

DISC

FORMATTING

by

FASCICLES

ISSUE

N. 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO DISC FORMATTING

Welcome to Disc Formatting, an anti-writing workshop to ponder on language subversion and non-linear thinking. And to make together, well... something.

Disc Formatting is (reluctantly) informed by the idea of language as the (over) shadowing (infra)structure of all thought. It wants to look at how the construction of consciousness might have come hand in hand with the learning of language, and what kinds of cognitions might have been lost in the process of imposing such vocabulary onto the imagination. How does the institution of language limit or border the possibilities of thought and imagination? How does it guard our imaginaries against possible alternative ways of thinking or being in the world? Departing from this idea, Disc Formatting wants to begin an investigation into mechanisms of language sabotage, wandering through the possibilities of subversion from the inside. How can we corrupt the power structures controlling our imaginaries to communicate in a non-binary reality? We don't actually know where language began, but now we set about to plot against its tight grips to our brain. Corruption is imminent, even when the outside has been obliterated.

Disc Formatting would like to participate in the ongoing questioning and (hopefully) dismantling of the values of Modernity and the fantasy of reason. In this sense, a sort of (___)baroque approach is encouraged.

*"The Baroque is the subjugated "other" of Enlightenment modernity, and for that very reason the object of its fantasy of losing itself and its precise boundaries within that "other." However, that dislocation also brings about a process of opening up and a blending of the systems of ways of seeing and representation, a "madness of seeing", a yearning vision made flesh that generated types of knowledge inaccessible to the rational Cartesian individual."
("needs quotation")*

Disc Formatting is an open structure where each of its participants are free to propose themes of research, reading or any other sort of materials to discuss and feed our investigation. The temporary plan is to dedicate each monthly session to a particular theme or methodology that might relate to Disc Formatting's questioning lines. The method/way/manner for the reading/observing of the materials brought might be specific to every sessions theme. After discussing/escaping/taking-up/flipping-down these materials, the group can decide collectively on how to conduct each month's anti-writing exercises, and the forms these should take.



**ALL THAT SHINES
IS
GOLD**

READING

A beautiful corn cob we found
Light was coming out of the leaves
Covering the kernel
But no kernels were to be found
Instead
The cob was full of pearls
A kernel collar, I thought
But the pearls were rotten
Baroque pearls
Irregular and non-spheric
As the corn smut ate them from the inside
That's how mushrooms work
They work from the inside
Talking to the inner self
A pearl
A corn kernel
An ape brain that listened to the mushroom
And learned to talk.

The Potosí Principle: How can we Sing the Song of the Lord in a Foreign Land (Words of Welcome - Manuel J. Borja-Villel)

Art history has traditionally located the origins of modern art in the paintings of Gustave Courbet, Édouard Manet, and the Impressionists; in other words, in that break with the traditional forms of art that was undertaken in order to reflect the immediacy of the subjective experience of reality. Romantic idealism, and Baudelaire's "spleen" were other milestones in the modern perception of the world. Trapped in an account consisting of familiar names and settings—emblemized by the artist who moves from Paris to New York, occasionally stopping off in central Europe—we have created a closed universe of references that prevents us from understanding the cultural practices of an expanded modernity, which goes beyond such frameworks in order to express itself in contemporary global society. We have been surprisingly blind to the fact that, since the sixteenth century, the history of Europe has been inseparable from that of its colonies, and that modernity quite clearly does not exist without the center-periphery relationships that first arose with colonialism. What would happen if we substituted for René Descartes's ego cogito Hernán Cortés's ego conquiro, or Immanuel Kant's concept of pure reason (what Karl Marx termed the principle of primitive accumulation)? What if, instead of starting our account of the modern age in the England of the Industrial Revolution or the France of Napoleon III, we started it in viceroyal South America? The answers to these questions undoubtedly offer us an illegitimate view of history. In the current context the hypothesis of an advanced culture, endowed with technical and intellectual means superior to those of others, who are always one step behind, appears far-fetched. The evidence is that we find ourselves within a global system in which, moved by certain dynamics inherited from colonial domination, the various actors associate and interrelate by way of intense flows of communication. Here, culture is not the independent and privileged site of ideas; it not only reflects a power structure but is the very power that is fought over.

In the seventeenth century, barely one hundred years after its discovery and conquest, Potosí was one of the most important cities on the planet with a population larger than London or Paris. The silver and other metals that were mined from the "Rich Mountain," as it was known, circulated the planet and were used to fund the Habsburg wars in Europe and to repay that dynasty's enormous loans to German and Genoese bankers. The exploitation of the Potosí mines produced the first accumulation of capital in the modern period and the forerunner and model for present-day financial globalization. In Potosí this excess of wealth was founded on the mita, a slave-based system in which the indigenous population worked in subhuman conditions. More than five centuries later, Abu Dhabi, China, and numerous other places are still characterized by processes of exploitation and accumulation with similar social consequences. Then as now, art had and has an inherent ambiguity. If, on the one hand, the experimentation and expansion of the field of knowledge associated with its practice serves to help us become better human beings, on the other, it could be said that the institution of art can easily act in complicity with a new global slavery, the commercialization of subjective viewpoints, and the transformation of immaterial heritage—for example, historical memory—into a pure economic transaction. In aiming to show works from its collection in its new venue in Abu Dhabi, the Louvre makes them more accessible but also gains significant financial benefit.

In a similar way, the intensive proselytizing of the indigenous peoples helped them to become aware of their rights with regard to earlier modes of domination, while this proselytizing also functioned to consolidate the colonial system. Nonetheless, art is political precisely because its very poetic structure has something within it that is impossible to assimilate, transforming it into an active element of liberation. Colonial paintings from Caquiaviri and Calamarca were responses to the ecclesiastical doctrine of the day and their function was an educational one. However, their particular use of the pictorial idiom, imported from the metropolis, allowed for an inversion of social structures. Saints and Virgins were reinterpreted in indigenous festivals and ceremonies, resulting in a hybrid spirituality devised to resist the colonial enterprise.

The Enlightenment aimed to establish a common measure that could harmonize the heterogeneous nature of social relations generated by colonial expansion, trade, and the growth of urban life. Everything that did not fit into that rational measure was considered to be outside the civilized self. However, as Eduardo Subirats has reminded us, Spanish Enlightenment thinkers hesitated to interpret modern reason as a universal principle, to define the secularization of culture in its farthest consequences, and to implement fully the moral and political principles of the autonomy of the individual. The starting point of the processes of primitive accumulation in Spain was an empire based on economic and social models that prevented the development and consolidation of a process of colonial expansion similar to that which took place among the northern powers. The intensity and speed of such processes resulted in a parallel dislocation in the dominating and dominated societies. As a result, modernity was baroque by nature almost from its outset.

There can be no single origin of modernity as soon as it is seen that modernity itself entails processes of dissemination, contamination, and permeability that destabilize the very notion of origin. This understanding of modernity invalidates any linear, evolutionary interpretation of the arts towards the achievement of purity in the varieties of aesthetic phenomena, as the prophets of modernism argued. If the baroque and the theatrical were once anathema to the perfect incarnation of modernity, they now present themselves as an option for an alternative type of modernity. From Walter Benjamin to Gilles Deleuze, numerous intellectuals have reflected on this phenomenon. As an aesthetic category or philosophical proposition, the Baroque is a nineteenth- and twentieth-century concept rather than a seventeenth-century one. For the northern world it represents the lack of moderation evident in the despotic methods of domination found in human behavior: blind, violent, and irrational ones that produce fanatical, aggressive, and superstitious individuals. The Baroque is the subjugated "other" of Enlightenment modernity, and for that very reason the object of its fantasy of losing itself and its precise boundaries within that "other." However, that dislocation also brings about a process of opening up and a blending of the systems of ways of seeing and representation, a "madness of seeing," according to Christine Buci-Glucksmann, a yearning vision made flesh that generated types of knowledge inaccessible to the rational Cartesian individual. While the Enlightenment was only able to perceive the subjective viewpoints arising from colonial dynamics as aberrations, Baroque society did not avoid depicting the specificity of social relations, opting not to conceal them, however violent they might be. The arbitrary nature of language in the Baroque gave rise to its total ideological manipulation by the forces of power, but its disseminating power made it less controllable. Allegory, the representative mode based on the inevitable arbitrariness of language, typical of the baroque, allows for multiple signifiers and for appropriation and distortion.

The Potosí Principle (Principio Potosí) responds to this double articulation. It reflects a situation of exploitation and increasing labor insecurity, of which culture is art and part, while at the same time problematizing this through the very same art. If religious paintings and paraphernalia from the colonial period took on a new dimension when they were recontextualized in indigenous events and rituals, in the museum they undergo a further transformation. The estrangement suffered by these objects is not hidden, but rather accentuated by their dialogue with the interventions by contemporary artists. By creating a tension between the colonial works and surroundings that are alien to them, the museum becomes Baroque and behaves like the forms of indigenous resistance to the colonial project. It becomes a paradigm of a relationship with a world in crisis that does not ignore the catastrophic state this is in.

The New Art of Making Books (Ulises Carrión)

WHAT A BOOK IS

A book is a sequence of spaces.

Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment - a book is also a sequence of moments.
A book is not a case of words, nor a bag of words, nor a bearer of words.

A writer, contrary to the popular opinion, does not write books.

A writer writes texts.

The fact, that a text is contained in a book, comes only from the dimensions of such a text; or, in the case of a series of short texts (poems, for instance), from their number.

A literary (prose) text contained in a book ignores the fact that the book is an autonomous space-time sequence.

A series of more or less short texts (poems or other) distributed through a book following any particular ordering reveals the sequential nature of the book.

It reveals it, perhaps uses it; but it does not incorporate it or assimilate it.

Written language is a sequence of signs expanding within the space; the reading of which occurs in the time.

A book is a space-time sequence.

Books existed originally as containers of (literary) texts.

But books, seen as autonomous realities, can contain any (written) language, not only literary language, or even any other system of signs.

Among languages, literary language (prose and poetry) is not the best fitted to the nature of books.

A book may be the accidental container of a text, the structure of which is irrelevant to the book: these are the books of bookshops and libraries.

A book can also exist as an autonomous and self-sufficient form, including perhaps a text that emphasizes that form, a text that is an organic part of that form: here begins the new art of making books.

In the old art the writer judges himself as being not responsible for the real book. He writes the text.

The rest is done by the servants, the artisans, the workers, the others.

In the new art writing a text is only the first link in the chain going from the writer to the reader.

In the new art the writer assumes the responsibility for the whole process.

In the old art the writer writes texts.

In the new art the writer makes books.

To make a book is to actualize its ideal space-time sequence by means of the creation of a parallel sequence of signs, be it linguistic or other.

Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context
(Baroque/Neobaroque/Ultrabaroque: Disruptive Readings of Modernity -
Mabel Moraña)

Imperfect, pathological, that deformed pearl evokes a sphericity never achieved: its slightly monstrous body is affirmed in the nostalgia of totality and perfection. The baroque pearl is a melancholic, transubstantiated, impure being, saturated by matter. It is, at the same time, hybrid and palimpsest, a deformity conceived through the transgression of its own limits—something new, that results from the defensive struggle exercised by the body that receives the challenge of heterogeneity. As the product of a contradictory dynamics of absorption and resistance, the baroque pearl combines, in its process of formation, both the norm and its exception.



the irresistible, vainly hyperbolic, and not totally achieved rationality; and the logic of a formal existence that evokes precisely what “it lacks,” sinks into its limits, and explores its own borders.



It seeks to resolve “the metaphysical problem of creating order out of disorder” to overcome crisis, instability, and disequilibrium, which Tiqqun asserts is an inherent by-product of capitalist growth



The adoption of the Baroque in America is not, therefore, just a moment of appropriation or recycling of the imperial aesthetics, but a process of cannibalization in which the sumptuous, symbolic merchandise of the colonizers turns into a barrueca anomaly—deformed pearl—in its contact with the social body that receives it. The anomalous or monstrous is the mark of an American difference that resists the perfection of the sphere, and, in addition, refutes the universality of its aesthetic value restoring in its place its singularity and contingency. In this way, American “accidentalism” opposes the modernizing and Eurocentric “Occidentalism” and reverts it.



The “deformation” that takes place in the American Baroque—its abnormality, its anamorphous nature, its monstrosity—is, therefore, “de-monstration” (“[in the Baroque] the monster is essentially a visual entity: monster, ‘mostrar’ (to show), demonstrate”). In this way, an art like the Baroque, which is exported from the metropolis as a mechanism of homogenization in accordance with the unifying plans of imperial Spain—“One God, one king, one language”—becomes, in its colonial re-production, a hybrid product, refolded upon the heterogeneity that it seeks to reduce, and unfolded from the parameters of “high” culture toward the popular horizons of the American difference and heterogeneity. It would be impossible to recognize the countercultural meaning that the appropriations of the Baroque acquire in the colonies without the recognition of this agency from which colonial subjects appeal not just to the re-production of imperial protocols, but above all, to the proactive production of a performativity that carries those models to the extreme in the process of their reconversion.

CODEOPHAGIA:

the process "through which the code of the masters transforms itself through the assimilation of the ruins in which the destroyed code survives".

Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context
(Baroque/Neobaroque/Ultrabaroque: Disruptive Readings of Modernity -
Mabel Moraña)

The (Neo)baroque is proposed, then, paradoxically, not only as a mimetic impulse, but also as the aesthetics of (dis)integration: an expressive form that is essentially agglutinative and hybridized, and, at the same time, an art that, by evoking the origins of the imperial appropriation, explores the drama of colonialism and the possibilities of dis-aggregation and divergence—of de-totalization and fragmentation—of the models that represent absolute power and dogmatic truth.

*

Heterogeneity and plurality are articulated in a constant process of rewriting, where the word questions itself and is constantly reformulated, dispersing and multiplying its meanings, canceling all possible forms of consensus and epistemological stability. The Neobaroque no longer encircles, as the copy/original of seventeenth century, “a buried truth” (Picón Salas 123), but dramatizes uncertainty and dis-identity; the word is neither a symbol nor yields to metaphorical strategies or mutations of meaning: it is only sign, impulse, and sound. What greater disbelief than this could have been orchestrated with respect to the supposed transparency and communicability of language as the rational instrument that allows to structure the social experience in the liberal and dependent modernity of Latin America?

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to vindicate the difference in the categorized world of modernity, a world based on mechanics of exclusion and on the perpetuation of coloniality, based on the application of reductive binaries (subject/object, feminine/masculine, private/public, power/desire)

*

[The aesthetics of the neobaroque] effectively breaks down its logic and disarticulates its principles. The poetics of the Neobaroque subverts; it does not revolutionize.

*

re-functionalizes ideological monumentalities, rationalities, and forms of authority and representational authorization, creating from the peripheries of the great systems and through the irreverent appropriation of their codes, an alternative way of looking. That “madness of looking” of which Buci-Glucksmann speaks constructs reality from a new perspective, subverting the same canons that served to systematize an image of the world from the platforms of modernity.

*

Concepts—the one of Baroque, in this case—migrate and are relocated, temporarily and spatially, defying from the ruin (from what remains, from the differential) the hard nuclei of historical origin and regulated subjectivity, in a centrifugal flight from the centers of elaboration of mass-produced epistemologies, theories, and symbolic practices, toward utopian horizons of liberation and desire.

ANTI-WRITING

THE VOICE-OVER

Rewrite the content of a video of your choice by using voice-over, adding subtitulation, adding a soundtrack, or other.





Episode III

REVENGE OF THE SITH

The backstroke of the west

THE BLACK-OUT

Change the content of a text (political discourses, bureaucratic documents, instructions, historical texts, etc.) by blacking out part of its contents.

**I'VE GOT A
DREAM
WORTH
MORE THAN
MY SLEEP.**

**I'VE GOT A
DREAM:

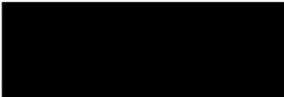
MY SLEEP.**

**Eighty
percent of
success is
showing
up.**

**Eighty
percent of
success is
showing
off.**

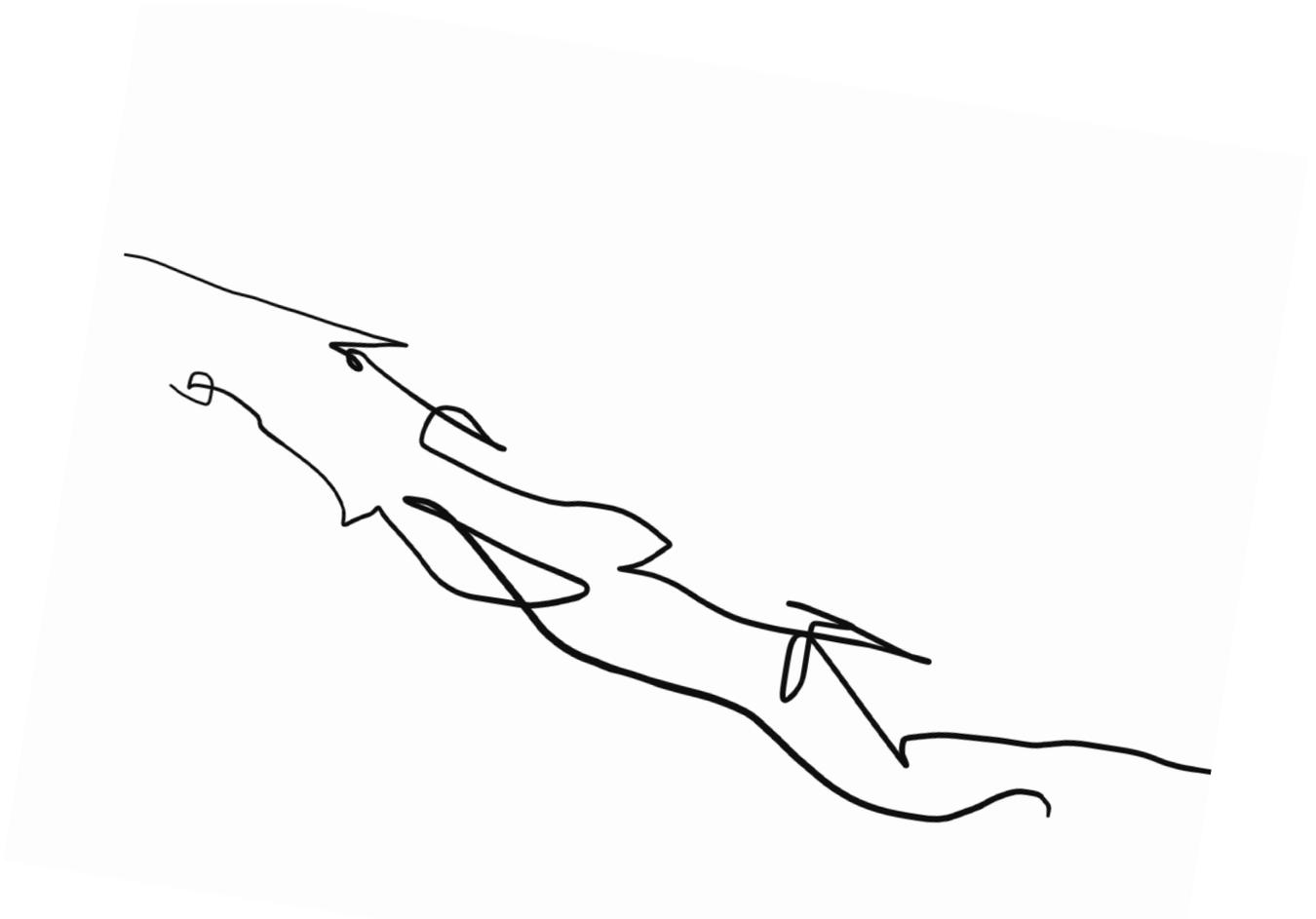
STOP
CHEATING ON
YOUR FUTURE
WITH YOUR
PAST.
IT'S OVER.

STOP
CHEATING 
YOUR FUTURE


IT'S OVER.

**THE
FIN
SION
S
E**

Have someone make a noise or sound/s for you. Try to draw it. Try to spell it out as well.



KGR-CHHHKKRRRRRR-GCH-(KLEK)

[NAILS SCRATCHING THE SURFACE OF A WOODEN TABLE]



BLIB BLIB dd-dit

[TAP DRIPPING]

THE QUESTION

Try answering these questions in any way you like.
We will later attempt to make a collective (*publication*) from with the answers.



Fig. 5 is a water surface expressed with smaller concave strokes linked onto a length of shallow waves in shadow. This method looks good when used judiciously in brush and ink drawings.

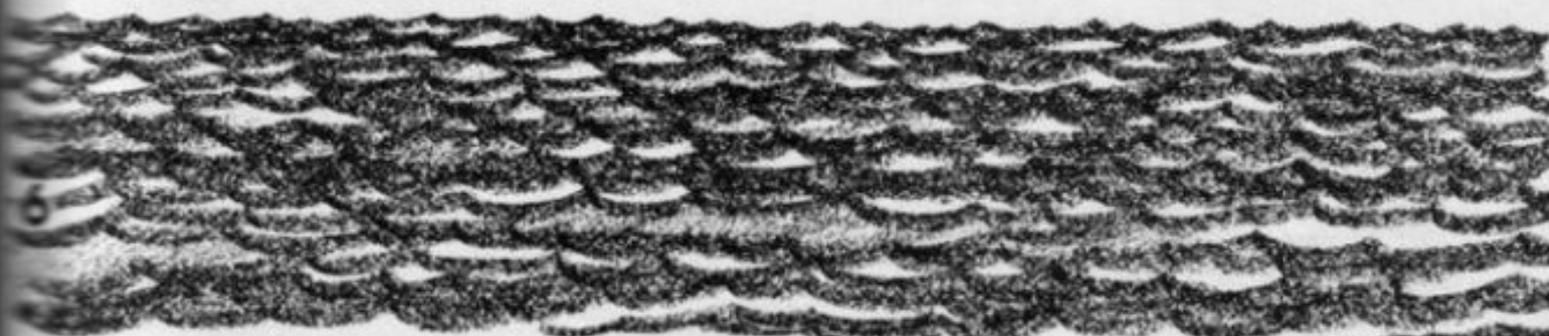


Fig. 6 is multiple dark wavelets strung out close together leaving bits of white between. Those at the horizon line are smaller than those in the front. Remember the warning of line five, fig.1, p. 96

**WHAT IS THE
COLOUR
OF THE
OCEAN?**



Fig. 7 we have a pulsating water surface of varying depths, not on shallow water. The darks appear on water of big boats.



Fig. 8 is similar to fig. 7 with more swirl. The two may be combined. The water is restless but windblown. The long flat oval works its way into this concept. Watch for it when "water hunting."

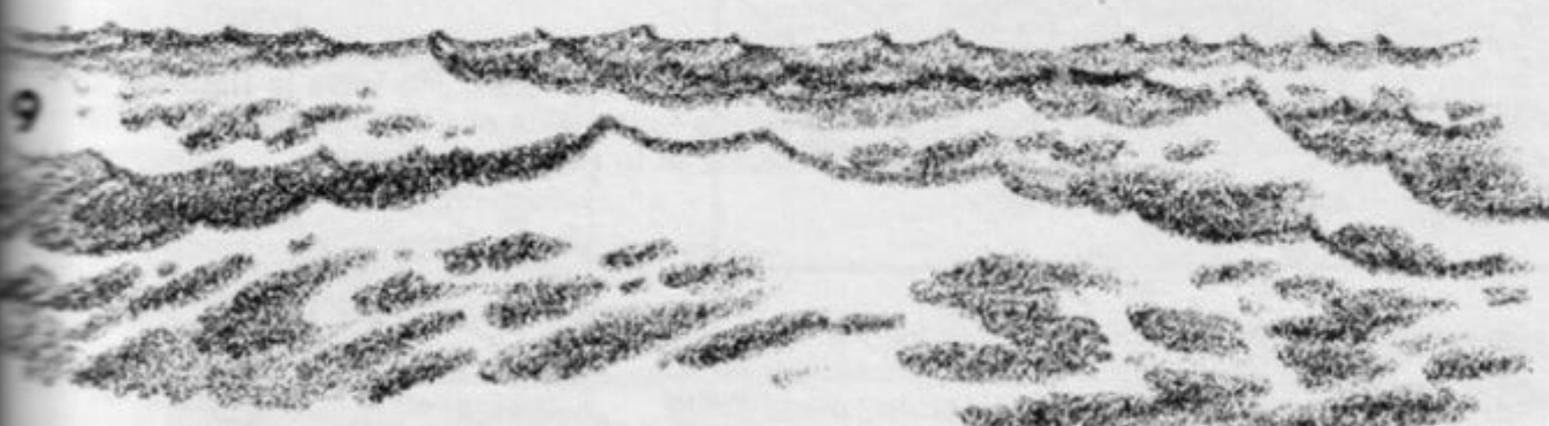
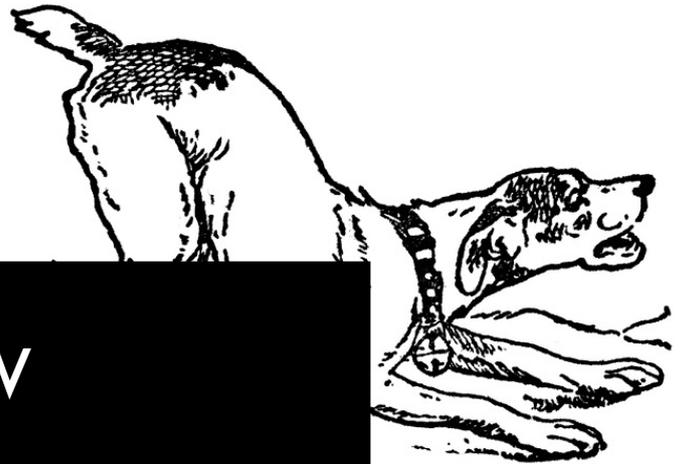
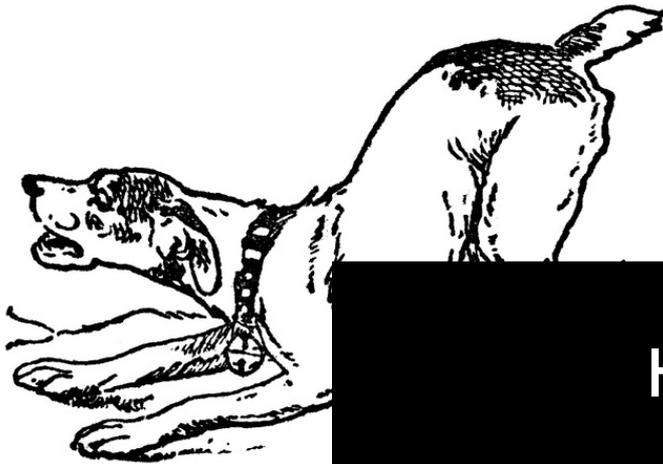
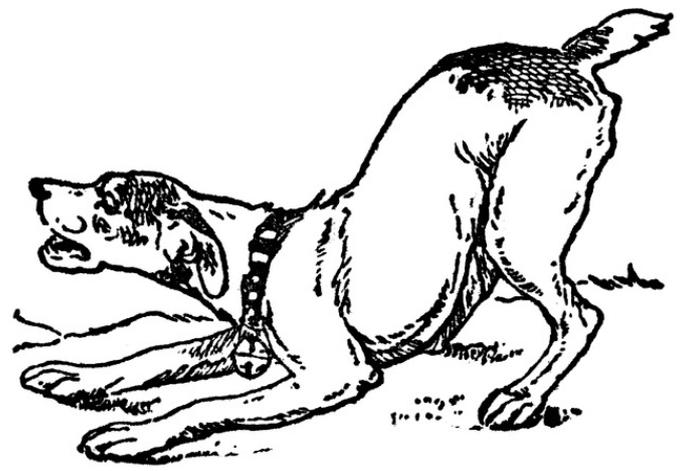
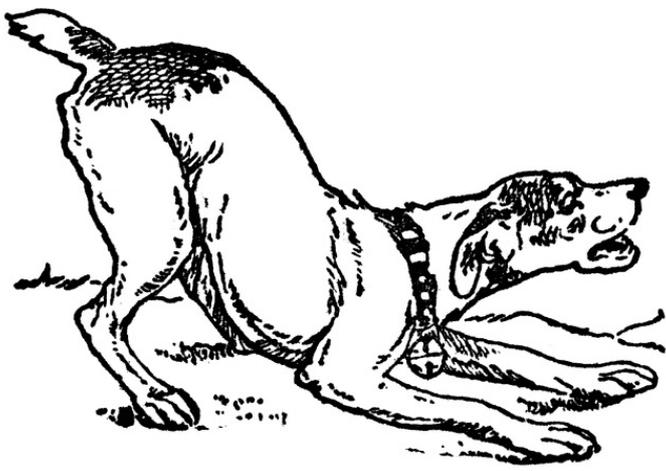
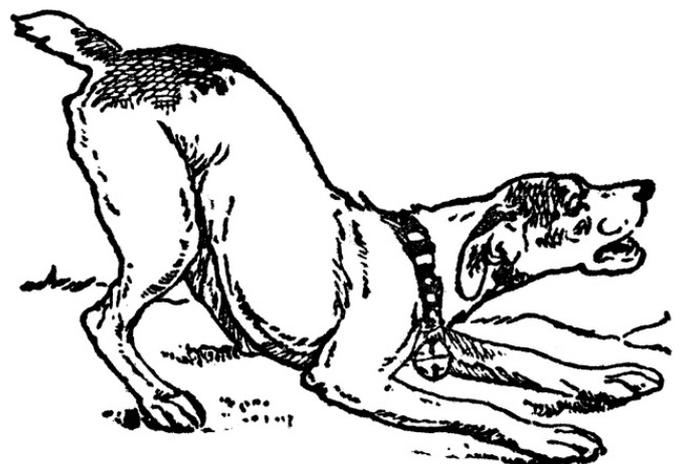
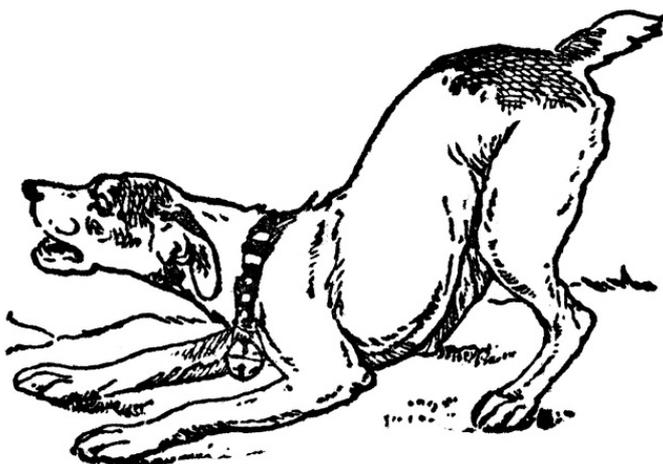
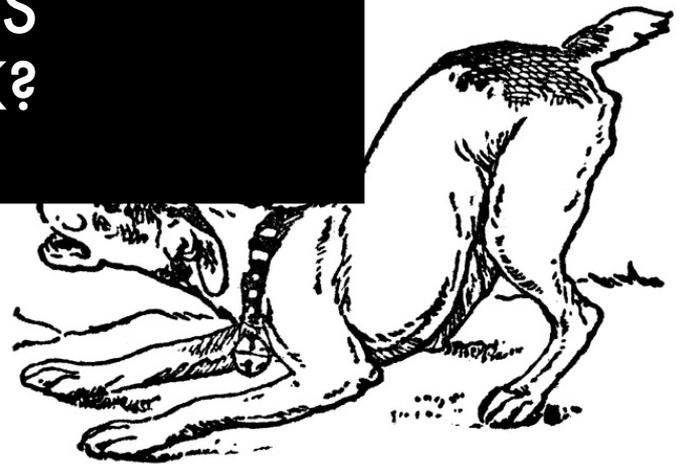
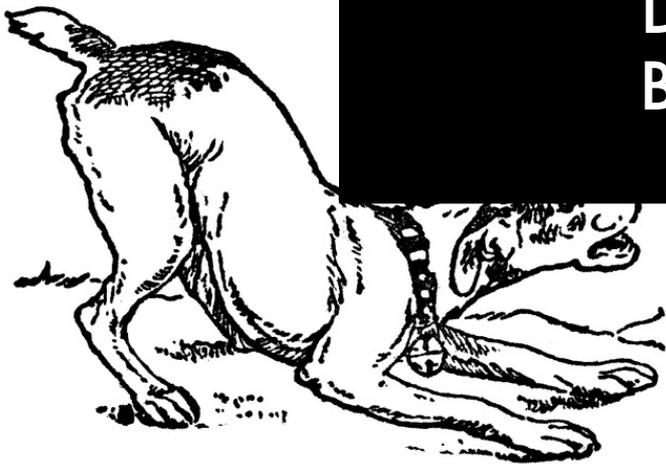


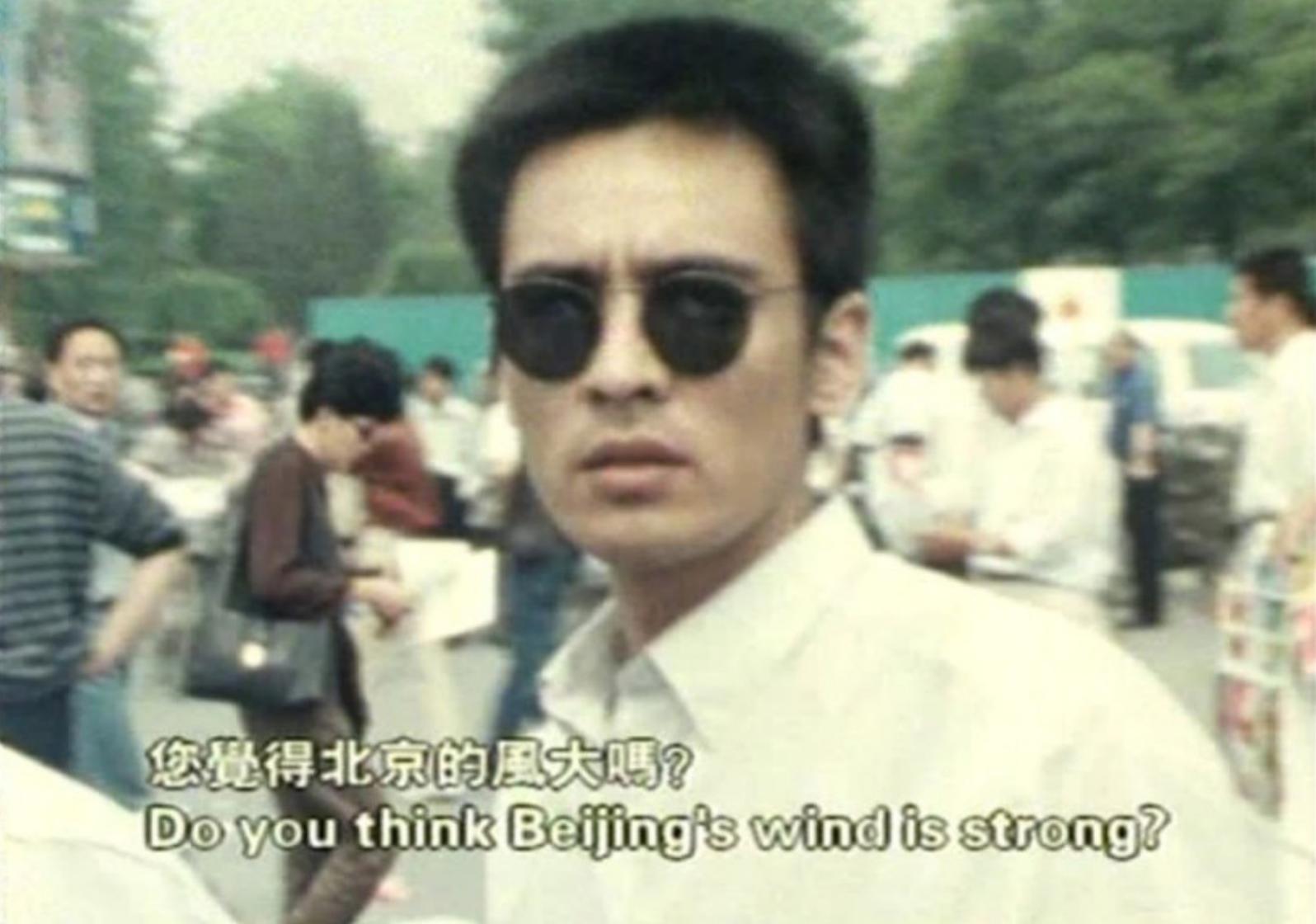
Fig. 9 we have something that occurs a lot at sea. There are "pie plates" of darks and grays set in foam beneath the tops of big waves. Along the crest there may be varying widths of pure white.



HOW
DO
DOGS
BARK?







您覺得北京的風大嗎？

Do you think Beijing's wind is strong?

RECOMMENDED FILM:

THERE IS A STRONG WIND IN BEIJING

Ju Anqi

[On absurd questions and realities being portrayed indirectly]

