

### **The Heisenberg Effect**

They say that the observer affects the experiment  
Your mere presence alters the state  
So how can you see your own true self?

How do you know your effect on others?  
Where does bias end when you look past yourself?  
What do you bring into that vision?  
What do you carry – implicit and hidden?

What fears block the faces of others?  
What falsehoods do you invest in their hearts?  
What schemes and what hates do you place in their minds?  
When you don't know them but know only their kind?

### **Why a New Meter**

Why a new meter?  
Why even try?  
Lie a big lie

It worked for Dr. Seuss  
And for Herr Trump  
It's worked before  
Made a whole nation jump

Don't say it in terms  
Obscure in extreme  
To show them to which  
College you've been  
Tell them in terms  
That reach to the heart  
Make their blood boil  
That is the art

Make it accessible  
Simple and pure  
Then watch and see  
The stadiums roar

Don't let facts get in the way  
Judge their reaction  
And hold them in sway  
Throw them red meat  
Blow your dog whistle

And

Tweet – tweet - tweet

**Rebel Yell**

I worked in their factories  
I dug up their ore  
Assembled their cars  
Filled my lungs to the core

I spit black – I cough and I hack  
I wobble and limp  
With my hobbled back

My wife doesn't know me after the war  
Can't sleep and I fight  
Keep vigil at night  
Some booze and some pills  
Cover bodies and kills

Friends gone now  
You wonder just how  
You believed all this shit  
When you voted for spite  
Confusing anger with might

I was forgotten – along with my clan  
Have I been bought by a mean-talkin' man?  
Can he recover the honour once lost?  
Will we dig coal and at what cost?  
Will cars roll again assembled by men?  
Will we share the treasure pulled out from this land?  
Or are we finished – just as it's been planned?

I thought that he spoke directly to us  
He gave us hope – he at least let us cuss  
He fanned our flames and gathered their heat  
To fill his own wings and sail aloft  
Now he looks down with occasional thought  
How does he need us – we who are bought?

## The Great White Dope

Back in the day  
When crack had its way  
We found a new animal  
Super-predator they say

We built up the laws  
We built up the prisons  
To protect us from  
These malevolent citizens

But coke was white  
And high as a kite  
A treat on Wall Street  
For the high-class elite

No mandatory minimums  
In these condominiums  
Just starlets and zombies  
with blowjobs in SUVs

Then came the crystal  
That methed up our mind  
In rust belts and counties  
Where coal was not mined

In hills and in valleys  
Where poor white people lived  
Hillbilly heroin started to rise  
Slowly but surely  
We gathered them up  
No use for them now  
The factories were shut  
But in a state prison  
They were worth a buck

Big pharma had a cure for everyone's pain  
They were quite sure of substantial gain  
And reports to the contrary  
Were totally in vain

Opioids were great – make no mistake  
They're not addictive  
And twice as effective

Roll out the pills  
Stock up on 'script pads  
This new release gathers money in scads

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## Lippin' Off - poems on whiteness & privilege

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Gather the doctors  
In spas and resorts  
Tell suntanned cohorts  
To push it – its magic!  
They will not know  
Its effects could be tragic

In a short time  
From clinics to pill labs  
From dispensaries to alleys  
and into cabs  
Pills tumbled out  
Sought in the day and sought in the night  
Damp palms clasped them – two or three at a time  
When a legit source dried up it became a crime

Here is a drug that crossed all class lines  
Addicted the righteous – fucked up their minds  
Now this is a crisis for all to respect  
When bankers and lawyers start to inject  
Where users are people of property and wealth  
We now acknowledge it's a matter of health

Tho' not before with the blacks and the trash  
They were the victims of moral backlash  
They now spend their time walkin' the yard  
'Cuz they got the minimum of 25 hard

But here in this time we clearly see how  
It's crossed the line – it's seized us now  
I heard a man promise to help us today  
for him I voted without a delay  
I cast my ballot for the Great White Dope  
Who's the dope now and how can we cope?

### The Liberal's Lament

I gave at the office  
I marched in the street  
I bought tickets in advance  
Gave a benefit dance

I studied them in my previous courses  
Shamed by their history  
I felt their remorse

I handed out flyers  
I pasted up posters  
I chanted and sang  
The mission bells rang

I looked at the water  
The land and the air  
The food that we eat  
It made me despair

I looked at our women  
Our gays and our straights  
How did they ever  
Confront those hates?

Peoples I didn't know  
From places I never go  
Arrived rich in difference  
Silenced by indifference  
So I spoke for them  
I stood in their stead  
'Cuz they needed someone  
Someone who led

"We did so much good"  
My colleagues have said  
"Why don't they listen"  
"They really should"

I thought on this hard  
Looked myself in the face  
Who am I to be the white saviour of race  
This idea that's false  
An invented fact  
To keep the false whites  
At the top of the pack

Who am I to comment on them  
Through the lens ground by white men?  
Where is their voice to analyze me?

**What's Their Problem?**

I just don't see  
What their problem is  
Why can't they just get over it?

I'm not responsible  
What have I ever done to them?  
Did you see how she looked at me?  
She's kinda hot – in a way  
He looks so angry  
They look shifty to me

So outrageous – so outspoken  
Quiet – sneaky-like  
Never know what they're thinkin'  
They all think alike  
They hate us  
They hate our way of life

We own this land – like legally!  
They had nothing before we came  
They had nothin' where they came from  
We civilized them  
What the fuck is their problem?

**Is White the Negative Space of Race?**

Is White the Negative Space of Race?  
Not that race exists  
But you know what I mean  
It's there  
In the heart and in the mind

Funny how things which are there can't be seen  
And others not there are so visible

Hard to see one's own privilege  
Hard to see the non-science of race  
Hard to see the roundness of the earth  
Hard to see gravity but it's still a force

Can white even be a negative in our tongue?  
Why not – it's just positive by convention – one not held by all

What colour is space anyway if we talk of a place "filled" with darkness?  
And blinding light can obscure as much as shadow

Just look into the cop's flashlight and try to see his face

## Lippin' Off - poems on whiteness & privilege

### Whose Blood? Whose Soil?

This land  
Mainly empty but full of riches

I never worked hard  
    Not hard like the coolie  
    Not hard like the cane-cutter

But so much came to me by default  
I am grateful  
I know I was born lucky – only poor in a Toronto way

My parents toiled too -much harder than me  
They also had some advantage over others by their accident of birth  
    and the colour of their skin

There were the better-off and the worse-off

When you think of these things in personal terms its easy to see hardships  
In those terms my parents did not create the state that they were born into any more than anyone else

But how many bullet and bombs, mines and plantations in distant lands laid the foundation for me?

How many atrocities here paved our way of life?

### Heel thyself

How does one decolonize oneself?  
Can the language of the oppressor examine its own mind –  
    when the limits of that mind were formed by the constructs of that language?

Perhaps the constraints of this formal tongue limit its voice.  
In its quest for “objectivity” it plays a binary logic, zero-sum game.  
That framework creates system of adversarial thought.

What truths are lost in viewing through this lens?  
Sufficient for Newtonian kinematics – out of date for current science – it hangs on.  
Compatible with older social theories. Supporting unfounded beliefs.

Reductionism. Winners and losers. Power. Dominance. Race. Empire. Destiny. Genocide.

Can language embody violence in its bones?

Is “academic-speak” an obfuscation – a hiding place for weak reason – a place for the ego of self-important words?  
Is it part of the strategy of a power relation - a way to win that zero-sum argument – in dialogues that should have no time limits?

Have we been conditioned into this verbal use, through teaching and the example of an aesthetic style, one that we mistake for the correct way to reason?

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## Lippin' Off - poems on whiteness & privilege

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That old Oxford accent used to sound so true - so correct.  
It commanded adherence, acceptance and faith. It carried the voice of power and empire.

But now old lies are re-told and shouted.  
These rants and these ravings speak to emotions that exist in their hosts.  
The "truth" is in these feelings  
– the feelings are there  
– embers poked and fanned by cult leaders

Bellows suck and bellows blow  
Hatred and fears lie deep within hearts  
What could be more true than an undeniable lie  
based on a fear – a shame - a hate – held onto so tight?

Where is the power of "reason" when fear and loathing rule?  
How do we get down to the basis in order to see the other?

**The Aesthetic of Meaninglessness**

The aesthetic of meaninglessness  
The truth of nothing

No reason to say anything if you have nothing to say  
True – but how to say anything when it is not allowed?

They never told you that you could not be  
They just made gods in their own image and hung them on the walls  
They invented the language and the schools to explain meaninglessness  
And found a way to give it a value

This cheapened everything before and after  
Created a new richness – if not rich in thought  
Shallow in profundity  
Facile in guile

Without meaning their perch was unassailable  
With no basis for refutation  
Omnipotence grew

Ignorance institutionalized as a new standard  
Irony's meaning - now appropriated - allowed anything do be done

A perfect machine to make profit – not art

**At the Gallery**

Hushed dialogue  
Thoughts pass through sphincters  
Well taut and taught well

Eyes trained by words to see incomprehensible sights  
– so secret that they were not there  
- only shadows cast by that light from within – Ego

Pairs lean, sway, almost glide and slowly turn  
Treading gently not to break the spell of self-important reverence  
Whispering to each another  
    Loud ideas and insecure thoughts  
Wondering if others  
    Know better  
    See more  
Or have met the artist

A sombre body language  
A bowing to authority manifest in the restricted mobility of body and limb  
Being held – but rarely in awe  
But rather by conditioning of  
What psychologists call discriminatory stimuli  
– like the scent of incense in a cathedral

On a weekend  
In a tourist spot  
It is a strange parade  
And then the selfies in front of the works  
I was there!

Then the naked emperor  
Mounts a dying horse  
The horse expels one last shit  
The crowd cheers

Art