

Rebels All

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF POLITICAL LIFE

A Federal Election Postscript, by Rob Kovitz

Jean Chrétien, Liberals



1.

There are many ways in which the thing I am trying in vain to say may be tried in vain to be said.

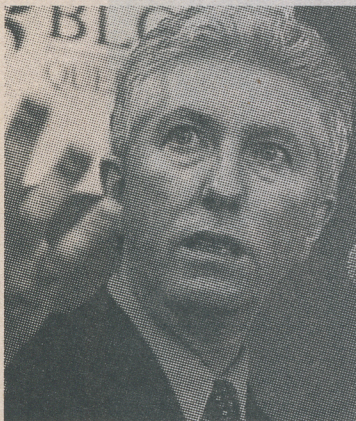
Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable*

He practiced a deliberate vagueness in his imagery, and at no time was this ... man so stupid as to think that his quest for both clarity and its opposite would not involve great personal difficulty.

Patrick Barnard, *The Language of Silent Things*



Stockwell Day, Canadian Alliance



Gilles Duceppe, Bloc Québécois

"What's it like having so many things to say, and not being able to say them?"

He smiled. "You're the only person who ever cared to ask that question. Now you know why I do the pastor's job. These interpretations. They're my way of speaking. Thanks to them, I can live in a foreign language."

"A lot of people have your problem, even people born here. The secret is to stay away from the big words, and not try to say too much."

David Homel, *Get On Top*

The ascent to the heights of Non-Objective art is arduous and painful, but is rewarding nonetheless. The familiar begins to recede into the background. The contours of the objective world fade more and more, step by step until finally the world, everything on which we have lived, becomes lost to sight. No more likeness or reality, no idealistic images, nothing but a desert. I was fearful of leaving the ordinary world of will and idea, but the promise of liberation drew me onward, onto a desert filled with the spirit of Non-Objective sensation, where nothing is real except the feeling.

Kasimir Malevich, *Suprematism*

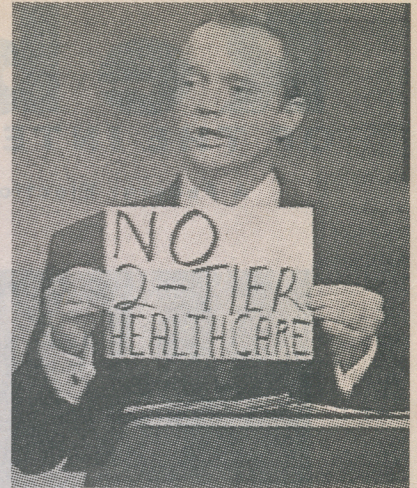


Joe Clark, Progressive Conservatives

2.

There were days, thought Inni Wintrop, when it seemed as if a recurrent, fairly absurd phenomenon were trying to prove that the world is an absurdity that can best be approached with nonchalance, because life would otherwise become unbearable. There were days, for instance, when you kept meeting cripples, days with too many blind people, days when you saw three times in succession a left shoe lying by the roadside. It seemed as if all these things were trying to mean something, but could not. They left only a vague sense of unease, as if somewhere there existed a dark plan for the world that allowed itself to be hinted at only in this clumsy way.

Cees Nooteboom, *Rituals*



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Alexa McDonough, New Democrats



Theirs was a life without a single moment's freedom; if not in harness in the team they were chained with metal chains even in their kennels, and when, after perhaps five or six years of work, their strength began to fail, they were killed and replaced with younger dogs.

The Gimli Saga

I wondered why, in this day and age, anyone would choose a life that was so fraught with difficulties. David shrugged.

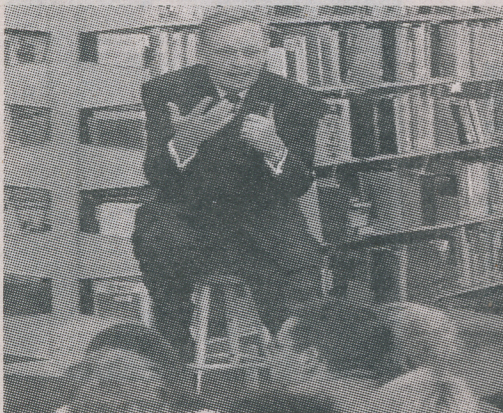
"I have a young cousin who's terrified on the water," he said. "He actually went overboard once, and he was in the water in a life jacket for a couple of hours. He gave up fishing for three years, he wouldn't go out on the lake at all. Now he's back at it."

Chris Gudgeon, *Consider The Fish: Fishing for Canada from Campbell River to Petty Harbour.*



Joe Clark, Progressive Conservatives

Jean Chrétien, Liberals



There's a precise moment when we reject contradiction. This moment of choice is the lie we will live by. What is dearest to us is often dearer to us than truth.

Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces*

3.

"How goes the wandering Jew?" he asked Gazarra.

"Behold, I bring glad tidings."

"No shit?"

Brenner put his elbows on his desk and his chin on his palm, as if his head were a burden too heavy to bear.

"Yeah," Gazarra told him. "I bring you news of the Messiah."

"The Messiah of the House of Gazarra, maybe?"

"Infidels, prepare to know fear the likes of which you can only dream of! Infidels, prepare to believe!"

Brenner gave a low whistle of appreciation. "You're good at that stuff. You should have gone into another line of work. Ever consider being the Messiah yourself?"

"I am unworthy," Gazarra said glumly.

"Don't take it personally. We all are. That's the point, peckerhead."

David Homel, Get On Top



Stockwell Day, Canadian Alliance



Joe Clark, Progressive Conservatives

They were surprised to see how little I accomplished when they found success so easy; I was surprised that they contented themselves with the kind of success that came their way.... They tried to shape my career by leading offers of position and office to me. They were astonished when I passed such offers by, or when, if I accepted one, I shortly abandoned the career this opened. They began to shake their heads in speaking of me: something must, so they concluded, be lacking in this man ... he has no ambition.

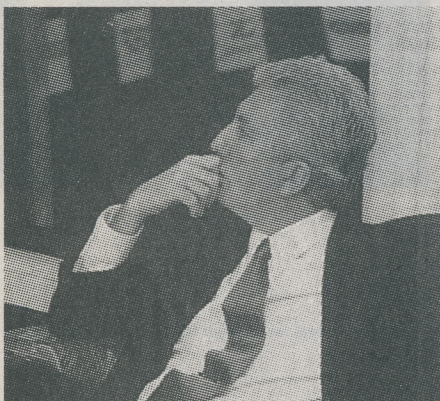
Frederick Philip Grove, Rebels All: Of The Interpretation of Individual Life

I noticed how people played at being executives while actually holding executive positions. Did I do this myself? You maintain a shifting distance between yourself and your job. There's a self-conscious space, a sense of formal play that is a sort of arrested panic, and maybe you show it in a forced gesture or a ritual clearing of the throat. Something out of childhood whistles through this space, a sense of games and half-made selves, but it's not that you're pretending to be someone else. You're pretending to be exactly who you are. That's the curious thing.

Don DeLillo, Underworld



Jean Chrétien, Liberals



Gilles Duceppe, Bloc Québécois

Not that it matters at all. We are here for no purpose, unless we can invent one. Of that I am sure. The human condition in an exploding universe would not have been altered one iota if, rather than live as I have, I had done nothing but carry a rubber ice-cream cone from closet to closet for sixty years.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jailbird

"What, then, is our neighbor? Thou hast regarded his thought, his feelings, as somehow different from thine. Thou hast said, 'A pain in him is not like a pain in me, but something far easier to bear.' He seems to thee a little less living than thou; his life is dim, it is cold, it is a pale fire beside thy own burning desires.... So, dimly and by instinct hast thou lived with thy neighbor, and hast known him not, being blind. Thou hast made [of him] a thing, no Self at all. Have done with this illusion, and simply try to learn the truth. Pain is pain, joy is joy, everywhere, even as in thee.

Josiah Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*



Alexa McDonough, New Democrats



Joe Clark, Progressive Conservatives

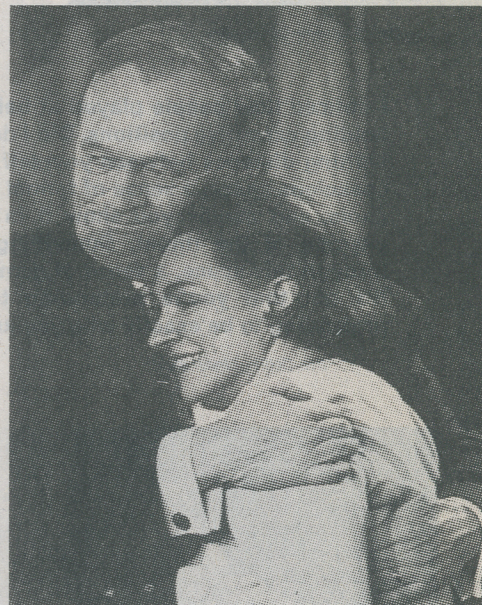
The beauty of the world is the mouth of a labyrinth. The unwary individual who on entering takes a few steps is soon unable to find the opening. Worn out, with nothing to eat or drink, in the dark, separated from his dear ones, and from everything he loves and is accustomed to, he walks on without knowing anything or hoping anything, incapable even of discovering whether he is really going forward or merely turning round on the same spot. But this affliction is as nothing compared with the danger threatening him. For if he does not lose courage, if he goes on walking, it is absolutely certain that he will finally arrive at the center of the labyrinth. And there is God waiting to eat him.

Simone Weil, *Waiting For God*

VLADIMIR: When you seek you hear. **ESTRAGON:** You do? **VLADIMIR:** That prevents you from finding. **ESTRAGON:** It does? **VLADIMIR:** That prevents you from thinking. **ESTRAGON:** You think all the same. **VLADIMIR:** No no, impossible. **ESTRAGON:** That's the idea, let's contradict each other. **VLADIMIR:** Impossible. **ESTRAGON:** You think so? **VLADIMIR:** We're in no danger of ever thinking any more. **ESTRAGON:** Then what are we complaining about? **VLADIMIR:** What is terrible is to have thought. **ESTRAGON:** But did that ever happen to us? **VLADIMIR:** Where are all these corpses from? **ESTRAGON:** These skeletons? **VLADIMIR:** Tell me that. **ESTRAGON:** True. **VLADIMIR:** We must have thought a little. **ESTRAGON:** At the very beginning. **VLADIMIR:** A charnel-house! A charnel-house! **ESTRAGON:** You don't have to look. **VLADIMIR:** You can't help looking. **ESTRAGON:** True. **VLADIMIR:** But we could have done without it. **ESTRAGON:** Que voulez-vous? **VLADIMIR:** I beg your pardon? **ESTRAGON:** Que voulez-vous? **VLADIMIR:** Ah! que voulez-vous. Exactly.

Silence.

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting For Godot*



Jean Chrétien and wife Aline on election night.

Rob Kovitz is creator and publisher of *Treyf* — bookworks and web projects cooked up using appropriated images and texts recombined through a process of highly subjective editing and juxtaposition.

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