

“A Collection of Radical Essays”
Andrew Mark Sivak

Bibliography List

Adrien Katherine Wing (editor), *Critical Race Feminism: A Reader*, (New York University Press, 1997)

During the summer after high school graduation I embarked on a political tour of the United States and landed for a time in Berkeley, California where I was serenaded nightly by the core instructions of third wave feminism and was given this book by a friend as an instruction manual. It features emerging feminist thinkers discussing the intersectional approach to examining gender and some practical dilemmas springing up throughout the world. This is the first edition. Its cover is badly worn as the book doubled as a seat cushion in an old pick up truck traveling through Palo Alto, Monterrey, and San Francisco.

T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, (Methune and Co., 1966)

Perhaps as radically substantial as *The Wasteland* this collection of essays on literary criticism first published in 1920 is an amazing resource for moving beyond the classical approach to literature perfected by Coleridge and others. It moves between assessing the errors of literary critics and analyzing *Hamlet* with a sublime grace. After I had discovered the new school literary criticism being floated by Jameson, Said, and company, I was given this book by a then girlfriend who was studying literature at Yale under the tutelage of Harold Bloom. To this day the dissonance between Said and Eliot is symbolic of every argument we ever had.

Mark Twain, *On the Damned Human Race*, (The Colonial Press, 1963)

Although it is primarily expressed in his novels, Twain's ability to peer into the depths of human society and extract (an often humorous) meaning is without an equal. This collection of essays has a worldwide focus on some failings of human civilization told in the style of Twain's jovial candor. His essays on Italian living formed a vital subtext to my experience living with friends in a villa in San Vincenzo (a small town outside of Pisa on the Mediterranean coast).

Alexander George (editor), *Western State Terrorism*, (Polity Press, 1991)

Even where this book has not been banned its circulation is widely suppressed. Long before the events of September 11th thrust the topic of terrorism to the forefront of American political paranoia this collection declared various foreign policies implemented by Western governments as expressing methodology of terrorism in places like South America, Ireland, and Africa to name a few. With contributing authors like Noam Chomsky, Richard Falk, and Edward S. Herman these essays remain essential, fresh reading on the subject of terrorism despite the flood of material that has emerged lately

on the subject. A conversation in a London pub regarding Bill Rolston's essay 'Containment and its Failure: The British State and the Control of Conflict in Northern Ireland' left me with on the worst black eyes of my life. This is the rare first edition.

Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, (Verso, 2002)

Rarely does an essay satisfy aesthetic as well as intellectual desire, but Žižek's series of five essays on September 11th accomplishes exactly that. By telling old ethnic central European jokes, using film anecdotes, and drawing on his immense knowledge of Lacanian psychological theory, Žižek explains how 9/11 was a point of mental rupture in which Americans could have chosen to forfeit their thinking of the outside world as an artificial theater of horrors and adopt a more complete picture of reality that included the United States as a location of brutality. Unfortunately he says, America decided to go back to business as usual. His style is seemingly incoherent but its intelligence maintains the reader's interest and always earns a kind of seduction. This is the first edition.

Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, (Vintage International, 1991)

As Sartre embraced a style of anti-colonial Marxism, the other golden voice of French existentialism, Albert Camus, pursued an alternative form of politics whose focal point was the revolutionary potential of the individual. His emphasis is on a metaphysical qualification for political resistance in the face of the nihilism posited by demagogues like Hitler. I first read this book while traveling in southern France with a group of Basque separatists who claimed it as an essential voice of their cause.

e.e. cummings, *i: six nonlectures*, (Harvard University Press, 1981)

These essays are the combination of a transcription and notes accompanying a series of lectures delivered by cummings on the radical status of the individual as a composite of the literary imagination. Although during the time of the lecture these thoughts were not controversial today they defend a minority academic opinion on social meaning of literary imagination. The inaugural lecture 'i & my parents' guided me through the process of seeing my identity while seeking out my biological mother. The book remains in good condition as the identity of my mother remains a mystery.

Alexander Star, *Quick Studies: The Best of Lingua Franca*, (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002)

Quick Studies is the most recent addition of my collection purchased by my father while I was hospitalized during the 2005 Spring Break for a stomach infection that had ravaged my body which was still weak recovering from oral surgery. It represents the most essential essays first published in the journal 'Lingua Franca' and features interviews with modern academic luminaries, fan 'zines' devoted to cultural icons, and various philosophical manifestos. This is the first edition.

Michel Foucault, *Fear Less Speech*, (Semiotext(e), 2001)

Like the essays by Cummings these essays are result of a lecture series given the University of California at Berkeley in the Fall of 1983 on the subject of 'Discourse and Truth.' This work found me (appropriately) while in Paris. Foucault's focus was on the concept of truth and those who claim to be its curators. At a cafe I was struck by Foucault's simultaneous ability to assert infinite subjectivity while also beautifully articulating a universal goal in unmasking political deception.

Lee Baxandall (editor), *Radical Perspectives in the Arts*, (Penguin, 1973)

In July of 2002 after I had completed a tour of modern art collections in Spain, France, and Italy I camp up for air in Tisovec, a small Slovak village 2 hours outside of Bratislava, and began to contemplate decadent bourgeois identity of much of what I had seen. This book was my guide. Eastern philosophers and political thinkers such as George Lukacs and the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party offer a scathing critique of Western artistic ideals while essays based on a round table discussion in Czechoslovakia (featuring a well known Sartre and lesser known local author, Milan Kundera) and a speech given after a similar symposium in Cuba by Fidel Castro defended the necessity of de-politicized artistic experimentation.

Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon (editors), *A Postmodern Reader*, (State University of New York Press, 1993)

If calling something a postmodern bible was not a contradiction of secular and fundamentalist terms this collection of essays would earn that title. With landmark essays by Habermas, Derrida, hooks, and Lyotard among others, it describes the fundamental architecture of postmodernism and its discontents. It was given to me by noted postmodernist and one of MSU's finest, Joe Natoli, after he learned I was pursuing graduate education in cultural studies. He led me through postmodern theory and Western Europe as a sophomore at the University.

Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, (Modern Library, 1994)

As a junior in an advanced high school physics class I once lamented to my teacher that science was cold and the technological destruction that it enabled was dangerous because science itself was without an ethical consciousness. To correct this view my teacher referred me to this collection of essays by Einstein detailing his views on pacifism, non conformity, and the pursuit of social justice. This is a gorgeous, Modern Library hardcover edition.

George J. Becker (editor), *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, (Princeton University Press, 1967)

Who better to contemplate the philosophical status of literature than the all-stars assembled in this collection of essays? Proust, Zola, James, Flaubert, Shaw, Tolstoy, and

others are given but a few pages to express their most pressing concerns with literature's confrontation with realism. What is more important is the way that most of these essays form a (perhaps intended) subtext for ethical responsibility. In particular Theodore Dreiser's essay 'True Art Speaks Plainly' was instrumental in inspiring me and others to refuse scholarship awards from MSU's Multicultural Business Program for ethical reasons.

Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, Kendall Thomas (editors), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, (The New Press, 1995)

A friend and MSU alum who recently graduated from Harvard Law School handed me this book for years ago and described it as indispensable. It is surely that. With essays discussing litigation surrounding Japanese internment and the maternity rights of drug addicted minority women it is a brilliant exploration in how to refashion the old civil rights desire for racial justice to modern, complicated world of disguised racisms. It is surely radical, fundamental, and indispensable. This is the first edition.

Roger N. Lancaster, Michaela Di Leonardo (editors), *The Gender Sexuality Reader*, (Routledge, 1997)

While attending a political rally on gender issues in downtown Chicago this reader served as my travel companion. Instead of dealing with gender and sexuality concerns as synonymous, these essays reframe the concepts to show their interactions as separate but crucially related entities. The reader was given to me as an encouraging gesture in support of the rally by a professor at James Madison College.

Simon During (editor), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, (Routledge, 1993)

While hearing lectures on postmodernism at a Dutch university I was given this book which is responsible for keeping my hopes and aspirations buoyant while in repressive undergraduate academic situations. Specifically, the essays drafted by Barthes, Hall, de Certeau, and Spivak seemed to possess a magical relevance to the academic abjection I was experiencing. But above all others, the essay entitled, 'Bourgeois Hysteria and the Carnavalesque' was able to transform my daily pains into a complex performance of subalterity.

Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death: Essays*, (Vintage International, 1995)

As a senior in high school I qualified for the national debate championships being hosted at the University of Oklahoma. While there I purchased and read this group of essays by Camus that problematized the instance of death in war and death as instructed by the state as a criminal penalty. The material was as drab as Oklahoma itself. Due to a scheduling error made by my coach our team was forced to stay in a run down motel immediately off the highway where, coincidentally enough, someone was strangled to death in the room below mine. This book remains my only positive recollection of the entire state of Oklahoma.

Chris Kraus and Sylvere Lotringer (editors), *Hatred of Capitalism: A Semiotext(e) Reader*, (Semiotext(e), 2001)

Inside this collection of texts based on submissions to the journal *Semiotext(e)* are some of the most brilliant cultural commentaries expressed in the past thirty years. It is dedicated 'To the memory of an era (1974-2002)' and features prominent cutting edge theorists breaking out of their familiar molds: Foucault discussing the importance of friendship, Deleuze & Guattari exploring the phenomenon of historical amnesia, and Baudrillard describing 'Out Theatre of Cruelty.' This collection of essays was purchased at the Shakespeare and Co. bookseller neighboring the campus of NYU hours after my first meeting with my gay, biological father in October of 2004. This is the first edition.

Slavoj Žižek, *Mapping Ideology*, (Verso, 1994)

What is unique about this collection is the way it uses essays to carve out a historical legacy on the subject. It traces writings on ideology from Lacan to Althusser to Eagleton to Žižek. Often, this book was all that separated my hair from the fine sand of an island a half hour off the coast of Dubrovnik. Its cover was warped under the Croatian sun when I took breaks to swim and contemplate the flow of ideological forces. I would have worried about this nice first edition being stolen during one of these exercises but no one else on the beach spoke English, and as it was dominated nudists, there were pockets to hide it in.