



Common Sense

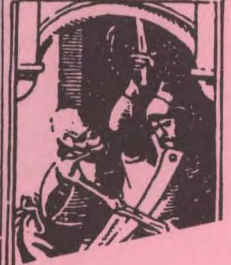
A Journal of a wholly new type



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BATAILLE; SHORT STORY; POLL
TAX; EARTHQUAKE; GERMAN
CLASS JUSTICE; ENLIGHTENMENT
SELFVALORISATION; REVIEW



Common Sense

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The ninth issue of Common Sense will appear in December 1989.
Deadline for contributions mid-November.

Notes for contributors: send articles in clean typescript,
single-space or space-and-a-half (not double-space). Leave
wide margin on both sides, and wide gaps at top and bottom.
Start first page half way down.

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Original illustrations (dance of death, etc.) by Aileen Wilson



COMMON SENSE EDITORIAL



In an epoch of crisis, the distinction between marginal and mainstream theory is rendered problematic in the same movement as is the distinction between marginalised and mainstream practice itself. Equally problematic, where crisis obtains, are the traditional genre-distinctions between academic disciplines, between academic and non- or anti-academic theorising, between politics and culture and between fictional and non-fictional prose. A social and political crisis – as was seen at least as early as eighteenth-century Scottish "common sense" philosophy – is always an epistemological crisis as well.

Hence Common Sense. At present, academic publishing houses are amalgamating and organising themselves into cartels devoted to hyping mainstream orthodoxies at prices which protect these orthodoxies from marginalised threat: only those entitled to enter the requisite libraries can discover what academia reckons it necessary to know. Cuts in education, as a point of a sociology of knowledge, entail conformism in what is taught and learned. Similarly, the most successful fictional publishers are rushing downmarket at a speed which leaves the bookstall browser breathless. In such a situation, Common Sense sets out to break all the rules. Its conviction is that what appears marginal is only that which is politically and financially marginalised, more and more insecurely with the passage of crisis-ridden years. Instead of monopolising the currency of ideas, Common Sense's programme is one of dissemination. Instead of maintaining distinctions within academia and between the academic (the sacrosanct) and the non-academic (the profane), Common Sense sets out to break such distinctions down. Its strategy is one not of popularisation but of juxtaposition: only received wisdom can be popularised, whereas the popular reception of unreceived wisdom turns on its discourses remaining in an angular,

unregimented and reciprocally raw state. As long ago as the 1920's Walter Benjamin reported that truth can be seen as 'constellation': Common Sense, existing in no other way than as a relay-station for the exchange of critical (or crisis-oriented) ideas, picks up where Walter Benjamin left off.

II

In all of this we are by no means alone. In 1989 there has appeared the first edition of the Small Press Yearbook whose opening statement is 'welcome to the brave new world of autonomous publishing' and which goes on to celebrate 'a cultural phenomenon of mind-boggling diversity': the revolt of an enormous network of small- and independent- and self-publication against the hegemony of cultural masters whose project it is to maintain the mainstream by monopolising, through finance and authority, the physical resources whereby the circulation of ideas occurs. The Yearbook lists literally hundreds of journals the intent of which, in form of not in content, is identical to that of Common Sense. In earlier editorials, we have declared that common sense is less a journal than an idea: if you don't like our version of an autonomous and critical publication then, on the same minimalist editorial and financial basis, produce your own. One section of the Small Press Yearbook contains invaluable practical advice on how to go about this. In the United States, a similar and astonishingly comprehensive index of small-press publications (complete with discussion of the problems attending self-publication and reviews of the numerous items listed) already exists, entitled Factsheet Five. The Small Press Yearbook is the first attempt, in the UK., to achieve a networking and interlinking of those to whom commercial publishing and academic monopolies are anathema to any conceivable life of the mind.

The Small Press Yearbook (1990 edition forthcoming) can be obtained from Small Press Group, B.M. Bozo, LONDON EC1 3XX; Factsheet Five can be obtained from Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Avenue, Renesse-laer, NEW YORK 12144-402 (USA).





BINGO - a short story by Walter Gibson



He walked down the corridor with a heavy measured pace, even footfalls thudding on the paving stones. As he had decreed, the only light came from real torches flickering in specially made bronze holders. The high curved ceiling above stretched into darkness, shrouded as the light faded into its oak panels. From the distance came the sound of whispering soft shoes; a servant creeping away before him back to its quarters from whence it would come only to serve his needs. The curtains, the papers, or the nine o'clock whisky and water.

As he walked he ran his fingers along the crisp edges of his dark perfectly cut suit. It was stiff and he imagined that the crackle from the torches came from the rich material. The long corridor stretched ahead. To his right a large white door shone grey and he paused, warmed by the emptiness of the hall, knowing in his absolute power that there was no one in the well lit room; that it waited for his own brief visit. The veins in his hands stood out as they closed around the brass handle, surrounding it in thousands of little rivers of blood.

He walked through the Guest Dining Room and its Annexe. The rooms were warm and softly lit with tall antique standard lamps casting circles of white onto thick patterned carpets. He sat for a minute before the wood fire which had burned to an orange glow. His fingers drummed on the cover of the leather armchair before he rose heavily to his feet and resumed his inspection, emerging further up the corridor, pacing on towards the heavy metal studded door of his study. His face, hidden in the shadows, was unsmiling but in this ritual walk he felt some small part of his worth as a solid achievement; and it was good.

Deep far below the flagstones, underneath the cold wormy earth, there was a casino. Bright electric lights burned everywhere, showing up lines of fairy lights set into gaudy orange panels flashing all around the greasy smoky walls.

A huge plastic Bear revolved manically round and around on a pedestal, dipping and bobbing as it went, throwing a set of dice at each turn into a gold plastic dish. They always came up double sixes.

Rows and rows of one-armed bandits hummed with loud harsh tunes, their wheels spinning as they moved by themselves. Here and there they played out to the sound of electric disco jingles faintly reminiscent of christmas singles or popular hymns.

To their side eight ball pool tables were lit with shaded blue covered lamps touched off by more strings of the flickering fairy bulbs. There were no balls on the tables and their cloths' were unmarked, although the click of play could be heard across the room.

"... and on its own Number One, Kelly's Eye, with Number Five, a Cat's Alive, Whole numbers Yellow Five, Number Thirteen, Unlucky-For-Some And We Have A Result ! On your left. Take your cards. Any more, any more, Before we start. Eyes Down !"

The Skeleton languidly rocked on its swivel stool and leaned back to see who had won. It was some gibbering type all wrapped up in a rotting shawl who shambled past cackling and spitting some mumbled lines. A hot stench filled the Skeleton's nose as the thing rushed up the steep steps clutching its gold prize card with the embossed name and started up the stairs on the left, quickly disappearing up the unlit and narrow passageway.

At eleven he liked to sign checks. He settled behind his wide polished walnut desk and waited for the double door to swing open and admit the little entourage. First in line before him would come Henry with carefully simplified sheets covering the major items of expenditure and date of authorisation. Martin came next, he would have the progress sheets on the holding companies which were to manage the subsidiaries tied up with over powerful managers or one time owners. Nigel held the programme diary, ready to finalise who would be seen and what was to be considered in the afternoon. Janet would stand on the other side of the desk, holding the delicate Wedgwood China tea service. His sock itched and he poked his finger down the shiny leather shoe and then quickly settled, straight backed and eyes front as the clock chimed.

The doors swung open and the four swung rythmically across the deep carpet and came to rest before him. He paused, smelled his fingers and eventually nodded at Henry. The day's work began.

The Caller stood by a gold plastic chair, elevated from the semi-circle of players by a stage covered in dirty red carpet. He lent over towards them slightly, the bones of his huge hands crunching as they fell against his knees, flexing at a blood pulse. The Skeleton watched intently as the bones squeezed into the dark cloak, digging deep, rythmically, accompanied by a small swirl of dust or smoke.

The Skeleton felt dread and lifted its eyes to the blank hood which was turned directly to it. For the first time it looked and at first there was no startling, blazing eyes or features, only the shadows of some picture, unseen, and the pressure quickly building in its head, bringing colours and rock songs, making its arms itch with suspicion of some ineradicable crabs, making the corner of its sight shine with worms, worms in the plastic orange panels, in the pool pockets, swarming up the stool while it must stay absolutely still, bones locked. This is forever, forever a rising scream transfixed on and on in a living age of more tearing an age and finally a sing song voice calling to the Jester and the Skeleton could forget the creeping worms and watched transfixed the spinning heavy cylinder and its revolving balls. Sound began again and the Skeleton was unlocked, the Tables and play seeming crystal clear to it , the lights as bright and welcome as the moonlight on a face sent to rot in a grave. The Jester winked , nodding the shrill bells on his hat and hustled over to the Caller with tiny steps, stopping short and leaning over and into Its cloak, pushing forward a series of fluorescent numbers.

"..Red on its own number seven, Blue ten Maggie's den, with yellow sixteen, one six, never been kissed.."

The Skeleton ill-humouredly flicked across the numbers. Its teeth ground and it drummed with its skinless fingers on the marked and cigarette stained board.

"..Seventy-One for a White One, Seven and One, And we have a Result !

The Thing to the Skeleton's right looked from the side like a malnourished child, but when it oozed from its chair and turned the face was a bowl Weevil's, cracked and moving, the whole thing a mass of tiny shells held together in the semblance of a child. Now everyone and her dog had gone up this morning but the little Skeleton. Its drumming fingers began to tear at the corners of the formica.

"Take your numbers, Everyone aboard and off we go ! Yellow Four and One, Forty-One ! Red Fifty-Nine, For A Swine ! An Isolated One, Blue One !.."

"Today is the Mountain top of my triumphs" he said to himself as he rose from the desk and retired to the smoking room for coffee. By the end of the afternoon he would have picked up the last of the occasionally troublesome independents. It was a matter of vanity rather than Business. His word had been law in the entire field, across the whole country, across

continents, for quite a while; not that he allowed this to become a talking point.

Health-conscious, he took one of the milder Silk Cuts and slouched in the deep creased armchair. For a second he stiffened, conscious of his image with the Help. Again he allowed himself to throw caution to the winds; after all it was only the Maid.

He watched the air trickle upwards, almost undisturbed by any deflecting currents, a representation of his own career; known as 'remarkable' in more than one great Nation. It floated increasingly effortlessly upwards to the top, which was where most of the shadow companies he controlled were to be found today. Not that the Unions in his Western divisions knew they were all his, or that it mattered whether they did any more, he reflected. It had gone beyond that long ago.

He tried to shift his underpants down a little by pulling through the cloth. To his faint discomfiture he found that he had been too hurried in the toilet and that residual urine had trickled out and dampened his leg. Of course the companies controlling basic commodity production did not even need to kowtow to these Union lunatics. Perhaps the methods were a pity, on occasion though. Balls ! He allowed himself a rare crudity and on impulse decided on a celebratory gin and tonic. He cocked a finger and a long-haired and long-legged Maid hurried up to him.

Fingering the fine crystal, he reflected complacently that the Maid's uniform was really cut too high for good taste.

The rims of the joints of the Skeleton's bones were beginning to itch everywhere and he used both hands to scratch violently inside his eyesockets and up his chin. He flicked the numbers with a sharp elbow as he saw a vast hulking figure of the undead, some mass grave zombie with heads growing from where they had been thrown in together, pull itself up and grasp the winning card for the second time this afternoon.

The crash of metal fired on the Skeleton's nerves as the fruit machines behind them hummed and spun and money showered from a vast technicoloured machine which looked like a jukebox and paid out to the chime of Good King Wencelas. The tiny flickering lights shone into the back of its skull. The grease on the chair was full of grit.

He always insisted on finishing all work at three. Sharp at ten minutes-to Martin arrived with the papers to be signed. He pretended to himself that he came to a snap decision while the papers were being laid side by side, but really he had been anticipating the risky excitement of this moment even as he had been enjoying the celebration of his final victory. The pen was weighty in his fingers. He set his lips in a strong line. After all, he had no intention of becoming a victim, although it was unfortunate that so many of his Lieutenants, as he liked to think of them, had become only so much dead weight. He wasn't some foolish old has been; they thought he didn't read the balance sheets, sensed the weighty structure and heavy duplication. He would not wait until his great work became vulnerable like an overripe peach, in victory came danger and he had no intention of being left behind. He scratched his signature on the parchment.

"..Sixty-Nine, Any Way Up then Red On Its Own, Six with Blue Sixty-Six, Six and Six-Clickedy-Click !"

The Skeleton slammed the bottom number across, almost besides itself with fury. It was in such a rage that it hardly understood when the panel began flashing rythmically.

"..And We Have A Result ! A Result to the Skeleton on the right, any one else, Any One Else To Start !"

Its hand tightened close around the little card and it saw and heard almost nothing as it flew up the stairway, burrowing through the crack that led to the surface.

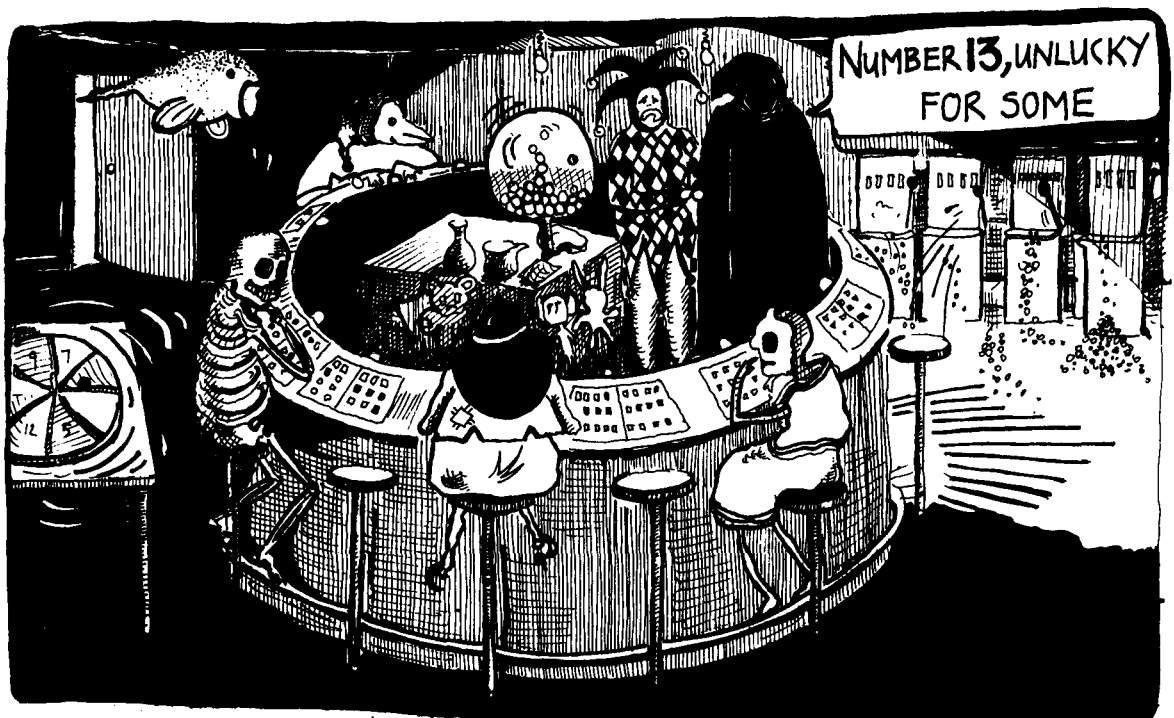
He rose heavily and Henry rushed to throw open the double doors. The flickering torches were already throwing their hissing light down the passage. He put the day's work behind him and felt the comforting solidness of the long walk and familiar inspection before him. As Henry closed the doors, he saw Martin quietly replace the phone.

His hand- made shoes fell crunchilly on the paving stones. It was quite dark after the study. Above, the curved roof had disappeared into the gloom. To his faint annoyance, because he wished to be alone after his day's labour, there was again a shuffling of rubber soled shoes disappearing by the Drawing Room door. He had no desire to meet any one there and shouted out. No one replied and he stepped ahead firmly, annoyed doubly now that he had been ignored. The corridor seemed

almost steamy. Of course it was smoky from the warm red lights of the living torches. Above there was a flickering and some noise. Perhaps there was some bird stuck, or squirrel searching for an exit. He must have Henry see to it tomorrow. It was quite noisy, those shadows could be wings, thousands of wings. The corridor stretched ahead, its walls bright though hazy and disguised by shadow. It seemed to narrow into the distance, not ending but passing on without end. It was dark above. He reached out to the walls and drew back. They were glowing without casting light and their surfaces, seen close to, were alive, many mouths meeting, wide open, coming together, half translucent, making up the wall, the corridor, wide open juicy mouths kissing wetly, many bodies together meeting together, crossing over and kissing, wetly, bodies like worms, seething together, just mouths and scaly bodies, intimate, together. Desperately reaching out, full of saliva and kissing, needing, needing As his knees came up to his chest, a mockery of running, slow jogging, a Sun silk advert, through bright haze, the noise above flapping, screaming, no noise, just thickness opaque noise thousands of wings, tight together just above the corridor, in the shallow groove above, pressed down the air thick the walls moving the corridor ahead narrow and endless running, slowly, getting nowhere, blurred eyes pushing forward with streaming eyes crying, suddenly crying, for the waste, for the poverty for the bellies the pain for the blindness sitting helpless for the tears and for us all as the paving stones ahead crash

With clearing vision sees before him the tiny crippled skeleton come dripping from the earth arms outstretched and waiting as the air cleared and brightened and the wings went and the walls were walls and his knees fell from pumping up to his chest and he fell gratefully into the bony arms the arms of steel, of strength beyond life, running, falling, into open arms, accepted, coming home with his mouth open to meet his new companion in rapture, enveloped and suddenly in dark

LUCIFER.....





**The trial of Ingrid Strobl
An Interview**

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EDITORIAL COMMENT: Ingrid Strobl was arrested on the 18 of December 1987 charged with membership in a terrorist organisation. This charge was dropped during trial. After 18 months of detention and about 4 months of her trial she was found guilty of supporting, and assisting, terrorism. The judge's verdict was 5 years imprisonment.

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Maria: What is the background of the detention and imprisonment of Ingrid Strobl?

Magdalena: The cause was a bomb attack on the administration building of Lufhansa (the German air travel company) in Cologne for which the Revolutionary Cells claimed responsibility (1). The damage was only minor. Ingrid Strobl and was arrested in the aftermath of the police investigation. The prosecution sought to establish that Ingrid Strobl was a member of the Revolutionary Cells. At the same time Ulla Pennselin was arrested charged with membership in the Red Zora which claimed responsibility for the bomb attack on the German company Adler. The Red Zora sought to support the South Korean strike of women workers against Adler subsidiaries in South Korea.

Maria: Could you say w little bit more on this background.

Magdalena: Shortly after the bomb attack the Federal Criminal Office (BKA) raided several flats and, amongst others, an archive in Essen which gathered

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1: The Revolutionary Cells and Red Zora are underground organisations of the militant Left in Germany. They propose violence against property as a means of revolutionary emancipation. The Revolutionary Cells abandoned this policy when they kneecapped a Berlin judge who was responsible for deporting immigrants from Germany. The Red Zora is a women's organisation using the same means to articulate their politics. Red Zora focusses its campaign mostly on issues such as sex tourism, trafficking in women, female workers' strikes and, for the last 5-6 years, on genetic-engineering. They articulate their resistance through bomb attacks on peep shops, gencechnology centres and such like. Both organisations communicate their political opinion through (anonymous) contributions in newspapers and newsletters of the radical left.

