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L-e-s-s-o-n

In

Schematics (? 🚑 🏠 🕒 ✓ 🏠 📄 ?)

Yeah...who's the teacher ?

By

lachlan

McDougall

WHY I LIKE IT: *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... Lachlan McDougall is no slouch, has been printed in our magazine before, and, while needing no introduction, I'm still going to introduce them. Definitely a human being that one should be reading, McDougall not only crafts an idea that you can only pin with tacks and string on corkboard, but an idea that resonates as a feeling within the reader. I too have danced unclothed in the rain, and I feel that McDougall may have done so as well. It's very rare when you get to meet a mind that can take you from moment to moment, touching each rain drop, and I would simply just be an asshole if I didn't say that this author can touch Joyce or Burroughs or Pound or, for fun, Nabokov – black petals are often*

like rain, each one dropping can shift and capture a mindset. “A Lesson in Schematics,” is a lesson in the ghost memory, the déjà vu, the imprint of a feeling upon a feeling upon a feeling. The trappings of our memories, historically important or not, take us to worlds that we would normally never touch in our daily lives. When the schematics of our lives connect repeatedly with the past, what life have we built but our own upon the foundation of others – for good or bad? As always, a good work to read.

Five stars.

QUALITY QUOTABLE (for the love of language...)

Picture postcard 1920s New Orleans: I faded silver distant over jazz of riverboats. Oily lagoon pictures flashing kerosene lamp of lost sleep. Picture postcard a distant memory. Looks like we got the wrong date boys—I'm still here but at the wrong address.

Old man walking stick... dog yapping... children begging... “very good meester”... “I say, do you have the time...” (his watch has stopped) “It’s a sad state of affairs...” *quien es?*... who shot you?... a marmalade breakfast I’m afraid... (blood on the sidewalk, blood in his hair).

A Lesson in Schematics

Walk down the street tell me what do you see? Old man hovering over his walking stick walking a small dog yapping at his heels... children begging for ice-cream... an old organ grinder and his monkey... now what are your coordinates? Where are you placed in time and space and no I’m not talking about your physical location although that certainly is a part of it (look around you, where are you now?). I’m talking about your real coordinates—what are you thinking? How does it relate? Have you seen that man before? What conversations do you hear and how do they relate to what has happened so far? (“On an average day//*quien es?*//you will find yourself in a beautiful house...”) You will find a number of connections running through your life that you never thought possible—this is a magical universe and there are no coincidences. Take a look around you and notice the lay of the land. “Authorized personnel only” says the sign and that’s exactly what it means—you will notice that a man disappears behind the curtain, you will notice

that an overheard conversation has direct bearing on your future activities or perhaps this was yesterday's news?

Quien es? We are making a study of intersection points, make a study, read the paper and find an interesting article now imagine you are reading this article in a past life, that is before the event has taken place. Locate yourself spatially and temporally in the past and see what happens. Now move forwards and try to imagine events before they happen—see how far you get—you may see a photograph relates to an article written a month from now, might be a year before that man comes back out from behind the curtain.

I walked in the door to the sound of rasping breath the death rattles of something happening here and I couldn't quite tell what. My notes indicated that someone was to die but I did not yet know who or under what circumstances. I took a photograph with my polaroid instant camera shaking the developing film like ticker tape... old man walking stick... have I seen this man before?... 'authorized personnel only'...

The tape flew from the ceiling in long streamers careening around the room like a whore's smile. I stood by the window lit a cigarette there on the ashtray stood my polaroid dim and distant a faded look about it I held the future time against my faded cheek falling into the photograph like so much cigarette ash. Here I was walking in the door to nothing and nobody home—stench of death on the place sense of misadventure. I checked through the cupboards and found them bare lit a cigarette standing by the window and opened up my notebook: *SEPTEMBER 30, 1946, Nuremberg trials begin*—I took the stand cool and casual smoking a cigarette by the window. Now where did I see this before? In an old film I remember now ticker tape parade before the war... little dog yapping at his heels... children begging for ice-cream... I looked through my notes and saw the intersection points align bringing me into present time.

Picture postcard 1920s New Orleans: I faded silver distant over jazz of riverboats. Oily lagoon pictures flashing kerosene lamp of lost sleep. Picture postcard a distant memory. Looks like we got the wrong date boys—I'm still here but at the wrong address. Fumigating the neighbourhood from the look of the air—I walked around the house to nothing and nobody home. Distant sound of dog yapping at his heels. I walked down the street noticed the man from before he held himself lightly over his walking stick *quien es? Who shot you?*

I found myself naked in the rain dancing a polka it was a total farce I'm afraid. Where did I read this in a future time? My images don't show anything like this for another thousand years but here I am naked and afraid. *Quien es? Who shot you?* I looked out over the walkway a series of pulleys moving platforms across the room so that they intersected at various points forming long paths that snaked around the room at irregular angles jutting up here and there and shifting slightly with the movement of the air. I chose a path and found myself walking turned about and heading back the way I came. Moved again and veered steeply to the right disappearing down a hole of melted steel that had formed in the rough sedimentary floor. Kerosene lamp burning low I took a look at my notes and decided the best path was to wait so I sat down a thousand years cool blue and still.

Old man walking stick... dog yapping... children begging... "very good meester"... "I say, do you have the time..." (his watch has stopped) "It's a sad state of affairs..." *quien es?... who shot you?... a marmalade breakfast I'm afraid...* (blood on the sidewalk, blood in his hair).

The walkways snaked around again and I found myself on the floor of old photographs where the young women were kicking up their heels showing off their dainty undergarments like a penny peepshow arcade. Like something out of Joyce I watched them feeling my hand in my pocket this was a photograph a distant memory cool and blue I took the stand September 30, 1946.

Now look at the coincidences in your life and you will see that they are not coincidences at all. Something has set this in motion and all we have to do is read the lines. Of course, it is possible to change events through careful manipulation of your intersection points—set up your photographs so that you won't miss, arrange your text to speak to you of a future time... cold lonely an old man walking his dog... you could be anybody and here you are in a grey flannel suit... check your diary for current coordinates—where are you? What are you thinking? Have you seen that man before? Ask yourself where this has been in a previous life—ask yourself *quien es???*

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *A Lesson in Schematics concerns intersection points—take a look around you will notice your own. A term borrowed from William Burroughs, I have taken the idea on as my own. Intersection point one. Turtles snapping oily lagoon—Burroughs old man suit and hat—book on the mantelpiece—electric waves of pain in the distance... write your own story, notice the small coincidences that make up your day—you will notice that there are very few coincidences.*

AUTHOR BIO: Lachlan J McDougall is an Australian artist and text technician working in cut-up and experimental literature. Their work aims at manipulation of intersection points and dissection of the control machine. The author of numerous books of poetry and prose, their work can be found at Amazon.com.