

PART II - LITERARY CRITICISM

LESLIE FIEDLER: HAMBURGER, LIT AND COCA-COLA

(excerpts from a Lecture given by Leslie Fiedler at the
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in August of 1979).

LET ME FIRST SAY THAT. . .

We "Fiedlered" around during an entire week last August: In the afternoon and at night. It was a great beginning of a new term. It was as if the whole English Department of UFSC had plunged into the mythic world of the Huck Finn Professor of literature. We wandered down the Mississippi, we fought the wind mills of Quixote. . . we saw the logic of madness - the kind of madness literature is and that all of us like to enjoy and need to enjoy.

As I said before - it was a great beginning. We all started the semester a little saner after this purifying week with the author of Love and Death in American Literature. Not forgetting the wine, the chats. . . Well, what I want to say is that you don't know what you missed if you weren't with us during the "FIEDLER EVENT" - which I should add, took place thanks to the special effort of Prof. Mike Jayne.

So, it was with the intention of sharing with you something of our mythic week that I asked Professor Fiedler to allow us to tape and print his last talk on popular literature and literary criticism, to which he kindly agreed.

It should be said that what is transcribed in this mag are excerpts from his lecture. Nevertheless, we tried hard to be as faithful as we could, given the poor recording conditions, to the line of thought developed by Prof. Fiedler.

Why did I decide to call it HAMBURGER, LIT AND COCA-COLA? Simple! It is that. . . Well, why should i explain it? Let Prof. Fiedler do it himself. He does it much better than i. Go ahead and read his lecture. And if you think you know enough of Fiedler because you read his books, you're wrong. This "summary" of his talk is a revelation of a critic who is reconsidering his previous involvement in an elitist approach to literature. It is the talk of a man who goes more for a Mark Twain than for a Samuel Clemens but who for many years was not allowed to say so. As he said in one of our talks, mentioning Dr. Johnson:

There is one final critic who judges literature,
that's time.

A good book pleases many and pleases long.

But, let's experience talk. Over to Prof. Fiedler!

DILVO

