

NOTES ON BEEF:
Towards a Semiologicohermenutics of the *Beef* trilogy

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A. Metaliterary notes

1. *Beef* is an anagram of BE FREE.
2. The names of characters who suffer setbacks all begin with B (*be*): Biff, Bump, Bob.
3. The names of characters who neither suffer setbacks nor gain advantages all begin with B (*be*): Billson, Bambi, Barbreath, Brick.
4. Throughout the trilogy, emphasis on the letter B (*be*) increases. *Gravy* devotes a great amount of time to complex alliterative presentation of this letter.
5. *Beef* is pronounced the same as *be* for ordinarily is.
6. The name *Biff* is a deformation of *beef*.
7. Beef: the flesh of cattle, a complaint, a criminal charge.

B. Structural notes

1. When Biff and Bump return to Freelton defeated, Doreen Sue is champion of the world, the cosmos, and the universe (i.e., the World Cosmic International Federation).
2. After Inspector Bob is accused of being the Beefer, Doreen Sue becomes an intimate of the president of the United States.
3. The only witness to Inspector Bob's assault on Doreen Sue is Doreen Sue. She also discovers his tattoo. About Inspector Bob's movements before his capture we know nothing.

C. Conclusions

1. The *Beef* trilogy demonstrates that in the modern world of transnational capitalism, the only people who can truly *be* or *be for* something are the members of a small coterie of influential capitalists and their hangers-on. Only they are allowed *to* beef, while the rest of us *are* beef.
2. In the transnational capitalist world order, one may BE FREE only by draining the life force out of most of the rest of the human race.
3. Biff and Bump are beef — prepared meat ready for the market — and consequently symbols of the average citizen of the modern "democracies."

1114

4. The *Beef* trilogy demonstrates the inherent contradictions in the bourgeois equation of freedom with egoism.

D. A mystery

One of Pastor Bob's Crapistani followers mistakes Pastor Bob for Inspector Bob, although this possibility clearly has not occurred to Biff and Bump. Is the Crapistani simply having trouble distinguishing members of the transnational capitalist elite, or have Biff and Bump been brainwashed into zombies who do and believe whatever they're told?