

Quebec state. We would argue that the key cultural significance of the social changes inaugurated by the Quiet Revolution has been nothing less than the production of the “Cultural” field itself as both the central legitimating agency of government and as an emergent regime of social power.<sup>2</sup>

This production of the “cultural” involves the elaboration of new forms of knowledge about *le peuple québécois* and hence new articulations of social difference within the population. *L’identitaire québécois* is thus articulated across a *dispositif* which links temporal (language and ethnicity as the historical grounds of the people), spatial (the regions as the figuration of cultural difference within *l’identitaire*) and administrative (the structuring perspective of cultural development) logics in the formation of emergent state practices. At the same time, it involves the production of the field of *la citoyenneté culturelle*; a field of distinction of the citizen as both social subject, sovereign subject of a nation, and as object of new forms of political power linking the distinctive traits of the citizen with those of the cultural producer and consumer.

#### Notes

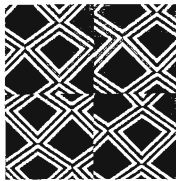
1 J. Létourneau, “Le ‘Québec moderne’: un chapitre du grand récit collectif des québécois” *Discours social*, v. 4, nos. 1–2, (1992), 63–87.

2 J. Donzelot, *L’invention du social* (Paris: Fayard, 1984).

#### —Martin Allor and Michelle Gagnon

Excerpted from “Singular Universalities: Québécois Articulations of *le culturel*,” *Public 14: Québec*, 1996.

## Qum



1998, oil and wax on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

—Sean Scherer

## Rattles

Every now and again, the quaint idea of radio as a kind of Talking Drum for the Global Village comes around for one more spin. In this romantic scenario, radio art is cast as an electronic echo of oral culture, harking

back to ancient storytellers spinning yarns in front of village fires. The idea has a seductive ring to it, and can be embellished in all kinds of ways, making room for everything from *Finnegan's Wake* to Street Rap: radio as Universal language, Electronic Community, Planetary Boombox.

Radio Talking Drum—a utopian transposition that loves to forget. *Most* forgotten are the lethal wires that still heat up from inside out, wires that connect radio with warfare, brain damage, rattles from necropolises. When I turn my radio on, I hear a whole chorus of death rattles: from stone cold, hard fact larynxes frozen in every stage of physical decomposition; from talk show golden throats cut with a scalpel, transected, then taped back together and beamed across the airwaves; from voices that have been severed from the body for so long that none can remember who they belong to, or whether they belong to anybody at all; from pop minster gigglebodies guaranteed to shake yo'booty; from artificial folds sneak-stitched into still living throats through computer synthesis and digital processing; from mechanical chatter boxes dead to begin with; from cyberphonic antibodies taking flight and crashing to pieces on air.

In November 1988, I had the good fortune to experience one of those infrequent opportunities to become abruptly and eternally united with one's own metaphors. While *en route* to Australia, my flight, a Boeing 747 stuffed with tour groups, came very close to crashing on take-off from Honolulu. With stabilizing flaps damaged by metal bars that had broken away from the landing gear, the plane barely lifted off the ground before it began to rattle violently.

In the wake of each fresh plane crash, I confess to reading survivor accounts with intense curiosity, and keep voluminous files. Such accounts almost invariably refer to *violent rattles* moments before disaster, so as the luggage compartments sprang open above our heads, I felt certain that we were seconds away from rattling right into a burn unit. But the Qantas pilot immediately lightened our load by dumping thousands of litres of fuel into the Pacific Ocean, and we lumbered back to Honolulu airport for a surprisingly uneventful emergency landing.

Several hours later, in a typically incongruous late-twentieth century change of scene, I sat watching the surfers ride the waves at Waikiki, a Qantas complimentary cocktail in hand. I thought about other waves, airwaves, the risks of mechanical vibration. I thought about all the radio art transmissions that dump their fuel and make premature landings, about the countless audio aircraft that never arrive at their true destination, or that shake, rattle n' roll violently without coming to the climax. And after three or four more complimentary cocktails, I thought about the crash/rattled post-Rodez body of Antonin Artaud, thereafter resurrected as Artaud, *Le Môme*.

When Artaud was finally released from his psychiatric internment at Rodez, his body had been thoroughly wasted by the nervous explosions of

his mental illness, externally administered electroshock treatment, frequent insulin injections and a terminal case of (undiagnosed) rectal cancer. Convulsed by electricity, and with disease spreading inward from the anus, Artaud returned to Paris in 1946. From this time on, his vision of a *body without organs*, with its promise of pure redemption, takes centre stage.

Artaud's desired new body, stripped bare, scraped clean and turned inside out, quickly assumes a pseudonym. *Le Mômô*: the pure energy of direct brain wave transmission, born from an occult synthesis of needles, electricity and a cacophony of irrefutable inner voices. *Le Mômô*: giving voice to the prosthetic language of the *disembody*, the antibody, the radio-body. *Le Mômô*: full of vocal flatulence, noisy jolts, black magic and bloody nothings.

In 1947, Artaud *Le Mômô* gave voice to his final public pronouncement, *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*, a lacerating cacophonous performance scheduled for national broadcast on February 2, 1948, but cancelled at the last minute by the Director of French Radio, Wladimir Porche. The official explanation rounded up all the usual suspects—obscenity, sacrilege, anti-Americanism. But after listening to a tape of the broadcast, one suspects the presence of a deeper fear, the fear that Artaud *Le Mômô* might yet reverse the voltage and wire countless brains to the shock treatment of his unearthly howls, jolting a million cars into the next world. As *Le Mômô* himself writes: *The magic of electric shock sucks out a death rattle, it plunges the shocked person into that death rattle through which one leaves life.*

—Gregory Whitehead

Excerpted from "Radio Art le Mômô: Gas Leaks, Shock Needles and Death Rattles,"  
*Public 4/5: Sound*, 1990/91.

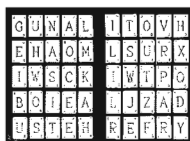
## Reading

What do you take aboard when you read? It seems like aqueous penetration. Through the eyes, through the mouth in vestigial salivation, flowing its slinky ink, writing its unwritable memoir. Mouth, mouth how slyly you are in league with the ear, in bonefolds subtler than the morel's gills. And eye, turning in its pool like an eel, breathing in and out, that body that becomes your body, that body of water clear deep and light going grey at the bottom, invisible. The words stay on the paper, like those leaves at the edge of the pool, not trembling, distinct. Then as if the water rose up to engulf the trees, indeed the world up

to the withers, the clear water overwhelms the buoyant leaves and takes away their pattern, then subsides, while the image invisible begins to fall gently down to the darkest grey. Some fragments raft together, calling up vaster shapes from lower down that rise as they fall, rise as they fall. A sinuous confluence occasionally tense is begotten, and like a spawning the reading. Shadows of their veins decay as debris falls down to dark, and any matter insinuates itself into form, though these are very few, and utterly transformed, not so much verbal as electrical, a charge of pure meaning to be recalled in other times, dry and wet, with the components indistinct or recombined, yet at times as human and whole as the peat bog men preserved in the wet moss of Ireland.

—Pam Brown

## Refray

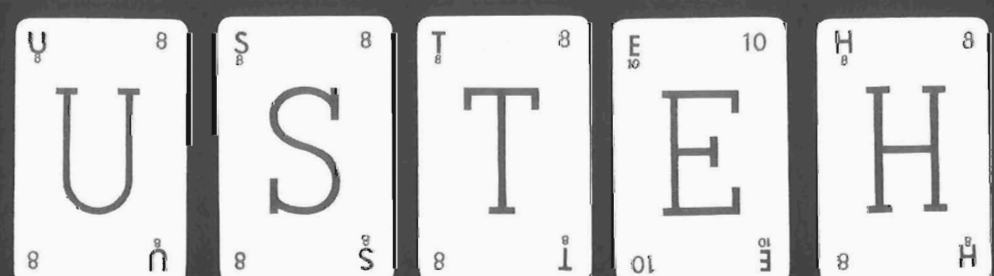
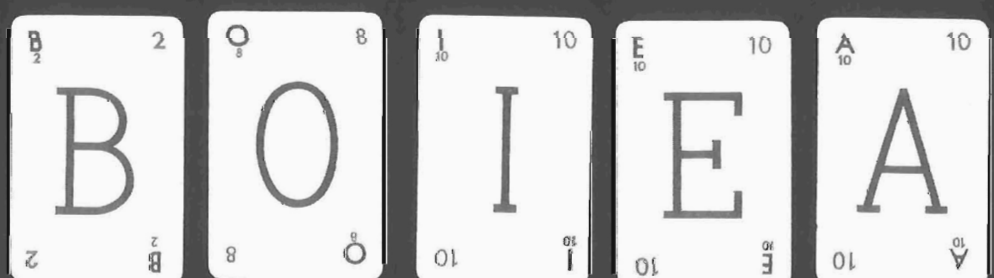
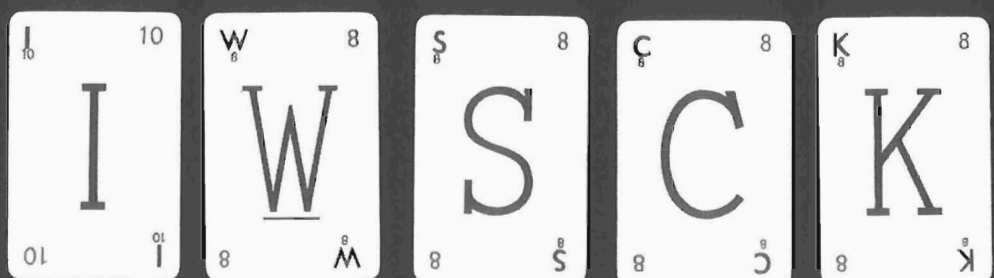
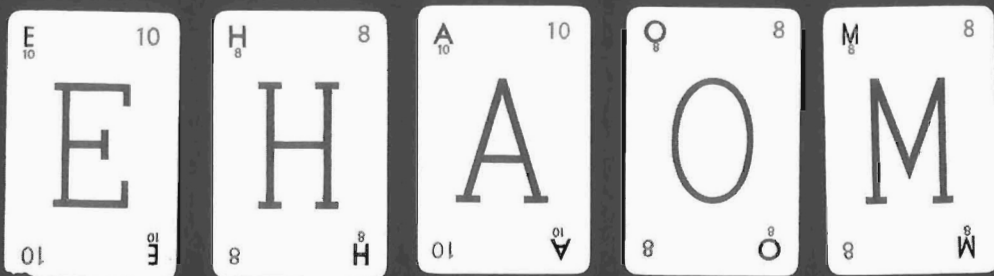
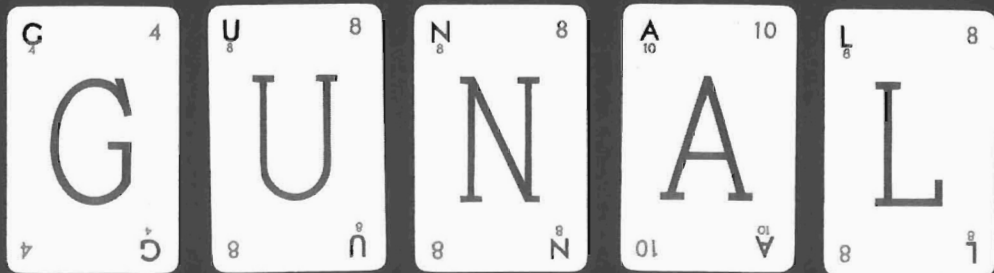


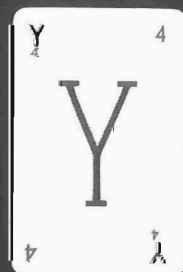
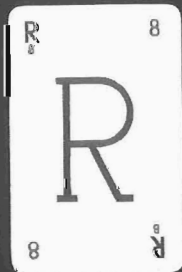
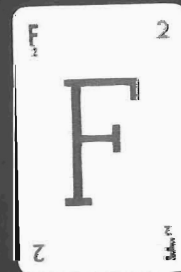
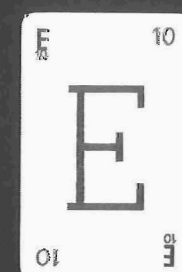
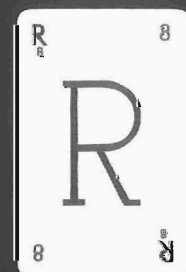
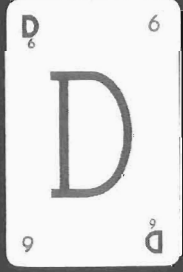
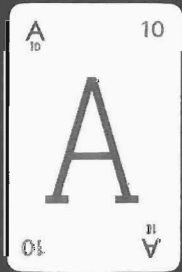
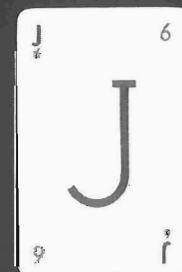
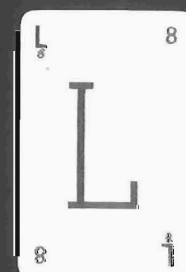
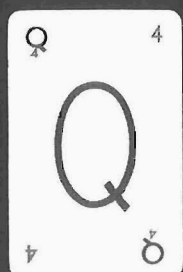
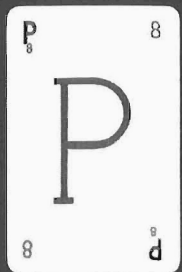
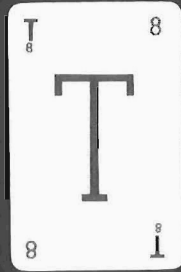
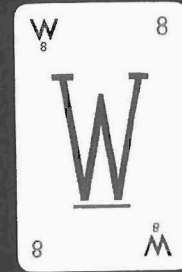
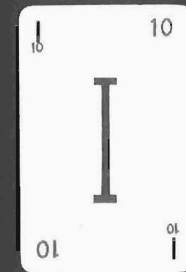
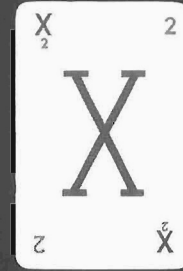
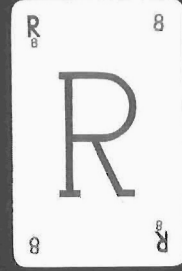
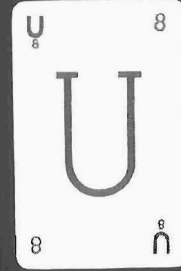
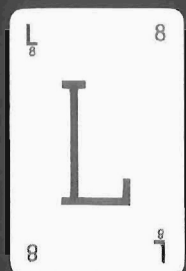
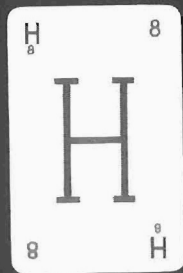
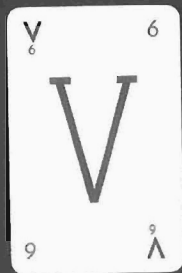
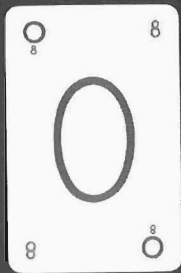
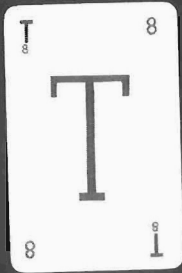
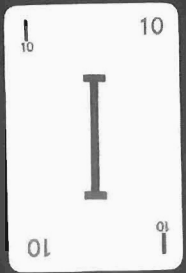
“Lexicon has been described aptly as ‘The Game for the Million,’ and its increasing popularity gives evidence of its widespread appeal.”

Stay at Eco San, an’ sit on da car wi’ Dr. Ali. He’s at par wi’ Lili, eh? I’m sur’ tis toi, so put out da rap til Jim is lit up an’ hets ar’ bi. Put gun to sow an’ refray (*sic*).

“The entertainment value is almost inexhaustible, owing chiefly to the fact that Lexicon caters to all types of players whose tastes differ widely.”

In December, my brother and I were packing up the family storage locker, when we found a yellowed deck of cards, buried in straw in a crate of old china. The spine of the card case was curved wood, mimicking the red leather cover of a dictionary. A tiny instruction manual, dated 1935, listed 24 different games you could play, including “Lexicon Bridge,” “Lexicon Stud Poker,” “Lexicon Don’t Forget” and “Lexicon Donkey.” It was probably our grandmother’s, but we’d never seen her play.





“Owing to the increasing popularity of Lexicon Drives, the following suggestions may prove of assistance to hostesses in their organization.”

We tried most of the games. Maybe it was us. Maybe our tastes differed too widely, maybe we were simply exhausted by the entertainment value, maybe we needed a Lexicon hostess. However, we did not despair.

“A family game, an instructive game, a gamble wild and fierce, a solus game, a round game—in fact, every type of game can be played with Lexicon.”

Lay out all 50 cards in a grid, ten across by five deep. Record all words which occur in any direction: vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Abbreviations, acronymns, slang and proper names are allowed. Construct a story of out of these words, and present it to your fellow players.

“Remember, the lowest score is the winner.”

—John Greyson

## Rights

What does it mean to claim a right, or what is it to do such a thing, since to assume that it is meaningful in advance is to presume too much? Who claims, and on what (if any) basis? The most obvious answer is simply: *I* claim. I claim something that belongs to me as my property, as what is proper and essential to me in virtue of what I am or what I have or what I do (and I am, for starters, human, but I am all sorts of other things too, various identities, understood here as given, or better, as taken, taken for granted). Right is my (own) right, not even right of or on behalf of others; no representation is possible here. Right is what is owed to me as me and no one else. The claim to a right is justified here precisely on the grounds that the site of the claim and of the right are identical. In short, *I am right*, and claiming rights is really nothing other than reclaiming or rescuing them, since they are essentially mine and their loss can be only accidental or contingent.

But what of this *claim*? Why *claim* what is one’s own? Why even open up the relation to the other that the linguistic act of claiming implies when my relation to my rights is essentially a relation to myself without mediation through, or openness to, an other? This claim could only be a statement, the constative declaration of a fact that had fallen into temporary oblivion. Is this act of claiming necessary? For if rights must be claimed, then:

1. the relation to the other, and the supposed “loss” of rights in the other, cannot be merely contingent, and
2. the rights claimed cannot simply pre-exist the claim that is made for them.

In other words, if there is an irreducibility to the act of claiming rights, then they cannot simply be given, and the “I” that claims them for itself cannot be given either but must occur only in relation with an other, an other that always implies the possibility of the disappropriation of oneself and one’s “rights” and “property,” an other whose inevitability is this experience of disproportion, i.e. of language as something other than a system of signs or representations.

—Thomas Keenan

Excerpted from “Deconstruction and the Impossibility of Justice,” *Public 6: Violence*, 1992.

## Scale

A defining quality of the turn of this century is a new or at least hitherto unknown sense of scale. The verb “to scale” means to “represent in proportional dimensions,” to find “commensurable” representations of reality. Whether in the context of technology (how high can a building be built before the proportions of gravity and steel collapse?) or of judgement and ethics (what does it mean to have a sense of proportion?), the human sense of scale has dynamically transformed: coordinates of time and space, coefficients of rate of change, social parameters of normativity. Technologically, the world is faster than perhaps ever before: SPEED is the maxim of the twentieth century. But SIZE in relation to scale has moved in two opposite directions, both “bigger and better,” and, especially in the realm of the virtual, “better, faster, smaller.” The question is: how does the human body, and its proportions and scale, respond? Where do humans fit themselves, limited by a mere three dimensions of space and the obstinate shadow of death, in a social space/time in which metaphors of velocity, amplitude, and compactness dominate? The “perfect” proportions of Da Vinci’s *Vetruvian Man*, arrayed around his centre of gravity, no longer hold. What is needed, ironically, is a new perspective on scale.

The human’s sense of scale is, on one hand, as limitless as her vertiginous imagination. In *The Matrix* (1999) Neo is asked the question, “What do you need?” He responds, “Guns. Lots of Guns.” The rush of gun racks and ammunition that are conjured in the white limbo of the film’s virtual reality trail into infinite perspectival space: more guns than he and Trinity could ever “realistically” use, but at their disposal nonetheless. This CGI visual effect is conceptually no more complicated than the copy-and-paste command of any word-processing program. Its limit is the physical capacity of computer memory and optical resolution, each of which grows exponentially larger and more refined by the day. The scale of human inquiry, observation, and power is larger than had ever been conceived in earlier centuries whether the field is computer imagery, infinitesimal sub-