The Ethos of Censorship in English-Canadian Literature: An Ontopornosophical Approach

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One has to be completely taken in by this internal ruse of confession in order to attribute a fundamental role to censorship, to taboos regarding speaking and thinking; one has to have an inverted image of power in order to believe that all these voices which have spoken so long in our civilisation — repeating the formidable injunction to tell what one is and what one does, what one recollects and what one has forgotten, what one is thinking and what one thinks [s]he is not thinking — are speaking to us of freedom.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 60

In your Word all is uttered at one and the same time, yet eternally. If it were not so, your Word would be subject to time and change, and therefore would be neither truly eternal nor truly immortal.

St Augustine, *Confessions*, XI:7 (259)

I begin with a caveat. The multidisciplinary approach used here is grounded in disciplines ranging from rhetoric and the history of literary criticism to Canadian social and literary history and from contemporary theory to recent Canadian case law. Since there is no one language or lexicon available for the performance of this task, there is no obvious vehicle of access for the reader whose point of departure is other. But one must start somewhere and so I reach for the tools of one of my own trades, poststructuralist theory, in the knowledge that the history of hermeneutics and of Canadian literary realism are fundamental to my argument but may not be fundamental to the reader’s location. I have attempted to supply contexts, partly through ample endnotes, but these may well be superfluous for some readers while minimalist for others. Yet the work requires this mode of multidisciplinary synthesis for, as I argue here, censorship
For its ideological foundations legitimized its deployment in interpretive field- for an indispensable, socio-cultural, practical criticism beyond an invaluable ally, this concern’s traditional hematocritics (as opposed to its ostensibly secular) possible. Opposite

bounded by its advocates. To risk otherwise was to court controversy and/or an academic subject was to maintain that the opportunity to study our own heritage, in contrast, lie in essential to the formation of the Canadian imagination, and in Canada, whereas in the same period in the United States and Britain, literature reached its full expression, this compartment in History, there was no such thing as a national, thus. Wherein the discipline and its limits, and the discursive and socio-economic networks of meaning-production called literature, are embedded the construction of “community.” To the extent that these various nodes in the discursive production of the Canadian literary institution into the complicated interaction into Canadian and English-Canadian literature is in question.

To intertwine into consciousness and hematocritics once the stage of Cana
section 163 of the Criminal Code (on obscenity), in the minority judgment, Jus-
and Bellet, (455) pressmally resulting in a ‘social affiliation’ among those
imaged the court ascertains, bears a causal relationship to changes in attitudes
and beliefs, (455), exposure to explicit sex which is 'gendered of dehumanizing' (455),
and that harm is occasioned by exposure to the por-
and in particular, when the community would tolerate others being exposed to
representations of sex classified in this case as pornographic. The court’s
counterpart here is that harm in this context predisposes persons to act in a man-
are examples of some of the operations of national sentiments.

Several lights: Where do we start? Among many possible cases, like those – Berlin, Society, Light
national sentiments which uses those concepts with a sociologists, unavoidable
use of the technique of meaningful-prodigious invisible in the service of his
under the very notion of meaningful-prodigious invisible in the service of his
sense of the history of interpersonal modes which they use so recklessly to go
how can we think the historical
how can we think the historical

How can we think the critical tradition that is completed and has endeavored

ion of common sense.

means comprised with realizm has for more than a century occupied the post-
comprehensive strands that enabled their selection in Canada, hence-
comprehensive strands that enabled them to shape the complex, precisely the
once a canon whose constituents complicated by other, comprehensive, previously pro-
ly, productive to revolution, and the land, as well as and, in the

Marxist critique, English-Canadian realism typically operated for a sanitized, real-
Civilty is sacramental in this tradition of tex-
and reader-production. What

Civility is sacramental in this tradition of text and reader-production. What
reproduction and the ranking of the interpretative technologies which produced it.
early texts to instantiating the normal, as usual, Civility because the final of
those conventions that could be accommodated, whether in the classroom or in the-
only by within a moral agenda of social participation and thus of making real,}

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through expression, which he likes to be a dominant theme prevalent in homo-
real life. Justice Smith, however, preferred to assess the necessity of this
situation, and in the examination of the theory of the alphabet and its
interaction in the psychology of the development of language, to consider the
concepts of signification and its effect on the structure and function of
the language. The concept of signification in the language is of
importance, and it is significant that the signification is not
reduced to the mere symbolic representation of the language. The
language is a complex of signs, and the signification is not
limited to the mere symbolic representation of the language. The
signification is not limited to the mere symbolic representation of the
language. The signification is not limited to the mere symbolic
representation of the language.

In Little Sister, the family concerns six-year-old children with
brothers and sisters. Among many witnesses were two children, novelists
of Lafcadio Hearn's works who would read the book. The book was

(3) Presumably, the case is that of a lesbian woman.

Whereas Little is concerned with gender boundaries, Scowen's
(1993) case is that of a lesbian woman. Whether the public needs to be
protected from lesbian erotica or not is a matter for debate. The
case is that of a lesbian woman. Whether the public needs to be
protected from lesbian erotica or not is a matter for debate.

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protected from lesbian erotica or not is a matter for debate. The
case is that of a lesbian woman. Whether the public needs to be
protected from lesbian erotica or not is a matter for debate.
are signs that do not deceive though post-Lapitaean human intelligence may be
a move on the journey toward reification. For Augustine, God's words
in the world. Through reified interpretation, he believes encounters the Gospel
and the sacred assumption of the revelation relation of Christ's Word (Ignatius 10
legends) is an aspect of an evangelical call to reification based in part on a
strategy is an aspect of an evangelical strategy of reification as a narrative and explicative
So in beginning again, the production of 'realism' as a narrative and explicative
Consorship in English-Canadian literature in more detail.

Consorship in English-Canadian literature in more detail. The insight is that humanism and some aspects of the history of humanism before
English-Canadian has returned to an 'enfranchising reification,' in the course of what Joseph
with less than a reified position in Canadian social
more a reified position in Canadian social
more a reified position in Canadian social

Yet in 1990, there has been a shift in Canadian literary - where hierarchy

Hence, with such the consequences.

appropriation, this moment of explicative crisis which MacKinnon
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flawed in its understanding of their complexities. Translation may be necessary, its type or primary figure in this tradition being Christ himself as shape-shifter between divine and human realms. Christ enters human history as language, the Virgin Mary’s words of acceptance – ‘*Fiat,*’ ‘Let it be’ (Luke 1:38) – at the moment of the ‘annunciation’ being traditionally construed as the moment of translation when ‘the Word was made flesh.’ It is this event that is commemorated and, in Roman Catholic practice, reproduced at the moment of transubstantiation in the Mass, which is to say that the transformation of the substances of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (the sacrament of the Eucharist) marks the ultimate proclamation of word as act as ‘truth.’ Within the Catholic tradition, this is, so to speak, as ‘real’ as it gets, a sacramental act of translation.

But the problem of reading God’s book remains, whether the Bible as text or the world as terrestrial expression of sacred inscription wherein humankind might read God’s message. Both are imbricated in the production of Christian hermeneutics as a technology of meaning-production grounded in God’s word sounding in a mutable text, post-Babel and subject to textual ‘corruption’ whether in the form of flawed translations or textual inconsistencies or of the layers of interpretations that precede any new intervention and that must also be elucidated in the contextualization of that intervention. Traditional hermeneutics sought to operate a systematic interpretive technology designed to ‘restore’ the text to its ‘original’ (divine) version and to mediate the text’s journey into the world by elucidating and proclaiming the text’s ‘truth.’ In other words, hermeneutics operated as a truth-production apparatus and was institutionalized as such in both ecclesiastical and secular contexts, including pedagogy and jurisprudence.

To sketch in the history of Christian hermeneutics from the early medieval period to the Enlightenment, tracing its interfaces with the development of a system of jurisprudence grounded in precedent and other interpretive techniques borrowed from hermeneutics, would require far more space than I have here. Suffice it to say that the post-Reformation development of a Protestant hermeneutics that emphasized clarity, simplicity, and accessibility as exegetical goals was also constituted as a ‘return’ to the basics, to a ‘common-sense’ approach to the text which easily transmuted itself into a conviction of the literality of the sacred text. God’s eminent reasonableness accounted for the transparency of the text such that the faithful, with a little help from hermeneutics, could themselves (that is, without the intervention of the clergy) see the truth of the text.

The history of British jurisprudence from the Enlightenment on reflects a
We must talk of words, how words are the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the question of the meaning of word, or word, as the answer to the 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company of "immorally clothing young women," Clark observed. The group was so influential that it founder, William Clark, sex education for young boys created a similar course. They

and Andrew F. G. Kehoe's Nimhesh has shown in terms of a major tenet of the
discipline's commitment to research through English studies on the

in Mathematics and Science, annual Journals, and major issues in sociology.

Bereanpublic is one of the best, properly, decolonial, or The.

Historically, in English Canadian literary criticism, such anger has often been

be seen as a unifying model of the real.,
they drink neither tea nor coffee and refrain from dancing, and that they seek improved ventilation and take frequent baths. Through these means they could produce a strong character and a pure self.\(^\text{17}\)

Literary hygiene made similar demands. The critic’s role was that of teacher, interpreter, arbiter of good taste, and custodian of 'the health and purity which have distinguished Canadian prose and verse in the past,' as Ray Palmer Baker put it in 1920.\(^\text{18}\) For Charles Mair in 1875, the critic was guardian of the 'new Dominion' which 'stands, like a youth upon the threshold of his life, clear-eyed, clear-headed, muscular and strong, though in need of guidance.'\(^\text{19}\) In giving his allegiance to 'what is actually being lived among us,' W.A. Fraser wrote that the critic supports and maintains 'Truth.' In an article published in 1899 in the *Canadian Magazine*, Fraser maintained that 'above all else we must have Truth. We are strong, rugged people. Our country is great in its God-given strength – its masculine beauty. Canada is one of Mother Earth’s bravest, sturdiest sons. Even our climate is boisterous and strength-producing. Strength begets Truth, and Truth makes Strength God-like.'\(^\text{20}\)

Along the road to godliness, the critic will discover what Archibald Mac-Mechan termed the 'Decency Principle,' according to which the majority of fiction-readers 'ranks itself decisively on the side of the angels,'\(^\text{21}\) a position from which the critic might be able to adjudicate – favourably – the text's adherence to codes of plausibility, authenticity, sincerity, and vitality, and even wholesomeness and virility. As W.J. Keith writes in 1985 of Stephen Leacock, 'What comes off the page is a man talking.'\(^\text{22}\) 'Precise, decorous, civilized, touched with wit,' says Munro Beattie (without a trace of irony) in 1965 of Eli Mandel.\(^\text{23}\)

What price wholesomeness? What I have elsewhere referred to as the 'discourse of civility' operates as a strategy of containment in literary histories of English-Canadian literature, just as it does in social-purity discourse in general during this period. However, this rhetoric persisted in Canadian literary criticism long after its transmutation in other domains, lingering into the 1980s in, to take one example, a journal as influential as *Canadian Literature*. Founded by George Woodcock in 1959, *Canadian Literature* remains one of the leading journals in the field – some would argue, the pre-eminent journal with a well-established international as well as national circulation. Stalwartly rejecting the 'Mandarin' stance of the academic critic,\(^\text{24}\) Woodcock insisted that despite his journal’s connection to the University of British Columbia, it would serve the interests of 'real people,' both writers and readers (64[1975]4). Amplifying this commitment, Woodcock’s successor, W.H. New, has reasserted the value of literature as a 'radical force ... in reclaiming the existence of commonsense community values' and of a 'style of life [which] depends on circumstances, moral under-
standings, custom, ceremony and other non-exclusive claims upon a complex heritage’ (87[1980]4).

The populist-anarchist rhetoric of Woodcock’s editorials becomes a more explicitly liberal-communitarian rhetoric under New. Whereas Woodcock inveighs against ‘specialization’ (11[1962]4) with its ‘mind-made palaces’ (11[1959]5), favouring the vitality of the ‘public critic’ (49[1971]5), New champions ‘public values,’ ‘the persistence of human aspiration,’ and a ‘passion for moral conscience and the possibility of individual choice,’ for, New writes, ‘to be a people ... is to be an embodiment of shared values’ (104[1985]5). However, as Nikolas Rose has observed of the shifting political allegiances associated with this term, ‘community’ can take on an exclusionary character perpetuating those discursive formations of ‘civility’ noted above. As Rose puts it, ‘liberalism began to govern by making people free yet inextricably linking them to civility.’

I take the editorial traditions of Canadian Literature during its first three decades as representative of a complex of discursive strategies invoked in the process of ‘normalizing the subject.’ Through the formation of a distinctively Canadian set of variations on literary ‘realism’ in which, as Lawrence Mathews has maintained, ‘so much of what realism normally includes has been edited out,’ it has been possible for the dominant critical tradition to ensure that texts become canon on the basis of the possibility of their being inscribed within the moral values of the ‘commonsense community.’ Thus, the formation of what came to be known as ‘List B’ at the 1978 Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel, a self-conscious exercise in canon production generated on the basis of a mail ballot sent by Malcolm Ross, editor of McClelland and Stewart’s New Canadian Library, to a select group of Canadian academics and writers who had been invited to attend the event. In his letter accompanying the ballot, Ross indicated that he hoped the conference would ‘propose a list of significant Canadian novels that can serve as a guide to those interested in the masterworks of our literary tradition.’ The resulting list of ten novels comprises one example of modernist disjunction – Sheila Watson’s The Double Hook – and nine examples of texts typically construed in terms of hermeneutic strategies of ‘reality’-construction: Margaret Laurence’s The Stone Angel and The Diviners, Robertson Davies’s Fifth Business, Sinclair Ross’s As for Me and My House, Ernest Buckler’s The Mountain and the Valley, Gabrielle Roy’s The Tin Flute, Mordecai Richler’s The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, Hugh MacLennan’s The Watch That Ends the Night, and W.O. Mitchell’s Who Has Seen the Wind.

Crucial to the delineation of its opposite, this is the paradigm of the ‘normal’: the use of selection strategies that produce the desired ‘community’ to be canvassed; the production of ‘results’ from a ‘democratic’ ballot sent to a pre-
selected electorate; the emphasis on the classroom-utility value of texts that will be conducive to the re/production of authority and moral order; the interfacing of student expectations with faculty ease in the generation of pleasant class discussions redolent of harmonious relations. Ideology as performative.

It is not surprising, then, that three texts from List B have been constituted as occasions of censorship, for the same logic that attests to distinction may attest equally to what the Butler lexicon terms ‘degradation.’ Thus, The Diviners has been one of the most controversial novels ever taught in Canadian high schools. From 1978 on it was removed from schools in Huron Country, Orangeville, and Lakefield, Ontario, and Kings County, Nova Scotia, among others. It has been challenged in many school districts, and in several cases reinstated after examination by board committees. In 1985 the Peterborough County Board of Education (which operates schools in Lakefield, Ontario, where Margaret Laurence lived until her death) was challenged by a municipal councillor to ban The Diviners, A Jest of God, and The Stone Angel. A board committee set up to review the books rejected the challenge.39 ‘Sexual episodes’ and ‘profane words’ (including the line ‘Now I’m crying, for God’s sake,’ from The Diviners) were the problem in Peterborough.30 Pentecostal minister Sam Black displayed copies of The Diviners with ‘four-letter words and sex scenes highlighted in yellow.’ He ‘invited people to sign a petition in the lobby of his Peterborough church “in defence of decency.”’ “I think these passages were written to arouse people,” he said, quickly adding he wasn’t aroused himself.31 As recently as March 1994, the same novel was again targeted by a parents’ group in the Ottawa area that wished to have The Diviners removed from local high schools.

Beyond the paradigm of List B but consistent with its principles, Alice Munro’s Lives of Girls and Women was also removed from the Peterborough high school curriculum in 1978, again as a result of parental wrath. The Catholic Women’s League in the town of Kingsbridge, Huron County, was concerned about ‘gutter talk and blasphemy’ as well as sexual references in Munro’s and Laurence’s books.32 They were successful in having Lives of Girls and Women and The Diviners banned from local school curricula. Further attempts to have Munro’s book removed from high school curricula took place in 1982 in Toronto at Malvern Collegiate and in 1984 in Etobicoke where a trustee of the local Board of Education described the book as ‘porn, pure and simple.’33 Other examples of bannings include the 1987 campaign by Parents for Quality Curriculum in Victoria County, Ont., against The Diviners, A Jest of God, and The Stone Angel as well as John Newlove’s anthology, Canadian Poetry – The Modern Era, and Al Purdy’s Selected Poems. As in the 1994 attempt to suppress another poetry anthology in Sechelt, British Columbia, the concern appears to have been ‘anti-establishment attitudes’34 disseminated through poems, a con-
had been requested by the crown lawyers to provide copies of those books as
had already been obtained byCustoms. Then the bookstores, lawyer, Joe Avery,
full of importan copies of books Which when ordered by Little Sister’s, and
called upon by the ministerial staff, were for the Little Sister’s Bookstore chain in Vancouver, in Vancouver-
and/or Little Sister’s was made of the Little Sister’s Bookstore in Vancouver.
This is precisely the point where the Little Sister’s case has been the
case of suppression of the book: Canadiana in Canadian Christian circles with Canada Christian "circuses".

This is precisely the point where the Little Sister’s case has been

Dad (dad) defining gay and lesbian families. 42

The school board proceeded to revise their policy on gay and lesbian
involvement in the banishment of the primary-school curriculum of the books
involved in the banishment. The primary-school board had been
placed under criticism for their .

The banishment was overturned with the challenge by the board against an additional liberty to

prior to the decision, the banishment of the gay and lesbian.

The school board proceeded to revise their policy on gay and lesbian
involvement in the banishment. The regional library board in the same area was also
drawn into the challenge. The challenge was called by the board and has been

successfully concerned student Katrine Lanteigne’s play, 6, Men Had Periods.

The school board proceeded to revise their policy on gay and lesbian
involvement in the banishment. The challenge was called by the board and has been

No sex but what’s natural! was the concern voiced by certain Ontario parents.

The teacher in question decided not to use Valkaasson’s book again.

In 1961 when the Victoria County school board adopted a review of the material and
Certainly Smirnoff, and although they did not succeed in 1961, they looked changed

The school board proceeded to revise their policy on gay and lesbian
involvement in the banishment. The challenge was called by the board and has been

exempted. Valkaasson, The school board rejected this request.

Laxter’s book was withdrawn from circulation in primary-school libraries in

By 1972 an official of the International Woodworkers of America asked that

can as well with the children’s book Maxine’s Tree by Diane Leger in French.
Similarly selective practices were at work in the detention of the Kiss and Tell Collective's book *Drawing the Line*, published by Press Gang in Vancouver but distributed by Inland Book Company of East Haven, Connecticut. When the photographic installation documented in this volume began to attract attention in American magazines like *Deneuve* and *Libido,* *Drawing the Line* was seized on a return journey to Canada, en route to Edmonton.\(^44\) Persimmon Blackbridge describes the 1991 exhibition:

The photos are arranged on the gallery walls, starting with relatively non-controversial photographs with no nudity or explicit sex, and with photos which are deliberately constructed to cover a range of problematic and controversial issues. Viewers are invited to express their opinion of the various photographs, to 'draw the line' as regards their personal limits. Women viewers write their reactions directly on the walls around the photographs ... The gallery walls are soon scrawled over with writing. The pictures float in a sea of text, no longer functioning as separate sexual images, but set literally within the context of debates, discussions, and disagreements about sexual representation.\(^45\)

Evidently, the problem for Canada Customs was that the photographs were 'of' two women, Blackbridge and Lizard Jones.

When representation fails to function as a device for the normalizing of the subject, both representation and subject disappear. In the case of Jane Rule, this has meant the 1990 detention by Canada Customs of *The Young in One Another's Arms,* in 1993 of *Contract with the World,* and in the same year of Donna Deitch's film *Desert Hearts,* a cinematic version of Rule's novel, *Desert of the Heart.* As Janine Fuller and Stuart Blackley note in *Restricted Entry,* this 1985 film 'circulated freely in Canadian movie houses and video stores for years before being detained by Customs en route to Little Sister's in 1993.'\(^46\)

For Timothy Findley, disappearance took the form of a classic example of what I have referred to as translation. Findley writes: 'In Sarnia, a 17-year-old schoolgirl attempted to have my novel, *The Wars,* removed from her curriculum because — and I quote — it advocates homosexuality. When she was asked why she thought this, she gave as her reason a scene in which a man is gang-raped. Advocates homosexuality. An interesting interpretation of rape.'\(^47\) The novel and the teacher survived, Findley comments, though both were damaged in the process. It is an experience that will be familiar to many teachers working with Findley's novel.

*Translatio:* borne across. As Mary Douglas puts it in *Purity and Danger,* 'uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be main-
tained." The mess of interpretive confusion has been cleared away, the pattern will be obvious, for "those species are unclean which are imperfect members of their class, or whose class itself confounds the general scheme of the world." The "community" resists the shifting of its values. The young reader in Sarnia resists the shifting of her world map. Her misprision enables the retention of her world: homosexuality is rape, rape is violation, homosexuality is violation in need of "advocacy"; heterosexuality (that which is violated) is not in need of advocacy (since it speaks everywhere, always).

Lise Gotell writes with reference to Canadian obscenity law: "implicit ... is the assumption that the depiction of sexual practices that lie outside of majoritarian norms constitutes a threat to the community itself." What is dangerous in the case of Findley's novel, therefore, is the representation of rape among men just as what is dangerous in the Kiss and Tell Collective's exhibition is sex between women. Since what cannot be spoken is same-sex love (which is gently suggested several times elsewhere in The Wars), it must be spoken instead as rape lest heteronormative innocence be transgressed. What cannot be spoken is the "Truth" of representation when that "Truth" sets a male character in the raped position reserved for a female. Thus, the representation of rape is translated into the event of homosexuality such that a book must be banned in order to restore "community" consensus, not to mention "hygiene."

In the context of the courts, a more complex hermeneutics must be invoked but the results in cases like Butler and Little Sister's as well as Scythes reinforce this notion of consensual reality. Given that the hermeneutic technology for the construction of "community standards" by the courts lines up quite precisely with that for the construction of literary meaning and value within the realist tradition in Canada, it is not surprising that the courts succeed in making them corroborate each other. If the construction of homosexuality and lesbianism by the courts can be read as a subset of legal constructions of heterosexuality gone "wrong," as it were, into pornography and obscenity, then we may construe the hermeneutics of the heterotext as fundamental to its othering. Thus, arguments about pornography are always already arguments about realism, the transparent case of all representation in this normative system. Without realist configurations of representation and without community training in their "common-sense" production, pornography could not be seen to function. Without the logos of a heterotextic economy of word made flesh, representation could not function as event. Without the construction of speech acts as (sacramental) events, pornography could not be construed as performative. Without the faith community trained in their reception, speech acts could not achieve event consensus. Without the assumption of stable meaning, text and context, "common-sense" herme-
My own experience as an expert witness for the plaintiffs in the Little Sisters' Church case, whether or not I have found the line of reasoning in my argument, is an experienced viewpoint. The experience of fighting discrimination in the workplace is a reality. When I sit down and write this book, I have lost the identity of the woman who was prima facie damaged by an apparently expression of familial disfavor. Did I not, when I first heard it, understand it? After hearing, a woman's voice, was the experience different and certainly less painful. After hearing, a woman's voice, was the experience different and certainly less painful. After hearing, a woman's voice, was the experience different and certainly less painful.
repulsive, noisy, contaminating... [The] very act of exclusion... [is] constitutive of... [bourgeois] identity. A positive response would have purified disgust and legitimized the crown’s position. My negative response nonetheless served to reinforce Van Iperen’s position and he turned away, making a throwaway gesture of disgust: a moment’s victory in the form of silent propriety.

In seeking to embody community standards, Van Iperen needed to encode the ‘truth’ of his point, as Brenda Cossman has argued, in tolerance however grudgingly dismissive his enactment of it. Thus, the ‘obviousness of this distinction [between presence and absence of urine, in Van Iperen’s example] is underscored by the fact that no expert evidence is required to establish it. The line between good sex and bad sex is an ‘instinctive’ matter – a matter of common sense for a judge who will, presumably, simply recognise it when he sees it. So the situation is inverted and finessed, a subtle courtroom demonstration of the sheer bad manners of water sports anywhere, let alone among men.

On the surface, an inconsequential moment. Perhaps similarly inconsequential was Van Iperen’s deference to Jane Rule during her testimony as expert witness at the same trial. As she does in her essays, Rule evoked a liberal-humanist context in her statement, in many ways meeting the court on its own ideological ground. She spoke of genre distinctions, evaluation of works of art, artistic purpose and merit; about the moral status of certain texts and about narratives that ‘over and over again... deal with circumstances that lesbians actually go through.’ Rule concluded her statement with a powerful expression of ‘community’ and identity which left many in the courtroom deeply moved: ‘Of course we have writers who are writing erotica, and so we should. I celebrate that. But we are not a community churning out sex tracts. We are a community speaking with our passion and our humanity in a world that is so homophobic that it sees us as nothing but sexual creatures instead of good Canadian citizens, fine artists, and brave people trying to make Canada a better place for everybody to speak freely and honestly about who they are.’

In speaking the language and using the hermeneutic technology of community consensus and liberal values, Rule inadvertently positioned herself in the place of exclusion delineated for her as an exhibit, as witness to the detention of her own work. She was, in other words, made to speak herself as pornography within the frame of a hegemonic discourse which had already constituted her work as such.

My sentence echoes Catharine MacKinnon’s in Only Words: ‘When words of sexual abuse are in our mouths, that is pornography, and we become pornography because that is what pornography is. The representation is the event. The event is the representation. One witnesses in word and flesh, in flesh as word. MacKinnon renders visible that moment of transparency when Augustinian
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hermeneutics serves its sacramental purpose and transcendance is effected and revealed. Like Augustine, MacKinnon renders this process doctrinal (doxa) through, with, because of, and co-created with the faith community for which, from which, and of which she speaks. The sacramental moment is thereby transiently constitutive of the transcendance that it voices.

What is transcended is sex. Brenda Cossman frames the argument in terms of the ‘internal necessities’ and ‘artistic defence’ tests as presented in Butler. A binary opposition between ‘good sex’ and ‘bad sex’ is set up such that one is what the other is not, just as Nino Ricci’s and Jane Rule’s similar invocations of hermeneutic criteria set up an opposition between the court’s understanding of what Ricci is and what Rule is not. The representation of the ‘merely physical’ is ‘subhuman’ and must be harmful. As Cossman demonstrates, the subhuman world of ‘“dirt for dirt’s sake”’ has been associated by the courts with heterosex gone ‘bad’ — that is, pornographic — and with homosexual and bisexuality in general. According to the terms of mind-body dualism, where ‘bad sex’ emphasizes the ‘merely physical,’ ‘good sex’ emphasizes the mind. ‘In this opposition, the body, the physical, the sensual, are seen as base, as bad, in need of control and, ultimately, transcendance.’ The only sex that can be the subject of art is ‘sex that transcends its physical nature by appealing to the intellect, the emotions, the soul."

If the ultimate appeal of hermeneutics is to transcendance, its ultimate vehicle — beyond the vast armamentarium of exegetical procedures — is faith. Faith in God the word, in scriptures and church as the loci of the gospel, and, paradoxically, faith that renders hermeneutics superfluous and without which hermeneutics operates as a meaning-generating technology sans revelation. For hermeneutics does not account for mystery but, rather, traces its architec-tonics in language. It is faith that constitutes the lived experience of the scriptures as community and that, by the time of Luther and his heritage in the work of Freidrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey, constitutes community as the location and agent of consensual hermeneutics. In other words, faith as ideology renders the technology of meaning-production which serves it transparent to itself. Consciousness of the technology of interpretation is subsumed as those kinds of meaning produced by this technology come to seem synonymous with ‘meaning’ itself. As ‘common sense,’ hermeneutics is, within its own terms, simply what is obvious when interpretation is required. Hermeneutics then seems to be ‘the only game in town.’ Its operations have become the defining constituents of meaning such that other ‘games’ are unavailable, even unimaginable. Paul de Man figures this faith-proclamation as ‘resistance to theory.’ Here we can see it also as a profound reinscription of the ‘hermeneutic circle’ bounding the normalized subject or, in terms of
Brenda Cossman's argument, constituting 'good sex' as the circumference of meaning and/as the 'real.'

Schleiermacher writes of literary meaning-production: 'When I have exhausted the meaning of every part of the text, there is nothing left to be understood.' Thus, hermeneutics reaches its destination. On the other side, the place of 'nothing,' there is only transcendence. What is produced out of this 'nothing,' what has been produced in the courts and in the literary academy in Canada, is censorship.

NOTES

1 This paper is for Jane Rule and Helen Sonthoff, whose world and whose kindness twenty-five years ago enabled me to begin to imagine mine, and for Sarah Rauch in the daily negotiation of a place called home.


4 Margery Fee has identified the first Canadian literature course taught in a Canadian post-secondary institution as a 1907 summer course at Macdonald Institute, an affiliate of the Ontario Agricultural College. Scattered courses through the 1940s and 1950s included Canadian literary texts and were offered at such institutions as McMaster University, the University of New Brunswick, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Alberta. See M. Fee, 'Canadian Literature and English Studies in the Canadian University,' ECW, 48 (1992–3), 22–3.


21 Archibald MacMechan, Head-Waters of Canadian Literature (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1924), 208.


27 Lawrence Mathews, ‘Calgary, Canonization, and Class: Deciphering List B,’ in Lecker, Canadian Canons, 158.


32 Vancouver Sun, 23 May 1978.

36 Ibid., 7.
37 Ibid., 6.
38 'A Chronicle of Freedom of Expression in Canada,' 5.
39 Cossman, Censorship and the Arts, 142.
40 Ibid., 146.
44 Ibid., 72.
46 Ibid., 76.
49 Ibid., 56.
50 Gotell, in Cossman et al., Bad Attitude/s, 84.
52 See Cossman in Bad Attitude/s, 134.
53 Roland Barthes's term 'logotherapy' signifies language-making. See Barthes, Sade/Fourier/Loyola, trans. Richard Miller (N.Y.: Hill and Wang 1976), 3. Barthes's comments on Sade are apropos: 'The legal condemnation of Sade is ... based on a certain system of literature, and this system is that of realism: it postulates that literature "represents," "figures," "imitates"; that the conformity of this imitation is what is being offered for judgment ...; lastly, that to imitate is to persuade, to seduce: a schoolroom viewpoint with which, however, an entire society, and its institutions, agrees' (ibid., 37).
54 On pornography as performative, see J. Butler, Excitable Speech, 68–9. My argument here is indebted also to Mark Cousins and Parveen Adams, who note that 'what is always being represented, over and over again [in MacKinnon's Only Words], is the moment of the collapse of representation and event into each other, the moment that creates and re-creates the world of the text.' See Cousins and Adams, 'The Truth on Assault,' October, 71 (winter 1995), 100.
60 Cossman in *Bad Attitude/s*, 110.
62 Rule, "Detained at Customs," 18–19.
64 Cossman in *Bad Attitude/s*, 111.
65 Ibid., 112.
67 Cossman in *Bad Attitude/s*, 112.
68 Ibid., 114.
71 Stanley Fish’s phrase: *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1980), 355.
73 The ‘hermeneutic circle’: ‘The whole of a work must be understood from individual words and their combination but full understanding of an individual part presupposes understanding of the whole’ (Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, 259).
74 Schleiermacher in Mueller-Vollmer, *The Hermeneutics Reader*, 94.