

TORONTO FIRE, APRIL 19, 1904—A DANGEROUS WALL.

Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year 1904, by G. L. Smith, at the Department of Agriculture

Luis took me to a bookshop.
Located in a mid-
20th century storefront
on Queen Street,
the entry way was flanked
by two picture windows.
There was a faint smell
of wood, emanating from
the floor-to-ceiling
bookcases. I thought we
might browse these together.

Luis disappeared.

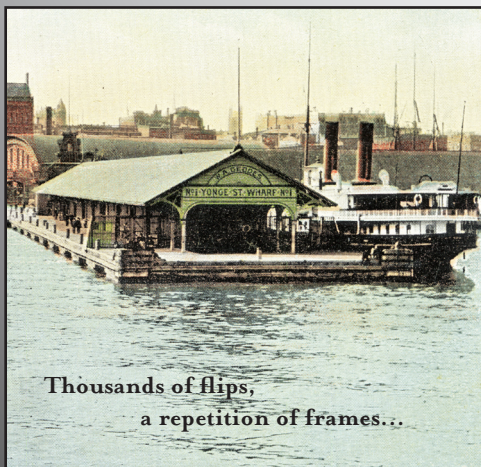
Yonge Street Dock, Toronto

I found him again in one of the window alcoves, hunched over an enormous
reference book, engorged with glossy pictures. I watched him flip through the pages.
Rapidly scanning, reading the images. Flip flip flip.
Each page a two-second register of syntax.

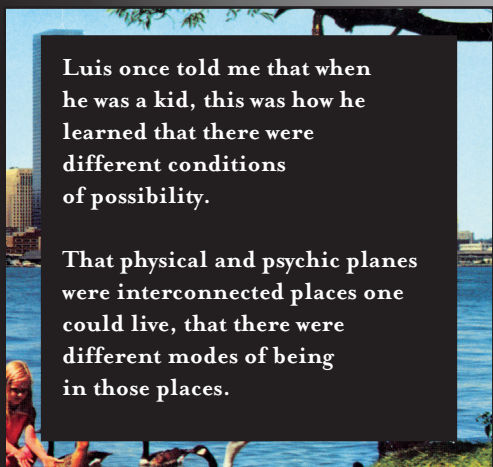


Luis once told me that when
he was a kid, this was how he
learned that there were
different conditions
of possibility.

That physical and psychic planes
were interconnected places one
could live, that there were
different modes of being
in those places.



Thousands of flips,
a repetition of frames...



LIGHTNING

Of inhabiting, or finding one's HABITAT.

Luis has mentioned the theories of sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, in several recent conversations. Social space, according to Bourdieu, is a symbolic field or a place that is constituted as a mode of thought. From childhood onward, distinctions between social classes are internalized in our unconscious minds. This psychic understanding of space correlates to objects (including human agents) with a singular locus in physical space. When Bourdieu claims that "the real is relational," he recognizes a distinction between the physical world and that of our imagination, a difference that nonetheless depends upon correspondences between the two.

Location
and social position

are
implicitly understood
in relation to other...

...locations and social positions.

Bourdieu uses HABITUS to describe the way that a persons' social positioning (in relation to other people of an economic or cultural class) is determined as they unconsciously perform certain gestures and preferences, or appropriate objects and actions for their own use...

HABITAT
shares an
etymological
relationship
with the term
HABITUS.

It strikes me that Bourdieu prefers to write about "taste" (a matter of the tongue) rather than "ideas" (a matter of the mind). It seems to me that the interesting thing about the "psychic plane" is not so much that it exists in the mind, but rather under the skin.

These elements
of style: ways of
walking, dressing,
eating, speaking,
looking,
collecting
nostalgic
postcards...

...are the expression
of one's social standing
in relation to a sense
of place.

Once, a camera
stopped in this
location.
When someone
pressed the
shutter-release
button, it exposed
the film to light.

The postcards reproduced
from the negative might
have been printed,
and looked at,
in many other places.

Why do we still
believe that this
is an image
of the city?

This building is
in the city and/
or/but it is not
of the city.

In fact, the association of
"looking at objects from the past" with "nostalgia"
is itself a form of stereotype. I'm very intrigued by a colonial
and capitalist fear-of-the-old, which shapes this city
in so many ways.

Is this image a stereotype?

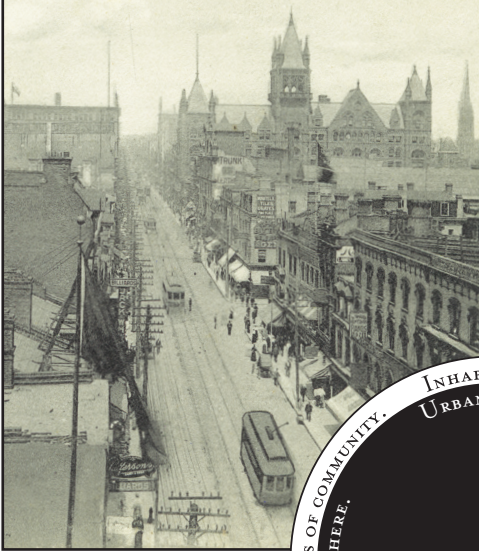
Let's reimagine the stereotypes!

This body of water is in the city
and/or/but predates the city...

... and flows
beyond its boundaries.

Photographs provoke *private feelings* in relation to the *public referents* they depict:
 environmental features, historic landmarks, transportation routes,
 sites of business, leisure and erotic encounters.

looking north from King Street, Toronto.



The viewer adds these feelings
 to an image, extending their experience
 of the picture beyond what is contained
 within a static frame.



Over time,
 as we move about
 and look at pictures,
 a sense of place
 arises in our minds
 and in our bodies.



Sky Line, Toronto, Canada.

INHABITANTS OF A CITY PRODUCE AN AFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP TO PLACE THAT MAY GENERATE FEELINGS OF COMMUNITY.
 URBAN IMAGINARIES ALSO ARISE IN RELATION TO BODIES THAT LOCATE THEMSELVES ELSEWHERE.