

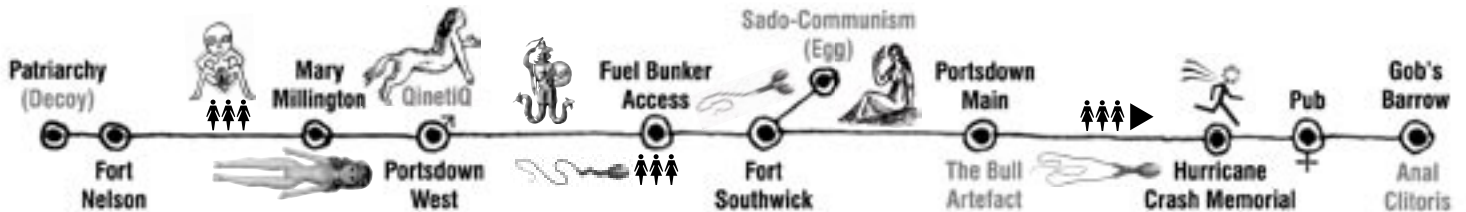
The Listening Voice

The newsletter of the Equi-Phallic Alliance & Poetry Field Club
Issue 10 / Brumaire CCXXI

“Weder Enid Blyton Noch Ulrike Meinhof”



RETURN TO PORTSDOWN HILL



This newsletter appears in a sickly light, that cast by the scandal surrounding Sir Jimmy Savile. Whilst noting the pertinence of this to our current enterprise, we make no comment upon it. But we do reflect on how the allegations have been framed within a public debate which, generally, has reinforced the moral panic relating to sex within our culture, keeping this aspect of our selves within the realm of childhood. And now one more monster has been released into our imaginations. That he was so singular a man, and one so famous, makes the effect more spectacular and thus the subject more unhandleable. So will the unspeakable remain unsaid. We seek to articulate unspeakable things that a change in the general circumstance might be achieved.

The field trip to Portsdown Hill is the first public event to be organised by the Poetry Field Club in three years. Both the EPA and the PFC have restricted activities to a minimum during this period. Since the publication of *Josian in Ermonie*¹, and in the ensuing period of intense transference, disruptions to internal communications became institutionalised. Paratelic operations all but ceased. PFC field trips became synonymous with dogging.

Envy & Gratitude

In our preparatory discussions we began by acknowledging that we go to Portsdown Hill to enact difference (sexual, political, social, etc.); to seek a deeper understanding of how landscapes mask opposing interests; to map strategies of disguise in the spatial realm; to share experiences of how we have internalised the reshaping of geographical features by various forces (political, industrial, military, etc.); to enact ‘poetry as its own interpretation’ rather than ‘experimentation as the replication of style’.

In the first session we explored institutionalised poetic production as it might occur within a mental hospital, police station, prison, military barracks or university. We considered the function of *degradation ceremonial* as a means of encouraging stylistic compliance in institutionalised poetic production and asked whether this results in a poetry of compromise or ‘stalemate poetics’.



Arse Vent Portal: The ‘Famous Five’ on Portsdown Hill in 1978 close to the northern portal of the underground Fuel Oil Bunker

We compared the marketisation of higher education to a Ponzi scheme and noted the many similarities.

In the second session we enacted an *ad hoc* play called *Envy & Gratitude* and through this performance we explored themes of poetic innovation and ‘corporate culture’; we came to the conclusion that institutions are managed to suit the needs of those who control them. Accepting the ‘creative industries’ as one vast mall, we looked for evidence of ‘opposing interests’ and recorded how they and their conflicts are masked; the aim is to apply these findings in the field, to develop strategies and interventions within perceptual processes to make visible conflicts that occur within those areas of the self that are the most difficult to observe.

Big Mother is Watching You

It was argued that as environmental surveillance has increased, so zones of conflict within the self have been withdrawn deep into the psyche; that, in effect, the State penetrates deeper into us by observing the spatial realm more. There was a debate about whether this process reflected deliberate psychic incursion. It was said that our response to this development was analogous to 'defending deep' on the football pitch. It was pointed out that in football this was rarely a good idea. Increased self surveillance might be indicative of a more aggressively intrusive State or of narcissism, vanity and paranoia. It was said that the human organism is not a football game and that the retreat into the self might be understood in terms of Zilbach's theory of women's development.²

None present had read Zilbach's article, but her theory is outlined in Estela V. Welldon's *Mother, Madonna, Whore*³ where she is thanked for her "original and most illuminating ideas", These challenge "... Freudian theories of the development of sexuality in the girl, especially in relation to the phallic stage, and offers an alternative female equivalent of the masculine concept of the phallus. She believes that the primary core femininity in the girl starts to become established very early on, in identification with her mother, and contains the wish for a baby as a potential creation. Later on, in reaching adulthood, actual procreation will start deeply within a woman when the sperm is 'actively engulfed', and not passively received as previously thought. This 'active engulfment' is the core, the beginning, and the growing essence of being female."

It was agreed that during the field trip we would seek to become conscious of the relations between the self and external sources of power as they are encountered on Portsdown Hill. That such places as the 'Palmerston's Follies' forts; the derelict underground command post known as UGHQ, from which the D-Day invasion was planned and controlled; the present day Dstl and QinetiQ defence research and testing facilities known as Portsdown West and Portsdown Main; the underground naval fuel oil reservoir; and the Paulsgrove estate, scene of the 'Paedophile Riots' of 2000⁴, make Portsdown Hill emblematic, of power generally and of patriarchal modes of power, and their repressed matriarchal equivalents, in particular.

Penetration & Engulfment: a Decoy

We will walk amongst emblems, for through their force, ranged about us like platonic spheres and experienced as "the medium of a hierarchy of immaterial substances", the self is known. It generates, as if from a single source, the corporeal or phenomenal world, as we know it, whether we like it or not.

On Portsdown Hill we are presented with a cognitive maze in which narrative loops bewilder the individual and relationships between individuals. These weird narratives reveal how power protects itself within the psyche of those who might threaten or expose it. One is bewildered by diversions as one approaches vulnerabilities within the array. If you stay close to your fear, anxiety, shame, etc. then you draw nearer to the source and become aware of the vulnerability of power.

It will be helpful to keep in mind the matter of our wider social and political inquiry, *viz*: The question that remains at the heart of matters political and social is this, in a reality with hegemony at its centre what does a Parliament represent? We agreed to approach this field trip as a 'remapping of the hill'. If you reach a point of distress, draw it, mark it with symbols. Any such data will be useful to our enterprise.

The method of this field trip will involve repetition. We will visit sites where power itself has been threatened in the past (sites of threat to individual and/or national survival) and ask the same questions at different points in the loops that we encounter. We will note how the narratives exposed intersect with alignments made between locations within the defence establishment (current and redundant), dogging sites, caves used by teenagers for drinking and smoking etc., official and unofficial 'viewing points' and so on. We will conclude with a visit to a pub.

This event might in some ways re-enact certain episodes from *Hegemonick*⁵; but it is not a re-enactment, rather it is to be considered an enactment. We will not 'miss our stop at Portchester' and thus we will not walk the full length of the Wymering and Paulsgrove estates, but we will briefly go into Paulsgrove. We will not encounter Fort Nelson as it was in the late 1970s, "mostly derelict and covered in graffiti" for the fort is now a Royal Armouries museum. Although it is still possible to enter the fort and walk the tunnels, it is not possible to do this in the absolute darkness, the silence and solitude, that once reigned there.

Similarly, our enactment will not re-enact the events described in *Hegemonick* under the title, Some Photographs. Although we might visit the 1978 picnic locations pictured in those photographs, we will not follow the same routes specifically to avoid the aura of re-enactment effecting our visit some thirty four years later.

The Modernism of the Druids

When Alfred Watkins (1855-1935) published *The Old Straight Track: Its Mounds, Beacons, Moats, Sites and Mark Stones* in 1925, he presented his theory and discovery of 'ley lines' as a vision of the past. Here was a system that could be described in abstract terms, a concept that cohered to places - imprinted upon them by eons of practice - that existed as a memory or analogue of many memories. His vision, mundane and elaborate, collected up this past as a totality and projected it from the present into the future. In reconnecting a lost traditional world to the contemporary one characterised by specialisation and alienation he was performing a ritual that came to be the central mystery of Modernism.

The cultural product Watkins created has long since been cleared of content by professional archaeologists. It became a container into which any meaning could be projected. The wreckage of his theory, when reproduced, like the product of an industry, with value added by unknown others, offers a way back or forwards to or from Utopia. Such ideological containers (environmentalism and feminism are of especial interest here) can be as progressive or reactionary as one wishes them to be.

The notion that meaning might be found in random alignments of things is so widely accepted in other fields that one wonders what motivates those who mock ley line enthusiasts with their maps, rulers and antiquarian conceits. Random association techniques were so widely used by modernist artists that they might now be considered heritage. Unexpected juxtaposition. Reorientation. Extreme abstraction. They produce works as shocking as a National Trust brochure.

Aleatoricism, a technique perfected by the Druids, produces products that are as useful now as they ever were; and those chancers got away with their mistletoe-based fraud for years. Wherever it is used, the term retains an aura of mendacity. The difference between an avant garde and a traditional artist is that the latter keep their aleatoric practises quiet. A traditional sense of shame about the nature of all artistic endeavour explains why "aleatoric" did not become a word until 1955.

Pussy Control

I've always thought that the paranoia in this country about sex is a class thing, just as much as public schools and comprehensives are. The old story of those in authority saying they know what is best for the rest of us while doing the opposite themselves, and using the excuse that the "working classes" aren't educated enough to be able to choose for themselves. At election times we are supposed to be able to pick our way through complicated political issues before casting our vote; but when it comes to reading matter we are treated like children.

Mary Millington

The cop is licking you between the legs . . . Pussy Riot

Whilst Mary Millington challenged the oppressive system that destroyed her, censorship, the diminishment of individual agency and the manipulation of shame were, for everyone else, merely the edges of a market that could still allow for the selling of porn as an idea, even if the product purchased were debased. The current market in radicalism and its imagery, whether cultural or political, works in the same way. The money shot repeats appropriate clichés for the market it defines. Mary Millington knew that content mattered. She wanted to make hard core porn for UK consumers but couldn't.

Millington was an early exponent of the feminist ideology that, in the 1980s, came to be known as Sex-positive feminism (or pro-sex feminism, sex-radical feminism or sexually liberal feminism).

Gayle Rubin coined the phrase "sex/gender system", which she defined as "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied." She defined sex-positive feminism against her essentialist opponents thus: "One tendency has criticized the restrictions on women's sexual behavior and . . . called for a sexual liberation that would work for women as well as for men. The second tendency has considered sexual liberalization to be inherently a mere extension of male privilege. This tradition resonates with conservative, anti-sexual discourse." These days anti-sexual behaviour is still common amongst lefties.



After the Chase: Benny Hill (**Apollo**), engulfed by Hill's Angels (**The Muses**)
Dr Mintern said: "In Europe they had hardcore. In the UK we had Benny Hill. It is astonishing that he is still frowned upon for the sexual content in his shows, rather than for its absence. He indicated a culture in which sex was repressed and out of control. It has been said that the only other entity to achieve that combination to a similar extent is the Roman Catholic Church."

The Political Economy of Sex

Traditionally the left adopted attitudes to sex and sexual behaviour that mirrored Tory attitudes to the poor and poverty. As there were the deserving and undeserving poor, so there are sexual preferences of which we should all approve and those which we must ridicule or condemn. The common element is crime. That some poor people were criminals made the task of persecuting those not cleansed by the category 'deserving' all the easier. That some people commit 'sex crimes' makes it easy to see anyone who doesn't conform to any supposed norm as suspect. Progress creates new forms of closet. These days the closet is inside the person.

That the left, obsessed as it is with economic theory, should project sado-capitalist structures and divisions onto sexual behaviours is not surprising. It resulted in forms of morality reminiscent of the Victorians; had the Conservative Party followed through on Margaret Thatcher's stated aim to 'return to Victorian values', they would have found that ground already occupied by those who liked to flatter themselves with terms such as 'radical' and 'alternative'. Doubtless they would have had an orgy.

The left, in being anything but permissive, appropriated the freedoms of laissez-faire economics and applied them to sexuality. Those within the hierarchy or approved by it can do anything; those they exploit can't. Thus the left, as it has been since the late 60s, defined itself as bourgeois. In childing the poor in relation to sexual politics, they revealed their project generally as being one of containment. We contend that queer rather than economic theory is the way to go. We walk towards a Queer Economics, the revolution that includes equality and freedom.

The Mary Alignment

"I hate policemen. Their truncheons are always bigger than their cocks." Mary Millington

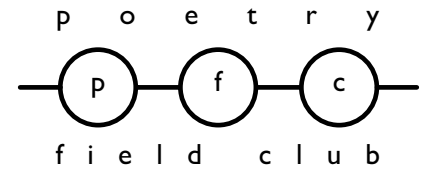
Mary Millington's porno activism and anti-authoritarian stance places her as the post-war pre-Oedipal marker on the line that leads from the feminism of Mary Shelley through Sex-positive feminism to 'Queer Theory'. That her commentary now appears prophetic is one aspect of her tragedy. Another involves the solitary nature of her enterprise. The current that flowed through her informs others now. If you extend the Mary Alignment you will eventually arrive at FEMEN.⁶

Millington was the exception that proved the rule of Containment Theory. In this sense, 'containment' means the ways in which 'liberation' supports the repressive order, through the undoing of sublimations and the release of pleasure *in socially approved forms*. Mary 'crossed the line' of what was tolerable and never returned. But her life can be seen as an early enactment of another idea that followed long after her death. She showed that the containment enforced by hegemony is not absolute. Her work indicated the presence of faultlines and the powers they emit.

Alan Sinfield described how subcultural practice can break a monolith down, bit by bit, by knowing its ground and finding the contradictions.⁷ Mary Millington subverted the genre she worked within by contradicting the commodity status of porn. She emphasised the aesthetic nature of porno rather than obscuring it; not by making 'good' or 'art' or 'erotic' films, but by saying and doing what porn stars do not say or do.

If you go back along the alignment you eventually arrive at Mary Wollstonecraft. There are others beyond her, but the roots of this tradition were obscured. Although they had appeared lost we still find the remains of their ancient structures in the landscape.

Join the Poetry Field Club putting landscape in its place



"Demand that you be treated like an adult."
Mary Millington

Wet Dream Seduction

Mary Millington understood the occult base upon which the superstructures of the self are constructed, that these originate in the body and must be liberated there. Seeking a politics that included "all sensations emanating from the sexual object", she applied her glamour to pre-Oedipal areas of the psyche to enact their capture in a series of movies and photo-shoots and thus to heal the organism.

Dr Mintern referred to "a prehistoric time in the sexual life" when the landscape was littered with mysterious structures. *Traditions, attitudes, behaviours*. In later life these can create anxieties which they appear to placate; in reality these structures extend infancy, sending us "along a line into nullity", they limit human agency and thus democracy.

In exposing her breasts outside 10 Downing Street during a protest against the Obscene Publications Act (a 1970s softcore action that predicted FEMEN) she used her whole body as "the trumpet of a prophecy" and made the restricted form of British soft core into an alembic through which to explore how infantile or childed sexuality might be transformed into an operative politics (via "definitive sexual organization").

Once repressed political desire had been channelled through this system, she hoped to unleash a raunchy revolution involving "the union of all desires in one object". Thus Mary Millington's ideology offered what all previous revolutions had lacked, it cohered within the erotic core of the self.

Beyond the Anal Clitoris

"Freud described, for both sexes, a perverse core to the personality as the essence of an infantile sexuality which was by inclination keenly seductive. But the notion of seduction with which Freud started, and the concept of perversion to which it led him, inevitably brought with them the more traditional idea of a True Path. To seduce is to lead away, and a perversion, by definition, deviates from a norm, though the crucial irony of Freud's account was that perversion in childhood was the norm."⁸

It seems plain to us that, as shown in the workings of Mary Millington (and of Wilhelm Reich⁹), inner perceptions of perversion, depending as they do on one's own tendencies, are prone to clash with what is known or thought to be accepted.

In this sense the etymological meaning of perversion as "wrong, not in accord with what is accepted" provides the key. What is accepted is always agreed or imposed and any process of agreement will mask opposing interests to some extent and exaggerate the power of some participants and understate the power of others. This implies unequal processes involving command, subjugation and 'grooming'.¹⁰

That which validates our humanity, our inner touchstone, is the source of our weakness. Affective anomalies are fixed in a social matrix through the development and control of feeling, not its suppression. Dr Mintern

And this, also, is how the hill works. It creates an unreality to lose you in.

It was pointed out that although she might have collaborated with the Sex Pistols and Ronald Biggs, Mary Millington was just an ordinary girl who happened to embody an archetype, that which informs the Sheela Na Gig. It was stated that she had climbed down from the wall of some country church to change the world.

Endnotes

1. Jordan, A. *Josian in Ermonie*, (bending oeuvre 2009) www.nonism.org.uk/bended.html
2. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 30, 185-196. Zilbach, J. (1987). I in the I of the Beholder: Towards a Separate Line of Development in Women
3. See page 31 of Estela V. Welldon, *Mother, Madonna, Whore - the Idealisation and Denigration of Motherhood* (Karnac Books 1992)
4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/872436.stm>

5. Jordan, A., *Hegemonick* (Shearsman 2012) <http://www.shearsman.com/pages/books/catalog/2012/jordanHeg.html> <http://www.nonism.org.uk/jordan.html>
6. <http://femen.org/> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FEMEN>
See also: Trig, E., *FEMEN - The Softcore Sisterhood* (Hobbledy Goddess 2012) and Adobe, A., *Tits Out for the Oppressors - Engulfing Patriarchy* (Location Unknown 2012)
7. Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (1992)
8. Adam Phillips, Making a Mess - A review of *Mother, Madonna, Whore: The Idealisation and Denigration of Motherhood* by Estela Welldon, *London Review of Books*, Vol. 11 No. 3, 2nd February 1989, pages 22-23)
9. It is a source of regret that she never met Wilhem Reich. Their combined "orgastic potency" would have been formidable.
10. Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, Oxford University Press 1995, p. 62.

Field Trip

In Conjunction with The Ad Hoc Committee
for a Utopian Desublimation

Saturday 24th November 2012
10.30AM — meet at
Southampton Central Station

Purchase a return ticket to Cosham. Our train will depart at 10.44am. We will alight from the train at Portchester at 11.23am.

nb Portchester Station has no car park. Those travelling by car should meet us at Fort Nelson (PO17 6AN). Fort Nelson is a Royal Armouries museum. Entrance and parking are free. There is a cafe and toilets.

We will walk to Fort Nelson and enter the tunnels to conduct a suburban ritual in the Powder Examining Room.

We will then visit Paulsgrove chalk pit to look at the Cooper Shelter and the Underground Radio Station. Having completed our investigations we will walk to The Churchillian pub (PO6 3LS).

We will return via to Cosham Station. Trains to Southampton: **17.26, 17.39, 17.46, 17.51, 18.06, 18.26, 18.39, 18.46** &c. (**bold** denotes 30 mins journey approx, *italics* denotes 45mins approx).

For further information about
The Listening Voice contact:

www.nonism.org.uk