

Fifth Estate on the Web

A guide to the Web presence of *Fifth Estate* staff, writers, and friends

Quincy B. Thorn

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Longtime contributor Penelope Rosemont has given the *Fifth Estate* a great many articles and graphics, all of them insightful and inciting to revolt (See her Fall 2013, “The Poisonous Cobra of Surrealism” essay). Her achievements go beyond writing and graphic arts. In 1966, along with her late comrade and partner, Franklin Rosemont, she was instrumental in founding the Chicago Surrealist Group.

Rosemont has played prominent roles in the US surrealist movement, alternative media, the exploration and preservation of radical history, and the Chicago anarchist milieu.

On the Black Swan Press web page for Penelope’s collection of essays, *Surrealist Experiences: 1001 Dawns, 221 Midnights*, we find the following apt description: “An ardent defender of all that is most liberating in the revolutionary tradition—from Robin Hood to the L.A. Rebellion—Rosemont is also a passionate defender of love, wilderness, and the poetic life.”

In these writings, critical theory “embraces the ‘language of birds,’ and poetic humor reveals the open secrets of revolutionary thought at its wildest and brightest.” surrealistmovement-usa.org/pages/experiences.html

She has also edited *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*. Information at surrealistmovement-usa.org/pages/swreviews.html

For a broad selection of texts by Penelope, Franklin and other members of the US surrealist movement, check out surrealistmovement-usa.org/pages/forecast.html

There are several engaging videos featuring Penelope including this multi-part interview on YouTube.

TheAnarchistLibrary.org includes texts by and about her, including her essay, “The Psychopathology of Work.”

Our own website, fifthestate.org, still in its beginning stages, offers three pieces by Rosemont, two reviews, and an article, “Disobedience: The antidote for miserablism.” (Go to the Search FE Authors drop-down menu on our Home page and type in the first few letters of Penelope to see the current offerings.) As our archives expand, more of her writings and graphic work will appear.

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The work of David Watson has made a major contribution to the *Fifth Estate’s* development as an anti-authoritarian forum.

Written under his own and other names (including George Bradford, T. Fulano, Mr. Venom, and Primitivo Solis), Watson’s writings played an important part in establishing and maintaining the FE’s radical and critical edge from the 1960s on into the new century.

Writing on ecology, de-mystifying history, sharing his poetic subversions, he has enriched the social, historical and analytical understandings of FE readers, including this one, for many years.

As a place to start exploring the broad and deep questions around civilization and technology—and the response later termed anarcho-primitivism—one could do no better than consult Watson’s article “Against the Megamachine” (written under T. Fulano), which appeared in *Fifth Estate* #306, July 1981. It was later expanded into a book

of the same name. A revised version of the article is available at radicalarchives.org/2010/09/06/dw-against-the-megamachine/

Years later, in FE #350 (1997), Watson offered a reflection on his role as an anti-authoritarian critic of industrial civilization in “Swamp Fever, Primitivism & the ‘Ideological Vortex’: Farewell to All That.” The article can be found on the Anarchist Library site at <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-watson-swamp-fever-primitivism-the-ideological-vortex-farewell-to-all-that>

Watson’s article, “Empire of Extinction,” (*New Internationalist* No. 288, March 1997) gives his analysis of another subject of abiding relevance, the human impact on the biosphere.

Following from his anti-authoritarian, deeply-inquiring approach, he probes beyond the superficial to give radical insights. For example, while population growth plays a role in the proliferation of poverty and ecological degradation, Watson points out that, “sheer numbers do not totally explain the current mass-extinction spasm. We need to look beyond the numbers, at social structures, at an energy- and commodity-intensive development model and the social and historical causes of extreme poverty.”

And, so, he does. The essay is at newint.org/features/1997/03/05/empire/

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