

Rectangular World script

The screen is black

Sound of touch-tone phone dialing. Phone rings twice, then it is answered.

In synch with the initial human voice, an image appears. A different image appears in tandem with a change of voice. In synchronization with each voice change, there will be a change of image. Transitions should be straight-cuts, as this conversation or dialogue is in "real" time. There will be a subtle but perceptible motion effect, loosely but not necessarily literally in tandem with the dialogue.

E: Hello?

D: Hello, E. What's up?

E: Well, I'm just glad you're home and answering your phone. I was worried about you last night. You dashed out of M's Gallery so suddenly.

D: It's hardly the first occasion I've done that, E. I took a good look at both shows, and then I didn't really feel very social, so I left.

E: Didn't you like the shows?

D: Oh no. I mean, they're both fine. V and I keep on getting better and better with age. I think V is on a roll. And those are all such beautiful boys he has rendered. Yes, the wonders of rendering. Both V's and I's shows are good. But there are only so many ways of telling the artists that they're good. Did you hang around M's gallery for a while?

E: Oh, did I ever. I got quite pissed. But I enjoyed myself. A lot of people I hadn't seen for a dog's age showed up, so I kept buying refills.

D: Yes. That's another reason why I decided to leave early.

E: So you walked home, D. You do recall that it was pissing out last night?

(an image highlighting a black and white photograph of a handsome young man appears on screen.)

D: Yes, well I had an umbrella... I was thinking about Adam, and I didn't feel social. So I walked alone. And I walked past the window of that stupid bar just a few doors down from M's gallery—the one with the signage BE SOCIAL OR DIE. I stopped in my tracks, stared at the signage, and I decided that I'd rather die. But not in the immediate

future.

(return to either abstract figured-images, or rectangular "persons")

E: You think Adam made that decision?

D: Oh yes. His death was not an accident.

E: How do you know Adam's death was not just a stupid and careless bike accident?

D: I just know, E.

E: How, D? You yourself insist that you hadn't seen Adam Parker for months now. I mean, I haven't ...or hadn't ...and nobody else I know had seen him. Ever since he stopped trying to be an actor and tried to become a painter.

D: He didn't really try to be a painter.

E: No shit. Painters have to make the scene and schmooze at least as much as other artists....

D: Unless they are both senior and successful. I mean, you're a painter.

E: Yes, I guess I am. You don't get shows unless people know who you are. It's not strictly on the basis of the work. That's such a modernist pipe dream. Besides, Adam only wanted to become a painter. I doubt he ever got up the nerve to buy a set of oils or acrylics and the other necessary tools.

D: Yes, I know. Adam only planned to make paintings. He only painted in Photoshop.

E: Oh. I see... But you're fine? You made it home okay?

D: Yes, E, I walked straight home. Sometimes I don't... sometimes I enjoy little detours, but not last night.

E: D?

D: What?

E: Adam Parker makes me think about the limitations of the word "community".

D: How so?

E: Well... some people die, and then an entire community feels the loss. But it's different with some other people's deaths.

D: Hmmm... Some individuals die, and then different communities claim that person. They have different and usually contradictory definitions or identifications of the deceased person.

E: I think I know what you mean. Like, take a political activist who happens to be queer but that's not the primary focus of their activism. They get wildly different eulogies or obituaries in the leftist press and then the queer press. You'd think...

(perhaps a good time to introduce left/right split-frame?)

D: You think there's a singular leftist press and a monolithic queer press. Or media?

E: You'd swear you were reading about two completely different persons who happened to share the same name.

D: You're right, E. And then there are individuals like Adam Parker who lived pretty well outside of everybody's radar. He was only tangentially connected to anything resembling an art community or a queer community or...

E: A biker. But did you ever see him riding his bike?

D: Hmmm. Maybe he was an actor playing a biker. Or a much more androgynous leather boy than those repellent gangster types who get so much press these days.

E: What about his family?

D: What about them? I mean, he never talked about them, but then he didn't talk very much period. ...I only saw one death notice for Adam. It was in The Globe and Mail, and it stated that his death occurred suddenly. "Suddenly" is usually code for a suicide.

(return to single-frame?)

E: Frequently, but not always. Hey, D ...You do recall that infamous Margaret Thatcher quote?

D: "There's no such thing as society. There are only individuals. And men and women. And families."

E: Yeah yeah. Which is ridiculous, because the minute you think, then there's something called society.

D: Because you will get contradictions and contradictory perspectives. Yeah yeah.

E: But what do people mean by society, and then what do people mean by community?

D: Is community synonymous with society, or is it a connected group within society?

E: Or maybe against society?

D: Some belong, and then some don't. I reject that.

E: I guess it's the definite pronoun that annoys you.

D: I can't stand it when the subjective pretends to be universal.

E: But there are so many different definitions of community. Even among artists. Like, is the scene around M's Gallery a community?

D: Well, E. you and I both hang out there. And many mutual friends hang out there, but also at other galleries and watering holes. But I don't consider that a community. I'd call that a scene.

E: Okay, but some galleries use the word community to refer to their regular audience, or even to artists who either have shown there or whose art would stand a good chance of showing there.

D: But then other galleries use the dreaded word to refer to people outside the art system ...to people from this or that community, whom the particular show is addressing..

E: Or whom the exhibiting artist or artists theoretically are representing.

D: Yeah, right. That definition bugs me as much as your first example... But the latter definition is actually closer to what people usually mean by society.

E: But, D, there's a really simplistic distinction here between artists and "real people".

D: Oh yeah. Then there's also those organizations that advocate a non-geographical definition of community.

(another split-frame sequence?)

E: Hmm... That's an extension of mail art or correspondence art.

D: I'd call those scenes, too.

E: Yes, I'm inclined to agree. But I can't get rid of this nagging feeling I have.

D: What nagging feeling?

E: That all of our pomo theoretical rejections of singular community etcetera are extremely urban and elitist to boot.

D: Yes, I know. We both have siblings who live and work in small towns, where everybody knows everybody else.

E: But then that's your geographical definition of community.

D: More like a neighbourhood. Like Coronation Street.

E: Well, surely not that claustrophobic!

(return to single-frame)

D: I don't know about that. The problem I have with any definition of a fixed community is that there are self-appointed gatekeepers. And what could possibly give any single individual, or group, or corporation or bureaucracy, any right to determine who belongs and who doesn't?

E: Agreed. But you also have to remember that individuals could align themselves with more than one community ...that, unless they're very boring, that they will have more than one interest and therefore more than one group of friends or associates.

D: Well, E, there are people who work at their jobs and then spend the rest of their time with their families. Although that's already two reference points.

E: I also detest the whole idea of community values. It's a thin veneer for censorship and restricted entry, etcetera.

D: And then there are individuals like Adam Parker.

E: Yes, Adam. Who didn't seem to belong to any community... Unless, there's a community of wannabe painters who never show their work, or one for gay men who apparently have no connection with either a mainstream or "alternative" gay community.

D: Yes. Maybe Adam appreciated anonymous sex but I really don't know.

E: Because the man didn't talk very much about anything other than retiring from acting and taking up painting.

D: Adam Parker took that stupid signage in the bar literally.

E: Yes, D. That is a stupid work of signage. But there's a variant of it that I have no problem agreeing with.

D: You mean, Be Social or Get Lost?

E: Yes. That isn't a command to go out and mindlessly consume. It's a reminder that, in society, you are sharing space with other humans and even animals and therefore it should be imperative to conduct oneself with civility.

D: Yes and no. I'll go along with No Violence Please, etcetera. But, sometimes at terribly polite events or art-openings, when everybody's pretending to like work that they really can't stand, I can appreciate the individual who vents his or her opinion publicly, and therefore violates an unofficial but all-too-pervasive protocol.

E: Occasionally I find such behaviour amusing, but generally people who act out merely bore me.

D: I feel more social tonight than I did last night. Even though it's still raining. Do you feel like meeting me at that opening at L's Gallery and continuing this conversation?

E: Ummmm.. No, D. I don't feel terribly social tonight, so I'm going to stay home and read. Fiction, not art books. But nice talking to you, as always. Glad you got home okay last night.

D: I'm glad that you care. Good night, E.

Sounds of phones being hung up.

CREDITS (on black)

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