British Columbia for the past couple of centuries. What he is calling for is a transfer of authority, in a sense to maps and dreams which are informed by visionary designs of the Indian hunting societies rather than by the myopic disorder of frontier ambitions. But what the *book* achieves is something quite different, a transfer of authority to its author, and to the imaginative structures according to which he describes the reality he so sensitively chronicles. This transfer takes place partly because it is such a good book; nonetheless, one of its ironic effects is to entrench not just Brody's authority, but the authority of those who speak on behalf of the Indians, and to reinforce the image of the Indians as inarticulate except to someone instructed in the secret arrangements of their minds and cultures . . . and there is of course truth in this, a cruel truth. Brody does everything possible to avoid this dilemma, but it is finally inevitable as he moves from the nervous predicament of being an outsider to the perceptive casualness of the insider. Even the children of Sanchez speak to us more eloquently when mediated by the imaginative questioning of Oscar Lewis and in the familiar mode of a literary text than they do in their father's house. I trust this analogy makes it clear that I am not at all discounting Brody's book. It is a very fine achievement. But its mission — to unclench the minds of its readers and nourish the impoverished imaginations which continue to debauch the frontiers — this mission can only be accomplished by replacing a vicious stereotype with one that Brody can only assume will be more virtuous.

Brody is quick to insist that he is not alone in his mission. He refers to Marshall Sahlins' account of hunting and gathering economies, noting especially Sahlins' description of hunters as having "the kind of nonchalance that would be appropriate to a people who have mastered the problems of production." Brody pays fitting tribute to the work of Peter Usher on the unrecognized and remarkable features of the domestic modes of production that characterize many native economies; and he acknowledges the important contribution made to an understanding of northeastern British Columbia in the recent past by Martin Weinstein, Jim Harper, Michael Jackson and Richard Overstall, especially at the hearings held by the Northern Pipeline Agency under the chairmanship of W.W. Mair. The Indians of the region, especially those with whom he lived, and those in the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs who have for the past few years done so much to try to ensure that the people of the northeast are not figuratively or literally flushed away by development, are given their rightful prominence by Brody. And no one familiar with the situation could underestimate the significance of the contribution made by Rick Salter, that relentlessly wise lawyer from Vancouver who, through his work with the bands of the northeast (and other parts of British Columbia) and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, has helped to put the Indian interest on the map in an unmistakable way.

Brody recognizes the ambivalence of his role.

> Maps and Dreams *presents . . . the way in which a project was shaped by a group of Indians. It is a book of anecdotes as well as a research report, its structure being the result of an attempt to meet two different needs. The problem is one of audience; or the intimately related one of documentary devices; or an awkward tension between a wish to maintain a sense of universal concern without losing a feeling for a particular place. In the case either of an ethnographic monograph or a report whose purposes include an encyclopaedic coverage of the grounds, these problems can arise but are not intrinsic. In the case of writings that grow from and have their significance in resistance to colonialism, the problems can be overwhelming. There is a need for scientific detail, evidence that must stand the test of scrutiny by academics and cross-examination in uncomprehending or hostile courtrooms; yet it is also essential to bring to life unfamiliar points of view.*

He notes near the beginning "a thought that must have bothered many researchers: you might find out five or even ten years later whom you were really working for." You never can tell. I remember going to concert in Vancouver to hear the Weavers, at a time (about 20 years ago) when with many others I was almost apoplectic in opposition to the Columbia River Treaty and its wretched hydro-electric projects to dam up the great river valleys of the region. (As Brody points out with regard to the northeast, "hunting territories cannot survive being flooded . . . and maybe every last river and creek will eventually be turned into the bays and arms of artificial lakes.") The late Lee Hays led off with "Roll on Columbia," Woody Guthrie's rousing commemoration of hydro-electric projects further down the river, written as part of a commission for the Bonneville Power Administration. The notion of Guthrie and Hays and Seeger as collaborators against the interests of people attached to the land is an absurdity; and yet here it was, in a vicious irony which was not made any less vicious because of the fact that farmers down river could now irrigate their crops, and workers in the newly established industries could now feed their children.

Brody's book deserves serious attention and serious discussion. It is ambitious far beyond the common run of anthropological and sociological monographs on Indians, and it addresses issues far beyond the local ones in northeastern British Columbia, though to my mind that is important enough in itself. His call for the recognition of Indian hunting territories comes naturally from his account of the characteristics of the hunting societies and their economies. But Brody does more. He candidly implicates himself in the book in a way that is hazardous and exhilarating, and that ultimately gives the book its complex intensity. He has not quite solved the problem of what to do with himself in his narrative, and his book is from time to time unsettling in the superior humility of its narration. Yet he has recognized the problem, and built it into the structure of the book; and this alone transforms *Maps and Dreams* into a book in the tradition of literary achievements in which a passionate polemic and a rigorous attention to detail combine to produce, out of a specific time and place, a description without the limitations of either, but with the human immediacy of both. □

The Violent Lens

by Philip Monk

CAMERA LUCIDA: REFLECTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHY
Roland Barthes
Hill and Wang
pp. 119/$14.95

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It would be a mistake to think that Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida,* subtitled "Reflections on Photography," is about photography, or solely about photography, any more than his previous book, *A Lover's Discourse,* is about the language of lovers. "Reflections" is to be taken more in the classical sense of a commentary, or a meditation, as if Zen had become the "zero degree" for

Barthes. Or, as in the lover's discourse, the topic is "the site of someone speaking within himself, *amorously* confronting the other (the loved object) who does not speak." Photography will be tied to that loved object, but not as a fetish.

The discourse on photography is not new to Barthes: he is not riding its popular wave; in fact, he calls his book "archaic." The photograph, and not film, had a privileged place in his earlier semiological enterprise, for example the influential essays, "The Photographic Message" (1961) and "Rhetoric of the Image" (1964). And as a playful "preface" to his "autobiographical" notes in *Barthes by Barthes,* he published some childhood photographs, "the author's treat to himself, for finishing his book. His pleasure is a matter of fascination (and thereby quite selfish). I have kept only the images which enthrall me, *without my knowing why* (such ignorance is the very nature of fascination, and what I say about each image will never be anything but . . . imaginary)." What he announces as a fascination, he will end by knowing in *Camera Lucida,* not with the objective of knowledge but of necessity. And this knowledge will no longer allow the photograph to be the "*object* of an immediate pleasure," as it still was for him. An historic event intervenes — catastrophic death.

To make a method of this "imaginary" is the reason perhaps why Barthes wrote *Camera Lucida* in homage to *L'Imaginaire* by Jean-Paul Sartre. Strange return for a man whose first book, *Writing Degree Zero,* was a modernist riposte to Sartre's demand for a committed political writing in *What is Literature?* Stranger still is the return to a phenomenological method, as represented by the homage to Sartre and by the use of the terms of phenomenology's founder, Husserl. (French structuralist and post-structuralist theory found its principle target in phenomenology's constitution of the subject and consciousness.) But in the return, Barthes "cheats": it was a phenomenology for himself alone. At the start of this investigation, Barthes wrote, "I wanted to learn at all costs what Photography was 'in itself,' by what essential feature it was to be distinguished from the community of images," which is not only a phenomenological, but a modernist inquiry. But because of photography's stubborn contingency, because of its actual referent, Barthes found this type of image unclassifiable. Finding the photograph resistant to a reductive system, unable to talk about *the* Photograph, only *a* photograph, Barthes, in his words, "resolved to start my inquiry with no more than a few photographs, the ones I was sure existed *for me.*"

So Barthes continues his phenomenological narrative in a form of a photographic reception known to us all: "I was glancing through an illustrated magazine. A photograph made me pause." Something attracts his attention and he expands that moment, more characteristically through linguistics and etymology than through the phenomenology of perception. Within that moment of solicitation he finds two features of interest, two themes which he names the *studium* and the *punctum.* The *studium* merely interests Barthes: it is the response of taste, of culture, of knowledge that makes us all good cultural subjects and competent readers of the photographer's intention. The *punctum* is what pricks and wounds Barthes. It is the unnameable and accidental detail that evacuates meaning and disturbs the *studium.* While these distinguish his desire, Barthes surprises us. After *The Pleasure of the Text* we do not expect him to say his pleasure was not enough; it did not reveal the universal nature of photography.

He is looking at photographs again, this time of his mother and he is looking at them shortly after her death. In one of these photographs he believes he has found the essence of photography and, once again, he decides to derive the nature of photography from this one photograph that assuredly existed for him. What he was seeking was his mother's essential image, the image that united body and soul, and he found it in a photograph of her as a five year old child. He did not merely want to call up the past, when he had known her or not ("nothing Proustian in a photograph"); he wanted the certainty of what had been: "The name of Photography's *noeme* will therefore be: '*That-has-been*' or again: the Intractable" which joins the photograph to the lover's discourse, which is "'unreal', i.e., intractable," and to his love of his mother.

This is the basis of his "'stupid' or simple metaphysics" and the definition and essence of photography for him — it authenticates what has been — "the body and face of the beloved person"; there is no denying the existence of the referent of the photograph. Not only does Barthes see his mother's essential identity and death in this photograph, every photograph for him is an "imperious sign of my future death." Now the references to death in the first half of the book begin to coalesce; photography represents the place of death in our society.

While it is difficult, if not indiscreet, to draw critical conclusions from as paradoxical a text as *Camera Lucida*, major critical dislocations abound in it. If

we asked Barthes to maintain and authorize the identity of his texts, then phrases such as "the truth of the image, the reality of its origin," "essential identity" (he even substantializes notions with capitals as in the nineteenth century — for example, "Sovereign Good of childhood") would draw not only our astonished attention, but the critical ridicule of senility by post-structuralists and deconstructionists as well. For not only is the photograph stubborn in its contingency, to restore the question of the referent is to go against the grain of all those French intellectuals (including Barthes himself) whose careers have been made on the erasure of the referent. The "arbitrary" sign in linguistics allows only the differential play of the signifier. Photography would then be a coded signifier. But Barthes comes out against the semiologists' and sociologists' coded photograph; for him, the photograph is as uncoded and intractable as the real. Most likely, however, this book will be excused as too personal for anyone to draw critical use from it — theoretical models are vested interests too. But if theoreticians are not interested in the referent, artists now certainly are.

But in truth, Barthes has not opened this richly suggestive area; it belongs in part to Georges Bataille in his research, writing and founding of the Collège de Sociologie in the 1930s. Bataille acts as a subtext to Barthes' book, and although Barthes is not at all Hegelian as Bataille was, the violence, revulsion and ecstasy of the image are Bataille's themes given over to photography (however, we should investigate the use of photography in his writing, especially in the journal *Documents*). Any contemporary study of the function of images would benefit from joining Bataille to René Girard who sees the origin of society and all cultural forms, including representation, in murder. Photography would be a vehicle for circulating and controlling violence. But Barthes is no critical terrorist; his texts are tactful, no impulse of power there. And what Barthes' texts teach us most of all is that the science of the singular cannot be found in a systematization of his terms. We can only follow his example: write what solicits us. □