

CENTER for EXPERIMENTAL LECTURES

September 4, 2016—The Shandaken Project at Storm King
New Windsor, NY
<http://experimentallecures.org>

H/S

by Sb Fuller



I.

“Me wanting to get rid of the aquarium is not me devaluing our relationship which I’m sure is how you’re interpreting this.” Find the image.

II.

As a higher profile Miami-Dade County circuit court judge, my grandfather kept the media’s attention sentencing record numbers of men to death row. He died from a heart attack four days before his 69th birthday. Find the image.

I met my grandfather’s brother in the summer of 2010 for the first time. This was the closest I’d ever come to meeting my grandfather. That summer, I sat with his brother looking through pictures. I told him how jealous I was of his grandkids. He took me aside, as if in response to this jealousy, as if to complicate the feeling, and told me a story I’ve since never forgotten.

He told me it was the late 50’s, maybe early 60’s, and it had been years since him and his brother had seen each other. He told me that they, putting brotherly animosity aside, both decided to try reuniting the families they’d since made for themselves. For this, my grandmother, my grandfather, their housekeeper, and their four kids, including my father, traveled up from Florida, across the country to visit his brother, his brother’s wife, their own housekeeper, and his two daughters. He told me “trips like this didn’t happen often, so everything about this trip was memorable,” as if to say, “I’m sorry I can’t forget.”

He told me that, on a more memorable evening of this visit, the two housekeepers were preparing a dinner for the two families, a meal to be shared over one large table. He told me that, in preparation for this evening, my grandfather pulled him aside, much in the way he had just pulled me aside. This part he whispered, he stuttered, but essentially what he told me was that his brother, my grandfather, has asked him to uninvite his black house keeper from the dinner table so as to not confuse his own black house keeper as to why she, at home in Florida, didn’t regularly eat with the family. A dis-invitation was asked for; so as not to confuse this woman, so as not allow her the image of another housekeeper being allowed to sit with the family, so as not to incur upon her the realization that her regular, at home, forced distancing from the dinner table, was anything other than another regularity of keeping a home.

My grandfather’s brother complained to me that this put him in the very uncomfortable position of having to decide between this woman and his brother. The story didn’t end so gracefully. He couldn’t really remember what he had decided to do. What was important was that my grandfather had even asked.

My dad has since recalled that as a kid there were only six chairs at the dinner table, a seat for mom, dad, and the four kids, and that Maimy, their housekeeper, after making dinner, never had any interest in eating with the family. He insists, that for as long as she lived with them, that there was nothing forced or exclusive about it. He insists that still to this day that the comment must have been a jab carrying over from years of the same brotherly animosity that had ever kept the brother apart in the first place. He can’t remember the dinner at all. Either way, my dad doesn’t like this story. He doubts the story is true. I doubt the story myself. Even if the evening never happened, the accusation itself portends a reality no less problematic. Instead of this evening having never happened, it may have just been easier to forget. A story of resentment or abuse, it’s a story, either way, of embarrassment.

III

In 1972, members of the FHAR, the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action, crossed over into CERFI, the Center for Study and Research into Institutional Functions, and through this relation, produced, the twelfth issue of the Parisian journal *Recherches*. Featuring contributions from Guattari, Deluze, Foucault, Sartre, Genet, Hocquenghem, and more, including numerous anonymous contributors, this issue, this trans-disciplinary editorial assemblage, mixing politics and pleasure with amateur and professional debate, took six months to produce under the direction of Guy Hocquenghem, and was finally released in March of 1973 under the title *Three Million Perverts: A Grand Encyclopedia of Homosexualities*.

This journal, underlining the challenges of collective production and quasi-anonymous authorship, came with an interactive illustration of a game board layout much like Snakes and Ladders. The layout was that of a segmented phallus that spiraled into itself with 30 segments along the way and thereby 30 different destinations. Find the image. The illustration came with a cut out die and six cut out game play pieces, each piece presumably starting at the base of the phallus and moving along the board according to the die, each move informing the players how and when to read the journal.

The first essay of this issue, “The Arabs and Us”, considered by many to be the most nauseating and pathological of the contributions to this journal, is a manifesto of sorts in the form of an anonymous conversation between three young men. The boys, P. (age 22), G. (age 32) and M. (age 24) write that they prefer, not only to sleep strictly with Arab men, but that they prefer to strictly bottom for Arab men. They explain that their desire is to give themselves to the people their fathers and grandfathers have fucked in the colonial wars, before again doing so in their own factories. Professing a sexual structure, in itself an avowal of guilt, that attains its highest pleasure with only Arabs and with only their genitals, they insist that because the bourgeoisie exploits these men and because the fathers of these boys exploit these men, that their desire is to give themselves to these men, offending, uprooting, and humiliating their fathers, doing the very least they can to ameliorate trauma.

In the game of this journal, most game play pieces start on the segment of the phallus named after this article. Readers come to this essay first. Upon rolling the die, they skip onward to subsequent articles, most of which, at least in part, variably react to, support, criticize, and sometimes all together reject the logic of this first essay. The remaining essays of the journal cover topics such as the sexual misery of youth, masturbation, the way in which different immigrant groups from North Africa live their homosexuality, and, most obviously, the racist fantasies here invoked in relations of sexual dependency. Shortly after its publication, this March issue was seized, and Felix Guattari, as director of publications, was fined 600 francs for affronting public decency and for publishing what was judged to constitute a “detailed display of depravities and sexual deviations” in this “libidinous exhibition of a perverted minority.” All copies of the issue were ordered destroyed.

IV.

A subject out of focus, out of frame, is the product of its image. A subject resists what it believes to be its misrepresentation, its representation’s confusion with another, homo-competitive, against any other, and this subject achieves nothing, no rebellion. This subject instead figures capitulation to the very ordered insecurities and paranoias of which this relation, representation’s virility, requires.

Instead, a subject breaks down, not in the propagate desire for positions, but in the abandoning of faith in any of these locales to begin with. All subjects, as subjects, gratuitously humiliate themselves.

V.

A man on the train is screaming at all of us, “Find yourself a new color!”

On July 4, 1961, local NAACP president Eula Johnson and black physician Dr. Von D. Mizell began a series of nationally publicized “wade-ins” of Fort Lauderdale beaches. Johnson Mizell, a third black adult, and four black college students participated in the first “wade-in.” As many as 200 African American residents took part in subsequent “wade-ins” in July and August of 1961. The demonstrations were prompted by Broward County’s failure to build a road to provide access to “Colored Beach,” the only beach available for people of color. In 1954, the county purchased this beach promising local African-Americans beach access and amenities. By 1961, the beach still lacked tables, restrooms, shelter, and fresh water. Only members of the black community served as lifeguards. Find the image.

My dad remembers my grandfather being there wading in with the 200 plus others, so as to express solidarity, so as to show, as a young lawyer at the time, that local lawyers of local counties were in support of these changes, so as to show

the public, his community, my family, and his son, my father, the importance of rightful representation. My dad insists that somewhere there's a photo of this.

On August 12, 1961, the city of Fort Lauderdale filed suit in Broward County Circuit Court against Johnson, Mizell, and the NAACP in an attempt to stop the "wade-ins." Nearly a year later, on July 11, 1962, Judge Ted Cabot denied the city's request. The decision effectively desegregated the county's beaches and marked a turning point in the struggle to desegregate all public facilities in Broward County.

VI.

And how did his heart break.

Before the courts, Guattari explained that *Three Billion Perverts* gave voice to homosexual desire without mediations. He argued that the issue demonstrated something about which he constantly reminded his readers: that it was impossible to exclude, as one skates along the plane of immanence, the worst excesses of multiplicity. He insisted that the form of the publication did not answer to any 'pre-established category,' no specific discipline, no national professional society, and was undertaken under no legitimated method. Instead, the journal gave dis-individuated voices a space to communicate directly their experience without precautions and without supporting documentation. It was this that made the issue so dangerous.

The anonymous authors of "The Arabs and Us", in satisfying themselves, commit a political act as an alibi, but this essay, in making sweeping assumptions, accuses the Arab men themselves of sexism and racism, and in giving no voice to these men, amounts, for most scholars, to little more than a rarified document of racist class masochism.

Reacting to this in subsequent essays, Deleuze argued that, in this first, most Oedipal of essays, the anonymous authors of "The Arabs and Us" cruise 'Arab' men more easily than Europeans, and do so because they assume that Europeans live their homosexuality 'pathologically', while 'Arabs' live their sexuality without problems and without culpability. The boys reiterate and reinforce the disaster. Imposing a negative, qualified existence is, in itself, the very violence of colonialist representation.

Another essay in this issue, "The Screwball Asses," now popularized in its now six year old *Semiotexte* re-print, Guy Hocquenghem, frustratedly insists that everything reverts to spectacle and exploitation and that in these gigantic spectacles, particularly in the case of "The Arabs and Us", the bourgeoisie directs the spectacle of the proletariat, the proletariat produces the bourgeoisie and its particularisms, the sexuality of these queers demands racism, and that because of this, this essay's authors and those accessing the text, relative to the text, forever only find themselves wedged between an ivory cock and an ivory tower.

Within any of the few remaining copies of Issue #12, it's clear that, of all the topics covered in the journal, those surrounding the figure of the Arab emerge regularly enough so as to reveal this figure as catalytic in the collective self-production of this group and their texts, one revealing the many dimensions of the journal and the group desires it unleashed towards its many diverse referential anchors. Exposing phallocracy to long overdue criticism from within, the journal remains a frustrated monument to political impasse.

VII.

Neither my father nor I over the past few weeks have had any luck finding any photo of my grandfather wading in.

Trying to get more information about the women that lived with my family, I've been in touch with my aunt, the daughter of my grandfather's brother. She's insisting, as of two days ago, that they never had a maid growing up. She's insisting she can't imagine where this story came from. She insists this conversation and this dinner never really happened.

Sourcing the essays of Journal #12, a re-photograph of public beach signage, conversations with my family, the scholarship of Gary Genesko, text messages, a re-photograph of my grandfather, and a text of my own published this

past year, block quotes and rough paraphrasings of which constitute the majority of this lecture, I'd like to have here demonstrated some nightmares and fantasies of structural visibility and invisibility.

I'd like to also introduce that tonight this tank begins its life as a mobile collaborative exhibition space, a space inviting and seeking submissions from hosts, curators, and artists to organize programming within and around its walls... programming asking of itself, of me, of collaborators, and of images, with regard to underrepresentation, how and for who does any frame figure boundlessness. As unreal as the world has been lately, questions like these feel exceptionally important right now.

VIII.

Justice martyrs a subject to its representation. This leaves its image, unembodied, on the lam—a total survivor.

Images like this insist on loss, loss we cannot mourn, loss ideal, loss of identity, loss making way for emergency, losses of which the image always allows because it is by this loss, as in all libidinal image economies, by which subjects, appearing to disappear as targets, make space for more to sense themselves unrepresentable. En route to un-representation, allowed to refuse opposition, the very possibility of position, all subjects, entire fields, en route to relief, are lost.

In this departure, subjects, as image runoff, having orbited their source, upgrade forever, apatriarchal, and, relieved from representation, they'll dissolve, proving their sources to have been, all along, dissolved themselves.

Thank You.