

TALKING— A HABIT

is a series of informal lectures/discussions sponsored by A Space in Toronto and organized by Christina Ritchie. "Arguments Within the Toronto 'Avant-Garde'" is the fifth text to appear here and is from the presentation January 19th at the Rivoli by Philip Monk, a Toronto critic. "Fuck You's, I'm Going to Bingo" was staged February 16 by an ad hoc group of ten Toronto feminist cultural producers (their names are listed at the head of the text.) It's interesting to note that both of these presentations started out as responses to things that had been said earlier in the series. In the "Letters" section of this issue there are some other responses. The editors invite the continuation of this discussion.

ARGUMENTS WITHIN THE TORONTO "AVANT-GARDE"

BY PHILIP MONK

I intended to talk, originally, on the politics of theory: the politics of representation and the representation of politics in art and theory. Now, however, given recent polemics and polarities, I have changed the lecture to the above title.

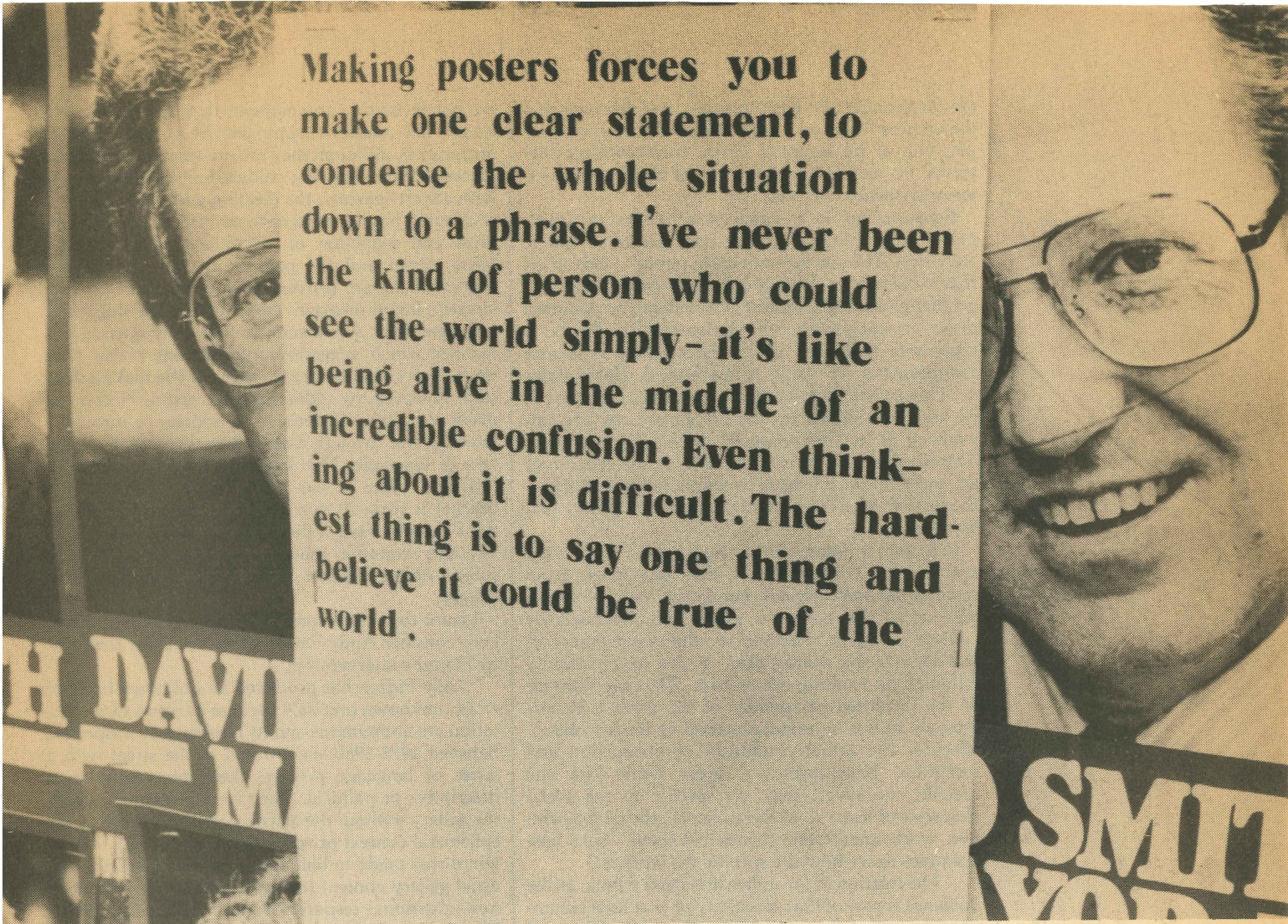
I want to take the idea of this series at its word, as an informal discussion that hopefully becomes a habit. Rather than one more specialized presentation that puts discussion at an end and becomes an object of consumption for a privileged community whose competency can register the effects — transgressive or otherwise — of the performance (and which therefore remains a formalism), I want to engage the different gears of these talks, to bring them into contact in order that this debate keeps moving. This series and the one sponsored by YYZ express a need in this community for response to work and, perhaps not so clearly, for discussion to develop relevant to the issues of *this* community. Most of us have the experience of acting in a vacuum. Without this response and discussion there can be no real critical edge to our discussion, no identification of the issues relevant to this community and hence no theory adequate to these issues.

As with so many other things, these issues and terms come to us from elsewhere, ready formed for application. There is a whole apparatus of investment operating here supporting the rhetoric of this fetish object of the "always ready there". Put into a new

context for us, it is divorced from its own. This discourse comes from a particular theoretical conjuncture which is absent to us and which is inflected, invested and determined by specific socio-economic and institutional political conditions, as well as personal rivalries. Theory then is accompanied by a politics of theory. Separated from its conditions of origin and production as we are here in Canada, we do not recognize its politics. When it is disseminated or imported here the politics that surround its production are absent, except to an attentive ear that hears the force of certain insistences. But, as well, an equally disguised politics is still there within the work in the imputation of modes of action and positions for the reader or viewer. It is this combination of import, position and representation by repetition (the attempt to make what is local congruent with what is happening elsewhere or consistent with another historical intention) that I wish to address here.

My lecture could be subtitled "Letters to the Editor" because I wish to respond to the lectures already published in *Parallelogramme* and the immediate response to at least one of them through an editorial in *Fuse* magazine. I want to draw out issues across all these presentations and responses. Through this maybe we can identify the issues important to us without closing the discussion.

First, I want to take a look at Tim Guest's lecture entitled "Intolerance: (The Trouble with Social



Making posters forces you to make one clear statement, to condense the whole situation down to a phrase. I've never been the kind of person who could see the world simply - it's like being alive in the middle of an incredible confusion. Even thinking about it is difficult. The hardest thing is to say one thing and believe it could be true of the world.

Realism)¹. The title, among other things, expresses, according to Tim Guest, "our continuing inability to generate a clear discussion of a relationship between art and (left) politics without descending into sectarian and personalized arguments and stalemate." The issue then is the relation between art and politics. The trouble for Guest is one of proposed solutions — the solution of social realism. But there is as much problem with Guest's presumed solution.

What is Guest's position? He wants to regard art and politics as two schools of thought, each with its own practice and value. On the question of art or politics, he seems to opt for the former, but with qualifications. His procedure seems to follow that of Trotsky whose quotations open and close his lecture. From the point of view of a Marxist revolutionary, Trotsky, in the debates on *proletkult*, Futurism and fellow-travellers during the early '20s, denies a role for the avant-garde in relation to the proletariat and in its name. But as a devotee of art, he reassures us by the second quotation that "Art must make its own way and by its own means."

In between these two quotations we find Tim Guest's problem with political art, or at least socialist or social realism. The problem in origin, not application initially here in Toronto, is basically two-fold. One is the socialist/Marxist "inability to comprehend a value for art, outside of straight-forward militancy". Secondly, and more importantly for

Guest, "it excludes anything which is simply emotional or amorphous or evocative, as well as any ambiguities and contradictions."

Now this is not to contend that Guest has fallen for aesthetic rapture over a political art. Like Trotsky, he suggests "that an internalized understanding of politics can help us analyse and know art; and that a great sensitivity and attention to art can help expand our perspective of politics". Art then would be neither Leninist nor Stalinist, and might open the left to issues of sexuality, for example. We should not be deceived here, however; he still maintains an absolute division between art and politics, or art and political content.

This then briefly is the theory — or at least the trouble as Guest sees it. The examples he proposes as excluded from an overtly political practice, but that have value nonetheless, or are politically effective or expressive in other terms are: Robert Wilson (who "is able to describe in his work dramatic metaphors for profound psychological revelation"), Paul Wong (whose videotape *Prime Cuts* is "the most thoroughly ambivalent work" Guest knows), and Susan Hiller (whose *Monument* makes "an inquiry into the conventions and exclusions of language").

I have a bit of trouble with this myth of profundity, with the belief in effectivity through manipulation of formal or textual operations (thereby changing consciousness), and to exactly where and in whose eyes this contradiction lies, how and to what effect. These

Andy Patton,
Untitled Poster
1978

are the examples he has presented; but there are also the choices of his own curatorial practice, for example, one of his ongoing series, *Interventions*, that shows his particular promotion of the relation between aesthetics and politics:

Interventions is a series of artworks in public places, from public squares and streets to public television. The aim is to put *art* in public — not an art that is didactic or dogmatic, but *art itself*. This is not art that presumes to represent a tendency or assume a direct or representational relation to its audience; it represents itself with “all the esoteric and expansive aspirations of art” as an A Space news release states it.² This art *truly* has its effects, because it is unimpeded and unmediated by the art gallery, by the immediacy of its “intervention” in the public sphere. This art provides an easy solution to the relation of art and politics: it forgets its whole recent history — the history of art’s excursion outside the gallery and its return to it.

It forgets it because in no way does it respect the critical and contextual art that developed from minimalism and early conceptual art, and that set the idea for the very basis of a “public” art. What sets the context or rather reception for the reappearance of this idea is the romanticism of the new painting, although no painting occurs here. The reappearance of the fetishized personality of the artist that corresponds to the “re-materialization of the art object” obscures the actual conditions of production and reception. Nonetheless, “...these works are site specific; moreover, they are specific to the social character of a site — to the audience, the people who live, work or entertain themselves there.” Let’s take examples to see how site specific the work is.

The relation to an audience is most telling, as the audience is part of that specificity or is at least assumed to be out of the good will of the artist. Ulay and Marina Abramovic’s performance, “sitting motionless in a deep state of self-hypnosis” in Toronto City Hall Square, duplicated their performances in many other cities, galleries and spaces. It was not specific to Toronto, but to their overall program. Nor was the audience specified or engaged except in a metaphysical manner. The audience not only is imaginary to them, it is passive. Their explanation is couched in mystical and idealist terms: “Our interest is relation. With our Relation-Work we cause a third existence which carries ‘Vital Energy’. This third energy-existence conjured by us, does not depend on us any longer, but has its own quality which we call ‘That Self’.... Immaterially transmitted energy causes energy as a dialogue, from us as progenitors to the sensibility and mind of a first passive eye-witness, who thus becomes an accomplice.” It seems to me that site specific work belongs to a materialist and not an idealist tradition as expressed here. There is a great difference between materialism that calls for a critique and idealism that supports an aesthetic.

The relation to an audience is part of the conditions of representation. We might want those conditions of representation rather than those of intervention. But this might mean more support for local art which actually and daily inhabits those sites more than the parachuted formal contextualism of international stars.

Jenny Holzer’s posters similarly can be located in any city and within or outside the gallery. The posters

are not specific to any context; they are specific to a genre. The posters occupy the site of street posters and graffiti, although they are on occasion artificially placed and decoratively coloured and assembled. As with advertisements, the meeting with an audience is accidental, but the posters do not take the form of address and seduction of advertising. The language seems direct and the posters *in situ* have all the *bonhomie* of art provera and process art. “Jenny Holzer’s literal messages take the form of slogans or propagandistic statements. In fact, they operate in a manner which suggests contradictions rather than clear, directive statements.” (Guest) We make a decision, however, to address this art just as Holzer has made some type of decision to address us through a *strategy*, not through direct address for all its directness of language. This language work is realized or “effected” only if we formally internalize it and bracket it from its surroundings, set its “contradictions” against itself rather than the social real and the referents around it; that is, only if we return it to the subject-object relation of the work of art in the art gallery.

I want to present something else, something local. Let’s consider Andy Patton’s history rather than Jenny Holzer’s intervention.

“Andy Patton has produced an unknown body of work, unknown precisely because its forms of presentation are anonymous and its mechanisms unspoken. Between 1978-1980, he worked in the street with a series of language posters; their intervention was descriptive or political. They were presented outside the gallery without the artist’s name, grounded in the ephemeral context of xerox street advertising. An attempt was made to blur the semantic markers of the usual gallery context (or sanction) and to provoke a non-intentional response from an accidental public. The logic of this process eventually abandoned language description for the photographic insertion of a postered site in the site. This extreme of self-representational and self-referential art functioned through the delay of its insertion and differential interruption. But it reflected a nostalgia for the site, a utopian desire for the surface of the world, for a pure productivity in an urban capitalist reality.

“The retreat to the gallery that the A Space work (four “advertising” light boxes displayed in the gallery) implies is only recognition that while language may be effaced in production it still provides the context of a work. And it recognizes that only by providing for the convention of an audience that the blurring of semantic markers can be realized. Those who were barred from the artist’s earlier intention — the art public that carries a context and history in its head — are the only ones who can make the posters work by means of their rules and infringements.”³

This immediate forgetting of context and history, I think, is reflected in Tim Guest’s lecture in forgetting the context of socialist and social realism — a conflation of work and a telescoping of time that makes everything the black night of Stalinism. But politics and art is more than Stalin or Lenin or Trotsky, Marx and Engels. As Perry Anderson has remarked, almost all the major figures of Western Marxism have made major contributions to aesthetics and cultural studies: Lukács, Adorno, Benjamin, Goldman, Lefebvre, Della Volpe, Marcuse, Sartre, Althusser, Gramsci⁴. So “it’s not simply because Joe Stalin still casts a long

and very dark shadow over political art", or that Marxists cannot "comprehend a value for art, outside of straight-forward militancy". In fact, the history of Western Marxism has shown an over-valuation of art to its detriment of political action.

This forgetfulness also makes us reproduce debates that have already taken place — namely those in Germany in the Thirties on the Marxist literary left between a proletarian reportage art and a critical realism and between modernism and realism. If we wanted to blunt the edge of this debate we could say it was between social and socialist realism. But of course it was much more than this, and it is of critical use to us today. The opposition is not so extreme in the continuing adventures of the dialectic.

How does Tim Guest approach this debate and opposition? To avoid confusion he defines social and socialist realism and makes these distinctions. Socialist realism is a propagandizing memo to party-serving academic artists. Social realism — which Guest leaves to the academics to define more precisely — "is a nebulous category of art having something to do with good intentions towards serving a social cause, and has an overall desire to reflect left-wing opinions. It is distinct from other art in its intentions, its message and its unambiguous look." Moreover, "it is rooted in the conventions and principals of socialist realisms...". In the end socialist and social realism are the same, except the more "up-tempo, better composed, more sophisticated" social realism is the realism that took place outside the U.S.S.R. in the West. What purpose does this strategic confusion serve? I think that it is important to be academic here, to distinguish between social and socialist realism and not between the two of them and something outside that remains art. The "broad parallel development to socialist realism" includes this list of names in the lecture: "Brecht, Steinbeck, Thomas Hart Benton, John Heartfield, Walker Evans and so on." By joining Brecht and Heartfield to Steinbeck and Benton, Guest generally collapses the whole enterprise of the '30s to a "rejection of abstraction in favour of a cartoony sort of realism, as in the pictures of Thomas Hart Benton." The modernist montage and alienation methods of Brecht and Heartfield are equated to the academic realism of Steinbeck and Benton. For a political concern and a similarity of intent in addressing an audience the former techniques become suspect, even though they are formally exemplary in themselves and their relation to an audience. How can we save Brecht and a social or critical realism for us? Every distinction and practice that has been obscured or misrepresented here has to be recovered and brought to light again. What can we learn from this debate and transpose to our situation to provide a grid of questioning of our practices, given our different situation and the means at our disposal?

First, it is not a question of the backwater of socialist realism — that is a red herring. "Socialist realism" was officially established between 1932-34 with the dissolution and centralization of the diverse workers' organizations for art and literature in the U.S.S.R. For many in the Soviet Union, at least in the arts, that imposition was tardy in comparison to the collapse of their own artistic practices during the '20s. The important debates were taking place elsewhere, although they might have been published in the Soviet Union. The advocate of a critical realism,

Georg Lukács dispatched socialist realism under the euphemism "naturalism". His criticism applied equally to social realism and to the modernist works he so vehemently opposed as decadent.

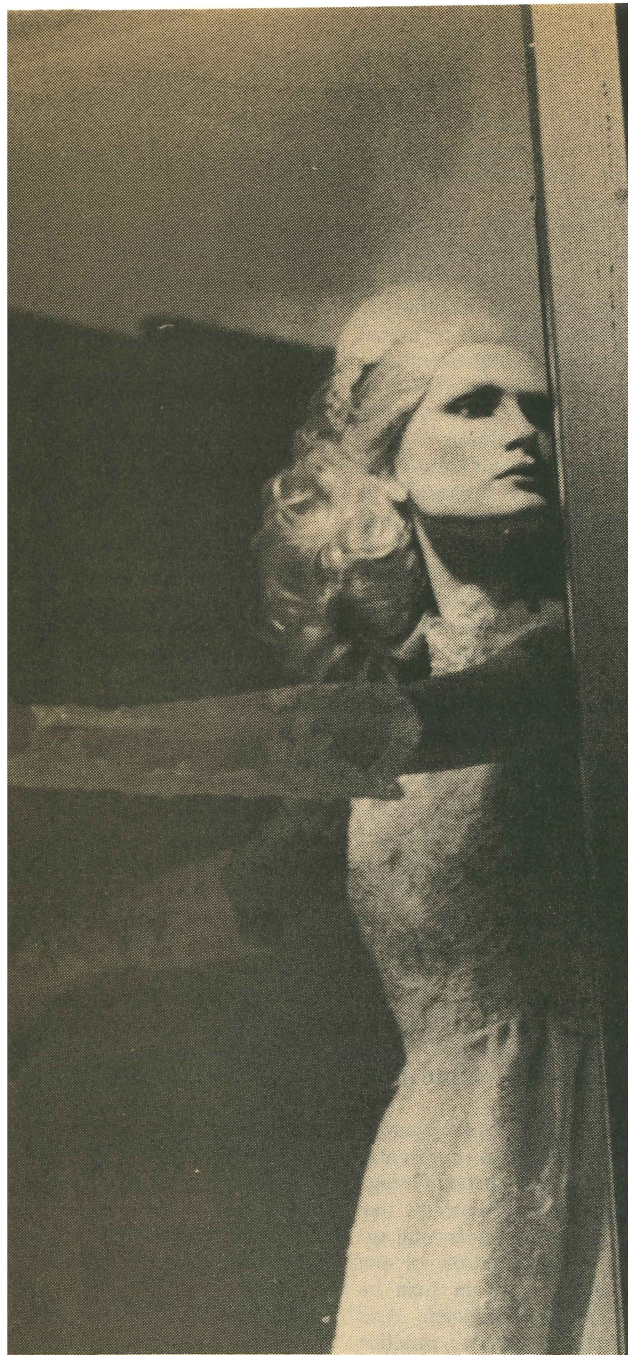
Lukács set the terms of this debate under the heading of realism; and the parts of the debate that are consequential for us are: (1) methods of depiction — montage and documentary reportage techniques, leading to the introduction of new means of technical production and reproduction; and (2) expressionism. These issues were rehearsed through the '30s in a series of articles written or provoked by Lukács' published in Germany and the Soviet Union.

Although the expressionist debate might seem more pertinent at this time, I am more interested in establishing criteria for a realist art. Both socially and politically our situation is different from that of Europe before and between the Wars. We are not at that stage of capital development and capitalist production. What is similar are the aims — the construction of a critical realism (or a new objectivity responding to a changing social situation) — and the formal means — montage, reportage and new technology (then radio and the photo-press). The methods and relations of production that were given to us then in art, and that partially resurfaced and were rearticulated *formally* in the '60s and '70s have been overturned, not surpassed, in a return to pre-World War I forms of art. It seems to me, in the complex reality of the moment, that the archaic form and mystified aesthetic of painting, which signals itself within the history of art, or a "montage" of styles, cannot set the conditions for a return to representation and realism. It is the continuation of modernist montage-reportage techniques — what many call in its present textual-semiotic-photographic form, post-modernism — that for me is best able to adapt itself to new conditions of representation.

Montage/reportage must not be received formally. Anyone anywhere can make a critique of representation or advertising through the juxtaposition of image and text ordered by a received theory. (Semiotics, like its mirror opposite, capitalism, can find its formal application anywhere, in the transvaluation of the local.) Montage/reportage work must in turn be made representational by being localized. And Lukács' arguments against this particular practice must be "dialecticized" so that montage/reportage can take advantage of his critique.

In return to the gallery — or to any communicative *intent* — we must be aware of the *conventions* out of which we work (the social and political conditioning of the gallery was thoroughly investigated in the last ten years, but often only as a *formal* pretext). We must also be aware of the communicative conventions and the special conditions of representation that I defined in *Language and Representation*: "A representational work is doubly directed: the reference towards its referent (the social real) and the representation towards its audience. . . . On one hand, the artist represents (stands for) the referential origin which comes first and serves as subject. On the other, the representation of the work returns to the referent, points to it as subject. . . . The work then mediates and stands between the referent and audience, between production and reception.

"We take advantage of the double sense of



RUIN YOUR FUCKING SELF BEFORE
THEY DO. OTHERWISE THEY'LL
SCREW YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE A
NOBODY. THEY'LL KEEP YOU
ALIVE, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO
CRAWL AND SAY "THANK-YOU" FOR
EVERY BONE THEY THROW. YOU
MIGHT AS WELL STAY DRUNK OR
SHOOT JUNK AND BE A CRAZY
FUCKER. IF THE RICH GUYS WANT
TO PLAY WITH YOU, MAKE THEM
GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY. SEND
THEM AWAY GAGGING, OR
SOBBING IF THEY'RE SOFT-
HEARTED. YOU'LL BE LEFT ALONE
IF YOU'RE FRIGHTENING, AND
DEAD YOU'RE FREE! YOU CAN
CHANGE THE RADIANT CHILD IN
YOU TO A REFLECTION OF THE
SHIT YOU WERE MEANT TO SERVE.

Installation: Jenny Holzer poster at Bay St. and Bloor, Toronto. Photo: Peter Greyson

representation's 'standing for'. Art and politics meet in the word 'representation'; and every artistic production contains a representation of the viewer on the model of political representation. As well, the artist must position himself or herself in relation to what is represented (its choice as subject, the referent and social real), but not authoritatively as the representative spokesman; and he or she must bring that representation about by the relations of the codes of representation among themselves and to the viewer.⁵

In arguing for a critical realism, Lukács criticized both naturalism (or socialist realism) and modernism of the montage/reportage variety. He suggested, as different as they are in form and intent, that they fall to the same criticism: that they uncritically and spontaneously reproduce the surface of things and try to make a political intention (tendency) or added commentary serve as the analysis. Instead, Lukács argued "for dialectics as a literary principle" and "against the theory of spontaneity in literature".⁶ A dialectics is re-

quired "to comprehend the necessary developmental tendencies of the epoch" and in order to find the "methods that best correspond to the problems of the class struggle at the time." For Lukács, this meant the dialectic of form and content found in classical nineteenth century realist novels. He criticized contemporary proletarian novels whose methods — "partly a kind of journalistic reportage, and partly a kind of public speech" did not correspond to the narrative demands. The conceptual element and moral "ought" organizing the narrative could not recreate in an organic portrayal the totalizing content and subjective conflict of the class struggle of the period. With the absence of this dialectic of form and content, this conceptual intention did not connect to the real in any immediate way, nor was it immanent to the artistic structure of the work. In "Realism in the Balance" (1938), Lukács reiterated: "What matters is that the slice of life shaped and depicted by the artist and experienced by the reader should reveal the relations

between appearance and essence without the need of any external commentary." He rejected the left-wing Surrealists' "method of 'inserting' these into scraps of reality with which they have no organic connection."⁷ Naturalism and modernism share this photographic and phonographic slice-of-life matter-of-factness. Not only Surrealism, but Walter Benjamin's allegorical practice and its semiotic photo-textual resurrection today fall to this argument.

In "Reportage or Portrayal?" (1932), Lukács characterizes this work as fetishistic. The reportage novelists could only recognize certain isolated facts, or in the best cases groups of fact— never the contradictory unity-in-process of the totality — and pass moral judgements on these facts." They fetishistically dismember reality and are unable "to see relations between people (class relations) in the 'things' of social life. . . ." "They want the objective to be purely objective, the content pure content, without any dialectical interaction with the subjective and formal factors, and in this way they fail to grasp and give adequate expression to both the objective and the content too. The subjective factor they push aside appears in their work as the unportrayed subjectivity of the author, as a moralizing commentary that is superfluous and accidental, an attribute of the characters that has no organic connection with the plot. And this mechanical and one-sided exaggeration of the content leads to an experiment in form: to the attempt to renew the novel with the means of journalism and reportage."⁸ Moreover, they treat and "objectively" describe reality as ready-made, incapable of change and hence not open to any type of transforming practice. The relative autonomy of these products of history and social relations is made into something absolute.

What individual can achieve that totalizing understanding and expression that Lukács demands for creating a realist work, without knowledge of the overall process, without an understanding of current class relations? Is that available to us at all in our fragmented individual realities, available to us here in Toronto? When locality replaces totality it is possible. Yet it is necessary for us to be aware of the conditions of totality and reification. And it is necessary not to reproduce and legitimize social relations by reifying an autonomous thing-like product in theory or practice. At the same time, it seems to me that it is possible that a fragmentary work (which is what montage/reportage work is, and which all the same is not contradictory) can be realist if it considers its own conditions of legitimation and representation (which are fundamentally different from the notion of production).

In "The Author as Producer" (1934), Walter Benjamin offers another solution in support of montage/reportage: that a political art — and there was no question that art was not political — had to be literarily correct if it was to be politically correct. It was not simply a question of the attitude (hence, tendency) of a work to the relations of production of the time, but its position in them. "This question directly concerns the function the work within the literary relations of production of its time. It is concerned, in other words, directly with the literary *technique* of works." This opens the door for political work for many of us. But, and it is a strong but, there is a "demand not to supply the apparatus of production

without — to the utmost extent possible — changing it. . . ." Any production is a matter of organization as well. All of this is achieved through technical (perhaps formal) innovation. But it is not matter of specialization. Authors and artists must transcend specialization that is the mark of the social division of labour. "The author as producer discovers — in discovering his solidarity with the proletariat — simultaneously his solidarity with certain other producers who earlier seemed scarcely to concern him." Finally the technical and organizational aim is to induce other producers to produce, for example, to make readers writers.⁹

For Benjamin it was not a question of representation — of content or constituencies. It was one of production. Changing institutions, transcending specialization, achieving solidarity with other producers — work on the means of production as well as on the product — are technical not representational questions for him. *We must make every one of these technical and organizational questions also one of representation.* In the end, Benjamin's ideas are predicated on an overvaluation of technical innovation and its effectivity — in other words, a utopian belief in vanguardism. We have only to pay attention to history to see that he was wrong in his estimation of cinema in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936). There he maintained that cinema was automatically a critical and progressive mode for the mass public: "With regard to the screen, the critical and receptive attitudes of the public coincide."¹⁰ For us, this overvaluation ends in McLuhan. This fetishization of the notion of production, organization and distribution is a demand that once more has become a tendency.¹¹

And so under these conditions we come to Clive Robertson's response to Tim Guest's lecture in the November-December 1982 *Fuse*. Although I find the response confused in places — and there is a whole other dynamic working across this text — we find a rehearsal of themes, concerns and demands familiar to Robertson. It is exactly because every one of his themes has to show its face and be attached at any price to a current issue and a name that it is confusing.

Under question initially is "politics as content" as a formal and fashionable theme this year in Toronto: "Attempts to build true political defences are often undermined within the community itself in an effort, one can't help but assume, to keep politics at an arm's length so that it can remain optional as 'content' and not overly demanding as engagement."¹² This lecture series and my original title, "The Politics of Theory", count here as opposed to the real necessity of political organization on class and economic issues. Secondly, more than an opposition between art and tendency, this opposition is attached to a name on one side and a group which becomes a class on the other. On one side is the bureaucratic ideologue and part of a "new self-appointed breed of non-artist/producer administrators, critics, and curators (lumped together as cultural managers)". His second response in the January-February 1983 *Fuse* continues: "The key phrase is 'self-appointed' to which could be added irresponsible (responsible to no one in particular)."¹³ On the other side is the artist or cultural worker who finds class solidarity with the labourer/worker. The opposition is translated into a class conflict.

Generally in Clive Robertson's arguments we find

three issues: (1) self-determination; (2) production/distribution; and (3) representation. On the question of self-determination I have no argument. My concern is that a distortion and an exclusion is made on the basis of semantics and notions of producer/non-producer, productive/non-productive rather than on an accurate analysis of the situation, institutions and their determinable effects. We need an institutional analysis of every level of contemporary art here in Canada. The problem in our nascent scene is that no institutional analysis can be made in our short history without naming names. In terms of (2) production/distribution, the possibilities of art are teleologically reduced to the technical. Only the independent *producers* who work in technically reproducible forms — namely Robertson's own work in audio and video — are presumed to be working in historically and class permissible forms. The gallery naturally is put in question as obsolete. The question of (3) representation is the most problematic and contradictory. It refers back to self-determination; but what starts as a call for representation of other cultural communities by their own self-representation in turn becomes the content not only of this demand but the content of Robertson's art as well. In other words, within our particular, perhaps closed, community, *their* presumed interests are represented by Clive Robertson.

All this takes place against major distinctions that revolve around class and economics. As I said, the distinction cultural manager/self-appointed professional and artist/producer is given in class terms. Moreover, Tim Guest is accused by Robertson of becoming "the ideological spokesperson for ANNPAC and its increasing respectability within the new establishment." Now probably class and economic analyses of the conditions and institutions of contemporary Canadian art are needed. But have they taken place to the degree that we can make a claim about an individual's class allegiances, as an ideologue for any particular class when the whole debate on class in Canada, let alone the art scene, has hardly begun? The labelling of artists as part of the working class on the basis of the congruity of "work of art" and artist/cultural *worker* with an industrial worker shows that we are far from that analysis. I suspect that the relations of workers to capitalism are of a completely different order than that of artists to the Canada Council or to bureaucratized artist-run spaces.

These types of analysis are needed; and Robertson's "The Story Behind Organized Art" in major part was a start. But we must understand every term that he uses when he says in that article "ANNPAC must understand that there are inherent class and capital barriers between themselves and their public funding, and insist on better service, from their government, for their legitimate economic demands."¹⁴ To return to the *Fuse* editorial: "Calling for critical discussion /as Guest did in an earlier *Parallelogramme* article/ begs the question why it has taken so long? The last ten years have produced few forums (with the exception of one or two uncritical conferences) and what is beginning to take place (in the lecture series) is the middle of a dialogue which has yet to have a beginning." As we are all self-appointed growing up in this culture — artists and others — and since we all start in the middle, perhaps it is important to find out what that beginning is by starting with an analysis of what *actually* exists.

NOTES

1. Tim Guest, "Intolerance (The Trouble with Social Realism), *Parallelogramme*, 8:1 (Oct.-Nov., 1982), pp. 15-19.
2. The quotations on *Interventions* (Ulay and Marina Abramovic; Jenny Holzer) are taken from A Space press releases.
3. Philip Monk, "Andy Patton", *Language and Representation* (Toronto: A Space, 1982), p. 12.
4. Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: Verso), pp. 76-78.
5. Philip Monk, *Language and Representation*, p. 6.
6. Georg Lukács, "The Novels of Willi Breidel" (1931/32), *Essays on Realism* (Cambridge: MIT, 1981).
7. Georg Lukács, "Realism in the Balance," in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 33-34.
8. Georg Lukács, "Reportage or Portrayal?", *Essays on Realism*, pp. 48, 49.
9. Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," *Reflections* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), pp. 230-238. Lukács' arguments against tendency are found in "'Tendency' or Partisanship?" (1932), in *Essays on Realism*, pp. 33-34. He indicates that the question of art or politics is already answered in advance by this opposition. To argue for a pure art or a tendency in art is to argue for either agitation restricted to the everyday or for an immanent formalism. Or one can go a step farther, accept art's necessary formalism and reconcile it to what is foreign to art — a political content. But to choose to frame it either way is to accept a completely divorced formal art from the start, to accept art as Kant defined it, as a "purposefulness without purpose", as an art devoid of interest.
10. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*. (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 234.
11. Lukács defines tendency as follows: "'tendency' is a demand, an 'ought', an ideal, which the writer counterposes to reality; it is not a tendency of social development itself, . . . but rather a (subjectively devised) commandment, which reality is requested to fulfil." "'Tendency' or Partisanship?", p. 37.
12. Clive Robertson, "Editorial: A Letter From Toronto," *Fuse*, 6:4 (Nov.-Dec. 1982), p. 154.
13. Clive Robertson, "Publisher's Note: The A Space 'takeover'," *Fuse*, 6:5 (Jan.-Feb. 1983), p. 228. If bureaucracy is, as Lukács defined it, "a basis form of development of capitalist culture," then not even its "oppositional" opponents will escape it. This is probably as true for *Fuse* as it is for Clive Robertson and Janet Martin's performance "The Interveners", a montage-reportage performance whose subject and format was that of Applebaum-Hébert Federal Cultural-Policy Review Committee.
14. Clive Robertson, "The Story Behind Organized Art," *Fuse*, 4:6 (November 1980), p. 325.