

Pranks, Punk and Industrial Culture from V. Vale

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V. VALE RE/SEARCH JUNE 2010 Newsletter: Atrocity Exhibition, John Waters, Arthur Koestler, MicMacs

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WELCOME TO V. VALE'S RE/SEARCH NEWSLETTER #94, JUNE 2010

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Design can produce a thing of beauty with minimal \$\$ BE READABLE! BE BEAUTIFUL! It's titled Perversity Think Tank & is available from www.supervert.com – Basically this treatise explores the boundaries and borderlands of the territory called “perversity” — cultural relativism is important here — and cites examples from Amish & Mennonite neighbors... (BTW, I happen to think that THEY are better equipped to survive the coming Soft Apocalypse than most of us. Talk about “living off the grid”... Yes, in the not-so-far-distant-future there may not BE any “grid” (referring to availability of cheap electricity and natural gas). Sure, a few people may keep their netbooks going on solar panels, but... we'll see. I might welcome the return of the horse-and-buggy, but...)

But back to “PTT” – this book is like being served a bowl of caviar. It's best taken a few pages at a time, as its frequently shocking thoughts and notions demand reflection and even recovery time. The book lives up to its name, with varying and parallel “narratives.” There are a plethora of good “quotes” scattered throughout, like Kant's “The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of object, and this consists in limitation.” In other words, there is a profound connection between beauty and boundary...” (p.93) Or, “The obsessive acts as though time does not exist.” (p.69) Without quotable quotes, a book cannot endure, and its author is highly suspect. Check out supervert.com's other books...

() A complete run of Jack Rabid's The Big Takeover (currently at #66) would give any cultural Rip Van Winkle a quick catch-up on the “best” body-shaking/head-bobbing music produced over the past 30 years. #66 contains an unreleased 1992 Ramones interview. Did you know that Steven King put on a Ramones concert, with Cheap Trick on the bill?! And that Joey campaigned in Kansas City for Bill Clinton? Order this encyclopedia-in-the-making (or better yet, SUBSCRIBE) from www.bigtakeover.com

6. From Moritz, Greifswald, Germany (Stephane von Stephane will return...)

1. **REVIEW OF The Book Of Eli:** This is a late call to watch that movie. It seems like few people really like that movie. I can't stop recommending it, but except for a small number of enthusiasts, everybody refuses to agree with me that this is an extraordinary film. I could start arguing by saying how nicely it captures that post-apocalyptic feel that most post-apocalyptic movies fail to represent: Vast stretches of a raped and abandoned landscape which still provides enough space for the characters to thrive and survive despite its superficial dysfunctionality. In that it is IMO better than Mad Max 2, a movie which doesn't seem to be interested in depicting a sustainable world after the apocalypse. The soundtrack helps a lot to endow the imagery with that ring of hope that's so very necessary to this kind of movies. Anyway, some reject The Book Of Eli on the grounds that they don't like this dark future setting. Fair enough. But totally unrelated to that, one has to acknowledge the deep symbolic references in it. (SPOILER WARNING. DON'T KEEP READING IF YOU HAVEN'T WATCHED THE MOVIE YET.) So Eli wanders around in the desert for 30 years with a book that obviously is meant to be the bible. Once you see the end of the movie and you find out that he is actually blind, you might say that his three-decade odyssey is caused by his blindness. But that is implausible if you take into account that everything he undertakes, he accomplishes in a skillful manner. Also he reminds himself to stick to the path and not to be diverted by helping those in need. But as it turns out, only when he gives up what is most precious to him in order to help another person he succeeds and finds the way to his destination. In one of the last scenes he crumbles under his injuries when he tries to cover the last couple of miles by navigating a small boat over the Bay to the island of Alcatraz. The iconographic impact is astonishing. Also without further ado, celibacy (as presumed by many religious leaders) is accepted from the outset. At no point you get the impression that the male and female leads engage in a relation that exceeds that of a leader towards his apprentice. There are many more points that need to be unearthed... You can complain about the apparently fideistic message of that movie but to do that you have to interpret it and that's a task not to be underestimated.

2. **REVIEW OF Sow:** SOW is Anna Wildsmith with Boys. The Boys are Mike Watts (Pig), Raymond Watts (Pig, Psychic TV, the Foetus live band) and Rob Henry (Euphonic). DOG is Sow's third album and was just released. Like its predecessors it comprises an eclectic assortment of instrumentations with outstanding spoken word-ish vocals. The genres and styles explored on this one are among others, Ambient, Jazz, Illbient, Trip Hop, Big Beat, Modern Classical and there are even some traditional elements. But the main reason for getting this CD are the strong vocals and deep, emotive lyrics by Anna Wildsmith. “The Kidnapping Of Anna Wildsmith” which might be considered the pivotal track on this album just illustrates that. In a surreal way it deals with the passing of Buster, Anna's long-time canine companion to whom the album is dedicated. In contrast to this the other songs elaborate predominantly on interpersonal relationships, often with subtle sexual references. Take your time to listen to the free track VICTIM which can be downloaded here: <http://www.i-absentee.com/sow/news.html> (where you can also get the album. The track is jazzier than any track on the album but still gives a good impression of what mood to expect. Considering her forceful artistic output I feel Anna Wildsmith is far too unknown and deserves much more attention. – Moritz

3. **The Atrocity Exhibition at Galerie Feinkost in Berlin.** Here is a little note on that for the newsletter:

Just a short note: Recently The Atrocity Exhibition in Berlin Galerie Feinkost ended. This show was a rather small one. Nonetheless it is yet another example for the global and refreshing albeit posthumous interest in J.G. Ballard. A continuously inflating and deflating plastic bottle provided the aural background for a couple of paintings, photographs and short films. Among the artists some need to be mentioned:

Anetta Mona Chi?a & Lucia Tká?ová: <http://www.chitka.info/> (See the last two items – great works reflecting (?) the setting and blocking in p-rnography.)