow an outsider to better relate those experiences to their own (as Andrew Sorfleet might have it). In fact Greyson's use of his cultural specificity - being Canadian - works in quite the opposite way. Marks writes:

Greyson's insistence on local references mobilizes particularity against universality. The details are not fetishized as "Canadiana" so much as made illegible to the outside observer, signifiers of irreducible experience that cannot be

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<sup>82</sup>Marks, "Nice Gun" 31.

<sup>83</sup>John Greyson in Marks, "Nice Gun" 31. Please see also, John Greyson, "Security Blankets: Sex, Video and the Police," *Queer Looks*, eds. Martha Gever, John Greyson and Pratibha Parmar, (New York: Routledge, 1993): 383-394.

<sup>84</sup>Marks, "Nice Gun" 29.

translated....Specific references rail, in insistent little voices, against the abstraction and universality upon which masculinity depends.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, the viewer is confronted with his/her difference from Greyson, even though s/he may share some aspect of identity with him. This is a function of both Greyson's attention to specific Canadian content as well as his assumptions that viewers will be familiar with gay content. For Marks "the gay activist content is like the "Canadian" content: by assuming a certain vocabulary, it privileges certain viewers and makes the rest aware that their universe is shaped differently."<sup>86</sup> This is a key moment in Marks' text which points to an important aspect of the fugue of the performative and the pedagogical. While they may dance together, within the realm of sexual identity, the performative is always distinct from the pedagogical in that the former's specificity cannot be completely assimilated by the latter.

This different shaping of universes within queer circles is not only the result of sexual positionings. Much as Greyson highlights the role of national identity in subject constitution, recent postcolonial theory has foregrounded "location" as a key factor in the construction of identity.<sup>87</sup> A focus on race and ethnicity in venues such as the "Queer Theory" issue of *differences*<sup>88</sup> is symptomatic of the crossover of identity interrogations in racial, ethnic and sexual spheres occurring of late.

While race and ethnicity were exempt from *C Magazine's* publication of articles about gay art practice and theorizing, *Parachute* has been more inclusive in its own

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<sup>85</sup>Marks, "Nice Gun" 29.

<sup>86</sup>Marks, "Nice Gun" 32.

<sup>87</sup>A good anthology of postcolonial writing is *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, eds. Russell Ferguson et al., (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Cambridge, Mas.: MIT Press, 1990).

<sup>88</sup>Of particular interest in this issue are: Tomas Almaguer's "Chicano Men: A Cartography of Homosexual Identity and Behaviour," 75-100, and Ekua Omosupe's "Black/Lesbian/Bulldagger," 101-11; both *differences* 3.2 (1991). Also noteworthy is Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* (Freedom, CA.: The Crossing Press, 1984).

pedagogy of queer theory. To attempt to see the articles published in *Parachute* as representative of an overall position taken by the magazine vis-à-vis sexual identity is troublesome as they are still few and far between and do not form any sort of cohesive unity in their pedagogy. For instance, regarding the crossover of race, ethnicity and sexuality, there has been little more than a hint in articles such as Lisa Brown's "Transsexuality," or Susan Douglas's "Slave and Master," or even in Marks' "Nice Gun You Got There." The issue of race is by and large left undiscussed with the exception of Laura Marks' "Sexual Hybrids: From Oriental Exotic to Postcolonial Grotesque" (*Parachute*, 1993)

In the latter article, Marks explains (following Edward Said and Homi Bhabha) how politically powerful entities have historically defined themselves through exclusion and through a definition of others as their opposites. The two arenas with which she takes issue in this informative piece are that of sexuality and that of Orientalism. Marks describes Orientalism as "a way of consolidating the identity and power of the West by constructing the so-called East as an object of Western knowledge, a place that is both threateningly other and reassuringly comprehensible."<sup>89</sup> Similarly, she describes the setting up of notions of sexual deviance as a reassurance of the normalcy of one's own sexuality. Discussing a group of artists who are all "Oriental" (this including Asian, Indian and Middle Eastern identities), Marks explores how they redefine their subjectivities through video interventions that address issues of sexuality, colonialism and Orientalism. The Orientalism to which Marks refers was theorised as such in Edward Said's key text of 1978, *Orientalism*.<sup>90</sup> A Foucault-influenced volume, *Orientalism* marked the earliest problematization of the East/West binarism through a detailed analysis of how the discourse of imperialism functioned to construct such a binarism.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 22.

<sup>90</sup>Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

In "Sexual Hybrids," Marks draws on Asian-Canadian Richard Fung's 1986 videotape *Chinese Characters*. In it, Fung exposes the construction of Asian homosexuality in "mainstream" gay porn. What Marks makes clear is that through Fung's enlistment of "semi-fictional gay Asian protagonists to find images that speak to their desire," normative stereotyping in gay porn is laid bare.<sup>92</sup> When looking for their objects of desire, the gay Asian protagonists invariably find images which require them to identify with white men. "Thus in trying to express themselves as gay, they had to express themselves as white."<sup>93</sup> Fung has written elsewhere of the feminization of Asian men, their objectification as invariably "passive sexual objects of white men" in the few North

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<sup>91</sup>An interesting study which also looks at the construction of otherness in terms of the carnival and the grotesque is Allon White and Peter Stallybrass, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1986). Laura Marks refers to this article on page 24 of "Sexual Hybrids." Some influential authors in postcolonial studies are: Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Trinh T. Minh-ha. Both *Screen* and *October* were among important journals in the dissemination of articles by these authors. In 1983, *Screen* published Bhabha's influential essay "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," while *October* published his "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in 1984, and his "Sly Civility,"<sup>91</sup> in 1985. Before Spivak's 1987 publication, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, her "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" was published in *Critical Inquiry* in 1985.<sup>91</sup> Trinh Minh-ha's writing was published in *October* in 1991 ("Documentary Is/Not a Name"), as well as in the journal *Discourse* in 1986-87 ("She, The Inappropriate/d Other") and 1989 ("(Un)Naming Cultures"). As well, she is the author of numerous books, including *Woman Native Other* (1989).<sup>91</sup> Similarly, the works of many black cultural critics have been important to the development of contemporary postcolonial theory. Cornel West and Stuart Hall come to mind, as well as bell hooks, Michele Wallace and Kobena Mercer - all prolific writers. *October* published West's important essay "The New Cultural Politics of Difference," and Stuart Hall's "The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities," both in 1990. That same year, bell hooks' *Yearning: Race Gender and Cultural Politics*, and Michelle Wallace's *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* were published. Kobena Mercer's more recent study, *Welcome to The Jungle*, (New York: Routledge, 1994) is one that distinctly takes on sexuality in conjunction with colonial and race issues. His chapter "Black Masculinity and the Politics of Race," outlines the doublebind faced by gay black men in contemporary culture.

<sup>92</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 25.

<sup>93</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 25.

American gay pornographic videos that employed Asian actors.<sup>94</sup> The Asian viewer is not constructed as a sexual subject - Fung's videotape is an attempt to "de-naturalize gay sexuality" as it is constructed in pornography and to suggest the possibility of an Asian subjectivity. Marks, in citing Fung's video work and writing, is acknowledging his place within queer theory. Fung's work was published in the germaines anthology of gay and lesbian film and video preproduction, *How Do I Look?* Also, it is noteworthy in magazines such as *Fuse*, and collections of essays such as *Constructing Masculinity*.

As well as Fung's work, Marks spends much of her article examining *Those Fluttering Objects of Desire* (1992), an installation by Shu Lea Cheang based on video pieces by women, mainly women of colour, that deal with their interracial sexual relationships.<sup>95</sup> Cheang's attempt here is to replace the exotic fetish objects of Hollywood movies through a representation of interracial relationships from within: "[W]e reject being labelled 'exotic' and attempt to re-define the term "erotic.""<sup>96</sup> The fixed fetish object is replaced with a fluttering object of desire. All of these performative pieces transgress traditional pedagogical constructions of identity construction in such a way as to draw attention to "how the very repression that constituted the identity of the colonized, also made possible the separate identity of the colonizer."<sup>97</sup> In fact, they particularly highlight how a colonialist pedagogy has historically erased performative inscriptions of sexual identity.

Pratibha Parmar's *Khush* (1991) similarly examines the crossover of discourses of sexuality with the construction of non-Western identities. Marks explains that "*Khush* tells

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<sup>94</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 25. Richard Fung's article on this subject is "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn," ed. Bad Object-Choices, *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991) 145-168.

<sup>95</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 23.

<sup>96</sup>Shu Lea Cheang in Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 23.

<sup>97</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 24.

how people who are caught between communities that cannot acknowledge them in the fullness of their identity - communities of ethnicity, sexuality, and class - break down those communities' borders."<sup>98</sup> The space created by *Khush* is one in which "naturalized identities briefly come undone", thus dissolving "into a myriad of desires, dangers and possibilities."<sup>99</sup> representative of performative inscriptions of sexual and ethnic identity, *Khush* challenges a colonialist pedagogy. This performative challenge is intertwined in a new pedagogy of sexual (and ethnic) identity through its own layered inscription in Marks' article, published in *Parachute*.

These works, and the others discussed in "Sexual Hybrids," mark the result of the transition from postcolonial object to subject through a refusal of containment - i.e., a resistance against the normative stereotyping of Orientalist and sexist discourses. As Laura Marks has noted, postcolonial subjecthood is theorized at length by Homi Bhabha in his text on writing the nation.<sup>100</sup> Pedagogical inscriptions and performative actions and their fugue, have been a theme running throughout this chapter, as well as Chapter Two, of this thesis. And so, how fitting that the only article published in *C Magazine* or *Parachute* to adequately address the question of race in relation to the construction of sexual identities also refers to Bhabha's performative and pedagogical distinctions.

As has been discussed, *C Magazine's* contribution to gay studies, while signalling certain debates about "gay community" and "gay history," represents only the voices of three men. Archived in *C's* pages are their works - hardly representative of the recent trends in queer theory. *Parachute*, on the other hand, has more fully compensated for what has been, in both their cases, a late entry into the production and dissemination of literature on alternate sexualities. Nevertheless, the infrequency of articles pertaining to issues of

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<sup>98</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 29.

<sup>99</sup>Marks, "Sexual Hybrids" 29.

<sup>100</sup>Homi K Bhabha, "DissemiNation," ed. Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, (New York: Routledge, 1990) 291-322.

sexuality suggests there is no clear political agenda vis-à-vis gay, lesbian and other sexualities in *Parachute*. The absence of a clear political agenda in *Parachute* connotes an incertitude on its part as to whether issues of sexuality are integral to its character as an art magazine in the early nineties. In *C Magazine's* case, the overwhelming lack of articles incorporating gay and lesbian studies and/or queer theory is suggestive of its own political agenda. Perhaps more accurately, it suggests that a preference for certain writers outweighs any overall political agenda or commitment. In fact, the type of gay studies published in *C's* pages begs the question of why, when there is a vast array of queer theory being produced contemporaneously elsewhere, have only these authors been validated in its pages?

## Conclusion

### A Performative Pedagogy of Difference

Kobena Mercer has written that "[p]olitically, identities are in crisis because traditional sources of membership and belonging inscribed in relations of class, party, nation and state have been called into question." He also writes that the prevailing name for this predicament, intellectually, is postmodernism.<sup>1</sup> The first chapter of this thesis noted the pervasive influence of postmodernism in Canadian artwriting especially as it was published in *C Magazine* and *Parachute*. So too did it draw attention to the distinct ways in which these two journals adopted (primarily French) postmodern theory. *Parachute*, in its early years being predominantly a magazine by and for a francophone constituency, published the works of influential authors (increasingly by the mid-eighties, in both languages). *C Magazine* published major theoretical articles dealing self-reflexively with Canadian and American uses of that theory - in English only.

The second chapter examined more extensively the intersection of feminism and post-structuralism in the discourse of "essence," as it is foregrounded in feminist articles from *C Magazine* and *Parachute*. Noting here the long and evolving history of essentialism within feminist debates, feminism's two crises of identity were explored: the crisis of "Woman," and the crisis of the "other" woman. Highlighted in this chapter were the differences and similarities in *Parachute's* and *C's* respective ways of putting forth critical feminism as it developed throughout the eighties and into the nineties. In particular, *Parachute's* interest in (psychoanalytic) deconstruction as a method of inquiry in the mid-eighties was contrasted with *C Magazine's* more cursory acknowledgement and use of these theories. By the early nineties, however, both journals were shown to be in sync with the contemporary vanguard of feminist theorizing. The strategic deployment of

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<sup>1</sup>Kobena Mercer, "'1968': Periodizing Politics and Identity," *Welcome to the Jungle* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 287.

essentialism as theorized by Diana Fuss and Gayatri Spivak, among others, was underscored in both *C Magazine* and *Parachute* at that time.

The increased focus on specificities within gender groups that evolved through the crises in feminism were partially responsible for an emerging questioning of the "nature" and construction of sexual identities. The third chapter of this thesis presented a brief overview of the emergence of gay and lesbian studies in the 1980s, and their evolution in the nineties, in certain places, into queer theory. Through the lense of these historical developments, articles from *Parachute* and *C Magazine*, dealing with issues of sexual identity were analysed. The dialogue around gay art production and "gay art history" as it was manifested in *C Magazine* was shown to be reflective of the larger discourse around the problematic notion of "gay community." Similarly, the lack in *C* of a specifically lesbian articulation of homosexuality was representative of what Teresa de Lauretis has called the addition of women "as an afterthought" to the "discourse of white gay historiography and sociology ... with little or no understanding of female socio-sexual specificity."<sup>2</sup> The advent of queer theory in the larger arena of political sexual discourse, was also outlined in conjunction with *Parachute's*, limited display of its politically transgressive possibilities. *C Magazine's* exclusion and *Parachute's* again limited inclusion of articles pertaining to the intersecting discourses of race, colonialism and sexuality were also considered.

This exploratory study of how feminism, of post-structuralism, queer studies, and postcolonial sexuality - are undertaken within the Canadian art context has demonstrated that the articulation of identity politics in *C Magazine* and *Parachute* is very much based on "undone" identities. The role of practice (activism, writing, artmaking), heralded as influential throughout this thesis, has also been foregrounded in a pervasive accentuation of performative and pedagogical aspects of identity formation. The fugue of the performative

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<sup>2</sup>Teresa de Lauretis, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities, an introduction," *differences* 3.2 (1991): iv.

and the pedagogical in those articles "producing" identities in *Parachute* and *C Magazine* should be clear, as should the transformative role of this fugue on the construction of new subject positions, through the layered re-inscriptions of identity by artists' and writers' performative acts being (at times) turned into pedagogical formations. It is here that the notion of *C Magazine* as primarily an archive and only incidentally a magazine is important.<sup>3</sup> While *Parachute's* theoretically dense texts are for the most part a representation of theories validated elsewhere, this is only the case with *C* some of the time. Conversely, the writing of, for example, Carol Laing, Tom Folland and Andrew Sorfleet, calls attention to the importance of the performative, and at the same time underscores the individuality of their positions within larger discourses. As evidenced by these magazines, communications is most relevant to the construction of identities in Canada, once again confirming that the Canadian situation is distinguished by the "extent to which communications is an intellectual and institutional concern."<sup>4</sup> Both the "archived" performative and the "published" pedagogical in *C Magazine* and *Parachute* together demonstrate the important role of these magazines in, to paraphrase Bhabha, *writing this nation*.

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<sup>3</sup>Lon Dubinsky, "Canadian Visual Art Magazines as Cultural Formations," Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, 1991, 116.

<sup>4</sup>Dubinsky 1.

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